

CITY OF DOVER
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
JUNE 18, 2026

The Meeting of the City of Dover Historic District Commission was held on Thursday, June 18, 2026, at 3:30 PM as an In-Person Meeting in the City Hall Council Chambers (anchor location) and virtually using the audio/videoconferencing system Webex. With Chairman Czerwinski presiding, the other members present were Mrs. Richardson and Ms. Baker. Ms. Horsey was absent.

The Planning Office Staff members present were Mrs. Dawn Melson-Williams, Mrs. Taryn Bauer, Mrs. Sierra Brown, and Mr. Alex Dewey.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Baker moved to approve the Agenda as presented, seconded by Mrs. Richardson and the motion was carried 3-0 with Ms. Horsey absent.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 20, 2025

Mrs. Richardson moved to approve the Historic District Meeting Minutes from November 20, 2025, seconded by Ms. Baker and the motion was carried 3-0 by voice vote with Ms. Horsey absent.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 19, 2026

Ms. Baker moved to approve the Historic District Meeting Minutes from February 19, 2026, seconded by Mrs. Richardson and the motion was carried 3-0 by voice vote with Ms. Horsey absent.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS

Summary of Applications 2025 and 2026

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that this is where we keep a running chart of the actions that have appeared before the Commission over the last two-year time frame. You'll see in 2025 there were a total of four applications and that includes one revisit, as it was revised later in that calendar year. So for some updates with those, the Old Post Project has begun some initial interior demolition and cleanup activities at the Old Post Office site. They do have a Final Site Plan that is in our office for its final approval process. Then she would note that the previous referral of the Fence Permit at 55 Kings Highway, while it did appear before you all, the applicant chose to revise their Permit to comply with the fence height of four feet and that project has been completed. It's a black metal fence at their location.

Moving on to 2026, there have been two applications. Both of them are referral of Permits. We will be focusing on second one this afternoon. So, are there any questions on the applications for the last two years?

Mr. Czerwinski stated that he doesn't have a question but the fence at 55 Kings Highway looks very nice and he is very pleased with the result.

Ms. Baker asked if we have any idea of when the Biggs expansion will begin. Responding to Ms. Baker, Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that for the Biggs expansion, you saw an initial scenario for a demolition of some rear additions to buildings that front on The Green that are in their ownership. She is not sure that that is going to be their path moving forward. She has been contacted by their project team and they may be going in a different direction; so, she would say stay tuned. She doesn't know that we are going to see demolition any time soon there because that would be tied to a future submission for what the actual addition to the building will be. It may not be moving forward in the way that they had previously planned.

Summary of Architectural Review Certifications for 2026

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that this is tracked by calendar year. So for 2026 through the end of May, there have been a total of 19 types of Permits in the Historic District. The Historic District Commission was involved in some way with at least five of them. The highest number Permit type is building interior which actually does not require Architectural Review Certification and then kind of the next in line is fences. One of those fences being the one that we saw at Kings Highway that we were just talking about. Probably the most significant ones of note from a Permit standpoint. While we do see the general kind of Fence and Sign Permits, are the two Permits related to the Legislative Hall Parking Garage Project. They were issued first as what we call the Administrative Permit related to commencement of site work activities. This is the Parking Garage project located at the corner of Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard South and what is East Avenue; kind of a segment of East Water Street there. Also the Building Permit for that Parking Garage was also issued. They are slowly moving through a lot of utility pre-planning and work that has to happen before we see a building related to the Parking Garage happening. But that is a project that is underway.

Mr. Czerwinski stated that he has one question for the Permit for 527-529 South State Street, it says interior and exterior renovation. Do you know what the exterior renovations were about and what that was for? Responding to Mr. Czerwinski, Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that Permit is a resubmittal of a Permit from a couple of years ago that had expired before they could finish work. The exterior renovation, she believes is with some window replacements and then she believes installation of shutters. She doesn't think they've taken the step to actually install any shutters at this point. That property is three apartment units. A number of years ago, there was the parking pad off what she will call the Christ Church Alley that was done that is supposed to have some screening of it. She thinks that with that Permit, we also were reminding them of their screening responsibilities. So, she thinks it's still a work in progress. It has not received any kind of Final Certificate of Occupancy at this point.

Department of Planning & Inspections Updates

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that some of you had the opportunity to meet our newest staff member of the Planning Office. Mr. Alex Dewey is a Planner I. He joined our office last week and has been very busy since all three of our Boards and Commissions have met this week. So we are getting a lot of things happening at once, but we welcome Alex to the team here at Dover. Then probably the other thing that she should note is that Ms. Sharon Duca, who had previously been the City's Assistant City Manager and had been helping with the administration of our overall Department of Planning and Inspections in the absence of a Director, has been appointed the City Manager for the City of Dover. So, congratulations to Sharon Duca.

