

*Township of West Orange*  
*Historic Preservation Commission*

**Meeting Minutes – February 10, 2021**

- 1) Notice of the date, time, and location of this meeting was given to the Township Clerk, was advertised in the *West Orange Chronicle*, and has been posted on the Township Bulletin Board and the Township Website in accordance with the requirements of the New Jersey Open Public Records Meetings Act.
- 2) The meeting, held via Zoom, was called to order at 7:01 P.M. Commissioners Feitlowitz, Drill, Forseth, McConell, Irvis, and Wosh, were present. Commissioners Feeney and Ficarotta were absent. Patrick Harshberger and Eryn Boyce from Hunter Research also attended the meeting, as did Kevin Malanga, a West Orange resident and Tammy Williams, our Council liaison.
- 3) The next regular Commission meeting will be held via Zoom on March 10 at 7 P.M.
- 4) Commissioner Feitlowitz welcomed Tammy Williams, our new Township Council liaison. Councilwoman Williams spoke about her background as a real estate professional and her interest in housing and the way in which historic preservation should play a constructive role in the community. She has been active in West Orange in a number of capacities, including membership on the Planning Board and most recently as chair of the Human Relations Commission.
- 5) Commissioner Feitlowitz reminded everyone that he is chairing the meeting in the absence of Brian Feeney, who is attending to some serious medical issues. The commission expressed its hope that Brian is doing well and will have a speedy recovery.
- 6) Minutes of the January meeting were approved unanimously.
- 7) Commissioner Wosh asked the representatives from Hunter Research if they could provide everyone with a link to the George V. Hecker Carriage House designation report. Patrick Harshberger agreed to send everyone a One Drive link to their mailboxes.
- 8) Commissioner Feitlowitz and the Hunter Research team presented an update on the Certified Local Government grant application. The grant is funded through the National Park Service, which provides each state with a percentage of its operating funds. The State Historic Preservation Office then is required to delegate approximately 15% of its allocation to Certified Local Governments for projects. West Orange has a good track record of receiving these grants,

and Hunter believes that this is a very competitive project. The grant will involve surveying properties that have not been covered in three other recent grants, which focused on the Main Street/Saint Cloud, Upper Gregory, and Lower Gregory neighborhoods. The current proposal primarily investigates portions of the Township west of Prospect Avenue, including many newer developments. Patrick Harshberger stated that the grant, which is due in Trenton on February 12, is 99% complete, awaiting only signatures from Township officials. The West Orange Township Council approved the proposal at its February 9 meeting, and the final signatures should arrive on February 11. At that point, Hunter will submit the proposal digitally through the State Historic Preservation Office's portal. The proposal itself runs between 70 and 80 pages, and it includes approximately two hundred properties and resources that will be surveyed in greater detail if the grant is approved. Kevin Malanga asked whether the stone wall on Prospect and Mount Pleasant Avenues has been included in the survey, and was informed that it has been included.

- 9) The St. Mark's Church congregation has not yet responded to our concerns involving the brownstone restoration and Commissioner Feitlowitz will follow up with them in the next month.
- 10) The Pleasantdale Chateau garage renovation project still appears to be on hold.
- 11) The removal of the West Orange Township Library to Essex Circle has not moved forward as yet. The Commission had been asked whether the removal of the library would have any historical implications, but the Commission did not deem the building to be of historical significance.
- 12) The five pending property designations will require public hearings. Commissioner Feitlowitz will investigate whether these might be done virtually in an effort to move things forward.
- 13) Under new business, Commissioner Wosh provided some ideas for revising the HPC website. This constitutes an important form of outreach to the general public and has the potential to raise our visibility. Some short-term goals would be: to add links to existing township and neighborhood surveys that have not yet been included on the site; to post Commission minutes; to provide a link to the Archives Finding Aid; and to provide a few sentences of contextual information that better explains the material that has been posted. Some longer-term goals might include: to scan designation reports and mount them on the site, replacing the photographs that now exist; to create a FAQs section that addresses common questions from residents; to provide instructional materials that explain, for example, how to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness or how to undertake responsible home renovation projects for historically significant properties; and to offer links to useful external resources. Other municipalities have good examples on their sites. The Commission agreed with the general direction and also mentioned some additional possibilities. Commissioner Feitlowitz introduced

the need to sponsor public programs, workshops, speakers, and tours. Commissioner McConnell mentioned that the Morris County Genealogical Society might be a good model for us to consider since it has a robust series of such programs. Commissioners Irvis and McConnell volunteered to work on the website project.

14) Kevin Malanga expressed his view that historic sites tours would be an excellent idea. He also thanked the Commission and Hunter Research for their support and interest concerning the Hecker Carriage House project and its pending designation.

15) Council member Williams expressed her support for the ideas for public engagement that had been discussed and reaffirmed her enthusiasm about working with the commission.

16) Commissioner McConnell moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Forseth seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:55.