

Minutes

Mt Lebanon Historic Preservation Board

Monday, October 16, 2017, Mt Lebanon Municipal Building

ATTENDANCE Present: Yvette Yescas, chair; Michelle Winowich-Zmijanac, Joe Bevins, John Evans, Jonathan Hill, Jim Martin. Susan Morgans, staff liaison **Absent:** Anna Siefken, John Bendel, commission liaison

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Yvette Yescas called meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

There was no citizen comment.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

The September minutes were approved unanimously.

TOPIC OF THE MONTH

Presentation on brick streets by Engineer Dan Deiseroth

Yvette backgrounded Dan on what the board has discussed regarding brick streets. The board concedes that no steep, dangerous street should remain brick. Its goal is to refine the PennDot mitigation plan and identify and prioritize 20-25 streets that should be placed in categories 1 and 2 (out of 4 categories) and be preserved because they are community resources regardless of the fact that some might not be in very good condition. Other things the board would like to consider is whether some streets that are not heavily traveled, such as Martha Avenue, might be passed over or just repaired when they come due on the list. The board also would like the municipality to consider bidding brick streets separately.

Dan explained processes currently in place. He said no one wants to see brick streets go away, but when brick streets deteriorate to the point where they undulate and become unsafe, they need to be addressed. Unfortunately, no matter how brick streets are bid, they will be more expensive than asphalt. If we want to preserve more brick streets, Commission needs to allocate more money for brick streets.

Brick streets in categories 3 and 4 are considered to be beyond repair. Public Works currently is focusing on category 1 and 2 and is placing

10 x10 or 10 x 20 patches to extend the lives of those that are in relatively good condition.

Brick poses two challenges: 1) It is hard to find new clay bricks of the same quality and color that our streets are composed of. We do most repairs using stockpiled old brick. If we reconstruct a brick street using new clay fired pavers, it will not look like what we have; it will look more like Grant Street. 2) There are a declining number of contractors who are good at brick street work (The municipality has three who will bid). Unlike asphalt work, which is done with machines, brick work is done by hand and labor is expensive. (There are machines that can lay brick, but they are too large to work in a residential setting.)

When elected officials are dealing with limited resources, the decision typically is based on cost. Dan said a new brick street would probably last 60 years; even so asphalt, which need to be redone every 20 years, is still more cost effective. That is why today, brick is used more commonly in parks or courtyards than on heavily used roads. the historic preservation board's challenge is to convince the commission that it is worth spending more to preserve key brick streets.

Dan does not think that any brick streets are up for reconstruction in 2018.

Yvette asked if Public Works facility could store brick removed from category 4-5 streets to use on category 1-2. Dan said, yes, but it requires more labor from the contractor to take the bricks out carefully without breaking them.

Bottom line: Dan suggests that the board identify the important streets. At that time, he and public works can determine how to preserve them and estimate the cost. At the point, the board could recommend a preservation plan to the commission and perhaps request a pilot program on one street (or even at the new public works facility) to see how we like the look of the new clay pavers. If acceptable, the preservation plan could become part of the capital budget.

The board agreed that having a formal preservation plan would be wise in that it would be based on well-researched facts and would not require regular public input.

Dan said that if board develops a list, GIS easily could add a layer to the streets map to indicate high-priority brick streets. He will look into getting the board an Excel spreadsheet showing when brick streets are scheduled to come up for reconstruction.

HISTORIC SIGNAGE

Susan Morgans has checked, and there are no Pennsylvania historic markers in Mt. Lebanon. Jonathan Hill showed possible sizes for a bronze sign denoting the historic district that could be either free-standing or attached to the outside of the municipal building. The board will aim to come up with a recommended sign and price prior to making its annual presentation to the Commission next spring. The same logo that is on the historic house plaque will be included on the sign. Jonathan will touch base with for board member Ben Wetmore, who volunteered to work on the sign design.

STAFF LIAISON REPORTS

Susan said Michelle Winowich-Zmijanac reminds people it is not too late to buy a ticket for the historical society dinner at 6 p.m., Wednesday, October 25, at St. Clair Country Club.

Susan also noted that the PIO is updating the welcome pocket folder and would like to include information for new resident want to find out if their home is in the historic district and how to preserve or restore it. Yvette will work on this.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Notebooks

Joe Bevins is continuing his review and will make a comprehensive report when he is finished.

Design Guidelines

Yvette asked everyone look at the Virginia Manor Design Guidelines before the next meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting is Monday, November 20, at 5 p.m. in the municipal building.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.