
M I N U T E S (DRAFT)

BOARD: HISTORIC CONSERVATION COMMISSION, CITY OF BETHLEHEM

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: DESIREE STRASSER

STAFF PRESENT: JEFFREY LONG (HISTORIC OFFICER)

PRESS PRESENT: ED COURRIER (BETHLEHEM PRESS)

VISITORS PRESENT: MOHAMMAD AYAZ, JOSEPH MCCARTHY, SCOTT MARTIN, EMMANUEL PATRICIO, JOSEPH SEDLER, NEEL SHAH, CHRISTINE USSLER, MINGKE YANG

MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 17, 2025

The regular meeting of the Historic Conservation Commission (HCC) was held on November 17, 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: 25 East Third Street

Property Owner: OM Three, LLC

Applicant: Mohammad Ayaz

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This structure is a single-story, attached, commercial storefront with a flat roof. The stepped terra-cotta parapet includes scrollwork details while the terra-cotta cornice and side panels feature egg-and-dart mouldings. The sign band is exposed brick masonry. The aluminum and glass storefront was modified in the late 20th century while large-format tiles at the apron and recessed entry were used to replace similar tiles following damage caused by a car accident in 2012. The building dates from ca. 1920 and is Classical Revival in style.

Proposed Alterations: The Applicant proposes to install one new wall sign with LED illuminated back-lit channel letters within the sign band and five new printed vinyl signs within the storefront transoms for a new commercial tenant.

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 ... taking advantage of existing mortar joints for installing hardware rather than drilling directly into masonry units to facilitate future sign replacement.

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: COA Application and supplemental document indicate intent to install new rigid sign backer with applied back-lit channel letters within existing sign band above storefront and also to install new printed vinyl signs within five existing storefront transoms that reflect new commercial tenant. Scale drawing of proposed signage with elevation (façade) view (indicated as required on COA Application) is not included, so Application is incomplete.

Existing sign band measures 36-inches tall x 360-inches wide while proposed sign measures 30-inches tall x 144-inches wide; thus, proposed signage fits within existing sign band. Computer-generated image seems to indicate that proposed sign is centered horizontally and vertically within sign band. Proposed backer is .040 aluminum with rear frame fabricated from 1-inch x 1-inch aluminum tubing, to be installed flush with existing brick masonry façade using L-brackets attached with 4-inch lag screws into existing mortar joints; proposed color of backer is Sherwin-Williams “peppercorn” dark gray. Affixed to rigid backer are individual channel letters with solid faces in warm white or ivory color that read “CrispyHalal” in large, bold, stylized cursive lettering. Channel letters are fabricated from .080 aluminum with overall depth of 2-inches. Individual letters are pin-mounted into sign backer using 2-5 3/8-inch bolts for each letter; backs of letters are offset 2-inches from face of backer. Proposed lettering includes 1500K LED back-lit illumination in red color, resulting in halo effect. Proposed signage within existing sign band is appropriate, pending clarification of following details:

- confirm sides of aluminum frame behind backer are also painted peppercorn dark gray to match front face of sign
- confirm bolt fasteners for each pin-mounted channel letter do not extend through rigid backer and into existing brick façade; if so, avoid multiple installation points into existing façade by increasing thickness/stability of rigid backer so it structurally supports channel letters
- confirm no conduits, raceways or junction boxes associated with illumination are visible
- 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 slightly reduce dimensions of lettering to accommodate

Proposed graphics for five storefront transoms are vinyl applications installed on glass surfaces. Based on provided computer-generated image, each sign seems to fill height and width of each glazed opening. Background of each vinyl sign seems to match dark gray “peppercorn” color proposed for rigid sign backer while graphics of each vinyl sign are large, bold, all uppercase sans-serif letters in warm white or ivory color centered vertically and horizontally. From left to right, transoms signs read: “PLATTERS”; “GYROS”; “FRIED CHICKEN”; “TENDERS”; “SANDWICHES”. According to HCC meeting agenda, each proposed sign measures 24-inches tall x 54-inches wide and installation is on inside glass surfaces; however, those specifics are not found on provided supplemental drawing sheet, so discussion is warranted to confirm.

