

**Town of Elkton  
Elkton Historic District Commission  
April 28, 2021**

**PRESENT:** Paula Newton, Chair; Nancy Yerkes; Jeanne Minner, Planning Director; Nicholas Cannistraci, Assistant Planner; David Beste, Esq., Legal Counsel

**ABSENT:** Brittany Schwartz

Ms. Newton called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and stated that this is a meeting of the Historic District Commission. There was discussion as to whether or not a quorum was met. Ms. Newton raised the concern because the Elkton Historic District Commission is currently short two members.

Ms. Minner stated that in the past and on other commissions, that as long as the majority of the people seated on the board were present, there was a quorum.

Mr. Beste felt confident that they could move forward with it.

Ms. Newton stated that the first item on the agenda was approval of the minutes from the December 17, 2019 meeting. She noted a mistake with the minutes and stated that they appeared to be incomplete.

Ms. Minner confirmed that the minutes were incomplete, and suggested that the committee postpone approving the minutes until a full copy could be provided.

Ms. Newton then introduced the second item on the agenda.

**Request by Alex Meitzler, representing Traffic Planning and Design Inc., for approval of a hanging sign on 111 E. Main Street.**

Mr. Meitzler began by introducing himself, and the firm Traffic Planning and Design, to the Commission. He stated that Traffic Planning and Design Inc. is a civil engineering consulting firm that specializes in transportation infrastructure. He stated that the office is slowly expanding and growing. The firm has tried several times to address their visibility on the street. However, after several attempts the firm concluded that a hanging sign was appropriate, as the grids in the windows have made it difficult to design anything that works effectively.

Mr. Meitzler also stated that the firm has had success in Elkton and that he has no intention of leaving the community. He believes that the sign is compliant with the town and is aesthetically pleasing.

Ms. Newton noted that there was no one from the public in attendance and she requested questions/comments from the Commission members.

Ms. Yerkes did not have any comments, only that the sign is quite aesthetically pleasing.

Ms. Newton agreed. Ms. Newton stated that the sign is quite tasteful and perhaps could serve as an example to others who wish to have a sign in the historic district.

**Motion: Ms. Yerkes made a motion to approve the sign for Traffic Planning and Design Inc.**

**The motion was seconded by Ms. Newton and the motion passed unanimously.**

Ms. Newton introduced the third item on the agenda.

**Old Business:** There was none.

**New Business:** Ms. Newton presented a couple of relevant questions to the committee. She indicated that there has been interest in murals to be designed and created in the historic district. The questions posed were, “Can murals be painted over when ownership of the building or property changes?” and “Is there a protection device put in place to secure the mural(s)?”

Ms. Minner stated that these were relevant issues to discuss. She also stated that a new owner would most likely be able to paint over a mural.

Ms. Newton asked if there would be anything that the Historic District Committee could do to protect the murals.

Mr. Beste also commented that the Historic District decided early on that colors and some of the finer details would not be of concern to the committee. Mr. Beste also suggested that if there was any enforcement it would be with the grant. Since murals could potentially be funded by grant money, the rules of the grant could come into play.

Ms. Minner also added that by the same logic, the committee could ask that owners of the property maintain the murals if the murals should start to peel or fade.

Mr. Beste asked who is funding the murals around town.

Ms. Newton stated that she knew some of the funding was provided through the arts council.

Mr. Beste also emphasized that murals are distinct because it is a form of communication and free speech, especially if text is included with murals. In that capacity, the Historic District can act on murals. However, the question remains about removal of murals.

Mr. Beste said that he believes the enforcement and maintenance of murals has to be kept with the grant.

Ms. Newton also noted that a section of Main Street has had permanent seating added to it from two local businesses. The Town of Elkton has worked closely with the businesses on Main Street due to Covid-19.

Ms. Newton questioned why someone who wishes to put a sign on a building in the historic district has to come before the commission but the businesses who have taken away public parking on the street for seating do not.

Mr. Beste joined the discussion and stated that an important factor to consider is whether or not the seating fixtures are truly permanent or not, and that these could be measures taken for temporary relief.

Next on the agenda was election of officers, however, due to lack of attendance the commission was not able to move forward.

**Motion: Ms. Yerkes moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Newton seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:45 PM.