

**APRIL 15, 2015 MEETING MINUTES
EAST AMWELL HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
EAST AMWELL MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 1070 ROUTE 202, RINGOES, NJ**

CALL TO ORDER & OPEN PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

The meeting of the East Amwell Historic Preservation Committee was called to order at 7:30 PM by Barbara Sageser. Secretary Sharon Brighthaupt read aloud the following: “In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, this is a regular meeting of the East Amwell Historic Preservation Committee pursuant to the meeting notice published in the December 18, 2014 issue of the Hunterdon Democrat. Notice of this meeting was filed in the Township Clerk’s Office, sent to the Hunterdon Democrat, and the agenda was posted on the municipal bulletin board.

ROLL CALL 4/15/15

Committee Member (term expires)	1/21/15	2/18/15	3/18/15	4/15/15	5/20/15	6/17/15	7/15/15	8/19/15	9/16/15	10/21/15	11/18/15	12/16/15
Jim Davidson (12//31/17)	7:35	X										
Frances Gavigan (12/31/16)	X	X										
Will Harrison (12/31/17)	X	X	X	X								
Suzanne Koeniger (12/31/18)	X		X	X								
Barbara Sageser (12/31/16)	X	X	X	X								
Pauline Serafin (12/31/15)	X	X	X									
Paul Sterchele (12/31/18)	X	X		X								
Peg Sullivan (12/31/18)	X	X		X								
Mary Van Horn (12/31/15)		X	X									
Susan Berger (12/31/16)		X	X									
Debra Carney (12/31/15)		X		X								
Charles Van Horn (TC Liaison)												

Others present: Committee Secretary Sharon Brighthaupt,

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON AGENDA ITEMS

Chairwoman Sageser noted there were no members of the public present.

PRESENTATION OF MARCH 18, 2015 MEETING MINUTES

Chairwoman Sageser asked if everyone had read the minutes and if there were comments or changes to be made. Hearing none, Will Harrison made a motion for the minutes be accepted as presented, Debra Carney seconded. All in favor, minutes approved as submitted.

EAST AMWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY UPDATE

Paul Sterchele reported on a recent presentation by the Black River and Western Historic Trust. Historically for the last fifty years volunteers have been keeping up the maintenance on the tracks and the train. At the end of the presentation they exchanged memorabilia with the Historical Society. Upcoming there will be a talk on the Lenni Lenape Indians scheduled for May 17, 2015 at the East Amwell Town Hall.

CLAWSON HOUSE REHABILITATION UPDATE

Barbara Sageser reports that we are in the second phase of the window submission, the most difficult part of the submission. We are awaiting the contractor posting his performance bond pursuant to the contract. The contract stipulated a length of time for completion. His comment is that the clock should start when the order is placed.

Barbara Sageser provided a copy of the plans for the basement indicating there is a sump pump, and specifications for review. She is preparing a Project Authorization Form which has to be completed before any work can be done on a public building. It requires inclusion of maps, photographs, architectural drawings and specifications, project description, statement of purpose, funding, etc. Once submitted the authorities will have thirty (30) days to evaluate the submission. If nothing is missing or unacceptable they will then have fifteen (15) days to determine if there is an encroachment.

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The Historical Society is contemplating requesting a 100 year lease on the building and seeking grants for completion of the work on the property. An interim report also has to be provided to the County so they are aware we will be applying for the remaining funding.

Will Harrison noted the specs indicate a power generator will be provided. There is already underground power on the property, and if we are going to be required to pay for a generator it may not need to be included. Also there is a toilet and water at the park.

Barbara Sageser will work with Terri Stahl when she has availability to obtain the required documents, it will be time consuming. She will review the specifications and get the submission ready.

QUICK COLLECTION WORK

No progress to report at this time. Dates have been provided from members of the committee for gathering to move it forward. They will be contacted to set up firm dates. Barbara Sageser noted we should pull some things from the collection to make them available for the Greenfest to take place on May 9, 2015. Also, some of the same items can be used for the Art and History Expo on June 13, 2015.

