

UPPER ALLEN TOWNSHIP
HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
April 15, 2025

MEMBERS

Matthew Taylor, Chairperson
Natasha Adler, Vice-Chairperson
Susan Sears
John Esser
Christina Rockey
Joseph Botchie
Frank Grottola, UAT Building Inspector (absent)

TOWNSHIP STAFF

Jennifer Boyer, Comm. Develop. Director
Scott Finkenbiner, Planning Technician

Board of Commissioners Liaison

Commissioner Phil Walsh

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Upper Allen Township Historical Architectural Review Board was called to order on Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at 6:30 PM at the Upper Allen Township Municipal Building. Roll Call was taken by Chair Taylor. Mr. Grottola was noted as being absent.

ANNUAL BOARD REORGANIZATION

Chair Taylor called for recommendations for the Annual Board Reorganization. Mr. Botchie made a **MOTION** to nominate Mr. Taylor to serve as Chairperson. The **MOTION** was seconded by Ms. Adler. The **MOTION** carried unanimously (6-0). Mr. Taylor made a **MOTION** to have Mr. Botchie serve as Vice-Chairperson. The **MOTION** was seconded by Ms. Adler. The **MOTION** carried unanimously (6-0).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Esser to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2024, meeting. The **MOTION** was seconded by Vice-Chair Botchie. The **MOTION** carried unanimously. (6-0)

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion of historic district signs

Ms. Boyer explained that the township is planning to install welcome signs along the roadside at the entrances of the historic districts, as well as street sign toppers within those districts. She presented the design of the signs and the proposed locations for the welcome signs to the board. Vice-Chair Botchie, inquired about the size of the welcome signs. Ms. Boyer responded that they would measure 24 inches by 36 inches. The purpose of presenting the signs to the board is to gather feedback on their design and placement, which will then be submitted to the Board of Commissioners (BOC) for further consideration.

Commissioner Walsh stated that each district would have its own unique design for the welcome sign, which would also be reflected in the street topper. The cost of these signs will vary based on the materials and designs chosen, and quotes are still being finalized. Additionally, these signs will inform home buyers that they are purchasing a home within a historic district. He also suggested the signs may serve as a traffic control measure for some motorists.

Mr. Esser asked for clarification on whether the street toppers would be added to the existing street signs or if new poles would be needed. He also inquired whether the back of the welcome signs would

indicate that drivers were exiting the district. Ms. Boyer explained that the toppers would be placed on top of the existing street signs, while the welcome signs would be entirely new installations and would not include a message about exiting the district.

Vice-Chair Botchie inquired whether the signs would be positioned along state roads. Ms. Boyer responded that Lisburn Road is a state road, which may necessitate obtaining permission from homeowners to place the signs outside of the right-of-way (ROW). Furthermore, if the signs are placed within any ROW, considerations will need to be made regarding sight distances and visibility, along with the requirement to obtain a Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) from PennDOT.

Chair Taylor asked Commissioner Walsh whether he believed that installing only the sign toppers would suffice or if the welcome sign was essential. Commissioner Walsh responded that the welcome sign is not only essential but also likely more important, as it is larger and will attract more attention than the sign toppers.

Ms. Boyer inquired if anyone had concerns regarding the placement of the signs. Vice-Chair Botchie suggested adding a sign on S. York St, as it serves as another entrance to the Shepherdstown district. Ms. Boyer confirmed that this recommendation would be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners for their consideration. Commissioner Walsh then recommended relocating the western welcome sign for the Yellow Breeches District closer to Lisburn Road and the railroad bridge, as the trees along McCormick Road in that area could obstruct visibility of the sign, and it is closer to the entrance to the district. Vice-Chair Botchie concurred with Commissioner Walsh's suggestion, pointing out that there is a clear area along the road, near an entrance to the farmland, where the sign could be placed.

Chair Taylor made a **MOTION** to recommend the approval of the sign toppers. The **MOTION** was seconded by Mr. Esser. The **MOTION** carried unanimously (6-0).

Chair Taylor made a **MOTION** to recommend approval of the cast iron historic district sign designs. The **MOTION** was seconded by Mr. Esser. The **MOTION** carried unanimously (6-0).

Chair Taylor made a **MOTION** to relocate the McCormick Road western entrance sign to the Yellow Breeches District, positioning it closer to the railroad underpass. The **MOTION** was seconded by Ms. Adler. The **MOTION** carried unanimously (6-0).

2. Discussion of amending historic district ordinance and map

Ms. Boyer explained that in 2022, the township hired a consultant to investigate the reasons for the creation of each historic district, as this information was not documented when they were originally established. After the consultant completed their research, the discussion shifted to whether all districts should continue to exist or if any should be dissolved. A decision was made to dissolve the Rosegarden and Trout Run districts; however, no formal action has been taken, and all four districts remain in place. Additionally, staff have not received any policy directions on how to update the historic district ordinance. As a result, this issue has been brought before the board again to seek recommendations to present to the Board of Commissioners.

