CITY OF DOVER

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
JULY 16, 2026

The Meeting of the City of Dover Historic District Commission was held on Thursday, July 16, 2026, at 3:30 PM as an In-Person Meeting in the City Hall Council Chambers (anchor location) and virtually using the audio/videoconferencing system Webex. With Chairman Czerwinski presiding, the other members present were Mrs. Richardson, Ms. Baker and Ms. Horsey.

The Planning Office Staff members present were Mrs. Dawn Melson-Williams, Mrs. Maretta Savage-Purnell and Mr. Alex Dewey.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Horsey moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Mrs. Richardson and the motion was carried 4-0.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 18, 2026

Mrs. Richardson moved to approve the Historic District Meeting Minutes from June 18, 2026, with the necessary corrections, seconded by Ms. Baker and the motion was carried 4-0 by voice vote.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS

Summary of Applications 2025 and 2026

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that this is the third application of the year. At this point, there were two permits that were referred to us and then the revisions with the Legislative Hall Building Addition project that was before you last month. It will be discussed again in today's agenda. And then from 2025, I don't believe there's any additional updates to those four applications. The Old Post Application is still under work within a Demolition Permit and for the Final Plan approval, there were just some recent changes to one of their utility plans, so we'll be processing that in the Planning Office.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked if there were any questions on the Applications from the last two years? There was none.

Summary of Architectural Review Certifications for 2026

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that this is activity tracked in the Historic District by calendar year. for the main types of Permits that Staff reviews. We track those that have the need for Architecture Review Certification and note those that do not. So, through the end of June, there were a total of 26 applications in the Historic District. Most of them have actually been building interiors that don't require the Architectural Review Certification, followed by fences and some exterior or new Building Permits in the District. For the month of June, probably the most significant one was the issuance of the Building Permit for the Dover Mobility Center Parking Garage that is now under active construction in that block to the north of Loockerman Street between Governors Avenue and Bradford Street. Out of the 24, the Historic District Commission was involved in six of the permits in some way with the remaining ones being eligible for Staff review.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked if there were any questions on the permit activity? There was none.

Department of Planning & Inspections Updates
Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned there were a lot of permits coming and going through our office. As noted in your previous meeting, we do have Alex Dewey, who's manning your presentation today. He is a Planner I in the Planning Office. He has been with us for just over a month now. So, I'm not sure that Ms. Horsey met him since she was not here at last month's meeting. So, welcome to Alex.

REVISED APPLICATIONS

HI-24-07 Legislative Hall Building Addition at 411 Legislative Avenue: Revision for West Entrance ADA Ramp – Review for Recommendation for a Revised Architectural Review Certificate for the addition of an ADA Ramp located at the West Entrance of Legislative Hall. The proposal includes an approximately 160 feet proposed ramp in length, while also providing access to a new accessible entrance created within the exiting west façade. A temporary ramp may also be proposed for during construction. This is associated with the Site Development Plan for the Legislative Hall Building Addition project. The main property of 2.80 acres+/- is zoned IO (Institutional and Office Zone) and subject to the SWPOZ (Source Water Protection Overlay Zone) and the H (Historic District Zone). The subject property is located on the east side of Legislative Avenue as the block between Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard North and Martin Luther King Jr. South. The owner of record is the State of Delaware. Property Addresses: 411 Legislative Avenue and Court Street. Tax Parcels: ED-05-077.09-05-15.00-000 and ED-05-077.09-05-14.00-000. Council District 4. *This Application HI-24-07 was considered at the Historic District Commission Meeting of October 17, 2024 and granted conditional approval of the Site Plan and Architectural Review Certification by the Planning Commission with Application S-24-19 Legislative Hall Building Addition on November 18, 2024. This Historic District Commission began review of this Revision at their meeting of June 18, 2026 and requested design revisions.*

