

Sykesville Historic District Commission Minutes

OCTOBER 6, 2016

The Sykesville Historic District Commission meeting was held on October 6, 2016 in the Conference Room at the Sykesville Town House. Commissioner Olsen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PRESENT: Commissioners Matt Olsen and Norman Fogg. Council Member Stacy Link.

STAFF: Dawn Ashbacher, Town Manager
Kerry Chaney, Town Clerk

SHDC MINUTES: August 30, 2016 – all motioned to accept the minutes as written.

Business:

#16-19 Discussion of Warfield Preliminary Development Plan and Pattern Book

Richard Wagner was present to discuss the Preliminary Development Plan and Pattern Book. He is from David H. Gleason Associates Inc. Architects, and he wrote the current SHDC Guidelines, the *Historic Preservation Guidelines for the Warfield Complex*, and the *Warfield Commercial Center: Design Guidelines and Standards for New Buildings*. He is also very familiar with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, which apply to all historic building. The entire Warfield area and its landscaping is included in the Historic District.

Richard Wagner was very concerned about certain view sheds that are deemed historically important. These view sheds must be kept with little to no interruption from buildings. He has requested a 3D sketch from the developers to show building infringement on view sheds. He also explained certain aspects of historical discussion, such as massing, proportion, scale, and rhythm, to the Commissioners.

There is concern over the rigid pattern of the trees as outlined in the Pattern Book. Mr. Wagner proposed clusters or clumps of trees instead, as this was originally a cottage plan landscape. Doing so would be more in line with how the trees were originally planted.

Mr. Wagner also explained his position on windows and doors. The windows and doors should be set back from the face of the house. The mullions are also important, as they cast shadows and patterns. A between panes grid should not be used, as it casts different shadows. The primary facades, facades that can be seen from the primary rights-of-way, should have the depth and mullions. He suggested the use of true divided lights or simulated divided lights for windows. Front doors should be made of wood without glued on recesses, which look very

different from real recesses.

Materials should be traditional or similar that require less maintenance, such as masonry and wood, and in some cases, plain concrete. If metal clad windows and doors are used, Mr. Wagner suggests white or off-white, as colors will fade over time. Wood with a baked on finish will not fade. Vinyl should not be used, as it is not traditional or similar in style. These are some of the biggest contention points between Mr. Wagner and the developer of the complex.

Once the SHDC has final, agreed upon comments and approved minutes, the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) has 30 days to review and reply. Mr. Wagner suggested trying to get a MHT reviewer assigned to the Warfield Development. This will ensure cohesion of MHT comments and allow for faster turnaround.

Consultation about Historic District Guidelines:

Richard Wagner gave the Commissioners guidelines from Easton, Maryland regarding sandwich board signs. His recommendations were to use wood or polyurethane materials instead of an off-the-shelf plastic sign. The guidelines he provided can also be changed to suit our needs.

For the purposes of the Sykesville Historic District Guidelines, street furniture was in regards to Town owned public property, however, if the Commissioners are in agreement, it can include privately owned street furniture, such as the benches along the sidewalks. Street furniture should also include potted plants and hanging plants. The Commissioners also asked about wording in the guidelines on page 54 that says “benches should be made of non-conducting material and have backs as well as seats.” The Commissioners were unsure what non-conducting material was. This was a typo and should have actually read “non-conducting material”, such as wood or plastic that does not heat up in the sun. Further clarification was also given as to the purview of the SHDC on street furniture. Furniture on the sidewalks and on patios on ground level is under SHDC purview; furniture on front porches is not under SHDC purview.

His professional recommendation was to amend the guidelines every five to ten years to allow for an update to materials and practices. The Commissioners should go through a training before attempting this. Over the years, they should create a list of question or contention issues with the guidelines that would then be addressed when the amendment process occurs.

The National Register Application for Sykesville has the period of significance for the Historic District being from 1800-1925. This application was completed over 30 years ago. There are possibly things and buildings that have occurred post 1925 that should now be considered contributing. This application should be reevaluated every 15 years for contribution and non-contributing additions and be amended formally or informally.

The Commissioners asked about neon signs, because previously they have interpreted the guidelines that say “no internally illuminated signs” to include neon. Mr. Wagner explained that neon is different from internal illumination. Neon may be allowable if compatible with the architecture, such as deco, of the building.

