



December Minutes

Thursday, December 4, 2025; 7:00 p.m.

A public meeting of the Howard County Historic Preservation Commission was held on Thursday, December 4, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was conducted as a virtual web meeting/conference call. Ms. Flynn Giles moved to approve the November 6, 2025 minutes. Mr. Barlow seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Members Present: Julieanne Danna, Chair; Ben Barlow, Vice-Chair; Ellen Flynn Giles, Secretary; Cathy Allen; Erica Zoren

Staff Present: Beth Burgess, Samantha Holmes, Mark Beaumont

This report and any recommendations are based on the Guidelines adopted by the Commission. The report is prepared by Commission staff and does not represent the views of the Commission or of the Department of Planning and Zoning.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. MA-25-30c – 3700 College Avenue, Unit 104, Ellicott City, HO-590
2. MA-25-46c – 3630 Church Road, Ellicott City

REGULAR AGENDA

3. HPC-25-45a and HPC-25-45b – 3700 and 3701 Mill Creek Way, Ellicott City
4. HPC-25-46 – 8000 Main St, Ellicott City, HO-332
5. HPC-25-47 – 3899 College Avenue, Ellicott City, HO-353 and HO-354

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Administrative Updates
 - a. Next regular meetings:
 - i. February 5, 2026
 - b. Vote to endorse DPZ's submission for MHT's Non-Capital Grant.

CONSENT AGENDA

MA-25-30c – 3700 College Avenue, Unit 104, Ellicott City, HO-590

Applicant: Ben Thurston

Request: The Applicant, Ben Thurston, requests Final Tax Credit approval for repairs made at 3700 College Avenue, Ellicott City.

Background and Site Description: This property is located in the Ellicott City Historic District and is listed on the Historic Sites Inventory as HO-590, Rock Hill Academy. The building is shown on various historic maps in the 1890s.

The Applicant was pre-approved for tax credits through the Executive Secretary process in May 2025, in case MA-25-30, to replace 11 windows in the condo unit.

Scope of Work: The Applicant submitted documentation that \$30,000.39 was spent on eligible pre-approved repairs. The Applicant seeks \$7,500.10 in final tax credits. The work complies with that pre-approved and the paid invoices and other documentation total the requested amount.

Staff Recommendation to the HPC: Staff recommends the HPC approve the Final Tax Credit as submitted, in the amount of \$7,500.10.

Testimony: There was no testimony.

Motion: Ms. Flynn Giles moved to approve the application as submitted. Mr. Barlow seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

MA-25-46c – 3630 Church Road, Ellicott City

Applicant: Gary Segal

Request: The Applicant, Gary Segal, requests Final Tax Credit approval for repairs made at 3630 Church Road, Ellicott City.

Background and Site Description: This property is located in the Ellicott City Historic District. According to SDAT, the building on the property dates to 1937.

The Applicant was pre-approved for tax credits through the Executive Secretary process in August 2025, in case MA-25-46c, to replace wood trim and roof slates as needed.

Scope of Work: The Applicant submitted documentation that \$5,775.00 was spent on eligible pre-approved repairs. The Applicant seeks \$1,443.75 in final tax credits. The work complies with that pre-approved and the paid invoices and other documentation total the requested amount.

Staff Recommendation to the HPC: Staff recommends the HPC approve the Final Tax Credit as submitted, in the amount of \$1,443.75.

Testimony: There was no testimony.

Motion: Ms. Flynn Giles moved to approve the application as submitted. Mr. Barlow seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

REGULAR AGENDA

HPC-25-45a and 24-45b – 3700 and 3701 Mill Creek Way, Ellicott City

Applicant: Erika Yokum

Request: The Applicant, Erica Yokum from Caruso Homes, requests the approval of a temporary sign at 3700 Mill Creek Way, Ellicott City.

Background and Site Description: This property is located in the Ellicott City Historic District, but does not currently contain any buildings.

The applicant was approved to construct a new house at 3700 Mill Creek Way in November 2024, in case HPC-24-46 and approved to construct a new house at 3701 Mill Creek Way in February 2025.

These lots are part of a larger development; the construction of the homes were approved by the HPC in October, November and December of 2024 and February 2025, with other site alterations approved in February 2025.

Scope of Work: The Applicant seeks approval to install two temporary signs (they will be up longer than a typical seasonal temporary sign).

HPC-24-45a – 3700 Mill Creek Way

The applicant proposes to install a temporary freestanding sign, labeled in the application as the Community Sign, to advertise the sale of new homes. The sign will be installed at the end of December/early January and will remain until 3 months after the last home in the community is sold. The sign will be 10 feet tall by 5 feet wide, for a total of 50 square feet. The sign will be installed 4 feet off the ground, for an overall height of 14 feet. The sign panel will be made of maxmetal and the sign posts will be black PVC sleeves with flat caps. The sign posts will be 14-foot tall 4"x4" posts. The sign will consist of three colors, black, white and blue.



Figure 1 - Example of sign; not to scale.



Figure 2 – Proposed sign rendering.

HPC-25-45b – 3701 Mill Creek Way

The applicant proposes to install a temporary freestanding sign, labeled in the application as the Sales Center Sign, to advertise the location of the sales center in the model home. The sign will be installed at the end of December/early January and will remain until 3 months after the last home in the community is sold. The sign will be 48 inches wide by 34 inches tall, for a total of 11.3 square feet. The sign will be installed 14 inches off the ground, for an overall height of 4 feet. The sign panel will be made of maxmetal and the sign posts will be black PVC sleeves with flat caps. The sign posts will be 4-foot tall 4"x4" posts. The sign will consist of three colors, black, white and blue.



Figure 3 - Rendering of proposed sign.



Figure 4 - Example of a Sales Center sign at a different location.

