



Hightstown Historic Preservation Commission

Thursday, February 18, 2010
7:30 pm @ Borough Hall



MINUTES

Call to order: Chairman Pratt called the meeting to order at 7:35pm.

Open Public Meeting Act Statement: Chairman Pratt read the Open Public Meeting Act Statement.

New Member: Mayor Patten swore in Commissioner Robin Smith prior to the meeting. Commissioner Cox introduced Robin Smith to the Commission.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Brown:	Present
Commissioner Buriak:	Present
Commissioner Cox:	Present
Commissioner Ely:	<i>Absent</i>
Commissioner Keith:	Present
Commissioner Mariboe:	<i>Absent</i>
Commissioner Patten:	<i>Absent</i>
Commissioner Pratt:	Present
Commissioner Smith:	Present
Council Liaison Musing:	Present

Public Comment: None.

Minutes: The minutes from the previous meeting were distributed by email prior to the meeting, with a few copies distributed at the meeting. The minutes were approved by Commissioners Cox, and Pratt. The remainder of the Commissioners had not been present at the last meeting and abstained.

OLD BUSINESS

Monthly Newspaper Article: It was discussed that Dan Buriak would be the liaison to the Windsor Heights Herald. That the "article" would be better received as a letter to the editor and that at each meeting a topic would be discussed to include in the newspaper. It was discussed that the first letter would be a general introduction to the HHPC and what our role is.

All commissioners to email topic ideas to Chairman Pratt before next meeting and we will discuss at the meeting. Other topics could be how to register your house, but we should get the PhD candidate thesis first. Another could explain why there are not more districts possible.

Downtown Hightstown Website: Commissioner Pratt corresponded with Ryan Rosenberg about featuring the HHPC on the DTHT website possibly monthly with topics about what we do, a link to white papers on the Borough website, and vignettes of topics from the pattern book and elsewhere. We could also include notice of events. DTHT does not want to replace the Borough website as a holding location for files, but would be an information portal.

Additional Properties for the National Register: There was some discussion about the Fire House and Anne Willis' house. Properties would be discussed as part of the Historic Element revision survey.

Historic Element Revision: Commissioner Pratt reported that a subcommittee of the Planning Board will be meeting to update the Master Plan. Our own subcommittee made up of Commissioners Cox, Ely, and Pratt; and Nancy Walker-Laudenberger will drive around town and document important properties to be added to the Historic Element. Commissioner Pratt as a Planning Board member will coordinate with the Planning Board subcommittee.

John Bull Sleepers: No report.

Demolition Ordinance: Commissioner Pratt reported the Demolition Ordinance was reviewed and revised by the Zoning subcommittee and re-reviewed by the Planning Board. Councilwoman McGinty had additional comments and the ordinance has been sent back to the zoning subcommittee for additional review.

Lee Brown's daughter writes family histories and publishes them. For a family to have pictures of a house which no longer exists, that their ancestors had lived in would be a tremendous asset. This reinforces the need to keep the paragraph concerning HHPC access for photographs in the ordinance.

Pattern Book: Commissioner Pratt reported that the book is 90% done. He stated that he met with the Architect preparing the 'History of Pattern Books' element and received a draft copy of same on February 16. He has not yet been able to get the picture list and flash drive to Doug Mariboe for additional pictures to take, but the weather hasn't been cooperating anyway. He stated that Bob Craig put him in touch with Angela Tingey to review the book in more depth. Ms. Tingey is working on that now and is prepared to have edits by the end of March. Ms. Tingey requesting additional sections on old windows and the Rehabilitation Building Code. Commissioner Pratt has developed these and will continue to seek input from various people / entities.

Commissioner Smith mentioned that it would be advantageous to have a list of salvaged materials in the Pattern Book, either that people have locally or that businesses in the area specialize in. Commissioner Musing had sent two such businesses to Commissioner Pratt for inclusion.

