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## MINUTES

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**BOARD:** HISTORIC CONSERVATION COMMISSION, CITY OF BETHLEHEM

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** TODD CHAMBERS, CRAIG EVANS (VICE CHAIR), GARY LADER (CHAIR), MICHAEL SIMONSON, DESIREE STRASSER

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** (NONE)

**STAFF PRESENT:** JEFFREY LONG (HISTORIC OFFICER)

**PRESS PRESENT:** ED COURRIER (BETHLEHEM PRESS)

**VISITORS PRESENT:** WENDY KERN, EMMANUEL PATRICIO, NEEL SHAH, ERIK TURNER

**MEETING DATE:** SEPTEMBER 15, 2025

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The regular meeting of the Historic Conservation Commission (HCC) was held on September 15, 2025, at the City of Bethlehem Town Hall Rotunda, 10 East Church Street, Bethlehem, PA. HCC Chair Gary Lader called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **Agenda Item #1**

**Property Location:** 306 South New Street

**Property Owner:** Greenway One, Inc.

**Applicant:** Bartush Signs

**Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features:** Construction of this semi-detached, 6-story commercial building located on the corner of South New Street and West Third Street was initiated in 2016 and it is Contemporary in style. The primary façades on both streets include glass and aluminum storefronts at the street level, are clad in brick on the second through fourth floors, while the upper-most floor levels and the corner are clad in glass and metal panels. The façade of the sixth floor is set back and has a thin projecting roof, creating an open-air terrace along the north and east facades. HCC is mandated with preserving structures dating from the designated era of the Historic Conservation District (ca. 1895 - 1950); thus, this building is not considered significant to the District.

**Proposed Alterations:** The Applicant proposes to install two new rigid wall signs on the main façades and various new signage in the storefront windows and doors.

### **Guideline Citations:**

- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 9.** -- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
- **Bethlehem Ordinance 1714.03 Purposes of Historic Conservation District** -- It is the purpose and intent of the City of Bethlehem to promote, protect, enhance, and preserve historic resources and traditional community character for the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation, protection and regulation of buildings and areas of historic interest or importance within the City.
- **Historic Conservation Commission 'Guidelines for Signage'**-- Care should be taken in mounting signs to minimize damage to materials. This includes reusing hardware or brackets from previous signs. Design Guidelines continue (p. 3) that HCC "will not recommend for approval aluminum sign boxes with internal ... lights and translucent sign faces".

**Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations:** COA Application and supplemental documents indicate intent to install two new rigid wall signs within sign band above recessed corner entrance, vinyl graphics in storefront doors, adjacent sidelites and storefront window at recessed corner entrance along with “backlit graphics/light boxes” to be installed within three storefront windows to reflect new commercial tenant. Scale drawings of proposed signage with elevation views of both façades (indicated as required on COA Application) are not included, so Application is incomplete.

Proposed non-illuminated sign at existing canopy of South New Street façade of recessed corner entrance measures 28-inches tall x 144 inches wide, which matches size of similar signage previously considered within sign band of this structure by HCC as appropriate. Proposed rigid backer is 2-inch-thick aluminum tube frame with .080 aluminum shoebox cover face installed using 1-inch angle brackets into existing aluminum panel cladding; off-set dimension between back of rigid backer and existing metal cladding warrants clarification. Design of sign includes corporate logo composed of woven links that form diamond-shape mesh at left followed by text “Community Bank” in large, bold, sans serif lettering. Overall logo and text dimensions are approximately 11-inches tall x 134-inches wide; logo and dimensional letters are 0.375-inch-thick aluminum cutouts flush-mounted to sign face. Sides and face of rigid backer are bright white in color; logo of woven links is orange in color while all lettering is black in color. Proposed placement of new sign in relationship to existing metal cladding is not indicated but seems to be centered vertically and horizontally within overall area of existing sign band.