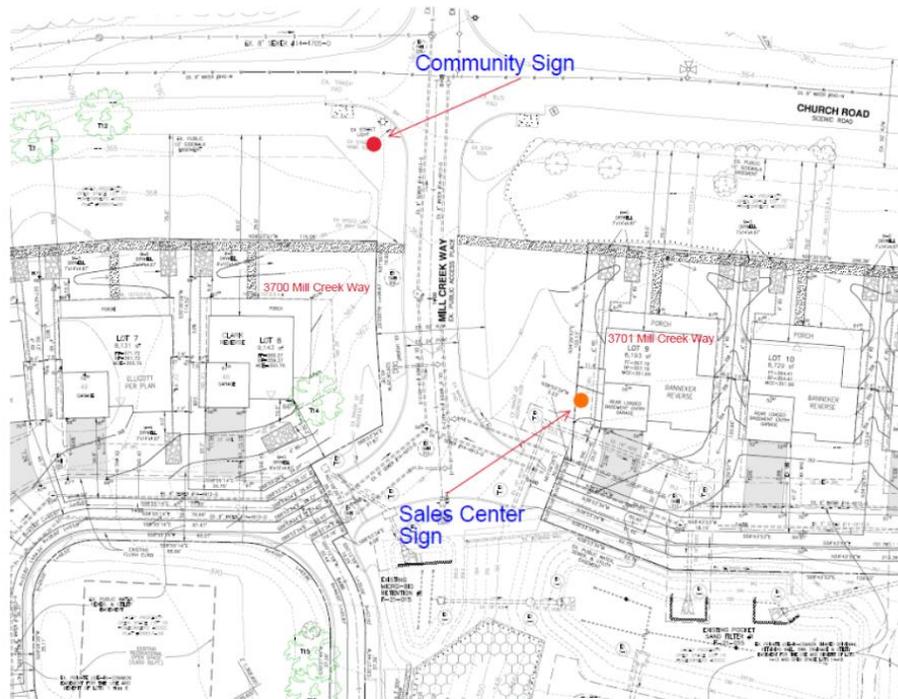


Figure 5 - Location of proposed signs.

HPC Review Criteria and Recommendations:

Chapter 11.A: Signs; General Guidelines

- 1) Chapter 11.A recommends:
 - a. *“Use simple, legible words and graphics.”*
 - b. *“Keep letters to a minimum and the message brief and to the point. In many cases, symbols or illustrations that communicate the nature of the business can be used.”*
 - c. *“Use a minimum number of colors, generally no more than three.”*
 - d. *“Use historically appropriate materials such as wood or iron for signs and supporting hardware. Select hardware that blends with the style of the sign and is neither flimsy nor excessively bulky.”*

Chapter 11.B.5: Signs; Commercial Buildings; Freestanding

- 2) Chapter 11.B.5 recommends:
 - a. *“Where they are permitted, limit a freestanding sign to a height below the window sill of the second story of the building with which it is associated.”*
 - b. *“To respect the pedestrian scale, limit the size of a freestanding sign to four to six square feet in area.”*

The Guidelines for signage are geared toward identification of businesses in the commercial setting of Main Street. The proposed signage will be temporary and will not be permanently installed, and is intended to provide information for the sale of a new development that is located in a residential setting.

The signage uses legible words and three colors. The sign does contain an advertising message as the intent is to advertise the sale of new homes within the development. The sign is not advertising a business.

Chapter 11.B.5.b: Signs; Commercial Buildings; Freestanding

- 3) Chapter 11.B.5.b states the following is Routine Maintenance, not requiring a Certificate of Approval, *“Temporary real estate signs not exceeding six square feet in area and limited to one sign per frontage.”*

The proposed signs exceed 6 square feet and the timeframe for which they will be installed is unknown. As such the proposed signs are not considered temporary.

Chapter 9.F: Landscape and Site Elements; Temporary and Minor Structures

- 4) Chapter 9.F states, *“Some improvements are of such a temporary or minor nature that their installation is considered routine maintenance, not requiring Historic District Commission review. These include lawn ornaments, individual mailboxes, individual newspaper delivery boxes, above-ground swimming pools that are dismantled each year, basketball nets, and children’s play equipment such as swing sets, sliding boards and climbing equipment. (Some of these features are required to comply with setback requirements of the Howard County Zoning Regulations.) Major or permanent improvements to a site, such as tennis courts, in-ground swimming pools, or permanent above-ground swimming pools, do require a Certificate of Approval.”*

The Guidelines indicate that improvements, i.e, alterations of a temporary nature do not require HPC review. The Guidelines explain that these include seasonal items such as above ground swimming pools that are dismantled each year, or children’s play equipment. The proposed signs are intended to be temporary and will be installed by December 2025/January 2026 and will remain up until 3 months after

the last home is sold. However, as it is unknown how long it will take to sell the homes, the Applicant seeks approval from the HPC for the installation.

Staff Recommendation to the HPC: Staff recommends the HPC determine if the application complies with the Guidelines and approve, modify or deny accordingly.

Testimony: Ms. Danna swore in Erica Yoakum and Ed Levendusky from Caruso Homes. The Applicants did not have anything to add or correct and did not have a presentation.

Ms. Flynn Giles said she was trying to figure out where the proposal fit within the Guidelines, but that the sign exceeds the dimensions for all recommendations for commercial and other signage. Ms. Flynn Giles asked why the sign needed to be this size. Ms. Yoakum said the 5'x10' signage was the industry standard for signage used for new developments. Mr. Barlow agreed with Ms. Flynn Giles, that the sign is outside the parameters for signage in the Guidelines. He said one catch all in the Guidelines that seems to fit are Temporary and Minor Structures, which can be up for less than a year.

Ms. Allen did not have any questions.

Ms. Zoren said the application specified the timeframe as three months after the last house sold and asked why. Ms. Yoakum said the timeframe is just in case something falls through and once construction starts, they can take down the sign. Ms. Danna asked what timeframe is reasonable to expect the homes to sell right now. Ms. Yoakum said their goal is to open up for sales in March and be sold within 11 to 12 months.

The Commission deliberated on the proposed signs. Ms. Allen said the discussions and questions made clear that the Guidelines for signage and temporary structures do not fit into this sign. She said the intent is the sign will be temporary and everyone is familiar with development signs and the timeframe is unknown. Ms. Allen found that Chapter 9, Temporary and Minor Structures, not requiring a Certificate of Approval was applicable. Ms. Flynn Giles concurred with finding the signs to be a Temporary and Minor Structure. Ms. Zoren said that even if the signs are temporary, they should still fit with Guidelines. The Commission discussed the signs as temporary and minor structures. Ms. Danna said there are Guidelines for freestanding signs and temporary real estate signs. Ms. Zoren agreed with calling the signs a temporary structure, the intent is temporary and there are no plans to keep the signs around further. Ms. Zoren was concerned with the size and said the Commission had denied smaller freestanding signs. Ms. Zoren said the text on the signs should read "historic" instead of "historical".

