

SHEPHERDSTOWN HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

Monday, February 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: Linus Bicker (LB), Jim Auxer (JA), Frank Von Fintel (FVF), Robin Von Fintel (RVF), Gino Sisco (GS), Karl Musser (KM), James Gatz (JG) Claire Tryon (CT)

1. **Call to Order:** KA called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m., made introductions of commissioners and support staff, and explained Roberts Rules Simplified.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** No changes noted, minutes approved as submitted.
3. **Visitors:** Linus Bicker (LB), Jim Auxer (JA), Frank Alfenci (FVF), Robin Von Fintel (RVF), Gino Sisco (GS), Karl Musser (KM), James Gatz (JG) Claire Tryon (CT)
4. **Conflicts of Interest:** None noted.
5. **Applications**

25-42- 310 W German Street

Certificate of Appropriateness Project Permit Application – New construction of a detached car garage. Homeowners, FVF and RVF, discussed plan.

- KA confirmed that this application was the subject of a workshop session from last March. RVF confirmed. AR asked if replacement shingles would be asphalt shingles. RVF confirmed and added that they would match the main house shingles. KA confirmed compliance with Guidelines and decided that alternate placement of garage is appropriate, pending approval from tree commission. KA asked what material and construction the doors would be made of. RVF said that she would prefer a carriage styled door but accepts a roll up door. TM noted that the Guidelines approve of the carriage styled door. AR noted that Guidelines would approve of roll up doors if they had a wood façade. TM moved to approve the application in accordance with Guidelines on PG 56 “Outbuildings on Residential Properties,” Sections A-F, with the selection of carriage styled doors or comparable. All in favor. None opposed. Passed.
6. **Workshop Sessions:** None.
 7. **Ongoing Business**
 - **Update and feedback on Mills Group materials:**
 - **Maps:** Commissioners discussed maps designed by Mills Group. RB expressed concern about accessibility for red/green color coding. KA

noted that Washington Street is labelled incorrectly. AR inquired about rationale on named streets. RB noted that zoning outlines may not be correct. AR requested that font sizes be standardized. TM asked about final presentation of map. KA said that the current plan is to display as a full size brochure, but other materials can be considered. TM noted that information is not conveyed in an intuitive manner. KA said that the map may not provide the desired information for residents. RB noted that the lack of street names excludes houses in district. KA suggested that these maps mainly be used for purposes of illustration and a way to direct people to a link with a more exact map. GS suggests a new version of the map, incorporating accuracy, accessibility, and legibility recommendations from the commission. RB noted that boundary lines are not explained clearly. JG expressed general confusion as to the maps' content. TM requested a simplified version of the map.

- **Flowchart:** Commission expressed general confusion on the purpose of the provided flowchart and information accuracy. KA clarified that the graphic was intended to educate residents on the procedure of gaining HLC approval for property changes, as well as potential outcome. JG requested a simplified version of the flowchart. KA requested further comments and questions by the end of Friday, February 6, at 5pm.
- **General Suggestions:** KA reviewed suggestions, those being: online bios of commissioners, an updated map linked to the Certificate of Appropriateness applications, and to confirm status and frequency of workshops. KA confirmed that workshops are for homeowners and that homeowners are encouraged to use that time. KM said he will update maps. KA said he will work with JG on the rest of the suggestions. JG asked when product and grant deadlines are. CT said February 28 for the grant deadline. TM asked if the deadline could be expanded by a month. CT gave a tentative agreement and instructions re following up.