Proposed non-illuminated sign at existing canopy of West Third Street façade of recessed corner entrance measures 39-inches tall x 200 inches wide, which is larger than similar signage previously considered within sign band of this structure by HCC as appropriate. Proposed rigid backer is 2-inch-thick aluminum tube frame with .080 aluminum shoebox cover face installed using 1-inch angle brackets into existing aluminum panel cladding; off-set dimension between back of rigid backer and existing cladding warrants clarification. Design of sign includes corporate logo at left followed by text “Community Bank” in large, bold, sans serif lettering. Overall logo and text dimensions are approximately 15.5-inches tall x 186-inches wide; logo and dimensional letters are 0.375-inch-thick aluminum cutouts flush-mounted to sign face. Sides and face of rigid backer are bright white in color; logo of woven links is orange in color while all lettering is black in color. Proposed placement of new sign in relationship to existing metal cladding of sign band is not indicated but seems to be centered vertically and horizontally within overall area of existing sign band.

Proposed signage within existing sign band of this non-contributing structure is appropriate, pending clarification of following details:

- confirm critical installation dimensions of both signs; ex.: top of sign is ??-inches down from top of metal cladding; bottom of sign is ??-inches up from bottom of metal cladding
- confirm off-set dimension between back of rigid backers and existing cladding
- HCC traditionally considers bright white as inappropriate within Historic Conservation District; consider ivory or warm white as appropriate alternative for sign faces and sides
- HCC traditionally encourages off-set pinstripe detail in complementary color around perimeter of appropriate signage within Historic Conservation District; consider integrating this detail, noting potential need to reduce dimensions of logo graphics and lettering to accommodate

Proposed graphics for storefront entrance doors and associated sidelites are vinyl applications installed on inside glass surfaces. Signs measure 11-inches tall x 32-inches wide (to fit door openings); widths of similar signage for sidelites are not provided but seem to fill width of glazed openings. According to supplemental drawings, underside of signage aligns with horizontal rail at push bar hardware. Signage for left door includes insert field at left measuring 8.5-inches tall x 11-inches wide that includes hours of operation. Adjacent to insert is corporate logo of woven links that form diamond-shape mesh above text “Community” in large, bold, sans serif lettering followed on next line with text “BANK” in small, all uppercase, bold, sans serif lettering; logo and all lettering are white in color while background is orange in color. Signage for right door includes text “Welcome” centered horizontally and vertically in large, bold, sans serif lettering. Logo graphic and lettering are white in color while background of all signage is orange in color. Proposed signage within storefront windows and associated sidelites of this non-contributing structure is appropriate.

Proposed signage labeled “Exterior Windows – Work Room” Concept A and Concept B is printed vinyl measuring 84-inches tall x 57-inches wide and seems to cover entire surface of existing window at left of recessed entrance facing South New Street. Concept A includes various text in sans serif lettering of

differing sizes alternating between white and black color followed by photograph inserted into central field of oversized corporate logo; background is orange in color. Concept B includes series of stripes composed of small repeating corporate logo at top and bottom of sign with larger corporate logo above text "Community" in large, bold, sans serif lettering followed on next line with text "BANK" in medium, all uppercase, bold, sans serif lettering. Logo is orange in color and all lettering is black in color while background is light teal in color and accent stripes are white in color with occasional orange accents. As with previous signage proposal, Applicant should consider integrating offset pinstripe in complementary color around perimeter of sign as appropriate detail; otherwise, discussion is warranted to determine appropriateness of proposed window signage.

Proposed signage labeled "Exterior Windows" Concept A and Concept B are "backlit graphic/light boxes" but offers no other details; signs are proposed for select window locations along West Third Street façade. Concept A signs each measure 60-inches tall x 46-inches wide and include graphics similar to previous window signage. Concept B signs each measure 42-inches tall x 42-inches wide with more simplified graphics in orange and teal colors. According to relevant Guidelines for Signage, aluminum sign boxes with internal illumination are inappropriate within Historic Conservation District; Applicant should consider vinyl signage installed on inside window surfaces with no internal illumination (similar to previous sign proposal) as appropriate alternative. Should HCC determine that proposed sign boxes are appropriate after discussing with Applicant, internal LED illumination should be limited to maximum 3000K color temperature in satisfaction of design guidelines to use low-wattage warm lightbulbs; no conduits, raceways or junction boxes should be visible.