Mr. Barlow concurred with Ms. Zoren. He discussed recent cases, stating his concern for setting a precedent and expressed concern with consistency on other signs. Ms. Danna was concerned about approving an open, no-limit timeframe, since the timeframe to sell all of the houses was unknown.

The Commission discussed the size of the signs. Mr. Barlow said that having two signs the size of the smaller Sales Center sign may be appropriate. Ms. Allen said the size of the Sales Center was fine as it is smaller and located inside the construction area of the development. She said the sign was a temporary sign and she would not review it the same as a business sign or marketing opportunity. Ms. Allen recommended the overall size and height of the Community Sign should be reduced, any unnecessary language removed, and if any of the open space under the sign can be used. Ms. Allen reiterated that the community sign was temporary and it was hard to review the sign as the same as the other business signs in the Guidelines. Ms. Allen said there was a need for temporary sign guidelines. Ms. Allen recommended reducing about 2 feet off of the height of the sign to bring it below a second story level, and approve for around a year timeframe.

Mr. Levendusky offered to reduce the size of the Community Sign to 4'x8', lowered to 2 ½' off the ground to keep below 11' in height versus 14' proposed. He said they can review the signs to reduce the language. He said that they do not want to get into a situation where they have to install 13 temporary signs for each lot. He explained that although banners are temporary, they do not last and they would prefer not to use a banner.

Ms. Flynn Giles said 11 feet would be in the one-story mark as recommended by the Guidelines, and asked if the Commissioners would like to approve the signs for 1 year.

Ms. Danna asked the Applicants if they wanted to amend their application to have a one-year time limit for the signs, for the Community Sign to be reduced to 4'x8' and the height to below 11-feet in height, with the final language to be approved by HPC staff. Mr. Levendusky said he would amend. Ms. Danna specified the community sign will be 4' wide x 8' tall, 2' above the ground and the standing height to be below 11-feet, final text to be approved by Staff. The Sales Center Sign will be temporary. Ms. Yoakum and Mr. Levendusky concurred with amending as explained.

Motion: Mr. Barlow moved to approve the application as amended. Ms. Allen seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

HPC-25-46 – 8000 Main Street, Ellicott City, HO-332

Applicant: Jamie Sweadner, The Fund for Art in Ellicott City

Request: The Applicant, Jamie Sweadner with The Fund for Art in Ellicott City, requests a Certificate of Approval for an art installation at 8000 Main Street, Ellicott City.

Background and Site Description: This site is located in the Ellicott City Historic District and is listed on the Historic Sites Inventory as HO-72, the Bridge Market. According to SDAT, the building on the property dates to 1790.

This property is the first property in Howard County after crossing over the Patapsco River from Oella, and is adjacent to the Oliver Viaduct railroad bridge, HO-332.

In April 2025, in case HPC-25-08, the Applicant submitted an application requesting approval for the installation of red 8-foot-tall heart on a 2-foot base. The application was withdrawn when the Commission had concerns with the height of the art, the accessibility of the art and the alteration to the iconic view of the railroad bridge. The Commission said a smaller scaled art with landscaping could be considered.

Scope of Work: The Applicant seeks a retroactive Certificate of Approval to install a 12-foot wide by 6-foot high by 2-foot deep piece of artwork (when mounted) that reads “OEC”, standing for Old Ellicott City. The application states that each letter is 5-feet tall and 2-feet deep, made of waterproof plywood that is painted blue and is mounted on a moveable timber frame painted black. The letters are constructed of MDO plywood (medium density overlay signboard).



Figure 6 - Artwork and siting location.



Figure 7 - Artwork shown at night, illuminated.

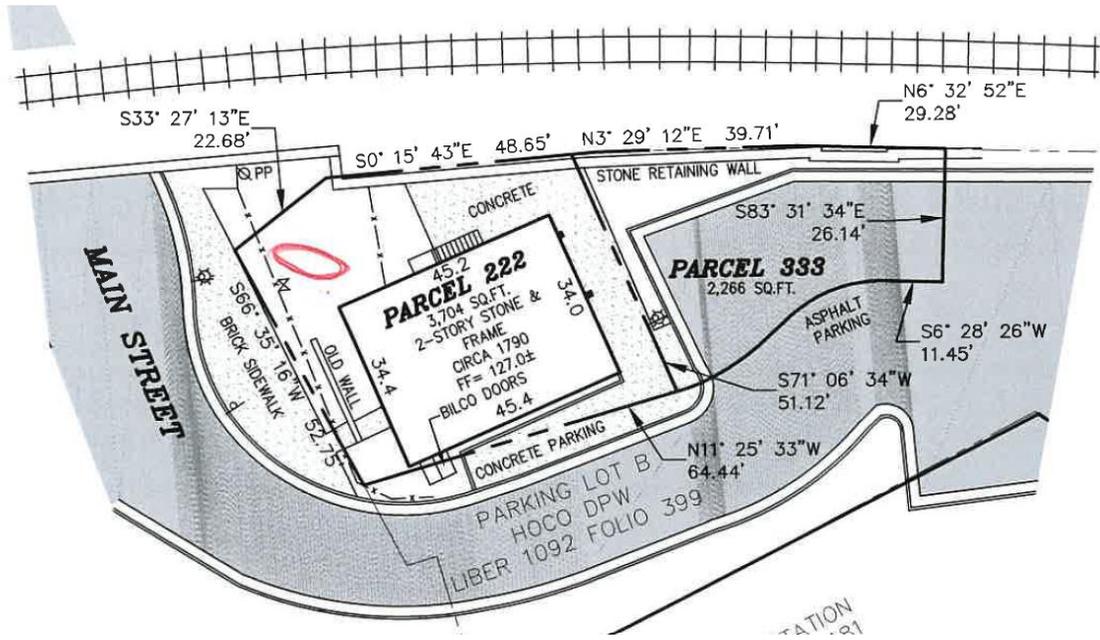


Figure 8 – Location for art in front yard of 8000 Main Street.

