Local Preservation Ordinances
A Curatorial Approach
What is a Curatorial Approach?

The Historic Preservation Ordinance is a management tool for the built and natural environment.

- It is part of a municipal government toolbox that includes planning, environmental, commercial and institutional interests.

The Curatorial Approach

- Assesses the overall content and qualities (areas of significance) of sites that might be listed.
- Assesses the potential for districts vs. individual sites
- Assesses the threats to resources – Development pressure, financial hardship, changes to infrastructure
East Pikeland Township

- The National Register in East Pikeland
  - Four National Register Historic Districts (Kimberton, Middle Pickering, Prizer’s Mill, Continental Powder Works)
  - One Individually listed building, three bridges.
- Approximately 200 individually listed local resources.
- One Certified Historic District
Three Questions at the start of the process

- Is there an existing ordinance?
- Is there a resource list?
- What is the intent of the ordinance?

Existing ordinance problems

- Not compliant with current codes and standards.
- Does not have provisions for Certified Historic Districts and individual resources.
- Difficult to interpret and use.
Beginning the overhaul process

- Enlist the support of the township staff and elected officials
- Categorize Issues
- Update List
- Reorganization – HARB and HC – are both needed, are they separate?
- Fix areas of the existing ordinance that have been problematic
The List

- **Is the existing data accurate – addresses, tax parcel #’s, building types and conditions**
- **Have specific criteria for listing, evaluate all existing and proposed resources, add and remove as necessary.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE NO.*</th>
<th>STREET ADDRESS</th>
<th>PARCEL NUMBER</th>
<th>COMMON NAME, STYLE OR TYPE</th>
<th>CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS^</th>
<th>DATE(S)</th>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>REMARKS</th>
<th>FMR CLASS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>313 CHESTER SPRINGS RD</td>
<td>26-4-65</td>
<td>House; Barn &amp; Outbldgs</td>
<td></td>
<td>1793; 1806</td>
<td>A,B,C,G,</td>
<td>Check Address</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1236 CHESTER SPRINGS RD</td>
<td>26-4-64.1</td>
<td>Holman/Dietrich Farmstead</td>
<td>House, Barn &amp; Outbldgs</td>
<td>early 1800s</td>
<td>A,C,D,G</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1149 PIKE SPRINGS RD</td>
<td>26-4-35</td>
<td>Hartman/Pickering Meade Farmstead</td>
<td>House, Barn &amp; Outbldg</td>
<td>circa 1790</td>
<td>A,B,C,G,</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1075 CHESTER SPRINGS RD</td>
<td>26-4-28.2</td>
<td>Octohedren Schoolhouse; Knipe House</td>
<td>School; House</td>
<td>mid 1800s; 1930</td>
<td>A,C,H</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1016 CHESTER SPRINGS RD</td>
<td>26-4-60</td>
<td>Norland Square; Emery House</td>
<td>Tavern/House</td>
<td>circa 1830/1800s</td>
<td>A,B,D,G</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1096 PIKE SPRINGS RD</td>
<td>26-4-63</td>
<td>Emery House</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>mid 1800s</td>
<td>A, C</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1097 PIKE SPRINGS RD</td>
<td>26-4-36.2</td>
<td>Hickory Springs Farm</td>
<td>House &amp; Springhouse</td>
<td>early 1800s</td>
<td>A,G</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A. Is 50 years or older and is generally intact;
B. Is relevant to or associated with the significant development, heritage or culture of the Township;
C. Is associated with a person of historic significance in the Township or elsewhere;
D. Is representative of a distinctive architectural style, vernacular building type, craftsmanship, or is the work of a notable architect or builder;
E. Is the site or location of a notable local event considered to have had a significant effect on the Township;
F. Is a distinctive example reflecting the cultural, social or ethnic heritage of the Township;
G. Possesses a notable location and physical characteristics as an established and familiar visual feature to a neighborhood or the Township overall, or;
H. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information in prehistory or history, such as an archeological site.
The list is the list, and does not establish tiered classes.
Do the HARPB and Historical Commissions have different roles?

*At a basic level – No, both review applications that affect historic resources. At a broader level, one can assume the allied duties of maintaining/updating the list, hosting events, promoting preservation initiatives.*
Important special provisions for our ordinance

- **Demolition by neglect**
  - *Reference existing codes and standards like the Property Maintenance Code*
  - *Watchdog vs. Policeman - Act through the township staff.*

- **Demolition**
  - *The most important application, because it represents an irreversible act and must be reviewed with care, including a professionally produced Historic Resources Impact Study.*

- **Incentives**
  - *Zoning relief, non-conforming parcels, building types and shapes.*
Putting it all together

- A member’s manual so each member can be effective and provide accurate, consistent guidance to applicants and others with inquiries.
- An accurate map with file entries for each resource.
- Have clear review criteria and design guidelines.
Lessons Learned

- The curatorial approach in establishing clear criteria for listing makes the application and review process more straightforward.
Lessons Learned

- The primary focus of a preservation ordinance is to protect the resource, but that doesn’t mean it has to be difficult for applicants.
Lessons Learned

Historical Commissions and HARB’s are advisory bodies, the final decisions rest with elected officials or potentially the courts. Actions must be clearly documented, consistent with referenced standards in the ordinance.
Lessons Learned

The effectiveness of the boards is greatly enhanced if they are seen as trusted partners in the overall management of the built and natural environment.
Post Presentation Notes

- Placing resources into classes is good for an inventory, especially for keeping track of resources on the National Register, but local listing criteria should form the basis for application reviews, not an implied ranking.

- A review should be based on the listing criteria and referenced standards. HARB and HC reviews can follow the same procedures, it is only the post review procedures that are different, so the HARB and Historical Commissions can be the same membership. The meetings need to be separate proceedings even if held on the same day and place.

- The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards are only the beginning, and not even a necessary part of review criteria. Design Guidelines are an excellent supplement to help applicants and reviewers.

- While Historic Resource Protection Ordinances should be tailored to local needs, there are many common elements that can be borrowed from other municipalities.