**Discussion:** Wendy Kern and Erik Turner represented proposal to install two new rigid wall signs on main façades and various signage in storefront windows and doors. Applicant confirmed that proposed non-illuminated wall signs are centered vertically and horizontally within metal panel system above recessed corner entrance; dimension between back of each sign and front face of existing façade is maximum one-half inch to allow for fasteners. Mr. Lader commented that proposed location for signage at metal canopy above entrance is perhaps not ideal, noting signage for other tenants is within brick wall system, as evidenced by supplemental photos. Applicant responded that building owner suggested proposed sign locations because new tenant will lease entry-level corner location. Mr. Lader continued that mounting locations of new signage should align with expressed joints of metal panel system. Mr. Chambers noted that differing dimensions of both proposed signs is more problematic than alignment with panel joints; Ms. Strasser agreed, expressing preference for consistent height dimension for both signs. Mr. Chambers requested clarification from Historic Officer about dimensions of existing signage for entry-level commercial tenant. Mr. Long explained that HCC recently determined signage for entry-level signage for new commercial tenant elsewhere in same building that measures 28-inches tall x 144 inches wide as appropriate. Applicant expressed willingness to reduce size of larger sign so that both signs have consistent dimensions. Mr. Chambers noted that accompanying sign details on Drawing Sheets 5 and 10 indicate dimensional letters are fabricated from acrylic rather while Historic Officer described lettering as aluminum; Applicant confirmed that letters are acrylic. Mr. Chambers inquired if Applicant is willing to incorporate 1/4-inch pinstripe detail offset 1-inch around perimeter of signage in complementary color; Applicant expressed willingness to include pinstripe detail, with ability to finalize color with Client. Ms. Strasser inquired if white of proposed color scheme is indeed "bright white". Applicant explained that corporate colors include bright white rather than warm white or ivory, as recommended by Historic Officer; continued with willingness to modify proposed color scheme so that sides and face of rigid backers are black in color while all lettering is bright white in color. Mr. Lader noted that HCC is willing to accept bright white color if part of corporate logo; HCC consensus was to retain original color scheme of white background and black lettering.

Discussion transitioned to proposal for storefront window signage. Applicant explained that proposed vinyl sign at left of entrance offers security for ATM machine just inside; continued by clarifying what appears "teal" in color on supplemental Sheet 11 is actually frosted to allow natural light inside while offering privacy for associated workroom. Mr. Chambers inquired if sign fills storefront window; Applicant confirmed that proposed signage is intended to fill entire window area below dividing rail. Mr. Chambers noted that provided photos confirm height of dividing rail of storefront window aligns with height of adjacent entrance doors ... not lower, as depicted on Drawing Sheets 3 and 11 ... so proportions of proposed sign might need adjusting. Mr. Chambers inquired if Applicant prefers design Concept A or B; Applicant responded with preference for Concept B. Mr. Lader inquired if frosted background detail is opaque; Applicant responded

that frosted treatment allows natural light inside while obscuring view from outside for privacy and security. Mr. Lader continued by inquiring if Applicant might consider perforated vinyl to allow even more natural light inside. Applicant responded that perforated vinyl would allow more natural light inside but design graphics will be “less sharp” while desired privacy and security would be compromised.