Mr. Wagner stressed the importance of finding additional Commissioners to the SHDC. It is acceptable to look outside of Town limits for additional members with specific skill sets. He recommended having at least an architect, historian, and structural engineer on the SHDC.

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS:

- #16-17 7547/7618 Main Street Wayside Signs
This was an application by the Town for the placement of two Wayside signs in the Historic District. One would be at the Town House (7547 Main Street) and one would be at Baldwin’s Station (7618 Main Street). These signs will have historical information for interested people to view. They were professionally designed and will not fade for 15-18 years.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fogg and seconded by Commissioner Olsen to approve the application for 7547/7618 Main Street. There are no guidelines for free-standing signs. All voted in favor.

- #16-18 7541 Main Street, first floor front step tiling, hanging sign, awning
The applicant was not in attendance. This application was for tiling on the front step of the building, a hanging business sign, and an awning over the front door. Richard Wagner provided some insight into front step tiling. Traditionally, the building number would be tiled onto the front step. There was some concern over the material chosen, as it could get slippery when wet, however there are no guidelines pertaining to front step tiling.

The hanging business sign is under the six and a half square feet per face recommendation, and the proposed height meets the requirements.

The awning did not meet the height requirements in the guidelines. On page 34 of the guidelines, it is recommended that storefront and other ground floor awnings have a minimum clearance of eight feet above the sidewalk. The dimensions provided show the awning having less than eight feet of clearance.

There was also concern from the Commissioners about the material used in the awning. The guidelines recommend using canvas duck as the awning material. The

Commissioners are open to the use of other materials, as long as it is similar to what is already used in Town. There were concerns that the materials used in this awning would be shiny or appear like plastic rather than canvas.

A motion was made by Commissioner Olsen and seconded by Council Member Link to approve the front step tiling with a recommendation to use anti-slip tiling, similar to what is used in showers, and to approve the hanging business sign for 7541 Main Street per the guidelines page 34. The awning was not approved because of the height issue and the concern over the material. The applicant may present the SHDC with a sample of the material or more description of the material for reevaluation. All voted in favor.

- #16-20 7610 Main Street Tree Removal
Jason Smith was on the phone with the SHDC for this application. He recently purchased 7610 Main Street and is in the process of renovating and rehabilitating it. There is a tree on the property that was planted around seven or eight years ago that is very scraggly but healthy and will be impacting the sidewalk soon. It is about eight inches in caliber. Even though there are guidelines on page 55 that recommend conservation of trees six inches in caliber or greater, this tree does not add anything to the Town. It does not improve the landscape.

A motion was made by Commissioner Olsen and seconded by Council Member Link to approve the application for 7610 Main Street even though the guidelines on page 55 recommend conservation of trees six inches in caliber or more because it does not add to the landscape or the character of the Town. All voted in favor.

Business Use of Sidewalks Application Review

The SHDC has decided to create guidelines for the sandwich board signs, and will the guidelines Richard Wagner provided and suggested. Dimensions of signs will be decided on a case by case basis, as some places have more room for the signs on the sidewalks. Plastic is not recommended as a material used in sandwich boards. Dry erase sandwich boards will also not be acceptable, as they have a shiny surface and do not fit within the character of the Town. The signs must be light enough to pick up and move inside at night but sturdy enough to withstand windy conditions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Gate House Museum – Council Member Link announced that the curator, Jack White, has done landscaping and other cleaning up around the museum. It is looking much better now. He has also established relations with Springfield, and they will be helping with the Smithsonian project and the Gate House exhibits. He has also learned about mounting displays from the New Windsor museum, and is working with Springfield and the Farm Museum to find items to use for

the displays. Jack has started working on a newsletter that will be finished and disseminated soon.

Schoolhouse – The Maryland Historical Trust has said the pathway placed at the Schoolhouse is not acceptable and needs to be redone. The Schoolhouse must also submit an application for an easement for the proposed garden.

BUSINESS:

- Observation of violations within the Historic District:
Samsara put up awnings without approval. They should submit an application for retroactive approval.
- Schedule for Warfield meetings:
Lots of things are evolving for Warfield that need SHDC attention. The October 25 meeting will start at 6 P.M. to accommodate the Warfield Development presentations. A meeting will be added on November 9 at 6 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Motion was made by Council Member Link and seconded by Commissioner Olsen to adjourn at 9:05 P.M. The Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kerry Chaney, Recording Secretary