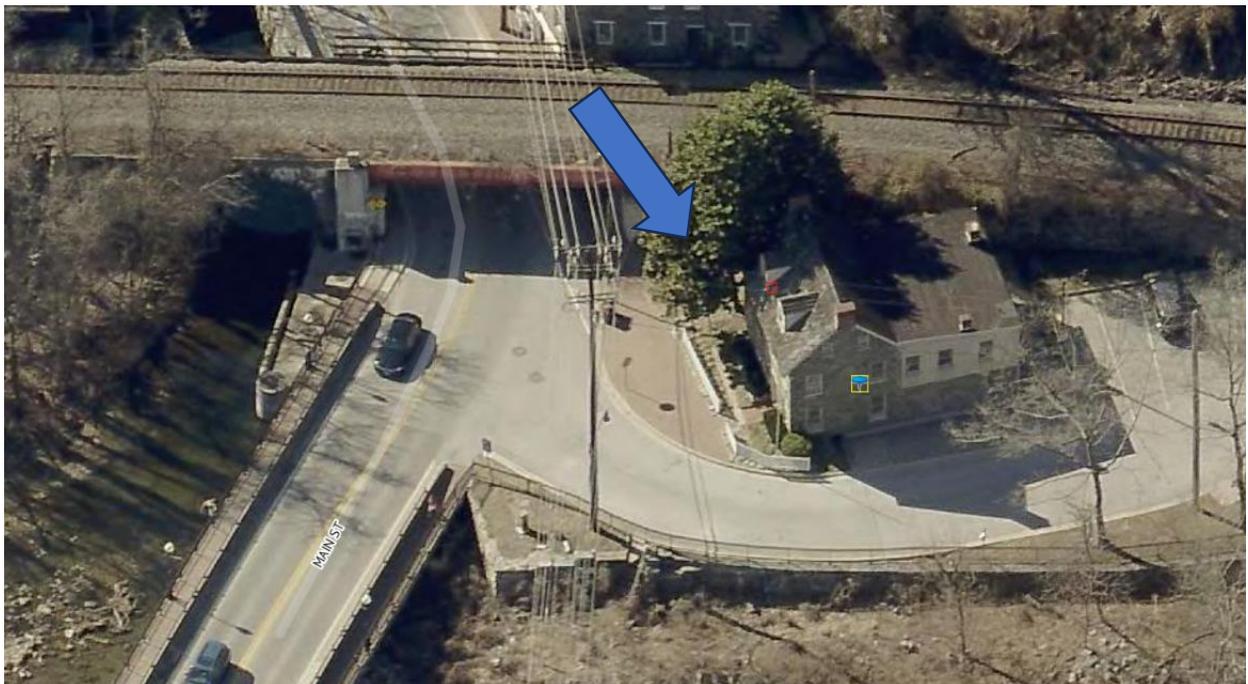


Figure 9 - Aerial showing property location.



Figure 10 - August 2025 view of property.

HPC Review Criteria and Recommendations:

§ 16.607. - Standards for Review.

(a) *Elements for Consideration.* In reviewing an application for a certificate of approval, the Commission shall give consideration to:

- (1) *The historic, architectural, or archeological value or significance of the structure and its relationship to historic value of the surrounding area.*
- (2) *The relationship of the exterior architectural features of such structure to the remainder of the structure and to the surrounding area.*
- (3) *The general compatibility of exterior design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture and materials proposed to be used.*
- (4) *Whether the requested action is necessary to protect against threats to public safety.*
- (5) *Any other factors, including aesthetic factors, which the Commission deems to be pertinent.*

Chapter 10.C: Parking Lots, Public Streets and Street Furniture

1) Chapter 10.C recommends:

- a. *“Select street furniture that reinforces Ellicott City’s identity as a historic district.”*
- b. *“Particularly along the commercial section of Main Street, place street furniture in areas where the sidewalk is wider or where adjacent public open space (such as the plaza next to the railroad museum) provides a more spacious public environment.”*

The Guidelines currently do not have recommendations for public art, however, Chapter 10.C addresses items found within the public realm along the street and sidewalks.

Staff Recommendation to the HPC: Staff recommends the HPC determine if the application complies with the Guidelines and approve, modify or deny accordingly.

Testimony: Ms. Zoren swore in Don Reuwer. Mr. Reuwer explained the letters were originally for a temporary Christmas decoration and are sitting on a skid; the letters can be moved around. He said there are currently Christmas lights on the “O” right now and they liked how it looked and wanted to see if they could leave it up year-round without the lights and have submitted this application. Mr. Reuwer showed a photo of the “OEC” letters at night. Ms. Holmes asked if there were one or two spotlights shining on it currently and he said that was correct.

Ms. Zoren did not have any questions. Ms. Flynn Giles wanted to clarify the dimensions; that the letters are 12 feet wide by 6 feet high, which means the letters are 72 square feet, but said it is actually cubic because they are 2-feet deep.¹

Mr. Barlow did not have any questions. Ms. Allen asked if the Commissioners were fine approving the spotlights (uplighting), or if there were concerns with the size of the lights. Ms. Holmes said the spotlights were minimal, black and not highly visible. She said the Applicant could amend the application to request approval for the spotlights.

Ms. Allen asked Mr. Reuwer about why the Commission keeps seeing his cases for retroactive approval and asked if he could come in prior to installing items. Mr. Reuwer understood and said he could do that.

Ms. Danna clarified the Commission is being asked to approve what is there on-site, and not the rendering in the application. Mr. Reuwer said that was correct. Ms. Danna asked about the frame around the letters per the application. Mr. Reuwer said the frame was gone, it was just for transport and the supports are behind the letters so they are not visible. Ms. Danna confirmed Mr. Reuwer was seeking approval for the art as shown in Figure 7, the more narrow letters. Mr. Reuwer said that was correct, the version seen now without Christmas lights.

Ms. Danna asked if the Applicant if he was willing to amend the application per Figure 7 without the Christmas lights, but with the ground-mounted spotlights. Mr. Reuwer said yes.

The Commission began deliberations. Ms. Allen said that unlike previous public art, the OEC is recognizable for Ellicott City and the colors are muted. She explained that the letters contain a lot of open space/voids and can be seen around and behind, which was appealing. She said the OEC letters were not a solid mass and did not detract from the surroundings; the letters did not block the historic viaduct railroad bridge, the historic stone wall or the historic building next to the wall.

Mr. Barlow concurred with Ms. Allen and found the letters blend into the landscape versus taking attention away from the historic structures. Mr. Barlow finds the letter “O” reads as a zero “0” given the width of the letter and that he preferred the wider application rendering but said it was also fine as-is.

Ms. Flynn Giles concurred with the comments made; the art fits the nook it was placed in, the color works better against the historic granite and it serves as a welcome entering the Historic District.

Ms. Zoren said the size, height, scale color and messaging were appropriate. She said the eggplant was approved for a period of 11 months and asked if the HPC needed to set a time limit here for consistency, with the opportunity to renew the approval.

