

Township of West Orange
Historic Preservation Commission

Meeting Minutes – January 11, 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 7:04 P.M. Commissioners Feeney, Feitlowitz, Ficarotta, Forseth, McConell, Irvis, and Wosh, were present. Commissioner Drill was absent.
- 3) The next regular Commission meeting will be held via Zoom on February 10 at 7 P.M.
- 4) Minutes of the November meeting were approved unanimously as amended. The Commission did not meet in December.
- 5) Commissioners have not yet received the full report on the George V. Hecker Carriage House on Ridge Road. Chairperson Feeney will contact Patrick Harshbarger from Hunter Research to make the report available in Dropbox.
- 6) Commissioner Feeney discussed the possibility of applying for the 2021 round of Certified Local Government (CLG) grants, which are administered through the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office. The National Park Service is required to provide a percentage of its budget to states in order to preserve local resources. The West Orange Historic Preservation Commission became a Certified Local Government in 1994, and since then has received several grants that primarily have been used to conduct and update site surveys, specifically for the Main Street Corridor, Saint Cloud neighborhood, Upper Gregory area, and Lower Gregory areas. Survey grant applications require that all properties that appear to be eligible for designation be described, with block and lot numbers included. Basically, the application would require the commission to conduct a “windshield survey” of proposed areas, and Chairperson Feeney estimated (based on past experience) that the survey would likely involve about two hundred potentially eligible properties. The deadline for the next round of applications is February 15, and the size of the grants has been increased to \$50,000. Commissioners unanimously agreed that a survey application appeared the best way to proceed. Given the tight time frame and the need to consult outside expertise, Chairperson Feeney suggested engaging Hunter Research, using money that already has been encumbered from the current budget, to prepare the proposal. Commissioners unanimously agreed.

Commissioner Feitlowitz next discussed areas that might be incorporated into the new survey. These included: the Walker Road area, which would complete the Upper Gregory survey; the western section of the township from the area of Turtle Back Zoo to Mayapple Hill, including such streets as Woods End Road, Dogwood Road, and Aspen Road, as well as such structures as South Mountain Arena and the Jewish Community Center Metrowest; the area west of Pleasant Valley Way, especially the National Guard Armory; Mount Pleasant Place, which boasts several fine homes and a firehouse constructed of fieldstone; several properties on Old Indian Road that might not have been included in the Saint Cloud survey; the neighborhood north of Northfield Avenue and east of Gregory that contains several notable mansions; the German Presbyterian cemetery off of Eagle Rock Avenue; and the Green Hill Nursing Home that once housed Green's Hotel. Once this survey has been concluded, updated information on structures and neighborhoods should be available for virtually the entire township. The Commission unanimously agreed to move forward with the application.

Commissioner Feeney announced that he will not be present for the February and March meetings owing to some medical issues that require attention. Commissioner Feitlowitz will assume the chair in his absence.

The meeting adjourned at 8:49.