Stockton Street Streetscape Improvements: Commissioner Buriak reported that the borough engineer was approved for an additional \$11,000 for services required by the

state in the application process for the Stockton Street project. The project requires considerable legwork and follow-through. Commissioner Buriak is the driving force in the Borough behind this fantastic project and will continue to follow its progress. It was discussed that Commissioner Buriak and Council Liaison Musing would present to council, or with Commissioner Buriak's assistance, Councilman Musing would present to council in a positive manner the monetary background to this grant and others around town.

One of the next steps is a public meeting. Council should first be educated about the project so that they are fully onboard before the public starts asking questions.

The project is on schedule to start around April and end around September. Commissioner Buriak said that the first phase would be from downtown to Academy Street. He recommended that there not be houses on the house tour from Stockton Street just in case the project runs long, it would interfere with the house tour.

Commissioner Smith asked that before any demolition of gardens occurs around the civil war monument, that the Rocky Brook Garden Club be notified so that they can make arrangements to move bulbs and plantings. Commissioner Buriak to present proposed plan to the club.

Stockton Street Advisory Committee. It was discussed that this is not necessary at this time. However, there is a need to roll-out the ordinance and make a presentation to the homeowners within the district. Lee Brown and George Keith will work on a key points memo as an discussion outline.

Plaques: It was discussed that possibly a grant or some of the HHPC budget could cover purchasing plaques for each of the houses in the district, (approximately 56). Possibly have 5 or 10 people buy plaques as examples and then other homeowners would be interested enough to buy. *Post Meeting: The cost for the initial 10" x 7" oval bronze plaque designed with lettering, logo, etc. to our specifications with a "blank" area for the date of the house to be routed on an individual basis is \$204 including shipping. Each additional plaque if we only buy 9 more would be \$177, (or \$1,593) including shipping. If we bought all 55 additional at once it would be \$113.50 each (or \$6,242.50). – We should look for an alternate manufacturer.*

Historic District Signage. To be determined.

Cedar Hill Cemetery: No report

Ghost Tour Discussion: No report – *Information carried from last months minutes so as not to be lost.*

- **Anthony November's** house has been identified as one with a ghost.
- **House next to Jim and Barbara Walker**, aka the Ashton House, has also been identified as a house with a ghost.
- The Octagon House was discussed as one that had history regarding a ghost.

- It was suggested that someone contact Matt Chiappardi from the Windsor Hights Herald since he had done a story on ghosts in town around Halloween last year.

NEW BUSINESS

NJ Scenic Byways Application: Dan Buriak stated that after his time is down on the streetscape project, he will shift to the Scenic Byways. Typically though this is a process done only on state roads. Our district is on a County Road. There is just one county road precedent, but that is due to it being a very long road. Dan asked Richard Grubb Associates in Cranbury to come up with a proposal, knowing that we have no money, and that they should put their creative minds together. Once this proposal is done, we will seek a grant.

HPC Application for the Building Department. This was not discussed. *Post Meeting: Rick will work on something for the Building Department based on the ordinance as a sort of checklist for the building department to aid homeowners in determining what they need to do in applying to be heard by the HHPC if they are planning any work to their house / structure in the Stockton Street Historic District, for the HHPC Commissioners to review.*

Oral History Project. It was decided that this project would be carried out by the Historical Society.

Symposiums at Pattern Book Roll-out. It was discussed that when the Pattern Book is completed, as part of the roll-out, symposiums would be held at various venues to discuss information in the Pattern Book such as house styles, historic paint, wavy glass, Sears houses, etc. These symposiums could also be distilled for the letters to the editor and topics of interest for the Downtown Hightstown website.

Budget. Our present temporary budget is \$100. Councilman Musing asked what we needed it to be. We need to base the budget on real needs such as the Pattern Book publication, possibly with a website flip page, and fabrication of some of the plaques. Rick to look into costs for same and send info to Dimitri.

National Publication. Commissioner Buriak was approached by a national publication wanting to cover the transportation enhancement project. This is the only project on the east coast.

WZBN TV 25. Commissioner Pratt was approached by a news anchor from WZBN TV in Trenton. They would like to come to one of our meetings as part of their "Moment in Time – (Mercer County History)" series. No date has been set.

Adjournment:

The motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Cox and seconded by Commissioner Buriak. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.