

PENNINGTON BOROUGH
30 North Main Street, Pennington, NJ 08534
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
March 19, 2024

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mary Baum, Robert Chandler, David Coats, Jack Davis, Eric Holtermann, Katrina Homel, Natalie Shivers, David Stevens, Yasmine Zein, Kaitlyn Macellaro

Absent: Nadine Stern

I. OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC ADDRESS (15 MINUTES)

Ruth Wells, 16 East Delaware, asked if she can talk about the simple changes to her application at 16 East Delaware Ave. Mr. Holtermann stated that she was the first application on the agenda, so we would get to her project shortly.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Katrina Homel moved to accept the February 20, 2024 minutes. Motion seconded by Mary Baum. Motion approved.

III. APPLICATIONS

2024-02 Certificate of Appropriateness-update of 2019-02 C of A

Mr. Holtermann brought up the drawings and plans of the Horst and Green residence, located at 16 East Delaware Ave. Ms. Ruth Wells explained how they presented a more elaborate addition with the garage in 2019 and it was approved with a Certificate of Appropriateness. She described how four years ago, they came back with the design with no garage. She stated how they wanted to change a few things to make it simpler so the whole addition fits in even more subtly. She said that she wants to relocate the door in drawing one further to the right or around the side. She stated that she wants to remove the storage shed. She explained that they are coming back to the Historic Preservation Commission to show the little changes they want to make to the elevation and to the exteriors that are available from the street. Ms. Wells stated that moving the door closer to the kitchen and putting a window where that door was would be one option and then putting the door around the corner and removing the storage shed would be another option. Mr. Chandler commented and said that the three bay window panel above the old storage does project a bit too far out and Ms. Wells explained that it gives it a little architectural interest. Mr. Chandler observed that there isn't a frieze board or brackets in the drawing showing the elevation where the proposed side door would go. Ms. Wells stated that the door isn't visible from the street Mr. Chandler asked if the railing above the bay window was in the drawing from before. Ms. Wells confirmed it was and Mr. Holtermann agreed and said that the certificate of appropriateness referred to a cable rail above the bay window. Mr. Green stated that wood might

look a little more traditional and appropriate. Mr. Chandler asked if the back would have gutters and downspouts. Mr. Green remarked that he would prefer not to and wasn't sure if there was an option for having a detail where the gutters are covered. Mr. Holtermann asked Ms. Wells and Max if there was a preference for where they would want the door. Ms. Wells said it would be her recommendation to do both. Mr. Chandler asked if it would be a metal roof and he knows a good roofing company that did his roof. Mr. Holtermann requested a final drawing of the railing before it is put in. Motion approved with 7 votes in favor.

2024-01 Certificate of Appropriateness: 141 South Main Street

Mr. Holtermann stated that the certificate of appropriateness was dropped off at the owner's house as well as at Borough Hall. Mr. Chandler asked if they were going to start building yet and Mr. Holtermann said he hasn't heard anything yet. Mr. Holtermann asked if Ms. Macellaro can let him know when a building permit comes in for this address.

2023-02 Update: Minor Application: 35/37 West Delaware Avenue

Mr. Holtermann is going to follow up with an email to them that there was a few things that were part of their approval that they haven't done yet.

2024-xx Update: Pennington School Old Main Front Porch

Mr. Holtermann mentioned that Kate Farewell said that they hired Clarke Caton Hintz Architects to work on the design of the front porch for Old Main. Mr. Holtermann offered for a subcommittee to look at the front porch more informally before submitting an application. He stated that the Planning Board Attorney confirmed that the Old Main front porch will be a continuing part of their development application. He described that the application would then have to go to the Planning Board for approval with the Historic Preservation's recommendations.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

A. District Survey: Update Key/Contributing/Non-Contributing on Survey Forms-Complete

Mr. Holtermann announced that Ms. Macellaro has gone through the entire survey and checked the box for what properties are key contributing, contributing and non-contributing. Mr. Holtermann stated that it is about 165 buildings in the Historic District.

