

Minutes

Mt. Lebanon Historic Preservation Board

Monday, September 18, 2023, Mt. Lebanon Municipal Building, 5 p.m.

Attendance

Present: Philip Neusius, chair; Mary Ellen Donato, Grace Gartman, Alan Hohlfelder, Matthew Moses (online), Marilyn Oberst-Horner (online); Staff liaison Laura Pace Lilley; Commission liaison Mindy Ranney.

Call to order: Board chair Phil Neusius called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

Citizens Comments: None

Consideration of August minutes: The August minutes were unanimously approved.

Administrative Reports

Chair report— Chairperson Phil Neusius asked for feedback on his transition document for the new board in April to ensure the board's duties will be incorporated into the new structure. The board agreed with the report and it was submitted to Assistant Manager Ian McMeans.

Commission report— Commissioner Mindy Ranney said the Commission passed a new sidewalk policy that will make it easier for residents to have a sidewalk put in their neighborhood, with a cost-sharing structure. She also said the Commission will be working on the municipal budget.

Staff Liaison— Laura Pace Lilley said that the assistant public information officer position was vacant and the municipality is looking to fill that soon. She also mentioned the Artists Market would be September 30 and August 1.

Continuing Business

Historic Signage: No report

Brick Streets: The Commission passed a Brick Streets policy in September. Ranney said the board included a list of streets that are designated to be a high priority to be preserved. Phil Neusius said the policy does not specify a public notification period and that residents needed to receive written communication that they could lose their brick street in time for them to give input on the decision, before it is a done deal. Ranney said that the Historic Preservation Board could review that list each year and reach out to those residents. Neusius said a lot of the information that he and Matthew Moses put together for the policy did not make it into the final policy. He also voiced concern over the emergency repair clause that allows asphalt repair, and said he believed that the municipality's interest would be in saving money not necessarily in historic preservation or in what residents want. Ranney said the point of the policy is to codify the list of streets that the Commission wants to see preserved. Neusius said the policy just calls for input from engineers and public works not preservationists and he believes their opinion leans toward time and money, and in that case historic preservation loses. Grace Gartman asked if the new board could be included in the discussion or consideration of brick streets reconstruction each year before it goes to the Commission. Ranney said the board could draft language to suggest the Commission change the policy to invite the resiliency board to give

input at the annual discussion session each year before the decision is made. Moses said he would draft a proposed change for the policy.

Public Education/board Education Events: Alan Hohlfelder said Gartman would be coordinating a presentation with Teresa Duff for a November or December at the Mt. Lebanon Public Library. He said the subcommittee is still working on the “This Old Sustainable House” three-part educational seminar for the spring. February 6, 20 and March 5, 2024 for the events also at the library.

Advisory Board Transition: Ranney reviewed the HPB’s request to have the new board name changed to include the words Historic Preservation in the name, but the commission said it preferred to keep historic preservation as a subcommittee but not change the name.

Liaison Reports:

Comprehensive Plan: Neusius said he attended the focus group for the plan and he said he was pleased that historic preservation was a part of the conversation. He said the plan recommendations would be made public in October.

Mt. Lebanon Economic Development Council: No report

Historical Society of Mount Lebanon: Gartman said the society would be having a lecture in conjunction with Preservation Pittsburgh on modernism at the library the following Monday at 8. They also have a small in-house lecture on November 9 at the society on Mt. Lebanon family history. Their annual fundraiser is October 5.

Planning Board: No report.

Partnership Design Committee: No report, but Mary Ellen Donato was assigned to be the new committee chair following Doug Devlin’s resignation.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 p.m. The next meeting is Monday, October 16, 2023, at 5 p.m. in person and on Zoom.