Applicant continued that similar vinyl panels would be adhered to faces of thin boxes with internal illumination intended for three select windows along West Third Street façade to offer privacy for employee offices. Mr. Lader requested clarification about delineation of tenant suite for new commercial tenant; Applicant clarified that new tenant’s suite includes entire stretch of storefront windows along West Third Street façade, with proposed signage to match heights and widths of existing windows. Mr. Chambers inquired if Applicant prefers design Concept A or B; Applicant responded with preference for Concept A because of larger size that fills entire storefront window and offers more privacy. Mr. Chambers requested clarification about intended locations for storefront signs. Applicant called attention to Drawing Sheet 6 and noted that three large windows (indicated with “#7”) along West Third Street façade will receive proposed signage. Mr. Simonson inquired if height of proposed signage is limited to lower storefront portion; Applicant responded that proposed signage would terminate at dividing rail. Similar to previous comment, Mr. Chambers observed that provided photos confirm height of dividing rail of storefront windows aligns with height of adjacent entrance doors, as depicted on Drawing Sheet 6, which approaches 7-feet tall. Mr. Evans inquired if Applicant is willing to install vinyl window graphics directly onto storefront windows to avoid internally illuminated boxes; Applicant was amenable to vinyl storefront window signage that is consistent with signage in window adjacent to storefront entrance. Mr. Lader inquired if graphics could be perforated rather than opaque; Applicant responded that perforated vinyl is acceptable if extended to fill entire vertical and horizontal dimensions of selected windows. Mr. Evans inquired if perforated vinyl would satisfy security and privacy concerns; Applicant responded with willingness to consider perforated vinyl as alternative to frosted treatment. Mr. Simonson inquired if perforated vinyl graphics can be installed on inside glass surfaces. Applicant agreed to investigate, noting typical experiences with vinyl graphics are exterior applications and expressed initial concern that existing windows are tinted so interior installation might prove challenging to “read” graphics. Mr. Chambers called attention to supplemental photos that depict Applicant’s temporary sign banner on inside surface of storefront that is easily readable; continued by requesting clarification about applicable design guidelines. Mr. Long noted that relevant HCC Design Guidelines for Signage do not specify interior installation of vinyl window signage; however, HCC traditionally requests Applicants to install vinyl window signage on inside surfaces to hinder damage due to vandalism and weather while proving easier to maintain.

HCC expressed no concerns with proposed graphics for storefront entrance doors and associated sidelites as long as vinyl applications are installed on inside glass surfaces.

**Public Commentary:** none

**Motion:** The Commission upon motion by Mr. Chambers and seconded by Mr. Evans adopted the proposal that City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work as presented, with modifications described herein:

1. The proposal to install two new rigid wall signs on the main façades and various new signage in the storefront windows and doors was presented by Wendy Kern and Erik Turner.
2. Appropriate details for two new non-illuminated rigid wall signs installed at both façades of corner entrance canopy include:
  - a. each sign measures 28-inches tall x 144 inches wide; installation is centered vertically and horizontally within existing metal panel system
  - b. each rigid backer is 2-inch-thick aluminum tube frame with .080 aluminum shoebox cover face installed using 1-inch angle brackets into existing aluminum panel cladding; off-set dimension between back of rigid backer and existing metal cladding is maximum one-half inch
  - c. design of each sign includes corporate logo composed of woven links that form diamond-shape mesh at left followed by text “Community Bank” in large, bold, sans serif lettering; logo and dimensional letters are 0.375-inch-thick acrylic cutouts flush-mounted to sign face
  - d. sides and face of each rigid backer are bright white in color; logo of woven links is orange in color while all lettering is black in color

- e. design of each sign also includes 1/4-inch pinstripe detail offset 1-inch around perimeter of signage in complementary color
- 3. Appropriate details for new graphics at storefront entrance doors and associated sidelites include:
  - a. signs measure 11-inches tall x 32-inches wide (to fit door openings); widths of similar signage for sidelites fill width of glazed openings while underside of all signage aligns with horizontal rail at push bar hardware
  - b. signage for left door includes insert field at left measuring 8.5-inches tall x 11-inches wide that includes space for hours of operation; adjacent to insert is corporate logo of woven links that form diamond-shape mesh above text "Community" in large, bold, sans serif lettering followed on next line with text "BANK" in small, all uppercase, bold, sans serif lettering; logo and all lettering are white in color while background is orange in color.
  - c. signage for right door includes text "Welcome" centered horizontally and vertically in large, bold, sans serif lettering
  - d. all logos and all lettering are white in color while all backgrounds are orange in color
- 4. Appropriate details for new storefront window signage at Work Room (left of recessed entrance) facing South New Street include:
  - a. printed vinyl installed on inside window surface that covers entire glazed area up to dividing rail (approximately 84-inches tall)
  - b. graphics reflect Applicant's design Concept B: series of stripes composed of small repeating corporate logo at top and bottom of sign with larger corporate logo above text "Community" in large, bold, sans serif lettering followed on next line with text "BANK" in medium, all uppercase, bold, sans serif lettering; logo is orange in color and all lettering is black in color while stripes are white in color with occasional orange accents
  - c. signage background is frosted to address privacy and security concerns
- 5. Appropriate details for new select storefront windows at offices facing West Third Street include:
  - a. printed vinyl installed on inside surfaces of three large windows that covers entire glazed area up to dividing rail (approximately 84-inches tall)
  - b. graphics reflect Applicant's design Concept A (similar to 4.b. above)
  - c. signage background is perforated to allow natural light inside while also addressing privacy concerns for offices

