

CITY OF DOVER
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 19, 2026

The Meeting of the City of Dover Historic District Commission was held on Thursday, February 19, 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, Ms. Baker, and Ms. Horsey.

The Planning Office Staff members present were Mrs. Dawn Melson-Williams, Mrs. Marettta Savage-Purnell and Mrs. Sharon Duca.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mrs. Richardson made an amendment to the agenda regarding approval of the November 20, 2025 Minutes that are still being prepared. Mrs. Richardson made a motion on the adoption of the agenda to remove that item. The motion was seconded by Chairman Czerwinski. The vote was unanimously carried 4-0.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS

Summary of Applications 2025

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned in your meeting packet was the Summary of Applications. In that calendar year, there were a total of four applications. One of them you did see twice; so, we can count that almost as five. That is the project for The Old Post at 55 Loockerman Plaza. Since your last meeting, that item was presented to the Planning Commission, and they granted conditional approval in December of last year. They are in the check print review process to finalize that Site Plan. They are moving towards project construction. The other items we looked at in 2025 included the project for 120 Governors Avenue. I do not see any real movement there with that project as of yet.

The Biggs Museum, I think you will probably see again, as they are evaluating what their path forward will be. And then there was the Referral of the fence at 55 King's Highway, which you were considering and deferred at your November meeting. That Applicant did actually comply with the suggestions that had been made and we were able to issue a Permit for a fence at 4 feet in height using that metal picket style. So, they worked through that. I am not sure if that Permit has been totally issued at this point, but so some progress there.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked if there were any questions on those Applications? There were none.

Summary of Architectural Review Certifications for 2025 and 2026

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that she was only reporting on the month of January for 2026. You can see there were three Permits that were issued at that point: a demolition one which was an interior and then the drive through canopy on what used to be the Citizen's Bank building Downtown, then a Fence Permit, and a Sign Permit Application. Looking back into the calendar year for 2025. There was a total of 34 Permits in the Historic District area that were reviewed either by Staff or the Commission. The Staff had the bulk of those with 30 of the 34.

The highest number of Permit types turned out to be Roof Permits at eight (8), Sign Permits at seven (7), and then there were some exterior building item ones with six (6). The balance of those are things related to fences, siding, and windows.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked if there were any questions on permit activity in the Historic District? There were none.

Department of Planning & Inspections Updates

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that she did not have any real updates. We still need a fifth member of this Commission. I don't know where any potential appointments stand with the Mayor's office on that.

NEW APPLICATION

HI-26-01 Referral of Door/Window Permit #26-118 at 1 Kings Hwy NE - Review of Architectural Review Certification as Referred by the City Planner to the Historic District Commission for a Door/Window Permit #26-118. The project proposes removal and replacement of four (4) windows and the removal and replacement of the entry door. Property is zoned RG-1 (General Residence Zone) and subject to the H (Historic District Zone). The owner of record is Richard Arnold. Address: 1 Kings Highway NE. Tax Parcel: ED05-077.05-02-54.00-000. Council District 3.

Chairman Czerwinski recused himself from discussion or any voting. The individual Mr. Arnold is his neighbor. Chairman Czerwinski's house lies within 200 feet of his property.

Mrs. Melson-Williams gave a brief Staff overview of the Application.

