

## **Delaware Township Historical Advisory Committee**

**Minutes: Special Meeting regarding Holcombe House, January 31, 2019 7:30PM**

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll Call:** Nancy Bond, Bob Chamberlain, Marilyn Cummings, Tim Davis, Charlie Herman, Chuck Taylor

**Visitors:** Mary Jane Augustine, Jason Kliwinski, and Lia Nielsen, joint owners of the Holcombe House. Jeffrey Marshall, President, Heritage Conservancy.

**Annual committee organization:** The committee is pleased to welcome Charlie Herman, our liaison from the Township Committee.

**Holcombe House Project:** We only had one item on our agenda, to discuss transferring the easement of the Holcombe House to the Heritage Conservancy, which has been professionally managing easements such as this for over 40 years. We agreed that as a volunteer and advisory government committee we do not have the time, training, experience, and authority to efficiently be responsible for this project.

We agreed that giving up final authority over decisions regarding compliance with the preservation easement will inevitably lead to some of us occasionally being disappointed by certain developments. Nevertheless, we feel that it is unrealistic to expect this committee to take on responsibilities on the order of those of the Zoning Officer, or the Zoning Board of Adjustment. And, since HAC is an advisory committee only, the Township Committee, and all future Township Committees, would also be forced to shoulder the same time-consuming and delay-causing responsibilities.

Jeff Marshall presented the Heritage Conservancy's proposal for proceeding with the re-assignment of the easement. Charlie Herman suggested that a second course of action be included in the proposal, so the Township Committee would have choices. Jeff agreed to provide a path describing a long term consulting arrangement, in addition to the plan for full transfer of the easement.

The committee voted to present the proposals to the Township Committee at their meeting on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019 if possible. We agreed to propose that the full transfer of the easement to the Heritage Conservancy would be our preferred course of action, with a short term consulting relationship ceding authority to the Conservancy to make the decisions necessary to allow the owners of the Holcombe House to move forward with repairs to the house.

We discussed the various avenues for funding the easement transfer and any consulting fees. Marilyn will work with the entities in the New Jersey state government who received the payment for the property, to see if some of it could be allocated to fund the management of the easement. We will also see if the township Open Space committee might have some funds to contribute, given that a fraction of land preservation funds are often allowed to be used for historical preservation. And we will

approach the private non-profit Delaware Township Historical Society to see if they can provide donated funds for this purpose.

**Adjournment:** 10:00 PM.