The motion for the proposed work was unanimously approved.

## **Agenda Item #2**

**Property Location:** 13-15 East Third Street

**Property Owner:** Vipul Shah

**Applicant:** Emmanuel Patricio

**Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features:** These two adjacent, attached 3-story structures are tan brick masonry commercial and residential buildings with front facing pediments, corbelled brick details, large-format terra-cotta elements, flat roofs with simple upper cornices and metal-capped parapets. Both large storefronts were modified during the mid-twentieth century by dividing them into several retail spaces, resulting in the loss of many defining architectural features. The front façades include 1-over-1 double-hung windows in anodized bronze finish while second floor level windows are arched and include solid metal panels within the terra-cotta arches. These buildings were formerly the F.W. Grand Store and date from ca. 1915. They are Classical Revival in style with Romanesque details and are possibly the work of Bethlehem's renowned architect A.W. Leh.

**Proposed Alterations:** The Applicant proposes to clean and restore the brick façade and terra-cotta details; to paint metal panel arch window insets, trim and fascia "barely brown" in color; and to paint window trim, wood trim, all flashing, fascia and accents "deep forest" (green) in color. **Note:** This is revised from the original meeting agenda description of the Applicant's intention to paint the brick façade "beige" in color.

#### **Guideline Citations:**

- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 6.** -- Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and other visual qualities and where possible, materials.
- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 7.** -- Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
- **Bethlehem Ordinance 1714.03 Purposes of Historic Conservation District** -- see Agenda Item 1
- **Historic Conservation Commission 'Design Guidelines'** -- relevant pages concerning Masonry and Stucco

**Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations:** COA Application indicates intent to paint front façades of both adjoining structures. While HCC is always willing to offer guidance to Applicants concerning typical historical paint colors found within Historic Conservation District, HCC is not commissioned with determining appropriateness of paint colors. In response, Applicant is allowed to paint various windows, trims, flashings and fascia in proposed color scheme following discussion with HCC.

Applicant's proposal to paint existing tan brick masonry façades and terra-cotta elements is inappropriate based upon relevant Design Guidelines which state "HCC will not recommend for approval ... applying waterproof or water repellent coatings (on masonry and stucco)". HCC has traditionally interpreted this guideline to include paint applied to unpainted masonry and stucco surfaces. Discussion with Applicant is warranted to understand proposed necessity for painting masonry surfaces while noting that Secretary of Interior Standards encourage deteriorated historical features be repaired rather than covered over. If necessary, chemical or physical treatments should be undertaken using gentlest means possible. It should also be noted that Bethlehem's Historic Officer presented Applicant with series of Preservation Briefs compiled by National Park Service that are in compliance with Secretary of Interior Standards via email on August 22 and offer guidance on appropriate methods for gently cleaning and maintaining historic brick masonry façades.

