March 8, 2012 7:30 p.m.
Carriage House

The regular meeting of the Cheltenham Township Historical Commission was held tonight. Members present were: David Harrower, Lois Hirsch, James McCann, Heidi Morein, Dorothy Spruill, Mary Washington, Joyce Werkman and Tom Wieckowski. Staff present was: Bryan T. Havir, Assistant Township Manager. (See attached attendance list).

**1. *Call to Order*** – Mr. Wieckowski, Vice Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:35 P.M. and made a few announcements.

***2. Acceptance of Minutes*** – Mr. Harrower, upon his arrival, assumed chairing the meeting at this point. He asked for a motion to approve the February 9, 2012 meeting minutes. Mrs. Washington made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted; seconded by Mr. McCann and unanimously approved.

**3. *Committee Reports***

A. Education Committee – Ms. Cohen was not present to offer her written report. Mr. Wieckowski read the Education report (see attached). Mr. Wieckowski announced that the docent schedule was being circulated. Mr. Harrower agreed to volunteer at the Wall House on March 11, 2012, in place of Mr. Banks, who, it was noted, is in the hospital.

B. Preservation Committee Report – Mr. Harrower stated that since he is now Chair of the Commission, he will be relinquishing his role as Chairman of the Preservation Committee. He invited anyone of the members interested in chairing the Preservation Committee to please contact him. He said he reached out to Ms. Davies to see if she had an interest in chairing the Committee.

C. Museum Committee Report – Mrs. Spruill stated that copies of the acquisition and deassession polices were available on the table. Both policies have been reviewed and revised

by the Executive Committee. Mr. Havir asked that Acquisition and Deassession Policies be placed on the Agenda for the April meeting for further discussion. Mr. Harrower agreed.

Mrs. Spruill will be conducting a training session for members on "How To Give Tours", on Tuesday, March 13, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.

Mrs. Spruill announced that a reception for the Quilt Exhibit has been scheduled for May 1, 2012. She would like to provide refreshments. Mr. McCann made a motion to approve $75.00 for refreshments; seconded by Ms. Hirsch and unanimously approved.

Mrs. Spruill noted that she located the Cheltenham Twinning Proclamation on the shelf in the Archives. The Proclamation is 46 years old. It was suggested that the proclamation should be done with archival glass and that this should be discussed at a future meeting.

***4. Chairman's Report –***

Mr. Harrower referred to an e-mail he sent to the members regarding upcoming history-related events in the region.

Mr. Harrower thanked all those who worked at the Wall House to assemble shelving and store boxes at the work party on Saturday, March 3, specifically Ms. Morein and her family members Aaron, Julian and Jonathan, Mr. Peter Wieck and Mrs. Spruill.

Mr. Harrower noted that he made a chart of expenses approved this year. Mr. Havir added that there was additional detail to review and suggested that Mr. Harrower schedule a meeting with the Director of Fiscal Affairs to ascertain the true cost of program operations for the Historical Commission.

Mr. Harrower raised the subject of potential fund raising events. He referred back to a suggestion of holding an art/photo show with the focus on Township historical sites to be hosted by the Historical Commission. Other suggestions were made such as hosting historic house

tours, garden tours, and holding a themed Dinner Dance or pancake breakfast. Mrs. Spruill suggested selling the old 4-burner stove from the Wall House on e-bay for a profit. Mr. Havir will ask the Township Director of Fiscal Affairs about the possibility of setting up an E-Bay account for the Historical Commission.

Mr. Harrower will follow up on student docents. He recently had an opportunity to speak to several of the docents, who indicated that they have regular contact with Mr. Hoff at the High School, who apparently signs off on their docent hours at the Wall House. Mr. Harrower will work with Mrs. Spruill to understand how the program works, and to have the School agree on this, to make sure the student docent program is effective for both the students and the Historical Commission. Mr. Harrower referred to the Docent Manual that was in the process of being typed by Ms. Cohen; Mrs. Spruill stated that it needs to be reviewed, corrected and edited. Mr. Harrower stated that his goal would be to have the docent manual completed, and to have this single docent manual be used by both student and adult docents.

***5. Staff Report –***

A. Mr. Havir provided an update on the water damage to the third floor at the Richard Wall Museum. Early proposals from contractors for masonry work and roof flashing and internal plaster and painting repairs suggest approximately $30,000 will be needed. These items were not earmarked in the capital budget for 2012. Upon discussion with the Township Manager, the funds earmarked for the upgrades to the archival storage room will need to be reprogrammed for this priority repair project. Mr. Havir noted that the historic preservation consultant, Preservation Design Partnership, was awarded a contract for professional consultant services and will commence documentation during the week of March 19th to prepare the plan and specifications for soliciting bids for the repairs.