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that the original Application for the whole Legislative Hall Building Addition was before the Historic District Commission back in 2024. The project team also appeared at the Planning Commission. But then revisited you last month in regards to adding an ADA ramp to the west entrance of the building. Because you have seen kind of the overall project for a proposal for an Addition on the east side, we felt it appropriate to bring this item to you as well. At the meeting in June, you had a lively discussion about the project and made some suggestions for improvements to the design proposal. The applicant has resubmitted that design proposal. We included in your packet their letter dated July 8, 2026, that gives some details about those revisions and then two Plan sheets: one a Site Plan sheet, and then the other an elevation rendering focusing on that west elevation. And then for your reference, we included the initial Architectural Review Staff Report that we issued last month. So, today we do have representatives of the project team. I think I'm going to let them go ahead and talk to you about what the revisions they have made in response to your application consideration last month.

Representative: Mr. Dan Ridgley, Studio JAED (in-person) and Mr. Gabe Cheung, Studio JAED (on-line).

Mr. Ridgley stated that he was also at the meeting in June where they received the Historic District Commission's initial comments. Thank you for those. They were very helpful and appropriate. We feel that our revised submission has addressed the Board's initial concerns. The main point being that the facade on the West entrance is a significant and architectural visual centerpiece of Legislative Hall. We want to maintain the symmetry there architecturally. That was the gist of the primary comment we received. So, what we've done is updated our renderings, and our plan, but the renderings more importantly should now illustrate that we are maintaining the height and scale of the window opening that we're converting to an ADA compliant entrance to the left. If you see the rendering there on the upper right of the page, West Entrance View from the West, that's a good illustration to describe. We are basically on the left-hand side of the main entrance. There you can see the ramp and the opening in the wall just left of that main entrance is now going to maintain the same height, keystone, brick opening size, and proportion as the existing one to remain on the right. Also, we have shown here a door with white trim and to be glazed in full to also provide glazing to give the effect of symmetry as best we can in this condition. For the ramp and its details, our understanding was that they were received pretty well last time with the wrought-iron railings and the brick retaining walls for the ramp. So, those are as previously shown.

Mr. Ridgley asked if there were any comments and/or questions.

Mrs. Richardson said the question is not in respect to the revised design of the door. I think it meets our expectations what we were requiring, but this is like, don't get upset with me, but the handicapped parking is on the far south side of the building. So, why wasn't the ramp put on the southwest side of the building, so it would be closer to where the parking is for handicap versus the north side of the building?

Mr. Ridgley said that's an excellent question, Mrs. Richardson. I can explain that. We wanted to place the ramp near the west entrance mainly for security purposes inside the building. Everybody who comes into the building needs to go through a security checkpoint and there's an existing checkpoint next to that west entrance. If we were to bring the ADA ramp into say the south side, then its not near that.

Mrs. Richardson said no, no, no, no, no, no. As you face the building it's to the left of the front door on the west side versus to the right of the front door.

Mr. Ridgley said, oh, I'm sorry, I didn't fully understand your question. So, on the right-hand side, there is an interior room that the client requested that we do not reduce. On the interior directly in-board of our new door, we are going to have a vestibule, if you will. People will be using that entrance right into the lobby where security can check them in. In order to do that, we have to take about 6 feet of the room and convert it into a vestibule going into the lobby. It's a conference room on both sides. The one on the right, they directed us not to change it because that is also the side where the Capital Police Office on the right. If you can envision, the plan is kind of symmetrical inside as well, the Capital Police Office being on the right means that

the adjacent conference room, which I believe serves the Senate side, is smaller than the one on the left, which serves the House side.

So, if we cut into that Senate side conference room, it would make for an uncomfortably small conference room on that side when keeping the Capital Police where they are. So, that's the reason for putting it on the left side.

Mrs. Richardson said alright that that makes sense. Thank you.

Mr. Ridgley responded that you are welcome.