¹ Because the letters in the application were larger than those installed, staff measured the current narrowed letters and found them to be shorter than the applications 12-foot length. The total combined length of the installed OEC letters are 83 inches wide. The letters are 61 inches tall without the base. The letters are 12 inches deep. The black sled base was 124 inches wide by 36 inches deep.

Ms. Danna concurred with previous comments; she said the color, size and location were all submissive to main historic structures; the Viaduct and Bridge Market building next to it. For timing, she said there is other art in Ellicott City that was approved without limits. The Commissioners discussed timeframes and found a timeframe was not needed.

Motion: Ms. Flynn Giles moved to approve the application as amended. Mr. Barlow seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

HPC-25-47 – 3899 College Avenue, Ellicott City, HO-353 and HO-354

Applicant: Patricia Driscoll

Request: The Applicant, Patricia Driscoll, requests a Certificate of Approval to make exterior alterations at 3899 College Avenue, Ellicott City.

Background and Site Description: This property is located in the Ellicott City Historic District and is listed on the Historic Sites Inventory as HO-353, Lilburn Mansion and HO-354, Lilburn Smokehouse. According to the Inventory forms, Lilburn was constructed by Richard Henry Hazelhurst, an Englishman from Abingharn, Berkshire, England, who owned a prosperous foundry in Baltimore. The buildings on the property date to the 1850s.

In May 2025, in case HPC-25-13, the Applicant submitted an application requesting retroactive approval for the installation of fencing and for approval to construct a series of tiered wooden landscape beds. The application was withdrawn during the hearing and the Commission requested more information.

In September 2025, case HPC-25-29, the Applicant received approval for the following:

- 1) Install geo textile cloth next to the lattice and construct retaining boxes as specified in the application form.
- 2) Install stone steps to the walkway area using existing stone.
- 3) A 12"x12" French drain and 4"x12'-0" black drainpipe will be installed with the boxes to discharge downhill.
- 4) Repair top of stone wall, shown in Figure 15, using the same mortar specified for MA-25-43b.

The Applicant withdrew the request to install fencing:

- 5) Retain existing stockade fencing, cut off scalloped top of the existing stockade fence, and add 1"x4" pressure treated wood boards to the front/top of fence.

The Commission indicated they would not approve the application for the fence due to the height, the stepping nature of the fence panels and the stockade wood. The Commission advised that a racked fence would be the appropriate style for the sloped yard and should be measured from the ground up, not from the top of the erosion control boxes up. The fence should not exceed 6-feet in height. The Commission explained that the stockade panel system was not the appropriate style and that a true board on board (alternating boards so the fence reads the same on both sides) would be an acceptable style.

Scope of Work: The Applicant seeks approval to install fencing on the side/rear yard. The application states the following:

- 1) Existing temporary fence and lattice will be removed.
- 2) The fence will be no taller than 6-feet above ground level.
- 3) The fence will be located 172 feet from the street.

- 4) The fence will be racked (follow the slope of the land), board and batten style, built board by board by Long Fence. The materials will be pressure treated pine supplied by Long Fence. They will not be painted or stained. The fence posts will be capped off with a copper cap.
- 5) The Applicant plans to plant green vines on the fence after installation.

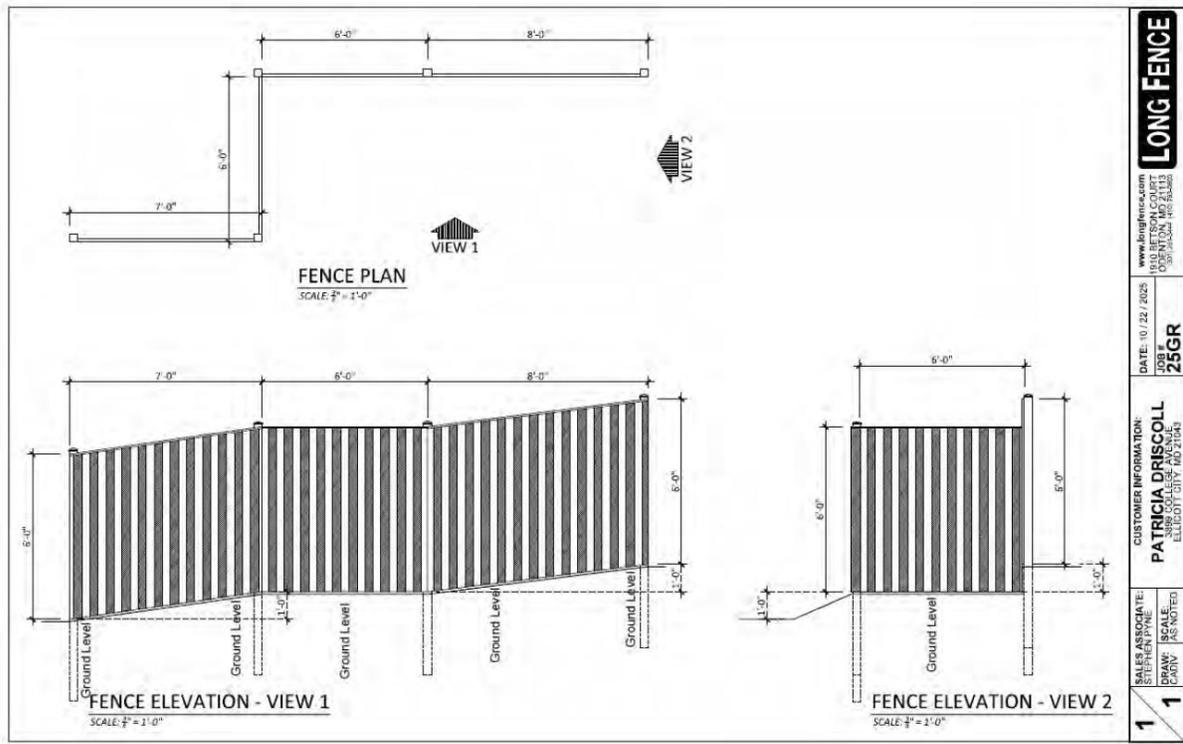


Figure 11 - Proposed fencing elevations from Long Fence.



Figure 12 - Aerial photo; general location of fencing.



Figure 13 (left) and 14 (right) – Images of existing fence. Rear of fence as seen from 3879 College Avenue. Fence height is just over 8-feet on the back of the slope. Application states fence will be removed.