Vice-Chair Botchie recommended starting the discussion with the Rosegarden District. Chair Taylor asked whether the district was established due to the mill that is no longer located there. Ms. Boyer clarified that the district was believed to have been created because of the mill, even though the mill may have been removed prior to the establishment of the district. Currently, the district consists of only one home and the land where the mill once stood. Chair Taylor pointed out that while the home is historic, a single residence does not constitute a district. Vice-Chair Botchie agreed, stating that he believed the district should be dissolved.

Chair Taylor called for a **MOTION** on the Rosegarden historic district. Vice-Chair Botchie made a **MOTION** to recommend dissolving the Rosegarden Historic District. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Ms. Sears. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Chair Taylor recommended that the discussion move on to the Trout Run district. Ms. Boyer provided an overview of the district, explaining the current location of its boundary and noted that new homes have been built within this area since the boundary was established. Chair Taylor questioned whether the district could be redrawn to move the western boundary behind the modern townhouses in the Ashcombe Farms development, thus excluding them from the district. Ms. Boyer clarified that while districts can be reduced in size, and the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) will accept such changes, expanding a district requires a certification process that must justify the expansion.

Chair Taylor made a **MOTION** to redraw the Trout Run District to exclude the modern townhomes in the Ashcombe Farms development. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Ms. Rockey. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Next, Chair Taylor asked to move on to the Shepherdstown historic district. Ms. Boyer described the location of the district's boundaries and mentioned that there had previously been discussions about removing certain properties from the district. These properties include one along the private road Scenic Drive, two on S. York Street, and four properties along Gettysburg Pike in front of Daybreak Church.

Ms. Rockey inquired whether removing these properties from the district would allow for their future development. Ms. Boyer clarified that it is the zoning district, rather than the historic district, that dictates what can be built on a property. However, she noted that any construction within a thousand feet of a historic district must adhere to additional requirements designed to protect the integrity of the existing district.

Public Comment

Phil Walsh of 443 McCormick Road expressed that being in a designated historic district offers certain inherent protections. He pointed out that if the modern homes were removed from the district, it could lead to current or future homeowners not preserving the character of the district.

Chair Taylor called for a **MOTION** on the Shepherdstown historic district. Vice-Chair Botchie made a **MOTION** to recommend keeping the Shepherdstown Historic District as it is currently drawn. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Ms. Sears.

During discussion of Vice-Chair Botchie's motion, Ms. Adler suggested altering the boundary to exclude the property along Scenic Drive.

Public Comment

Phil Walsh of 443 McCormick Road reiterated that removing properties from the districts can be dangerous for future development of those properties. However, he would not oppose the proposed amendment to remove the property along Scenic Drive, as it is situated on a private drive and is not visible from the public right-of-way.

Vice-Chair Botchie made an amended **MOTION** to recommend keeping the Shepherdstown Historic District as is, apart from removing the property on Scenic Drive (333 Scenic Drive) from the district. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Chair Taylor. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Ms. Boyer started a discussion about the Yellow Breeches historic district, noting that the original boundary map from the 1970s has been interpreted in various ways over the years. At times, it included only the first 200 feet of a property, while at other times, it encompassed the entire property. In the draft map for potential changes, no modifications were proposed for this district.

Ms. Sears made a **MOTION** to recommend keeping the Yellow Breeches Historic District as it is currently drawn. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Vice-Chair Botchie. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Ms. Boyer asked if the board had any thoughts on what should be included or changed in a new or updated ordinance. The current ordinance is quite brief; it only defines the districts and outlines the powers and procedures of the board. Are there additional topics that should be included, such as rules for residents to follow in each district, regulations regarding demolition by neglect, or any other changes or information?

Chair Taylor asked if these changes would relate to the potential homeowner's guide. Ms. Boyer responded that the two could reference each other but should remain independent. Given the potential depth of the discussion, Ms. Boyer suggested that the board review the Township's existing ordinance and return to next month's meeting with ideas for discussion.

3. Discussion of reference guide for property owners

The discussion started by reviewing the reference guide provided by Mechanicsburg Borough. Ms. Boyer explained that the company that created this reference guide has dissolved. When Upper Allen Township sought quotes for similar services, only one company responded, with a quote of \$47,000. The township reached out to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) for assistance, but they indicated that they do not have the necessary staff available. However, the local

PHMC representative for Upper Allen mentioned that they could review a proposed final product and provide feedback.

Commissioner Walsh noted that when he contacted the Mechanicsburg Borough HARB about using their reference guide as a template, they agreed. They also mentioned that they had utilized the reference guide from the Borough of Carlisle as a template. Additionally, the PHMC offers grants for educational projects, which may apply to this initiative.

Chair Taylor stated that he did not have enough time to review the reference documents as thoroughly as he would have liked. Therefore, Ms. Boyer recommended postponing the discussion until the May meeting.

Chair Taylor made a **MOTION** to table the discussion until next month's meeting. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Ms. Adler. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

No public comment.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Vice-Chair Botchie made a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. The **MOTION** was seconded by Ms. Adler. The **MOTION** carried unanimously (5-0). The meeting adjourned at 8:02 PM.