REVISED APPLICATIONS

HI-24-07 Legislative Hall Building Addition at 411 Legislative Avenue: Revision for West Entrance ADA Ramp – Review for Recommendation for a Revised Architectural Review Certificate for the addition of an ADA Ramp located at the West Entrance of Legislative Hall. The proposal includes an approximately 160 feet proposed ramp in length, while also providing access to a new accessible entrance created within the exiting west façade. A temporary ramp may also be proposed for during construction. This is associated with the Site Development Plan for the Legislative Hall Building Addition project. The main property of 2.80 acres+/- is zoned IO (Institutional and Office Zone) and subject to the SWPOZ (Source Water Protection Overlay Zone) and the H (Historic District Zone). The subject property is located on the east side of Legislative Avenue as the block between Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard North and Martin Luther King Jr. South. The owner of record is the State of Delaware. Property Addresses: 411 Legislative Avenue and Court Street. Tax Parcels: ED-05-077.09-05-15.00-000 and ED-05-077.09-05-14.00-000. Council District 4. *This Application HI-24-07 was considered at the Historic District Commission Meeting of October 17, 2024 and granted conditional approval of the Site Plan and Architectural Review Certification by the Planning Commission with Application S-24-19 Legislative Hall Building Addition on November 18, 2024.*

Representative: Mr. Gabe Cheung, Studio JAED; Mr. Dan Ridgely, Studio JAED

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that she will give a brief introduction to this Report and then we have project team representatives here that will provide some greater detail. This is labeled as HI-24-07. Previously, the Legislative Hall Building Addition project was reviewed by the Historic District back in 2024. They have been working through early fits and starts about whether that project was going to move forward. Well, it's moving forward and today we bring to you a proposal related to the West Entrance of the building for some improvements to include an ADA ramp; both a permanent one and then a temporary one related to some of the construction activity. If we go to the Site Plan that will probably help orient people a little bit. At the bottom of the page is the West Elevation of the building. That's currently one of the main entrances into the building. The proposed ramp would be in that area of the building. The Building Addition that you all saw back in 2024 is actually on the east side of the building or the side where the statue is now. That was proposed for a Building Addition and kind of new plaza area for the overall building there. So, today we bring the ADA ramp. We did provide some basic information. Their project proposal has a couple of items to it and since you had seen the East Addition previously, we thought it would appropriate to bring back this ramp proposal to you so you can understand the whole package of what may be happening at this location. So there are some new parking spaces; they can speak to what we call accessible routes to get from either the sidewalk or those parking spaces and into the building should you have ADA needs. They can speak in more detail about the ADA ramp. She thinks you will find that their proposal is a one that is clad in brick and uses the black metal for the railing systems of a ramp. Because this is an exterior improvement in the Historic District, it is subject to the *Design Standards and Guidelines of the City of Dover Historic District Zone*. So that's what you're kind of weighing it against. It is considered new construction and those *Design Standards and Guidelines* give some criteria related to those key things when you're talking about doing construction for new additions to existing buildings. Staff has recommended approval of the Architectural Review Certificate for this ramp project, but it is for the Historic District Commission to make a

recommendation. We will also carry that recommendation back to the Planning Commission since they also saw the Building Addition Project. At this point, she thinks it would be appropriate to hear from the project team. They can go over a few more nitty gritty details of their project here. You did receive in your packet a narrative of their project along with two plan images to help you understand what's proposed with this West Entrance ramp project.

Mr. Cheung stated that as Mrs. Melson-Williams alluded to, we have an Addition going on at the existing East entrance. There currently is only one accessible route to the building and that is at the East entrance. When we do the Addition, that obviously will be closed down and will not be available for use during the construction. Therefore, the owner has asked us to take a look at providing an accessible entrance at the West, which they currently do not have. We have two options. One is a temporary ramp and one for a permanent one. Really, they are very similar to each other than the temporary one is going to be removed at the conclusion of construction and everything around it, the landscaping, the openings for the existing building and all of that will be restored to the original way that it was. He will first start by going through parts of the accessible routes during construction that will be starting with the new accessible street parking that's located on the Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard South. So, there is six new spots there that used to be reserved parking. Those reserved parking spots are going to be relocated into the new Parking Garage that is being constructed across the street. From that area, once you come out towards the west entrance, from there, there are a couple of steps that take you up to the upper sidewalk area. That would get a new walkway; either an aluminum ramp or it would be a paved walkway with pavers to match the sidewalk. Once you are up on that level, there would be a new ramp. Either the aluminum ramp that we were talking about that would be temporary or a more permanent one that would be clad in masonry and brick that would match the façade of the existing Legislative Hall. The ramp flooring and landings, those would be of a concrete material and then we would have wrought iron guardrails and railings. Again, it would match the aesthetics of building around it in the Historic District. So once you get up to the landing, the ramp in length is about 160 feet. It is probably 12 foot from the sidewalk level to the first level inside Legislative Hall. So what's interesting is that at the outside landing of the main entrance at the West entrance, that doesn't get you all the way up. There is a step that gets you into the threshold then there's a set of three steps inside that then get you up to the first landing. So, there's a little difference. We couldn't just take the ramp to the landing as that would not get you all the way in; so that's why we are going as high as we are and the length of the ramp is as such. Once the ramp does make its way to that level, there is an existing window opening that we would carefully remove. We would carefully cut down the opening so it would match the level of the first floor inside. We would infill that opening with a wood door that would match the aesthetics of the main door out there and then have that clad with a brick surround that again, would match the aesthetics of the building. In the temporary ramp, we would be more careful about its location and how it interacts with the landscaping. Because it's temporary, we would be able to maneuver it as such that it minimizes removal of trees and landscaping as much as we could because we would of course restore that after its construction. With the permanent one, it's a little bit hard to do that because of the permanent nature of it and kind of where it needs to go. In that case, we would be looking at removing two trees that would be on the left side of the main entrance and associated landscaping around that area. But we would in turn put back landscaping that would be suitable for the area as we would be doing in the East entrance where we are doing the new plaza design. After construction takes place, the permanent ramp would

