

SHEPHERDSTOWN PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING

Monday, February 16, 2026

6:00 p.m.

TOWN HALL

104 NORTH KING STREET, SHEPHERDSTOWN

DRAFT

1. Call to Order:

Time: 6:08 pm

Commissioners Present: L. Bicker, L. Chapalee, J. Gatz, M. Morningstar, R. Parmesano

Commissioners Absent: E. Helmick

Staff: K Musser

2. Approval of Previous Months' Minutes:

Motion to approve January 19, 2026 meeting minutes: L. Bicker, 2nd J. Gatz, all ayes

3. Visitors:

K .Alexander, J. Auxer, P. Chapalee, C. Fletcher of Urban Design Ventures (virtual)

4. Conflicts of Interest:

None

5. Applications:

a. 25-42 310 West German Street

Certificate of Appropriateness Project Permit Application – New construction of a detached car garage.

Staff report provided.

Discussion: Clarified that the application did not need approval from the tree commission, as initially stated in HLC Minutes.

Application meets guidelines.

Motion to approve: J. Gatz, 2nd L. Bicker, all ayes

b. 26-01 81 Sage Place

Construction by owner of a ready-to-assemble sauna in rear of property.

Examples are provided. Staff report provided.

Discussion: The Commission referenced the guidelines for sheds and accessory buildings.

Application meets guidelines.

Motion to approve: M. Morningstar, 2nd J. Gatz, all ayes

6. Continuing Business:

L. Bicker provided a Town Council update.

7. New Business:

a. Chris Fletcher, Urban Design Ventures on ordinance review

- *Task:* C. Fletcher will propose revisions to the town's Planning and Zoning Ordinance.
- *Findings:* An initial review identified the current Zoning Ordinance as difficult to read and implement, containing both contradictions and ambiguity.
- *Priorities:* The initial focus will be on the Title 9 PUD section, with the goal of aligning development with town character, historic preservation, affordability, and other priorities from the Comprehensive Plan.
- *Clarifications:* Annexation and PUD zoning are distinct processes. The Planning Commission's jurisdiction is zoning, not annexation. The Planning Commission's role is limited to making zoning re-classification recommendations to the Town Council.
- *Action Items:* Proposed revisions to the PUD section are planned for the March meeting, for the Planning Commission to review and share feedback. Chris Fletcher will coordinate a workshop with J. Gatz to review these changes before the next Commission meeting.

b. Discussion of application process

- *Task:* K. Musser drafted a permitting process outline, with the goal of clarifying the process for commissioners. This may eventually inform a public-facing version for applicants.
- *Recommendations:* Suggestions for improving the process included providing online procedural guides, communicating the option to consult with town staff before submitting an application, establishing clear submission deadlines, using combined HLC/PC application forms to reduce duplication, explicitly stating which projects do not require permits, citing relevant Title 9 sections in staff review forms, and clarifying the process for re-zoning applications.
- *Action Items:* K. Musser will revise the process draft for the commissioners, while town staff continues work on public-facing materials for the permit application process.

8. Discuss Executive Summary

Executive Summary:

Planning Commission Meeting (February 16, 2026)

Approved Applications

- 25-42 310 West German Street: Certificate of Appropriateness Project Permit Application – New construction of a detached car garage.
- 26-01 81 Sage Place: Construction by owner of a ready-to-assemble sauna in rear of property.

Continuing Business

- L. Bicker provided an update regarding recent Town Council activities.

New Business

- The Commission discussed a comprehensive Planning and Zoning Ordinance review with Urban Design Ventures, beginning with proposing revisions to the Title 9 PUD section to better align with priorities in the Comprehensive Plan and increase usability.
- Staff presented a draft permitting process outline to clarify the process for commissioners. The Commission discussed potential improvements in the permitting process and public-facing guidance.