



Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Hybrid - Newtown Borough Hall / Zoom

Present: Mr. James McAuliffe, Chair
Mr. Robert King, Member
Ms. Marcia Lincoln-Heinz, Member (via Zoom)
Ms. Judith Ritter, Member
Ms. Karen White, Member (via Zoom)
Mr. Kris Bauman, Borough Council Liaison (via Zoom)
Ms. Ana Gindhart, COA Administrator (via Zoom)
Ms. Margaret Newman, Preservation Consultant

Absent: Mr. Michael Hutchinson, Vice Chair

1. Meeting Commencement

Mr. McAuliffe called the meeting to order. He explained that this Board's recommendations will go to Borough Council for review at their regular meeting at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, in Borough Hall at 30 N. Chancellor Street. Applicants were advised not to begin their projects until they have received final approval by Council and obtained the necessary permits. The review process for larger projects may take two (2) to three (3) meetings. It was noted that the HARB reviews applications using *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, and these will be cited in the recommendations.

2. Approval of the Minutes

Mr. King made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 17, 2025, meeting, with the following change: on page 4 change "Mr." White to "Ms." White. Ms. Ritter seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by the Board.

3. Applications Considered

The following applications were considered at the meeting:

25-046	19 Sterling Street – Charles Ralston
26-001	26 S. State Street– Craig Weidman
26-002	12 S. State Street – Melinda Vallone
26-003	109 N. State Street – Joel Petty

4. Application 25-046

19 Sterling Street, residence

Applicant: Charles Ralston, Five Clovers Construction

The applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a 2nd floor addition.

Charles Ralston was present via Zoom.

The Board considered the application in relation to Ordinance No. 594 of the Borough of Newtown Code and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Margaret Newman noted that the requested changes were made to the application. One outstanding item was the material of the porch ceiling. Mr. Ralston said it would be tongue and groove Azek with a smooth finish.

Ms. Newman asked if the proposed windows will be simulated divided light with muntins on both the interior and exterior of the glass. The applicant said the windows are fully customizable so they can be.

Ms. Newman asked the board for confirmation that the dimensions of the window trim are sufficient. Mr. McAuliffe confirmed that they are.

A discussion about the rear windows followed. The new windows will be vinyl to match the existing. Mr. McAuliffe confirmed that they are not visible.

Citing Standards 9 and 10, Mr. King made a motion to recommend approval of the application as submitted, noting that the visible new window will be simulated divided light and that the porch ceiling will be Azek, tongue and groove, smooth finish. Ms. Ritter seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by the Board.

5. Application 26-001

26 S. State Street, retail store

Applicant: Craig Weidman

The applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness for a hanging sign and a vinyl window cling.

Craig Weidman was present via Zoom.

The Board considered the application in relation to Ordinance No. 594 of the Borough of Newtown Code and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Mr. King asked if the board should consider the vinyl window cling that contains both the hours of store operations and a logo. He thought that it may be beyond HARB's purview and is a zoning matter. Ms. Gindhart confirmed that zoning will look at it. Mr. McAuliffe asked the board to focus only on the hanging sign.

Citing Standards 9 and 10, Mr. King made a motion to recommend approval of the hanging sign only. Ms. Lincoln-Heinz seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by the Board.

6. Application 26-002

Applicant: Melinda Vallone

12 S. State Street, retail store

The applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness for an in-kind window replacement

Storeowner Melinda Vallone was present for the application.

The Board considered the application in relation to Ordinance No. 594 of the Borough of Newtown Code and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Ms. Newman confirmed with Ms. Vallone that the application was to replace a wood window for a wood window and that only the sash itself, not the trim, was being replaced.

Ms. Vallone confirmed that the new sash is wood and that the trim would have to be removed to take out the existing sash but would be put back up once the new wood sash is installed.

Citing Standard 6, Mr. King made a motion to recommend approval of the application as submitted. Ms. Ritter seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by the Board.

7. Application 26-003

Applicant: Joel Petty

109 N. State Street, residence Applicant: Joel Petty

The applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of an addition.

Joel Petty was present for the application.

The Board considered the application in relation to Ordinance No. 594 of the Borough of Newtown Code and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Discussion began with changes proposed to the north elevation. Two existing non-historic windows will be relocated from the west end to the east end of the ca. 1900 section. The existing non-historic siding will be removed, and this elevation will be re-clad with smooth-finished Hardi-Plank. A corner board will be installed between the original front section and the 1900 section. Mr. Petty noted that all original window openings and sash are being retained. Because of its rear location and the neighboring house, the board noted that these changes will be very difficult to see from the street.