remain permanent, but the temporary ramp would be removed and everything would be restored as is. After construction, the main entrance is an accessible entrance so that will still be the case. We will have an accessible main entrance where we have it on the east where the plaza is located and the pathways to get there would also be from the accessible street parking that we have on Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard South. They would just head east, continue on to the plaza, up the flanking accessible ramps onto the landing which would get you onto the first floor of the addition. There is also parking that is located in the Parking Garage across the street. That also provides an accessible way, either from the Parking Garage level; you can exit onto the street and make your way up across MLK Jr Boulevard crosswalk and then that takes you up into the main entrance. Then the final way would be restricted access and this would be for Legislators only. They would be able to go down to the tunnel level, enter the tunnel level, cross underneath MLK Jr Boulevard and then they would be able to get into the tunnel level of the Addition and then be able to make their way to wherever they need to. That in essence, describes all of the accessible routes that would take place for the building.

Mr. Ridgely stated that along with historic character, this is a project of need. As Mr. Cheung mentioned, they will be taking the existing ADA access to the building offline in order to construct the east side Addition. The owner has directed us to provide the permanent ramp. So, whether it was temporary or permanent, we need to do something there to meet Code for the building and the occupancy.

Mr. Czerwinski stated that he is getting confused with temporary and permanent. The ramp as shown in the image here is the brick ramp, that's permanent right? That's staying on the west facade. Responding to Mr. Czerwinski, Mr. Cheung stated yes, so the ramp that we are talking about is a permanent ramp. So that door is always going to be there.

Mr. Czerwinski stated that's where he has a problem. The issue with this is the design. He understands necessity, absolutely. He was talking to somebody else because I'm not familiar with the inside the building. He knows you are saying that it has to be elevated to get it over the foyer stairs. My problem is the asymmetry that this is introducing. So what you are doing is taking out the window frame, taking out the window, you're taken out the keystone and you are putting a regular door there. Again, this is the first State, this is our State Legislative Building and everybody sees that. This to him is like a patch job. This is putting a wood door on a brick building that should have a glass window matching the other glass windows. The idea is great; you need to do it. But why not design the door to meet the height of the other window and leave the window frame in place with the keystone so when people are looking at it, they're going to see a symmetrical design not the asymmetrical design. Those keystones still stick out when you have a wooden door and he has no issue with that especially if this is permanent. If this was temporary, we are taking the window frame out and we're putting a wood door in just to cover the opening that would be fine. His suggestion is that you keep the window frame and design the door. It's going to cost a little bit more to design a door that either mimics or might be a glass door or glass is a skylight over the top that matches the aesthetics of the other window. This is a big deal. He is hoping that we can look at that and can actually design the door, maybe a glass door that matches the aesthetics with the white frame and the shape of other door, so people aren't drawn to that door to the left. That's my big problem with it.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that if we can go forward on one of the images because she thinks they have the renderings of this proposal.

Mr. Czerwinski stated that it really sticks out especially; it's almost looks like the back of the building. This is the façade and everybody sees this when the fireworks are going off. This is how the State of Delaware presents itself to everybody else. People are going to look at that and think, you really cut costs on that door. He just hopes that they can go with a glass door design that matches the aesthetics with the other one with the height and the keystone left in place to frame so people aren't drawn to that door.

Ms. Baker stated that she agrees with Mr. Czerwinski. Where is the handicap accessible entrance now? Responding to Ms. Baker, Mr. Cheung stated that is on the current east entrance. There's an accessible ramp that you would take. There is a plaza there.

Ms. Baker stated that she can't see it. Responding to Ms. Baker, Mr. Czerwinski stated that it's not shown on the illustration.

Ms. Baker stated that in the end there will be two ramps, correct? There will be one on the east side and one on the west side when all of the additions are complete. Responding to Ms. Baker, Mr. Cheung stated that if it is a permanent one, yes.

Ms. Baker stated that her next question is for the temporary aluminum ADA ramp, how are they going to get into the building? Responding to Ms. Baker, Mr. Cheung stated maybe there was a little miscommunication with the temporary versus the permanent. It would be one or the other. In the case of a temporary ramp, it would be located in the same area except that it would be made of temporary materials and then would be removed after construction because it would serve its purpose. Then you would be left with one accessible entrance which is like what it is today which would be located on the east side.

Mr. Czerwinski stated that brings up the question, are they going with the permanent or have they made their decision on just doing the temporary ramp? Responding to Mr. Czerwinski, Mr. Cheung stated that what he thinks they want to bring up is that they are asking to do something permanent which would again, alter the façade of the original west entrance there. We want to know if that is something that would be entertained and that is doable. Or the second option is to do something temporary and then restore it back to the original look and it would still be accessible at the end of the day when all of the construction is complete.

Mr. Czerwinski stated so you have Plan A and Plan B. Plan A is possibly a temporary ramp with a door. I would assume the window would be pulled out and reinstalled afterwards to restore it. Plan B is a permanent entrance with a ramp and then a permanent entrance on both the west and east facades. Responding to Mr. Czerwinski, Mr. Cheung stated yes, that's correct.

Mr. Ridgely stated that we are seeking approval of the permanent ramp.

