

**Franklin Township
Historical Commission and
Historical Architectural Review Board
Combined Hybrid Meeting**

December 5, 2023

Minutes

I. Call to Order – Paul Lagassé called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM. Also in attendance were Sally Gallagher (HC only), Sara Beth Kohut (HC only), Nan Latimer, Lou Mandich, Chuck Phillips, and two members of the public.

II. Public Comment – There was none.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A. HC-HARB Meeting, August 1, 2023 – On a motion by Mr. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Mandich, the minutes were approved unanimously.

B. HARB Meeting, September 5, 2023 – On a motion by Mr. Mandich, seconded by Ms. Latimer, the minutes were approved unanimously.

IV. Old Business

A. Updating Historic Resource Surveys and PHMC Data from Map – Mr. Lagassé said that there was nothing to report, but he was planning to update the properties spreadsheet to include a few words characterizing the structures on each property.

B. Church Hill African Church Cemetery – Mr. Lagassé reported that he had not talked to Crystal Crampton recently, but he didn't expect a cleanup to happen until February. Ms. Latimer said that she owned a variety of equipment that might be useful, including a dauber for herbicide that would help kill wild olive AKA Russian olive.

C. Other Township Cemeteries – Ms. Latimer reported that the Flint Hill Cemetery was being mowed.

D. Mason-Dixon/Arc Corner Connectivity Project – Mr. Lagassé reported that he would be acting as Township liaison for the meetings of the Advisory Committee, which consists of members from Elk, Franklin, London Britain, and New Garden. He said the committee had met in October, and would meet roughly every two months, though the next meeting is in January. At the October meeting, the participants were introduced. The project is being managed by the Brandywine Conservancy, with Sarah Sharp leading, and Heritage Strategies and Miller Design Works are assisting the Conservancy. Jeannine Spiers of the Chester Co. Planning Commission is also participating. The plan is in its early stages, and the first meeting outlined the process and reviewed the contract. The

bulk of the work will occur over 16 months, unless an extension is needed and granted. Information on current trails, the Mason-Dixon and Arc monuments, other historic resources, ag-tourism sites, and preserved lands is being gathered. Going forward there will be five more taskforce meetings and three public meetings. All meetings are expected to be virtual.

E. 896 Roadwork & a Walkable Kemblesville – Ms. Kohut reported that the negotiations for compensation for property owners was largely completed, and that PennDOT was planning to start work in the spring. Primarily for the benefit of the members of the public, there was a discussion concerning the extent of the roadwork and changes to traffic patterns that would result.

F. Raising Awareness of Kemblesville & Franklin History – Brochures, old and new, on local history as well as enlargements of several old maps were on HC table at the Franklin Fall Festival. Visitors were intrigued by the maps, and next year the HC will try to add modern road names to the old maps, which should make it easier for people to find where they live. Additional brochures could include one on historic Township taverns. Mr. Lagassé has shared copies of the brochures with 1723 Vineyards to see if they would like to host a display of them, but has not yet followed up.

Mr. Lagassé reported on America250, the celebration of the semiquincentennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which was the topic of the fall Chester Co. Historic Preservation Meeting. He noted that, currently, the main drivers for creating celebration events were the state governments. In Chester County, the county government will act mainly to publicize events on a local level, with an emphasis on sites that are open most of the time, such as a staffed museum or a self-guided site or trail. Celebrations need not focus on July 4.

Possible ways of celebrating the event that were discussed include doing something on the 4th, doing something during the Fall Festival, and holding events or a talk series in conjunction with neighboring townships (Thomas McKean, the Mason-Dixon Line and/or Delaware Arc, and local religious diversity were topics mentioned).

G. HC Website – There was nothing to report.

H. Township History – Mr. Lagassé again mentioned that he was working with retired UD professor Tim Barnekov on his history of the lands that now form the White Clay Creek Preserve and White Clay Creek State Park, specifically on the Mason-Dixon Line, but otherwise there was nothing to report at present.

I. Multi-Municipal Identification of Historic Resources in the Big Elk Creek State Park – The recent plan was discussed, and some concern expressed about the proposed campgrounds relatively close proximity to the bulk of the Spring Lawn historic ruins. Mr. Lagassé said that he had started going out again last Saturday, and had photographed mainly around the paper mill and dam site, including two house foundations across the Spring Lawn trail from the mill site. He planned to continue to his

research in the park beginning on Dec. 10, when hunting is suspended for two weeks. Ms. Latimer said that she would join him when she could.

J. Talks and Training – New London Talks – Mr. Lagassé reported on the cancellation of the Cape May History talk, and said he was thinking that it be rescheduled for May, as it would be an appropriate topic for the pre-summer time period. He said he would like to get Emily and Edith Kilby to talk in March about their retracing of the Mason-Dixon Line by visiting the mile markers in Cecil County.

Mr. Lagassé reminded members that the Chester County History Center membership card can be downloaded to a cell phone, but also said that members could also just check in with the desk on arrival.

K. Revisions to the Historic District Ordinance – Mr. Lagassé is going to try to get this restarted and completed beginning in February. The Zoning Officer needs to answer some questions posed by the Solicitor.

V. New Business – There was none.

VI. Public Comment – There was none.

VII. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 PM.