



**Meeting of the Plymouth Township Historic District Commission
Thursday, February 23, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.**

Next Meeting date April 27, 2023

- 1) CALL TO ORDER**
 - a) Roll Call
- 2) APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 23, 2023 CONSENT AGENDA**
- 3) ENACTMENT OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**
 - a) Approval of the December 8, 2022 Meeting Minutes
- 4) BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**
- 5) PUBLIC COMMENTS**
- 6) NEW BUSINESS**
 - a) Pod cast proposal– *Ben Eikey*
 1. *See attached proposal*
 - b) 200th Anniversary Celebration – *Wendy Harless*
- 7) OLD BUSINESS**
 - a) Shearer Cemetery – *Wendy Harless*
 1. We need to set a Spring clean-up date.
 - b) Triangle Park marker – *Wendy Harless*
 1. Review of a title “An Historic Community with Heart”. Let’s discuss other ideas for this title—*Wendy Harless*
 2. Discussion of latest draft of text (see attachment)
 3. Updates on images to use
 - c) Update on 49000 N. Territorial Rd.
 - d) Any new Plymouth Historic facts for the Township Newsletter?
 1. Cooper Corners
- 8) ADJOURNMENT**

**The public is invited and encouraged to attend all meetings of the Historic District Commission of the
Charter Township of Plymouth**



**Plymouth Township Historic District Commission
Proposed Minutes**

Thursday, December 8, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.

Next Meeting date February 23, 2023

1) CALL TO ORDER

a) Roll Call

PRESENT: Dennis Cebulski
Wendy Harless
Sybil Hunter
Ben Eikey

EXCUSED Colleen Azimi
Carol Souchock

ALSO PRESENT Supervisor Kurt Heise
Nani Wolf, Township Planner
Denisa Terrell, Recording Secretary

2) APPROVAL OF THE December 8, 2022 CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by W. Harless and supported by D. Cebulski to approve the agenda for the regular meeting of December 8, 2022.

Ayes all.

3) ENACTMENT OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

a) Approval of the June 23, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Moved by W. Harless and supported by B. Eikey to approve the consent agenda for the regular meeting of June 23, 2022.

Ayes all.

4) BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

B. Eikey Shared that he has a Podcast titled Oversight Matters. He would like to share the history of the Township on the podcast.

5) PUBLIC COMMENTS

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Nani Wolf shared that the Michigan Historic Preservation Network will hold a conference from May 10th through May 13, 2023 on Mackinaw Island and they also announced the acceptance of state and local grant applications on October 3rd through February 1, 2023.

6) NEW BUSINESS

a) Update from Township Supervisor Kurt Heise

Supervisor Heise went over goals and updates of projects in which the Historic District Commission is involved including the Peacock House, Purcel House, and the new sign for Shearer Cemetery. He also shared information on an upcoming Bicentennial Commission as an opportunity to consider. Supervisor Heise also provided information on the MITC Corridor and history of the worse train wreck in the early 1900. He spoke about the possibility of a historic marker as a project goal.

b) Vote to approve 2023 HDC Meeting Dates

February 23, 2023

April 27, 2023

June 22, 2023

August 24, 2023

October 26, 2023

December? — we need to select a date for 2023

Moved by S. Hunter and supported by B. Eikey to accept the dates from February 23 thru October 26th as meeting dates for the Historic District Commission.

Ayes all.

c) Search for an Architect Member for the HDC

Due to Z. Funks' moving has opened a seat to the HDC. W. Harless will send Z. Funk an email to thank him for serving on the HDC.

d) The Elks Project – *Dennis Cebulski*

D. Cebulski provided an update on the Elks project. He suggested that HDC start research as there will be a historical marker for the site that the developer will fund.

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7) OLD BUSINESS

a) Shearer Cemetery – *Wendy Harless*

1. We read and tried to transcribe the stones. See attachment.

B. Eikey, W. Harless, C. Azimi, and S. Hunter looked at tombstones to complete the redraw of the map that includes names on the tombstones, the inscription, and flowers found in the area. W. Harless suggested the commission consider cleaning some of the tombstones as well as preservation methods. She emphasized a marble headstone that is weathering.