Discussion: Mohammad Ayaz and Scott Martin represented proposal to install one new wall sign with LED illuminated back-lit channel letters on rigid backer within existing sign band and five new printed vinyl signs within existing storefront transoms. Applicant clarified that individual channel letters will be pin mounted into rigid backer, so fasteners will not extend further into existing brick façade; also confirmed no visible conduits, raceways or junction boxes are associated with proposed illumination. Applicant was not amendable to recommended offset pinstripe detail around perimeter of sign backer, noting need to reduce sizes of proposed channel letters to fit within resulting border and concern that tail of letter “y” would extend beneath pinstripe; also inquired what color would be considered appropriate for potential pinstripe. Mr. Chambers suggested sizes of lettering could remain as proposed; pinstripe detail in same color as lettering could be interrupted by lettering, as needed. Applicant remained unconvinced of need for offset pinstripe detail. Mr. Simonson requested clarification about intended color of tube framing at back of rigid backer; Applicant confirmed color of tube framing will match dark gray color of rigid backer. Mr. Lader inquired if red color visible on supplemental drawing represents backlit halo effect resulting from proposed red LED lighting; Applicant clarified that sides of each channel letter will also be red in color.

Mr. Lader requested clarifications about size(s) of proposed vinyl window signs and also if sign background is clear, opaque or solid in color. Applicant responded that panels would cover dimensions of storefront transom glazing ... each measuring approximately 24-inches tall x 48-inches wide; continued that sign background is solid color to match "peppercorn" dark gray of proposed rigid sign backer. Mr. Chambers questioned Applicant's selection of solid color for vinyl window signage, noting resulting loss of natural light inside. Applicant responded that existing interior dropped ceiling interrupts height of transoms, so proposed solid color hides that condition from view outside; also noted that installing vinyl signage on inside glass surfaces might prove challenging because of existing dropped ceiling. Mr. Lader inquired about height of proposed lettering for each sign; Applicant was uncertain of sizes for proposed lettering but confirmed that height of letters is consistent for all signage. Mr. Chambers noted that accompanying computer-generated image indicates letters that are approximately 4-inches tall when compared proportionally with overall transom dimensions; Applicant was amendable to 4-inch height of proposed lettering.

Public Commentary: none

Motion: The Commission upon motion by Mr. Evans and seconded by Mr. Lader 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 one new wall sign with LED illuminated back-lit channel letters within the sign band and five new printed vinyl signs within the storefront transoms for a new commercial tenant was presented by Mohammad Ayaz and Scott Martin.
2. Appropriate details for new signage at existing sign band include:
 - a. sign measures 30-inches tall x 144-inches wide and is centered horizontally and vertically within existing sign band
 - b. rigid backer is .040 aluminum with rear frame fabricated from 1-inch x 1-inch aluminum tubing, installed flush with existing brick masonry façade using L-brackets attached with 4-inch lag screws into existing mortar joints; backer and tube framing are Sherwin-Williams "peppercorn" dark gray in color
 - c. affixed to rigid backer are individual channel letters with solid faces in warm white or ivory color and sides in red color that read "CrispyHalal" in large, bold, stylized cursive lettering; channel letters are fabricated from .080 aluminum with overall depth of 2-inches
 - d. individual letters are pin-mounted into sign backer using 2-5 3/8-inch bolts for each letter that do not extend through and into existing brick masonry façade; backs of letters are offset 2-inches from face of backer
 - e. lettering includes 1500K LED back-lit illumination in red color, resulting in halo effect; no conduits, raceways or junction boxes associated with illumination are visible
3. Appropriate details for new signage in existing storefront transoms include:
 - a. each vinyl sign measures approximately 24-inches tall x 48-inches wide to cover entire glass surface of each transom
 - b. background of each sign matches dark gray "peppercorn" color of rigid sign backer
 - c. graphics of each vinyl sign are large, bold, all uppercase sans-serif letters in warm white or ivory color centered vertically and horizontally; all letters are maximum 4-inches tall
 - d. from left to right, transom signs read: "PLATTERS"; "GYROS"; "FRIED CHICKEN"; "TENDERS"; "SANDWICHES"
 - e. if possible, installation of signage is on inside glass surfaces; otherwise, exterior application is allowed

The motion for the proposed work was approved 2:2, with Mr. Evans and Mr. Lader (as Chair) supporting the motion and Mr. Chambers and Mr. Simonson not supporting the motion. HCC members not supporting the motion noted that the Applicant should integrate the traditional offset pinstripe detail in a complementary color around the sign perimeter to satisfy the definition of appropriate wall signage based on relevant design guidelines for signage within the Historic Conservation District.

