

**Town of Elkton  
Elkton Historic District Commission  
June 25, 2014**

**PRESENT:** Paula Newton, Chair; Steve Leonard; Mark Clark; Jeanne D. Minner, Director of Planning

**ABSENT:** Josh Brown

Ms. Newton called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and stated that this is a meeting of the Historic District Commission and that a quorum was present. She stated that the Committee operates under the authority granted it by the Town of Elkton. She further stated that the qualifications of the Committee members are on file with the Town of Elkton. The basis of the decisions of the Committee be consistent with the Town's Ordinances, they are on file with the Town of Elkton and are hereby made a part of the record of each and every action of the Committee at today's meeting. Each application heard today is considered on its own merits and is not to be considered as establishing a precedent for any other application.

Ms. Newton stated the first agenda item is the approval of the minutes from the meeting of November 25, 2013. She asked if anyone on the Board had any corrections or comments. There being none, she asked for a motion.

**MOTION:** Mr. Leonard made a motion to approve the minutes of November 25, 2013 as written. Mr. Clark seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Newton stated the second agenda item is the approval of the minutes from the meeting of May 28, 2014. Ms. Newton stated she had one correction. She stated that the zip code should be 21921 under the request statement. She asked if anyone on the Board had any corrections or comments. There being none, she asked for a motion.

**MOTION:** Mr. Clark made a motion to approve the minutes of May 28, 2013 as corrected. Mr. Leonard seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Request by Mr. Dwight E. Hair, representing Colonel's D & D Choice LLC for exterior renovations to 323 Hermitage Drive, Elkton, MD 21921**

Mr. Hair introduced himself to the Commission. He stated that he has been working on the building for almost ten (10) years and that he is finally in the last stages. He provided a brief history of the building located at 323 Hermitage Drive. He stated that originally the building was brick but that it was stuccoed when the mortar began falling out. He stated that the original windows were replaced sometime between WWI and WWII and about thirty (30) years after that storm windows were installed. He stated that the metal straps in the windows, which are not original, contain lead. He stated that in order to bring the building into compliance with Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) regulations he wanted to replace all of the windows. He stated that even after he replaces all of the windows, the building still might not pass an inspection according to MDE. He stated that the new windows would be 12 grids and be historic looking and attractive. He stated that it is a very expensive building to maintain.

Ms. Newton stated that since it is one of the more historic buildings in the Town and, while the Commission appreciates the expense of maintaining an historic building, they sought guidance from Maryland Historic Trust.

Mr. Clark stated that the Commission operates under the guidelines of the Secretary of the Interior Standards Historic Preservation Guidelines. He stated that he spoke with the Assistant Director of the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) and with the Preservation Planner. He stated that under these guidelines there is no provision for this Commission to approve vinyl replacement windows. He stated that it doesn't mean the Commission agrees with it but it is how the Commission is chartered.

Ms. Newton asked if there was any public comment in support of the proposal.

Ms. Diane Hair spoke in favor of the project. She stated that if not approved the property could become like the boarded up historic Holly Hall building.

Ms. Sue Whitaker spoke in favor of the project. She stated that Mr. Hair is a good neighbor, that they share a driveway with this building and that they had never had any problems. She complimented him on how well maintained he keeps the property and how nice his tenants are. She stated that the Commission needed to be realistic and allow things like vinyl windows which look historic on the Town's historic buildings otherwise they will be too expensive to maintain and will end up like Holly Hall, which is a disaster. She stated that the Commission can tell owners what they can and cannot do to their historic buildings but they can't tell them they can't let them rot away. She stated that this is an issue she feels needs to be looked into. She stated that the Commission's position should be to help owners maintain historic properties and that she felt that the Mayor should think twice about having this Commission if that is not the case. She stated that she has had contact with three (3) or four (4) other neighbors and they do not have a problem with it. She stated that this Commission should be doing everything to preserve buildings.

Ms. Newton asked if there were any public comments in opposition. There being none, she asked the Commission members if any of them had further comment.

Mr. Clark asked if Mr. Hair had the letter from MDE he had referred to earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Hair stated that he did not have it with him this evening but would give a copy to Ms. Minner in the morning to distribute.

He stated that MHT was shocked that MDE would take such a stand because these types of windows are regularly being refurbished in Maryland. He stated he was not in a position this evening to either deny or approve of the project. He stated that he would like to see the letter Mr. Hair received from MDE.

Mr. Leonard asked when the exterior, aluminum clad storm windows were installed.

Mr. Hair stated that it was about 30 to 40 years ago and that they are not energy efficient and that it costs about \$30,000 a year to heat the building.

Mr. Clark reiterated that it was not himself saying that the windows could not be replaced, but the State of Maryland. He stated that the conflict between MHT and MDE requirements needs to be resolved.

Discussion ensued regarding whether or not the Commission could vote for vinyl windows, the fact that other individuals had been allowed to use vinyl windows, the energy value of different window types, the unattractiveness of the current 30 to 40 year old windows and that one case does not set a precedent for other cases but each is taken on its own merit and that the Commission must show consistency. It was further discussed as to how much more information they needed from MHT because this is an issue that would likely come up repeatedly.

**Motion:** Ms. Newton made a motion to table the vote until next month until the Commission could get clarification. Mr. Leonard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Old Business:** Ms. Minner stated that she had information from Maryland Preservation to distribute.

**New Business:** Discussion ensued regarding allowing replacement windows in historic structures, the value of just preserving the front façade over preserving the entire structure and the role of MHT in the Commission's decision making.