

## Wrightstown Township Historical Commission

Minutes

10 July 2025

1:00 p.m.

**Call to Order:** Chair Betty Davis called the meeting to order at 1:25 p.m.

**Present:** Chair Betty Davis, Jane DelBianco, Beverly Wilson, and Karl Niederer; absent: Mary Lee Johnson. Guest: Jane Magne, Township Supervisor

**Agenda:** Additions and Changes - None.

**Donations received:** From the Village Library of Wrightstown, Max Vanka, *The Gift of Sympathy: The Art of Maxo Vanka*, catalog (Michener Museum, 2001), and *Friends Love Food*, cookbook, (Wrightstown Friends Nursery School, undated).

**Approval of Minutes:** 1 May 2025 meeting; APPROVED. The Commission reviewed informal notes of the 5 June meeting, which lacked a quorum.

**Treasurer's Report:** \$0 left in township supply account due to expenditure for new Octagonal School storm windows. Commission savings account \$9,463.65 total after \$198.51 deposits and \$1.03 interest.

### Old Business:

1. **Quaker History Exhibit** — Karl reported that the exhibit has been installed. All captions and texts will be reprinted on an ivory or cream-colored card stock to reduce the sharpness of contrast with displayed items. A formal opening is scheduled for Monday, 21 July prior to the Township Supervisors' scheduled meeting, and representatives of Wrightstown Monthly Meeting will be invited to participate.
2. **Octagonal School Open Houses** — Assignments update:
  - Sunday, 20 July; Karl and Mary Lee (1:00-3:00); Betty and Izzy (3:00-5:00)
  - Sunday, 17 August; to be determined
  - **Bucks County Recorder's Office Deed Book preservation project presentation, 21 September Open House** — Karl reported he is waiting for formal response from County Recorder of Deeds Dan McPhillips's office committing to participate in the 21 September Open House. Karl will confirm with McPhillips's staff which deed books should be selected for display at Open House.
  - **19th Century Music encore performance** — Karl reported that he has contacted The Stevenses and Deals about performing at the August or October Open Houses. No response yet.
3. **Octagonal School Crawl Space Protection** — Mary Lee installed the metal grates. They look and work well.
4. **Octagonal School Roof Replacement Photo Album** — Karl reported that he needs to complete the expanded introduction reflecting the information and photos provided by Mary Lee on the first shingle roof replacement in the 1990s.
5. **Commission Reports to Township Supervisors** — Karl reported that he had presented a summary of Commission activities on Monday, 16 June. The Commission asked Jane

Magne to provide notification of future Supervisors' meeting dates when we should report.

6. **Placing Prints in Township Building** — Karl reported that he still needs to produce the captions for historical maps and prints displayed in the public meeting room.
7. **Mega Way Development History** — No report.
8. **Organizing and Scanning Commission Files** — Betty and Karl reported that Wrightstown resident Lisa Loeffler has volunteered to work on the scanning project. Ms. Loeffler interviewed on 3 July and was shown examples of the files to be scanned. Karl reported that he is working with Township volunteer technology consultant David Dutko to identify suitable scanning equipment to purchase for the project. Mr. Dutko will repurpose an existing unused workstation in the office for the scanning project. Jane Magne recommended that the Commission present a request for any new equipment that needs to be purchased at the 21 July Supervisors' meeting, included specifications and costs.
9. **Gaine House Documents** — Karl reported:
  - A thank you letter has been sent to William Osler for donating the documents
  - On the progress made inventorying the records on 29 MayThe Commission will hold another work session to continue the inventory on either 14 or 21 August, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00.
11. **Octagonal School Grounds Franklinia Tree** — Beverly reported that the tree is surviving, but may be suffering from overwatering due to recent heavy rains. She noted that her husband Bart had paid for the replacement tree.

#### **New Business:**

1. **BET Investments Apartments correspondence** — Betty reported that the Commission had received a memorandum from an anonymous individual dated 19 June, protesting a rezoning of property in Newtown Township for construction of apartments. The Commission determined that the matter was outside its jurisdiction (see attached).
2. **Wrightstown Documents for sale** — Jane DelBianco reported locating documents for sale on eBay, an 1898 deed by J. Gaine, administrator for the Cyrus Gaine Estate to Sallie Ross. The seller is asking \$50 for the document. Jane provided the link to the document on eBay. No action taken.

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, 7 August 2025

**Adjournment:** 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



— Karl J. Niederer, Secretary

6/19/2025

To: The Joint Zoning Council  
The Historic Architectural Review Board  
Joint Historic Commission Board

Re: BET Investments proposed Apartments

I am a longtime resident and homeowner in Newtown who would like to set the record straight about the proposed construction of apartments at the Corners at Newtown Place (behind the 7-Eleven). I do not believe your commission is being told the whole truth about the project and I would like to fill in some of the things you may be aware of.

BET would have you believe that they can't rent the offices in that development. That is total nonsense. Unlike every other commercial real estate for lease in the area, BET has NOT had these offices listed on sites such as Loopnet for years! If you don't advertise them, it might be harder to rent them out. The 2 "leasing" signs on the development show a phone number of 215-442-540. Several years ago, when I tried calling that number, it rang and rang and rang, and no one picked up the phone. Now, if you call that number, it goes to Verizon saying "Your call cannot be completed as dialed." It has been like that for nearly two years. They are deceiving you into thinking they cannot rent the space.

These spaces are in the heart of Newtown. Who wouldn't want to be within walking distance to everything and with great parking? BET states that the buildings are "antiquated." I find that ironic in such a historic town as Newtown.

Half of the offices they want to tear down look EXACTLY like the building they are "leaving alone" in the strip along Richboro Rd where the Dominos is. If they are good enough for Dominos and the Hoagie Factory, what is so different with the other buildings, the ones they say are 'antiquated?' These buildings have a timeless look to them that blends into the area, unlike what their proposed monstrosity will look like.

With all the restaurants clamoring to get into Newtown, there is a fully outfitted, but EMPTY restaurant waiting to be leased, but again, IT IS NOT BEING ADVERTISED.

The traffic created in that area will be a nightmare. During morning and evening rush hour at that intersection, it is already ridiculous. Please do not turn this area of Newtown into another "Village of Newtown!" I know tons of people who won't drive to the area of McCaffrey's anymore due to the traffic and parking mess that has been created.

I know for a fact that none of the business owners in that development wanted to move. The karate guy was forced out but didn't want to go. This is also true with the hair salon that recently had to relocate. It is an easy place for customers to get to.

I personally know of someone who was a representative of a multi-physician office that wanted to establish another office in the Newtown area. He contacted a Dan Greeley from BET to ask about leasing all three remaining unoccupied buildings in what would have been a long term lease. He was told that they plan on 're-developing' the area or something like that. I guess they are pretty sure of things to come to turn away such a potential lessor. They have taken The Corners at Newtown Place off of their corporate website where they advertise all of their other real estate. Point being, they could lease these buildings with little effort.

A year ago at a Joint Zoning Council Meeting, someone pointed out that the building next to the farm house where the karate and salon were is also listed as historic according to Newtown Township. The BET lawyer stated he was not aware of the historic designation. This should certainly be considered in BET's planning.

Please do not let them tear down this easily rentable property and turn Newtown into a more and more overly congested place. Mr. Toll and Mr. Markman can surely consider other locations to build.