

Minutes
Mt. Lebanon Historic Preservation Board
Monday, April 16, 2018, Mt. Lebanon Municipal Building

Attendance: Present: Yvette Yescas, chair; John Evans, Jonathan Hill, Brendan Kelly, Jim Martin, Anna Siefken, Laura Pace Lilley, staff liaison **Absent:** Joe Bevins; John Bendel, commission liaison.

Call to order:

Chair Yvette Yescas called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

Introduction of New Member: Yvette Yescas introduced new member Brendan Kelly, who was just appointed for a three-year term. He has lived in Mt. Lebanon for 4-1/2 years. He was attracted to Mt. Lebanon and its Historic District and architecture. He volunteered for the Board to get involved with the community and looks forward to serving. The board members then introduced themselves.

Consideration of minutes:

The March minutes were approved 4-0. Anna Siefken and Brendan Kelly abstained since they did not attend the March meeting.

Citizens comments:

None

Chair's report:

None. However, Chairperson Yvette Yescas formally thanked Susan Morgans for her service as staff liaison since the board's creation. Yescas referred to Morgans as the glue that held the board together. She said the board was sad to lose Susan but that since new liaison Laura Pace Lilley works side by side with Morgans, they would not be losing the institutional knowledge.

Staff liaison report:

Laura Pace Lilley reported that the board could consider occasional joint meetings with the Mt. Lebanon Planning Board, as has been done in the past. The role of the HPB at such meetings would be to keep up to date on pending plans and lend advisory assistance in matters of Historic Preservation with regard to proposed development, especially in the Historic District. Planning Board liaison Ian McMeans has told Lilley that summers are slower times for the board and might be a good time to meet. Lilley also told HPB members they should consider attending Planning Board meetings the fourth Tuesday of each month. Yvette said if anyone is interested in being the liaison to the Planning Board to let her know.

Lilley reminded the board of the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on April 18 at 6 p.m. and an extended discussion meeting with the Mt. Lebanon Commission on Monday, April 30 at 6 p.m. Former chair Yvette Yescas and current chair Jim Martin will attend with Laura Pace Lilley.

She also updated the Board on the status of the fundraising for an entry sign for Lebanon Hills. The residents have raised more than \$10,000. A two-sided sign would be \$16,000 and a one-sided sign would be \$10,000. They will continue their efforts and representative Faith Williard will report back.

Liaison reports:

None

Topic of the Month: Brick Streets. Leo Weidl, commercial sales rep and residential sales at R.I. Lampus Company and Jim Piteo, sales manager of the Belden Brick Company. Invited and introduced by Jim Martin.

The presenters were invited to talk about communities that are using brick streets and to talk about how the brick is made.

Leo Weidl of R. I. Lampus Co., who has been in the brick business in Pittsburgh for 30 years, has been involved in prominent projects such as Grant Street in Pittsburgh and streets in Oakmont (which has a bid out right now for a street reconstruction). Oakmont uses street pavers, which are thicker than normal brick pavers, and good for heavy traffic.

Jim Piteo of Belden Brick Co. in Canton, Ohio, (which has been in business since 1855) said brick streets can last 130 years or more. Belden got into business making clay pavers to help with mud on Canton streets due to horses. Some streets in Canton are older than 120 years. He detailed a project on Harvard Avenue in Canton in 2002, where bricks were set in modified asphalt on a concrete base with sand in the joints. He showed a slide of the street from last week and compared it to the original 2002 installation and noted even after 16 years, it looks the same with no maintenance. It has hard wear, freeze/thaw and yet is in great condition. Jim Martin asked if it was a highly traveled street and Jim Piteo said it is—and it is a cut-through street and an artery to Downtown with truck traffic. Jim Martin also asked if it had a lack of traction and Piteo said it does not. Jonathan Hill said people often assume you can't put bricks on a hill because of traction. Piteo said they do put them on hills and that products are tested for slip resistance and they fall in line with specs. Anna Siefken asked if the street had been machine laid or hand laid and Piteo said hand laid. Piteo said they have not spent anything on maintenance in 16 years, other than salt. One of the neighbors on the street lives in a house built in 1906 and the brick street complements the house.

Jim Piteo gave some marketing information from the Brick Industry Association that says brick streets should be preserved because it is more economical in the long run, the streets can last 100 years and they are visible evidence of tradition. Jim Piteo said bricks can give a calming, historic effect. Anna Siefken asked if the brick jobs they're doing are new streets or replacements; Jim Piteo said both. Some problems with maintenance in the past were because there was no standardized way of maintaining them. The BIA now has tech notes on how to keep them up and Piteo said he'd be happy to share them.

Jonathan Hill said he hears one barrier to use of bricks is that people believe they don't make bricks like they used to. Jim Martin agreed that he has heard that and also says some people say you can't replace the bricks with similar bricks. Piteo disagreed and said Belden bought its plant in 1926 and the bricks haven't changed. He passed some of the product around. He compared a modern paver with an old one and said he believed they would perform similarly.

Piteo only brought red bricks to show the board but said the company does have a nutmeg color. The bricks come in 19 colors, including buff, yellow and gray. Leo Weidl cited Beechview Boulevard that has recently used the yellowish bricks from Belden. Piteo said color is defined by the ingredients in the brick and that most bricks are shale and fire clay. He said there is nothing you can do to cheapen it. Yellow brick has a higher clay content, which gives it that color. Firing temperature range can also affect the color.

Jonathan Hill asked about Dormont's recent project. Leo Weidel said that project was done with concrete pavers. Concrete is cured but brick holds its color. Jim Piteo said salt doesn't bother bricks and they are colorfast. The only thing that can upset the brick are temperatures of 2,000 degrees or acid. Stains are easily removed. Bricks are available in a permeable version.