Mrs. Richardson stated that she is looking at the proposal and at that rectangle in the bottom right corner. That's not where an aluminum ramp would be located, correct? Responding to Mrs.

Richardson, Mr. Cheung stated that after submitting that, I realized that I made a little mistake. It really would be replacing where the permanent ramp would be located.

Mrs. Richardson stated the only other comment she has is that you're assuming that a lot of the handicapped people will be parking in the Parking Garage and that will make it easy for them to access the east side entrance once that is completed. But, and this probably doesn't have anything to do with anything, where you have these handicapped parking spots, it just seems so far from either entrance. Now she can see for the east entrance coming from the Garage but there are going to be a lot of people that are not parking in the Garage. She would think that you would want to put these handicapped spots on the west side of the building where it would be easily accessible to this permanent ramp that you are building there. Responding to Mrs. Richardson, Mr. Cheung stated that is certainly something that can be considered.

Mrs. Richardson stated that she just wondered what the reasoning was. Responding to Mrs. Richardson, Mr. Cheung stated that the rationale was that those were current reserved parking spots that won't be reserved any longer.

Mrs. Richardson stated that aren't the ones on the west side also reserved? Responding to Mrs. Richardson, Mr. Cheung stated that they might be; he doesn't quite recall. Responding to Ms. Baker, Mr. Cheung stated that in that case, they weren't thinking of really changing anything there in terms of the striping.

Mrs. Richardson asked where the handicapped currently park. Responding to Mrs. Richardson, Mr. Cheung stated that he guesses they would have the parking lot that would be where they park. He believes that there are also some parking spots in the plaza area that are close to the current east entrance.

Ms. Baker stated that she is a handicapped person so she took a tour today and thank you Mrs. Richardson for bringing up the distance. She has done this now a number of times. It is a long troop and it's a very bumpy troop given the beautiful brick. But my love for my State has me moving on but there's not always going be a nice young man that says "Oh can I help you?" So keep that in mind as you know in terms of services. How many parking spaces currently reserved will be released to the public once this project is complete? Responding to Ms. Baker, Mr. Cheung stated that in the Parking Garage, he doesn't have the exact count. There is probably ten public spaces.

Ms. Baker questioned that just for anybody? You are assuming that they will be in the Garage. Responding to Ms. Baker, Mr. Cheung stated that there is accessible parking for both the Legislative Staff and the public side in the Parking Garage. That is taking the bulk of all of the parking that was existing in the plaza area.

Ms. Baker asked if she understands correctly that the tunnel is by no means a given thing at this point. Responding to Ms. Baker, Mr. Cheung stated that they have been told to proceed with it.

Ms. Baker stated to forgive her ignorance, she also can't see that far and she has marked up what our Planner has sent us. How many permanent entrances for the handicapped are we going to end

up with in 2030 by the time this Addition is added to Legislative Hall? Responding to Ms. Baker, Mr. Cheung stated that we have one main entrance. The main public entrance that most people will use is the east entrance and that is accessible. So, that's the one plan north.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated at the top of the page.

Ms. Baker stated that is to be the Uber entrance. Responding to Ms. Baker, Mr. Cheung stated correct, very similar to what we have there today. That would be the main one.

Ms. Baker stated then would there will be another handicapped entrance on the west side or not? Responding to Ms. Baker, Mr. Cheung stated that is what we are here to discuss. Whether it's a permanent item or it's a temporary item. The west side is going to be more for Legislators because that is just not an entrance that is going to be used on a day-to-day basis from how we have been told that the building use is going to be. Everyone is going to be funneling towards the east.

Mr. Ridgely stated that there would be one additional accessible egress at the lowest level. Responding to Mr. Ridgely, Mr. Cheung stated that is correct. That is not really shown but if you look at the addition to the east, there is a ramp that takes you to the ground level. It has a card access so it is not really used.

Ms. Baker asked if that was for the Legislators, right? Or is it the Legislator's entrance from the parking garage? Responding to Ms. Baker, Mr. Cheung stated no, it is on the north end. So that is a ramp that takes you down to the ground level. Currently, there is no accessible entrance directly to the ground level; so, that is something that is different in our scheme that we are able to provide. But it's not meant to be a public entrance. It is able to be a card reader but it can certainly be used as an accessible egress from the building.

Ms. Baker asked if she could concur with her colleagues with regard to the view of the west entrance. Even though she thinks most of us who live around here who in march in and out of the building consider that the main entrance for us. Even if it's not the main entrance, we need to keep the symmetry. We need to keep the look because once you start chipping away at that concept, you can't even teach people about it anymore. We who want to understand the past ourselves need to have examples of something that is really well done and truly beautiful.

Mrs. Richardson asked Mr. Czerwinski when he was talking about a glass door, were you referring to like a glass paned door? Responding to Mrs. Richardson, Mr. Czerwinski stated yes. It would be glass instead of wood.

Mr. Cheung asked if he can propose that we consider a wood door with the glass transom so that we match the symmetry of the brick work and masonry and the height and scale but the door itself would have a certain level of security to it similar to the existing doors.

Mrs. Richardson stated couldn't you put a glass paned door as like a storm door on the outside so that's what would be visible and then a wooden door inside. Responding to Mrs. Richardson, Mr. Cheung stated that may he ask is the intent for symmetry or glass?

Mrs. Richardson stated yes, because you know in my house, there's like 12 inches between the storm door and her actual front door because of the thickness of the walls.