8. New Business

- Linus Bicker- LB introduced himself as a representative from the Tree Commission and raised the issue of a Sugar Maple removed last Fall. He asked to build a retaining wall/tree well at that spot for the health of future trees, made of loose laid stone to fit the character of surrounding walls. KA said that LB was supposed to discuss communication methods between commissions and asked commissioners if they thought the retaining wall should be brought forward as a proposal. JG said he was in favor of immediate approval. KA said he appreciated that the tree commission kept the HLC up-to-date on infrastructure updates. AR said that work should be considered under PG 67 "Changes to Commercial Sites Yard Features" and PG 68 "Retaining Walls." TM asked if stone could be made of locally sourced limestone. LB confirmed that the stone mason would be using suitably matched materials. KA asked for

commission approval. AR asked about mortar use. TM confirmed that preference was for dry laid wall, and LB said that if mortar was needed, he would come back to ask for HLC recommendations. TM asked how the maintenance shed had been handled previously, if it was a formal application or a consultation. JA confirmed that it was a formal application. LB raised the issue of unnecessary bureaucracy considering the small scale of project. TM asked what the process was and raised the point that both residents and commissions will benefit from formal applications made by the town. KA said that this decision may fall under purview of the mayor. JG said that applications could start but after the approval of LB's proposal. JG suggested that proposals could be brought first to the Planning Commission. KA noted that Planning Commission benefits from HLC recommendations in their decisions and affirmed that landscaping decisions fall under the purview of the HLC. KA expressed skepticism over the idea that a formal application would unduly set back the expected schedule for work. KA said he would prefer an application, similar to proposed cemetery work. LB expressed concern that this decision would weaken the efficiency of the town to perform work. KA said that the decision would make sure that the town government kept in line with all required guidelines and processes. LB raised the issue that commissions applying for permits was not required under current rules. AR noted that work was required to come before HLC within the district. TM suggested that the town clarify both legal requirements and preferred practices. KA asked for HLC and town recommendations. JG said that, at this point, LB had done what was required. KA said that, as LB was only on the agenda to discuss cooperation between commissions, an approval of work was inappropriate. KA asked LB to attend the March meeting with a formal application. LB agreed but noted that his own communications were clear on the intention of proposed work.

- Claire Tryon/CLGC SHPO- CT introduced herself and said that she was currently updating process of evaluating CLGS. She said that evaluations were performed every 4 years and that the next evaluation will be 2030. She said that she expects materials from Shepherdstown within the next week and that commissioners should have received a manual for evaluation containing the duties and responsibilities of a CLG. She said that a decision will be made within 60 days of her receiving materials. If Shepherdstown does not meet expectations, SHPO will create an action plan to remedy concerns. KA noted that he and CT will be meeting the following Monday at 2 p.m. and said that commissioners were welcome to attend.
- Town grants for facades and sidewalks- KM said that the town has set aside funding for facades and sidewalks. He requested feedback on the review process, requirements for proposals, and the language for advertising this fund. KM noted that he does not need these recommendations immediately, but that the town would prefer to take applications as soon as possible. RB asked if there was a list of licensed

contractors for sidewalks in town. GS suggested the town organize a list of licensed businesses in town. RB asked if residents could “adopt” a section of sidewalk not connected to their house and split the cost with town. JG was open to the idea. AR asked what the timeline would be for residents to hear about approval or denial of grant award. KM said that they would prefer an open-ended deadline. AR said that this would encourage a “First Come, First Serve” dynamic, rather than prioritizing high-need properties/sidewalks. TM asked what awards would cover. JG confirmed that the grants would not cover the full amount of work. KM said that the grants would work on reimbursement. JG suggested that advertisements cover definitions of facades and specify maximum awards. TM expressed approval of these grants and asked for the expected scale of work. KM said that applicants would be encouraged to attend workshops to get suggestions for work. KA asked if these workshops could improve applicants' chances of awards. KA asked if there was a preferred timeline for recommendations by the HLC. JG said that commissioners should consider the coordination of application timelines, different commission purviews, and workshop schedule. TM noted that not all eligible projects would be under HLC purview. KA suggested that applicants reach out to the HLC, with the caveat the HLC can decide whether the project should come to workshop. KA suggested that recommendations be compiled by the March meeting.

9. **Adjournment:** TM moved to adjourn at 7:20 p.m. KA seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Passed.