Jim Martin asked about cost differential between asphalt from scratch and brick from scratch. Piteo said the brick is four times the cost of asphalt but you have to take a long-term look at the costs. He said that is hard for him to estimate without talking to an engineer. Piteo quoted that one lane-mile (740 square yards) costs \$225,000 for asphalt, \$900,000 to \$950,000 for new brick and \$575,000 to \$600,000 for reused brick, not counting removal of existing pavement and preparation. Sixty percent of the cost is labor. He said the cost to install brick is \$115/square yard. This is why machine laying is becoming popular. Jonathan Hill asked if busy streets have different installation and Jim Piteo said it would be the same.

Leo Weidel said most of the problem with the Grant Street installation is at the intersection and caused when buses spill fuel that goes to the mastic and that releases the brick, which was installed too tightly. He said there are ways around that, such as installing bricks in a herringbone pattern, which allows for the brick to hit in a different way. Anna Siefken asked how the problems with Grant Street could be prevented in Mt. Lebanon. Leo Weidel said there are better ways to install it now.

Jim Piteo said the problem with asphalt is it eventually returns into gravel but brick does not break down. Bricks chip but they usually don't crack in half. He showed a slide of what brick repairs look like when they're done properly.

Jim Martin asked if the machine installation could be used in Mt. Lebanon. Jim Piteo said Folino construction has used the machine for some of its installations. A machine picks up brick in nine layers from a pallet, 12- to 15-square feet at a time, and puts it down in 4-1/2 minutes.

Jim Martin said the Commission understands the appeal of the historic value and the benefits of the aesthetics but it comes down to cost vs asphalt. He said if the Historic Preservation Board

could show over the life of the road that the cost per mile is equivalent or within an acceptable variance, Commissioners would likely say it makes sense. He said what they need are data for street repair and replacement costs and how much maintenance is needed on a cost per mile after it's done. Jim Piteo said he doesn't have those numbers but suggested the board contact Lafayette, Indiana, Chicago or Canton for such numbers. Jim Martin said with asphalt, they expect the streets to last 20 years, but brick lasts longer.

Jim Piteo said he would send his PowerPoint presentation, which includes some life cycle costs that came from the BIA, to Laura Pace Lilley for distribution to the board.

Jim Piteo said they keep the brick from streets being torn up to use for repairs. He also said you can use different color bricks to mark crosswalks and handicap logos and parking lines and you will not ever need to paint them. Jim Martin says Mt. Lebanon should bid the repair of brick streets as brick repair instead of putting it out with the asphalt streets. Jim Martin asked if the BIA has any data about the aesthetic appeal/sales value of brick streets vs. asphalt. Jim Piteo says it can have a traffic calming effect. Jonathan Hill asked if they work with public works departments to educate them. Jim Piteo said they do Brick School and other events, like lunch and learn and plant tours of the factory in Sugar Creek, Ohio. The BIA is headquartered in Reston, Va., with engineers on staff. He mentioned Shannon by name.

Anna Siefken mentioned some face brick on buildings in Tepper Quad at CMU for which Belden did the brick to match the color of the historic buildings on campus.

Jim Martin asked that contractors that use the machine to lay brick, including Folino Construction (Lawrence Martin, 412-820-2800), Satira Construction (Mike Satira, 412-793-7629) and Gulisek Construction (Mike Oravetz, 724-696-3341), be entered into the minutes of the meeting for reference.

Continuing Business:

Historic design guide, John Evans: John Evans said the guide is nearly done and it would be sent to the board the following day. The PIO would be doing final proofreading and adding photos. He will send a link to the board for their input on content. Yvette Yescas asked them to look at it in a timely fashion. Jim Martin reminded the board that the guide can be updated. Laura Pace Lilley explained that that PDF of the report would be turned into a Flipbook online and that future updates could be done on the PDF and the flipbook redone, but because it does take time, changes should be limited. The PIO will put together a publicity plan for the guide to make residents aware. Additionally, Lilley reported that John Evans and Susan Morgans will present the guide to the Commission at the first meeting in May. Lilley also reminded the board that it would make a good impression if the board's webpage could be updated in cooperation with the release of the guidelines so that residents would see current info on the page. She told the board Joe Bevins said he would have an update synopsis of suggested changes at the Board's May meeting.

Historic signage, Jim Martin: Jim Martin had no report, but noted Steve Harroum of APCO Architectural Signs, who presented in February, could come back to another meeting with samples. He said he still doesn't have costs. John Evans said he will remind Ben Wetmore to submit his sign design ideas. Jim Martin said the board is considering eight signs at eight locations throughout the municipality. He noted Susan Morgans said the board should think of all the locations it wanted and then scale down if needed.

Brick streets, Yvette Yescas: Yvette Yescas said she is working on the street priority list that will put the information received at today's meeting into a report to share with the Board before it goes to Commissioners at a later presentation in anticipation of creating a brick streets policy.

Notebook & website review, Joe Bevins: No report.

Other business: The board unanimously selected Jim Martin as chairperson and John Evans as vice chairperson for the next year. Yvette Yescas said it would take the whole year to move forward all the projects that are in progress.

The board appointed Anna Siefken as liaison to Commercial Districts and Jonathan Hill as liaison to the Historical Society of Mount Lebanon.

Board members briefly discussed whether it made sense to change the meeting time to later in the day, but ultimately decided it should remain at 5 p.m. They agreed to revisit if it proved difficult for members to get there by 5 with work schedules.

Next meeting: The next meeting is Monday, May 21 at 5 p.m. in the municipal building.

Adjournment: 6:15 p.m.