

East Bradford Township Historical Commission Meeting Minutes October 17, 2023

REGULAR MEETING:

The East Bradford Township Historical Commission held a meeting on October 17, 2023 in the McCardle Meeting Room, 676 Copeland School Road, West Chester. The agenda was posted to the Township website and at the Township Building on October 11, 2023. Copies were available for attendees at the meeting.

Commission Members present: Jean Renshaw, Chair
John Marshall, Vice Chair
Tom Russo
Brett McHugh
Steve Novak
Ann Armstrong

Commission Members absent: Brad Roeder

Staff members in attendance: Andrea Campisi, Director of Planning & Zoning

Others/Citizens/Residents in attendance: Megan McNish, PHMC

The meeting was called to Order at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

MEETING MINUTES:

September 22, 2023: Mr. Marshall made a motion to recommend approval of the minutes. Mrs. Renshaw seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE/PRESENTATIONS: None

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Certified Local Government (CLG) Training

Megan McNish of PHMC was present to provide training for the members. She explained the laws and regulations that give the Township the authority to regulate and protect historic resources as well as the role of the HARB and the Historical Commission.

NEW BUSINESS:

2. Partial Demolition & Reconstruction of Existing Barn – 855 Conner Road, Tax Parcel #51-3-25, Class I DOE, HR# 43.

The property owner seeks approval to remove all interior wood framing, exterior wood walls and the existing metal roof and replace it with new materials due to deterioration. The rubble stone walls, and stone foundation will remain. The stone foundation will be repointed and reinforced.

Matt Miller, with Pickering Hollow Woodworks LLC, was present on the property owner's behalf. Mr. Miller explained the history of the construction of the barn and noted that the framing in the garage portion of the barn is in good condition and will be retained. Mr. Miller explained that the interior framing of the barn is suffering from major insect damage and rot likely due to the fact that the bark remains on the timber and has held moisture resulting in powder post beetle damage. Mr. Miller noted that no footers have been found in the structure.

Mr. Miller explained that the barn was enlarged in the 1930's and there has been settling in the floor system partially due to the storage of heavy tractors. Mr. Miller said the entire foundation will be retained, the manure will be dug out and new buttress walls will be poured to structurally stabilize the foundation. Mr. Miller said stone masonry will be repointed. He noted that there are stones under the framing but no actual foundation. He also noted that the barn will be dismantled by hand, and timbers will be salvaged and incorporated into the new barn where possible. Mr. Miller said there will be all new joists, posts and a new roof system which will consist of hemlock and the exterior will also be hemlock board and batten siding. He said the roof will have tongue in groove pine decking with a standing seam metal roof to replace the existing tin standing seam roof. Mr. Miller stated that the property owner is out of town, which is why he is not present this evening.

Mr. Marshall asked if anything on the exterior of the barn would be changed. Mr. Miller said the plaster is chipping away and we will replaster the exterior. Mr. Miller also said that the owner will be repainting the foundation and the wood in the spring and is willing to work with the Commission on the colors. Mr. Marshall said the Commission does not typically get involved in colors.

Mrs. Renshaw asked if the size of the barn will remain the same. Mr. Miller said yes. He added that only the interior will be repointed not the exterior. As far as the timeline, Mr. Miller hoped to be able to commence the work during the second week of November and two weeks after that would like to pour the new cement slab floor inside the barn. Then Mr. Miller said he needs one month from that point to roof the barn in, and he would like to have it roofed prior to January 1, 2024. Mr. Miller said the addition will be re-sided and reroofed to match the main barn and the plaster walls will be patched. He said there will also be new wood barn doors, new half round copper gutters and new windows will be installed, which will match the existing.

Mrs. Renshaw reviewed Zoning Ordinance Section 115-125C.4.a-g:

- a. The effect of demolition on the historic significance and architectural integrity of the resource in question.

Since the materials to be removed from the barn will be replaced in kind, the Commission determined that there will be no impact.

- b. Whether the applicant has demonstrated that he or she has considered and/or pursued all alternatives to demolition:

The Commission noted that the applicant presented a letter from a structural engineer.

- c. Economic feasibility of adaptive reuse of the resource proposed for demolition.

The Commission determined that this is not applicable since the structure is not being demolished.

- d. Alternatives to demolition of the resource.

The Commission determined that this is not applicable since the structure is not being demolished.

- e. Whether the resource in its current condition presents a threat to public safety.

The Commission noted that given the structural report submitted, the barn does present a threat.

- f. Whether the resource has been intentionally neglected.

The Commission was not aware of any evidence of neglect.

- g. Whether the required retention of the resource would represent an unreasonable economic hardship.

The Commission determined that the proposal before them to reconstruct the barn creates a greater hardship to the property owner.

Mr. Russo made a motion to recommend approval of the proposal as presented. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS NOT ON THE AGENDA: None

MEETING ADJOURNED: The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: The next Historical Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 21, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Campisi, Director of Planning & Zoning