CITY OF DOVER
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
October 20, 2016

The Regular Meeting of the City of Dover Historic District Commission was held on Thursday, October 20, 2016 at 3:00 PM with Chairman McDaniel presiding. Members present were Chairman McDaniel, Mr. Czerwinski, Ms. Horsey, and Mr. Scrafford. Mr. Jackson was absent.

Planning Office Staff members present were Mrs. Melson-Williams, Mrs. Townshend, Mrs. Purnell, and Mr. Diaz.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Horsey moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Mr. Scrafford and the motion was unanimously carried 4-0. Mr. Jackson was absent.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING OF July 21, 2016

Mr. Scrafford moved for approval of the minutes of July 21, 2016, seconded by Mr. Czerwinski and the motion was unanimously carried 4-0. Mr. Jackson was absent.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING OF August 18, 2016

Ms. Horsey moved for approval of the minutes of August 18, 2016, seconded by Mr. Scrafford and the motion was unanimously carried 4-0. Mr. Jackson was absent.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS

Summary of 2016 Activity

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that included in the packet was a Summary of the 2015 and 2016 applications that came before the Historic District Commission. For this calendar year there were five (5) applications and we have another Informational item today that will be assigned a number. For 2015 there were a total of eight (8). As an update on applications, HI-16-05 was conditional approved by the Planning Commission on September 19, 2016 and the Architectural Review Certification was also granted noting the Historic District Commission's Recommendations. Mr. McDaniel questioned the Planning Commission action on the cornice. Mrs. Melson-Williams noted that the Planning Commission did discuss the cornice and their concerns about a flat roof system.

Summary of Architectural Review Certifications for 2016

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that to date there have been thirty-six (36) Permits with activities in the Historic District that includes building interior and exterior projects, roof, signage, and fence permits. There were nine (9) Sign Permits, two (2) Temporary Sign Permits, and seven (7) building renovation projects. Twenty (20) of the Permits were approved by Staff including four (4) that were heard by the Historic District Commission. There were twelve (12) Permits which required no Architectural Review Certification because of the type of project.

Chairman McDaniel questioned the most recent permit at 2 West Loockerman Street and which building it was. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that it was the drugstore building (now law offices) and the interior Demolition Permit is for the third floor space of the building. Their plans are to convert the space into an apartment.

Mr. Scrafford questioned whether the apartment would require an exterior fire escape, Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that there is an internal stair access and this would be something that the Building Code would look at. She believes there are egress windows that will get you out onto a lower roof level on the back side that is not visible on State Street or Loockerman Street.

Chairman McDaniel and Mr. Scrafford questioned if this would come before the Historic District Commission because they were concerned if it was an exterior escape that it could be on the outside of the building that was visible. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that she did not believe it was; it is on the interior of the block. Again, it is not on the State Street or Loockerman Street façade. There is another Permit also associated with the project.

Department of Planning & Inspections Update

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated some of Planning Staff participated in the Delaware Maryland Regional Planning Conference, October 14-15, 2016 that was held in Towson, Maryland.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated the Planning Office continues to have a fairly steady volume of permit activity as well as applications to our Planning Commission. We also have a variety of other study projects.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no review of Permits referred to Commission.

OLD BUSINESS

Presentation on Open Flags for Downtown Businesses (HI-16-06)

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that included in the packet was a cover sheet and image that the Planning Office received in regards to the concept for Open Flags at Downtown Businesses. She gave a brief overview of the application and stated that Open Signs do not require a Permit.

Mr. Scrafford questioned the indication of "Open" whether it meant the business was open or an open kind of flag. Mrs. Townshend replied that the "Open" indicates that the business is open.

Presentation

Mr. Stonesifer handed out additional information (photograph examples).