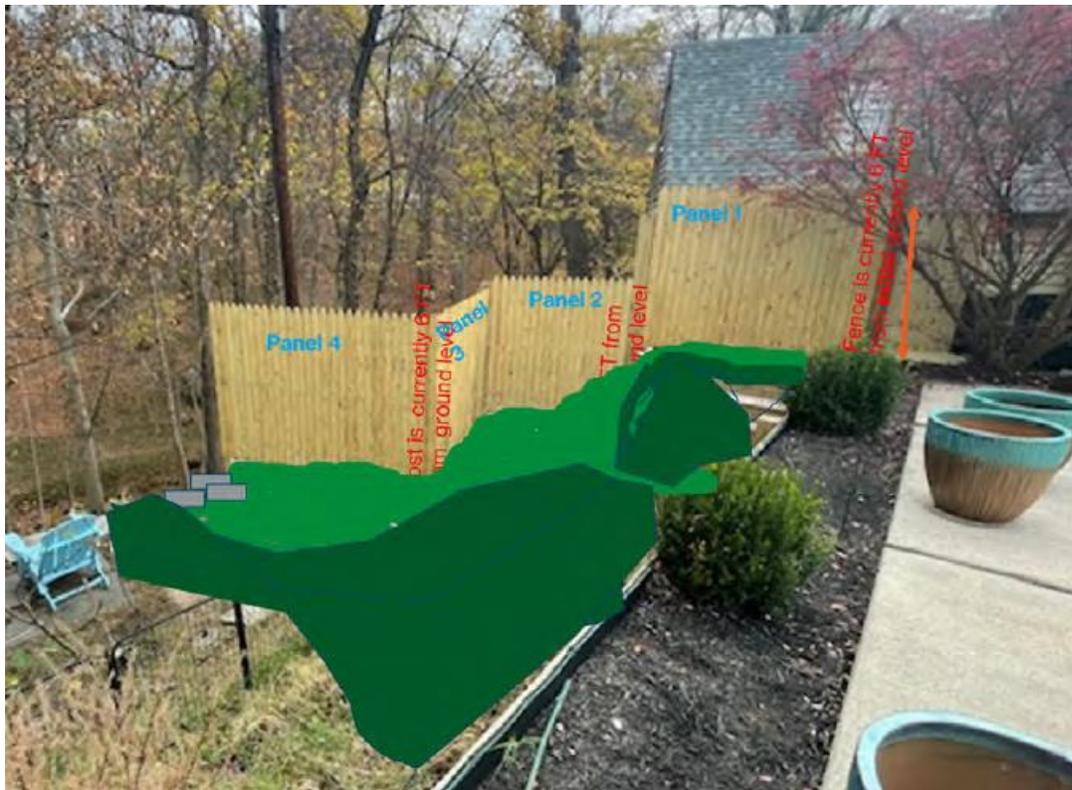


Figure 15 - Location of existing fence, to be replaced with new raked board on board fence. Posts shown at 6 feet above ground level as shown on this side of the slope.



Figure 16 - Proposed location of fence at side/rear of property.

HPC Review Criteria and Recommendations:

Chapter 9.D: Landscape and Site Elements; Walls, Fences, Terraces, Walkways and Driveways

- 1) Chapter 9.D states, "Fences of wood or iron can be used. Fencing is also available in other metals such as aluminum, but shaped and finished to resemble iron. A simple, painted picket fence is suitable for many of the district's residences (especially smaller or less formal homes). A basic picket fence has either a half-round or half-octagon shape at the top, while a framed picket fence is topped by a railing."
- 2) Chapter 9.D recommends:
 - a. "Construct new site features using materials compatible with the setting and with nearby historic structures, particularly for features visible from a public way."
 - b. "Install open fencing, generally not more than five feet high, of wood or dark metal. Use closed wood fences only for side and rear yards in areas where a precedent exists. Construct closed wood fences of painted vertical boards, with straight or angled rather than scalloped tops."
- 3) Chapter 9.D recommends against "New driveways, parking areas, walkways, terraces or other features that substantially alter the setting of a historic building."

The Applicant proposes to remove the existing lattice and stockade fence and have Long Fence install a racked board on board fence, to follow the contour of the land.

As requested by the Commission, the following information has been provided to inform the Commission about previous relevant cases. In HDC-02-03 the Commission approved the construction of

a 72" Wyngate style, board on board wood fence with a wood lattice top to surround and enclose, an in-ground pool (Figure 32).

In HDC-04-48, the Commission approved the installation of a 6-foot high, board and batten privacy fence around the perimeter of the rear yard.

The Commission determined MA-24-25 was a Minor Alteration, in which the applicant proposed to construct a 104-foot long, 5-foot-high vertical board fence, installed in a side yard approximately 180 feet from the street, to run alongside a neighboring property pool fence that was deteriorating.

Other fences approved by the Commission were around 4 to 5 feet in height and consisted of wood split rail, board on board, picket fencing or black iron or aluminum open fencing.

In case HPC-25-10, in April 2025, the Commission denied the neighboring property's 4'-10" picket fence, finding the request inconsistent with the Guidelines, with one of the reasons that a fence should typically stretch the full length of a property line, or enclose an area of the yard.

Staff Recommendation to the HPC: Staff recommends the HPC determine if the application complies with the Guidelines, and approve, modify or deny accordingly.

Testimony: Ms. Danna swore in Patricia Driscoll. Ms. Driscoll gave an overview of her proposal; she said the proposed fence is to be 6 ft tall and is located 172 feet from the public roadway and cannot be seen from the public view of College Avenue. She said the roadway stands at an elevation of 269 feet, rising to 274 feet in her yard, dropping down to the pool deck back down to 260 feet and the lower garden at 254 feet. She said the project area where this fence is significantly lower and cannot be seen from a public view. Ms. Driscoll discussed the need for privacy for the pool area. She believes that a closed fence is warranted over an iron fence due to the need for privacy and for the pool. She said the fence will block access to her property from her neighbor's property. Ms. Driscoll referenced a previous intruder who entered her property, she said she has had death threats made against her and break-ins. Ms. Driscoll referenced an incident in 2024 where a man entered her lower garden area and the fence was constructed after this incident. She said without the fence, the intruder would have to climb a 45-degree slope and climb an 8-foot retaining wall. Ms. Driscoll referenced an on-site meeting that took place at her house with Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits staff and Department of Planning and Zoning staff. She said DILP determined the existing fence was under 7 feet and did not need a permit. Ms. Driscoll discussed the smokehouse and needed erosion control. Ms. Driscoll explained that Long Fence made the CAD drawings, and the fence will be pressure treated pine, not stained and all materials will be provided by Long Fence. She said that all the concrete footings are behind the property lines and the 6-inch by 6-inch treated posts are approximately 8 inches behind the property line. She said the posts were put in place after a survey done by the neighbor and the intruder who entered our area from the lower garden. Ms. Driscoll summarized previously approved privacy fences as stated in the staff report.

