

The regular meeting of the Cheltenham Township Historical Commission was held tonight.

Members present were: Barbara Bartlett, Louise Cohen, Lois Hirsch, James McCann, John Washington Sr., Mary Washington, John Washington Jr., Joyce Werkman and Dr. Wieckowski.

Staff present was: Brian Hinson, Acting Director of Parks and Recreation. (see attached attendance list).

1. Call to Order – Mr. Washington called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. He asked for a “moment of silence” for fallen Philadelphia Fire Fighter Joyce Craig-Lewis, followed by a “silent prayer” for the recovery of Cheltenham Police Officer who was injured in the line of duty today.

2. Acceptance of Minutes – Mr. Washington asked for a motion to accept the November 13, 2014 meeting minutes. Ms. Werkman questioned the meeting minutes from November 13 item #3, regarding the Shovel Shop. She asked about the information added to the minutes regarding the rental of the Shovel Shop and the statement regarding the lease dated until June 30, 2015. The rental status of the Shovel Shop was given by Mr. Havir after reading the question from the draft of the November meeting minutes. Mr. Hinson will find out what account the money for the lease of the Shovel Shop is being deposited. He will report this information to the Commission at the next meeting.

3. Review of Financial Report – Mr. Washington reviewed the financial reports. He stated that the Commission still needs to raise money in 2015. Mr. Washington Sr. congratulated Mr. Esposito and family on the birth of their new baby. Mr. Esposito was not able to attend the meeting because of the birth.

4. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee – Ms. Cohen is planning a program for Black History Month. She has been in touch with the Beacon Theatre Company. They have two short plays available; one is

called “Mr. President, I am Frederick Douglas” and the other is called “Mary Todd-Lincoln, the woman you thought you knew”. This will be one program with two plays. Each play will be about 35 minutes long. The cost for this program will be \$250 total. Mrs. Washington made a motion that the Commission accept this program for Black History Month; seconded by Mr. Washington Jr. and unanimously approved. Mrs. Cohen stated that she and Mr. Esposito are working on an email system called “The Chimp”. It’s a service to individual organizations with no charge. Mr. Washington Jr. was concerned about the e-mail addresses being given out to others while using the “Chimp”. Dr. Wieckowski stated that no one else gets the e-mails, only the individuals of the organization. The “Chimp” simply sends out notices for an organization. The Historical Commission would maintain their own private mailing list if using the “Chimp”. Mrs. Cohen said this will help promote the programs for the Historical Commission. Mrs. Cohen and Dr. Wieckowski will consult along with Tim Esposito then they will get back to the Commission regarding this e-mail system.

B. Preservation Committee Report – None.

C. Museum Committee Report – The student docents will assist with Wall House visits starting in January 2015. It will be for the 4th Sundays in January and February and two Sundays in the month of March. Mr. Washington Sr. will post signs for hours open at the Wall House accordingly. Mr. Washington Sr. said he would cover the Wall House visits for the 4th Sunday in January 2015.

D. Special Events- Dr. Wieckowski stated there will be an upcoming history tour. It will be a joint program with the Cheltenham Historical Commission and the Old York Road Historical Society.

5. *Chairman’s Report* –See attached.

6. Staff Report –Mr. Hinson said the Curtis Steering Committee met on Monday, November 17, 2014 at Curtis Hall. Consultant Ms. Nancy Minich gave a final draft of the property survey. There were initial concerns that portions of the dog park may be on residents private property. It was found that the boundaries of the dog park belong to the Township. Ms. Minich continued to discuss the plans for the master plan. The master plan is to have Curtis restored to its original state. Ms. Minich will continue to do research from the old Olmsted archive in Boston to make sure everything is accurate. There was a discussion regarding the ponds at Curtis. The ponds need dredging and are over populated with non-native species. Dr. Tabias Lanberg a new member on the Steering Committee from Arcadia has offered his services to hold educational classes at the ponds too rejuvenate them by removing the non-native species and weeds. His proposal will be taken under consideration for the next meeting. Ms. Minich asked about the PennDOT improvement to the intersections and entrance at Curtis. Mr. Hinson reiterated that Mr. Havar stated that there are ideas to widen roads or make changes to the entry way at Curtis but is still under consideration by PennDOT as a matter of the state transportation funding. The Steering Committee will meet again March 2015. Mr. McCann had concerns about the pillar on the left gate of the entrance at Curtis. He said more than 1/3 of the gate is missing and is starting to lean. This is a safety concern. He asked that it be looked at and addressed. Mr. Hinson said he would investigate this issue. Mr. Hinson mentioned that the Lyceum proposal application is due by the end of the year. The information to apply for the grant must be in as soon as possible. Mrs. Cohen will get the information needed for the Lyceum proposal.

