Meeting of the Mendham Township Historic Preservation Committee  
Wednesday, April 4, 2018 7:30 pm  
Town Hall

Members in Attendance: Vanessa Brown (participating by phone,) Corey Holquist, Melissa Saharko, Bob Scialla, James Zemaitis, Patricia Zimmerman

Other Attendees: Amalia Duarte, HPC’s representative on the Township Committee

Patricia Zimmerman called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Pat distributed a copy of a photograph depicting a “Washington’s Instant Coffee” airplane.

Pat gave a short history of the HPC and explained its role. She and Bob noted some past projects of the Committee. Pat and Vanessa explained the Committee’s role, which is to report and offer our opinion to the Township Committee. The HPC should not take independent action on its own without consultation of the Township Committee. Each member introduced themselves and discussed their background and interests. Vanessa announced she is running for Morris County Freeholder.

Pat distributed copies of Ordinance No. 2018-2, which establishes the Historic Preservation Committee for Mendham Township. The Committee discussed the Ordinance. The Committee has an annual budget of $500 and has an office and other storage space.

Pat distributed copies of Section VII Historic Preservation Plan of Mendham Township’s Master Plan. Included is a map of the Township’s historic districts. Pat gave a brief history of the establishment of the historic districts. The Committee discussed the Master Plan.

The Committee discussed our visit to Mosle Mansion. The Committee’s conclusion is that the property is in such disrepair as to be unsalvageable and no parts of it can be preserved given the nature of the project. On behalf of the HPC, Bob drafted a letter to Mayor Diegnan on March 20, 2018. Pat distributed copies of the letter to the group.

The Committee discussed the Verizon Wireless 5G nodes which are proposed to go in the Township’s historic districts. The nodes going on Union Schoolhouse Road (USR) require additional consideration as the power supply for the nodes runs underground. The Committee discussed the location, appearance, and purpose of the nodes. Recently, CBRE, representing Verizon, determined that the poles will be owned by Verizon Landline. It was agreed that because of the problem with overheating in the latest shroud design, the light brown color painted on shrouds along Corey Lane will be acceptable for use in our historic districts. The conclusion of the HPC is that we will request that Verizon stain the poles a dark brown and paint the cable and meter to match the pole. The HPC remains firm that the power for the nodes on USR must be trenched and remain underground, so as to preserve the pristine nature of the road.
The Committee has one additional question about the poles – if changes are made to the poles and/or equipment in the future, will we have the opportunity to give input?

The Committee discussed the history of rebuilding bridges in the Township. The Committee discussed the Washington Valley Bridge and Bob reviewed the HPC’s involvement. The HPC has proposed a sign to be erected by Union Schoolhouse Bridge which would show images of the original bridge circa 1909. New Jersey’s State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) submitted the signage to the Department of Transportation, who wishes to have the original photographs. Pat and Melissa will conduct a search of the archives to locate them.

The Committee discussed the blacksmithing video which was made by Doug Black, but was never received by the Township. Sadly, Mr. Black died suddenly in early February. The location of the video is unknown. The HPC suggested that Rich Brusco, the subject of the video, or the Mendham TV people may be able to find the film in his files or computer if given permission by his family. The Committee discussed where the video might appear once it is located.

The Committee discussed the location of the Township’s archives. Some materials are in a vault near the Town Administrator’s office. There is also a room at the elementary school with several filing cabinets full of materials. Melissa expressed a desire to catalog and perhaps digitize some of the material. Bud Hall, a former Mendham resident, is believed to have a collection of arrowheads he gathered in the area over the years. We would like to locate him to see if he is interested in donating them to the Township.

The Committee discussed Pitney Farms. At one time, there had been some discussion about having a permanent location at Pitney for the HPC and the Township’s archives. Amalia said that the Township Committee was still waiting for the Friends of Pitney to come back with their plan.

The Committee discussed a proposal to rezone some lots from ten (10) acres to five (5) acres.

The Committee agreed that future meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, May 2, at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.