

**Town of Elkton
Elkton Historic District Commission
October 28, 2015**

PRESENT: Paula Newton, Chair; Mark Clark; Brittany Schwartz; Steven Leonard; John Downs Esq., Legal Counsel; 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 Commission operates under the authority granted it by the Town of Elkton. She further stated that the qualifications of the Commission members are on file with the Town of Elkton. The basis of the decisions of the Commission 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 Commission 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 that the first item on the agenda was approval of the minutes from September 29, 2015. She asked if any member had any corrections. Hearing none, she stated that she had corrections. She stated that on the last page the paragraph that started with 'Discussion ensued regarding...' 'was' and 'that' in that sentence needs to be struck. She then asked for a motion.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Leonard to approve the minutes of September 30, 2015 as corrected. Ms. Schwartz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Newton introduced the second item on the agenda.

Request by Mr. Doug Goldberg of Tupp Signs, representing Stacey Bridges, for installation of a sign at 221 E. Main Street, Elkton.

Mr. Goldberg introduced himself to the Commission. He stated that today they are requesting a 2' x 2', sandblasted redwood sign, which will be installed in the front yard and sit 15' from the road. He stated that the current sign hanging from the canopy only lets someone walking toward the building know they are at the correct office. He stated that it cannot be seen from the road and clients are having difficulty locating the building.

Ms. Newton asked if anyone in the audience is for or against this request.

Ms. Bridges stated that she was the owner of the building and was in favor of the request.

Ms. Minner clarified that the applicant would need a variance for this size of a sign. She informed the Commission that the applicant was on the agenda for the Board of Appeals meeting and that the Commission was only approving the style of the sign. She stated that the Town was working to amend the Zoning Ordinance to relax the size of the signs allowed in this zoning district.

Ms. Newton requested clarification on what sandblasted redwood was.

Mr. Goldberg stated that they take a 2" thick piece of redwood, apply a stencil with the lettering, then take a sandblaster and sandblast everything around the stencil. He stated it recesses the area around the lettering so that the letters stand out.

Mr. Clark asked if the post and beam for the sign would be white.

Mr. Goldberg stated that they would be white.

Discussion ensued regarding adding detail to the sign, such as a shaped cap on the post.

Ms. Newton asked if there was any further discussion or comments. Being none, she requested a motion.

MOTION: Mr. Clark made a motion to approve the sign with the addition of a traditional finial on the top of the 4' x 4' post. Ms. Schwartz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

BUSINESS: Ms. Minner stated that the Commission had requested to be informed of any capital projects the Town planned to conduct in the Historic District, particularly sidewalk projects. She stated that she brought the issue up at the last meeting and that Town Administrator Lewis George suggested that she invite Mr. Todd Frey of KCI Technologies and the Director of Public Works Mr. Dan Handley to speak to the Commission regarding ongoing/upcoming projects affecting the Historic District.

Mr. Dan Handley presented himself to the Commission and introduced Mr. Todd Frey of KCI Technologies, the Town's engineering consultants. Mr. Handley stated that they would be working on the sidewalk on E. Main Street from the Presbyterian Church to just east of Locust Lane.

Mr. Frey explained the slides showing the existing conditions along that stretch of E. Main Street. He stated that the area is a mix of brick and concrete sidewalk most of which is in poor condition and probably would not meet ADA standards. He stated that the purpose of this project is not just to address the look of the sidewalk but also to address ADA concerns regarding ramps and surface conditions. He stated that the sidewalk would consist of a concrete curb, 2' brick edging and a 5' concrete surface. He stated it would mimic what had already been done across the street and across a large portion of the downtown area. He asked if the Commission had any questions.

Discussion ensued regarding why the Town could not just relay the existing brick, the desire to retain the existing granite curbing, and the desire not to modernize Main Street.

Mr. Handley and Mr. Frey explained that they were not sure how much of the existing brick could be salvaged, that the existing brick is so worn in areas that it is not ADA compliant, that the cost of installation and maintenance of brick is a factor and that they are not certain they would be able to find new brick to match the existing brick. They further stated that 90% of the "historic" sidewalk has been modernized and the Town wishes to mimic the work that has already been done.

Mr. Clark stated that it is Elkton's historic charm that attracts people to Elkton and that these type projects chisel away at that historic charm.

The Commission requested that the Mayor and Commissioners give the Historic Commission a proposal as to what their intention is and include a cost estimate.

Mr. Frey asked if what they are requesting is an all brick sidewalk (using existing and supplementing with new where necessary) with granite curbing, even in those places where granite curbing does not currently exist.

The Commission stated that was correct. They stated that if it is not too costly any granite curbing that cannot be repaired should be replaced with granite. They stated that if concrete sections need to be replaced it should be replaced with brick.

Mr. Frey asked for clarification regarding the driveways. He asked if the Commission wanted them to be brick or concrete.

Ms. Minner asked as to the number of driveways.

Mr. Frey answered he believed there were 3 or 4 driveways in the scope area.

Mr. Clark stated and the Commission concurred that the driveways should be brick so as not to create stretches of brick dotted with white areas.

Discussion ensued as to how to "beef up" brick driveways so that the brick does not sink with use creating rutted areas. Discussion continued as to how much of the project could be done in-house and how much would have to be subbed out. It was further discussed as to how the existing concrete could be treated to better blend with the brick. The Commission pointed out that they were tasked with upholding the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for historic areas.

Mr. Clark stated that he would like to make a motion that the Mayor and Commissioners be informed that the charm of Elkton is its historic value and historic nature and if we start chipping away at that and adding modern features and modern renovation techniques we start losing that charm that draws people to Elkton. He stated that if it all starts to look like the suburbs there is no reason to come to Elkton. He stated that at one time State Highway wanted 200' of brick sidewalk torn up and replaced with concrete because that is State Highway's standard. He stated that the logical extension of that is that Elkton becomes so ordinary there is no reason for anyone to come here. He stated that would never happen in Chesapeake City.

Mr. Frey stated that in historic Chesapeake City they are currently redoing the sidewalks and that they are installing the sidewalks in the same way the Town is proposing tonight. He stated that State Highway did want all concrete in Chesapeake City and that this was the compromise they reached.

Ms. Newton thanked Mr. Handley and Mr. Frey for the information.

Ms. Minner stated that, regarding the draft Standards and Specifications for the Historic District, she had passed along the comments from the Commission to the consultant. She stated that they wanted to have a phone conference with her next week regarding the comments.

Ms. Newton asked if there was any other business the Commission members had for discussion.

Mr. Clark asked that Ms. Minner reiterate to the Mayor and Commissioners that the Historic District Commission wished to be informed and be allowed to provide comment on any capital projects the Town proposes for the Historic District.

Ms. Minner stated that she would do so.

Ms. Newton requested a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: Mr. Leonard made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Schwartz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.