Elkhart Historic & Cultural Preservation Commission

Special Meeting Thursday, September 10, 2026

Call to Order:

Bill Zimmerman called to order the Elkhart Historic & Cultural Preservation Commission Special Meeting for Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 5:00 pm.

Roll Call:

Present: JA Whitmer, Bill Zimmerman, Doug Mulvaney, Carrie Brunson. Kyle Anthony-Petter with the City of Elkhart and Deb Parcell from Indiana Landmarks.

Absent: Bobby Glassburn

Approval of Agenda:

Zimmerman asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Motion made by Doug Mulvaney, seconded by JA Whitmer; motion carried with the following roll call vote:

JA Whitmer - Yes
Bill Zimmerman – Yes
Doug Mulvaney – Yes
Carrie Brunson – Yes

Approval of Minutes:

Zimmerman noted that the packet included one correction to the May 21, 2026, minutes. The minutes originally stated that Bill Zimmerman called that meeting to order, but he was absent. The minutes were corrected to show that Doug Mulvaney called the meeting to order.

Zimmerman said that he would accept a motion to approve the corrected minutes from May 21, 2026. Motion made by JA Whitmer, seconded by Carrie Brunson; motion carried with the following roll call vote:

Whitmer - Yes
Zimmerman – Yes
Mulvaney – Yes
Brunson – Yes

Hearing of Visitors: NA

Old Business:

Zimmerman asked staff if there were any old business, neighborhood update, progress review, or nominations.

Kyle Anthony-Petter, planner II staff member for the commission, said there is none.

New Business:

A: 26-COA-09, 515 East Street – Non-lit Fabricated Letters

Anthony-Petter read staff report: Install non-illuminated stud-mounted 3in deep fastened black aluminum lettering wall sign on the north elevation between the second and third story.

Zimmerman asked the commission members if they had any questions for Anthony-Petter. Whitmer asked if there was a report.

Kyle read report:

Applicable Guidelines:

Commercial Standards: Signs: Add a New Sign to Replace a sign or where no signage exists.
- New signs should be in proportion and be similar in color and details of the building.
- Signage should not cover nor remove elements of the building that give it its character.
- Signs designed in the same period as the building's construction are recommended – allowing the use of modern materials for their fabrication.
- New signs should be installed with anchoring that does not destroy or cause removal of historic materials.

Staff Analysis

The petitioner is requesting to install a non-illuminated stud-mounted 3in deep fastened black aluminum lettering wall sign on the north elevation between the second and third story.

This petition is in part of a larger request in completing the residential building project which came in front of the commission in 2024 as 24-COA-01. The request is to provide signage of the address for the building in larger lettering than typical.

The petitioner recently reached out staff to talk about the requirement for signage for this property and was made aware of the need for approval from the Commission before permits.

The proposed sign area will be placed on the brick wall with the lettering of the sign to be located in the corner of the building between the second and third floors. This request for the property reflects the petitioners wanting to add a way to better identify its location. With this building being new construction, the typical worry of damaging the historic material is not a concern.

Recommendations

The Staff recommends approval of the request based on the following findings of fact:

1. The proposed sign should be in proportion and be similar in color and details of the building.
2. The proposed sign will not cover nor remove elements of the building that give it its character.
3. The proposed sign will be installed with anchoring that does not destroy or cause removal of historic materials.
4. The proposed color, graphics, and scale is compatible with the district and its character.

Zimmerman asked the commission members if there were any questions for staff. No one had questions.

Zimmerman said that he would accept a motion to approve 26-COA-09, as presented. Motion made by Whitmer, seconded by Mulvaney; motion carried with the following roll call vote:

Whitmer - Yes
Zimmerman – Yes
Mulvaney – Yes
Brunson – Yes

B: 26-COA-10, 301 Division Street – New Shed

Anthony-Petter read staff report:

Description of work:

1. Install a new 24ft long by 10ft wide by 8ft high wood framed shed in the rear yard.
2. The siding will be 36" x 16" Charcoal Gray Pro-Rib Steel Panel.
3. Use Owens Corning TruDefinition Architectural Shingles in Sierra Gray.

