



KENNETT TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday January 10, 2023– 7:00 pm

Call to Order:

A session of the Kennett Township Planning Commission was held on the above date at the Kennett Area Senior Center. Planning Commission members present (5) included James Guthrie (chair), James Przywitowski, Rudy Karkosak, Pat Muller, and Anne Verplanck. Absent members (3) included John Saraceno, Lynell Laws, and Shawn Knudsen (alternate). Also in attendance were Diane Hicks (Director of Planning and Zoning) and Amy Ferris (Admin. Asst to Planning & Zoning).

Meeting Minutes:

A motion was requested for approval of the December 13 minutes. A motion was made by Rudy Karkosak and seconded by Jim Przywitowski. Motion carried 5-0.

Announcements:

An announcement was made that there will be no work session on Feb 7.

Other Business:

Jim Guthrie was nominated for Chair by Jim Przywitowski, Pat Muller seconded. Motion carried 5-0. Jim Przywitowski was nominated for Vice Chair by Rudy Karkosak, Anne Verplanck seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

SUBDIVISIONS/LAND DEVELOPMENT

Parkside – 410-414 N. Walnut St.

The committee summarized review letters and determined that more information is needed and that a presentation will be required for further consideration. All action deferred.

Spar Hill Farm – 438 Burnt Mill Rd- Demolition of Structures

Eden Ratliff, Township Manager represented the Township in its proposal to move forward with demolition/preservation of itemized structures. He noted that of the proposed structures slated for demolition only (1) is listed in our Historic Resource Inventory which would be the Tenant House or Carriage house on the Township list which would typically make this the only structure under consideration per ordinance by the PC. He stated that the Board of Supervisors have spent a considerable amount of time assessing all of the structures with much input from the Historical Commission who are in favor of all of the proposed demolitions except for the metal grain bin.

Diane McGovern, speaking on behalf of the Historical Commission, requested to keep the metal grain bin due to its significance to the dairy farming operation and intricate metal work, and sought delay of demolition until further avenues of preservation could be pursued.

Joe Duffy, 2 Black Rock Rd, also commented that the metal silo/grain bin should be salvaged as it would require minimal repairs and is of local significance.

Diane Hicks noted that over the years the Supervisors have reached out to Committees and residents to inquire what to do with the Property, the result of which was to maintain it for passive recreation. Reports were generated by experts on the Farm and its structures which stated that the structures and farm itself had lost its integrity due to extensive work done on it throughout the years and the number of years it was vacant. It was her opinion that the Grain Bin in particular was not historic as it did not meet the standards for a Class 1 or 2 structure per definition.

A subcommittee consisting of Anne Verplanck, Pat Muller and Jim Guthrie did a site walk on January 9, 2023, to assess the proposed demolition. Anne Verplanck spoke for the sub-committee citing the history of the property as previously owned by the Schutt family as an example of an American country estate, however within a 5 mile radius of the property there were better examples of this type of use. Stating that the property as a whole had been serious neglected to the point where the structures, including the grain bin, posed a safety hazard to the residents. Noting that tax payer monies were spent to purchase the property and likewise will be spent to maintain them the subcommittee determined that the proposed structures for demo should proceed.

Pat Muller mentioned that it was the consensus of the subcommittee that the Township consider establishing a procedure or vision when it came to open space purchases which might address other township acquisitions as well. The procedures could consider such items as property use, possible funding after stabilization or continued future revenue streams which would defer some of the costs for construction/demolition.

Following discussion, a motion was made to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to proceed as planned with eh demolition /preservation as identified and presented by the Township including the metal grain bin.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Pat Muller and seconded by Rudy Karkosak. Motion carried (5-0). The meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Ferris
Planning Secretary

Spar Hill Farm: Kennett Township Historical Commission Ad Hoc Committee

2-8-22

Please note, the following document was prepared as requested by township staff by Karen Marshall on 2-8 for the Supervisors administrative meeting to be held on 2-9. This was not done in consultation with the Historical Commission. This is my attempt to explain my role in this process. If there are any concerns or questions please contact me at 610-357-0187.

Background:

The Kennett Historical Commission is very concerned about focusing efforts and attention on identifying a sustainable plan to preserve and interpret elements of the historic Spar Hill Farm. We initially proposed forming a Task Force to study the entire farm and requested a Planner to assist the group at the December budget hearings. After consideration, we decided that it was really only the historic resources that the commission had a responsibility towards so we developed a Spar Hill Ad Hoc Committee. The mission of the committee is to:

Provide recommendations to the Kennett Township Board of Supervisors on historic preservation and heritage education for Spar Hill and Lord Howe properties. This would include:

1. preservation of historical buildings and sites
2. usage of retained structures
3. historical signage and programming

Our Short Term Initiatives for the first half of 2022 are:

- Review completed environmental remediation proposal for Spar Hill structures
- Interview Porter Schutt/others for better understanding of the property's history
- Hire a historic architecture consultant to evaluate the buildings, recommend treatments, and provide an estimated budget.

Report:

The Breckstone Architecture Spar Hill Farm Condition and Recommendation Report of June, 2019 provides a comprehensive overview of the condition of each structure within the farm complex and a thoughtful set of recommendations on which structures might be preserved.

On January 27th, Karen Marshall and Matthew Roberson toured the farm complex to review the Condition and Recommendation report for the Ad Hoc Committee to determine the cost of hiring a historic architecture consultant to evaluate the buildings, recommend treatments, and provide an estimated budget. We had initially proposed \$30,000 on the basis of a new survey of the property being required.

Matthew is a long-time preservation carpenter in Chester County and President of R&B Restoration Carpentry, Inc. He has overseen numerous preservation projects throughout the county and has provided advisory support to historical commissions. He is currently retained by Exelon to provide the preservation maintenance of historic Fricks Lock Village which consists of

over 15 structures in East Coventry Township. I asked if he would consider helping us develop a proposal for our BOS which he agreed to do.

After touring the property he noted that he felt that the report was comprehensive and that he would be able to work with the survey to provide additional detail on specific treatments for structures the commission wished to consider for preservation and interpretation but not for habitation at this time.

He provided a rough figure of \$400 per building. His email to me is attached. He notes he will have to review the report in detail to provide a definitive proposal to prepare a scope of work with prices for all trades that would be involved. The objective for these scopes of work would be for long-term retention of historic features and longevity of condition, that is, work that buys the township up to a decade or more of preservation.

The commission felt sure that during this 10 year-time period, a plan for the use of the property would be developed and implemented with funding for projects secured. We respectfully point out that millions of dollars are spent on trails and open space but currently no funds are dedicated to preserving Kennett Townships significant heritage. The farm preserves the rural flavor of the township which residents have identified as a priority to quality of life. Our comprehensive plan notes that our historic resources are important to our community life.

Request:

We would like approval to seriously pursue a proposal from Mr. Roberson for \$4,000 - \$7,000 to plan for the 8 identified structures (see map) that are circled and the 2 foundations that shown as rectangles to be presented at the March 2, BOS meeting. We would also like to know if there is any good will toward incorporating historic preservation into the trails and recreation use of Spar Hill Farm. Without endorsement of the concept from the BOS, it seems unreasonable to ask a professional to devote further time to this project and disheartening for our enthusiastic Ad Hoc Advisory Committee to move forward.