# SHEPHERDSTOWN PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

September 21, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
Town Hall – 104 North King Street

1. **Call to Order**
   The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Lauren Chapalee.
   **Attendance**
   Members Present: Lauren Chapalee, Ebonee Helmick, Michael Binder, Madge Morningstar, James Gatz
   Staff Present: Karl Musser
2. **Approval of Previous Months' Minutes**
   Michael Binder moved to approve the August 2026 meeting minutes. Ebonee Helmick seconded. All ayes; motion carried.
3. **Introductions**
   Joe Yates (not present) was identified as the new Town Council representative to the Planning Commission.
4. **Visitors**
   Visitors Present: Keith Alexander (HLC), Jim Auxer
5. **Conflicts of Interest**
   No conflicts of interest were disclosed.
6. **Applications**
   a. **Application 26-20 – 312 W. High St. – Fence**
      The Commission reviewed the proposed four-foot vinyl fence and confirmed that the gates would swing inward. Discussion addressed the ordinance's preferred materials and the Historic Landmarks Commission's assessment that vinyl was compatible with existing fencing on the property and in the neighborhood.
      Madge Morningstar moved to approve Application 26-20. Michael Binder seconded. All ayes; motion carried.
   b. **Application 26-21 – 322 W. German St. – Shed**
      The applicant clarified that the plans provide at least three feet between the fence and the nearest shed wall. The Commission reviewed the application on the basis of that clarification.
      Ebonee Helmick moved to approve Application 26-21. Michael Binder seconded. All ayes; motion carried.
   c. **Application 26-23 – 320 W. German St. – New addition**
      The applicant's designer presented the rear addition, including a mudroom expansion, family room, covered porch, and metal roofing on the existing rear addition. The Commission discussed setbacks, green space, building size, energy efficiency, and compatibility with the historic structure.
      Michael Binder moved to approve Application 26-23. Madge Morningstar seconded. All ayes; motion carried.

d. **Application 26-24 – 112 E. German St. – Sign**

The applicant proposed a hanging wooden sign using the existing bracket and clarified that the paw-shaped sign would be made from one solid piece of wood.

Madge Morningstar moved to approve Application 26-24. Ebonee Helmick seconded. All ayes; motion carried.

**7. Continuing Business**

a. **Town Council update**

The Commission received an update that Town Council had adopted revisions to the Planned Unit Development ordinance. A development application was expected to come before the Commission within the next month or two.

**8. New Business**

a. **On-boarding new commission members**

Members discussed town email, shared-drive access, training resources, and access to Title IX, Chapter 8, the Open Governmental Meetings Act, historic design guidelines, and the comprehensive plan. Shared-drive access would be provided, and a similar orientation discussion was proposed for Joe Yates.

b. **Draft Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance**

The Commission reviewed the draft's consistency with the comprehensive plan and discussed fees, setbacks, internal ADUs, simultaneous permitting of a principal dwelling and ADU, historic district guidelines, and rental provisions; revisions and coordination with the Historic Landmarks Commission were discussed. Committee agreed to circulate a revised draft by Friday, and the Commission agreed to review it at a special meeting on October 5, 2026, at 7:30 p.m., following the Historic Landmarks Commission meeting, before making a recommendation to Town Council; no recommendation was adopted.

c. **Recognition of Ebonee Helmick**

The Commission recognized Ebonee Helmick for three years of service, including her leadership as president, her work during a period without staff support, and her contributions to the comprehensive plan. This is Ebonee Helmick's last meeting.

**9. Adjournment**

Madge Morningstar moved to adjourn. Ebonee Helmick seconded. All ayes; motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm.