

March 10, 2011 7:30 p.m.
Carriage House

The regular meeting of the Historical Commission was held tonight. Members present were: Cynthia Breen, David Harrower, Lois Hirsch, Heidi Morein, Jack Washington, Mary Washington, Joyce Werkman and Tom Wieckowski. Staff present was: Bryan T. Havar, Assistant Township Manager. Guest present was Ed Landau.

1. ***Call to Order*** – Vice-Chairman David Harrower called the meeting to order at 7:35 P.M. He announced that Chairman Banks had been in the hospital and was recuperating at home. Also, Reynold Greenberg was out of rehabilitation and back in his apartment. Mr. Harrower announced that Mr. Bruce Connor, a member of Northeast Philadelphia History Network, who had attended meetings and had been involved with the preservation efforts for the Kerlin Farm, had recently passed away. An announcement was circulated during the meeting. Mr. Havar stated that he could e-mail the information to anyone who wanted a copy.

2. ***Acceptance of Minutes*** – Mr. Harrower made a motion to accept the February 10, 2011 meeting minutes as submitted; seconded by Mr. Jack Washington and unanimously accepted.

3. ***Committee Reports***

A. **Education Committee** – Ms. Cohen was not present to offer a report on the recent Black History Month Lecture held on February 27, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. at Curtis Hall and sponsored by the Jenkinstown Lyceum.

Mr. Harrower encouraged volunteers to reach out to provide coverage for the docent schedule for the upcoming month on Sundays. Ms. Hirsch stated that both she and Betty Goldman are scheduled as docents on March 13, 2011.

B. **Preservation Committee Report** – Mr. Harrower noted that a draft Historic Preservation Ordinance was under review by the Ad Hoc Zoning Committee. . Part of the process will

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include review by the Planning Commission and the Historical Commission, hopefully in the next couple of months.

C. Museum Committee Report – Mrs. Spruill was unable to attend the meeting to offer a report. However, Mrs. Breen announced that the World Ware II Exhibit will begin coming down on March 14, 2011. The next exhibit will feature flags dating from the 1860's. Mrs. Breen had offered to climb the ladder to assess placement on the picture rails. Mr. Havir noted that the picture rails are a recurring problem. He believes that the picture rails should be replaced and reset. Mr. Havir also recommended wearing gloves to avoid getting smudges on the walls from fingerprints.

4. *Chairman's Report* – Mr. Harrower encouraged those in attendance to reach out to neighbors interested in the history of the Richard Wall House Museum and Historical Commission to serve as volunteers.

5. *Staff Report* – Mr. Havir revisited the request for new chairs for the Carriage House. He noted that initial cost estimates for 35 replacement chairs would be approximately \$3,500 - \$4,000. Members commented that if the chairs are replaced, they would prefer a darker colored upholstery. Ms. Morein stated that she had the name of an upholsterer who does both residential and commercial work. Mr. Havir was asked to make a report at the next meeting.

Mr. Havir also reviewed the request for a Climate Control System for the archival room in the basement of the museum. Discussion ensued about the various attempts over the past years to maintain satisfactory conditions in this area. Mr. Havir suggested that there needed to more guidance from an in-house architect (Mr. Harrower) on what needs to be done or perhaps another professional consultant is needed before any expenses are incurred.

6. Old Business –

A. Status Report on Museum Cataloguing Project - Mr. Havir reviewed Karen Karuza's most recent report dated March 10, 2011 covering activities from January to present. (see attached). Mr. Havir added that Mrs. Spruill is obtaining pricing proposals for shelving with quantities, cut sheets, etc. which should be available within the next month. Assembly of the new shelves will be required for placement on the third floor near the kitchen area. One more order to Gaylord will be placed for purchasing additional preservation materials by April 15, 2011. The museum cataloging contract ends on June 30, 2011 and the project will be closed-out by July 31, 2011. Ms. Karuza will be asked to attend next month's meeting to make a presentation.

B. Update on Demolition Permit issued for Heidelberg/Kerlin Farm - Ed Landau, Landscape Architect and interested party offered an update on Kerlin Farm (Heidelberg Estate). Mr. Landau reported that the house was still standing but that they may only have a couple of weeks to find a solution to save the structure. It was discovered that asbestos was found in the basement and that meant that an asbestos abatement plan had to be developed. Mr. Landau noted that Mr. Pransky, Cheltenham Township Community Development Corporation, had met with the owner of the property about a week and a half ago. Mr. Landau had developed a conceptual site plan. Mr. Landau, along with a carpenter, and an architect met and felt that there was still integrity in the foundation and walls of the original structure. It was estimated that approximately \$100,000 would be needed to repair the roof and walls and to stabilize the building so that it would no longer be in jeopardy. Ms. Gartner was working with several organizations to secure monetary pledges to do the work required to stabilize the house. There is also an effort to continue research on the history of the house and Ms. Gartner is working with a

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member of the Bolten family. There are only a few options left to preserve the site: find a buyer or developer and convince them to save the structure/stop deterioration; getting commitment pledges to stabilize the building, applying for grants.

C. Update on Zoning Hearing Board Appeal 3388 (see attached 2/11/11 memorandum from Chairman Banks). Mr. Harrower announced that the zoning issue with the Penske Truck Leasing business on Cheltenham and Sycamore Avenues in La Mott was scheduled for the Zoning Hearing Board on February 14, 2011 but the application was withdrawn. This issue may appear again in the future. Mr. Harrower also noted that the zoning variances for Matrix's development proposal at the former Ashbourne County Club site were approved. Mr. Harrower did attend and listened to the point by point review by three members of the Zoning Hearing Board and the Township Solicitor. Information can be found on the Township website home page concerning the approval of the variances.