Agenda Item #2

Property Location: 13-15 East Third Street

Property Owner: Vipul Shah

Applicant: Emmanuel Patricio

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This attached 3-story structure is a tan brick masonry commercial and residential building with front-facing pediments, corbelled brick details, large-format terra-cotta elements, continuous bands of cast stone windowsills at both upper floor levels, flat roof along with a simple upper cornice and metal-capped parapets. Large storefronts were modified during the mid-twentieth century, resulting in the loss of many defining architectural features. The front façade includes 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. This building was formerly the F. & W. Grand Stores and dates from ca. 1915. It is Classical Revival in style with Romanesque details and possibly the work of Bethlehem's renowned architect A.W. Leh.

Proposed Alterations: The Applicant proposes to modify the existing sign band and storefronts, including replacement of an existing display case to create a new entrance vestibule, and also to paint the existing continuous bands of cast stone windowsills at both upper floor levels.

Guideline Citations:

- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 4.** -- Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 5.** -- Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
- **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) 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** -- see Agenda Item 1
- **Historic Conservation Commission 'Design Guidelines'** -- relevant pages concerning Masonry and Storefronts ... noting photo of Applicant's property depicted on p. 17
- **Historic Conservation Commission 'Guidelines for Storefronts'**

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: COA Application indicates intent to modify existing sign band and storefronts and also to paint existing cast stone windowsills.

Based on provided narrative and accompanying drawing sheets, overall form of existing commercial storefronts will remain, with exception of reconfiguring free-standing display case at far left to become dedicated entrance leading to upper-level residential units. Glass storefronts will be appropriately replaced with new butt glazed insulated glass following same configuration as existing; Applicant should be aware that appropriate glazing is not reflective, tinted or colored. New wall that defines dedicated entrance at far left appropriately mimics existing storefronts elsewhere, with tile base at low knee wall and smooth substrate wall above with panel mouldings. Applicant proposes new aluminum full-glazed storefront doors with transoms; both pairs of existing historic storefront doors and transoms with fluted mullions are not being retained or used as inspiration for replacement doors and transoms -- see provided photo. Clarification is warranted why these distinctive materials, features and finishes are not being retained, repaired and/or replaced in satisfaction of relevant Secretary of Interior's Standards and design guidelines rather than being proposed for replacement.

New floor tiles are proposed as replacements for existing mosaic tiles spelling out "F. & W. Grand Stores" at both commercial entrances. Proposed design, material samples and specifications for new tiles were to be

submitted “prior to HCC meeting as soon as possible”; however, no such samples were received. Similar to previous comment, distinctive features should be retained, repaired and/or replaced in satisfaction of relevant Secretary of Interior’s Standards. Recent onsite inspection determined that mosaic tiles at #13 East Third Street -- see provided photo -- are in pristine condition with little (if any) needed repairs while mosaic tiles at #15 East Third Street require limited restoration. Indeed, HCC Design Guidelines depict these specific floor mosaic tiles on page 17 above caption “Retention of distinctive flooring is encouraged”, so discussion is warranted to determine why proposed replacement flooring appropriate.

New tile is proposed for low knee walls to replace existing dark green marble; similar to above, material samples and specifications of proposed replacement tiles were to be submitted “prior to HCC meeting as soon as possible”; however, no such samples were received. Discussion is warranted before appropriateness can be determined.

Remnants of old awning system at existing sign band to be appropriately removed and replaced with paneled mouldings. Unfortunately, accompanying drawing sheet does not depict proposed mouldings, so clarification is warranted to determine appropriateness. If needed due to poor condition of existing substrate of sign band following removal of awning system, smooth fiber cement wall panels or Medium Density Overlay (MDO) plywood panels are proposed for installation. HCC traditionally prefers fiber cement or composite panels over plywood as appropriate replacement material within Historic Conservation District.

Applicant proposes to clad existing brick piers at far left and far right of overall storefront in fiber cement or MDO plywood with panel mouldings. Similar to above, HCC traditionally prefers fiber cement or composite panels over plywood as appropriate replacement material within Historic Conservation District.

Existing tin ceiling is proposed to be retained and painted, which is appropriate.

