

Pennington Historic Preservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

3/15/22

Opening Statement

Adequate public notice of this meeting has been posted in Borough Hall and sent to the officially designated newspaper the Hopewell Valley News. Because of the state of emergency in New Jersey regarding Covid-19, the meeting will be held remotely via Zoom.

Attendance

Robert Chandler, Jack Davis, Eric Holtermann, Katrina Homel, Barbara Kirsh, Natalie Shivers, Mary Baum, Hannah Williams, David Coats

Past Minutes

There were no comments on the January 2022 minutes. Motion to accept Barbara, second by Mary; all approved via voice vote.

New Business

Applications

There are no new applications for review.

Borough Staff

The Borough has hired a Land Use Administrator, Katie Ronollo, who will be taking minutes at the Historic Preservation meetings and serving as a liaison between the Planning board and the Historic Preservation Committee.

Council Liaison

Kati Angarone is the new Council liaison to the Historic Preservation Commission. She is unable to attend tonight due to a council budget meeting.

Discussion of Certified Local Government (CLG)

The HPC's application to the State for a Certificate of Eligibility was previously approved in 2018. The COE allows the Borough to seek formal State and National Register listing as well as to apply to become a Certified Local Government. Becoming a CLG is attractive because it will allow us to apply for grants to assist in the application for State and National Listing. For example, to be listed we will need a more comprehensive survey which carries a large professional expense. Pennington already meets many of the requirements for a CLG. The one requirement that is lacking is the taking of consistent minutes which we are rectifying with the hiring of the Land Use Manager. The Land Use Administrator will help to keep the paperwork organized and more in line with what the state is looking for in a CLG. There are few extra responsibilities in being a CLG which include a mandatory annual report, mandatory training for members and, if we get a grant, having to follow those specific guidelines. Becoming a CLG could also help with the tax credit issue. There are some tax credit projects moving forward in

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NJ and it would be great if Pennington had the CLG in place and was ready to take advantage of what is offered.

Review of Ordinance

When Pennington applied for the COE, our Historic Preservation ordinance was reviewed by the state office and the State shared comments. These comments were discussed by the HPC but no updates to the ordinance have occurred. If we are to apply for CLG, the ordinance will need to be updated. Not every comment from the state will have to be incorporated into Pennington's ordinance but there are some valid suggestions. Any changes in the ordinance will need to be approved by Council.

NJ Historic Preservation Conference

The State Historic Preservation Conference is scheduled for June 3, 2022 in Trenton. It is a one day event that has been quite informative and geared toward historic preservation commission members. It is possible that funds from the HPC's budget could cover registration costs. Katrina raised the possibility of funding a membership in Preservation NJ. This may also be a possible way to use HPC Funds.

Notice of Unauthorized Work

Eric suggested that the HPC develop some form of notice for unauthorized work that has been completed in the Historic District without HPC review. This notice may specifically address items for which no permit is needed such as windows and doors. It is possible that new homeowners are not aware of the historic district and extra responsibilities for home owners in the district. Some sort of education on the front-end for home owners, realtors and contractors would be helpful. A pamphlet that can be shared with new homeowners has been discussed by the HPC in the past. Eric suggested adding a note in the Mayor's newsletter as a first step. Eric will write the blurb for the newsletter and will share with HPC prior to sending to the Mayor. Katie will check if add-ins that are sent with physical water bills can also be included with the digital bills.

Old Business

Website Updates

The HPC has asked for updates to the Borough website. Some of these items have been completed and some are still pending. The new historic area map has been posted. The survey has not been posted. Eric will send the survey to Katie. A wish list for the website includes: a direct link from the HPC page to the Historic Preservation Element and the Historic Preservation section of the ordinance; direct link to the Certificate of Appropriateness (it is now in the forms section); and, posting of archived applications and comments intended as a guideline for new applicants. In order to gauge feasibility of posting the applications, Eric will send Katie some applications.

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A goal is to make the HPC section of the website more descriptive and accessible as far as process. Natalie will work on the description and Eric will share information that he has. Please share with Natalie any examples you may know of as a model for this section.

Meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting April 19 @7:30. Most likely an in-person meeting will be an option.