B. Planning Board Master Plan Update: Historic Preservation Element

Mr. Jackson described that the Master Plan is constructed into 11 elements and the Historic Preservation Plan is included. He stated that the Historic Preservation Committee has an opportunity to write a Plan consisting of a number of objectives, achievements and what they would like to do in the future. He said that the Master Plan is owned by the Planning Board and is executed by Council with their discretion. He announced that Ms. Stern and Mayor Davy have joined the Planning Board and they have been a great contribution to the Master Plan Committee. He talked about the Citizens Advisory Committee and how quickly it came into effect with the Mayor's approval. He commented that each element has to be presented to the public and has to be approved by the Planning Board at a public hearing. He shared that the first draft will go to the Master Plan Committee and then to the Citizens Advisory Committee for comments and changes before going to the Planning Board. Mr. Jackson stated that Ms.

Kassler-Taub is the liaison for the Historic Preservation Commission and will report updates back to the Master Plan Committee.

Mr. Holtermann described that they are behind schedule with the first draft of the element and Mr. Jackson replied to take as much time as they need. Mr. Holtermann stated that he will keep in touch with Ms. Kassler-Taub in their updates about where they are in the first draft process. Mr. Holtermann read the Historic Preservation goals. Mr. Jackson announced that these goals and any progress you make with the element will be posted on the website by Ms. Macellaro by the end of the month and the public will have a chance to make any comments or suggestions.

10.1. Continue to identify and document historic resources, especially those facing the greatest threats to their historical integrity. Examples include, but are not limited to, the preservation of Pennington's Railroad Station and the HVRSD Administration Building.

Mr. Holtermann stated that he would consider expanding that to include expansion of the District or addition of districts in the Borough. Mr. Davis added to include individual properties.

10.2. Continue to review municipal policy for protection of historic resources and continue to implement this policy through effective regulatory measures.

Mr. Holtermann stated that this is exactly what they have been doing with the update of the ordinance and meeting the requirements of the MLUL. Ms. Kassler-Taub mentioned that she referenced some of Haddonfield's historic plans in the goals and they may tweak or add to them as they feel. Ms. Homel asked if historic resources referred to just standing buildings. Mr. Holtermann confirmed that it relates to many other resources as well.

10.3. Facilitate adaptive reuse and restoration to accommodate growth and changing needs without substantial impact to the integrity of historic resources.

Mr. Holtermann stated that this will promote in a place that is not a museum, but where we want modern, vital use of the existing historic fabric.

10.4. Balance historic preservation efforts with the public interest in smart growth, greater housing choice, sustainability, equity, and economic development.

Mr. Holtermann said that this is an important goal and can be expanded on the more it is thought about. Mr. Jackson commented that this goal was extracted from Princeton.

10.5. Prepare and promote user-friendly information for public awareness and stewardship of historic resources, policies, and design guidelines. Continue to facilitate awareness through multi-platform outreach to promote historic resources.

Mr. Holtermann stated that they made tremendous progress with the website over the last year and will continue to promote knowledge of the Borough's history to the residents.

10.6. Ensure resiliency of historic structures that are vulnerable to climate change-related natural hazards.

Mr. Holtermann suggested that we change the word “ensure” to “promote” or “encourage.” He stated that energy efficiency is an important aspect of the work they are trying to do to protect all of these older buildings and people want to improve energy efficiency.

10.7. Borough Code 119-9 defines Emergency Procedures that can be taken when an historic building requires immediate repair. Emergency repairs may be performed immediately upon approval of the Construction Official, who shall certify that a bona fide emergency of the type referenced herein exists. No definitions of emergencies exist in Chapter 119 and should be added to 119-2 Definitions, and should include climate-related emergencies. Chapter 119 does not address costs of emergency repairs if the homeowner can't cover them. There should be wording in the ordinance to about the need for the owner to insure the property against such cost.

Mr. Holtermann stated that Ms. Homel, Mr. Chandler and himself can work on adding that. He said that there are definitions of emergencies in other ordinances that he will have to look into and he doesn't know how to address a need for assurance for buildings in town. Mr. Jackson said there may be insurance that is specifically for homes that have some special historic value.

10.7. Maximize the benefits of Certified Local Government status for the Municipality from the state Historic Preservation Office OR Amend the Historic Preservation Ordinance to satisfy state requirements for Certified Local Government status.

