

**Chesterfield Township
Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Minutes August 1, 2023**

Chairmen James Codella called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

The Open Public Meeting Statement was read and Compliance Noted

Roll Call:

Present- Robert Forwood, James Codella, Joseph Ratajczak, Timothy Beggs, Eugene Cardone, Jennifer Lynch, HPC attorney Dominic DiYanni

Absent- Jill Moraca

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Beggs made a motion seconded by Mr. Forwood to approve the July 6th meeting minutes. All were in favor, motion carried.

COA APPLICATIONS

11 Chesterfield-Crosswicks road- Reverend Larry D. Lewis was present to present the COA application for a new front door to the Grace AME Church located at 11 Chesterfield-Crosswicks road. The applicant proposed a custom made mahogany door with a new frame made by a Trenton manufacturer. The door will be 36' by 80' with a right hand door, featuring 6 inch door jams, and brass hardware. Ms. Lynch made a motion to approve as submitted seconded by Mr. Beggs, all were in favor, motion carried.

Public comment- Mr. Beggs made a motion seconded by Ms. Lynch to open to public comment.

Peter Chacianas- CrossPoint attorney, Clarified that this public comment session is for any agenda item and that there will not be another opportunity for public comment at the end again. Mr. Codella confirmed.

Janet Fletcher Castle- 737 Georgetown- Julius town road Jobstown, NJ- Stated she grew up in Chesterfield on Waln Avenue where her family still resides. She stated that CrossPoint Fellowship Church has always been willing to help the community. She said that she believes the HPC would not ask local farmers to put millions of dollars into a building they have no use for as they are asking of the Church.

Angela Tawares- Saddle way, Chesterfield NJ- Explained that she has three kids who attend the church and she is hoping to get support of the HPC so the church can continue to support the community.

Sam Surtees- 37 Crosswicks Street, Bordentown NJ- Stated that he has reviewed the historic district map and that the Bullock mansion is the western most part of the map with no similar structures in the immediate area. He explained there is not enough historic significance to try to preserve and recommends demolition.

Abigale Litterford 17 West Railroad Avenue, Easthampton NJ- Explained that Chesterfield is a very special place, built around community and helping hands and that it still has its small town feel. Stated that the church is a not profit organization and feels they should not be responsible for the financial hardship of keeping the Bullock Mansion in place.

Keith Wastle- 43 Chesterfield Road- Stated he has been in the Bullock Mansion multiple times. He believes that if the township has a lot of interest in the building they can easily move it onto township property. He raised concern that the township may have the ability to make a church pay for the building. He does not believe there is a great deal of historic relevance, and feels that when historic buildings are lost it does not change the structure of the township.

Kurt Cherry- 29 Raydwire Drive, Hamilton NJ- Attended Fellowship CrossPoint previously Shadyrest for over 40 years. He expressed that the Township has had the opportunity to obtain the building if they wanted it. He stated that he couldn't find the exact report but that the foundation is made of limestone and it is beginning to dissolve. He asked that the HPC make the hard decision and let the building be demolished.

Stanley Lochen 18 Mathew Drive, Hamilton NJ- He has been a chairman and trustee of the board. He stated that the original building was built in the 1500's and then in the 1800's additions were added. He stated that the Church has already spent \$40,000 to take the front porch off and that restoration would be considerably expensive. He feels that the expense would be far more than the church can bear.

Karl Watson- 156 Burlington Path Road, Creamridge NJ- He stated that he grew up outside of Allentown and he is currently dealing with a demolition of his homestead. He is utilizing an Amish demolition company which is going to repurpose different materials that would otherwise be lost in the demolition such as reusing floorboards, rafters, etc. He offered to provide the HPC with that phone number if they recommend approval to the Planning Board for demolition.

Macharla Rao- 66 Harness Way- He stated that he believes there is more value in the expansion of the church than preserving the building.

Robert Bruck- 193 Chesterfield-Crosswicks rd. Expressed that he feels that the church does have the money to preserve and maintain the building. He explained that the property was gifted to CrossPoint by Shadyrest. He believes it can be maintained by restoring the roof and exterior not the interior.

A motion was made by Ms. Lynch seconded by Mr. Beggs to close public comment, all in favor. Motion carried.

Peter Chacanas, CrossPoint attorney of Hyland Levin Shapiro explained that his client filed the demolition application on February 10th, 2023. He stated that the church was gifted to Fellowship Crosspoint in November of 2020, the church did not purchase this property. The HPC raised concern over the Bullock mansion and suggested scheduling a site visit to which CrossPoint was willing to conduct. The church heard of the demolition by neglect ordinance and withdrew the offer for the site visit as they felt this ordinance may be used against them. On April 5th 2023, members of the church and members of the township met and discussed different possible uses for the Bullock Mansion including possibly moving the mansion onto township property. The Township requested that CrossPoint come up with a proposal for the cost to move the mansion across the street on township property, CrossPoint

hired a company to prepare a report, and this was presented to the township on June 2nd for a cost of \$375,000. Response was received on June 10th from township administrator stating the township does not have the means to move the Bullock mansion onto township property at this time. Peter explained that similar to how the township does not have the funds, neither does the church.

Pastor Brennan Coughlin- stated they were so excited when the possibility arose that the township may want to move the mansion onto their property He stated that it was a solution that satisfied all parties involved. He explained that he has tremendous empathy for the HPC for being in this very difficult position. He urged the HPC to see that sometimes the right decision is the hard one. He expressed the importance of stewardship as a non-profit church. He explained that the church would be willing to reuse materials that could be harvested from the demolition in the addition and future projects.

Tod Phillippe, architect- 1325 Old Lincoln Highway, Langhorne PA- Stated has a licensed architect since 1987, in multiple states including New Jersey. He was reached out to 20 years ago and upon evaluation multiple codes were not up to date, he was then contacted again 2020 to where he deemed the property had no practical use in the mansion. The cost of restoring the mansion would be an estimated approximately two million dollars. Mr. Forwood asked if there was any phasing done instead of the most expensive option to renovate. No phasing was done as that is not what Todd was asked to prepare. The cost to just restore the historic aspects such as windows etc. would be approximately \$650,000 minimum.

Todd Phillepe and Brennan Coughlin were both sworn in by HPC attorney Dominic DiYanni.

After the applicant presented their application, Mr. Codella explained that the HPC members will be holding a discussion prior to voting on the matter. The HPC members held a discussion covering all of the points under Chapter 123-13 in the Township Code Book. Mr. Codella read off each bullet point 1-13 and there was discussion held amongst the members on their thoughts

A motion was made by Mr. Forwood seconded by Mr. Beggs to preserve the Bullock Mansion in place if feasible- recommending the denial of the demolition permit-

James Codella- Yes

Timothy Beggs- Abstain

Jennifer Lynch- No

Joseph Ratajczak- Yes

Robert Forwood- Yes

Eugene Cardone- Yes

Mr. Chacianas questioned if the Planning board takes a different stance on the matter if they would need to come back to the HPC. Mr. Codella explained that that cannot be determined at this time they must follow the process following the Planning Board hearing.

COA application 31 Front Street- Replacing old existing fence with same style fence- Discussion was held between applicant and members and the replacement of the fence was approved as it will be the same style fence.

A motion was made by Mr. Ratajczak seconded by Mr. Forwood to close the meeting, all in favor, motion carried. Meeting adjourned 9:39pm