

Chesterfield Township
Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Minutes March 7, 2023

Chairman Karl Braun called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

The Open Public Meeting Statement was read and Compliance Noted

Roll Call:

Present- Karl Braun, James Codella, Robert Forwood, Jill Moraca, Joseph Ratajczak, Jennifer Lynch, Matthew Litt, Liaison, Denise Koetas-Dale, Liaison

Absent- Timothy Beggs

Approval of Minutes: James Codella made a motion seconded by Joseph Ratajczak to approve the regular February 7th meeting minutes. All were in favor, motion carried.

New Business:

- **CrossPoint Facility-**

HPC opened a discussion regarding the Bullock mansion COA demolition application. Mr. Braun explained that the discussion held will be advisory only, in terms of the COA process the HPC's role is to review the application but the Planning Board has the final say. The Fellowship CrossPoint Church made application to demolish the Bullock Mansion on February 10th. Upon receipt of the application it was deemed incomplete. Karl Braun reached out to HPC attorney John Gillespie esq. who then provided the HPC with guidance on the timeline in which they could respond with a deficiency letter. There was a 10 day period in which the HPC could respond. The HPC sent out a letter of deficiency on 2/16/23 to Mr. Brennan Coughlin of the CrossPoint church. Response was received from Fellowship CrossPoint attorney Peter A. Chacanas esq. on February 27th. John Gillespie esq. reviewed and provided guidance on how to proceed.

Mr. Braun asked for a motion of support Mr. Codella made the motion seconded by Ms. Lynch, all were in favor, motion carried.

Mr. Braun read Ordinance 123-13 for member discussion and comments.

Mr. Litt stated that the analysis performed is preliminary and is not intended to be comprehensive final analysis.

Ordinance 123-13 A-L Procedure for Commissions review of demolition permits additions, alterations, and new construction.

123-13

- A. Its importance to the municipality and the extent to which it's historical or architectural value is such that removal would be detrimental to the public interest.**

All members agreed that the removal of the Bullock Mansion would be detrimental to the Chesterfield community due to the mansions prominent spot in the township.

123-13

- B. Its status with regard to the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, i.e., whether it is individually listed or eligible to be listed: whether it is a part of a registered or eligible historic district, and whether, within that district, it is a key, contributing or non-contributing building.**

Mr. Braun explained that there was a national nomination on June 9th 1975 when the Bullock Mansion was listed number 8 building in this area of Victorian architecture dated 1876.

Discussion was held over why the HPC was not granted permission to do a walkthrough of the mansion. The purpose of the walkthrough was supposed to be to evaluate the condition and to brainstorm ways to help rehabilitate or at least stabilize the structure. In conclusion the HPC was not granted permission to make the walkthrough possible.

123-13

- C. The extent to which it is such old, unusual or uncommon design, craftsmanship, texture or material that it could not be reproduced or could be reproduced only with difficulty.**

Mr. Forwood took language from the Historic Inventory from the National Register Nomination of the Bullock Mansion from 1975. The national register pointed out some features and details from the nomination that are not easily reproduced and would definitely not cheap to reproduce.

123-13

- D. The extent to which it's retention would promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new jobs, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists, and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in studying architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage or making the municipality a more attractive and desirable place to live.**

All members agreed that the location of the mansion is significant in that it helps distinguish The Chesterfield Historic district, as well as increasing property value for everyone in Chesterfield.

E. The probable impact of its removal upon the ambience of the historic district, if it's within a historic district.

Mr. Braun stated that the mansion is within the district and that its loss would be a serious loss to the district.

F. Whether the site contains any extant archaeological resources.

Mr. Braun stated that since the site was heavily disturbed and modified it is unlikely there would be any archeological resources.

G. Whether the historic landmark represents the last or best remaining example of its kind in the Township that possesses research potential or public education values.

Mr. Braun stated it is a Victorian style building it is an outstanding example of this type of building in the township and it is a hallmark in many ways.

H. Whether the historic landmark can be preserved by protecting its location from disturbance

Mr. Braun explained that the location is well set back and so it can be preserved, he mentioned subdivision to see if the church can also benefit while preserving the historic building.

Mr. Braun stated that the first step will be to begin to craft questions directed to the CrossPoint owner to possibly come together and stabilize this structure.

Mr. Litt states the questions should be directly related to the ordinance discussed 123-13 A-L.