Three new pendant fixtures are proposed as exterior lighting ... one centered at each entrance. Project narrative references product specifications; however, provided drawing labeled “FORMS” only indicates overall dimensions (approx. 60-inches tall x 11-inches at widest) of proposed fixture and depicts simple metal hang rod with glass globe. Discussion is warranted to identify fabricator, material and finish, etc. of selected fixture. Applicant should be made aware that LED lighting is limited to maximum 3000K color temperature in satisfaction of relevant design guidelines to use low-wattage warm lightbulbs within Historic Conservation District and also be made aware that no conduits, raceways or junction boxes associated with proposed illumination can be visible.

Applicant also proposes to paint existing continuous bands of cast stone windowsills at both upper floor levels with silicate paint in color to match existing stone. Relevant Design Guidelines 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 cast stone masonry surfaces while noting that Secretary of Interior’s Standards encourage deteriorated historical features to be repaired rather than covered over. If necessary, chemical or physical treatments should be undertaken using gentlest means possible.

Discussion: Emmanuel Patricio, Neel Shah and Christine Ussler represented proposal to modify existing sign band and storefronts, including replacement of free-standing display case to create new entrance vestibule, and also to paint existing continuous bands of cast stone windowsills at both upper floor levels. Applicant explained that building has been vacant since ca. 1985, so renovation proposals will reintegrate building into streetscape. Applicant justified conversion of display case into dedicated entrance leading to upper-level residential units to avoid confusion with commercial storefront entrances; continued by noting footprint of new entrance follows shape of existing storefront rather than introducing new or conflicting design element. Applicant justified removal of existing storefront entrance doors and transoms with decorative separation mullions to satisfy ADA (handicap) compliance, so proposal integrates two pairs of new entrances that integrate into proposed storefront windows ... with butt joint glazing inserted into top and bottom metal tracks. Applicant then presented computer-generated view of proposed replacement storefront depicting various new details: replacement hexagonal Carrera marble mosaic floor tiles at all entrances; large-format reeded tiles in medium green color as replacement for existing marble at low knee walls; Moravian Star pendant lights centered at each entrance; panel mouldings at reestablished sign band, side wall of new entrance vestibule and at existing piers at far left and far right of overall storefront.

Mr. Lader requested clarification about proposed panel mouldings at sign band. Applicant admitted that suggested mouldings on provided rendering do not “read” well; continued by clarifying that all rectangular panel mouldings applied to smooth wall surface are uniform in height while panel above central storefront is narrower than two remaining panels above recessed entrances ... noting potential for future signage within central panel if one commercial tenant is found or separate signage within outer panels if two commercial tenants are ultimately found. Applicant also confirmed that pendant lighting within original COA Application evolved to Moravian Star fixtures ... with product specifications available in advance of subsequent HCC assessment. Mr. Evans inquired about drop dimension of proposed pendants; Applicant responded that new storefront doors are 8-feet high, so bottoms of fixtures are slightly higher than that.

Applicant confirmed awareness that appropriate new storefront glazing is not reflective, tinted or colored. Mr. Evans inquired if proposed glazing is insulated; Applicant confirmed that new glazing is insulated. Mr. Simonson inquired about widths of proposed replacement entrance doors at commercial tenant locations; Applicant responded that each door is 3-feet wide, with no mullions between pairs of doors. Mr. Lader inquired if Applicant would consider leaving existing transoms in place to retain distinctive historical materials and details; Applicant was not amenable to that suggestion. Mr. Chambers suggested that replacement transoms could include similar applied mullions in deference to historical condition; Applicant expressed willingness to study further. Mr. Lader expressed concern about ability to retain heavy crown moulding detail at existing tin ceiling if all storefronts are removed. Applicant responded that demolition of existing storefronts would happen from inside to avoid damage to details of historical tin ceilings visible from public right-of-way.

