

**EAST COVENTRY  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2007**

The East Coventry Historical Commission (EHC) submits the following Annual Report to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) in accordance with the East Coventry Township Zoning Ordinance, Ordinance 135, September 19, 2005, Part 12, Section 1203.4.H.

**Introduction**

Chester County Planning Commission document Landscapes2 states: “In the public opinion survey conducted for Landscapes2, almost half of all respondents identified cultural and historic resources as an important asset contributing to the county character. Yet, historic resources continue to be comprised and threatened by development, changing building type needs, economic issues, and roadway expansions, among other issues. Historical commissions are the cornerstone for successful preservation at the local level in the County. However, they are sometimes not included in the development process or their recommendations are not taken into account by decision makers, which make historic preservation planning and implementation difficult. Additionally, historic preservation regulations may not be enough on their own; other incentives or tools may be needed for successful historic preservation. A historic resource inventory is critical information that defines what resources remain and why they are important. Those parties interested or involved in preservation rely on a survey as the groundwork for their preservation efforts to determine what to preserve and why.”

As a reflection of citizens appreciation of our historic resources, Mr. Roy Kolb, Planning Commission Member, EHC Liaison, and life long farmer in East Coventry Township contributed the following poignant statement for the content of the EHC Annual Report: “As I recall some of the Historical Commission activities and events during the past year, I am impressed with the amount of stone buildings, particularly stone houses, built in our township between the years 1750 and 1930. To a farmer, field stones are a real back breaking nuisance. It was with these stones, mostly sand stones; the early settlers erected some of the finest houses that exist today. Truly these monuments are a keystone to the history of our township.”

As you review the following Annual Report 2007, you will find East Coventry Township has a Historical Commission which is on target to meet the needs of the Township and the County in our goals to preserve our rich historical assets.

**Members**

Reorganization was accomplished at the January 10, 2007 regular meeting. N. Gail Brown was re-elected as Chairperson, Mary E. Brower was re-elected as Vice

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Chairperson, Elaine Preston was elected as Secretary. Mr. Roy Kolb remains the Planning Commission Liaison/Member.

The ECHC has six (6) appointed members.

The members are as follows:

Mary E. Brower, Ann Keen, Phyllis Snyder, Roy Kolb, N. Gail Brown, Elaine Preston, and Lynn Coine.

Long time ECHC member Mary E. Brower resigned August 17, 2007.

At the September 12, 2007 meeting of the ECHC, Lynn Coine was elected Vice Chairman to fill the position vacated by Mary E. Brower.

### **Historical Commission Calendar**

The ECHC sought permission from PECO and the Board of Supervisors to develop a 2008 Calendar – Fricks Locks, Before and After. This calendar would have brought public attention to the current deplorable conditions in Fricks Locks Village. PECO referred the ECHC to the township BOS for permission for the endeavor. Permission was denied.

The ECHC developed a 2008 calendar entitled – ‘Fricks Locks Village and the Canal Era in the United States’. This calendar was approved by the BOS. Key in artistic development of the calendar was Mary E. Brower and Ann Keen. Ann Keen generously donated the use of two (2) of her Fricks Locks drawings to be included in the calendar, the cover page and the December picture. The ECHC sought bids from three (3) printing companies, with a low bid of \$875.00 from Zap Digital, Inc. accepted. Total sales and donation receipts for the 2008 calendar totaled \$821.00 as of December 31, 2007.

### **Deed Research**

Deed research was suspended in 2007 in order to support the completion of the Historical Resource Map.

### **Budget**

In accordance with the East Coventry Township Zoning Ordinance, Ordinance 135, September 19, 2005, Part 12, Section 1203.5(G), the ECHC members at the November

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14, 2007 regular meeting reviewed, discussed, and developed the ECHC 2008 budget proposal totaling \$12,100.00.

The proposal was submitted to Bernard Rodgers, Township Manager. Significant in the budget were an increase to \$5,000.00 each for Historical Research and Grant Writing Assistance. The increase for Historical Research was for professional assistance to perform research for six (6) properties (one per year) recommended by the 1981 Historic Resource Survey. The increase for Grant Writing was submitted to support Fricks Locks Stakeholders activities and progress.

### **Preservation and Historical Society Memberships**

On December 17, 2007, ECHC membership to the Chester County Historical Society (CCHS) and the Chester County Historical Preservation Network (CCHPN) were renewed for the following year. CCHPN membership includes: 1) Four (4) free passes for each training session presented by the CCHPN; 2) Eight copies of the Chester County Ledger; 3) Invitation to the early summer Volunteer Recognition Celebration.