2. Duane Quates and Stacy Tchorzynski from the DNR say that they are still downloading and reviewing the data from their March visit. They will send us dates to return this fall and do more ground scanning with the ground penetrating radar.

B. Eikey suggested that there be a cleanup a week before the ground penetrating radar returns to complete.

b) Updates on our 2020 home inventory – *Wendy Harless*

1. Was anyone able to take photos of buildings we did not previously have in our inventory?

Photos are needed for the brick house by Pioneer as well as the house at 46627 Ann Arbor Road and Canton Center Road. Both homes were recently sold. W. Harless indicated she will try to get a photo. W. Harless emphasized if commissioners see a house not in the inventory take a snapshot.

c) Triangle Park marker – *Wendy Harless*

1. I sent the Supervisor our recommendation for a location
2. Discussion of latest draft of text (see attachment)
3. Updates

The HDC discussed the only text is complete and the only task left to achieve would be to identify the title and photos for the Triangle Park marker. Richard Sharlon sent photos of his family turkey farm. The Commissioners talked about examples.

d) Info/update on 49000 N. Territorial Rd.

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S. Hunter and W. Harless visited the home. The home is one of the oldest in Plymouth Township with logs in the basement. The home owners were gracious in sharing history.

e) Fall Colors was October 9, 2022

The Fall Colors event was a success.

f) The tombstone of Ellen and Honora Nelligan

Tombstones were found during while being landscaped. The tombstones are from the 1860. The police were notified W. Harless shared the story of Ellen and Honora Nelligan. The mother and daughter were located on Ancestry.com. The research allowed the police to return the headstones to St. Patrick's Cemetery after deemed missing for forty years.

g) Any new Plymouth Historic facts for the Township Newsletter?

The newsletter is sent out electronically quarterly. B. Eikey contribute. He also shared that the podcast that can be shared in historic facts and would

8) ADJOURNMENT

Moved by D. Cebulski and supported by S. Hunter to adjourn the meeting of the Historic District Commission at 8:41 p.m.

Ayes all.

Wendy Harless, Chair

1/30/2023

Ben Eikey

Plymouth Township Historic District Commission Podcast Series Proposal

Summary:

- This is a proposal for a podcast series for the Plymouth Township Historic District Commission. The initial run would be twelve episodes long and air monthly. Time per episode would be around 20-30 minutes.

Equipment Needed:

- I believe I have the equipment I need for virtual and in-person interviews.
- For uploading the podcasts once ready, there are two options.
 - Use a subscription program like Zencast to upload to all podcatchers. \$12/month.
 - I can upload to the major podcatchers: Spotify, Google, Apple.
- Use of a transcript service for accessibility purposes. Around \$10/episode.

Summary of Personnel:

- Ben Eikey is a member of the Plymouth Township Historic District Commission. He works at Wayne State Law School in the Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy. At the Center he is the host of Oversight Matters, a podcast on legislative oversight. He loves history and is delighted to apply his podcasting skills to sharing stories on Plymouth Township history!
 - I would do the interviews as part of my service on the Commission.
- Trevor Skerbe is a music technology student at Wayne State University. He uses his audio skills to help edit and polish every podcast episode.
 - \$23/hour.

Suggested Episodes:

- Plymouth Township History 101
 - Suggested interviewee: Supervisor Heise.
- Shearer Cemetery
 - Suggested interviewee: Wendy?
 - Questions:
- A homeowner?
 - Suggested interviewee:
 - Questions:

- HOCO prison?
 - Suggested interviewee:
 - Questions:

- A collaboration on the North Township train disaster?
- Sybil to discuss the heritage sign and indigenous people history?
- Any old businesses?
- Any old family farms?
- Historic mills?
- Inn at St. Johns
-

Proposed heritage sign for new triangle park Ann Arbor Trail at Beck

Title

An Historic Community with Heart

Indigenous people lived here well before Europeans arrived on the Great Lakes. Their footpaths became many of the roads we use today, including Ridge, Joy and Ann Arbor Trail. Multiple documents reference the importance of two major footpaths intersecting in what would become Plymouth. This geographical area is part of the “1807 Treaty with Ottawa, Etc.” which compensated indigenous people to relocate elsewhere, including to two land tracts along Tonquish Creek - a Rouge River tributary named after a Potawatomi Chief. The tribes that signed this treaty included the Chippewa, Ottawa, Wendat and Potawatomi.

