

THE MINUTES OF THE 329TH STATED MEETING
OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

8 MARCH 1989

EDWARD A. MONTGOMERY, JR., CHAIRMAN

Present: Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman
Christine Washington, Vice Chairman
David Brownlee
Caroline Golab
David Hollenberg
Jason Nathan
William Thompson
Barbara Kaplan, Executive Director, Philadelphia City
Planning Commission
Scott Wilds, Office of Housing and Community Development

Maria Petrillo, Esq., Law Department
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Assistant Historic Preservation
Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner

Also: Toni E. Collins, Curator, Elfreth's Alley Association, Inc.
George E. Thomas, Clio Group
A. L. Gravina, University of Pennsylvania
Titus Hewryk, University of Pennsylvania
Julie Johnson, University of Pennsylvania
Edward Ciolko, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority
MaryLou McFarland, Preservation Coalition
Donna Harris, Philadelphia Historic Preservation
Corporation

THE MINUTES of the 328th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 8 February 1989, Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman, were reviewed and approved.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 23 February 1989, David Hollenberg, Chairman.

Mr. Hollenberg reported to the Commission members the Committee's recommendation for the approval of four submissions reviewed on the 23rd of February. These include plans for the rehabilitation of 4313-17 Main Street, the preservation standard for the Ridgway Library at Broad and Christian Streets and plaster repairs in Room 202 City Hall. The Committee also recommended an approval in concept for the adaptive reuse of the Tabernacle Presbyterian Church at 37th and Chestnut Streets. The Commission voted to accept the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and approve these four projects.

The problem presented by the placement of the PECO transformer near the entrance to Emanuel's Court at 22nd and Chestnut Street requires additional study by the Committee. No action on this matter is recommended at the present time.

THE REPORT on the Activities of the Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff for February 1989, Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer. In response to a request for information on the status of the Commission's proposed rules and regulations, Mr. Tyler reported that substantial progress had been made. Following completion of the draft, copies of the proposed rules and regulations will be distributed among the members of the Committee on Rules and Regulations. Following revision of the preliminary draft by the Committee, a final draft with a Committee recommendation will be presented to the full Commission for review. At this time, copies will also be made available to all interested parties for review. The final stage in this process will require the publication of a (30) thirty-day notice of a public hearing, the conduct of this hearing and referral to the Administrative Board for a final approval.

The Commission voted unanimously to accept the February Activities Report.

OLD BUSINESS

Designation Continuance for the Laboratory of Hygiene at 215 South 34th Street and the Music and Morgan Buildings at 201-205 South 34th Street.

At its 8 February 1989 meeting, the Historical Commission granted to the University of Pennsylvania a one-month continuance on the proposed designation of three University of Pennsylvania buildings currently under consideration by the Commission. This continuance was granted with the provision that the University return to the Commission at its March meeting to discuss the current status of its campus preservation study.

Mr. Tyler introduced to the Commission those University of Pennsylvania representatives present at today's meeting. Messrs. Gavina and Hewryk of the University of Pennsylvania and George Thomas of the Clio Group appeared before the Commission to report on the progress of the recently formed Advisory Committee. This Committee was created to examine and evaluate the historical significance of buildings on the Penn campus and to develop a preservation overlay for the University's Master Plan. The Committee will examine all University owned properties in the core campus and its immediate surroundings.

Mr. Gavina explained to the Commission the process which this advisory committee must follow before a formal presentation of its findings can be made to the Commission. Within the next several months, the advisory group's preliminary report will be reviewed by various University committees and the University administration before being submitted to the Board of Trustees. Presentation of this report to the Trustees is expected at the end of June with a formal submission to the Historical Commission in July.

Following some discussion of the study and the time frame for its completion, the Commission voted to grant an additional two-month extension. The Commission requested that the University return in May to provide a report on its advisory committee's progress. David Brownlee, Caroline Golab and David Hollenberg abstained from voting on this matter.

NEW BUSINESS

Elfreth's Alley Easement Proposal. Mr. Tyler introduced to the Commission members a proposal presented by the Elfreth's Alley Association for the designation of the Philadelphia Historical Commission as the third party in succession to accept and monitor restrictive covenants/easements on three Elfreth's Alley properties. These properties include 114 Elfreth's Alley, No. 1 Bladen's Court and No. 2 Bladen's Court.

Toni Collins, Curator-Administrator of the Elfreth's Alley Museum, appeared before the Commission to present the Elfreth's Alley Association's (EAA) proposal and to answer any questions of the Commission members. Ms. Collins explained the Association's desire

to sell the three properties, which it currently owns, subject to certain restrictive covenants and easements on the significant portions of the interiors and exteriors of the three properties. The EAA has established an Endowment Fund to cover the on going expense of monitoring these easements/covenants; proceeds from the sale of the properties will be set aside in a fund for annual house inspections and emergency legal expenses.

The Commission members expressed much concern over the Historical Commission's acceptance of responsibility for the monitoring and enforcement of the proposed restrictive covenants/easements. In particular, the Commission members feared the costs associated with enforcement especially with regard to potential litigation. Several of the members suggested the Commission's involvement through a narrow reading of its own ordinance rather than through the mechanics of an easement or restrictive covenant.

Following considerable discussion, the Historical Commission voted unanimously to decline the Elfreth's Alley Association's request for permission to include the Historical Commission as the third party in succession to accept and monitor proposed easements and restrictive covenants on 114 Elfreth's Alley, No. 1 Bladen's Court and No. 2 Bladen's Court.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Siemiontkowski
Assistant Historic Preservation Officer

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