

Malvern Historical Commission 2019 report to Borough Council

The Historical Commission had a very busy 2019! In addition to the regular events and activities the commission typically participates in on an annual basis, we found time to add a few more.

Our biggest undertaking this year was our walking tour, presented as part of the Chester County Town Tours and Walks program. This year's theme was "Now and Then" and we had a lovely mix of properties that look mainly as they did when they were built, and others that have completely changed. With the help of over twenty volunteers, we presented the tour to about 200 people. The tour was ended early by the County personnel in attendance due to the weather, and the final 2 groups finished their tour under the Schmitt Pavilion at Burke Park. There were many comments from area residents who were unable to make it for the tour that they would like more, so we are looking into how we might make that happen on a slightly smaller scale.

The Commission makes a great effort to connect with the public. Writing for the Borough Newsletter and In Great Valley (prior to the Borough not continuing their participation) lets area residents know about our current activities and how they might contact us. Our highly popular Facebook posts on Monday and Thursday are more history-related and designed to engage the public in conversation with us. Our Facebook account increased from 1023 "likes" and 1039 "follows" in January to 1132 "likes" and 1194 "follows" in December. We held booths at Malvern Blooms, Endless Summerfest, Paoli Heritage Day, and Christmas on King, where we sell books, postcards, and other items, and also connect with the public in person. Those events afford us the opportunity to hear people's stories. All of these avenues we use to connect with the public have definitely paid off, as we answered a number of requests for information and photos this year, including a request from Senator Dinniman's office for information on Sam and Betty Burke that was to be included in a series of bookmarks. To this list of ways to connect with the public, we added a new Instagram account in March. We used this account, and its connection to our Facebook account to create anticipation for the tour as well as post pictures of current events happening in the Borough. By the end of the year, we had 203 followers.

Some of our more official duties this year included bestowing 6 preservation awards to residents and businesses who are good stewards of their historic properties, attending the Spring Workshop and the Volunteer Recognition Dinner hosted by the Chester County Historic Preservation Network, and working with members of the Planning Commission to revise the Historic Ordinance, which will continue into 2020.

This year, along with most of the same things we did last year, we plan to do some major overhauling of the History Center. Organizing files, getting rid of items not pertinent to the history of the Borough, and making the items that are useful to us more accessible.

We are grateful for the support of current and past Borough Council members and the Borough Administrative staff!