

Minutes

Mt. Lebanon Historic Preservation Board

Monday, January 20, 2020, Mt. Lebanon Municipal Building

Attendance: Present: Anna Siefken, chair; Joe Bevins, Alex Ferraro, Jonathan Hill, Philip Neusius, Matthew Moses, Anne Swager; Commission liaison Mindy Ranney, Staff liaison Laura Pace Lilley.

Call to order: Board chair Anna Siefken called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

Citizen comments: none

Consideration of minutes:

The November minutes were approved unanimously.

Administrative Reports

Chair report — Anna Siefken welcomed Almanac reporter Harry Funk to the meeting. She also proposed that the board consider selecting its president and vice president at the next meeting, a month early to ease the transition as her term is up on the board. She also said the board is due for a new strategic plan and asked board members to be thinking about that.

Commission report — Board members introduced themselves to newly appointed commission liaison Mindy Ranney. Ranney said she would be reporting on commission activities that might interest the historic preservation. She said the commission is interested in the environmental sustainability aspect of brick streets.

Staff report — Staff liaison Laura Lilley reminded the board that interested volunteers needed to turn in applications for the board vacancy by February 29.

Continuing business

Historic signage: Alex Ferraro reported that he and Jonathan Hill and Anne Swager will be going over old RFPs to come up with a scope of work for the architect/designer who would be working on the historic signage project.

Jonathan Hill and Laura Lilley reminded the board they were considering four types of signs: medallion toppers for street name signs noting person is in the historic district, bars to go across the municipal entry signs to note Mt. Lebanon is a historic district, historical markers to be placed in traffic islands in accordance with the municipality's neighborhood sign policy and informational signs that could be placed throughout the district in meaningful places.

Brick streets: Anna Siefken briefed the board on her appearance and presentation at the December 10 commission meeting. She said she, HPB member Matthew Moses and (now former) Commissioner John Bendel had made revisions to the proposed draft brick streets policy and that the most recent iteration is dated December 5. She said the next step is to have a meeting with staff to go over the policy and look at the procedure going forward. She asked Lilley to confirm that the \$25,000 for brick removal and storage was funded in the 2020 budget.

Siefken also said the commission passed the moratorium on deconstructing any brick streets throughout the 2020 construction season which buys the board more months to work on the policy. She said some of the outstanding questions include how residents are to be notified about proposed brick street work, storage and how it would be funded over time. She noted the committee also is working on timing of the policy progress.

Commissioner Ranney said the commission has commented favorably on the HPB's work to date on the policy and said that it serves as almost a model for other boards to follow when considering policy recommendations.

Siefken also noted that resident Rich Sieber set up a meeting with Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation staff, including Arthur Ziegler, Michael Sriprasert and Louise Sturgess, and while the Foundation did not itself have any data on brick streets that would be helpful, it endorsed the board's effort and would be interested in learning how the process develops. Sturgess also suggested the board hire an intern to do life cycle cost assessment research. Matthew Moses and Anne Swager said they would be happy to be involved in the process going forward.

Liaison reports:

Lebanon Economic Development Council, Joe Bevins: Bevins reported that the board is focusing on the new Vibrant Uptown project, with improvements scheduled for sidewalk, lighting and cabling improvements. The group also has a structured leadership team in place to march through the effort.

Historical Society of Mount Lebanon, Jonathan Hill: Hill reported that the Society's latest exhibit is on Mt. Lebanon's Houses of Worship would be extended through March. He also said he has been speaking with president Mike Cahall about historic district signage as a cooperative project, to be placed in front of the center, and that Cahall had some concerns that it might be too cluttered with the Society's current signage.

Hill and Siefken talked about bringing John Conti back to the board to give his history presentation to remind the board about some of the events that have happened here.

Phil Neusius and Jonathan Hill reminded the board that transportation was a part of the history of Mt. Lebanon and the reason for the development after the construction of the Liberty Tubes. Anne Swager reminded the board that Mt. Lebanon development during the time of the trolley was focused on walking home and the transition to the farther neighborhoods were more spread out as people in those homes used cars.

Swager also noted that some of the development of larger homes with larger yards was intended to keep out lower priced clientele. Jonathan Hill says he prefers to stick to the architecture of the neighborhood.

Siefken says the suite of signage will tell a deeper story

Jonathan Hill suggested coordinating a committee to review the sign locations. The description could talk about transportation, trolleys, schools, etc.

Joe Bevins mentioned the public art budget that's close to \$1 million as part of the Vibrant Uptown project. Siefken said the HPB could partner with both the Vibrant Uptown committee and the Historical Society on signage. Hill suggested coming up with a brochure or online section in a sort of "heritage trail" concept. Bevins suggested identifying some key locations in Uptown in conjunction with historic concepts.

Planning Board, Alex Ferraro and Matthew Moses: None.

Mt. Lebanon Partnership Design committee, Joe Bevins: No report that already wasn't covered in the EDC report.

New Business: None

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m. The next meeting is Monday, February 17 at 5 p.m., 710 Washington Road, Mt. Lebanon.