

Minutes

Mt. Lebanon Historic Preservation Board

Monday, February 17, 2020, Mt. Lebanon Municipal Building

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

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

Citizen comments: none

Consideration of minutes:

The January minutes were approved unanimously.

Administrative Reports

Chair report — Anna Siefken reported that she spoke to the Residents Academy in January in the new room in the Mt. Lebanon Public Library, along with the library director and a representative from the Historical Society of Mount Lebanon. She said she would forward her PowerPoint presentation to Laura Lilley in case someone wanted to use it in the future. She said it could use some photos and a picture of the design guide.

Commission report — Mindy Ranney said the commission is studying new communications strategies and is currently digesting the results of the survey on how residents wish to receive their communications. She said she was thinking about how the municipality could have communicated better with the residents of Duquesne Drive. In the past, the municipality has expected residents to check the website and magazine but that push notifications or a mailer might be used to encourage residents earlier in the process to come to meetings where decisions were being made.

Anna Siefken asked the best way for the board to provide the commission with formal feedback. She noted the volunteer committee working on the brick streets policy has a subcommittee that is considering communications. Ranney said to communicate with her and Public Information Officer Laura Lilley.

Siefken said that sending a geotagged email would make sense to target people in certain neighborhoods, constituting a smaller segment than “everyone.” She also noted that communication has to happen before a decision is finalized.

Jonathan Hill said public works may have its own schedule with regard to communicating road construction work and may not be on the same timeline. Laura Lilley said that’s part of the conversation, for public works to look at timing of communication. Lilley also said the LeboALERT system currently doesn’t allow sending by address.

Hill also said not everyone cares to be notified. And Siefken replied: “until they do.” Lilley also pointed out that GIS records do have addresses for geographically targeted letter mailing.

Staff report — Laura Lilley said she is currently looking to hire an assistant public information officer to get the office back up to full staffing. She also spoke with editors from a local TV station that aired some distorted information about the brick street policy development. Anna Siefken said she did not hear negative feedback from those who saw the report so she considered the matter resolved.

Lilley also reminded the board that the boards and authorities dinner was scheduled for Wednesday, April 22 and that nominations for the Community Service Award were due March 13.

Continuing business

Historic signage: Alex Ferraro said he and Anne Swager were working on the RFP for the design services for the historic signage process. Lilley said she would check with Municipal Planner Ian McMeans on the next steps. Ferraro said he didn’t know if the RFP would come back to the board and Lilley said she wanted the board to be pleased with the RFP before it goes out so she would bring it to them. Ferraro also said the designer could also work for a sign company that actually makes the signs.

Hill said he asked the Historical Society to get information on the company who provided the contributing structure medallions but that he hadn’t heard back yet.

Brick streets: Anna Siefken said she is working on creating an intern position with the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks to study life cycle costs for brick streets, with a data-driven approach. She said funding might be an issue but only expected the cost to be a couple thousand dollars. PHLF would house the intern but the board would need to fund it. Siefken asked if there were other municipal interns that could be used.

Lilley replied that the PIO interns were all unpaid unless there was a specific line item in the budget. Siefken said the position could be unpaid. Lilley noted that unpaid interns must be experiencing an educational opportunity, that there has to be someone mentoring an intern. She also said she didn’t know if the municipality could “hire” an intern on behalf of someone else, like PHLF.

Siefken also was hoping for a Carnegie Mellon University engineering student with an interest in history. Ranney said she would check into funding possibilities for around \$3,000. Siefken said any of the parameters could be changed as long as they could find the person who would be willing to do this kind of work.

Siefken also said she would need to meet with McMeans and other members to talk about the next steps for the policy update.

Three year strategic plan: Siefken asked for a volunteer to work on the strategic plan going forward. Matthew Moses volunteered. Siefken said she would forward her notes and Lilley said she would resend the expired strategic plan.

Liaison reports:

Lebanon Economic Development Council, Joe Bevins: Siefken reported on Bevins' behalf to say he reached out to Eric Milliron on behalf of the HPB to say that the board would appreciate consideration of historic signage in the context of the Vibrant Uptown project.

Ranney said the Vibrant Uptown leadership team would be meeting with landscape architects LaQuatra Bonci on Wednesday, February 26, in order to ask the firm questions. During that meeting the group would either accept the firm's proposal to do work for the project or ask for something else.

Historical Society of Mount Lebanon, Jonathan Hill: No new report.

Planning Board, Alex Ferraro and Matthew Moses: Alex Ferraro said that the planning board in January recommended the commission update the zoning code to allow a less dense use of townhouses in the R-7 district. He said there was both support and opposition to the concept from the public at the meeting.

Ranney said the commission would be holding a public hearing at its next meeting in advance of any possible vote. She said it would be small amount of property affected by that change.

Mt. Lebanon Partnership Design committee, Joe Bevins: None.

New Business: Siefken said no one had approached her about being a board officer for the new year. She asked the board to think about it before the next meeting and let her know. She also reminded the board that the deadline for application to the board is February 29. She asked Lilley if there were any applications and she said there were. Ranney asked if there was any specific types of experience that the board needed. Board members replied that real estate professionals, architects and urban planners were helpful to the board.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m. The next meeting is Monday, March 16 at 5 p.m., 710 Washington Road, Mt. Lebanon.