

SHEPHERDSTOWN HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

Monday, March 2, 2026

6:00 p.m.,

TOWN HALL

104 NORTH KING STREET

In attendance: Commissioner Chair Keith Alexander (KA), Tom Mayes (TM), Ashley Reynolds (AR), Rebecca Bicker (RB), Cheryl Brown (CB),

In absentia: None noted.

In audience: Judith Shepherd (JS), David Abruzzi (DA), Jim Auxer (JA), Jim King (JK), Karl Musser (KM), Hunter Wetzell (HW), Robin McGrorty (RM), James Gatz (JG)

1. **Call to Order:** KA called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., made introductions of commissioners and support staff, and explained Roberts Rules Simplified.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** KA noted that application 25-42 previously submitted work under a workshop, not as a formal permit application. RB motioned to change minutes to reflect this. AR seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Minutes approved as amended.
3. **Visitors:**
4. **Conflicts of Interest:** None noted.
5. **Applications**

26-03-104 N. King Street

Tree well replacement and small landscaping improvements adjacent to Town Hall. Includes a low, arcing, loose-laid stone wall, 8 feet in length.

- RM, Tree Commissioner, reviewed plan for tree well. KA asked if limestone would be used as material. RM confirmed. TM moved to approve under the condition that native limestone is used, in accordance with Guidelines on PG 68 “Retaining Walls” Section C. AR seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Passed.

26-04-106 W. German Street

Sign Permit Application – business sign for Eclectic for the space formerly occupied by Evolve.

- JS reviewed plans for wooden sign. KA asked how the sign would be attached to building. JS said that the sign would be attached to brackets and a plain black bar. RB moved to approve sign, in accordance with Guidelines on PG 63 “Lighting, Signage & Fire Escapes,” Sections A-C. AR seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Passed.

6. **Workshop Sessions:** None.

7. Ongoing Business

- Update and feedback on Mills Group materials—KA updated commissioners on the extended deadline at the end of April. He noted that new map drafts from Mills Group reflect HLC feedback, but that commissioners are welcome to add further recommendations.
- CLG Update—KA informed commission that CLG status was approved. He noted that SHPO representative Claire Tryon expressed concern about projects not approved by HLC and suggested that more effort is taken by commission to make sure all district projects submit permit applications. Tryon also noted that the HLC did not submit a report on activities for 2022 and 2023.
- Town Grants for facades and sidewalks— KM reminded commission that the town is accepting feedback. KA requested a deadline. KM asked that all feedback be sent directly to him in the next week (by Monday, March 9). TM asked if the recipients of the town grant would be required to display a sign saying they were an award recipient. KM confirmed that was the case.

8. New Business

- Historic plaque program— AR proposed that a plaque program be installed through the town. She proposed that homeowners submit deed chains to receive a plaque certifying the age of their building, or that the HLC provide that research on request. CB asked if the town would supply plaques on request. AR said this was feasible, but that the town would have to agree on plaque design and find a way to store them. TM approves of idea and asks if local artisans could take precedence, perhaps through a competition. AR and KA agreed that the project would ideally support local artisans. AR said that she would draft a page for applications and the competition for a contract, to review next meeting.
- Library sign— KA read his communications with Christy Hagerty, Director of the Shepherdstown Public Library. She said that the material of the previous sign was MDF and that the sign likely was less than 10 years old. KA expressed that the age of the sign means that the HLC does not need to request it be reinstalled.

KA noted that the current sign is not appropriate in materials or in how it is attached to the building. KA and TM confirmed that the current sign was approved by Planning Commission, but not the HLC. KA asked JG what the town would prefer, in order to make the sign appropriate. JG asked for HLC preference. KA suggested replacing the sign with appropriate materials and method of attachment. TM agreed. KA proposed submitting a resolution for the town, or suggested that he attend the next Town Council meeting. JG asked that KA submit a resolution or letter. TM moved for a resolution to recommend to the town council that the sign for the Visitor's Center at the Old Market Hall which under our ordinance should have been approved by the

HLC but which did not receive the approval of the HLC be replaced with a sign that is appropriate under the HLC Guidelines, including the manner in which it is attached to the building and the appropriate materials of the sign. AR seconded. CB asked that it be a recommendation, rather than a resolution. JG accepted. All in favor. None opposed.

KA said that he would attend the April Town Council meeting. JG asked what the town should have prepared. KA suggested the town create a design proposal.

- Bollards— KA noted that SOI Standards recommend that bollards be installed that are “as unobtrusive as possible” and avoid installing bollards “without taking into consideration and visibility so that they negatively impact the historic character of the site.” KA asked if the HLC should submit a proposal to change the bollards to an appropriate design. JG asked that the HLC acknowledge the importance of bollards, to suggest specific designs that would be visually appropriate, and to keep in mind that this suggestion would set precedent for future installations. RB noted that installed bollards should prioritize sturdiness for health and life safety. KA agreed and suggested that the HLC prioritize both historic character and health and life safety. TM moved that the HLC recommend to the Town Council that the existing bollards on German Street be replaced with bollards consistent with SOI Standards, and that the HLC will work collaboratively with the town to determine an appropriate design that meets the performance requirements of the town, that are appropriate replacements, and that future bollards meet this requirement. RB seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Passed.

KA said he would present this at the April Town Council meeting.

- Title IX Revisions— KA noted that Title IX requires that signs and fences come before the HLC for approval, which is not currently reflected in Design Guidelines.

KA noted that the Planning Commission is revising guidelines for Planned Unit Developments (PUDs). KA suggested that the HLC discuss whether PUDs fall under HLC purview. JG said that the ordinances are being codified beyond Title IX. JG said that a contracted company is reorganizing ordinances and may suggest changes based on the ordinance applicability and conflict between ordinances. JG said that zoning categories, including PUDs, are some of the first issues being reviewed. He noted that the consultant recommended the HLC be involved in these discussions as they progress. KA asked that HLC be involved in all discussions related to Title IX changes. TM asked if, during Title IX changes, the “Demolition by Neglect” provision be updated. JG confirmed this was a planned change. AR noted that current provisions exempt state-funded properties from Certificate of Appropriateness requirements. DA emphasized that this is limited to state-owned properties.

JK recommended that the town take special care that local ordinances also reflect state laws, with no conflicts. JG confirmed that was the intention behind the recodification.

- David Abruzzi— DA introduced himself as the newest board member for the Preservation Alliance for West Virginia. He expressed strong approval for the Shepherdstown HLC's actions so far. He clarified the role of PAWV for the state, the organization's composition, and its priorities. He noted that the PAWV Annual Conference will be held locally, at Berkeley Springs from May 12-14.

9. **Adjournment:** MSA unan. To adjourn at 7:20 p.m.