Mr. Czerwinski stated that it might be difficult for a wheelchair access to do something like that with a single door of entrance to get through there. But he has seen other doors. If you look at the Kent County Court Building, it is all glass. It's a heavy glass that will be more expensive but he prefers it to be glass door than the wood door. Because if you look at it from different angles, it's definitely going to show the wood door sticking out. He appreciates what you're saying. He thinks it would look better if it was a full glass door made with a glass transom above it to match the window. Responding to Mr. Czerwinski, Mr. Cheung stated that he believes there is also precedence around the other existing entrances of Legislative Hall. They do have doors that are very similar. He believes that they have a window side light that matches the width of the doors.

Mr. Czerwinski stated yes, but there is a window. That is a completely symmetric design and the other is a window so you would want that to try to represent a window as much as possible than a door.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that there is not a public hearing regarding this. You do need to make a motion of sorts giving your recommendation for this project. She thinks you've had some discussions about a potential path forward on how the opening from the ramp into the building is treated. So, she guesses the other thing that your applicant was looking for is any preference related to just doing something temporary that goes away or doing something that's permanent in nature, for this side of the building for the long-term future to provide a permanent ADA access point on the west side of the building.

Mr. Czerwinski stated that his feeling on this is that this is really important. If this is going to be permanent, that's going to be there for perpetuity. He thinks he is leaning more towards a full window like design with matching frame. The door doesn't have to be that high. It could terminate at a certain point and be 8 or 9 feet as a normal door and the rest could still be glass. They can even put in the framing that would match to give the illusion of symmetry. Again, a wood door on the facade he thinks, especially when it's located where it's supposed to be a window, it doesn't add up to him.

Mrs. Richardson stated that she agrees that it should be permanent and that your recommendations regarding the door and the transom, keystone and all be incorporated in the design.

Ms. Baker stated that she concurs as a native of the keystone state; she is all for keystones. Having two handicapped accessible entrances and egresses, she doesn't feel it's too much. She thinks it will be a good thing.

Ms. Baker moved to accept with conditions, the revisions for HI-24-07, the West Entrance ADA ramp be permanent with the condition that the door be a glass paneled door equal to the height of the window on the opposite side of the entrance with a keystone in it.

Mr. Czerwinski stated if he had a different motion to make; he was going to forward a motion himself. Do we have to vote against the motion just made or do we have to decline the motion? Responding to Mr. Czerwinski, Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that right now she has just started a motion. She does not currently have a second on the motion. So if there is not a second, then that motion was either withdrawn or it basically is lost because there wasn't a second.

Ms. Baker stated that she will withdraw her motion.

Mr. Czerwinski moved to deny the Revised Architectural Review Certificate for HI-24-07 Legislative Hall Building Addition at 411 Legislative Avenue with the request of a redesign of the entrance to reflect our discussion as to re-establish symmetry on the building façade, maintaining the original window frame design at the door location and using a heavy glass door to match the other window as close as possible. If it's a temporary ramp, all bets are off because if you are going to reinstall a window, so that doesn't matter, seconded by Ms. Baker and the motion was carried 3-0 by voice vote with Ms. Horsey absent.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked if he was recommending denial of the revision as presented to you and are asking for a redesign of the door connection of this ramp. Are you seeking to have that come back to you for another presentation? Responding to Mrs. Melson-Williams, Mr. Czerwinski stated yes.

Ms. Baker stated that if they denied it, it would have to come back.

Mr. Czerwinski stated yes, we would like to see a redesign. Responding to Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that technically you are a recommending body to the Planning Commission and she could take your denial to the Planning Commission and they could do something different. You may want to make a second motion that clarifies that you would like a redesign presented to you on this project based on the conversation had today before we move it on to a Planning Commission review.

Mr. Czerwinski moved to recommend for HI-24-07 Legislative Hall Building Addition at 411 Legislative Avenue a redesign of the entrance to better reflect a symmetrical window arrangement at the entrance point so that the door entrance point is a glass door that matches the window frame design of the other window opposite of the main entrance door and to be presented at a late date of the Historic District Commission meeting, seconded by Ms. Baker and the motion was carried 3-0 by voice vote with Ms. Horsey absent.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that she thinks that gives potential guidance to our applicant that the Historic District Commission would like to see this redesign scenario brought back to them. You can certainly work with Staff and we can get that scheduled for a future meeting of the Commission. Their next meeting would be in July and she can confirm with you when she would need information by.

Mr. Czerwinski stated that they appreciate the applicant's patience in this matter. If it's going to be there for a while, they want to make it look right. Responding to Mr. Czerwinski, Mr. Cheung stated that they appreciate the feedback.

NEW APPLICATIONS

Review of Permits Referred to Commission

HI-26-02 Referral of Siding Permit #26-848 at 108 S. Governors Avenue - Review of Architectural Review Certification as Referred by the City Planner to the Historic District Commission for a Siding Permit #26-848. The project proposes the use of a vinyl siding product in a horizontal format to re clad the three-story residential apartment building. Property is zoned C-2 (Central Commercial Zone) and subject to the H (Historic District Zone). The owner of record is Sarwat Nasr. Address: 108 S. Governors Avenue. Tax Parcel: ED05-077.09-01-41.00-000. Council District 4.

