

## **Historical Commission Minutes June 20, 2017**

Commissioners in attendance: Maureen Noonan, Ann Bedrick, Kristine Gordon-Watson, Evie Baird, Diana Cormack, Gary Wills

Guests: Marty Raser, JoAnn Domanski, Tori Lingg, Peggy Hartzell, Pat Traphagen, Alison Mallamo

Meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM.

### **1. Minutes**

The March 21, 2017 minutes were approved.

### **2. Town Tours, 2017**

East Nantmeal's HC will take part in Town Tours and Village Walks, Tour #11 in the brochure, an August 17 lecture at Warwick County Park, and optional self-drive tour, focusing on General Washington's encampment in this area after the Battle of the Clouds and the role the region and its resources played in the American Revolution. There will be a trio of presenters, historian Michael Harris, Warwick Township Supervisor Charles Jacob, and a representative of the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust. Registration will be in a pavilion, with the lecture at 5:30 PM in the inside meeting room and refreshments and follow-up at 7:00 PM. Maureen, Kristine, Evie, Pat, Diana, JoAnn and Alison volunteered to help with registration, etc. Ann Bedrick showed us the rough draft of the map of relevant local sites. On the reverse side will be a map of the routes the troops took in September 1777 from Yellow Springs to Warwick Furnace.

### **3. Trip to Winterthur with Artifacts**

JoAnn Domanski and Maureen Noonan related details of their appointment with documents' expert Melissa Tedone at Winterthur's free conservation clinic May 11(once a month, Sept.-May).

JoAnn brought a 1843 deed of sale, which now includes the Hause Store(HRMap#29) and House(HRMap#30), to Jacob Hause. This item with three different seals was pronounced to be calfskin and in very good condition.

Maureen brought a letter, dated 16th August 1788, from Sam Harvey, Coventry Forge, to Rebecca Harvey, Charlestown. This item was early paper and also in good condition in spite of having been sent through the mail. The letter's opening content and setting details reveal that Sam Harvey wrote from the Coventry Forge office, where he kept the accounts.

The deed should be placed in a flat conservation box and wrapped in acid free paper; the letter at least placed in mylar sleeve. Future preservation plans include taking these items to Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts, Philadelphia.

### **4. Info about Endangered Historic Resources**

From Township Solicitor Oeste: Mr. Montgomery, the owner of the barn at 3463 Conestoga Road (HRMap #275), has put up a perimeter fence around this dangerously neglected property. Although the Chester County Court judge who reviewed this case (unfortunately) ordered the barn removed by April 30, the owner

has yet to comply. Solicitor Oeste had been in contact with the Court about the still ongoing situation, which could lead to the Township placing a lien. One hope is that at least the barn's stone would remain local, ideally used in restoration projects. Alison will talk to the owner of Hause's Store (HRMap #29) about help with conservation and cleanup. They have talked about this property's history, and Gary Wills brought his photographs of the interior of HRMap #29 to the February 21 meeting. More information will be sought for 102 James Mill Road (HRMap#42).

## **5. Correspondence**

Maureen gave Diane from Styer's Real Estate Rt.100N, Pottstown, information on where to get pictures and maps related to East Nantmeal for their office.

## **6. April Speakers**

April 18: Victoria Laubach, Director of Welkinweir, and HC's Ann Bedrick spoke on the Morris Tilt. Green Valley's Association at Welkinweir (HRMap#79), originally the house of the forgemaster, Edwin Morris, is purchasing ground around the site of the forge, the Morris Tilthammer (HRMap#80). Vicki had wonderful early pictures of Welkinweir and gardens.

## **7. Penndot 106 Consulting Party Meeting**

On June 12, at the Warwick Township Building, Penndot hosted a Section 106 consulting party meeting concerning the rehabilitation plan for the 1904 stone, brick-arched Mansion Road Bridge, aka Brower's Bridge. This bridge on the National Register of Historic Places is surrounded by Reading Furnace Farm, also on the National Register. To make this bridge meet current "crash worthiness," the plan involves dismantling the entire 25' bridge for interior reinforcement, etc., then rebuilding the bridge's exterior exactly, using the original stones, capstones, and brick-framed plaque. Our bridge is one of this project's Group T, nine bridges (eight much larger and much more trafficked) slated for rehab by one bid-winning contractor. In February Penndot will request bids for the repair of this group of nine historic stone arched bridges, including Brower's and the much altered, significant 1697 Frankford Avenue Bridge in Philadelphia, the oldest continuously-used roadway bridge in the United States. Penndot did a similar dismantle/reinforce/rebuild job on the Lewis Mill Rd. (aka Glen Gable) Bridge in West Nantmeal in 2013, as it plans to do on the less traveled and National Register Mansion Rd. Bridge. Penndot said that the bridge will be returned back to its original appearance after the planned work, although with total asphalt approaches rather than the current grass.

The HC plans to check out similar nearby Chester County stone arch bridges, which Penndot cited as examples of its work at the meeting. Any project comments and concerns will soon be sent to Penndot.

## **6. CCHPN Volunteer Recognition Celebration**

The CCHPN Volunteer Recognition Celebration will be June 28, 2017, at Historic Yellow Springs. Several people suggested highlighting ENHC's new page on the township website and the reprinting of *The Forgers*, in conjunction with Warwick and

South Coventry Townships, as ENHC accomplishments to be mentioned during this year's traditional roll call of Chester County historical commissions and committees.

### **7. ENT Historic House Plaques**

Kristine's house is now back to 1740 courtesy of a 1875 article in *The Pottstown Ledger*, and Tyler's to 1739, courtesy of a date stone. More work at the Archives is scheduled.

### **8. Fall Speakers**

Suggestions were made for future speakers. Two possibilities mentioned from the CCHPN March 11 Workshop were Wade Catts, the archeologist, and Jim Garrison who inspirationally related the development of his township's impressive new preservation planning model. Jim, an East Vincent HC Chair, has written a book about the work and impact of noted 20th century architect R. Brognard Okie on the understanding of early domestic architecture. Also suggested were Bob Woods, with his knowledge of this area's early Native Americans, Michael Harris, Dolly Rosen and a speaker from the herb society on colonial herbs.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.  
Kristine Gordon-Watson, Secretary