

**MINUTES of March 18, 2025 MEETING of the Commission  
(via Zoom)**

**Adopted April 15, 2025**

**Members Present:** The meeting began at approximately 7:40 pm. Bob Booher, Bill Earl, Wendy Harris, Mimi Styles, Sam Suzich (retiring alternate), and Kirk Greenway (new alternate) were present. Barbara Raimondo (TC liaison) did not attend because of a TC scheduling conflict.

**Approval of Agenda**

Minor changes to the proposed agenda were made and it was unanimously approved.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Minor corrections were made to the draft minutes of the February meeting, and they were unanimously approved.

**Review Session**

There were no projects submitted for review.

**Commemorative Signage**

Sam reported that she had not been able to get together with Kathy in the Town Office to obtain photo scans needed for the commemorative signage graphics. Although she is stepping down from her HPC role, Sam will continue to work on this project, which has been included in the HPC's budget for the next fiscal year. Bob reported that no questions about it have been raised by the Town Council.

**House Signage**

The HPC discussed offering homeowners the opportunity to purchase signs that would identify their homes as historic, or as contributing resources to the Washington Grove Historic District. To be decided is whether the signs should be generic--identifying them simply as contributing resources to the Historic District, or custom--calling out the unique history or characteristics of individual houses. The Blue Plaque system used in the U.K. was offered as a model for the latter type of program. Also discussed was the potential impact on a signage program should either the National Register or the Department of the Interior cease to exist in the future. Mimi will contact Erie Landmark, the vendor who has supplied the annual award plaques to obtain some pricing information about bronze vs. aluminum plaques. It was noted that Erie's website reports their foundry is currently out of service.

The purpose of having house plaques and goals for the program should be thought through by individual members and brought back for discussion at the April meeting.

**Multi-Use Path**

Bob reported that the Multi-Use Path project should be ready to proceed to the next design stage following the public hearing that took place on Thursday, March 6, in McCathran Hall and by Zoom. The mandatory referral review is the next step, but it has not yet been scheduled. The

project manager doubts there will be comments from other agencies that will slow progress. The Town has already provided comments on the configuration of the path, lighting, landscaping, etc.

### **Review Priorities for Archive Work**

Bob continued to express concern about the progress Pat has been able to make with archive work, due to her health issues and computer hacking that she reported to him by email. Additional steps will need to be taken.

### **Commercial Corner**

Bob reported that the mayor has become more involved in the Commercial Corner issue; he would like a public-private agreement between the Town and the property owner for redevelopment of the property (restoration of the Odd Fellows Hall, addition of apartments on the second story and retail on the ground level). The town attorney is reviewing the agreement (which stipulates the Town would change the zoning dependent upon execution of the mutual development agreement). The Town has received letters from the Appleby family expressing concern about potential redevelopment. Sam said that she and her husband attended the most recent PC meeting to express concern about apartments above the retail area and questioned whether there will be sufficient space for new resident parking, as well as potential increased traffic in the neighborhood and the impact on pedestrians and children playing along Hickory Road. Sam said that neither the PC nor TC had reached out to neighbors about redevelopment plans.

### **Steatite Quarry**

Wendy reported that the County Parks have an increased interest in steatite quarries, especially those with archaeological significance, or possible significance. She mentioned the acquisition of a site called "Ednor" which has a steatite quarry and is being developed into a park to highlight the history of Indigenous people in Montgomery County. County Parks now have an archeologist there and a geologist on staff, who will be exploring other quarry sites owned by the County. Wendy is trying to coordinate a visit by the County geologist and Caleb Fassett, who has ties to Washington Grove and who has examined the quarry site during previous visits. Wendy reminded that Caleb does not see evidence of human quarrying; he feels that the exposed steatite is the result of water and erosion. There is a narrow window of time when the quarry can be examined because of heavy vegetation; it will be too overgrown by the end of April.

### **Bulletin Material**

Mimi has now heard from a representative of Peach Orchard Retreat Center (operating on the site of the former Spencerville Camp Meeting) and hopes to visit its grounds and museum before our next meeting.

### **Planning Commission Meeting**

Sam attended the March PC meeting. Her comments about the redevelopment of the Commercial Corner are included above. There was also a report about a survey of Railroad Street, clearing the sides of that road, making it more walkable. There was also discussion about a proposed deck and screened-in porch at 123 Washington Grove Lane.

### **Town Council Meeting Report**

Barbara, our TC liaison, was not in attendance at our meeting. Bob attended the last TC meeting and reported on the introduction of the Vacant Properties Ordinance. The proposed ordinance is

based on the experience of other municipalities and includes the requirement for registration, with fines imposed for failure to comply.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:50 pm. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, April 15, at 7:30 pm via Zoom.