



West Vincent Township Historical Commission  
Meeting Minutes for March 12, 2025 (Approved April 9, 2025)

**Commission Members in Attendance:** Kate Farnham, Chair, Suzanne Bender, Peter Benton. Absent: Bob Wise, Vice Chair

**Township Supervisors in Attendance:** Dana Alan

**Call to Order:** Meeting called to order 7:03 pm

**Approval of Minutes:** January 8, 2025 Minutes prepared by Peter Benton: Motion for Approval by Suzanne Bender; Peter Benton seconds. Motion carries unanimously.

**Applications:** There were no applications.

**Board Vacancy:** Stephen Foley has submitted an application to the Board of Supervisors for the open position on the Historical Commission and attended the meeting. Several existing board members have had the opportunity to speak with him over the past few weeks. Stephen is a partner in the architectural firm Foley Hillestad Architecture and lives in a historic house on Chester Springs Road.

A Motion to recommend appointment of Stephen Foley to the Historical Commission by the Board of Supervisors was made by Peter Benton, second by Suzanne Bender. Motion carries unanimously.

**Old Business:**

**1. Birchrun Road Bridge:** PennDOT has completed a Phase I archeological survey and reported its findings of no effect. Findings with respect to impacts on historic resources have not been posted, though the bridge itself is considered not contributing to the significance of the Birchrunville National Register Historic District. Bob will work on a letter to PennDOT on our view of impacts to the rural character of the Historic District, which we will present to the Board of Supervisors concurrence and approval.

**2. Bertolet School Bridge:** Chester County and PennDOT will construct a new bridge over French Creek adjacent to the existing historic bridge, which will remain for pedestrian use. Construction will begin next year.

**3. Griffith Farm:** Bob is working on a letter with recommendations to the Supervisors for review by Commission members.

**4. Inventory:** Bob and Cindy met to finalize the revised inventory, and final changes are being made.

**5. 1245 Schoolhouse Lane:** No demolition permit has yet been submitted for the historic house. The Historical Commission must be permitted to take record photos before demolition is allowed.

**6. Township Barn:** Bernie Couris emailed Peter Benton expressing concern about the floor of the barn. Jim Wendelgass, Interim Township Manager, asked that we wait until the new Township Manager is in place before addressing the issue. Peter noted that the two small portions of flooring under the former holes in the metal roofing (now repaired) are deteriorated, but the overall flooring appears to be in good condition. Nonetheless, a structural engineer experienced in historic barns (Ortega Consulting) should be asked to look at the flooring and floor beam below to stipulate measures that should be undertaken, including limits on loading if necessary. The new Township Manager is expected to start in late March.



**7. 3070 Horseshoe Trail:** Three sets of neighbors were in attendance to discuss the condition of the property. Historical Commission members have reviewed the property, and though general maintenance is needed, conditions of the vacant house, outbuilding, and carriage house are not threatening the buildings to the extent that the Demolition by Neglect provision of the Zoning Ordinance would be triggered.

The issue is a large amount of trash and junk furniture in the property's yard. Dana Alan noted that the Board of Supervisors is looking at how to address the issue, which will be assigned to the new Township Manager. Names of attendees were taken so they can be updated on progress.

**New Business:**

1. None

**Reports:**

1. Current assignments as Committee Liaisons are: RW – BoS; KF – PC; PB – OSC.

2. Planning Commission: Peter Benton noted that several projects under review by the Planning Commission are of interest to the Historical Commission:

- **1178/1240 Birchrun Road (Emery Farm):** In February, the Planning Commission reviewed a conceptual development plan for the two farms at this location. The properties are about 100 acres in area, and 156 single family dwelling are proposed. 48.63 acres of open space are proposed encompassing the two farmsteads. Dana Alan noted that this was not a formal submission. The developers met with Jim Wendelgass, Interim Township manager, for an informal review, and Jim took the conceptual plan to the Planning Commission for their information. The proposed plan does not conform to the Township's Zoning Ordinance (R-3 District). This is an ongoing potential development to remain aware of.
- **1414 Birchrun Road:** This property has been under review since August. The owners propose a minor subdivision of the c.60-acre property into two lots. One lot without buildings will be accessed via Jaine Lane. The other lots with a proposed new residence and an existing barn used as a residence is accessed via Birchrun Road. A conditional use is also required related to the stormwater detention system. Both are being approved, but the PC is awaiting revised drawings before final approval. The historic barn is to be retained as an accessory dwelling. The historic farmhouse was demolished years ago.
- **Butterscotch Pastry Shop:** Conditional use changes have been under review since May 2024 involving interior expansion and exterior seating that has been in place since COVID but never formally approved. Neighbors have been concerned about excessive exterior use and parking capacity. Issues relate primarily to the exterior use impact on the village. There are no issues related to the historic building. Dana Alan stated that the Historical Commission should consider whether it has any guidance or issues related to potential impacts including changes/expansion of parking. The HC should maintain awareness of proposals as the reviews proceed.

3. HRC Report:

**Sheeder Hall Covered Bridge:** Cindy reported that the commemoration of the Sheeder Hall Covered Bridge's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary will be held on Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. Speakers are welcome. They are seeking a grant for installation of a marker.



**Highlands Presentation:** The presentation about the Highlands National Register Historic District will be held on May 28<sup>th</sup> at the Township Building. Bob Wise and Cindy are meeting to work on the presentation.

**Business from Floor:** None

**Adjournment:** The meeting ended at 8:15 upon motion by Peter Benton and second by Suzanne Bender. All HC members approved.

Respectfully submitted by Peter Benton, April 5, 2025

