

Upper Makefield Historical Advisory Commission (HAC) Meeting Minutes – August 20, 2012

Present: Cynthia Maxel, Maureen Ferrazzi, Peter Crawford, Virginia Cleary and the Supervisor's Representative Larry Breeden and Historic Conservancy Jeff Marshall

1. Minutes – The Minutes from the HAC meeting were approved via email and forwarded to the Board of Supervisors.
2. The Agenda items: The HAC welcomed our new appointee Virginia Cleary.
3. Agenda items: The Committee perused a letter from the Bucks County Register of Wills and Orphans' Court and the Meeting Notes from the 5/16/12 meeting Notes on the topic of Historic and Genealogical Advisory Panel. These letters have been submitted with these minutes.
4. Agenda item: Jeff perused a copy of the draft Preservation Ordinance for information about the categories regarding Upper Makefield Twp. Homes and historic structures. The Committee began the process of regarding the historic properties in the Township. Jeff presented an evaluation and a recommendation for each property listed based on the four categories of property significance and the Committee then evaluated his findings. The 4 Classes of resources include: Class 1: buildings, sites, districts on the National Register of Historic Sites and Building, sites, Districts eligible for the Register. Class 2: Buildings, sites, structures determined to be of high historical or architectural value to the Newtown Area Joint Municipal Zoning Map Area. Class 3: Buildings, sites, structures, and objects listed on the Inventory not meeting criteria for Class 1 or Class 2 but deserving of protection and preservation. Class 4: Buildings, sites, structures, objects, districts that are historic due to their age, but whose current condition is too altered that preservation and protection would be futile. The Committee discussed the evaluated properties and made an effort to understand the various Classes of eligibility and the impact on Upper Makefield Township. The responsibility of the Committee according to our mandate is to establish those properties worthy of protecting so that the Supervisors can make an intelligent evaluation when it comes to their demolition or preservation.
5. The Committee received from Maureen a 2 part letter from a local realtor Mart Dinneen entitled A Citizen's Guide to Protecting Historic Places by Constance E. Beaumont, a State and Local Policy Director for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It was her hope that it would present some useful information on the topic for all members.
7. The Committee set the next meeting for 6:30 on September 24, 2012.

Respectfully submitted

Maureen J Ferrazzi: Secretary

Minutes Approved August 28, 2012

**Bucks County
Register of Wills and
Orphans' Court**

Memo

To: All Members
ROW/OC Historic & Genealogical Advisory Panel

From: Sheila Bass

Cc: Donald Petrille, Jr., Register of Wills & Clerk of the Orphans' Court

Date: 5/21/2012

Re: Meeting Notes 5/16/12

ROWOC HISTORIC & GENEALOGICAL ADVISORY PANEL

5/16/12

Meeting commenced at 3:00 p.m. in the Courthouse Lawyer's Lounge with Don Petrille and Sheila Bass. The following organizations were represented and welcomed by Mr. Petrille:

Yardley Historic Association	Charlie Thomforde
Mercer Museum	Sara Good
Latter Day Saints – Family History Center	Gery Vallette

Don Petrille gave an overview of what our office has been accomplishing:

1. Currently imaging new Court cases;
2. Keeping original documents in acid-free files;
3. Writing an RFP regarding imaging and indexing all historic documents, including marriage licenses, death records and probate issues; and
4. Initiating remote access in the future, once scanning is complete.

It was noted by Gery Vallette, and Sara Good confirmed, that OCR of 18th century files can be hard to read. The question is whether to have our ROW/OC staff do the job or outsource. Mr. Vallette stated that the Friends Historic Library in Swarthmore is doing OCR and also has on-line access for the public while the Mercer Museum does not. Sara Good noted that Terry McNeale, the former Director of the Mercer, had signed letters to accept the "long term loan" of records from the Register of Wills and Orphans' Court in the past. Ms. Good suggested that Mr. Petrille call Susan Hartman.

Mr. Vallette discussed educational initiatives from the Church of Latter Day Saints, which has on-line and indexed genealogy with no fee. However, they do charge for copies. The Mercer Museum, per Ms. Good, charges \$10 for admission for full access to their library and they also do workshops. Mr. Thomforde noted that the Pennsbury Manor conducts educational programs and would be happy to collaborate. He also suggested that Mr. Petrille contact their leadership.

Mr. Vellella related that the Massachusetts Genealogical Society lists every historic site in that state. He amusingly stated that if a County cannot take care of their records, the State must take the records. While this is also true in Pennsylvania, per Ms. Good, the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission has resisted this due to spacing considerations.

Don Petrille has thought about exploring establishing a Records Center when the existing Courthouse is reconfigured. The facility would be fitted with humidity and light controls, and would house records of multiple offices. Ms. Good explained it may be more cost efficient for County offices to further partner with the Mercer/Spruance Museum.

Ms. Good noted that they are digitizing documents into TIF format, which her research indicates realistically only lasts about 15 years. Both Mr. Petrille and Ms. Good would like to see more collaboration with Register of Wills/Orphans' Court in the future. A tour was then led by Mr. Petrille with Ms. Good and Mr. Vellella. Both seemed pleasantly surprised by our set-up and accessibility.



DONALD PETRILLE, JR., ESQUIRE
Register of Wills and Clerk of the Orphans' Court
Bucks County Courthouse, 55 E. Court Street, Doylestown, PA 18901
Email: registerofwills@co.bucks.pa.us

David G. Costello, First Deputy
Patricia A. Murphy, Second Deputy
Robert A. Mancini, Solicitor

Telephone: (215) 348-6265
(800) 942-8257
Facsimile: (215) 348-6156

May 23, 2012

Cynthia Maxel, Chair
Upper Makefield Township Historic Society
1076 Eagle Road
Newtown, PA 18940

Re: ROW/OC Historic & Genealogical Advisory Panel

Dear Ms. Maxel:

We're sorry that you were unable to attend our first meeting of the ROW/OC Historic and Genealogical Advisory Panel. Your input, however, is important to Bucks County and to all local organizations for future planning of document storage and preservation of all of our historic records.

It was certainly enlightening to hear each group's updates on records and programming. Please note that we will be having future meetings in order to continue this pertinent dialogue and will keep you on our mailing list.

Sincerely,



Donald Petille, Jr.

DP/sb

Enc. Meeting Notes 5/16/12