Applicable Guidelines:

Residential Standards: Site Project: Garages, Landscaping, Parking Area, Decks, Driveways, Sidewalks and Paths: Construct a new Garage: New Construction

- **Setbacks and Site Parameters**. Specific features that should be used in defining physical context include: building age, style, design character, materials, the entries, and the placement of accessory structures. Reflect the traditional setbacks seen within the block.
- **Massing and Scale**. Establish a sense of human scale in building design.
- **Architectural Character.** Design a new building to reflect its time, while respecting key features of its context.
- **Materials.** Use materials that match the historic building in look and detailing.

Staff Analysis

The petitioner is requesting to install a new 24ft long by 10ft wide by 8ft tall shed in their rear yard. The shed will use Owens Corning TruDefinition Architectural Shingles in Sierra Gray. The siding for the shed will be 36" x 16" Charcoal Gray Pro-Rib Steel Panel.

This petition comes in response to the petitioner starting construction on a shed and stopping following being made aware that approvals were needed before work could be completed. The petitioner recently reached out to staff following being made aware of needing a permit and approval by the Commission to complete the shed which had been started. The petitioner then submitted a COA a few days later.

When a new garage or shed is proposed to be constructed the design guidelines makes reference to following the new construction guidelines. Due to the current state of the shed, which is about 75% complete the framing and general shape is known. As a part of the submitted documents no elevations were given showing the location of doors or windows when complete. Anthony-Petter said that it is still a question that needs to be addressed.

New construction should differentiate new work from the existing historic architecture and design but should be compatible with existing massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the district. The height of a new structure and its height to width proportions should be consistent with adjacent buildings in the district. Building materials used on a new structure should be compatible in scale, texture and color with adjacent structures.

Materials should appear similar in scale, proportion, texture, and finish with traditional building types. Material should match the historic building in look and detail. The use of pre-approved materials for siding and trim would be recommended to better fit with the district. The vertical metal siding does not match existing siding on the house or in the district and should be horizontal. No example of the use of metal siding on sheds or houses in the district could be found that matches the proposed siding.

The proposed roofing material is an approved material and will fit with the district and the house. The placement and location will match existing sheds and garages in the district along alleys. A portion of the shed will be visible from the street (Division Street) but will be most visible from the alley.

Staff appreciates the petitioner wanting to make improvements to their property, but following the existing process is necessary to ensure compliance with the Commission and the City.

Recommendations

The Staff recommends approval of the shed based on the following findings of fact:

1. The proposed shed meets the setback of the area which reflects the traditional setbacks within the block.
2. The proposed shed will fit the scale of the other shed in the district.
3. The roof form will be like those historically found in the District.

The Staff recommends approval of the roof material based on the following findings of fact:

1. The proposed roof will be similar in color and material to the house.
2. As the roof is new, the installation will not destroy or cause removal of historic materials.
3. The proposed roof shingle is similar to other roofs and meets historic district guidelines for material and profile.

The Staff recommends denial of the siding material based on the following findings of fact:

1. The proposed siding material would not match the historic buildings in the area in look and detailing.
2. Other siding material from the pre-approved materials list or other alternative materials could be used.
3. The proposed siding material is not similar scale, proportion, texture, and finishes with those used traditionally on this building type.

Anthony-Petter said that staff is recommending to approve the first two and deny the last one and have the applicant work with staff or approve it or approve the last one, but applicant work with staff to have a material that staff feels comfortable with to make sure it is horizontal as well as finding a material that will fit better with the neighborhood. Anthony-Petter added that they do not

know if the structure will have doors or windows. Anthony-Petter said that those questions still needed to be answer, and the applicant was present to answer any questions.

Zimmerman asked the applicant to come up to podium and to state his name and address.

Applicant introduced himself as Juan Macias. Zimmerman asked commission members if they had any questions to the applicant.

Whitmer asked Mr. Macias if he had anything to say to the commission in support of his project. Ian Irizarry helped applicant to translate from English to Spanish, and applicant did not have any questions.