Chairman Czerwinski added on to that and asked are you trying to refer to the fact that they could have a parking on Martin Luther King North for the handicap parking? I think that what you are saying is why are people going all the way from Martin Luther King South and going all the way around the building when they could at least temporarily be closer until that extension is built. If they are going to build the ramp, is to actually have handicapped parking on Martin Luther King North on that side. It's showing South here. I mean it's kind of outside the scope, I think, of our decision making here, but we would recommend that you'd probably put parking or at least temporary parking, handicapped parking on the north side of the building there.

Mr. Ridley said to Mr. Chairman, he would be happy to take that into consideration. I would just like to mention that our civil engineers have designated some loading and offloading areas on the north side that are required by Planning Commission. So, we may be restricted on that side but thank you for the comment. We'll take it into consideration.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there were any additional comments.

Ms. Baker said translating the 18th century and the 20th century ohmage to the architecture and 21st century requirements, it's a big job and we appreciate that you are working on it so audaciously. Is there any way you could just take another peek at a closer handicap parking? It’s a clear opposite side of the building where people will have to roll themselves in front of the main door and up the ramp. Could the loading be assigned to another place or just somehow rethought? I know it takes a lot of time to do this, but you might find something creative pop out. And yes, and I know those conference rooms on the 1st floor are small. I also have a question about windows and panes. On the door, it looks as though it’s nine over nine lights of the door windowpanes. On the windows in the building itself, it looks like 16 over 16. Am I seeing that correctly through these old eyes?

Mr. Ridgley said they look like twelve over twelve.

Ms. Baker said alright twelve over twelve, but the other looked like nine over nine. Is that really what it is? Because it's not a large photograph of that lovely new door that you made.

Chairman Czerwinski said right. I apologize. The door looks like six over six. The windows are twelve over twelve. And then of course you got a probably a three-pane transom over the top. Ms. Baker said right, right, yeah. I was just checking to see if it obviously matched the other window. Mr. Ridgley said good, right.

Ms. Baker said so it sounds like a good transition.

Ms. Horsey stated I do know that the Governor had a line-item veto and one of them was to not allow the expansion of Legislative Hall. And in that regard, why is this ramp needed at all? There's a beautiful ramp on the east side. I've been with people who have accessed this ramp, and they were in a wheelchair and it's beautifully designed. I know that there's parking on that east side for handicapped people. I know there are some on the south side, and they have done a great job of incorporating the symmetry on the east side to accommodate that ramp. The west side is iconic. I don't think we should put a ramp there at all. And in light of the Governor's veto, why is that ramp even needed? Maybe nobody can answer that question at this point. But that is my overall concern. And I know that building inside and out too, and while the south side might not be the best, it wouldn't, what I would like to say is change the symmetry of the iconic west side. It's the side that people take pictures of and it needs to stay that way, please.

Mr. Ridgley said thank you, Ms. Horsey. So, you are correct. We were directed basically to pause all work on the Addition project. However, we're meeting with you today to close the loop on this particular item. We have not been directed to make this ramp a separate project or anything to date. However, if the Addition ever does come back to life, what will happen is as the Addition's being constructed, we have to take the existing ADA ramp offline. We gave our client the option whether to do a temporary ramp or a permanent ramp on this west side; and they elected to do the permanent ramp. Because it's good practice to have as many accessible ingress and egress points to a public facility as we can.

Chairman Czerwinski mentioned he assumed that this is conditional based on funding for the project? Can you tell me for certain that this ramp would be budgeted as part of the expansion project? This isn't, like you said, this is a separate line item on its own. Mr. Ridgley replied that's correct.

Chairman Czerwinski said, so this is conditional. We had discussed this in the last meeting that if they do the Addition, that's going to block the original ramp. So, they actually by a necessity for ADA have to have this ramp installed. I don't know if you've seen the original proposal. The original proposal was simply a wood door. So, that’s definitely an improvement of that.