### **Training**

March 10, 2007 - CCHPN Spring Workshop-Historic Resource Impact Studies. Speakers – Robert Wise, Wise Preservation Planning; John D. Snook, Senior Advisor at the Brandywine Conservancy's Environmental Management Center; and Todd Pohlig, principal of Pohlig Builders, a Malvern based residential property developer. Attended by Phyllis Snyder.

March 26, 2007 – Spring Pennsylvania Historical Societies Leadership Forum. Co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), Alliance of Pennsylvania County Historical Societies, Pennsylvania Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations, and Pennsylvania Humanities Council. Some of the seminars included were – Finding History in Your Community; Schools + Societies = Historical Community; Archival Principles for Small Historical Repositories; Educational Programming – For the Fun of It!; Strategic Planning for Boards; How to Find Funding When It Is (Almost) Impossible. Attended by: N. Gail Brown, Elaine Preston, and Phyllis Snyder.

April 25, 2007 – CCHS– Research Orientation. Presented by the CCHS staff and Chester County Archives personnel. Attended by Phyllis Snyder, Elaine Preston, Ann Keen, and N. Gail Brown.

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November 16, 2007 – Fall Pennsylvania Historical Societies Leadership Forum at the Lehigh Valley Heritage Museum. Two (2) members had registered, Phyllis Snyder and Elaine Preston. Members elected to not attend and forfeited their registration fees in order to support the Historical Resource Map completion.

**Chester County Summer Town Tours & Village Walks**

Although the ECHC did not sponsor a Town Tour in 2007, they offered support as volunteers in whatever capacity needed to four (4) neighboring Historical Commissions and Organizations. Two (2) organizations replied to our offer – East Nantmeal “Nantmeal Village: A Victorian Country Village” and Historic Yellow Springs. N. Gail Brown (tour guide), Elaine Preston (registration table), and Lynn Coine (registration table) volunteered at East Nantmeal and N. Gail Brown (tour guide) volunteered at Historic Yellow Springs.

In 2005 Preservation Pennsylvania and the PHMC awarded the Chester County Town Tours & Village Walks program one of two statewide educational awards. As a result of the East Coventry Historical Commissions innovation, this award winning program has added the following check mark to their 2008 Town Tours & Village Walks application – “  X   NOT THIS YEAR BUT, we would like to help a neighboring municipality with their tour.”

**Zoning Workshop Meetings**

N. Gail Brown attended most meetings of the Zoning Workshops. Several changes were agreed to be incorporated into the proposed Zoning Ordinance at the request of the Historical Commission. Most significantly, the wording “This ordinance is created Pursuant to Article I, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution” and the address of “demolition by neglect”.

**Historic Resource Map**

All members of the ECHC worked diligently throughout the year to complete the Historic Resource Atlas. This process included identifying and classifying as (Class I, II, and III) five hundred and eighty-three (583) Historical Resources. Two historic districts were identified, Fricks Lock Village (Class I) and Parker Ford (Class II). All information compiled by the Historical Commission was submitted to Chester County Parks and Recreation for mapping. Chester County Parks and Recreation produced a professional map which is consistent with other townships within Chester County. This map was presented to the BOS at the December 4, 2007 Zoning Workshop Meeting. Per request by Mr. Atlee Rinehart, Chairman, street names were added to the map, and this revised map was presented at the December 17, 2007 BOS meeting. The Historic Resource Map

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has been on display at the Township building since December 17, 2007. The map is scheduled for approval early 2008.

**Public Assistance/Interface**

The ECHC has addressed several inquiries from prospective buyers of historical properties within the township. L. Coine and E. Preston located and obtained a copy of the rare '1798 Glass Tax' and we were able to share this information with a resident.

The ECHC assisted two young men with their Eagle Scout Projects:

1. Andrew Hoffman researched, developed, and built a flag incinerator dedicated to the Revolutionary War Veterans buried at Ellis Woods Memorial Cemetery.
2. William Dougherty, erected a series of story boards within Towpath Park memorializing the Schuylkill River Navigation canals.

**Subdivision and Land Development**

The ECHC reviewed thirteen (13) Subdivision and Land Development plans in various stages of development. Below is a summary of those most significant.