Ms. Danna swore in Ms. Wilson. Ms. Wilson said she provided a statement and a picture to staff per the registration instructions. Ms. Danna said she would accept Exhibit 1 and 2. Mr. Beaumont asked if there was any objection to those documents by the other party. Ms. Driscoll did not object. Ms. Wilson's Exhibits 1 and 2 were accepted into the record. Ms. Wilson read her testimony from Exhibit 1 as reasons why she thought the application should be denied. She said the application was incomplete and does not reflect the actual structure. Ms. Wilson said she and her husband have not removed dirt as presented in Ms. Driscoll's testimony, but they have tried to control the erosion on their side as there were areas with obvious and visible erosion. She said they have added dirt on their side to make the slope level. Ms. Wilson said the fence height was not accurately represented; the Applicant placed

mulch and soil on their side of the fence to reduce the height of the fence on their side, but not on hers. She said the fence is considerably taller on her side. Ms. Wilson said the fence height obscures her view of her property through the windows in her house. She said the site lines are altered from when they purchased the house. Ms. Wilson said the fence will be 6-feet high above ground level, but she could not tell if the 6-feet high was measured from her side or if it would be more than 8-feet high like that fence that is currently there now. She said the plan encroaches further onto her property. Ms. Wilson discussed some of the images shown in the staff report, the dimension of the fence and the property line. Ms. Wilson explained she is also trying to control erosion and that the prior owners built a French drain; all runoff from her driveway goes down a French drain and drains on her own property far from Ms. Driscoll's pool, well within the Wilson property boundaries. Ms. Wilson discussed the current lattice and stockade fencing, stating that it does not appear temporary. Ms. Wilson said the Driscoll pool and pool deck are visible from the driveway. Ms. Wilson said the fence does not enclose an area and there are gaps. She said she has security cameras pointed at her property because she has had issues with trespassers. Ms. Wilson said the freestanding fence has been there for 14 months and new plan is for another freestanding fence. She said the entire property is not a steep drop, it is level and open and anyone can walk on to the property. She said the fence does not prohibit people from walking onto the property. Ms. Wilson said she was still not clear on the height and design.

Ms. Driscoll presented her case. She hired Long Fence and clarified that staff did not instruct her to use a specific company. She said Long Fence came and took measurements; the existing posts have been there for 14 months, the fence and lattice will be removed, board on board fencing to be installed which will be the same on both sides, raked to meet slope of the land. Ms. Driscoll said that Long Fence took the measurements. She said the land is not flat and provided some information on the topography. She explained when they have had issues with people entering the yard and had break-ins. Ms. Driscoll found a closed fence is justified. She said they have not moved posts or boundaries; the posts will remain and Long Fence will re-use them.

Ms. Wilson had the opportunity to cross-examine Ms. Driscoll. Ms. Driscoll asked where the height of the fence was being measured from. Ms. Driscoll said the fence height was measured from her side of the fence, where the dirt was put back and exists now. Ms. Wilson asked if the fence will be over 8-feet tall on her side of the fence. Ms. Driscoll said no and provided an explanation of measuring the fence. Ms. Wilson questioned Ms. Driscoll on whether she has seen anyone removing large amounts of soil from her property. Ms. Driscoll said she saw Ms. Wilson's husband remove soil, dump soil and create level areas with lounge chairs on the Wilson's side of the fence.

Ms. Wilson questioned Ms. Driscoll on the whether the posts will stay at the same height and if the caps will be copper. Ms. Driscoll said the application clearly showed the heights and the location; she said Long Fence created the CAD drawings.

Ms. Wilson asked if the fencing panels go in the same direction as the planter boxes or if the fence will be a combination of horizontal and vertical. Ms. Driscoll said the planter boxes approved for the direction they were approved². Ms. Driscoll said the fence is being proposed in the style suggested, vertical in a raked style.

The Commission questioned Ms. Driscoll on the application. Ms. Flynn Giles said the fence is referred to as board on board and board and batten and wanted to verify the style. The application specifies board and batten, which will not have gaps between the wood. Ms. Flynn Giles asked questions regarding the fence posts and the specific location of the proposed fence. Ms. Driscoll said the fence posts will be cut down as specified by Long Fence. She said the fence will enclose the side of pool. She said there is a

² Per HPC-25-29, the planter boxes will run horizontal.

hedgerow taking up the whole right side and the fence will be built into the left side all the way down to the stone retaining wall that ties into the smokehouse. Ms. Flynn Giles summarized that the fence will be a mix of natural and stone structures.

Mr. Barlow asked Ms. Driscoll when the fence would be built if it is approved. Ms. Driscoll said she would like to have it built as soon as the crew is available.

Ms. Allen questioned Ms. Driscoll on the soil that was being added and removed. Ms. Allen said that at some point before the fence was even put in, the two sides of the yard must have been symmetrical and asked Ms. Driscoll to explain. Ms. Driscoll said she submitted drawings that showed what it looked like in 2008. She said they had to replace the pool retaining wall because it was falling over and there was soil that came all the way up because it was 6 feet. She said there were 6-inch boards that were all falling over, so they removed the retaining wall, but had to dig down in order to get rid of all the rotted boards, and put in posts because there used to be 4-inch by 4-inch posts which they replaced with six-inch by six-inch posts 5-feet into the ground. Ms. Allen said there is not a good justification for when and what point all of the land was the same level. She understood Ms. Driscoll's testimony, but said the HPC does not really have any physical justification that shows what the level looked like. Ms. Driscoll said there was about 6 inches from the top of the old planters down all the way around. Ms. Allen said 6-inches is not 2-feet; she said a 6-foot fence on one side and an 8-foot fence on the other side is not 2-inches. Ms. Allen asked why the application says the fence materials will use 2"x10"x12'-0" pressure treated lumber. Ms. Driscoll said that specification was an error on her part and was used for the pool retaining wall. Ms. Allen asked if the fence will look the same on both sides and Ms. Driscoll confirmed it would.