Ms. Horsey mentioned that she did see that.

Chairman Czerwinski said good.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there were any other comments?

Ms. Baker said thank you. If this project moves forward as envisioned, there will be two accessible doors for handicapped persons for Legislative Hall in the fullness of time. Is that true or not?

Mr. Ridgley replied Ms. Baker, that is correct, but there will actually be three. That will be one to the lower level, but that'll be for Staff and then two public entrances.

Ms. Baker, two public entrances. Thank you very much.

Mr. Ridgley said you are welcome.

Chairman Czerwinski said I appreciate all the work. It is definitely more of what we're looking for. It carries the asymmetry, the massing, you know, and maintains that, so I really appreciate the work. Just as long as the proposal or what you show here is what we get, because sometimes we'll have the other rendering and then get what actually comes out. It's like, well that wasn't exactly what they had rendered. If you guys could keep to the rendering. But I'm very happy and thrilled with what you guys have done here. It definitely shows the thoughtfulness and respect of an architect. Thank you very much.

Mr. Ridgley said that we do recognize that there was a recommendation on landscaping. If it is impacted, we will address it. Our Plan is to expand the landscaping area in the Plaza on the east side. So, if the project does come back to life and this ramp is included then we would look at offsetting the reduction of landscaping on the west side and on the east side. Since we are going to have more plaza space on the east side we will have more opportunities for planting there. If we have to take out a couple of trees to make this ramp work, we plan to offset it there. If for some reason this project became stand alone, we would address it another way, but we certainly received that comment and will take it into account.

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that there is not a public hearing related to this specifically. But you do need to take some action on the proposal for the west entrance ADA ramp referencing any conditions and the most recent version of its design.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there was any additional discussion.

Chairman Czerwinski stated that he liked the proposal and with the window and door, there are certain limitations. The doors are going to be thicker than the windowpanes because of the work around for that. So, you have a 6 over 6 on the door with the four lite transom which matches the four 16x16 width. I do appreciate the matching width. I'm happy with it.

Mrs. Richardson agreed.

Mrs. Richardson moved to accept the Revised Plan for HI-24-07 the West Entrance ADA Ramp. Chairman Czerwinski mentioned to add Section IV from the Staff notes in regard to that as well. Mrs. Richardson said okay, thank you. Yes. The motion was seconded by Chairman Czerwinski. The motion carried by a 3-1 voice vote. Ms. Horsey voted no.

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that Staff wants to just confirm that the Revision you're accepting is the one that was presented to you today, which is their submission of July 8th, just for clarity purposes.

Mrs. Richardson replied yes.

Mrs. Melson-Williams said ok, because the whole thing is actually a revision. So, it's the Revision of the door entry, as presented in their July 8, 2026 Plans and Submissions.

NEW BUSINESS
Review of Permits Referred to Commission

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that there are no new items of business. I will note that the Siding Permit that you dealt with at last month's meeting regarding 108 South Governors Avenue, Staff has worked with the applicant. They are proposing the use of a not a vinyl product, but another product, a Hardy Plank style product that replicates the horizontal siding for that building instead of cladding over with the vinyl that you actually disapproved. They made a resubmission with that material in mind. Staff will be working to complete review and approval of that.
Since it will more closely represent what was there on the building, and that would include using it on the side where the likely asbestos cement shingles on composite shingles are on that south side of the building. It will certainly look more Italianate than it probably does now. So, it's a much better outcome than the original proposal on that one just to give you that heads up.

Mrs. Richardson asked if they mentioned anything about taking the old siding off.

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that we had that discussion with them. We did research a little bit about the product that they were looking to utilize. It's very clear that their specs refer to it being installed on a flat surface. So, that would necessitate removal of items before to meet that flat surface quite obviously for that building. I think he's very interested in doing the right thing. It still, once you have a flat surface, does have some waterproofing type membranes that are installed. But it's certainly a better path forward at the moment than a few weeks ago.

