

## Minutes

### **Mt. Lebanon Historic Preservation Board**

Monday, August 19, 2019, Mt. Lebanon Municipal Building

**Attendance: Present:** Anna Siefken, chair; Alex Ferraro, Brendan Kelly, Philip Neusius; Staff liaison Laura Pace Lilley. **Absent:** John Bendel, commission liaison; Joe Bevins, Jonathan Hill,

**Call to order:** Vice chair Anna Siefken called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**Citizen comments: none**

#### **Consideration of minutes:**

The July minutes were unanimously approved with one change for a typo.

**Election of new chair/vice chair:** The board voted 4-0 to elect Anna Siefken chair. There was no interest from those present in taking on the vice chair position. The topic will be brought up at the September meeting.

#### **Re-assignment of Committees**

- **Partnership Design Committee: Joe Bevins**
- **Brick Streets: Anna Siefken, Brendan Kelly and Phil Neusius**
- **Historic signs: Anna Siefken and Alex Ferraro**

#### **Administrative Reports**

**Chair report** — None

**Commission report** — None

**Staff report** — Laura Pace Lilley told the board the commission had not yet acted on adopting changes to the code regarding first floor, front facing business; she said the commission is split on the issue with some wanting office use to be nonconforming and others wanting it to be conditional use.

#### **Liaison reports:**

**Lebanon Economic Development Council, Joe Bevins:** None.

**Historical Society of Mount Lebanon, Jonathan Hill:** None, but Laura Lilley reminded the board that president Mike Cahill is scheduled to visit the board at its September meeting.

**Planning Board, Brendan Kelly:** None.

**Mt. Lebanon Partnership Design committee, Joe Bevins:** Mt. Laura Pace Lilley reported that the municipality convened a steering committee for the upcoming \$3.5 million public space improvement project for Washington Road and that the Historic Preservation Board was represented in that group.

#### **Continuing business**

**Historic Signage, Anna Siefken:** Siefken reported that she met with both John Bendel and John Evans. John Evens assembled a Power Point about proposed improvements to the sign program: an entry sign, a neighborhood marker, sign toppers and interpretive signage. She will be presenting the proposal to the Commission on September 24 in hopes of securing \$25,000 in funding to begin the first phase of the project. Alex Ferraro said he would help Siefken with the Power Point.

**Brick Streets, Anna Siefken:** Siefken recapped the progress on brick streets efforts. She shared a memo of the history of the project as well as the future of the project. She said the board had been looking at brick streets since 2014 when it was announced that Castle Shannon Boulevard would be paved. A working committee included folks from the HPB and the municipal staff, with some deliverables from the HPB that were never executed.

The board then heard from a group from Duquesne who were upset about their street being paved instead of the bricks replaced. The HPB then wrote a letter to the commission and Siefken read it at the Commission meeting in support of the residents. She then met with Jim Martin, John Bendel and Yvette Yescas to fill in the blanks of the history and what the barriers were.

The group then planned several meetings to gather information from municipal officials as well as a working group to propose changes to the policy.

She also noted the Commission will be selecting a new HPB member to replace John Evans, who left, as well as two members in March whose terms are up. She encouraged the board to recruit interested people. Siefken emphasized finding a member from a brick street. Laura Pace Lilley summarized that potential board members must apply on line and that the commission then selects them.

Siefken said the policy working group would be meeting the evening of August 29. She also proposed a large public meeting to gauge feedback about brick street preservation. Siefken said the HPB would need to create a metric to score brick streets and that work would be combined with the qualitative information from residents to create a priority list.

She emphasized the board would be focusing on repair of the streets rather than reconstruction, as well as a salvage and storage plan.

Brendan Kelly asked how much work can be done for the \$65,000 in the repair budget. Lilley said Rudy Sukal would be sharing that list at the meeting later in the week. Alex Ferraro asked how far into the year that money lasts, and Lilley explained is that it's bid at one time as a chunk.

Siefken said weather events have been more and more of an issue, and are magnified by the lack of a maintenance plan. She said not being in the Historic District is detrimental to some brick streets not in the district.

Phil Neusius reminded the board that the Historic District was not created to condemn properties that are not inside it, so that it shouldn't be used in a negative way against those other streets. He also noted the architectural integrity includes not only the brick but the houses along the street as well.

Siefken said the next steps including writing a letter to accompany the packet for the presentation on September 24. She said the board will be asking for \$65,000 for the repair, an additional \$50,000 for a higher service level of repair, an additional \$25,000 to salvage and store the brick, and \$25,000 for historic signs for a total of \$165,000. (including the additional \$50,000 for the brick.)

Kelly asked where the bricks might be stored. Lilley said Sukal has said there is no place in the municipality but that the board's thought was that perhaps the \$25,000 could cover the cost of someone coming in and taking it to another location.

Siefken said the board should look at other cities' policies and how they manage their lifecycle costs and brick streets policy. She said the board needed to ask if brick streets are bid in both asphalt and bricks.

She said the draft policy needs to be revisited. The working committee will look at where some of the provisions can be changed. She said the board needs to provide the list of streets and the categories. She favored moving the streets into three categories to streamline and make the plan simpler, because category 3 and 4 were all subject to being paved.

Siefken said the board needs to create a communication plan to let residents know about the importance of brick streets and to be transparent about plans.

She mentioned the project will be a lot of work and wanted the board's help on it.

**Strategic Plan Update, Anna Siefken:** None

**Community Education Plan:** Tabled due to full slate of activities for the board.

**New Business:** None

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m. The next meeting is Monday, September 16 at 5 p.m. at 710 Washington Road, Mt. Lebanon.