

**Town of Elkton
Elkton Historic District Commission
May 26, 2021**

PRESENT: Paula Newton, Chair; Brittany Schwartz; Jeanne D. Minner, Director of Planning; Nicholas Cannistraci, Planner I; David Beste, Esq., Legal Counsel

ABSENT: Nancy Yerkes

Ms. Newton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. 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 to 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 to 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 the first item on the agenda was approval of the minutes from the December 17, 2019 meeting. She stated that she had several corrections. Those corrections were noted and incorporated into the minutes. Ms. Newton asked if the commission had any other corrections. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

MOTION: Ms. Schwartz made a motion to approve the minutes of December 17, 2019 as written. Ms. Newton seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Newton introduced the second item on the agenda, which was approval of the minutes for the April 28, 2021 meeting. She stated that she had several corrections. Those corrections were noted and incorporated to the minutes. Ms. Newton asked if the commission had any other corrections. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

MOTION: Ms. Schwartz made a motion to approve the minutes of April 28, 2021 as written. Ms. Newton seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Newton introduced the third item on the agenda.

Request by Mr. David Bibi for approval of hand rails located at 214 W. Main Street, Elkton

Mr. Bibi introduced himself to the Commission. He stated that there currently are no hand rails located at the property. He informed the Commission that it was a bank owned property that he recently purchased and it is now a rental. The addition of hand rails are important for safety but also, as he stated, for consistency. All of the neighboring properties have hand rails. Mr. Bibi also stated that he choose vinyl as it seemed appropriate and was the material of choice in the Historic District.

Ms. Newton asked for comment by the public.

Ms. Marjorie Blystone stated that the hand rails seemed appropriate and would be a wise addition to the property. Ms. Newton and others concurred. Ms. Newton asked if the commission had any other comments. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the request.

MOTION: Ms. Schwartz made a motion to approve the request by Mr. David Bibi for the addition of hand rails located at 214 W. Main Street. Ms. Newton seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Newton introduced the fourth item on the agenda.

Request by Mr. Lee Lewis for approval of a mural located at 112 W. Main Street, Elkton

Ms. Newton asked if Mr. Lewis was in attendance and Ms. Blystone informed Ms. Newton that he was not in attendance and that she was at the meeting to represent him. With that, she stated that they intend to place a mural on the backside of the property located at 112 W. Main Street. The mural would be facing the municipal lot on Howard and Bow Street. The mural will represent the arts with different people engaged with a variety of art forms such as reading, dancing, and painting. Ms. Blystone stated that she believes this mural would be an excellent representation of the Arts and Entertainment District as well as provide something that is engaging to the guests of the Town of Elkton. Ms. Newton noted that there was none in attendance from the public at this time and asked the Commission for any comments.

Ms. Minner asked if Mr. Levy, the owner, had signed his permission for this project. Ms. Blystone indicated that they are waiting for final approval, due to the fact that part of the funding is coming through a façade grant as part of the Main Street Program.

Ms. Newton presented a comment to Ms. Blystone. She stated if the current owner decided to sell the building it could present a scenario to consider. The question would be, what would prevent the new owner from painting over these proposed murals? Ms. Newton indicated that Mr. Beste suggested that those protections and restrictions be included in the grant funding.

Ms. Blystone again stated that the funding for the mural would be coming through two different sources, Maryland State Arts Council and The Main Street Program.

Ms. Minner asked about their policy for something like this and Ms. Blystone said she would have to look into this topic further. Discussion over maintenance of the mural and various scenarios followed. Ms. Blystone also stated that an opportunity could present itself here due to the fact that Mr. Levy is looking to sell the building. She stated that there could be an opportunity for discussion and that she believes the mural would be a great asset to whoever buys the building.

Ms. Newton asked the Commission if there were any further comments, hearing none she asked for a motion to approve the request.

MOTION: Ms. Schwartz made a motion to approve the request by Mr. Lee Lewis for the addition of a mural located at 112 W. Main Street. Ms. Newton seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business: Ms. Newton raised concern over a couple of properties. One building she raised concern over is on the corner of Main and Bow St. Ms. Minner stated that she understands that the owner who purchased the property is working on it but he is from New York and the work is progressing quite slowly.

Ms. Newton continued to express concern over a number of buildings in that area of downtown. Ms. Newton also asked if there were any plans to renovate the former marriage parlor on Main and Delaware Avenue.

Mr. Beste stated that he was unsure about those plans. Ms. Minner stated that she would also ask the director of building and zoning about that.

Ms. Newton also brought to attention the outdoor dining on Main Street. Ms. Newton asked why no approval was necessary for the businesses downtown. Ms. Minner stated that it was due to Covid relief efforts. Ms. Minner also stated that she is unsure what the town's long term position is regarding the outdoor seating. Ms. Newton stated that if the outdoor dining is permanent, then it would be unfair to ask everyone else to get approval for numerous other things. The outdoor seating essentially adds another room to one's business and it does create a significant impact. Ms. Minner stated that she does believe the intent is to be a temporary solution. Ms. Minner was able to check the commission's position on the issue and stated that there were expiration dates that were being placed on the resolutions to allow outdoor dining, but on the most recent resolution the date had been left open ended. Ms. Newton and Ms. Minner both agreed that some correspondence may be necessary with the mayor.

New Business: Ms. Minner stated that Holly Hall has remained an eye sore despite recent attempts at appraising the property. Ms. Minner stated that she feels the town may lose the historic property either way. Ms. Minner asked Mr. Beste if he had any ideas on how to proceed forward.

Mr. Beste stated that appraisers are indeed difficult to track down in this current time. Mr. Beste also stated that in his experience negotiating additional terms is a better way to approach developers. Mr. Beste agreed he would send a letter and get a hold of an appraiser. Ms. Minner also agreed that would be a good way to move forward.

Ms. Newton asked if there was anything else to discuss. Hearing no other comments or concerns the meeting was adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:50 p.m.