This is a Door and Window Permit that was first filed with the Planning Office. It consists of a proposal to remove and replace four windows and then removal and replacement of the entry door on this building at 1 Kings Highway NE. The building is a three-story single family detached dwelling with a mansard roof and front porch. The door that we are referring to is the front entry door there as it faces the street. Normally with Permits for window and door replacements, it is something that Planning Staff reviews through the permitting process. We look at the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone* in making decisions about whether that project can be issued in what we call an Architectural Review Certificate for work in the Historic District. In the case of this, Staff had a number of concerns with the proposed project and has chosen to refer it to the Commission. Specifically, in the *Design Standards and Guidelines*, you would be looking at Chapter 3, where there is information about appropriate practices for doors and windows. Basically, the *Guidelines* would suggest that building elements such as these be replaced in kind to match the existing conditions. So, for things like windows, that means the same window opening size, operating function, and the panels of light or the panes on how they are divided. For doors, it's very similar in that it would be a door in the same opening size, same door format, and if it had any light or glass in it, something similar to what would be any existing historic door in that era. Today, we refer this Permit to you to consider what is being proposed. I'm not sure that we've received information to clarify which exact windows on the house are being proposed for replacement, but we may be able to learn that today. The door is being proposed to go from what is a double, kind of solid wood door to a single door with a sidelight to take up that space. There is an image in the email

trail that we had with the contractor for the project that shows the concept for the door. I will note that in that email, the picture shows both the inside and the outside. So, look at those as a single version of the door with side light and the transom light window above it. In our Report on page 3, Staff lists some findings and then also made some Recommendations in regard to this for our findings regarding window location and format.

We need to clearly understand which windows are being replaced to ensure that the replacement is in that similar style. The door location as noted is the one that faces Kings Highway. It is visible from the sidewalk, especially since the vegetation that was previously in the front yard, has now been removed. There is a new kind of picket style fence that is there (metal fence). The concern that Staff has is really related to the format of the door. It does have a set of double storm doors that's primarily glass and then you can see the double door that is behind it. That double door format is a feature that is typically seen in the late 1800s to early 1900s in this architectural style. There are several buildings in Downtown Dover that have that double door format to them. Staff Recommendations regarding this Permit request would be to provide additional information specifically about which windows, and then regarding the door to focus on if there is a way to repair the existing door. But, if full replacement is necessary, it should be a double door in function. The fact that it has the double storm door format on it is the right way to go when it comes to storm doors in dealing with a property such as this.

Our package for you included our Letter of Referral and their specific Door and Window Permit Application. We also provided you with the *Design Standards and Guidelines* elements from that document and then there was a recent photo taken within the last few weeks here of the front door. You can see that was before the snow melted away. But Mr. Arnold has joined us this afternoon. So, if he would like to come forward and talk to you a little bit about his project. It's an opportunity for him to do that and to have a conversation about this Permit.

Representative: Mr. Richard Arnold, Owner.

Mr. Arnold stated that referring to the windows, they are the old windows that are way at the back of the house. They cannot be seen from the front at all. They are on the side of the building, so you would not notice them. In fact, two of the windows are on a porch. So, you'd have to be on the porch in order to see it. So, they are hidden if that's the right word. The front door is in bad shape. There is a reason why we put up the storm door, to keep the wind out. It's in bad repair. I've tried to seal it several times. There are cracks in the doors. Somebody who knows how to use wood could probably fix it; I can't. So, I wanted to put in a new whole door and completely reseal everything. But one of the things I want is keyless entry because now I live by myself and I want medical staff or whoever is asked to come into the house. I would be able to give them the code when I call in an emergency or my two sons so that they would be allowed in. Right now, there's one key and if we lose that, forget it, nobody's getting in. The contractor that I had went through extensive measurements and whatever, and the product that they had was too small. And that's why we went to a single door. That door would be able to fit the space. I've read your Report and everything. I'm not going to argue with you. It should be a double door, that's fine. You know, we'll just do the windows and then that's it.

Mrs. Richardson asked that within the packet, there's an email from the contractor Gregory

Madrigale, and he refers to the windows. "He says all the windows will be replaced in the exact same style including the grids. As far as trim, we typically install a PVC coded aluminum with wood grain texture in order to preserve the integrity of the existing wood. We can match the existing colors as needed. If the original trim needs to remain, we can have alternate installed techniques to keep the existing trim visible." Is this email enough documentation to answer any of the questions regarding the windows?