Mr. Holtermann believed that this already complies with the ordinance. He explained how they revised the ordinance for all of the relevant issues.

10.8. Continue to provide the technical assistance necessary to preserve and improve historic properties.

Mr. Holtermann stated that they would give people advice on how to appropriately make changes to their building. He said that they should promote improved energy efficiency in the older houses.

10.9. Establish economic incentives to support the preservation of historic buildings and Neighborhoods.

Mr. Holtermann stated that he doesn't have very many ideas to do this, but can be included in the goals. He mentioned that the Presbyterian Church is at their limit of their budget with the rehabilitation of the house on the corner of South Main and East Delaware and encouraged them to apply for a Pennington Day grant which they was successful. This grant allowed them to upgrade the siding to a more appropriate material.

10.10. Maintain and strengthen support for historic preservation from individuals, not-for-profit preservation groups, neighborhood organizations and downtown interests.

Mr. Holtermann stated that he received an invitation from Amy Ruckenstein who writes for MercerMe and is part of the Hopewell Valley Historic Society, is putting together a meeting that would involve all of Hopewell Valley's Historic Society, historic commissions and other history related groups.

Mr. Holtermann concluded that this is a great start for writing the element and explained some of the goals can be broad while others can be more specific. He asked Ms. Zein if she would be interested in writing the element since she already has some experience. Ms. Zein stated that she is very busy with starting her new job. He asked Mr. Stevens if he would be interested and he responded that he doesn't feel qualified to take the lead, but is willing to contribute. Ms. Homel asked Mr. Holtermann to clarify the timeline. He stated that it probably won't get finished by May, which was on Mr. Jackson's proposed timeline, but maybe a little later. Ms. Zein commented that Emily Bent, Gretchen Overhiser and Natalie Shivers have volunteered to help with writing this element. Mr. Coats and Mr. Chandler also volunteered to contribute in writing the element. Mr. Holtermann asked Ms. Homel if we are limited to no more than three people in a room. Ms. Homel replied and said that more than three people is a quorum for the commission. Mr. Holtermann suggested that we do a table of contents and then separate each part to a different person. Mr. Jackson announced that we have money set aside for Mr. Kyle to pay him to help with the preparation of the elements. Mr. Holtermann expressed that it would be a good idea to have a zoom meeting with Ms. Zein to brainstorm the table of contents and then he will distribute them to members who are interested in contributing to writing the goals. Mr. Holtermann asked if anyone is willing to volunteer for Planning Day on Wednesday, April 10 starting at 2pm. Mr. Jackson clarified that from 2-5pm is for the Master Plan and from 5-7pm is for all of the other committees. Mr. Coats volunteered to come stand by the Historic Preservation element poster starting at 2pm.

C. Ordinance Revision Update-

Mr. Holtermann discussed that Ms. Homel made those changes and they are just going to fix the emergency part and then it can get sent out to the attorney.

D. Borough Requirement to Watch Minor Video-

Mr. Holtermann reminded everyone to watch the required video by the Borough about minors.

E. Borough Webpage: HPC Introductory Info, Further Discussion-

Mr. Holtermann asked Ms. Macellaro if the minutes and agendas will be more readily available on the website. Ms. Macellaro stated that when the website gets updated in the beginning of April, we will be able to make those changes. Mr. Holtermann asked Ms. Macellaro to email the agenda and the minutes from the previous minutes to the Commission members before each meeting. Ms. Shivers thanked everyone who made

contributions to the website.

F. At Risk Buildings:

Ms. Homel asked what the status is of the church on Main Street. She stated that there was some talk about a group wanting to get together to buy it. Mr. Holtermann said that he spoke with the zoning officer who said that someone came into Borough Hall asking what the Historic Preservation would think about buying the Bethel AME church and turning it into a residence. Mr. Holtermann spoke to that person and explained they would have to go through a process with the Historic Preservation and how any changes they made would impact the streetscape. Mr. Holtermann invited him to a meeting to talk about the plans he may have and he still hasn't heard back from him.

Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

Adjournment 9:09 PM