I. Whether redesign of the development proposal to avoid impact can result in the preservation of the building or structure in question

Mr. Braun stated that redesign could reference alternate uses of the building. He explained that the first step is to stabilize the building before considering redesign.

J. The historic, architectural, aesthetic and social significance of the structure or building and/or importance or uniqueness to the township and the extant archaeological resources.

Mr. Braun Stated he does not think the archeological resources are significant but he feels the uniqueness does contribute to the community.

K. Whether protective measures will result in long-term preservation of the historic landmark

Mr. Braun states the first step is taking protective measures. He referenced the Mince Meat factory in Crosswicks where the structure could not be saved due to deterioration.

L. Whether the steps necessary to preserve the Historic Landmark are feasible and practical

Discussion was held regarding if the HPC could offer any resources to help the applicant with the stabilization process or at least mothballing it for safety purposes. Mr. Litt stated he can't promise success on any particular grant but that he is aware of Historic grants on both a state and national level. He does believe that the grants may be harder to get approved due to the church being religious use.

The members discussed the procedure if the commission were to state that demolition is not feasible.

Planning Board –

The HPC has provided a document for the technical review committee to use in terms for its review of the OYCC warehouse application.

Mr. Braun asked for a motion to circulate the document.

Mr. Forwood made a motion seconded by Mr. Codella all were in favor, motion carried.

Old Business:

A discussion was held regarding the procedure for getting the 1740 Black House registered as a historic Landmark. Mr. Litt clarified that there is preliminary work that needs to be done by the commission prior to going to the Township Committee. The HPC is looking into doing a walkthrough of the 1740 Black House. The HPC will follow up with Tom Sahol

The HPC will be conducting a walkthrough of the Crosswicks firehouse on Friday March 10th at 10am. Public notice has been served.

General Discussion:

Jim Mckeown who has been a great member of the HPC over the years, has decided he is no longer able to continue to serve on the HPC. Timothy Beggs will be joining the HPC on April 4th.

Public comments and questions:

Mr. Codella made a motion seconded by Mr. Forwood to open public comment.

Peter Chacianas, Fellowship CrossPoint attorney. Stated he will be holding off on making any comment today based of the new information that an additional letter will be sent to CrossPoint requesting more information. He stated that he was present for the HPC

meeting in November where he had first heard of the Demolition by Neglect ordinance. Upon hearing the ordinance was possibly going up for adoption his client decided to back out of the walkthrough at this time as he felt after a phone call with Mr. Litt the ordinance was being used as leverage toward his client at CrossPoint.

Valerie Jones, 21 Buttonwood St. Discussed concern that the church should not be responsible financially for fixing a building they just gained ownership of 2 years ago. She referenced the old Township building and states that it was lost due to Township neglect.

Agnes Marsala, 42 Cromwell Dr. States that the property was gifted to the church and that they could repurpose the building and use it for tourism or a bed and breakfast.

Brennan Coughlin, 10 Tudor Ct. Pastor of CrossPoint, Discussed the importance of accuracy. He voiced concern that there is inaccurate and untrue statements being spread on different social media platforms. He clarified that the CrossPoint church did not acquire the property from Shadyrest Bible Church until 2020 when they joined congregations. Fellowship CrossPoint had nothing to do with the construction of the new church building in 2005. There was no financial transaction as CrossPoint did not purchase the property.

Judy Cherry, 29 Ray Dwier drive, Hamilton. Explained that she has gone to Shadyrest bible church for 67 years. The founders of Shadyrest church are her aunt and uncle. She explained she has a lot of heritage in the mansion and a lot of personal experiences in the mansion however the structure is a money drain, two thirds of the money the ministry collects is used for PSE&G bill for a vacant building.

Janet Castle 737 Juliustown-georgetown rd, Jobstown. Discussed growing up in Chesterfield her whole life and she did not know the historical significance of the mansion until recently. She explained it is a beautiful structure but it didn't bring anything to her time growing up here in Chesterfield.

Kurt Cherry 29 Ray Dwire Dr. Hamilton. Discussed being the treasurer for ShadyRest for well over 20 years. He stated that he deals with government budgets and that Shadyrest was far more difficult to do the budget for since there were no funds. He feels that the mansion has outlived its use.

Mr. Rataczack made a motion seconded by Ms. Lynch to close public comment, all were in favor Motion carried.

Adjournment

Mr. Codella made a motion seconded by Mr. Forwood to adjourn the meeting, all were in favor Motion carried at 8:39pm.