Representative: Ms. Safwat Nasr, property owner (virtual)

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that this is a Siding Permit that was submitted to the Office for review. She stated that the applicant was online and he is not there now; so we will continue and maybe he will reappear. This is regarding the property at 108 S Governors Avenue. It is a building that is in the Historic District. The Siding Permit that was submitted to our Office came in on May 29, 2026 and it actually proposed that the building be clad in a vinyl siding product. We asked for more information about that product and so in the packet is the brochure about the siding product. First, a little bit about the building itself; the image on the screen shows a three story Italianate building. The image is from several years ago. The image that Staff had immediately available was not much better than this to visually see the building itself. With Siding Permits, typically the Planning Department can consider doing the review of Architectural Review compliance as part of the Permit; however, we reserve the right to refer them to the Commission for additional consultation. This property is in your Historic District. It is within the boundaries of a National Register Historic District, specifically the Victorian Dover Historic District. The nomination for that District indicates that it is a pre 1885 construction which makes sense for the three-story Italianate style. That nomination describes the building as having clabbered siding. Staff looked at it and it looks like it's horizontal clabbered siding definitely on the front. The south side of the building which you can see on the screen, appears that it may have some type of composite shingled siding for at least part of it at this location. What we have to look at is what is visible from the public view which the "public view" has a very specific definition for you in the Historic District. It is anything that is readily seen from the street. So with this building, you can readily see the front of the building where we see the porch and actually both side elevations of this building. This property is adjacent to the large tract to the south; part of which is becoming the Dover Mobility Center Parking Garage. (Note: The Dover Mobility Center Parking Garage project is across S. Governors Avenue. The mixed-use building proposal at 120 S. Governors Avenue is the nearby large tract proposed for redevelopment.) That construction is getting started. To the north, there are two additional buildings before you get to the next street intersection that is there. In looking at their proposal for siding, we have to look at

Chapter 3 of the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*. Chapter 3 is where we find the description of the different types of building elements and specifically there are sections of that Chapter that talk about walls and depending on what those walls are constructed of, then siding. It gives recommended, not recommended, and inappropriate practices associated with each of these building elements and in this case, the best practices for siding. In general, it suggests with siding that it should be repaired in kind. It does emphasize wood siding and trim to keep it in good repair and painted. It does, as not recommended, specifically list aluminum siding. It doesn't appear that the building has that on it at the present time. It also notes that vinyl siding is not recommended in the Victorian historic context for the Historic District. It does note that if vinyl siding would be installed, that there are some careful installation methods that would need to be taken into account. Those include how to ventilate that siding and also how to maintain the various trim work details of the building.

Mr. Nasr stated that the siding that he provided, which he hopes the Commission has, he used it before in other Historic Districts; so, that's why he brought it here. It is the upgraded version of vinyl; so he's used it like two times in other Historic Districts and they accepted it. The building is vacant right now; the siding is really making the street look bad. So, he wanted to upgrade it with the siding that I gave.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated let her finish and then we'll give you an opportunity to talk a little bit more in detail about your proposed project here for this building. The Historic District Commission members may have a series of questions for you as well. So, today what the Historic District Commission is considering is whether your project meets those *Design Standards and Guidelines* or could potentially meet those *Standards* with any specialized conditions in order to issue what we call an Architectural Review Certification. It is necessary when any exterior changes are being made to a property in the Historic District. So, the Staff findings is that vinyl siding is not recommended for use in this area of the Historic District. It has a sheen that could be noticeable and it has a tendency depending on how it's installed, to potentially cover up or eliminate architectural details that exist on the building. Those would be things like trim work, corner boards, trim around windows, and things of that nature. Staff is also concerned about if it is placed over existing wall surfaces, that there is a potential issue of trapping or basically dealing with moisture behind that, which could be more detrimental to the wall systems that are there. With that, she thinks the Commission would like to hear from the applicant. They did receive a copy of that siding brochure and she would note that that siding brochure does give several different, we call them "siding profiles" Is it straight? Is it a Dutch lap which has a kind of a bend in each horizontal row. And then what's the width of the siding; each band of the siding specifically. This Historic District Commission does not regulate color, but you could see what their thoughts are on those items. Some of these colors may be more appropriate for building of this Italianate style than others. But she thinks at this point, the Commission would like to hear from you with a little more detail about your project at this building.

Mr. Nasr stated that his plan to wrap with Tyvek around the building, so moisture is not a problem. Concerning the width or any of that, he will let the Commission pick how you want the color or the width or the style of that siding. He is more than happy to do it. Later, he wants do the next one next door. He has the three buildings in a row, so he wants to upgrade one at a time

to really boost that little block and how it looks. Concerning the trim work, he doesn't see any like historic architectural to cover up, to be honest, other than the old siding. Maybe on top of the trim work, he can paint it if you want to keep that white trim work on the very top. He is more than happy to paint that. If there's any other concerns, he is happy to answer them.

Mrs. Richardson asked if he would be removing the existing siding before he wrapped it with Tyvek. That's the number one question. Number two, would you be keeping the shutters or replacing them? What width had you initially planned to put for the siding? Responding to Mrs. Richardson, Mr. Nasr stated that he is not going to remove the old siding. He is going to Tyvek all around it and then put the new siding up. He is planning to replace the shutters. If you wanted, he can submit the shutters as well if that is a concern for the Commission as well. He usually uses 4 inches for the width of the siding.

