

**Town of Elkton
Elkton Historic District Commission
January 26, 2022**

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 approximately 6:10 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 November 23, 2021 meeting. She stated that she had one correction. Ms. Minner stated that she also had one correction. Newton asked if the commission had any other corrections. There were no other corrections.

MOTION: Ms. Yerkes made a motion to approve the minutes of November 23, 2021 as written. Ms. Newton seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Newton introduced the second item on the agenda, which was the request of Robert and David Massimiano for the approval of a sign to be installed at 106 West Main Street.

Request by Mr. Robert Massimiano for approval to install a 10 ft. by 3 ft. sign. This request is for the property located at 106 West Main Street, Elkton, MD 21921.

Mr. Massimiano introduced himself and greeted the commission. He stated that he has proposed a sign that sits flat against the side of his building. Mr. Massimiano also stated that he intends to attach gooseneck lighting for the sign. Ms. Newton then asked what color the gooseneck lights would be and whether they would be black to match the boards that would be attached. Mr. Massimiano indicated they could be any color.

Mr. Massimiano also showed pictures as examples to the board members. Ms. Newton noted the material for the sign would be PVC and she asked Mr. Massimiano to describe the characteristic of PVC, especially how it is used for a sign. Mr. Massimiano stated that it is essentially a hard and durable plastic. Ms. Yerkes also asked for clarification and asked if any other material would be used. Mr. Massimiano affirmed that it would only be PVC and would be about ½ inch thick.

MOTION: Ms. Yerkes made a motion to approve the request by Mr. Massimiano to install a 10 ft. by 3 ft. sign. Ms. Newton seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Newton introduced the third item on the agenda, which was the request of JR Leonard for improvements made to 132 East Main Street.

Request by JR Leonard for approval to: replace and repair front door, light in transom over door, damaged brick on façade, glass in original transom windows, placement of a sign, placement of additional molding, and new paint for all trim. This request is for the property located at 132 East Main Street, Elkton, MD 21921.

In attendance at the meeting was Zoe August to represent JR Leonard. Ms. August introduced herself to the Commission Board Members. Ms. Newton asked her to detail the plans they have for the building. Ms. August began by stating that they plan to repair the brick and paint it white. Ms. August continued to detail the work proposed. She indicated that the trim would be painted, dentil moldings would be added, the awning would be removed and not replaced, the door would also be replaced, and there was also work proposed on the transom windows. That work included replacing the glass in each one and opening the ones that had been boarded up and concealed. The work planned also calls for s stained glass address in the transom window above the door. The final piece of work she described to the commission was the placement of a sign and bracket.

As the commission continued to review each item proposed Ms. Newton asked about the proposed door. She asked about the panes of glass and also about the transom window above the door. Ms. August verified that the windows will be replaced and that the door will have the same window pane design and style.

Ms. Minner asked why the work includes painting the repaired brick white. Ms. August responded to the question by stating the intent is to make the building look appealing as well as stand out. She stated that some of the other businesses along the street have also painted their brick. She emphasized the fact that their brick is severely damaged. Ms. Newton informed Ms. August that the other businesses painted their brick without prior approval.

Ms. Yerkes stated that she felt painting the brick was not appropriate. Ms. Newton also agreed, stating it is better to not paint over original material such as brick.

Ms. Newton asked of the color for the proposed door. Ms. August stated that the proposed door would be stained mahogany.

Ms. Newton then asked about the proposed sign. She asked about its style and material. Ms. August stated that the sign would be a routed wood composite. The sign will look like natural wood but will be able to withstand the elements better. She also stated it will be bracketed. Discussion continued to ensue about the sign as well as the other elements of work proposed. Ms. Newton and Ms. Yerkes both agreed that the work proposed would all be wonderful improvements to the building. However, they could not approve painting the brick.

MOTION: Ms. Yerkes made a motion to approve the request by JR Leonard to: replace and repair front door with mahogany, light in transom over door, repair original brick, add dentil molding, replace three original transom windows, paint all trim, add sign and brackets. The painting of the brick façade will not be approved. Ms. Newton seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business: Ms. Minner stated there has been movement regarding appraisal of the Holly Hall Building. She stated that she was able to establish communication with an appraiser and she would continue to work toward the goal of getting the building appraised.

She also stated there was an application for the Historic District Commission to fill an open position on the board. She stated the applicant is familiar with Elkton and has an exceptional background. Discussion continued about possible and future candidates to also join the board.

Ms. Newton began discussion about the Elkton Historical Society and the status on the condition of the building the society is currently occupying. Ms. Newton gave a brief description of what has happened and the conclusion provided by the professional HVAC team.

Ms. Minner expressed concern about the possibility of a government entity, such as Cecil County, making changes to buildings in the Historic District. She stated that government entities are exempt from the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Beste stated that she was correct in that the government entity is exempt from the Zoning Ordinance, however, such an entity would still need to appear before the Historic District Commission Board for permit(s) regarding any work done in the Historic District.

Ms. Newton asked of the status of the Wedding Chapel. She stated she had an excellent conversation with a graduate student interested in architecture around the county. Ms. Minner stated that she wasn't sure and she would ask the zoning administrator. She also stated that she included a recommendation within the Town's comprehensive plan to buy the property in question and restore it.

Ms. Minner discussed the importance of historical preservation. Ms. Newton agreed and that there were several things the Town could do better. Ms. Newton and Ms. Minner also discussed the Washington-Rochambeau Route and stated that the Town applied to be a part of a documentary. Discussion ensued over America 250. Ms. Newton discussed the lack of initiative regarding preparation for the event. Mr. Beste stated that he would be willing to let other municipalities that he represents know about their initiative to help prepare for the event.

Mr. Beste and Ms. Newton also discussed the similar issues that other towns in the county encounter regarding maintenance of historical buildings. Mr. Beste stated that the other municipalities he represents encounter similar struggles and offered to initiate conversation with other local leaders.

Ms. Newton stated that she had no other items to discuss and asked if there was any other business to discuss.

Hearing none, Ms. Yerkes made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.