HISTORIC INVENTORY REVIEW UPDATE

No progress to report at this time. Barbara Sageser and Jim Davidson have been discussing the role of the Historical Society in the Clawson House. The society has formed a committee and they are putting together a list of questions to be presented to the Township Committee.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairwoman Sageser recognized John Allen and Bob Leith – County Cemetery Committee on the Landis Burial Grounds

Barbara Sageser explained the Historic Preservation Committee has had difficulty with the historic inventory. John Allen and Bob Lieth believe they may be able to help with the confusion over the lot and block numbers and the accuracy of the historic inventory.

The County Cemetery Committee just started about a year ago. They have been trying to figure out how many cemeteries there are, and where they are located, and what shape they are in at this time. All the municipalities have someone who is focusing on this project. They identified the Landis Burial Grounds and they would like to approach the Township Committee and have them take over ownership of the property with a Quit Claim Deed. They are seeking support to present this opportunity to the Township Committee. There is no current owner of the property. The tax map shows how it was in the 1750's. There is a 1739 headstone. He also had a map around 1813 that indicates the property was not touched by the surrounding owner at that time. A map around 1865, indicates the owner cut out the cemetery when he sold the property. He kept the cemetery property. Tax maps show it as owner unknown. They are in the process of getting Quit Claim Deeds in all the surrounding townships.

The Landis property is exempt, so there are no taxes. You can't get into the property. There is a vehicle (pick-up truck) trapped by trees growing around it. There appear to be empty drums and oil tanks, all appear to be empty. There are compressors and tanks 6' by 20', but when you bang on them they appear to be empty. The 1739 headstone may still be there, but if the stones are there they are overgrown and can't be located.

Will Harrison said he hiked out there sixty years ago and at that time you could see the stones, and you could still barely read the inscriptions. He estimates there were maybe a dozen or two dozen at that time.

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Peg Sullivan asked what would be the ramifications of the township taking possession with a Quit Claim. Will Harrison suggested perhaps the Historical Society may want to take ownership of the property. The County Cemetery Committee does not have any money, but they would like to convince someone to take ownership of the property. They will obtain the Quit Claim Deed and offer it to the Township.

Barbara Sageser explained that this may fall into the category for the Township like the sidewalk improvements, and the unfit building ordinance. Things that can revitalize and uplift the village are being reviewed and looked at closely at this time.

Peg Sullivan asked if they know who is buried there. They are sure Landis is one of the names of people buried. If the Township did take ownership they would have no access to the property. There are land owners who have graciously allowed access over their property. It would be difficult to enforce no dumping laws, and to clear it out would involve heavy equipment. Peg expressed concern for the possibility that the property is contaminated, and could become a liability for the Township if they take ownership.

The Cemetery Committee meets the fourth Saturday of every other month. The next meeting is in May. Also, they are having a seminar on September 19, 2015 from 11AM-4PM. They will have speakers and a panel discussion on how to preserve and protect early burial farm grounds.

Will Harrison thanked the Cemetery Committee representatives for coming to our meeting. He expressed the hope that this will be the beginning of a cooperative relationship. Barbara Sageser gave them her email address and they will provide the minutes from their last meeting and any news from their committee. Will Harrison suggested there could be other liability incurred by the township if we unearth the property and people start going out to the site.

CORRESPONDENCE

Budget questions were answered when Barbara Sageser and Sharon Brighthaupt attended the meeting with the CFO and the Township Administrator. We still have the same budget, the copy we had last month showed only one quarter of the annual budget.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No new announcements.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Chairwoman Sageser noted there were no other members of the public present.

ADJOURNMENT

Will Harrison made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Suzanne Koeniger seconded, all in favor. Chairwoman Sageser declared the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:10PM.

The next Historic Preservation meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2015 at 7:30PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/Sharon Brighthaupt, Secretary