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that Staff was generally comfortable with how they were describing an approach to the replacement of the windows. It just wasn't clear where they were on the house itself. The Permit application just said four windows. Mr. Arnold today has described that they are towards the back of the house. We can confirm with him more specifically where they are and be able to deal with the window aspect of the permit.

Mrs. Richardson said thank you. I think that there are really two separate projects. One's the window and then the other is the door. I don't have any problem with the windows. Is there feedback from the Commission?

Ms. Horsey mentioned that she would like to know exactly where those windows are because I think, unless you say it's the porch and this is the oldest part of the house. Is that right? Mr. Arnold replied yes, it is.

Mr. Arnold stated that the house is actually two houses. They had an old farmhouse, which has just four rooms. And that sits this way. And then years later they put on the Victorian section in the front. And that sits this way. So, the windows are on this part of the house, the old part that sits way, way in the back. Like I said, you can't see it for the most part. And you can't see it from the road. He had to be on my property in order to see them. They are exactly what they described. The old windows were six panels over nine, and that's what they have brought in, and they are going to put up. There are six panels over nine. So, they match it exactly and they're white. Just like the ones I've got.

Ms. Horsey mentioned that it would be nice to have a visual. I'm a little more inclined to say yes to the windows possibly. I'd still like to know a little bit more about the materials on the windows even though it says its vinyl. We are always a little leary of anything vinyl which you probably know that. I know vinyl's getting better.

Mr. Arnold said hopefully it will. It matches perfectly. I can go get some pictures of it if you want, but, like I said, you can't see it from the road. You have to be on the property. But I understand the front door. I'm not going to argue with anybody about it. They want double doors and the company cannot provide them. So, I will just do the windows and then go to someplace else because those doors need to be replaced.

Ms. Horsey mentioned that she thinks the doors on this house are iconically located position on the street and on that corner. And even though you really can't see the double doors, changing it out to something like a single door with that sidelight is not historic at all.

Mr. Arnold mentioned that he was warned and now that it's happened, but I'm not going to argue about it or anything. Let's do it right.

Ms. Horsey said yeah, and I think you'll want to. I mean historic houses are becoming more endangered in Dover every day, and we need to protect them. You understand and that's good, so we don't have to argue that point.

Mrs. Richardson asked Mr. Arnold if he was given a copy of the historic guidelines. Mr. Arnold replied yes. I have a copy here and I was given a copy on the email. I read it and I knew I was coming into this meeting, not going to get approval, but you know, at least we talked about it.

Mrs. Richardson asked Mr. Arnold if he had checked with other contractors regarding the doors and if not, that's a possibility. Mr. Arnold replied no.

Mr. Arnold said yes, the door needs to be replaced, there is no doubt.

Mrs. Richardson said I think it's the style that concerns us. As you know, as far as a keyless entry, I think you can probably put that on double doors like this.

Mr. Arnold mentioned that the door is old and beat up.

Mrs. Richardson said that she was talking about replacing the doors if they are in that bad condition.

Mr. Arnold said that he would appreciate it if Council (the Commission) would say, yeah, you can put in keyless entry. I'm thinking of my safety you know. I don't have relatives nearby. So, when I call for an emergency or whatever, I can just give them the code and then they can come right in I have a coded entry in the back. I have a hard enough issue getting them to the front door on 1 Kings Highway NE. My neighbor on the right is 109 N. Division Street. So, they think I am on Division Street. So, I need a keyless entry. So, if that's approved, that's a big step for me.

Ms. Baker asked if it was their business to approve or disapprove a keyless entry?

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that your *Guidelines* do not go into that kind of detail.

Ms. Baker mentioned that she lives around the corner from Mr. Arnold at 3 S. Bradford and her immediate adjacent neighbor is at number 15 S. Bradford. So, I understand the confusion of spaces and numbers. It's a rarity and it can be fun if you're not in a hurry, right? But you're concerned about if you need help in a hurry. I cannot but believe that there is a competent person(s) who could create a door system for you that would satisfy the historic nature of this incredibly beautiful building. And satisfy your concerns for your own safety, which I totally resonate with. So, I appreciate you being so forthcoming. I'll tell you what on my block, several of us said "Wow! They took down all those shrubs. And now we can see this beautiful house." So, thank you Mr. Arnold. Thank you so much and thank you for the fence. So now, don't stop here. Drive right on through to a new door until you get what you want. And one that will be the pride of Downtown Dover, and I thank you sir. God speed.

