

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
August 14, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Joe McCormick, Joshua Anderson, Jonathan Martin

TOWNSHIP STAFF: Caroline O'Connor, Assistant Planner

Phil Yocum, Historic Consultant, Commonwealth Heritage Group

I. Call to Order – Joe McCormick called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Review of Meeting Minutes

In response to a question from Mr. Martin, Ms. O'Connor confirmed that the Historical Commission reviews sign permits within 100 feet of a historic resource.

MOTION: To approve the minutes for July 10, 2023.

ACTION: Passed 3-0 (Anderson/Martin)

III. Public Comment

None.

IV. PLANS

1. SS Philip and James

Address: 694 E. Lincoln Hwy.

Contributing HR: 032 St. Mary's Chapel

Request: Review information regarding an emergency permit that was issued to make necessary roof repairs to the Chapel

George "Bud" Turner was in attendance on behalf of the Applicant. He explained that recent storms caused damage to St. Mary's Chapel that necessitated an emergency permit to re-roof the Chapel. The previous roof was asphalt shingle and was 34 years old; the new roof is the same material. The Chapel has been closed for the last month and has air dryers running 24/7.

Members had no questions and noted that the Applicant has the highest and best interests of the iconic landmark in mind. Mr. Yocum asked that if any of the original wood shake roof is discovered in the reroofing process, the remnants be kept and documented.

Ms. O'Connor explained that because the emergency permit was already issued, no action was required by the Commission.

- 2. Eric Smith & Laura Mikowychok**
Address: 1416 Woodbank Way
Designated HR: 044 Ryerss Infirmary Barn
Request: To approve a building permit application for installation of a rooftop solar array on the designated historic resource.

Mr. Smith and Ms. Mikowychok, owners of the Ryerss Infirmary Barn, presented their proposal to install 33 solar panels on the south facing roof of the barn. The array will blend in with the existing standing seam metal roof. At this time, the Applicants will not be selling energy back to the grid; the panels will only supply power to this property.

Mr. Yocum found no adverse impact on the Barn or the adjacent historic Ryerss House. Mr. McCormick noted that the Applicants presented the best application submission with complete information, drawings, and pictures.

MOTION: To approve the building permit application for installation of a rooftop solar array on Designated Historic Resource 044, the Ryerss Infirmary Barn.

ACTION: Passed 3-0 (Martin/Anderson)

Following the motion there was discussion about the Witch's Cap and how it may fit in nicely on the historic property. The Applicants expressed interest in the Cap and will see Staff for pictures and more information.

- 3. Uk Jung**
Address: 1460 Spackman Lane
Designated HR: 141 'Leven Acres
Request: Conversation regarding the potential demolition of historic resource 141 'Leven Acres.

Mr. Jung, owner of the property, described the 9.6-acre site with a stream bisecting the property north and south, and a culvert that becomes problematic during storms restricting exit from the property. The historic tenant house has structural degradation, a recent bee infestation, no insulation, and a basement with moisture and humidity issues. Mr. Jung presented 3 options for the site and requested feedback from the Commission. Option 1 was a single new house north of the tenant house but beyond the flood plain. Option 2 was a new house located further south within the flood plain, and Option 3 was a new house on top of the steep slope between the creek and Spackman Lane.

The historic tenant house has two later additions on the rear of the house. Mr. Jung said he preferred to remove the additions and keep the original two-story structure and construct a modern home adjacent. Mr. Yocum said it would be best to incorporate/connect the new building with the tenant house to ensure that the historic resource will be maintained. Suggestions for possible use included an art studio or guest house. Mr. Jung suggested rebuilding the tenant house following the original footprint, but Mr. Yocum advised against this, noting that once dismantled, it would be near impossible to put it back together again.

The possibility of subdividing the property was discussed, but Mr. Jung said he proposed this before and met resistance from his neighbors as they felt any home on the new lot would be too close to them.

It was suggested that the existing cladding on the tenant house be changed to something more in line with the historic nature of the house.

Outlining the next steps, Ms. O'Connor suggested the Applicant meet with the Planning staff and Codes Department staff to go over the permitting process and options for developing outside of the floodplain, slopes, subdivision, etc., and then once a permit application is complete, the project will come before the Historical Commission again for formal review.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Review/compile comments for Ordinance updates

The Commission continues to review proposed amendments to Article XVI, "Historic Preservation," of the Township Zoning Ordinance. Ms. O'Connor asked members if they had any additional comments or suggestions. She will compile them in a document for Mr. Weller to finalize the amendment.

Mr. McCormick suggested a six-month minimum delay for demolition permits. Ms. O'Connor advised that Mr. Weller is still checking on the legality of this time frame. Mr. McCormick suggested checking what other townships do (East Pikeland, for example). After further discussion, Members asked for more restrictions on demolition. Mr. Martin said the goal should be to finalize the amendment this year. Ms. O'Connor confirmed that it will be completed this year.

HC CONCERNS:

Mr. Martin asked if a statement was prepared for Community Day addressing why the Township changed the designations for historic resources. Mr. Anderson said it was not needed. He reported on his time spent at the Historical Commission table, noting that people were interested in current construction, duties of the Historical Commission, and the History of West Whiteland booklet. He added that a volunteer application for a position on the Commission was completed by an interested party with a specialty in archeology.

TOWNSHIP ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ms. O'Connor said SS Philip and James (Thrift Store) will be coming back to the Historical Commission next month (September 11) for review of a new roofing project.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Vote: Passed, 3-0 (Anderson/Martin)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Recording Secretary,

Caroline O'Connor
Assistant Planner

