

**PENNINGTON BOROUGH
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 11, 2018**

Mr. Reilly called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and announced compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act.

Board Members Present: Nicholas J. Angarone, Mark Blackwell, Deborah L. Gnatt, Eileen Heinzl, William B. Meytrott, Katherine L. O'Neill, Vice Chairman, Douglas Schotland, James Reilly, Chairman. Absent: Winn Thompson
Historic Preservation Commission: Natalie Shivers, Ned Crislip, Robert Bolton, Hannah Williams, Catherine Chandler, David Coats, Stephen Molinelli, Eric Holtermann, Chair. Absent: Robert Chandler, Chris Czornyek. Also Present: Edwin W. Schmierer, Mason, Griffin & Pierson, Planning Board Attorney; Michael P. Bolan, Borough Planner; John Flemming, Zoning Officer (left 7:50 p.m.); Mary W. Mistretta, Board Secretary.

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC ADDRESS - none

JOINT MEETING OF THE HISTORIC COMMISSION AND PLANNING BOARD REGARDING DESIGNATION OF THE PENNINGTON AFRICAN CEMETERY (PREVIOUSLY REFERRED TO AS THE AME CEMETERY), 417 SOUTH MAIN STREET, BLOCK 1002, LOT 46 AS A HISTORIC SITE AND AMEND THE BOROUGH'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION DISTRICT.

Mr. Holtermann stated that in the Historic Preservation Ordinance that established the Historic Preservation Commission it states that they should have the following duties and responsibilities and one of them is to recommend to the Borough Council the designation of historic districts. They recommended the addition of the Pennington African Cemetery to the existing Historic Crossroads Preservation District. He stated that when they started looking into the process they spoke to the State Historic Preservation office and recommended that instead of identifying the cemetery as an individual historic site it would make more sense to add it to the Historic District. The Pennington African Cemetery located at 417 S. Main Street, is one of the most historic landmarks in the area. Archival research shows that the cemetery parcel was owned by William Welling and deeded to five black men: Stephen Welling, Samuel Allen, Samuel Blackwell, Theodore Boyer and Jasper Moore on September 1, 1863. The men worked in close association with the Bethel A.M.E. church in Pennington to ensure that black residents were guaranteed access to a graveyard and place in which to honor their ancestors. Until the First Baptist Church was established in 1902, most African Americans in Pennington attended the A.M.E. church and early burials were mostly church members. Records indicate that burials occurred as early as the 1850's indicating the land was used as a cemetery prior to it being legally recorded in Mercer County in 1863. There are 245 documented burials, including ten known Civil War veterans. The actual number and date of all interments is unknown although there is a continuing effort to identify as many of the graves as possible. The last burial in the cemetery was in 1964. Mr. Holtermann presented a plan that shows not only the headstones, but graves that have been detected.

Angela Witcher, Hopewell, NJ, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Pennington African Cemetery Association, thanked the Commission and the Board for placing this on the agenda. She stated that when you look at a lot of the names in the cemetery they are ancestors of people who still live in Pennington. The cemetery is a significant part of Pennington's past and present. Teachers bring students for education and community service and Boy Scouts have done Eagle projects giving the cemetery a fence and signs. Ceremonies for the veterans are held every Memorial Day in the cemetery. Ms. Witcher stated that members of the Association are the stewards and caretakers for the cemetery as there are a lot of burials where there is no family left. The Association is non-profit and made up of volunteers who are mostly descendants

of people buried in the cemetery. Ms. Witcher noted that they were able to identify a lot of the burials with the help of the Blackwell Memorial Home's records.

Mr. Bolton made a motion, seconded by Ms. Shivers recommending the addition of the Pennington African Cemetery to the existing Historic District. Voting yes: Robert Bolton, David Coats, Ned Crislip, Stephen Molinelli, Natalie Shivers, Hannah Williams, Eric Holtermann.

Mr. Blackwell made a motion, seconded by Ms. O'Neill to recommend to Council the addition of the Pennington African Cemetery to the Pennington Crossroads Historic District. Voting yes: Nicholas Angarone, Mark Blackwell, Deborah Gnat, Eileen Heinzel, William Meytrott, Katherine O'Neill, Douglas Schotland, James Reilly. Absent: Winn Thompson.

ZONING OFFICER'S REPORT - Mr. Flemming encouraged the Board members to contact him right away if they see something that they are not sure is allowed or does not have a permit. He stated that his goal is not to harass residents, but to be helpful if a project is in violation.

WORK SESSION

APPLICATION REVIEW COMMITTEE – REPORT

Mr. Reilly explained that the Board charged the Committee to review the provisions of the Town Center (TC)/Town Center Buffer (TCB) Zones. Ms. O'Neill, Chairperson of the Committee stated that they have had meetings and spent extensive time going into great detail. Ms. O'Neill addressed the locations of the Town Center Buffer Zone and explained that originally it was developed to act like a bridge to the Town Center Zone. It has zoning regulations that are the same as the Town Center Zone and the Committee discussed whether it should be rezoned, made part of the R-80 Zone or changed to a new zone like R-35 or R-40 that would be more realistic for the zone. There is quite a mix in the TCB including large houses and lots and narrow lots with narrow houses. The narrowest lot in the zone is 25 ft. wide and the largest as wide as 150 ft. There are a lot of issues concerning the zone including the possibility of subdividing and adding to the density of the zone and the committee wants to make sure that they move forward in a way that is right for the zone and the residents in the zone and town. In discussing the alternatives, the Committee feels that they do not recommend rezoning at this time and recommend doing a comprehensive review of the TC and TCB zones as well as other zones in the Borough as part of the Master Plan reexamination which will be needed in a few years. Mr. Bolan agreed with this and felt that the reexamination of the Master Plan would allow a more comprehensive look at other areas in the town as well as the Town Center and Town Center Buffer Zones. There were no objections from the Board and Mr. Reilly agreed that a comprehensive review would be better and there did not seem to be any immediate reason to change the zone at this time. The Board would keep it under consideration and bring it up again if circumstances change in the future.

MINUTES - January 10, 2018 - Ms. Heinzel made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blackwell to approve the minutes and the Board approved by voice vote.

February 14, 2018 – Mr. Blackwell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Heinzel to approve the minutes with a correction and the Board approved by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary W. Mistretta, Planning Board Secretary