Applicant called attention to provided image of proposed large-format reeded tile in medium green color, noting that product sample and written specifications will be provided for review at future HCC meeting. Applicant also called attention to provided image of proposed frost-proof hexagonal Carrera marble mosaic tiles intended as replacement for existing tile flooring at both commercial entrances, with potential to integrate “frame” within each tile field composed of dark green square or rectangular frost-free mosaic tiles to recall existing historical flooring; samples and product specifications to be considered at later date. Mr. Lader inquired if proposed replacement hexagonal tiles match sizes of existing historical tiles; Applicant noted that existing tiles are approximately 1.5-inches wide while proposed tiles are 3-inches wide. Mr. Lader inquired if existing floor tiles can be retained and repaired due to historical significance. Applicant felt strongly against retaining existing floor tiles, noting damage at #15 East Third Street entrance due to frost heave and need to “invade” existing floor tiles at #13 East Third Street for construction of new residential entrance. Mr. Chambers inquired if space beneath tile flooring is occupied; Applicant responded that basement is not occupied. Applicant also explained that storefronts with names of former tenant will prove challenging to attract new commercial tenants with no ability to integrate their own names. Mr. Lader sympathized with Applicant’s concerns while explaining that HCC is commissioned to be good stewards of existing historical buildings; continued by suggesting that new tenants might be proud to find commercial location that values its history. Mr. Lader noted he is less concerned about retaining historical doors because current proposal makes entrances ADA-compliant; however, ability to salvage existing historical flooring is more significant. Mr. Chambers suggested that replacement tile flooring should closer match sizes of existing historical mosaic tiles and also include some design element within framed fields that gives homage to building’s history. Applicant expressed preference for larger format hexagonal tiles but in colors that mimic historical tiles while admitting they are more difficult to source; continued by inquiring if street numbers are acceptable as suggested design within framed fields. Mr. Lader expressed preference for replacement mosaic tiles closer to sizes of existing tiles ... maximum 2-inches, which are potentially more cost effective because they are more readily available; continued with strong preference to retain historical names within tile fields but might be amendable to street numbers as appropriate replacements. Mr. Simonson cautioned Applicant to carefully research street numbers in coordination with U.S. Postal Service to ensure new entrance for residential tenants also receives street number ... potentially resulting in #13, #13-A, #15. To avoid confusion, Applicant inquired if framed fields within tile flooring could include other designs beyond street numbers; HCC encouraged Applicant to explore various options before returning to HCC for subsequent assessment.

Mr. Chambers inquired why new entrance leading up to residential units has door that opens out toward sidewalk; continued by suggesting new door could be located around inside corner within area currently depicted as solid wall with paneled moulding. Applicant explained that entrance with “straight shot” to stairs

leading up to residential units is more conducive when tenants move in/out and also makes entrance immediately visible rather than hidden.

Mr. Lader inquired why Applicant proposes to paint windowsills at upper floor levels. Applicant noted that recent façade renovations proved successful for removing most grit and grime from vertical brick masonry surfaces while horizontal cast stone windowsills still appear dirty; continued that proposed silicate paint to match color of existing cast stone would chemically bond with masonry to avoid water penetration while also providing consistent color across entire façade. In response, Mr. Lader prefers to see sample of proposed paint for subsequent HCC evaluation before appropriateness can be determined; Mr. Simonson agreed with Mr. Lader's suggestion.

In closing, Mr. Lader summarized "push-pull" of historic preservation in tandem with being realistic to foster Applicant's intentions to rehabilitate building that remained for several decades mostly vacant in preparation for new commercial and resident tenants, resulting in inherent struggles to find proper balance; concluded by noting this beautiful building deserves to be treated better and appreciates Applicant's efforts. Mr. Chambers agreed, recalling how Applicant transitioned from original proposal to paint over entire historical façade to more appropriate proposals within current COA Application.

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 modify the existing sign band and storefronts, including replacement of an existing display case to create a new entrance vestibule, and also to paint the existing continuous bands of cast stone windowsills at both upper floor levels was presented by Emmanuel Patricio, Neel Shah and Christine Ussler.
2. Appropriate details for new storefront include:
 - a. overall form of existing commercial storefronts will remain, with exception of reconfiguring free-standing display case at far left to become dedicated entrance leading to upper-level residential units; existing tin ceiling to be retained and repainted
 - b. glass storefronts will be replaced with new butt glazed insulated glass inserted into top and bottom metal tracks that follow same configuration as existing storefronts; appropriate glazing is not reflective, tinted or colored
 - c. new wall that defines dedicated entrance at far-left mimics existing storefronts elsewhere, with tile base at low knee wall and smooth substrate wall above with panel mouldings
 - d. new aluminum full-glazed storefront doors with transoms replace both pairs of existing historical storefront doors and transoms to satisfy ADA (handicap) compliance
 - e. existing brick piers at far left and far right of overall storefront to be clad in fiber cement or composite panels with panel mouldings
3. Details for subsequent HCC assessment include:
 - a. scale drawing indicating critical dimensions of proposed panel mouldings for sign band above storefronts
 - b. design options for new mosaic flooring that replace existing historical tiles ... including product samples and written specifications for intended materials, with preference for maximum 2-inch hexagonal mosaic tiles
 - c. product samples and written specifications for intended material(s) for low knee walls at replacement storefronts
 - d. product samples and written specifications for intended pendant lighting
 - e. written specifications for silicate paint proposed for existing cast stone windowsills, including paint samples applied to similar stone masonry surfaces

