

Newtown Joint Historic Commission
23 N. State Street
Borough Council Chambers
Newtown, PA
September 26, 2011

Present: Paul Gouza, Jeff Marshall, Nancy Freudenthal, Warren Woldorf, Lisa Ray, Jeanette Rogers

Absent: Lorraine Pentz, Paul Beckert, Jerry Schenkman, Julia Woldorf

Call to order:

In Lorraine Pentz's absence, Paul Gouza was acting Chairman and called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of August 22, 2011

Nancy Freudenthal moved to approve the Minutes of August 22, 2011. The motion was seconded by Jeanette Rogers and was passed (5-0) with Warren Woldorf abstaining.

Treasurer's Report – September 26, 2011

Treasurer Rogers reported the funds as follows:

Savings account:

Previous balance (07/29/11)	\$1,468.08
Interest (08/31/11)	.13
Savings account balance (08/31/11)	\$1,468.21

Regular checking:

Previous balance (08/08/11)	\$3,174.13
Check #437 – Secretarial services	79.39
Balance (09/08/11)	\$3,094.74

Ms. Rogers noted that a check for \$600 had been received from the Township.

TOWNSHIP SUBDIVISION REPORT

Warren Woldorf noted two new things on the report. He said that the Board of Supervisors met last week and reviewed two plans: 1) the proposed assisted living facility (The Birches) on Durham Road; and 2) the dental office on Newtown-Yardley Road. It was noted that the Commission has not received a DOS form on either property, although a site visit had been done on The Birches. Jeff Marshall said that he will follow up on the paperwork.

OLD BUSINESS

Demolition notification process from Township Zoning Office; review emails between Lorraine Pentz and Kristie Kaznicki:

Paul Gouza suggested that the Commission send an acknowledgement email to the Township when the Commission has received plans for review. Nancy Freudenthal said that in a previous meeting, it had already been agreed that, if we're asked to review a plan, we should make a recommendation to the Zoning Office, but say that a DOS form is still required.

Warren Woldorf said that the function of the JHC is posted on the Township website and it states a DOS form is necessary initially when a structure is proposed for demolition. He talked about how the JHC process has worked historically between the Borough and the Township and noted that there's been inconsistency regarding submission of DOS forms for larger scale projects as compared to smaller ones. Nancy Freudenthal said the Commission should know from the plans that there's an intention that potentially affects something historic, and this should be JHC's trigger. Mr. Woldorf said that submission of any full set of preliminary/final subdivision and land development plans, if this is the first step by an applicant, should contain a completed DOS form as part of the whole package, as it has with other applications.

Mr. Marshall noted that there are two types of applications: 1) homeowners' application which takes a short time and 2) land development which takes a much longer time, and we should be involved earlier in both processes.

A discussion took place about when the Commission should receive the DOS form and who should deal with the applicant – the Township or the Commission – as there have been inconsistencies and no pattern in the past. It was noted that perhaps Kristie Kaznicki was not informed of the formal procedure and she should ask an applicant if any demolition is intended when plans are submitted. If the answer is yes, she should send a completed DOS form with the application package to the Commission.

Jeanette Rogers and Lisa Ray agreed that a letter should be sent to Ms. Kaznicki advising her that she needs to ask applicants if demolition is intended.

Warren Woldorf made a motion that Chairman Lorraine Pentz send a letter to the Township, addressed to Kristie Kaznicki, copied to Joseph Czajkowski, Township Manager, and to Jerry Schenkman, requesting that when any permit request is received that involves demolition, including subdivision or land development plans, a DOS form be completed by the applicant. The motion was seconded by Jeff Marshall, and was passed unanimously (6-0).

Report on Board of Supervisors meeting, September 7, 2011, by Jeff Marshall:

Mr. Marshall said that Beneficial Bank made a presentation regarding the proposed bank at the former Stockburger facility on Sycamore Street, but no discussion took place about whether the existing building would remain. After a lengthy discussion, the Board agreed not to grant the setback variance requested by Beneficial Bank.

NEW BUSINESS

DOS – Beneficial Bank:

Nancy Freudenthal, Warren Woldorf, Lorraine Pentz and Jerry Schenkman conducted a site visit at the former Stockburger facility on September 17th. Nancy and Warren noted that there was little of physical historical/architectural interest, other than the open sweeping window. Mr. Woldorf noted that no bank representative was present at the time of the visit. It was agreed that the facility is not worth saving. Mr. Woldorf felt that the building isn't structurally sound for moving to a better location on the site. Although the process had not been followed, Commission members agreed they would have recommended approval for a demolition permit to be issued. .

A general discussion took place about how the process transpired with the Stockburger facility and it was agreed that the Commission had performed its job by visiting the site and making recommendations to the Township.

Jeff Marshall made a motion to recommend that the Township issue a demolition permit for the former Stockburger facility. The motion was seconded by Warren Woldorf and was passed unanimously (6-0).

A discussion took place about what qualifies a structure to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places and how it might have applied to the Stockburger site. Mr. Marshall explained the criteria and answered some questions from Commission members.

Preliminary land development plans for the proposed McDonald's at the Village of Newtown:

Paul Gouza said that preliminary plans have been received, and that the medical office building on the site is planned for demolition. However, no DOS form was received by the Commission.

Nancy Freudenthal made a motion that a letter should be sent to Kristie Kaznicki acknowledging receipt of the preliminary plans dated August 1, 2011 for the proposed McDonald's, indicating that the medical office building will be demolished, and that we still need a DOS form. The motion was seconded by Jeff Marshall and was passed unanimously (6-0).

Privilege of the Floor

Paul Gouza noted that he visited the Dunmore Building site at the Newtown Athletic Club (NAC) and took photos. He saw nothing of historical significance.

There being no further business, Jeff Marshall made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Warren Woldorf and the meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on October 24 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra McIntyre