

**Approved MINUTES**  
**THORNBURY TOWNSHIP (CHESCO)**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING**  
**Monday, March 2, 2009**

**Members:**

Chris Lang - Chairman, Dr. Anne Dzamba, Don Macpherson, Dr. Richard Webster  
Molly Morrison, Tom Spackman

**Attending:** Dale Frens, Preservation Architect

1. Approval of Minutes for Jan. 5, 2009 and Feb 2, 2009:

Vote postponed, since all members not ready to approve.

2. Historic Resources Survey Project:

a. Dorchester February Report - Not much done in February due to Cheyney National Register Nomination work. Chris Lang reported he had given to Dorchester the list of 15 sites for property researches.

b. The Commission appointed Dick Webster and Chris Lang, as a sub committee to meet with Jane Dorchester to make initial designation of class for each historic resource, to be sent then to the County for its GIS mapping.

3. Cheyney Farmstead:

a. Dale Frens attended to discuss the Cheyney barn. He explained the measured drawings his firm made of it and the evolution of the structure. Lang asked Frens to add the so-called granary wall on the east and the wall remnant at an acute angle to former milk house. The HPC expressed clearly, that the Township's goal should be to save the barn as a barn rather than as a ruin. The Township should only consider saving the barn as a ruin as a last resort after all other options have been extinguished. Any study by Frens should include identify what would be the cost and method to save the 18<sup>th</sup> c. core barn with cross gable and fore-bay, and a wall ruin was last choice.

b. As far as the Cheyney property National Register Nomination, Lang described the submittal and its timing and the comments back from PHMC, dated Feb. 20, 2009, that stated the PHMC did not think the property was eligible for the NR based on architecture or history, but maybe as a farm site. Thornbury Manager and HPC Chair decided to withdraw submittal from consideration for the April meeting, partly due to the short time. Instead, Thornbury has decided for Jane Dorchester to take the time to submit a refined application based on all three criteria - architecture, history and agriculture, for the October PHMC meeting.

c. The HPC then had a discussion as preparation for a joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors at its March 3 work session. The HPC majority still felt the best chance for preservation of the house and barn is to have them return to private ownership. For public ownership to work there must be a clear use, a secure maintenance budget and daily residency or surveillance. We agreed the barn issue must be solved first.

4. Cheyney Marker:

In light of additional information from the nomination application, Dick Webster and Molly Morrison will make final minor edits to the maker text.

Respectfully submitted, Christopher Lang, Chairman

Attachment pg 2 : Cheyney Property Recommendations from HPC to Board prepared for March 3 meeting

Cheyney Property - Historic Preservation Commission View, March 3, 2009

The GOAL for the Cheyney Property is the best and maximum preservation of the historic resources of Cheyney Farmstead for future generations, and preservation that is organizationally and economically feasible. This has been the Township's goal since the original contract with the Dallets over ten years ago.

Any plan adopted by the Thornbury Township (TT) should achieve this goal. First, the board must decide if the property will be kept in public hands or private. This will affect the subsequent decisions. Pros and cons of alternatives should be carefully examined. TT should not rush decisions on structures or course of action, and should have a public hearing on it, due to long term and financial considerations

In order to protect the structures, we believe someone must be on the property everyday, preferably residing on the property. If in private residential use, it will be protected; if in public use, TT will need a caretaker residence or similar.

Before deciding on Public Ownership and Retention, the Board must have

- 1) a plan and budget of Restoration or Fix up Cost
- 2) a budget for Annual Building and Maintenance Expense.
- 3) a plan of projected use (justifying the expense)
- 4) a plan of paid and volunteer human resources to support the property use plan over time.

Public ownership raises the potential for issues of governance, proper decision making, loss of interest over time, conflict of priorities. Very importantly, it does not insure protection with the house if it is for most of the time vacant and unattended. A subsequent Board may not have interest in the house and may neglect or demolish it.

For Private Ownership to be considered, the Township must determine what restrictions, easements or controls are needed to insure the goal of Maximum Preservation of the historic resources for future generations. Restrictions would be set up to be part of the property deed and not dependent on the owner's choice or whim. Enforcing restrictions would be the responsibility of a third party.

Since the prerequisites of Public Ownership are not in place, and will be difficult to achieve, most of the HPC members believe the optimum way to achieve the goal is through private ownership. Private ownership, with restrictions and periodic right of public access, has the benefit of strong vested interest in decision making, restoration and maintenance, and the 24/7 protection of residential occupancy.

In summary, the Historic Preservation Commission believes that the best option is to market or lease the property for private use and solicit proposals which would define use and intent. Until the land allocation of the 16+ acre lot is determined the concepts of control and maintenance can not be worked out. We feel it best that the property be offered in sensible size lots with the house and/or barn, adequate in size and shape for protection of the ownership. The HPC believes part of the 16+ ac. should go into the township park.