Wineberry Estates – This property is a National Register eligible property. The historic house, barn and outbuildings were subdivided on an individual lot entitled the “Maack Residential Property and sold. Remaining on the balance of the property is a 635 foot cut stone retaining wall. The developer proposed to remove approximately 410’ for road access. Per the October 24, 2007 minutes of the HC the developer had submitted detail drawings and locations for the reconstructed stone wall. Three (3) items remained outstanding: 1) The members were receptive to drawings, but reserve final review when drawings are submitted with the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) retaining wall requirements included. 2) The HC recommends ‘deed restrictions’ be added for Lots #7, #8, and #9 requiring the property owner to maintain, to the satisfaction of the HC, rebuilt and original stone retaining walls. 3) The ECHC recommends that the Township have a qualified individual monitor the excavation of the site to ensure that the proper procedure is followed in the event that archaeological resources are discovered. To-date, the ECHC is not aware of any further action taken by the developer.

Green Acres – The subdivision is a six (6) lot development with a historic house and barn on one lot facing Bethel Church Road. The historic barn sets on the edge of the road. The PHMC stated, “there may be historic buildings and/or structures eligible for the National Register of Historic Places located in the project area.” The ECHC supported the developers request for a waiver for the sidewalk along Bethel Church Road. It was

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the consensus of the ECHC that sidewalks would jeopardize the historic barn and possibly result in demolition. Should the sidewalk waiver be denied, the ECHC will recommend a Historic Resource Impact Study to be commissioned by the developer.

Telvil Hall – This property contains a historic house, barn, and various outbuildings. Lot N1, which contains these properties shares a property line with another historic resource, a fine example of a German Colonial house and barn. This second historic resource is not part of the subdivision. The ECHC was concerned with storm water basins on lot N1 between the two historic resources and directly across the street from these historic resources. The concerns were with the close proximity to the neighboring historic resource, emergency spillways on both storm water basins which drained in the direction of the neighboring historic resource, and an excavation for an 18” drainage pipe along the neighboring property line which would undermine the neighbor’s stone wall. The ECHC brought this to the attention of the neighboring property owners, the Planning Commission, and the developer. The neighboring property owners also expressed concern that the excavation for the drainage pipe would damage the roots of the trees along their property line and eventually kill their trees. The Planning Commission and the developer were responsive to these concerns. The developer is in process of revising their drawings to relocate the storm water basins and the drainage pipe.

Sprint Cell Tower/Faulk Tract –At the September 17, 2007 regular meeting the BOS approved a resolution granting approval of the Sprint Spectrum preliminary/final subdivision plan as amended with the Conditional Use Order attached. This resolution included comments from the ECHC letter of January 11, 2007 and September 10, 2007 recommending compliance with the East Coventry Township Zoning Ordinance – Part 14, 1401(G)((9)(10) and (H). The September 10, 2007 letter states the Chairperson for the ECHC had requested the comments of January 11, 2007 be included in the Conditional Release at the July 11, 2007 meeting of the BOS. It further stated upon review of the Conditional Release Section 1401 (H) had still not been included. All sections of 1401 were included in the Final Resolution with the exception of part (H) which was not included. No work has commenced on this project.

**Fricks Locks Stakeholders Meetings**

March 12, 2007 the Township received a letter from the Schuylkill River Heritage Association stating the following: “I am writing at this time to inquire as to the townships interest in combining our efforts to save Frick’s Lock. The Schuylkill River Heritage (SRHA) Area is willing to convene a meeting of Exelon, Township, and SRHA officials to discuss how we can collectively begin to take these steps of preservation.” This letter resulted in meetings dated August 7, 2007; October 2, 2007; November 22, 2007, and a

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meeting is scheduled for January 23, 2008. The following denotes the key points discussed at the final meeting of 2007 - November 22, 2007.

- Exelon representatives have produced an unverified map of the exclusionary zone. It appears four (4) or five (5) buildings are outside the exclusionary zone. Exelon to verify accuracy of the exclusionary zone map.
- Exelon's primary concern is the safety and emergency evacuation issues for potential users inside the exclusionary zone.
- The group came to a common consensus that the plans for the Schuylkill River Trail (SRT) will continue to route the main trail outside the exclusionary zone, but that a loop trail through Fricks Locks Village, with historical markers at the buildings, is a potential use.
- Chester County Parks and Recreation indicated that Chester County's completion date goal for the SRT is three (3) to five (5) years. (2009-2012)
- Exelon stated it would be open to a twenty (20) year lease with either the County or East Coventry Township.

The above short summary demonstrates the integrity and progress of the Stake holders.

**Summary**

In summary, the ECHC has had a productive year and we are proud of all of our accomplishments, but two stands out as most significant: The completion of our Historic Resource Map and bringing together a developer, the Planning Commission, and the township resident affected by this development, as in Telvil Hall, towards finding a satisfactory resolution for all parties.

We, the East Coventry Historical Commission, respectfully submit our 2007 annual report to the Board of Supervisors.

N. Gail Brown  
Chairperson  
East Coventry Township  
Historical Commission