7. *New Business* – Mr. Havir announced the 2011 Old House Fair to be held at Germantown Friends School on March 26, 2011 from 9am-5pm. Admission is \$10.00 unless a member of Preservation Alliance, then the admission is \$5.00. The Historical Commission is a member. Contact Mr. Havir regarding membership.

Mr. Jack Washington announced a Revolutionary War Reenactment at Valley Forge Park on March 27, 2011, "Lock, Stock and Barrel".

Graeme Park will also be featuring a Civil War Reenactment on March 26, 2011 from 10 am-4 pm.

Mr. Harrower inquired about Hope Lodge and Mr. Washington responded that Hope Lodge has been shuttered. Rumor has it that Whitemarsh Township expressed some interest in acquiring the property.

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8. *Citizens Forum* - None.

9. *Adjournment* - There being no further business, upon motion of Mr. Wieckowski, seconded by Mrs. Washington and approved by the Historical Commission, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.



David G. Kraynik
Township Manager

Submitted by: Kathryn McDevitt



MEETING ATTENDANCE LIST

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

Thursday, March 10, 2011

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)
Jack Washington			
Dave Harrower			
Lois H. HIRSCH			
Mary Washington			
Cynthia Breen			
Heidi Morein			
Joyce Westman			
ED LANDAU			
Tom Wells			

Report #5
March 9 2011
Wall House Archives Project

Photographed/recorded manually/tagged/ wrapped and boxed/put into database:

Late 19th and early 20th century (1920s-1930s) beaded and mesh reticules and purses –90% of collection (balance is on exhibition)

19th century children's undergarments, bibs, caps, bonnets, christening gowns, long dresses-90% of collection (balance on display)

Early 20th century children's dresses –50% of collection

Preparation and meeting with Curator, Dottie Spruill on identification of four boxes of pall, religious textiles, car blankets, shawls dating from Civil War to early 20th century and balance of 19th century and early 20th century wedding gowns, undergarments, dresses, bodices.

To date: the above four boxes of textiles have been photographed/manually recorded/tagged, wrapped and boxed- approximately 90% of this part of collection (balance on display)

50% of the above costume items have been photographed/tagged/manually recorded. This should complete recording of 99% of wedding gowns (one remains on display) and 90% of late 19th century women's costume and 90% of early 20th century women's costume (balance on display)

To date: 42 boxes have been recorded-41 of these are in the database.

I have taken and saved 697 photographs.

I contacted Dave Fazio (IT) March 5,2011 regarding pop-up messages for software updates and upgrades. I requested that he install updates before I continue to use the database. I will continue to record manually until those are installed.

As per Bryan Havir, all project supply requests are forwarded to Dottie Spruill who in turn forwards them to Kathy McDevitt to order. February 12 I forwarded a request to Dottie for more unbuffered paper and Tyvek archival tags (I had included \$3000 in my proposal for supplies). Dottie responded on February 15 that Kathy McDevitt was reviewing a grant budget packet and when a total of remaining monies was calculated, the supplies would be ordered. To my

knowledge, the order has not yet been placed. At this point the roll of paper previously ordered has been rapidly dwindling, as are tags.

Follow-up from January 13 meeting:

Textile intern: When I proposed the idea of contacting local universities regarding any textile/museum studies interns, I had been previously told that the Township would cover the insurance for an intern. However, Bryan Havir informed me at the January 13 meeting that I would be required to provide this insurance. This insurance would have to be added on to my existing policy and would be cost prohibitive.

Shipment of supplies stored in Carriage House: As per Dottie Spruill, I contacted Jim McCann for moving these supplies. Mr. McCann, Sebastian Karuza and I unpacked and moved all of the project materials into the Wall House March 1. All packing materials and boxes were broken down and neatly packed to be picked up for recycling.

Project general status:

Due to the nature of this collection having been provided primarily by donation, a large and varied surplus has accumulated. To this point, it has been my goal to photograph, record, tag, wrap and box the oldest items, i.e. dating back to the Civil War period until early 20th. Century. Moving into the final phase, I would like to continue to focus on this time period- however, some items are in extreme disrepair. I find it most advantageous at this point to record only items that are either in the best condition and/or have the most significant value (e.g. examples of craftsmanship, etc.) Items that are in extreme disrepair will be put aside (into separate boxes) for review by Curator. I will continue to consult with Curator regarding sorting of items for recording.

Costume and textiles dating from mid-century to present will be recorded last after exhibition items have been recorded.

Workspace and storage are extremely limited and limiting. I have made every effort whenever possible to comply with Curator's request to group items of like

period in the same storage boxes. As the basement archive room shelving is nearly filled to capacity, the third floor has become a temporary storage area.

Suggestions:

Several Historic Committee members have suggested the installation of an exhibition that ties into this project to take place when it is completed. My thoughts are that such an exhibition could be a useful "marketing" tool to engage universities with museum studies, fashion and textile programs as well as costume designers to utilize the Wall House collection as a viable resource. My suggestion is that the Curator and Committee to consider such an exhibition in their schedule planning for the next year. I would also recommend creating "educators" and "design inspiration" events in conjunction with an exhibition with specific times and programs listed on an invitation/mail to be sent out to universities, costumers, etc.