7. Old Business – Mr. Washington Sr. said he wanted to get the mission statement and acquisition policy finalized as soon as possible. After discussion about the mission statement, a suggestion was made to also created a separate mission statement for the Richard Wall House Museum. Mr. Washington suggested the word in item 1 under “Mission of the CTHC of the

acquisition policy for the Richard Wall House get changed from “maintenance” to “support” of the historic physical structure, so that financial help would be available from the Township when repairs are needed. In item 2 under the same section ”acquisition and display of relevant articles” Mr. Washington Sr. stated that ALHFAM, an organization he belongs too states that artifact are props. The article is attached and gives ideas on how to word the displaying of artifacts in the policy. Mr. Washington Sr. suggested that displays in the museum should relate more to Cheltenham Township history and have fewer displays of items unrelated to the Township history. Mrs. Washington stated going forward in relation to the mission statement that the Commission be more selective of items collected. Mr. Washington Jr. suggested that there be a curator to help the Commission structure the Museum. Mrs. Cohen suggested a policy be added for the loaning out of historical items and it should state the transporting, display and security of historical items. Ms. Werkman said a form could be filled out for the loan of such items. Mr. Washington Sr. said an addendum for this could be added to the policy. There was a discussion on making several other changes to the draft of the acquisition policy. Dr. Wieckowski will do another draft of the policy. Mr. Washington said the mission statement should be able to fit on the back of a business card. The Commission will discuss the policy and will try to complete it during the next meeting. A lengthy discussion was ensued.

8. *New Business* – Mr. Washington Sr. is requesting the purchase of new bulbs for the windows at the Wall House.

9. *Moment in History* –Mrs. Washington gave a report. (See attached).

10. *Announcements* – *None.*

11. *Good and Welfare* –Mr. Washington Jr. wanted to send out Congratulations again to Mr. Esposito and family for the birth of their new baby boy.

December 11, 2014 7:30 p.m.
Wall House

12. *Adjournment* - There being no further business, Mr. Washington Sr. asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Washington Jr. made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Mrs. Washington.



Bryan T. Havir
Township Manager

Submitted by: Linda Vann



MEETING ATTENDANCE LIST

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

Thursday, December 11, 2014

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)
John Washington			
J. Berkman			
Lois HIRSCH			
Mary Washington			
Louise Cohen			
JAMES J. McGinnis III			
Jack Washington			
Barbara Bartlett			
Tom Walsh			

Chairman's Report Dec 11, 2014 Meeting

Finally met with one of the cleaning crew. I now have a better understanding of the scope of their work. Any Commission member with a concern about the janitorial work, please approach me with the problem.

In reviewing the window candles, some of the oldest ones are starting to deteriorate with the exposure from the sun. This is particularly noticeable on the South side. This is the season to purchase replacements as they are on SALE for the holiday season. I donated two, and took the old ones out of service. The LED bulbs do have the lumens to adequately do the job.

Please consider the points of the proffered Mission Statement and Acquisition Policy. They need to be inclusive, but not restrictive - The point being it is something we can live with for a number of years.

Jack Washington

Artifacts have the potential to mediate between the past and the present. The tangible proof they provide about craftsmanship, materials, decoration and ornament become clear only when closely inspected.

Debates about the role of artifacts in museums continue despite some hard and fast rules that I believe establish a benchmark for museum work. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) defines a museum as "a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment" (2007).

ALHFAM members should rejoice over this definition because it includes their work. Most ALHFAM members have complete environments (historic houses, historic sites, living history farms). Most have tangible artifacts. Some might have intangible artifacts, such as oral histories and the cultural practices that further institutional missions. But "museums" must have objects to be credible.

These objects need provenance to have credibility as historic artifacts. Too often, we accession objects that have little to no provenance. That object becomes a prop, an illustration of the past. It does not help us further our missions of communicating the tangible and intangible heritage. It does not help us study the past or educate about it. It might help us enjoy something about the past or the museum experience. But that alone does not warrant the investment in caring for that object in already packed collection storage areas.

What to do? Embrace those well-documented artifacts. Seek out additional objects that help you further your mission. "Read" them carefully. Involve others in the process. Translate the information into exhibits and public programming. You exponentially increase the opportunities for the public to connect with the past when you keep objects central to your interpretive goals. And you support the purpose for which museums exist.

Objects and their histories hold the tangible and intangible evidence of the past. They hold the history that archives cannot. It's a major responsibility, and sometimes overwhelming. But professional organizations such as ALHFAM exist to equip us for such duties. ☞

Debra A. Reid, ALHFAM President



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Debra A. Reid, ALHFAM President



EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT DEC. 11, 2015

We are planning for a program in honor of Black History month which next year will be on Feb. 12, 2015, Thursday at 7:30 following a Historical Commission Meeting. The program will take place at Curtis Hall.

The suggestion for this year is a two one act plays by the Beacon Theatre Company. One is "Mr. President, I'm Frederick Douglas" and the other is "Mary Todd Lincoln – The Woman You Thought You Knew". Each is 35 minutes long and if we request it there is a 10 minute "Talk Back" afterwards. The cost is \$250.

We have begun the process of using Mail Chimp for our email list. It is hoped that we can create a flyer for the program and use this means of sending it to our list as well as the Wall Paper and other communications.

Louise Cohen, Chair

Thursday December 31, 1936
Editorials

A Park - And An Estate

A deed of dedication applicable to the forty acres of the estate of the late Cyrus H. K. Curtis is now in the hands of officials of Cheltenham Township & has been referred to Samuel H. High, Township Solicitor, for final study & report to the Board of Commissioners

Times Chronicle Saturday, December 21, 1912

Men of Money Contribute Liberally
The Millionaire Company To Have Splendid Equipment
The Old York Road Fire Co's Proposed
Automobile Fire Engine Project is Progressing
Subscriptions Paid Aggregate \$4343.

Countess of Santa Eulalia	\$200.00
Cyrus H. K. Curtis	250.00
George W. Elkins	1000.00
J. Howard Ervien	15.00

MARY WASHINGTON