

Minutes

Mt. Lebanon Historic Preservation Board

Monday, September 20, 2021, Mt. Lebanon Municipal Building

Attendance: Present: Anne Swager, chair; Joe Bevins, Krista Ford, Philip Neusius; Commission liaison Mindy Ranney; Staff liaison Laura Pace Lilley. **Absent:** Matthew Moses, Marilyn Oberst-Horner

Call to order: Board member Anne Swager called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

Citizen comments: none

Consideration of August 2021 minutes:

The August minutes were approved.

Administrative Reports

Chair report — Anne Swager reported she went through the strategic plan and spent some time massaging the goals into sentences she thought represented the goal:

Historic Preservation Board Goals:

To raise the awareness and educate our citizens about the benefits of preserving and celebrating our historic assets.

Walking tours/self-guided/app – link to signs

-Attend public events w/HD maps and talk to people (create better display)

-Talks at Mt. Lebanon Public Library & Historical Society & Denis Theatre

-Symposium/seminar

-Block parties

-Magazine series, team with Historical Society

-Trolley tour

-Educational signage/pedestrian friendly/most historic sites

-Fully fund historic signage effort

-Page on new website (more prominent)

-Pursue historic design elements for Rec Center/any new community-based buildings

-Promote neighborhood sign policy

To adhere to the federal/state guidelines that protect our National Register historic district.

We must respond/Develop mechanism for timely response

To explore appropriate means including but not limited to zoning tools to preserve our National Register historic district.

*If we lose too many resources, we could lose our designation

-Focus education on what you can do instead of tear-down

- Update design guide/reuse of historic building materials/education (website/magazine/app)
- Work with Bill Callahan to ID low-hanging fruit w/regard to preservation options
- Discuss ideas/options with planning board inc. stormwater, etc.

To explore outside funding sources in support of our goals.

Phil Neusius mentioned the use of underground radar for use in brick streets as an innovative tech tool.

Commission report — Mindy Ranney said the parks master plan and recreation feasibility study was still underway and that a second set of survey questions had just been released. She said the consultants would be using the sign design for the Historic District signs as a template. The study will likely be done end of first quarter.

She said the DEI groups would be coming to the Commission meetings in October to make their recommendations and answer questions.

The Economic Development Council also is starting to look at Complete Streets possibilities for Mt. Lebanon and the concept of and Eco District. Swager also said she had concerns about the walking paths for the kids who use them to go to school.

Staff report — No report.

Continuing business

Historic signage: Anne Swager said the board received the final bid package for the Historic Sign program, and passed it along to Lilley to go to Rudy and Keith. Lilley will provide the board with the map of where all the street signs are in the district so that the board could pick the most important locations to suggest to the municipality based on how much budget they have.

Brick streets: Anne Swager presented the current draft of the brick streets policy. She said the current iteration incorporates information from the CMU white paper. She asked board members to read it carefully and give feedback. Ranney thanked the board for its work on it and said she was excited to read it.

Phil Neusius said the most important aspect is public involvement. In historic preservation, public approval is the biggest tool we have. Allow the residents to be heard. And if we can't preserve all streets, at least they'll have a chance for input.

Ranney said she expects to HPB to be able to provide its recommendation on the policy to the Commission in December or January.

Liaison reports:

Lebanon Economic Development Council, Joe Bevins said the EDC would be working on Design Guidelines for businesses thanks to a grant it received.

Historical Society of Mount Lebanon, Krista Ford: The Historical Society would be meeting the following day. But the annual fundraiser will be virtual on October 21 to honor St. Clair Hospital. They also will be talking about the treasure of the society not being a member of the board.

Planning Board, Matthew Moses via email: The Board deliberated the following matters:

Amendment to Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance provides that properties zoned R-1, R-2 and R-3 allow only one principal building. The municipal staff have proposed to remove R-3 from this requirement. This is proposed due to the stormwater facility issue that Marilyn discussed during our last meeting – the desirability of allowing multiple buildings so that the properties can share responsibility for the cost of mutually-enjoyed stormwater facilities rather than putting the entire cost on the property on which the key facilities are situated. There are 532 R-3 properties in Mt. Lebanon, of which only about 6.4% of which would be affected by the specific change. The Board approved the staff's proposal. The recommendation will go on to the Commission, which, should it approve, will proceed with the notice and adoption process.

Update to Comprehensive Plan. The municipal planner presented proposals to update the *Elevate Mt. Lebanon* Comprehensive Plan by the end of 2023. As of the last census, Mt. Lebanon's population increased moderately to 34,005 residents. The last comprehensive review was in 2012/13. The Board will need to decide (i) the makeup of the three advisory groups on the components of the Comprehensive Plan (i.e., who on the Board is interested in working in which group), and (ii) ultimately, the specifics of the Comprehensive Plan. It is noteworthy that the recently-developed Parks Master Plan generated about three times the amount of comments as were received in the previous update to the Comprehensive Plan, and staff anticipate vigorous community input.

Capital Improvement Plan. The Board reviews the proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as the first step in the municipal budgeting process. The Planning Board reviews the CIP for concurrence with the Comprehensive Plan in advance of it being presented to the Commission as part of the 2022 Budget. A key component of this is analysis of streets, including brick streets. I reported on the status of the HPB's new brick street policy recommendations, and the engineer reported on typical 3x costs of brick versus asphalt. I also fielded a suggestion from one Board member that it would be helpful to do some sample repair projects to try to analyze how the brick stands up, before committing to large numbers of other brick streets. I responded on that point that such tracking will no doubt occur, but we're talking about years down the line before we have meaningful data on sample street projects. The Board approved the 2023 – 26 CIP as being in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Partnership Design Committee: Joe Bevins: No substantial updates. The Vibrant Uptown project is moving along.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6 p.m. The next meeting is Monday, October 18, 2021, at 5 p.m. in person and on Zoom.