Ms. Baker thanked Mr. Nasr for caring about Dover's Downtown. She is also a Downtown resident. Can you tell us how any of your properties in another town may have worked out with this sort of thing? She takes it that he is an expert in appreciating old buildings and trying to renew them. Responding to Ms. Baker, Mr. Nasr stated that she was really breaking up on his end but he thinks she was asking about what other properties he has in the town. Is that correct?

Ms. Baker stated that where you have made successes of this rehabilitation interest of yours. Responding to Ms. Baker, Mr. Nasr stated that he also have now the building next door to it, which he also plans to come to the City with a Permit to make additions to the outside to upgrade it. The address is 144 S Governors Avenue. After this Permit hopefully it gets accepted, he wants to make the outside look good and bring up that building as well.

Ms. Baker stated that the photograph that is submitted is from 2012. She goes to see all of the places that we are dealing with and there is a tremendous amount of deterioration on the exterior of building at 108 S Governors Avenue. It does not look anything like the photo that is attached to her materials. So, she is wondering if the applicant would comment on that. It seems like a very intense investment on your part to bring this building up to what it should be Code wise. Responding to Ms. Baker, Mr. Nasr stated he is going to put the money up front. He know that there is the 20 % that he can get back, but he is going put the money up front to fix it first and then he can apply for it. For the deterioration, he is going to make sure that everything is solid before he put the Tyvek, so, that deterioration doesn't variate more. It will be solid after the Tyvek and the new siding.

Mr. Czerwinski stated he has a couple questions himself. Are you tearing off the siding? He thinks the applicant stated that he was removing the siding and putting the Tyvek over it. Responding to Mr. Czerwinski, Mr. Nasr stated correct, he is going to put Tyvek over it, but he is not going to remove the old siding.

Mr. Czerwinski stated that part of the problem that is that again if you look at the building today, and he agrees with Ms. Baker on the fact that the building is in pretty poor condition. His concern is that with putting siding over the existing structure like that, it's definitely going to either trap moisture or contribute to the degradation of the building itself. Now, the bigger part when you put siding it tends to recess the window frames. There's a couple other Italianate homes in town that put siding on and it definitely degraded their appearance overall. So, he is not

a big fan of siding. He understands again, it helps keep the bills down and it's cheaper to do it that way. But again, this is building a built in the late 1800's. It's in the Historic District. The Staff findings state that it's not recommended to use vinyl siding on a building such as this. He would ask that you rather put money towards restoration of the building, do a good job of restoring the structural members on the outside, and keep it painted to keep it sealed. He thinks that is probably a better use of the money for this particular building. Again, we don't have too many Italianate left in the City. To cover it up in siding, he doesn't think is really in the best interest of the building or the neighborhood.

Ms. Baker stated that the Chairman is right. She happens to live in a house that is nearly 100 years old and it does have siding. We are not in the Historic District and dealing with the gaps and the cracks and all; it is a constant matter. She loves the notion of restoring the building to the degree that one can based on one's resources. That would be truly a gift to the future and also to the people who live there.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that she has a couple of questions for Mr. Nasr. The shutters that are on the building now, are they a wood shutter or are they already some type of vinyl product? Responding to Mrs. Melson-Williams, Mr. Nasr stated that he forgets but he believes that they are vinyl. A couple of shutters are missing; they are not all there.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that he mentioned there's a kind of the trim mark at the top, that heavy white cornice line. Is there any gutter system on the building? Is it a built-in gutter on the roof? It looks like it probably has a very low-pitched roof if not, totally flat. Do you know for the building itself? Responding to Mrs. Melson-Williams, Mr. Nasr stated it's not a built-in gutter, it's just a downspout that goes down to the ground.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked if they are properly functioning at this point or does that also need repair? Responding to Mrs. Melson-Williams, Mr. Nasr stated that he would like to repair them.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked that on each side of the building is it all wood siding? She knows we can't see the rear of this building. It looks like one side where the driveway is that there is some horizontal, wood siding like the front, and then it's a looks like some type of composite siding. Do you have any more information on that? Responding to Mrs. Melson-Williams, Mr. Nasr stated that is correct. It's not the same siding all around. It's been patched up with other material; not wood. It's like mix and match all around on the sides and the back. So as of now, it's not the same wood.

Mr. Czerwinski stated that when he looked at the building today, it looked like your facade was wood siding. The south elevation looks like asbestos siding. It was probably installed in the 1930's or 1940's. Responding to Mr. Czerwinski, Mr. Nasr stated that he doesn't know about that but he is not going to remove it. He is just going to keep it on and add that Tyvek on it that way he doesn't disturb the old siding.

Mr. Czewinski stated it is probably a good reason not to put siding over it because you will be nailing into the asbestos which may be a problem. A lot of times with asbestos they will put

strips over it and it changes the looks of the building because asbestos likes to crack if you put nails through it.