Representative

Mr. Todd Stonesifer, Moving Experience

Mr. Stonesifer stated that he represents a group called Destination Downtown Dover. The group is dedicated to the revitalization of the Downtown area. They work very closely with the merchants and the Downtown Dover Partnership. As he referred to the photo, he stated that the group took a fieldtrip to a little town called Lititz, Pennsylvania. They saw a vibrant neighborhood that was

represented by a uniform Open Flag that was put out when the business was open and taken down when the business was closed. He spoke to the Main Street Director who informed them that they use to have a "missing tooth" syndrome. The "missing tooth" syndrome was described as when patrons would walk up and down the street and they come across a vacant building they are liable to turn around. They were able to overcome that and represent an open business a few doors down the street by having this uniform sight line streetscape going on. They loved the idea and decided to borrow it. Destination Downtown Dover raises various funds through festivals held Downtown on Loockerman Street. Those funds are used to give back to the community. The second photo is their concept and take on the Lititz "Open for Business" flags. They have been able to use the historic Dover branding and logo (Caesar Rodney horse riding) and they will be using Delaware historical colors (bright colors that are noticeable). Their group will pay for the flags as well as the mounting system, a flag will be given to each business merchant; everything will be installed at the group's expense. The flag is 12 x 18, double sided, polyester material, washable, and the brackets will be mounted to the wall at a 90-degree angle. He hopes to place the order as soon as possible upon the blessing of the Historic District Commission so that they can begin their crusade of helping Downtown look a little better. He stated that also present was Ms. Tina Bradbury who represents the Downtown Dover Partnership committee and Mr. Tom Smith who represents the merchant's committee of the Downtown Dover Partnership.

Mr. Scrafford questioned if the Mayor approved of the "Open Flags" with the Caesar Rodney emblem. Mr. Stonesifer stated that the Caesar Rodney emblem is Dover brand; it is not something he made up. Mr. Scrafford mentioned it was not the Capital School District brand. Again Mr. Stonesifer replied it is Dover brand and if you drive up and down the streets you will notice the Caesar Rodney emblem.

Chairman McDaniel commented that the bar was 6-feet tall and wanted to make sure no one would hit the bar.

Mr. Stonesifer stated that you would have to measure the projection. Some of the buildings may not accommodate a flag.

Chairman McDaniel stated that he would like to see all of the flags uniform if at all possible.

Mr. Stonesifer stated that he will make the flags uniform if at all possible.

Responding to Mr. Scrafford's question why the group did not select a flag that was angled and more vertical or like the way the Lititz sign is located so that you do not have the potential for customers or persons that are 6-foot 4 that might walk into the bar. He suggested these questions and concerns be taken into consideration.

Mr. Stonesifer stated that the flags are custom made and hang at a right angle 12 inches off the wall. To his understanding there was no additional approval for the flags other than from the Historic District Commission.

Chairman McDaniel stated that the flags will be close enough to the buildings that it might be harder to walk into them.

Mr. Czerwinski stated that the narrow ones are less likely to be yanked on or ran into. For example, he was concerned of someone hitting their head coming off of the steps.

Mr. Scrafford stated that he was not in favor of the concept, but he was in favor of the signs.

Ms. Horsey commented that Lititz is a beautiful little town and has a great downtown area that has signs that identify the shops at a certain level and the open signs are underneath them. What makes it work the flag work is the angle and narrowness of the open sign. She stated that the proposed colors were garish. She liked the ones in Lititz and thought they were tasteful and subtle. She mentioned cost. She would hate to see Downtown Dover full of all these flags up and down the street. She loves the idea and thinks it is smashing; she just thinks it needs to be redesigned and rethought if. She asked where the money would come from if it was more expensive.

Responding to Chairman McDaniel's question how much the group planned on spending on the signs. Mr. Stonesifer replied that they group was going to donate roughly $8,000 for a total of 150 signs.

Ms. Horsey commented on that there was never any confirmation that Caesar Rodney ever rode a horse. She was not trying to be hard, but it was too much. You have to consider where the signs are for the stores, are they going to be secured, and if you will be bumping into them because they are coming out from the building.

Mr. Scrafford stated that this is only a 12 x 18 sign. According to the scale on the photo, it looks as if the perspective is incorrect. He is also not an advocate of the color, but whatever can promote openness to Downtown Loockerman Street needs to be done.