The motion for the proposed work was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item #3

Property Location: 312 East Fourth Street

Property Owner: Holy Infancy Roman Catholic Church

Applicant: Joseph McCarthy

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This church structure is a detached, 3-bay, stone masonry institutional building with a steep gable roof and cross-gable transept. Each bay includes an entrance portal with pointed Gothic arch and upper-level windows, also with pointed Gothic arches. The larger central bay with north-facing rose window extends up to become the church bell tower. Originally called St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, it was constructed ca. 1865 but was later expanded and modified ca. 1886 to become Holy Infancy Roman Catholic Church. The church is Gothic Revival in style.

Proposed Alterations: The Applicant proposes to install a new ADA-compliant (handicap) ramp with pipe railings.

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.
- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 10.** -- New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
- **Bethlehem Ordinance 1714.03 Purposes of Historic Conservation District** -- see Agenda Item 1

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: COA Application indicates intent to install new ADA-compliant ramp with pipe railings to facilitate handicap access inside. Proposed exterior ramp to be installed at west façade entrance along Taylor Street near northwest corner at East Fourth Street. New concrete ramp to be poured after select existing sidewalk segments are sawcut and removed; overall ramp dimensions are approximately 114-inches wide x 72-inches deep. Associated steel pipe railings to be installed directly into new concrete and remain independent of existing church structure. Proposed ADA-compliant ramp with pipe railing assembly is appropriate as presented, pending clarification that expansion joints will be inserted between new concrete and existing stone masonry structure to ensure that new construction, if removed, does not compromise form and integrity of existing historic structure.

Discussion: Joseph McCarthy and Joseph Sedler represented proposal to install new ADA-compliant (handicap) ramp with pipe railings. Applicant recalled previous helpful discussions with HCC, noting current solution is much smaller version of previous ramp proposals envisioned at different façade; continued that interior elevator was recently installed near northwest entrance, so current proposal would facilitate ADA-compliant entrance for easy elevator access. Mr. Chambers requested clarification about previous ramp proposals; Mr. Long summarized brief history of several ramp proposals previously considered by HCC as inappropriate. Mr. Chambers inquired about need for proposed handrail; Mr. Simonson agreed that current building code does not require handrail for proposed ramp due to minimal height differential with public sidewalk below. Applicant responded that proposed handrail is intended as additional support for congregants with mobility issues who might fear stepping off ramp and onto sidewalk below. Mr. Lader noted that end of upper rail must extend 12-inches before returning back to structural post and also suggested that intermediate rail is unnecessary according to relevant building code. Mr. Simonson agreed with both observations while noting Applicant must still submit proposed ramp for Plan Review to ensure these and other issues (specifically 5-foot turn radius) are addressed before installation commences. Applicant concluded by agreeing to insert expansion joints between existing stone masonry structure and new ramp before pouring concrete to ensure that new construction is independent from historic structure.

Public Commentary: none

Motion: The Commission upon motion by Mr. Lader 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 a new ADA-compliant (handicap) ramp with pipe railings was presented by Joseph McCarthy and Joseph Sedler.
2. Appropriate details for new ramp include:
 - a. exterior ramp installed at west façade entrance along Taylor Street near northwest corner at East Fourth Street; new concrete ramp poured after select existing sidewalk segments are sawcut and removed
 - b. overall ramp dimensions are approximately 114-inches wide x 72-inches deep ... pending final Plan Review
 - c. steel pipe railing installed directly into new concrete to remain independent of existing church structure, with no intermediate rail; end of handrail extends 12-inches before returning back to new structural post
 - d. expansion joints inserted between existing stone masonry and new ramp before pouring concrete to ensure that new construction is independent from historic structure

The motion for the proposed work was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item #4

Property Location: 21 East Third Street

Property Owner: Ann Hunsicker Morrissey

Applicant: Mingke Yang

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This structure is an attached, 2-story, 5-bay commercial building with stucco over masonry construction. The building dates from circa 1920; however, the original storefront was significantly modified during the mid- to late 20th century and has a recessed entry with entrance door/shop window storefront combination flanked on either side with display windows. The building has an upper parapet with a low sloping roof, a heavy upper projecting cornice with decorative brackets and a simpler intermediate cornice with no supporting brackets above the sign band. Various façade modifications prevent assignment of a specific architectural style.