Early European-ancestry peoples came from the east, bringing their rural farming traditions to the area, building farms and homesteads. This heritage is spread around the Township today but in small doses, after the suburbanization that came to the area in the post-World War II era. Nearby Township Park was fashioned from the Allen farm. The Greek Revival farmhouse was moved from the park, saved and stand today as a private residence.

IMAGES: Can we get permission to use one of the historic images that exist online of the Native people in their traditional dress? We have a hi-res file of the Allen Farm from the 1876 Atlas of Wayne County. We need to give credit to the Plymouth Historical Museum.

(On side two, no title is needed as per the Daisy design shown above).

The Township of Plymouth was formed in 1827, encompassing 72 square miles of forest, stream, and field. South Plymouth residents formed their own Township in 1834, naming it Canton. This reduced Plymouth to half its original size. The village of Plymouth was incorporated in 1867 by an act of the Legislature. In 1898, by a vote of 40 to 30, the northern residents of the Township also decided to split off to form their own community. Today this area is known as Northville. Nineteenth century travel difficulties were a key rationale for bringing local government closer to the people it served.

By late 1825, several settlers had cleared portions of the heavily timbered land, raised cabins, erected barns, and planted crops. During the Spring in 1826, residents began to cut roads as more came to the township seeking a homestead. John Tibbits was one of the first settlers, and it was on his property that the first Township meeting convened in 1827. The barn in which everyone met that day still stands on North Territorial Rd.

Image [*farms*]: Tibbits barn on N. Territorial (need better picture) We could use the one from 1980s in our brochure.

Glacial forces created a rich soil in this area that aided agricultural activity. Farming expanded early in the 19th century. Cultivation of orchards produced fruit to subsist life. Vestiges of early farms abound, including houses on major roads where families gathered together for local celebrations with their neighbors.

In 1902, Norman and Cornelia Miller purchased 1,100 acres in Plymouth Township near this marker and farmed the land until his passing in 1958. In 1968, the remaining family members sold 40 acres of their farm to the Plymouth-Canton School District with the stipulation that the 10 acres of unfarmed forest located just west of here on Powell Rd. be preserved, for education and recreation.

Today Miller Woods is a nature preserve that shows how the forest looked before the European settlers arrived to farm the land, clear cutting the forest. Many of the trees are over 350 years old. It is an example of “late successional” forest and can be enjoyed year-round. The Friends of Miller Woods hold many tours and educational programs throughout the year.

Side Two

First image [*1-room schoolhouses*]:

(need one closer than Geer). Maybe the museum has a photo of a long-demolished school house from Plymouth Township?

Text:

Michigan's early constitutions provided for public instruction in schools for each local district at least three months every year. Children of several generations received their education in one-room structures, such as Geer School west of here. In 1914, the State's Department of Public Instruction specified standards for rural school construction. Several existed at Beck and N. Territorial roads.

image [*Plymouth Plank Road*]:

Text:

A law to incorporate the Detroit, Plymouth and Ann Arbor turnpike (or timber road company) was enacted on March 22, 1837, "for the purpose of constructing a turnpike or timbered road from the city of Detroit, in the county of Wayne, to the village of Ann Arbor, in the county of Washtenaw." This was "the first plank road in Michigan, and indeed, in the United States."

Third image [*Gunsolly mills*] (pictures from our brochure?):

Text:

Roads originally were crude but provided better access to mills. A mill used water power from a stream to grind ("mill") grain to produce flour for baking and cooking or corn for meal. Abraham Markham claimed to have erected the first mill in the Township in 1826. Nearby mills include: Phoenix Mill; Wilcox Mill; Luther Lincoln's Lumber mill, Gunsolly; and Meads.

Fourth image [*Trillium, Yellow Poppy, Toad Lily*]:

Text:

The rolling meadow here is home to many wildflowers, such as clover, violets, daisies, Trillium, the Yellow Poppy (native to Michigan), Blood Root and Trout Lily. Their blossoms provide butterflies, pollinators, and songbirds with the food required for them to live. A meadow is critical to the health of plants in the surrounding area.