Mrs. Richardson said okay, thank you.

Chairman Czerwinski mentioned if you look at the condition of the wood, there's a lot of rotted wood on that building. I mean we can argue about removing original material, but on the other hand, I mean if you look at the condition, he's going have to replace all that anyway.

Ms. Baker said Mr. Chairman and excellent Staff, there was such an ardent promotion of wrapping the building in Tyvek last time that I have to ask about that. Has that been addressed and do they still want to wrap the whole building?

Mrs. Melson-Williams replied as part of the installation of siding, there is a water barrier (that Tyvek component) that happens when you go to install siding such as that. So, there is a membrane of sorts. Tyvek is actually a trade name. In doing that installation, you will see something along those lines as they begin to install siding and their starter edges. We talked about corner boards and trim boards; so, very clearly that needs to be replicated. There's not much other detailing up at the cornice line or anything. I think at the cornice line that will be a repair and paint scenario.

Ms. Baker, thank you. So, the original idea of something that looks like an unfinished Christmas present it will not be that. It will be the taking off of what is there, right?

Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that is what is going to be approved under the permit.

Ms. Baker, thank you so much. I appreciate Staff's hard work on this.

OLD BUSINESS

Certified Local Government (CLG) Program

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that we are into a new City budget year at the present time. We will need to circle with the State of Historic Preservation Office to see if there are any opportunities there.

Implementation of 2019 Comprehensive Plan

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that we continue to work with the assigned consultant as related to the land use and housing reform and the voluntary program that we are participating in with the Delaware State Housing Authority related to SJR8, which is Senate Joint Resolution 8. They are looking at the various housing provisions in our Code, and we are anticipating some initial Reports from that review from the consultant in the next few weeks. There will be some updates on the program I believe in September then the first kind of public workshop on that whole project is tentatively set at this point for late September. We certainly will keep you in the loop there and how to participate in it if we need to bring anything to this body.

Chairman Czerwinski said again, I would like to state our interest in trying to get the funding and the consultancy for doing our addendum to our Guideline book. Again, with the material with this Hardie board, that's stuff that we have not heard of before. It would be nice to know, and I think as we go on and every year goes by there's some new material that's being introduced. I think it's becoming more and more important that this addendum be done so that we are aware of those kinds of materials and that we can actually discuss the progress with applicants. So, we are kind of armed with the information and that they know ahead of time that there are options out there that work with modern materials, that respect the architecture, and respect the history of these buildings. I know every year we keep pushing this down the road, but I'm hoping that at some point we can get the money and get the Staffing done so that we can finally get the Addendum completed.

Ms. Horsey commented about Hardie Plank. It is used at the beaches on beach construction because it's attractive, it wears well, and it just works. It's a great product. I'm happy to see that they are willing to install it on this house.

PUBLIC COMMENTS OPPORTUNITY

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated it is an opportunity that's given for members of the public to provide any comments to the Historic District Commission, specifically not related to any particular applications or public hearings that you may have during the meeting. We have one member of the public in the audience.

I'm not sure if she wants to speak. She's shaking her head “no”, and then the only other participant we have is from the project team with the application that you just considered. I don't believe that he has any comments outside of that project.

Mr. Gabriel Cheung said I do not thank you.

There were no public comments.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if the Public Comments Opportunity was going to be in every meeting from here on out?

Mrs. Melson-Williams replied it will be. We can advise that anytime we have an open meeting we give the opportunity for public comments. So, with the Boards and Commissions that the Planning Office supports, we have kind of standardized the language on the agendas so that it's specific that it could be any item outside of something that required a public hearing during your meeting. So, it gives an opportunity for the public to share their thoughts with that particular Board.

Chairman Czerwinski said thank you.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if anyone had any comments before we adjourn? There were none.

Meeting adjourned at 4:11 PM

Sincerely,

Maretta Savage-Purnell
Secretary