Proposed Alterations: The Applicant proposes to install one new wall sign with LED illuminated back-lit channel letters and one non-illuminated projecting blade sign for a new commercial tenant.

Guideline Citations:

- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 9.** -- see Agenda Item 1
- **Bethlehem Ordinance 1714.03 Purposes of Historic Conservation District** -- see Agenda Item 1
- **Historic Conservation Commission 'Signage Guidelines'**

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: COA Application indicates intent to install one new wall-mounted illuminated pan sign within existing sign band and one new blade sign hanging from new decorative scroll bracket to reflect new commercial tenant. Scale drawing of proposed signage with elevation (façade) view (indicated as required on COA Application) is not included, so Application is incomplete.

Overall dimensions of proposed wall sign are 30-inches tall x 112-inches wide, which matches dimensions of previous signage at same location determined by HCC as appropriate. Applied lettering measures 22-inches tall; width of applied lettering is not indicated. Proposed rigid backer is 3-inch-thick aluminum pan in bright white color with offset pinstripe border around sign perimeter in black color. 4-inch-thick aluminum channel letters with black aluminum returns, black plastic trim caps, acrylic faces in warm white or ivory color with matt finish and with outlines in black color spell out "Taichi" followed by three Chinese characters ... all in large, bold, sans-serif lettering. Channel letters are individually pin-mounted directly into rigid backer using aluminum studs with 1.5-inch spacers to offset letters from face of backer. Illumination is

accomplished with LED lighting in 2700K color temperature behind each letter and character, resulting in back-lit halo effect. Proposed signage within existing sign band is appropriate, pending clarification of following details:

- confirm overall width dimension of applied lettering
- confirm front faces of letters and characters are solid and not opaque so that illumination does not penetrate through
- confirm no conduits, raceways or junction boxes associated with illumination are visible
- HCC traditionally considers bright white color inappropriate within Historic Conservation District, so consider warm white or ivory color for rigid backer; also confirm that all sides of rigid backer receive same color as front
- HCC traditionally considers maximum 2-inch thickness as appropriate for dimensional lettering within Historic Conservation District, so discussion is warranted
- HCC traditionally considers outlines around lettering inappropriate within Historic Conservation District unless integral to design of corporate logo, so discussion is warranted

Overall dimensions of proposed double-sided blade sign are 24-inches tall x 24-inches wide; diameter dimension of overall circle graphic is not indicated. Sign material is 1-inch-thick aluminum, with bright white background color. Graphics include one bold circle outline in black color with series of subsequent concentric circles ... beginning with large circle in medium green color that includes text "TAICHI BUBBLE TEA" in all upper-case, bold, sans-serif lettering within upper portion and three Chinese characters in lower portion; letters and characters are bright white in color. Subsequent smaller concentric circle is medium brown in color while subsequent even smaller concentric circle is bright white in color. Center of circle seems to be Yin-Yang pattern, with one segment dark green in color and remaining segment dark brown in color. Blade sign is to be hung from new decorative metal scroll bracket. Proposed bracket is 36-inches long; overall bracket height is not indicated. Distance between edge of blade sign and front face of existing sign band is 6-inches. Accompanying narrative confirms no internal illumination; rather Applicant relies on existing ambient street and storefront lighting for illumination. Proposed double-sided blade sign is appropriate, pending clarification of following details:

- confirm diameter dimension of outer circle graphic
- confirm installation location of decorative scroll bracket and proposed blade sign ... especially such critical dimensions as height from public right-of-way (sidewalk) to underside of blade sign and blade sign's relationship within existing sign band and proposed wall sign nearby
- confirm intended installation method; accompanying narrative mentions "concealed fasteners" but offers no further details
- HCC traditionally considers bright white color inappropriate within Historic Conservation District, so consider warm white or ivory color for sign background and also for lettering and characters; also confirm that all sides of sign receive same color as both sign fronts

