

# Sykesville Historic District Commission Minutes

## February 28, 2017

### **DRAFT**

The Sykesville Historic District Commission (SHDC) meeting was held on February 28, 2017 in the Conference Room at the Sykesville Town House. Commissioner Fogg called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Norman Fogg, Melissa Clark, and Mike Johnston. Council Member Stacy Link

**STAFF:** Dawn Ashbacher, Town Manager  
Kerry Chaney, Town Clerk  
Dennis Hoover, Town Attorney

**SHDC MINUTES:** January 24, 2017 – all motioned to accept the minutes as written.

### **REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS:**

- #16-23            524 Schoolhouse Road            Addition of a Little Free Library  
Girl Scout Troop # 2946 was in attendance to present this application to the Commission. They would like to place a Little Free Library at the Historic Colored Schoolhouse to benefit the Homework Club and the surrounding community. They will raise the money through fundraisers. After planning and research, they chose two possible locations, along the walkway and next to the side entrance, which would minimize the interference with mowing and trimming of the area. The Schoolhouse has an easement from the Maryland Historical Trust. They reviewed and approved the proposal.

A motion was made by Council Member Link and seconded by Commissioner Johnston to approve application #16-23 for 524 Schoolhouse Road as it is consistent with the Historic District Design Guidelines and in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. All voted in favor

- #17-02            7615 Main Street            Business Sign  
Mr. and Mrs. Dearie were in attendance to discuss their application. They are changing the name of the Cork and Bottle Spirit Shop to The Vine on Main and will sell fair trade goods along with their current selection. They want to put the new signs on the back of their current signs. The dimensions and locations will remain the same.

A motion was made by Council Member Link and seconded by Commissioner Clark to approve application #17-02 for 7615 Main Street as it is consistent with the Historic District Design Guidelines for business signs on pages 36 and 37 and in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. All voted in favor.

- #16-19 Warfield Complex Development Plan  
Richard Wagner was in attendance to discuss this. The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) denied the proposed changes to the *Warfield Commercial Center: Design Guidelines and Standards for Signs and Energy Efficiency*. Mr. Wagner responded to their denial by inviting the Easement Committee to a meeting on the Warfield property to discuss the proposed changes. He was disappointed to report that the MHT refused the meeting. They suggested having the SHDC approve something that would fit the current guidelines instead of trying to change the guidelines for the new development. Mr. Wagner strongly suggests not submitting anything to the MHT that does not meet the current guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. He presented four options to the SHDC for how to proceed with the Warfield application.
  1. Revise the *Warfield Commercial Center: Design Guidelines and Standards for Signs and Energy Efficiency* again and keep the same plan with the minor tweaks, such as the curved road in Parcel E/F. Mr. Wagner is unsure how to revise the guidelines differently than what was already attempted and get the same amount of density in Parcel E/F.
  2. Review the *Warfield Commercial Center: Design Guidelines and Standards for Signs and Energy Efficiency* and substantially revise the plan to get the required density but maintain the historic nature of the site.
  3. Approve the current plan as meeting the current guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Mr. Wagner cannot support this decision. He strongly suggests not pursuing this option, as he believes the current plan does not meet the current guidelines or the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
  4. Remove Parcel E/F from the easement. It would still be included in the Historic District of Warfield, but it would no longer be part of the MHT's review. The MHT's easement covers the entire property currently. They would need to consent to the removal of Parcel E/F from the easement. Mr. Wagner explained that this is a very political move, as the State of Maryland required the easement when the property was given to the Town. This would allow for a differentiation between the new construction and the rehabilitation of the buildings.

Mr. Wagner stressed again that he believes the current plan does not meet the current guidelines or the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The key Standards are on page 103 of the handout Mr. Wagner passed out. They are the Standards for the Building Site. Also, the Standards for Setting on pages 106-108 of Mr. Wagner's handout are where the current guidelines were drawn from. When he wrote the current guidelines, he used the approved zoning use at the time, which did not include residential. He suggested the argument that the environment, economics, zoning, etc. have all changed which would require an update to the guidelines. It was asked if the roundabout and Springfield Avenue, which is a curved road, that were added met the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The road that was there previously was a

straight road that was replaced with a curved road and a roundabout. Mr. Wagner explained that it was the original landscape that needs to be respected for the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, not what was placed on the land after the land was deemed historic.

Mr. Wagner reported that he is looking into Cultural Landscapes, as the property was originally used for agriculture and it is no longer needed for that purpose. He is hoping that since the cultural aspect of the land has changed, that might be another defense for revising the guidelines. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and the MHT says that the MHT cannot unreasonably withhold consent of the guidelines. Dennis Hoover, Town Attorney, explained that he believes this would extend to consent of guideline revisions as well. Sean Davis, of Morris Ritchie Associates, doesn't believe that the MHT is acting in good faith by denying both the revisions and the invitation to meet on the property for discussions.

Mr. Davis asked for clarification of the repercussions from the MHT for approving the current plan as meeting the current guidelines. Mr. Hoover explained the remedies portion of the easement between the Town of Sykesville and the MHT. These remedies are in section G of the easement. They include instituting a suit, demand restoration of the property to the condition required by the easement, and enter the property, correct the breach, and hold the Town responsible for the costs.

Mr. Davis offered a fifth option for the SHDC to consider: writing a letter to the MHT explaining that the SHDC would like to approve the plan and outlining the justification of the decision. He believes that this might force a meeting between the SHDC and the MHT. Mr. Wagner offered a modification to this option. He suggested having the justification be that the guidelines should be changed and adapted to the new zoning, environmental changes, and cultural changes, which has happened in Town. His proposed language for the letter states that the SHDC believes that the plan meets the guidelines except for specific gray areas that the SHDC would like to discuss with the MHT.

It was decided that Mr. Wagner, Mr. Davis, and Mr. Hoover would collaborate to draft a letter to the MHT. A special meeting will be held by the SHDC on March 14 at 6:30 P.M. for the SHDC to review the letter before it is sent to the MHT.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Gate House Museum** – Council Member Link announced that Jack White, the curator of the Gate House Museum, has been working with the Smithsonian and the Carroll County Farm Museum for their exhibit. The Gate House exhibit has shifted focus and is now about the rise and fall of Wade Warfield, who owned the Town and Springfield properties in the early 1900s.

Mr. White is hoping to reopen the Gate House Museum in early May.

**Schoolhouse** – Pat Greenwald was in attendance to give an update on the Schoolhouse. There are 15 children in the Homework Club that meets every Monday and Wednesday and six of the children made the second quarter Honor Roll at their schools. The Homework Club also includes four teenage tutors and 10 adult tutors. St. Paul's Church made the Schoolhouse their mission project. They help paint, clean, and garden. There is an event almost every week and tours can be scheduled through the Town. They are waiting to hear back from the MHT about two raised garden beds for the Homework Club students to grow vegetables. Mayor Johnathan Herman offered his praise of the Schoolhouse. He thanked Ms. Greenwald for all her hard work maintaining and running the Schoolhouse in its original purpose.

### **BUSINESS:**

- Open positions on the Commission: Commissioner Fogg announced Mr. Wagner will hopefully be giving him the names and contact information of students who would like to join the SHDC. Kerry Chaney, Town Clerk, announced that there have been some emails from interested people. She will follow up with them.
- Observation of violations within the Historic District: no violations were observed by the Commissioners.

It was discussed among the Commissioners and decided that the Closed Session was not needed, as everything was covered in Open Session.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, a motion was made by Council Member Link and seconded by Commissioner Clark to adjourn at 8:26 P.M. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kerry Chaney, Recording Secretary