

RF Nichols

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MINUTES OF THE 115th STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

27 June 1967

Present: Dr. Roy Franklin Nichols, Chairman

Mr. Richmond P. Miller
Mr. John Taxin
Mr. Trautwein Mr. Charles R. Tyson
Mr. R. Norris Williams, II.

Mr. Oscar Goodstein, representing the Commissioner of Public Property
Isador Kranzel, Esq., Assistant City Solicitor
Mr. Eugene Meyer, Reporter, the EVENING BULLETIN
Mrs. Charles J. Maurer, Secretary

Unless otherwise noted, all action taken herein is the result of motions properly made, seconded and carried.

THE MINUTES of the Meeting held on 6 June (transferred from 30 May) were approved

REPORTS

The Historic Values Committee, Dr. Roy Franklin Nichols, Chairman
Members of the Commission were asked to consider the certification of The Methodist Episcopal (Old Brick) Church of Kensington. This was approved.

The Architectural Committee, Mr. George K. Trautwein, Chairman. A short version of this report was read by the Chairman. It was approved and directed to be filed with the official copies of the Minutes.

The Historical Commission's Activities, Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Historian. In Dr. Tinkcom's absence, the secretary was asked to read this report. It was approved with commendation and directed to be filed as above.

OLD BUSINESS

Mrs. Grant M. Simon's reply to the Minute of appreciation sent her by the Commission in memory of her husband, was read. It was commented upon with fervor and directed to be filed with the official copies of the Minutes

Carpenters' Company, ³W20 Chestnut Street. Dr. Nichols referred to his correspondence with Mr. John Harbeson, which had been circulated by mail prior to the meeting, and explained the drawing, pointing out that the Carpenters' Company building had been unfinished in 1777. The addition of the eagle shown in the broken pediment of the fireplace mantel was discussed. The Chairman stated that this and the cornice around the room was the issue; that Mr. Harbeson had agreed to this and had defended the eagle, although it had been pointed out to him. that this device was not in use until a later period.

Mr. Williams expressed the opinion that too many details are incorporated in the submission; that no studies or ground work for them appear to have been made. He asked for a report on this point and said the

OLD BUSINESS

Carpenters' Company, continued

Commission wants the building to be restored to its appearance in 1774. Mr. Tyson concurred. Mr. Trautwein asked if National Park Service will ultimately own this building. The Chairman answered affirmatively, and added that it might then remove the fireplace, if installed, and would fully restore Carpenters' Company to its original state. Messrs. Tyson, Williams and Taxin voted against the drawing in its present form; Mr. Trautwein took the opposite position.

It was resolved to wait for the report mentioned as forthcoming in Mr. Harbeson's letter. He will, in the meantime, be asked by the Chairman to give historical justification for the present submission. The resolution was carried.

NEW BUSINESS

The moving of four to six historically significant buildings in Southwark. The Chairman rehearsed the background of the Historical Commission's support for a depressed highway. The State Highway Department now reports that there is no money for this and has countered with the proposal that four to six houses could be moved to a position north of Gloria Dei in order to preserve them and in order that the church will appear to have a neighboring congregation.

As Dr. Tinkcom reported, she and Dr. Nichols represented the Historical Commission at a meeting a few days earlier, called by Dr. S. K. Stevens, to discuss the choice of Southwark houses to be moved by the State Highway Department; suggestions for a place to which they could be moved; and the responsibility for their maintenance and use, after being moved. It was agreed by the Highway engineer present that the State would effect the moving - Federal funds having been quaranteed. Dr. Stevens and Dr. Nichols agreed to explore with the National Park Service the site to which these houses could be moved.

The Chairman said that if Old Swede's Vestry and Rector approve this proposal and if National Park Service will allot the land, the designated buildings will be moved. He further reported that Mr. Ronald Lee has agreed to advise on this matter; that the Rector of Gloria Dei, Dr. John Craig Roak and the attorney for the Vestry, Mr. Rappaport, seem to agree. The Chairman asked the Members for an opinion. This was given in the affirmative and it was resolved that although six houses out of one hundred thirty-one historic structures are the issue, and this was noted as a very small percentage, the Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Udall; the Mayor of Philadelphia, the National Park Service, Senators Scott and Clark; and the Congressman for Southwark, Mr. James Byrne, shall all be notified by a letter from the Chairman. Mr. Kranzel was asked if his legal advice agrees with this resolution. The Assistant City Solicitor stated that he could find no objection to such action. It was so ordered.

It was observed that these buildings, when moved and fully restored, would be livable and probably rentable under the National Park Service's prevailing policy.

NEW BUSINESS continued

Greystone Hotel, 11th and Pine Streets. The Chairman called attention to the information mailed to Members of the Historical Commission in time for this meeting, saying that although the Commission is asked to support Community Legal Services, Inc. in the preservation of this building, it can do nothing to help unless the Redevelopment Authority wants to preserve it. Furthermore, unless the Commission saw the plans for this building's rehabilitation, hopefully a restoration to its original condition, no action toward its preservation would be taken. It was the opinion of the Chairman that the Commission has insufficient information at this time on which to make a judgment. It was resolved that the Commission would acknowledge the communication and say that it would give the matter further study before any commitment could be made. This was approved.

Mr. John Harbeson's offer of two sketches in his position, made by the late Grant M. Simon. It was reported by Mr. Trautwein that one of these is a pencil sketch of Pittsburgh; the other a water color, made in Spain. Mr. Williams stated his opposition to the Commission's acceptance on the basis of its inability to care for them properly and recommended that the sketches be given to a library, museum or similar institution. Mr. Trautwein, therefore, recommended that Mr. Harbeson give Mr. Simon's works to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The Secretary was directed to ascertain the feasibility of this action.

Mr. Kranzel asked the Chairman's permission to report on the moratorium on the Historical Commission's ordinance, saying he had had no response, as yet, from City Council, but that City Planning Commission had rejected it. Mr. Kranzel asked for additional time to make several contacts with Councilmen and agreed to make a more detailed report at the next meeting.

Mrs. Shannon's resignation. The Chairman asked that Mr. Shannon be summoned and, when present, formally announced that this is her last week with the Historical Commission, a matter of regret to everyone. Mrs. Shannon then expressed her own regret and added that it had been a pleasure and source of much satisfaction to have worked for the Commission for the past seven years and to have known the Members.

Date of the Next Stated Meeting. It was resolved that the next meeting be held as usual, the last Tuesday in July, this year the 25th of the month.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 P. M.

Respectfully submitted

Roy Franklin Nichols
Chairman for the Commission

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