Mr. Stonesifer stated that it could be off because his building is the second one in the photo and the overhang above the stairs is very much more than 18", it is closer to 2-feet. The proposed flag shows more of the overhang.

Chairman McDaniel questioned as he referred to the photo if the black and white awning was his building, Mr. Stonesifer replied yes.

Chairman McDaniel stated that he did not have a problem with the color of the flags.

Responding to Mr. Scrafford's question if the flags were a Temporary Sign, Mrs. Townshend replied it is not a Temporary Sign that would require a Temporary Sign Permit. It would be removable when the business is closed. Mr. Stonesifer stated that the mounting is permanent.

Responding to Mr. Scrafford's question who controls the sign or if someone decided in the future to do something different, would there be a control, Chairman McDaniel stated that he would imagine once this is approved this is what they will have. One of the problems might be if one of the merchants do not like it and want to design their own.

Responding to Mr. Scrafford's question whether you would be able to have a mix-match of signs instead of standardize sign. Mrs. Townshend replied what the Historic District Commission is

reviewing at the current time is the thematic approach. If the merchant does something different it could be something subject to the Sign Regulations and it could be subject to a permit. Again, an "Open" sign does not require a Permit.

Mr. Czerwinski questioned who manages the sign once they are installed and used. Is it the group purview to make sure the merchants are using the approved sign? Mr. Stonesifer replied absolutely not.

Responding to Mr. Czerwinski's question if the merchants could technically pull the sign off the bar and put up whatever they want, Mr. Stonesifer replied that as long as they follow the Sign Ordinance. They cannot make them do anything other than that. Mrs. Townshend replied that they could all put up different "Open" signs now if they wanted. A business can have two (2) "Open" signs, but no flashing signs.

Mr. Czerwinski mentioned that most "Open" signs are mostly A-frame signs on the sidewalk and there was another business that had a light post sign. Mrs. Townshend stated that there were two (2) businesses that had the sign on the light post.

Chairman McDaniel stated that they were missing is when you walk pass the Old Town Pub and the next store is vacant you turn around and walk back. But with these signs you see "Open" then you are aware that more stores are "Open".

Mrs. Townshend stated that there is even a more concrete effect when you get to Governors Avenue. The corner is vacant, but if you see the "Open" flag because there are more businesses open and it may draw people further.

Representative and Chairman of the Merchant Committee of Downtown Dover Partnership
Mr. Tom Smith of Dover manages the Delaware Store stated that he supports the project. If we have learned anything about the Historic Preservation and commercial districts is that a thriving business district can and will support preservation and active use of historically significant buildings. If we want building owners to have the money needed to keep these buildings in good repair, then the historic commercial core must prosper. These attractive flags will help our businesses attract customers and serve as a reminder that good things are happening Downtown. He commends Destination Downtown Dover for this project. He has personally spoken with over two (2) dozen merchants, shown them pictures, and talked with them about the concept; all of them thought it was a good deal. He hopes the Historic District Commission will support the project. The Delaware Store and the Parke Green Gallery currently have five (5) flags outside of their businesses. One (1) is an "Open" sign and the others are of different nations. The flags are bright and they can be seen. They have a lot of customers because of the flags. No one has ever walked into the flags on the outside flag poles. He does not think that the flags will be an issue on Downtown.

Responding to Chairman McDaniel's question if he also put out the flower pots and how many, Mr. Smith replied yes. He was not sure how many, but he puts them down the entire block. His goal is to encourage other businesses to do the same.

Chairman McDaniel mentioned that he was sure other members have been by Mr. Smith business and have seen how nice and festive it looks with all the flags.

Ms. Tina Bradbury with Downtown Dover Partnership

Ms. Bradbury stated that she was speaking from a perspective at looking at how they brought people out at the Farmers Market this season. They actually looked across the street and saw maybe a building that was not vacant and looked at it as an opportunity to become entrepreneurs. If they are walking along and seeing these flags and the vibrancy that it is creating and that there are open businesses that puts them in the mindset to possible want to come Downtown to be an entrepreneur. You are no longer seeing it as a vacant spot. One of the members from D3 used the word "opportunity" and that is what it should look like. It is an opportunity for someone envisioning having a storefront business Downtown. Whether it is the color or sizing that has to come into agreement, it can be worked out quickly. The system of unity will draw people to want to shop and possibly get the spots filled that the Downtown so desperately needs.