Mr. Nasr stated that he owns a lot there. He has the two next door of it when looking at it on the right, and he has the big building on the left. So, of course he is not going to do anything without going through you guys and getting all the right Permits, but he does want to make the look of each one a little bit better. He knows you guys are also trying to bring up the block. He wants to do his part with the properties he has on that block.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated a couple of things from the Planning Staff here. There are certainly some incentive programs that we can make you aware of. While they do not provide upfront money, if you are following certain guidelines for your project and expenditures, then there maybe incentives that waive things like Permit fees. There are also some provisions for what we call

a Tax Credit for Historic Properties. They are more than happy to share information with you on that. It sounds like you have been at least advised a little bit about the Downtown Development District Program where there are rebate monies available at the State level for that. We are happy to share more information about that. Today we're just focused on this one building at 108 South Governors Avenue. Should you pursue work with either one of the adjacent buildings there that you own to the north, each of those buildings would be looked at individually for consideration for what type of projects you are proposing for those. So, today we're just focused on 108 S Governors Avenue. Responding to Mrs. Melson-Williams, Mr. Nasr stated yes, he is aware. He just wants to let you guys know that he is going to bring others. He knows he has to do the same process as he is doing for this one. He is just going to do it one by one, but he understands that today's meeting's just for the 108 building.

Mrs. Richardson stated that she can't in good conscience approve this siding. She would prefer to follow the historic guidelines and to avoid the vinyl siding. If she is overridden, she can't agree to just wrapping the existing building with all the rotted wood and siding that is currently on there. She can't see how that would be a long term solution for the building. Even if you have high quality siding that you are putting on, she thinks that would be a mistake.

Ms. Baker stated that she shares those concerns. She has seen this on her block. She is hoping that we might have some imagination and spirit for reshoring up these buildings so that they can continue to emit their history in our historic town and reflect their sturdiness and excellence on the owner of the property. She thinks that she senses from having walked around the property that there is much to do there. It's a great challenge and she thinks it will be a great reward. She concurs that she can't go against what is the City's recommendation here and charged to us to not use vinyl siding and in this case, just wrapping it in Tyvek. She is not sure that the weather elements would be inclined to support that.

Mr. Czerwinski stated that he is completely sympathetic with the idea using vinyl siding; he knows everybody uses it. It's the typical material for your standard neighborhood, but this is not your standard neighborhood; this is not your standard house. Our *Design Guidelines* are pretty straight forward when it comes to the Historic District and dealing with historic structures, especially of this neighborhood where the structures are definitely disappearing. He can't

emphasize how important this building is. It's an Italianate, there aren't that many left in the City. The fact that if you wrap the structure, you do have the potential of trapping moisture and old insects within the structure. He has seen that quite a bit in the past, where they wrap the building, the building looks wonderful about ten years and all of a sudden it's condemned. He thinks they have all seen condemned buildings that look perfectly fine. That's because they are rotted from within. He thinks the best thing for this building is to replace components or replace the siding and structural elements with similar materials in-kind. He thinks it's definitely doable for this building. It's definitely going to need a lot of work. To use the correct methods to bring the building back into its original look does more than anything else to bring the neighborhood back up. When you have a building that's been restored to its original condition using the proper materials and there is no replacement of that. Vinyl siding just doesn't do it, unfortunately.

Mrs. Richardson moved to deny HI-26-02 Referral of Siding Permit #26-848 at 108 S. Governors Avenue based on the proposed use of material and installation, seconded by Ms. Baker and the motion was carried 3-0 by voice vote with Ms. Horsey absent.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that if Ms. Nasr wanted to follow up with Planning Staff next week, we are more than happy to have some more discussions and meet with you about options for the building as you plan an alternative path forward with the building's repair. Responding to Mrs. Melson-Williams, Mr. Nasr stated okay. Who should he be in contact with to move forward with what he is going to do?

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated if you contact the Planning Office, her name is Dawn. She is one of the Planners here. She knows that you've been working with Ann Marie Townshend, our Planning Consultant and also Alex, here in our office has participated in this meeting. So, we were all familiar with what has just transpired this afternoon, but we are more than happy to meet and have more discussions about the appropriate path forward given the action that occurred this afternoon. Responding to Mrs. Melson-Williams, Mr. Nasr stated that he would be in contact. He has one more question, if maybe we can do like vinyl where it's not seen like on the sides and back and then on the front he can bring in the wood. Would we discuss that now or next week?

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that she thinks let's start with a discussion with Staff about what opportunities might be there. We can advise whether you would need to come back to the Commission to make some of those decisions with a different path forward or what the situation might be. Responding to Mrs. Melson-Williams, Mr. Nasr stated okay.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated thank you for participating today. We know that work with historic buildings is not always the simplest thing, but we appreciate your time and your interest in making improvements here in Downtown Dover.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that there are no new items of business.

OLD BUSINESS

Certified Local Government (CLG) Program

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that any grant opportunities there are on hold. She needs to follow up if we have any availability moving into the future with that. She knows with the Federal program, there is a couple of different years going on and we are also getting ready to turn a fiscal year here at the City. The City's budget is pending and has not been adopted yet for FY27. She does believe that they were able to earmark some matching dollars for potential grant program opportunities.

Implementation of 2019 Comprehensive Plan

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that while there's not anything specific to the Historic Preservation Chapter, she will let you know that the City is a participating jurisdiction in what is known as the SJR8 Zoning and Land Use Reform Initiative. This is a voluntary program that the City is participating in with the State Housing Authority in looking at the various housing provisions of our Ordinance, from process to Code. The idea is to look for where there may be potential for improvements. So certainly if anything comes into play and there will be some future public outreach opportunities on that. We will certainly keep the Historic District Commission in mind as one of our bodies that does see housing related items appear before them.

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPPORTUNITY

There were no public comments.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM

Sincerely,

Kristen Mullaney
Acting Secretary