On the south side, the addition was discussed. It was noted that it is set back from the original front section of the house and will only be minimally visible. Mr. McAuliffe confirmed that all the materials being proposed are appropriate.

Citing Standards 9 and 10, Mr. King made a motion to recommend approval of the application as submitted. Ms. Ritter seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by the Board.

8. Preliminary Discussion – 101 S. Congress Street

Joel Petty was there to discuss the proposed renovations of a barn which the homeowners would like to make into a habitable space while keeping the exterior intact. Much of the siding has been damaged. Sections have been replaced with plywood while one side of the barn is bowing out.

Mr. Petty proposes taking all the existing siding off the barn frame and salvaging what can be reused. He will sheath the barn frame in plywood and clad it with the salvaged siding where possible while replacing the siding beyond repair with wood siding that matches the original in kind.

He believes the front will remain as it is with the existing doors and trim. The rafter tails and roof will remain. The only changes to the exterior he might propose will be limited to the side where an existing door and window may need to be relocated (although the door may need to be replaced as it may not be up to code for egress) and at the back where an egress window will need to be installed. Mr. Petty understands that the project will have to be reviewed by the JHC first.

Mr. McAuliffe stated he thought the approach sounded appropriate and was a good way to preserve the building. He also asked to see the historic survey card when the application is submitted.

10. Miscellaneous

50 South Congress Street, Friends Village

Mr. Bill Newell attended the meeting. He lives on Congress Street directly across the street from the Friends' Home. He came to offer constructive criticism of the project approved in May/June for the installation of HVAC equipment along the historic façade of the building. Mr. Newell stated that the equipment is on an industrial scale that required removal of all existing vegetation. It includes 4 very large HVAC pumps which are 6 ft. above grade and about 8 ft. above street level plus a very large generator which is 12 ft long, 6-7 ft. high. He believes the approval was a mistake and that it defaces the building and negatively impacts the streetscape. He doesn't understand why the equipment wasn't installed at the back although he recognizes that the back of the building is now the main entrance. He understands that it is done now and unlikely to be changed but came to the meeting in hope that something like this won't happen again. He would like a mechanism put in place to prevent this.

Mr. McAuliffe explained that per zoning the equipment needs to be shielded by vegetation and/or fencing. He said HARB are not planners or engineers so must believe the applicant about the required placement of mechanical equipment. Finally, he said as a recommending body, HARB does not approve applications, Borough Council does so he suggests Mr. Newell discuss this with them.

Mr. Bauman weighed in agreeing that this is a Borough Council issue. Council needs to review the process and what happened with this particular case. He reiterated that HARB is a recommending body only. For this application, HARB review was limited because the mechanical equipment didn't have an impact on the

architecture of the building, giving HARB no basis to disapprove. Mr. Bauman stated that the responsibility comes back to Council who approved it. The conditions of the approval are being reviewed as far as height and bulk of the units to ensure what was submitted in the application is what was completed in the field. As far as allowing equipment in the front yard, Council will review what the zoning regulations provide to limit this and through review, consideration may need to be made to strengthen the ordinance.

Mr. King thanked Mr. Newell for coming to the meeting, saying that it would make him look more closely at these types of applications. Mr. McAuliffe also thanked Mr. Newell for his comments.

Ms. White noted that the plans that HARB approved are not representative of what was built. The scale is totally different. Mr. McAuliffe commented that it is hard for architects to accurately depict equipment like this because the information given by the equipment manufacturer is often not fully known until shop drawings are provided.

Ms. Lincoln-Heinz asked how this will be followed up on to ensure that plantings are actually planted as the application said would be done.

239 Court Street

Mr. McAuliffe received a letter from the Borough council in regard to 239 Court Street. He was surprised that the Council would communicate to the HARB in this way. Mr. Bauman stated Council did not direct the attorney to send a letter. Mr. Bauman thought he was coming to the meeting tonight to convey what was discussed at the Council meeting.

Mr. Bauman stated that the owners of 239 Court Street filed an appeal and that Council is seeking guidance from HARB for more qualitative comments for how the wall should look. Mr. McAuliffe felt HARB was clear at the meeting. The wall should more closely match the stone of the house's foundation in color, in size of the stone and in how the stone is laid. The cap should be less formal than the existing rectangular, cut-slate top. A rough stone cap would be more appropriate.

Mr. Bauman asked HARB to convey this information to the owners when they come in with another application.

Beyond the District

Mr. Bauman stated that the Joint Historic Commission requested a follow-up to the previous efforts to strengthen protections of historic building outside the district. A meeting will be held to discuss existing and proposed tools; HARB will be invited

11. Upcoming Meeting

The next HARB meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 25, 2026 in person and via Zoom.

12. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. King and seconded by Ms. Ritter, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Newman, Recording Secretary