

**UPPER ALLEN TOWNSHIP  
HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
November 15, 2022**

**MEMBERS**

Joseph Botchie, Chairperson  
Natasha Adler, Vice-Chairperson  
Matthew Taylor  
Virginia LaFond  
Joseph Cooper  
Susan Sears  
Frank Grottola, UAT Building Inspector

**TOWNSHIP STAFF**

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

**Board of Commissioners Liaison**

Commissioner Kenneth Martin  
Commissioner Ginnie Anderson

**CALL TO ORDER**

A meeting of the Upper Allen Township Historical Architectural Review Board was called to order on Tuesday, November 15, 2022, at 7:04 p.m. at the Upper Allen Township Municipal Building. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all, and Roll Call was taken by Chair Botchie. Chair Botchie noted that Ms. LaFond and Mr. Cooper were absent.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Grottola to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2022, meeting. The **MOTION** was seconded by Vice-chair Adler. The **MOTION** carried unanimously. (6-0)

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1. 311 Gettysburg Pike - Demolition of existing residential dwelling and its accessory structures**

John Esser of 311 Gettysburg Pike represented the Plan. David Poletto Central Pennsylvania Abstract Services, Inc. was tasked with finding the original built date of the property. He found that it first appeared in tax documents between 1922 and 1924. The building is a 2-story framed home that appears to be 2 units, with one unit being smaller than the other, which may have been built at separate times. The property has multiple additions, estimated at five, along with aluminum siding, shutters, downspouts, and gutters all of which have no historical value. The property has a variety of window designs, including aluminum storm windows. The property is not referenced in the 1976 publication "Early Architecture in Upper Allen Township". The rear of the building has two doors, one for each "unit" with at least two additions, and a BILCO access door to one-half of the basement. Mr. Esser provided a hand drawn layout plan of the building and detailed how the house was not evenly divided with one side being smaller than the other

and having a narrower staircase. He described the basement as having a bizarre layout with an earthen wall divider, that may have been a cinderblock or stone wall covered in dirt. Mr. Esser noted that no one has lived in or maintained the building for an extended period, with the previous owner having died around 2012. Mr. Esser explained that on his walkthrough he fell through the floor due to the extensive water damage. While not a mold expert, he said there is a lot of microbial bacteria spread through the house.

Chair Botchie asked if there were any tax liens on the property since it was vacant for so long. Mr. Esser stated that there were none to his knowledge. Ms. Boyer noted there were had been no property maintenance issues. Mr. Esser stated that no historical architecture or pieces were found in the structure. Chair Botchie then asked what Mr. Esser planned to do with the property. Mr. Esser stated that he had conversations with the Daybreak Church and that they are interested in the property; however, they do not have immediate plans. He will continue to discussions with the church. Aside from that, Mr. Esser only planned to demolish the property due to its state of disrepair.

Mr. Taylor asked Mr. Esser to confirm that the property is not historical, not specifically mentioned in the list of historic properties, and of poor design and condition. Mr. Esser thanked Mr. Taylor for summarizing and confirmed that the summary was accurate.

No Public Comment.

A **MOTION** was made by Chair Botchie to recommend approval for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the property at 311 Gettysburg Pike with the condition that any new construction from the current or future owner(s) retain community character compatible with historic precedent and be designed to incorporate appropriate elements of the massing shape, size, materials, proportion, orientation, setbacks, and the like. The **MOTION** was seconded by Vice-Chair Adler. The **MOTION** carried unanimously (6-0).

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Chair Botchie proposed beginning discussion of the Township adopting another means of historic preservation beyond the historic districts, specifically through act 247 of the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Chair Botchie stated he was concerned that the Township would be losing many historic structures that were listed in “Early Architecture in Upper Allen Township” book, as well as other historic resources. This process would assist in protecting those structures but would not be under the jurisdiction of the HARB.

Chair Botchie made a motion to recommend to the Board of Commissioners the adoption of an ordinance in accordance with Act 247 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, as amended in 2000, providing for the protection of all historic resources as listed and depicted on the map contained within the 1976 publication “Early Architecture in Upper Allen Township” except for those resources having since been demolished or no longer in existence since that publication. All properties and resources that are listed within the current Upper Allen Township

Historic Districts shall continue to be regulated by Act 147 of 1961 the Historic District Act of Pennsylvania and the currently adopted Chapter 155, Historic District Ordinances of the Township.

Mr. Taylor asked how he could obtain a copy of Act 247 to read and if it was already in place throughout the state. Chair Botchie stated that he had brought copies, and it is available through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and that Act 247 is active in municipalities across the state.

Ms. Sears asked if historic resources specifically meant structures. Chair Botchie explained that historic resources do not have to be structures. They could be things such as a cemetery or a significant location.

Ms. Boyer clarified with Chair Botchie that his recommendation was something the Board of Commissioners had previously discussed. The township's first step was to determine how the existing historic districts were created and why. A second step could be to determine if structures within those districts could be part of a comprehensive historic district list and/or if other structures within the township could be part of the list.

#### Public Comment.

Eric Fairchild of 1224 McCormick Road believes that something should be done to protect buildings that never made it into a historic district. Chair Botchie's proposal sounds like a good solution because the Township could retain HARB to protect properties within the district and develop criteria to protect individual properties. Mr. Fairchild also noted that he has learned that the process of adding a new property to a historic district is quite involved and getting the consent of the homeowners in between the new and old boundaries especially if the properties in between are not historic properties, can be an issue.

Being that there were no more public comments, Mr. Taylor stated that he was not against the motion; however, he would like to be able to read Act 247 before he would vote on the motion. He asked if it would be possible to table the motion until the next meeting. Commissioner Martin noted that he is uninformed of the topic, and that he only is speaking in terms of governance, but it appears that Chair Botchie was the only person on HARB aware of Act 247 before it was brought before the board tonight. He suggests that Chair Botchie or someone gather materials and provide those to the other HARB members and then have another meeting to discuss the topic before making any decisions that get passed on to the Commissioners. Ms. Boyer noted that she would provide the board with information and HARB could discuss the topic at their December meeting. The board agreed and Chair Botchie withdrew the motion until the next meeting.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Eric Fairchild of 1224 McCormick Road wanted to discuss the preservation of the house at the Township's Generation's Park on Lisburn Road. Mr. Fairchild gathered letters of preservation support from Preservation Pennsylvania, Cumberland County Historical Society, and Historic Harrisburg Association, and asked to have the letters added to the record. Mr. Fairchild then asked the Board to make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners to not demolish the farmhouse, or at least recognize the historic significance of the property.

Commissioner Martin clarified that the Board of Commissioners' intent was never to demolish the farmhouse; however, it was an option. The Commissioners provided the option for the house to be relocated or reassembled and one response was received, but it did not meet the qualifications of the bid. Therefore, the Commissioners had considered moving forward with demolition; however, after feedback from the public and a miscommunication with the bidding, the Commissioners made the decision to go through the bidding process a second time providing multiple options for the removal of the farmhouse. Conversations about this can be found in the minutes. Furthermore, Commissioner Martin stated that it is his belief that the Commissioners has been very patient and deliberate in working with the community and listening to concerns without taking swift action to suggest demolition. Mr. Taylor stated that he agrees with Commissioner Martin.

No motion was made by HARB to support Mr. Fairchild's request.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business, Mr. Taylor made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Sears seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.