Mr. Arnold said thank you.

Vice Chair Richardson asked Ms. Horsey if she had any additional comments? Ms. Horsey said no, I'm fine, thank you.

Vice Chair Richardson stated that she was inclined to conditionally approve the windows but not approve the door. We are asking you to bring back a plan for the door.

Mr. Arnold asked for clarification; plans for the door? Vice Chair Richardson said yes, the door. Mr. Arnold said I think that is going to take a little while, I think. It's not going to be in the next couple of weeks. Vice Chair Richardson said we only meet once a month. Mr. Arnold said yes. I'm going to look around but doors are expensive, especially when you live on a fixed income.

Vice Chair Richardson mentioned that historic homes are expensive to maintain. We all know.

Mr. Arnold said he had a contractor who was installing a dishwasher and he was standing outside, and he looked at the house, and he said, "I bet you never run out of projects, do you?" So, no.

Ms. Horsey moved for partial approval of Application # HI-26-01 Referral of Door/Window Permit #26-118 Architectural Review Certificate to not approve the door request but to approve the window request based upon the windows being the same configuration as the old ones. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Richardson and unanimously carried 3-0. Mr. Czerwinski abstained as Mr. Arnold is a neighbor.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked Mr. Arnold if he had a few moments to wait till we finish the meeting, she would talk to him about where exactly the windows are so that the Planning Office can move forward with that portion of the Permit that we have in now and removing the door project, we'll call it, from that. And once you have done some more work on the door project, that would be a separate Permit. It is probable if you come back with a double door or something that staff can approve and you would not end up back before these lovely folks if we could help it.

OLD BUSINESS

Certified Local Government (CLG) Program

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that we had made application for grant application to the State of Historic Preservation Office to focus on the work on your *Design Standards and Guidelines* to focus on alternative materials. We have not taken any additional steps since we made that application. Staff time has been devoted otherwise. In order to begin that, it would be a formal grant agreement with the Historic Preservation Office and then we would have to go out for consultant services. So, we will see how that progresses in the next couple of months here.

Implementation of 2019 Comprehensive Plan

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned she had no specific items to bring to you today. I will let you know that the City is participating in a voluntary program with the State Housing Authority that will be looking at Land Use and Zoning Reform related to affordable housing or housing in

general. So, if there's certainly anything as we move into that process that needs to come before the Commission, we will certainly loop you in. That's meant to look at our *Zoning Ordinance* related to housing citywide and opportunities for improvements there in our types and variety of housing. We'll see what moves forward with that. Basically, by participating in that program, we get free consultant services to help us look at our *Zoning Ordinance*. We will know more about that in a couple of weeks. I would say they are going to be making formal announcements about that program shortly.

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPPORTUNITY

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there was anyone in person or online that wishes to make public comments?

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that seeing that there's only one other individual in the room that is public here, and there are no individuals that have joined us online at the moment. Since this is an open meeting that public comment opportunity is an opportunity for the public to bring any general comments to the Commission that aren't associated with a formal application. I don't believe you have anyone wishing to speak today.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there were any questions or comments before we adjourn?

Ms. Baker mentioned that she would like to thank Staff for taking care of so much, for so many, for so long.

Chairman Czerwinski said I'll second that. Anybody else?

Mrs. Richardson moved to adjourn the meeting seeing no other items of business, seconded by Ms. Horsey and unanimously carried 4-0 of the members present.

Meeting adjourned at 4:02 PM

Sincerely,

Maretta Savage-Purnell
Secretary