B. Shovel Shop Lease – Mr. Havir noted that the current lease term expires on June 30, 2012. A letter was sent to the tenant in accordance with the terms of the agreement about renewal. Mr. Havir indicated that the Township has not received a response as of this date.

C. Embossed Certificate Folders. Mr. Havir noted that in the past the Historical Commission has used the folders for student service awards, etc. The folders need to be reordered and the cost for the folders is $1.18 each. Mrs. Spruill made a motion to order 50 folders at $1.18 each; seconded by Mrs. Morin and unanimously approved.

D. Archival Room Consultant – Mr. Harrower asked if the Historical Commission could pursue the archival room consultant in the current budget year for recommendations for repairs at a future time. Mr. Havir suggested we wait until the roof repairs are completed in order to determine what funds remain in the Wall House Capital Budget. The repair work to the Archival Storage room may need to be reprogrammed to 2013.

***6. Old Business***

*A. Status of Museum Cataloguing Project*: Mr. Harrower noted that the consultant has seven hours to use for the Past Perfect Training. Follow through is needed to wrap up the project. Mr. Havir stated that all hours need to be completed and billed by the end of March. Mr. Harrower will contact Ms. Karuza. He did expect that Ms. Karuza will be at the Museum on March 9, 2012 to complete a portion of her work and he will ask her to submit her bill at that time.

*B. Update on Kerlin Farm* – Mr. Harrower noted the development proposal was discussed at a recent Planning Commission Meeting and at a recent Building and Zoning Committee meeting for the construction of 50 townhouses on entire site. The developer would need a zoning change from R-4 to R-7 to permit what is being proposed. The Commission expressed concern about the density proposed, suggesting less dense development and Open Space, and recommending

that adaptive reuse of the historic building be made a condition of any development proposal. Mrs. Morein noted that the community group CC4A (Concerned Citizens for Ashbourne) also has concerns.

Mr. Harrower encouraged members to participate in various meetings or write a memo and get on record.

*C. Report on Historical Research of:*

Ashbourne Country Club, Cheltenham –

Mrs. Washington reported on her continued research. She found aerial views from Hagley Museum that show the roof lines of the buildings that existed. She also found a Cheltenham Township Annual Report from 1952-53 where a photograph of three country clubs; Melrose, Cedarbrook and Ashbourne is shown. Mr. Harrower and Mrs. Washington matched up aerial and side views. From a newspaper article, the mansion was referred to as the castle. Lifford Hall was an impressive hall. An 1848 atlas map shows the property as the Buckman property, one of the original owners, which reinforces ownership. The 1937 aerial view also shows the bank barn with full roof and cupola.

Mr. Harrower stated that the owner, Matrix-Ashbourne Associates, gave permission to Mr. Havir and Mr. Harrower to go through the farmhouse. Mr. Harrower took photographs. Few historic details remain except one Victorian marble fireplace mantle. The rest of the building is updated with drywall. Basement has some arches which are in great shape and not structurally impaired.

There were no hand hewn support beams, suggesting a 19th Century date for the building. The building has been vandalized, with copper piping and wiring removed.

Since that time, all five demolition permits have been released by the Township. Mr. Harrower will again contact Matrix to request that the farmhouse be saved and considered for adaptive reuse. Mrs. Morein stated that CC4A had met at Rowland Community Center to discuss Matrix's three alternative development scenarios.

1811 Willow Avenue, La Mott – Mr. Havir stated that the structure has been deemed unsafe and therefore posted as condemned by the Township's Building and Zoning Department. Mr. Harrower stated that the structure should be documented for the archives.

***7. New Business***

A. The discussion on the NEH Preservation Assistance Grant ($5,000) regarding additional assessment conservation documentation possibly for a catalog project will be evaluated by the Executive Committee and scheduled for discussion at the next meeting.

***8. Other Business***

Mrs. Washington visited the former Sousan Pharmacy which was closed in November and received donations of some articles for the archives: A plate dated 1890, Shoemaker School, 12 classrooms 285 pupils; receipt forms; prescription labels; imprinted plastic bags; store photograph and medicine bottle. The Pharmacy had occupied three locations during its existence: 8014, 8029 and 8023 Old York Road.

