

**Town of Elkton
Elkton Historic District Commission
November 23, 2021**

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

ABSENT: None

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 May 26, 2021 meeting. She stated that she did not have any corrections. Ms. Newton asked if the commission had any other corrections. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

MOTION: Ms. Yerkes made a motion to approve the minutes of May 26, 2021 as written. Ms. Newton seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Newton noted that one of the applicants was not in attendance. She stated that the agenda would be switched. She introduced the second item on the agenda, which was the request of Vincent Monterosso for approval of replacement of windows, doors, and exterior brick.

Request by Mr. Vincent Monterosso for approval to replace windows, doors and exterior wood trim and to replace lower half of exterior bricks with faux stone siding. This request is for properties located at 136-138 East Main Street, Elkton, MD 21921.

Mr. Monterosso introduced himself to the commission. He stated what he proposes to do to the building, which includes replacing the front doors and trim. He explained that the wood is rotted and stated that one side of the property he intends to turn into a pizzeria. The faux stone on the bottom is to correct the brick on the lower portion of the building. He stated that it is currently in poor condition. He also stated he wishes to differentiate the two store fronts of the building.

Ms. Minner asked if Mr. Monterosso had a chance to look at the standards. Ms. Newton also asked what side the pizzeria would be going in. Mr. Monterosso stated that it would go in on the left side and the tax accounting business will be on the right side.

Ms. Yerkes asked if the window on the left would be replaced by a sign. Mr. Monterosso stated that he indeed intended to keep all of the windows. He may take a grid out of the window.

Ms. Newton asked if these windows were original to the building. Mr. Monterosso stated that he wasn't sure.

Ms. Newton directed Mr. Monterosso to the design standards and stated that artificial stone is not an acceptable material for the Historic District. She stated that the original brick is a part of the building and essential to the betterment of the property. Ms. Minner also asked if Mr. Monterosso could potentially restore any of the brick and wood despite its current condition. Mr. Monterosso stated that he felt it wouldn't be possible. The wood appears to be quite rotted. The brick on the bottom of the building needs to be repointed. Ms. Minner responded and stated that it can be done and that the color of the brick can be made to match.

Discussion continued regarding the materials to be used for repairs as well as the windows to be repaired. Ms. Minner asked if Mr. Monterosso intended to keep all of the grids on the windows. Mr. Monterosso stated he didn't plan to and pointed to the fact that many other façades along the street do not. Both Ms. Newton and Ms. Minner agreed that many of those changes to the facades of the buildings along Main Street could have taken place before the establishment of the Historic District. Ms. Newton stressed to Mr. Monterosso that the Historic Commission is concerned with the current and future preservation of what now exists in the Historic District.

Ms. Yerkes asked Mr. Monterosso what kind of door he was proposing. He stated that he was proposing a painted metal door for security purposes. He stated that steel doors do come with grid windows.

Ms. Newton stated that her opinion on the matter, according to the guidelines, is that she was not in favor of allowing faux stone siding. Ms. Yerkes also agreed and stated that the brick would need to be repaired. Ms. Yerkes also stated that windows and doors could be replaced as long as they also have grids.

Mr. Monterosso was agreeable to these repairs but asked more questions about repairing the brick. He asked if he is not able to repair the existing brick, while also maintaining the integrity of the building, what would have to be done in that particular circumstance. Ms. Minner emphasized the fact that a similar material as the guidelines have dictated must be used. Mr. Monterosso pressed the matter and stated that there could be a potential situation where the bricks would not match and he would have to re-brick the entirety of the building with new brick, which, in his opinion would look worse and less historic than it does now. Mr. Beste responded to Mr. Monterosso's point, and stated that those scenarios are speculation and one must try to abide by the guidelines of the Historic District. Mr. Beste also stated that if necessary, the Commission will cross the bridge it needs to in order to accommodate a unique circumstance.

Discussion continued regarding the steel door, windows, wooden trim with contours, paint, and fascia board. There was also discussion about the differences between wooden and vinyl windows and the importance of replacement and replication.

Mr. Monterosso also stated that he would like to differentiate between the two doors and facades by painting each a different color. Ms. Newton stated that she didn't see any issue with that request as long as the colors chosen are appropriate.

Further discussion on the finer details of the steel door and handles, wooden trim, and current condition of the building continued. Ms. Yerkes summed up all that had been discussed and made a motion.

MOTION: Ms. Yerkes made a motion to approve the request by Mr. Monterosso to replace windows, doors and exterior wood trim and to replace the lower half of exterior bricks. The approval does not allow for faux stone, rather, the bricks must be repaired with brick. The approval is also contingent upon the windows being wooden with grids, a steel door with windows, panel on the door, and with a similar door handle. Also, all existing wooden trim is to be replicated, as well as the fascia board, and two different colors may be used as long as the colors are muted and appropriate. Ms. Newton seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Minner noted that the other applicant, Mr. Justin Meyers, was not in attendance and therefore would not be able to present the request at this meeting.

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

Old Business: Ms. Minner stated that the Town received a letter from a concerned citizen regarding the Holly Hall building and its current state of disrepair. Ms. Newton further expressed what was written in the letter. The letter essentially pleaded with the town to make an appeal and backed up the appeal to be made with points from the Historic District Guidelines. The concerned citizen also expressed willingness to help by taking petitions and signatures if necessary, in order to move the process along. Ms. Minner proceeded to read the letter for the record.

Ms. Minner provided context and a timeline of events surrounding Holly Hall. She stated that she had reached out to the property owner a year ago and the owner said he would be agreeable to sell the property to the Town. However there was never any follow up from any of the property owner's appraisers.

Ms. Newton stated her opinion is in favor of taking some action.

Mr. Beste wanted to make note of the fact that he questions the inability to donate to the Town, the property in question, and in return receive a tax break. Mr. Beste stated that he knows many other municipalities that have done a similar action in the past. He stated that it is a frequently used mechanism to convey property.

Ms. Newton again expressed her favor for action on the matter.

New Business: Ms. Minner spoke to the commission about names for additional members. She stated that the Mayor continues to ask for names for the Historic District commission.

Ms. Newton emphasized that it doesn't have to be a town resident, however, it does require someone who has some background in history and architecture or related knowledge. She also stated she doesn't know anyone who would be interested in serving on the commission.

Ms. Yerkes stated she knew of a couple people she could reach out to.

Ms. Yerkes also brought to the attention some fences she has seen that have recently been placed in the Historic District. She asked if fences also require permission granted by the Historic District Commission. Ms. Newton stated that fences do require permission.

Ms. Minner stated another item of new business. She stated that Elk Landing received grants of up to \$48,000 to restore the master bed room and slave's quarters at Elk Landing Mansion. The goal is to have this completed by the semiquincentennial, which is also known as America 250. Ms. Minner stated that the goal of the grant is to interpret the historical significance of the mansion as well as the slave's perspective.

Ms. Newton and Ms. Minner discussed the importance of Elkton during this upcoming celebration as Elkton played a significant role during the American Revolution. Ms. Newton also shared thoughts about coordinating efforts for the semiquincentennial and how the various nonprofits in Elkton and Cecil County could work together. Ms. Newton shared some of her ongoing efforts as well.

Ms. Newton asked if there was anything else to discuss.

Ms. Yerkes made a motion to adjourn. Hearing no other comments or concerns the meeting was adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:37 p.m.