**Discussion:** Emmanuel Patricio and Neel Shah represented proposal to clean and restore brick façade with terra-cotta details; to paint metal panel arch window insets, trim and fascia "barely brown" in color; and to paint window trim, wood trim, all flashing, fascia and accents "deep forest" (green) in color. Mr. Lader inquired about original COA Application that included proposal to paint brick masonry façades and terra-cotta details. Applicant responded that original intention was to "clean front façade to match storefronts below and match what is planned for inside"; however, initial approach to scrub brick façade had little effect on removing dirt, grime and pollution. Applicant subsequently discussed concerns with representatives within city's Planning Office and were encouraged to use OneRestore (by EaCoChem) for gently removing stains from all façade components as appropriate alternative to painting over. Mr. Simonson inquired about Applicant's approach for cleaning façade with proposed product; Applicant explained that small sections of brick masonry façade and terra-cotta details will be cleaned using OneRestore to observe how successfully product works without resulting in damage. Mr. Lader noted that façade work was already observed at project site. Applicant responded that initial misunderstanding led to initial work being halted until COA Application could be submitted and assessed by HCC. Mr. Lader inquired about what was previously attempted. Applicant explained that front façade was initially power washed, which proved unsuccessful; in response, Applicant approached other professionals and city staff for guidance. Mr. Lader expressed appreciation that Applicant initiated dialogue with others with experience and agreed that Applicant's new approach to avoid painting over brick masonry and terra-cotta is appropriate. Applicant inquired if side façade (visible from New Street Bridge) could still be painted over due to several patches that utilize differing bricks that "look bad". Mr. Chambers countered that HCC prefers to have true masonry façade visible ... even with patches of differing bricks; continued that painting over brick façades will retain moisture and ultimately lead to more significant maintenance issues. Mr. Lader agreed that Applicant should avoid painting over brick façade for reasons mentioned. Once brick façades have been cleaned, Mr. Simonson noted that many mortar joints will need repointing, with damaged or missing brick units using in-kind replacements. Based upon initial testing, Applicant assumes front façade will need limited mortar repairs while entire side façade need repointing. Mr. Lader cautioned against using Portland cement to

repoint mortar joints due to incompatibility with historical bricks; continued by encouraging Applicant to cooperate with qualified masons experienced in historical brick masonry structures for needed repairs. Applicant also noted that terra-cotta details need limited repairs; Mr. Simonson noted those should be in-kind repairs.

Applicant requested clarification about what is considered appropriate to paint at front façade. Mr. Lader explained that HCC does not dictate paint colors but proposed color scheme will be memorialized in resulting board motion. Applicant called attention to colors described in COA Application. Mr. Lader noted that professional paint supply stores include “historical color ranges” that might inspire Applicant, as well. Mr. Simonson noted that Applicant’s proposed color scheme seems inspired by historical color palette.

**Public Commentary:** none

**Motion:** The Commission upon motion by Mr. Simonson and seconded by Ms. Strasser adopted the proposal that City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work as presented, with modifications described herein:

1. The proposal to clean and restore the brick façade and terra-cotta details; to paint metal panel arch window insets, trim and fascia “barely brown” in color; and to paint window trim, wood trim, all flashing, fascia and accents “deep forest” (green) in color was presented by Emmanuel Patricio and Neel Shah.
2. Appropriate details for cleaning and restoring brick façades and terra-cotta details include:
  - a. clean small representative areas using appropriate solution applied with gentlest means possible before allowing inspection by city’s representatives before cleaning entire façades
  - b. repair resulting brick façades and terra-cotta details using in-kind or compatible masonry replacement; Portland cement should be avoided when repointing mortar joints

**Note:** Applicant also intends to paint metal panel arch window insets, trim and fascia “barely brown” in color and to paint window trim, wood trim, all flashing, fascia and accents “deep forest” (green) in color; while not commissioned with determining appropriateness of paint colors, HCC considers painting appropriate façade materials part of appropriately maintaining historic structures.

The motion for the proposed work was unanimously approved.

**General Business:**

Minutes from HCC meeting on August 18, 2025, were approved by those attending that meeting, and with abstention by those not previously in attendance.

There was no further business; HCC meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



BY:

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Jeffrey Long  
Historic Officer  
South Bethlehem Historic Conservation District  
Mt. Airy Historic District