Ms. Danna confirmed the fence will be board and batten with no space between the lumber, since both fence terms are getting used. Ms. Driscoll said that was correct.

Ms. Wilson presented her case. She said she has never seen a mound of dirt approaching the level or height described by Ms. Driscoll. She described the state of the property when she purchased it, stating there was not a 2-foot difference in elevation. Ms. Wilson said she was concerned about a giant stockade style fence on her side and a fence over 8 feet tall completely obscuring her view from her window of her backyard.

Ms. Driscoll questioned Ms. Wilson. She asked questions about how far apart their backyards are from each other, whether Ms. Wilson lived in the house during the 2016 and 2018 floods, water runoff and if the County told Ms. Wilson how they would determine the height of the fence.

The Commission questioned Ms. Wilson. Mr. Barlow said that at the last meeting Ms. Wilson objected to the fence materials submitted and he asked if Ms. Driscoll comes back and uses appropriate materials if that would be an application Ms. Wilson would not have a problem with; and that Ms. Wilson said there would be other items she would have a problem with. Mr. Barlow said that he thought he heard in Ms. Wilson's current testimony that she wants to be able to see into Ms. Driscoll's backyard. Ms. Wilson specified she wanted to see into her own backyard. Mr. Barlow said he was trying to figure out what part of her backyard was she trying to see that is not visible from the chairs placed outside. Mr. Barlow questioned Ms. Wilson on the fence placement, style and proposed CAD drawings. Mr. Barlow stated the CAD drawing is for a fence that will be 6 feet tall.

Ms. Allen stated that in one of the pictures there is a black fence right before the wooden fence and asked if Ms. Wilson installed that fence. Ms. Wilson stated that Ms. Driscoll installed that fence and asked if it required approval, stating it has been in place for more than 14 months.

Ms. Driscoll said she thought there was a misunderstanding of the CAD drawings and explained the perspective of the drawings/elevations.

Ms. Driscoll made her closing arguments; she stated they will be ripping out everything except for the posts, which will be cut down to the drawing specification. She said the fence will be racked to follow the slope of the land. There will be no lattice. She stated a closed fence was appropriate here because it cannot be seen from the street and will be built right up into a hedge that covers it from any public view. Ms. Driscoll said this was a commercial property and she has an obligation to protect her guests; she did not have an obligation to give Ms. Wilson a view into her backyard. She said she is not requesting approval to put up an entire perimeter fence, she only wants to protect a vulnerable area where someone could sneak up and enter a back door, which has already happened. She wants to protect herself and her family from a security standpoint.

Ms. Wilson gave her closing argument. She said that she can appreciate the desire for security and privacy, but the characterization that they are filming into her backyard or not giving her guests privacy is completely inaccurate and misleading. She wants to ensure there is not an 8-foot-tall stockade fence. She said the accusations that they are digging out the dirt to make the fence taller is completely misleading and inaccurate. She said she was fine with the fence. She said that no one in her household generally looks into other people's yards, but they also have property on that side as it is their side yard and they would like to see into the other part of their property from their windows. She did not think the fence addressed the security concerns that were voiced as parts of the property are flat.

The HPC deliberated on the case. Ms. Zoren found the application approvable; she said the Commission had repeatedly asked the Applicant to bring in dimensions that meet the Guidelines and said this proposal does that. Ms. Zoren said the board and batten fence with a defined top and bottom that follows that grade is appropriate, retains privacy, minimizes height and is common to find along property lines. She said that a fence of this nature will look the same on both sides; whereas the issues with the previous proposal was a finished and unfinished look depending on the side of the fence. Ms. Zoren stated that from her understanding of the surroundings, the fence starts and stops at naturally occurring geographical and natural barriers; to hedge and a retaining wall and there will be continuity along the property line.

Ms. Allen agreed the fence as submitted was appropriate and what the HPC recommended. She expressed concern about the height difference on each side of the fence and stated there are historic sites on both sides of the fence.

Mr. Barlow concurred with the previous comments, although he was not concerned about the height; he did not see how the fence height could drastically change from one side to the other. He said the design is for a 6-foot fence and did not hear any credible objections or arguments. Mr. Barlow said it seemed to boil down to a belief there was a right to view from houses and windows and he was not aware of any rights to view. He was aware of a right to privacy. From the purpose of the Commission he said that historic fences tended to fully enclose the property, a feature on that property. He thought it would be mechanistic to require that a single fence enclose an entire property. He said a single fence when there are natural geographic cutoffs, such as a 10-foot cliff on one side or impenetrable hedgerow on the other side should be considered that kind of enclosure that makes this fence more typical of that found historically. He said the issue of the 4-foot plastic fence is not before the HPC, nor any issues of land ownership; the Commission cannot quiet title. He said based on the actual proposal in front of the Commission, it seems consistent with the Guidelines and he would approve.

Ms. Flynn Giles concurred that the design as submitted complies with the previous instruction given by the Commission to the Applicant and was consistent with the Guidelines.

Ms. Danna concurred with Ms. Zoren’s comments. She said the Applicant stated that the fence is entirely on her own property and will be the same on both sides. Ms. Danna stated that a request to install a 6-foot fence was before the Commission and no more than that. She agreed with the previous comments about the hedgerow and natural boundaries forming an enclosure. Ms. Danna said the measured drawings comply with the Guidelines.

Motion: Ms. Flynn Giles moved to approve the application as submitted. Mr. Barlow seconded. The motion was approved by Ms. Flynn Giles, Mr. Barlow and Ms. Zoren. Ms. Allen denied. The motion passed 4-1.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Administrative Updates
 - a. Next regular meetings:
 - i. February 5, 2026
 1. The Commission reviewed the February and March meeting dates and possible snow make-up dates. Ms. Burgess told the Commission there may be a January training session scheduled.
 - b. Vote to endorse DPZ’s submission for MHT’s Non-Capital Grant.
 - i. Ms. Zoren asked about the purpose of the grant and staff explained the purpose was to hire a contingent position to train under and be mentored by Ken Short and to focus on goals from HoCo by Design, such as connections to slavery and other underrepresented communities in Howard County. Ms. Flynn Giles moved that Commission endorse DPZ’s submission for the Maryland Historical Trust non-capital grant as presented. Mr. Barlow seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Danna moved to adjourn. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 10:35pm.

Julianne Danna, Chair

Beth Burgess, Executive Secretary

Samantha Holmes, Preservation Planner