Mr. McCann noted that Cecilia Drach had passed away and was buried in Holy Sepulcher Cemetery because the Cheltenham United Methodist Church cemetery was at capacity. The former Methodist church at that site had been closed and then merged to Fox Chase and then Grace Gospel. Mr. McCann noted that on the day of his visit to the area, crocus were in full bloom and covered the cemetery which he captured on his camera.

Mrs. Washington mentioned that the cemetery had been included on the Old York Road Historical Society's (OYRHS) Cemetery Crawl several years ago. Mr. Havir asked for a copy of the OYRHS program for the Historical Commission's files.

Mr. Spruill noted that the answering machine is not functioning. Mrs. Spruill stated that she had an answering machine from home that could be installed temporarily. Mr. Harrower agreed to install it on Sunday.

Mr. McCann expressed concerns about 409 Ashbourne Road, referred to as Workers Double House for T. Rowland and Sons employees. It is currently leased to Boy Scout Troop #321. Mr. McCann inquired about water infiltration. Mr. McCann will touch base with Mr. Dave Jennis, Troop #321 Scout Master. Discussion continued about the historical nature of the structure. Mr. Havir noted it was determined not eligible for National Register by Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission in 2004. The land goes back to William Penn. Roof had been replaced last in 1990 through a DCA grant that State Representative Nahill obtained for the Boy Scouts. According to terms of the lease the Scouts need to make repairs. The roof needs replacement and the Scouts should be advised.

Jack and Mary Washington visited Myers Elementary School today in colonial costume. They have been invited back next year and they continue to promote the Richard Wall House Museum.

Mrs. Spruill announced that McKinley School students will tour the Wall House Museum.

Mr. McCann asked what happened to Mrs. Washington's "Moment in History" presentations, which used to be made at the end of Historical Commission meetings. Various members shared historical anecdotes:

- Mr. Wieckowski noted the 1901 volume of the Times Chronicle March 6 complaining about Greenwood and Glenside Avenue as covered with dust and thick with mud.
- From the Inquirer - Anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. Widener Memorial. George D. Widener was the first president of the Board of Commissioners and was president at the time of his death in 1912. A Smithsonian article interview of last to die. Mrs. Eleanor Widener was wearing her $75,000 pearl necklace. P. A. B. Widener had sent a railroad car to meet her and her maid. Mrs. Widener said she did not have a chance to say goodbye to George and her son Harry who died April 9, 1912. Mr. Harrower suggested the Commission discuss the centennial of the sinking of the Titanic at the next Historical Commission meeting.

**9.** ***Adjournment*** - There being no further business, upon motion of Mrs. Washington, seconded by Mr. Wieckowski and approved by the Historical Commission, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

David G. Kraynik
Township Manager

Submitted by: Kathryn McDevitt

# MEETING ATTENDANCE LIST

## Historical Commission Regular Meeting @ 7:30 P.M.

## Thursday, March 8, 2012

### Carriage House

**One Wall Park Drive, Elkins Park, PA 19027**

*(Please Print Clearly)*

| Print Name | Mailing Address (only if different) | Telephone Number (only if different) | E-mail Address (only if different |
|---|---|---|---|
| D. SPRUILL | | | |
| J. Werkman | | | |
| Jim McCann III | | | |
| Mary Washington | | | |
| Tom Wachowski | | | |
| LOIS H. HIRSCH | | | |
| DAVID HARRONER | | | |
| H. MOREIN | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

## McDevitt, Kathryn

**From:** dccohen1@juno.com
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 06, 2012 10:01 PM
**To:** daveharrower@gmail.com; McDevitt, Kathryn
**Cc:** Havir, Bryan
**Subject:** Education committee report

I am sorry I could not attend the lecture for Black History Month; I hope that it was enjoyed by all who attended. Many thanks to those who helped fill in for me that day: Joyce Werkman, Mary Washington, and David Harrower. Thanks to Kathy McDevitt and Karen Indelicato for work on the flyer. Thanks, too, to the Jenkinstown Lyceum for the grant for the speaker, refreshments and publicity.

The next lecture is in honor of National Preservation Month on Thursday, May 10, 2012, at 8:00 P.M. at Curtis Hall. The speaker will by David Harrower on Trollies and Trains in Cheltenham Township History. This lecture, too, is funded by the Jenkinstown Lyceum. Please let me know if there is anyone you wish to add to the email or snail mail list.

Louise Cohen

---

Get Free Email with Video Mail & Video Chat!
http://www.juno.com/freeemail?refcd=JUTAGOUT1FREM0210