Chairman McDaniel clarified that the Downtown Dover Partnership is one entity and Destination Downtown Dover is another entity. Mr. Stonesifer represents Destination Downtown Dover and they want to pay for the flags and the wall mounting. Destination Downtown Dover is more or less a group that can get things done quicker because they are not a part of Downtown Dover Partnership.

Mrs. Townshend stated that there are no public funds so they are a little more versatile.

Chairman McDaniel stated that if you went down to the Beer Festival or OctoDover Festival there must have been roughly 3000 people and that is where the money comes from for these projects. He stated that he does not want to get all wrapped up on Caesar Rodney or colors. The Historic District Commission needs to look at what can be done so that the project has our blessing.

Mr. Scrafford mentioned that it is good to hash the colors and the poles to get it out in the open because there is nothing worse than finding out you did not later on and you wish you should have.

Mr. Czerwinski stated that everyone agrees the "open" flags are needed and it is a great idea. His overriding worry is safety. You have a pole sticking out at 60-inches and someone trips and you have still people riding skate boards and bikes. The bars poles in Pennsylvania example are angled up and the points of the narrow signs are roughly 64-inches. He suggested the poles be raised to get above most people heads. He is afraid people will poke or hit their head. He thinks the "open" flags idea is perfect.

Historic District Commission suggested that the pole be higher (maybe 7-feet) so no one can hit their head and it is safe, but still visible. They are in favor of the sign.

Mr. Stonesifer stated that he would need to measure the awnings. He does not want the flags to be hiding behind the awning.

Mr. Stonesifer questioned the height of Mr. Smith flags at this business. Mr. Smith replied he was not sure.

Ms. Bradbury stated that the enforcement could possibly be done within the Downtown Dover Partnership Design Committee or Marketing & Merchants to keep a uniform look.

Mr. Scrafford suggested to Mr. Stonesifer to have a rule or control for the "Open" flags and be prepared for complaints and protect himself.

Ms. Horsey questioned how much more expensive would it cost to have an angled bar. Mr. Stonesifer replied three (3) times as much. It is not the shape but the angle that it hangs and in order to make it hang straight down the flag will need to be custom made. You want to make the sign so that it can be read.

Mr. Scrafford questioned who brought the flags in Lititz, Pennsylvania. Mr. Stonesifer replied he was not sure. He believes it is a Main Street Program.

The Commission continued to discuss the flag concerns and suggestions as previously discussed.

Mr. Stonesifer stated that he has already spoken to the merchants.

Mr. Scrafford moved that the program for "Open" Signs in the Central Business District be endorsed as presented by Mr. Stonesifer. The motion was seconded by Ms. Horsey and unanimously carried 4-0. Mr. Jackson was absent.

Chairman McDaniel thanked Mr. Stonesifer for being so generous in donating the signs.

OLD BUSINESS

Certified Local Government (CLG) Program:
Update on FFY2016 Grant Project: Evaluate and Update the *Design Standards & Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that they are into the grant year for the project Evaluation and Update the *Design Guidelines* for the City of Dover Historic District Zone. There is also a grant agreement document that needs to be signed between the City and State Historic Preservation Office that outlines the grant administration and the reporting on a quarterly status and progress to date. At the current time Staff need to be working on the RFP to seek consultant services for the project. It is still a work in progress.

Chairman McDaniel questioned the receipt of the Planning publication that they use to receive. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that the Commission may have received a publication from the National Association of Historic District Commission. It is a membership and she was not sure if the membership had been renewed.

Mr. Scrafford moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Czerwinski and unanimously carried 4-0. Mr. Jackson was absent.

Meeting adjourned at 3:49 PM

Sincerely,
Maretta Savage-Purnell
Secretary