

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
January 11, 2021**

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Kabli, Joe McCormick, John Prendergast, Jonathan Martin, Julie Bauer, Roberta Eckman

TOWNSHIP STAFF: Justin Smiley, Township Planner
Ali Cleveland, Community Development Coordinator
Phil Yocum, Historic Consultant, Commonwealth Heritage Group
Joshua Anderson, Supervisor

I. Call to Order – the meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the meeting was held virtually, via Zoom.

II. Reorganization

Motion: To elect Julie Bauer as Chairman of the Historical Commission for 2021. (Kabli/Eckman)

Vote: Passed 6-0

Motion: To elect Joe McCormick as Vice-Chairman of the Historical Commission for 2021. (Eckman/Martin)

Vote: Passed 6-0

III. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

(Ms. Eckman left the meeting at 7:06 p.m. due to a conflict with another scheduled meeting.)

IV. New Business

- 1. Applicant: Arrandale Associates
Address: 600 W. Lincoln Hwy.
Historic Sites: Arrandale Barn
Request: Amendment of Arrandale Condo Agreement**

Mr. Smiley explained that the original Declaration of Condominium did not specifically spell out maintenance and preservation for the Arrandale Barn. The Applicant has worked with the Township and Mr. Yocum to draft an Amendment which has been reviewed by the Township Solicitor, Mr. Yocum, and Staff.

Jeffrey Cronin, attorney for the Applicant, introduced Philip Earley, real estate broker; Chris Knauer of Arrandale Associates; and David Kozak of Paradigm Financial Group, prospective buyer. Proposed renderings prepared by John King of King Construction were shown of the Barn. Mr. Kozak said he is a small business owner and wishes to expand his business by converting the Barn into useable space preserving as much as possible. Proposed elevations were shown along with examples of other barn renovations done by Mr. King.

Mr. Yocum reviewed the various aspects of the Barn highlighting what features could be preserved and what would need to be removed. The stone wall on the west side will come down and be rebuilt. Details of the proposed renovation will be reviewed at a later date by the Historical Commission. Tonight's business is to focus on the draft amendment to allow renovation. Because of deterioration much of the inside structure will be removed, but the basement walls will remain. The Applicant plans to use the barnyard for parking.

Mr. Yocum explained that the proposed amendment addresses maintenance issues and adds an "Exhibit A" listing the specific elements to be retained. The Commission recommended adding the language "as described in Exhibit A" to the end of paragraph 2 after "remaining barn shell" such that should a fire or other catastrophic event occur necessitating a rebuild, the Barn will be rebuilt adhering to Exhibit A.

Mr. Martin suggested that language be added regarding the rebuild of the barnyard wall that any rebuild will be in keeping with the historic features referenced in Exhibit A, but also allow the Applicant the flexibility that will be needed for two-way traffic.

Mr. Yocum explained his phrase "ruins in perpetuity" to ensure that any owner would not be rewarded for demolition by neglect. Should such a scenario occur, the ruins would be practically secured and not replaced with a modern building.

Mr. McCormick expressed his appreciation to the Applicant for his efforts to preserve the Barn.

Motion: to approve the Amendment to Declaration of Condominium of Arrandale at Oaklands subject to the following conditions:

- **Addition of the following language to the end of paragraph #2 following "remaining existing barn shell": "as referenced in Exhibit A."**
- **Revise Exhibit A to include "Preservation of the courtyard stone wall in accordance with Township regulations" (Fire Marshal, Codes).**

Vote: Passed 5-0 (McCormick/Martin)

Mr. Smiley said the next step for the project will be to go before the Board of Supervisors for approval. He anticipated this would be February 10, but will confirm.

2. Applicant: Ashbridge Tenant House

Address: 101 Woodcutter St.

Historic Sites: 102c (Class IE)

Request: Installation of a new signage, awnings, and windows for new Rita's at former Maggie Moos

Steven Wolfson, developer of Main Street at Exton, introduced Jennifer Houghton, Director of Leasing; Anne Muraglia, Senior Leasing Agent; and Debbie Price of Rita's. Mr. Wolfson provided an overview of the project proposed with the changeover from the former Maggie Moo's to Rita's. New signage, fabric awnings, and window modifications were proposed.

Of the three existing triple hung windows, the center window will remain, and the two outside windows will be replaced with replicas that will swing inward for customer walk-ups. Mr. Wolfson said he will keep safe the two windows to be removed should they be reinstalled in the future. The wood counter will be covered with Corian. Mr. Yocum said Corian is practical and reversable. Mr. Yocum suggested adding two new light fixtures to the existing fixture over the center window to match the remaining lighting (in groups of 3) resulting in one fixture over each window.

Mr. Martin expressed concern with the mounting of signage to the stone façade. Mr. Wolfson said the signage will be installed with as few holes as possible. He asked Ms. Price if she would be agreeable to mounting the signage letters on a board and mounting the board rather than each individual letter. Ms. Price agreed with that condition.

Motion: To approve the installation of new signage, awnings and window modifications as described at tonight's meeting. (McCormick/Bauer)

Vote: Passed 5-0

V. Old Business

1. Review of Historic Preservation Awards descriptions and letters to the three awardees

Mr. Smiley summarized the 2020 Preservation Awards and letters to the recipients which he anticipated would be mailed before the end of January. Mr. Anderson suggested offering plaques only rather than giving recipients a choice between plaque or framed certificate. Mr. Martin suggested providing a "respond by date" in the letters.

VI. Approval of Minutes for December 14, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes of December 14, 2020 (Bauer/Martin)

Vote: Passed, 5-0

VII. Historical Commission Concerns

There was discussion on filling the current Commission vacancies with people who will help meet the requirements for a Certified Local Government. Mr. Smiley said he did not believe Township residency was required for service but will check. Members agreed that they may have to look outside the Township to find people that meet CLG requirements and are willing to serve with no compensation.

VIII. TOWNSHIP UPDATE:

Mr. Yocum reported that Ms. Strawley is progressing with the historic resource survey and has completed 65 properties. She hopes to finish the existing inventory by February and begin surveying properties constructed between 1930-1978 in March. She expects to request a 6-month extension in February.

Mr. Anderson said he and Mr. McCormick have begun reviewing property records for restrictive covenants relating to racial segregation.

Mr. Smiley gave an update on the Exton Square Mall, noting that more apartment buildings are expected.

Mr. Smiley will notify Karen Marshall of the Commission member changes to Chair and Vice-Chair.

Mr. Kabli encouraged the Commission to keep the Thomas Mill and Miller House in mind when the pandemic is over, and work can be safely resumed.

The Commission thanked Mr. Kabli for his two years of service as Chairman of the Commission.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 8:38 p.m. (McCormick/Kabli)

Vote: Passed, 5-0

Recording Secretary,


Justin Smiley, AICP
Township Planner