Discussion: Mingke Yang represented proposal to install one new wall sign with LED illuminated back-lit channel letters and one non-illuminated projecting blade sign. Applicant confirmed diameter of main circular graphics on proposed blade sign is approximately 20-inches; also confirmed that overall width dimension of lettering and characters on proposed wall sign is approximately 104 inches. Mr. Chambers inquired about reducing depth of channel letters from 4-inches to 2-inches; Applicant was amendable to recommendation. Mr. Chambers suggested that proposed blade sign should be installed at same location as previous blade sign; Applicant confirmed intention to install new blade sign in same location as previous similar signage. Mr. Chambers inquired if Applicant is willing to amend bright white signage color to appropriate warm white or ivory; Applicant inquired if Mr. Chambers intended white color on one or both signs. Mr. Chambers clarified that his comments are relevant to both signs; Applicant responded with willingness to amend bright white color to warm white or ivory on both signs. Mr. Lader inquired if corporate logo includes black outlines on individual letters and Chinese characters; Applicant confirmed that corporate logo indeed includes black outlines for each letter and character. Applicant also confirmed that central portion of circular logo on proposed blade sign includes Tai Chi stylized Yin-Yang symbol.

Public Commentary: none

Motion: The Commission upon motion by Mr. Chambers and seconded by Mr. Simonson 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 one new wall sign with LED illuminated back-lit channel letters and one non-illuminated projecting blade sign for a new commercial tenant was presented by Mingke Yang.
2. Appropriate details for new signage at existing sign band include:
 - a. overall dimensions of wall sign are 30-inches tall x 112-inches wide; applied lettering measures 22-inches tall x maximum 104-inches wide
 - b. rigid backer is 3-inch-thick aluminum pan; face and sides of backer are warm white or ivory in color while offset pinstripe border around sign perimeter is in black color
 - c. 2-inch-thick aluminum channel letters with black aluminum returns, black plastic trim caps, acrylic faces in warm white or ivory color with matt finish and with outlines in black color spell out "Taichi" followed by three Chinese characters ... all in large, bold, sans-serif lettering; channel letters are individually pin-mounted directly into rigid backer using aluminum studs with 1.5-inch spacers to offset letters from face of backer
 - d. illumination is accomplished with LED lighting in 2700K color temperature behind each letter and character, resulting in back-lit halo effect; no conduits, raceways or junction boxes associated with illumination are visible
3. Appropriate details for new blade sign include:
 - a. overall dimensions of non-illuminated, double-sided blade sign are 24-inches tall x 24-inches wide; main circle graphic is 20-inches in diameter
 - b. sign material is 1-inch-thick aluminum, with both faces and all sides warm white or ivory in color
 - c. sign graphics include:
 - i. one bold circle outline in black color with series of subsequent concentric circles ... beginning with large circle in medium green color that includes text "TAICHI BUBBLE TEA" in all upper-case, bold, sans-serif lettering within upper portion and three Chinese characters in lower portion; letters and characters are warm white or ivory in color
 - ii. smaller concentric circle is medium brown in color while subsequent even smaller concentric circle is bright white in color
 - iii. center of circle is Yin-Yang pattern, with one segment dark green in color and remaining segment dark brown in color
 - d. sign is hung from new decorative metal scroll bracket at same location as previous tenant's blade sign; bracket is 36-inches long, resulting in 6-inch distance between edge of blade sign and front face of existing sign band

The motion for the proposed work was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item #5:

Property Location: 327 South New Street

Property Owner: 325 South New Street Development, LLC

Applicant: USA Architects

Note: This item was removed from the meeting agenda, so no evaluation was offered and no resulting discussion ensued.

General Business:

Mr. Lader encouraged City of Bethlehem to seek additional commission members. As last remaining original HCC member, Mr. Evans recounted recent conversation with Mayor Reynolds, who expressed willingness to consider potential new members. Mr. Chambers inquired who is best qualified to have such

discussions with mayor. Mr. Simonson agreed to speak with mayor's staff to consider potential candidates; Mr. Lader agreed to contact Mayor Reynolds separately, noting that HCC should be composed of nine commission members but currently has only five.

Mr. Simonson reported that Cathy Fletcher, City's new Planning Director, plans to attend initial portion of December HCC meeting.

Minutes from HCC meeting on October 20, 2025, were approved by those attending that meeting, and with abstention by those not previously in attendance.

There was no further business; meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



BY:

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

DRAFT