Whitmer said that there was no indication of windows or doors for the shed and asked the applicant to describe where those were going to be place. Irizarry translated that he does not have anything for windows, but for doors yes. Whitmer wanted confirmation that the shed would have no windows. Irizarry translated and confirmed that there were not windows. Whitmer asked how many doors, and where will they be placed. Irizarry translated and confirmed that there will be only one door facing his property. Whitmer asked if this would be a garage door or a regular sized door. Irizarry translated and confirmed that it would be a regular door. Whitmer asked if that would give the applicant adequate access to the shed. Applicant responded yes. The applicant said that he wanted to answer what he could. Mr. Macias stated that the shed is not big and described it as twelve by ten. The size made him think that he does not need windows or a big door since he would like to use it for his tools. Whitmer wanted confirmation if he was going to use it for storage of his tools. Mr. Macias said Yes that is what I have to use it for.

Whitmer said that nothing of what she had heard so far would impact the recommendation on approval of building the shed itself and she did not have a problem with the roof. The commission has a problem with the proposed covering of the side. Whitmer asked if Mr. Macias understood that metal was not an approved covering. Mr. Macias responded that he understood, but he said that the siding on his house is really old and cannot have the same one on the shed. Whitmer said that she understood that and added that there was a list of approved sidings and he could work with staff to choose one that could be on their approved list. Whitmer asked if he would be willing to work with staff. Mr. Macias asked if he cannot use metal siding. Zimmerman confirmed that he cannot use metal siding and added that the siding has to be an approve material other than metal and the direction of the material has to be horizontal not vertical to match. Zimmerman repeated that there were two issues with that: The material and the direction of the siding. Zimmerman continued that those issues needed to be addressed before they could move on. Zimmerman asked again if the applicant was willing to make those changes according to Whitmer's question. Mr. Macias asked if he had more options. Whitmer asked Anthony-Petter if he could give the applicant samples of approved materials. Whitmer suggested that wood siding would be one, but she does not think that it will be practical. Anthony-Petter said that an LP siding, and that the staff was looking for something that would have a little bit of an overlay that creates a lapping and looks like some kind of flapping. Whitmer asked if this would be horizontal and not made of metal. Mr. Macias asked if that could be vinyl. Whitmer asked if vinyl was on the approved list. Anthony-Petter responded no it is not and added that since it is a new building that opened up the opportunity for materials that are historic in nature, but what staff cared more about was making sure it has a

profile that would fit with the neighborhood. Whitmer asked Anthony-Petter if he could work with Mr. Macias to arrive at an acceptable covering. Anthony-Petter said that he could provide the applicant with a list and photos of approved materials that would fit. Whitmer asked Mr. Macias if he was willing to work with staff to choose another covering. Mr. Macias agreed. Whitmer said that would resolve her questions about it. Zimmerman said that not only the covering material, but the direction. Whitmer added that if the applicant worked with Anthony-Petter, it would make it so that it fits within the historic guidelines to the extent possible, even though it is new construction it will have a little bit of an older look to keep it with the neighborhood. Whitmer thanked the applicant for his cooperation in doing that.

Zimmerman asked if applicant was willing to work with Anthony-Petter and staff to make the correct material and direction of the material for the shed.

Whitmer asked Anthony-Petter if he would, on the third issue, prefer approving it subject to working with staff or how does he want the board to handle it because she did not want the applicant to be back another time. Anthony-Petter said approving it with the condition that the applicant will work with staff to come up with an acceptable material and to make sure that the three motions are separate.

Zimmerman asked for the following three motions for 26-COA-10 231 Division Street, for three sections: 1. Approval of the shed 2. Approval of the roofing material 3. Approval of the siding with the condition that applicant works with staff for the proper material and direction Anthony-Petter instructed to include the COA number and the address. Zimmerman asked if those three needed to be separately or included in it all. Anthony-Petter confirmed that it needed it to be separated.

Zimmerman asked for a motion to approve 26-COA-10 231 Division Street, in reference to the construction of the shed on the property. Motion made by Whitmer, seconded by Doug; motion carried with the following roll call vote:

Whitmer - Yes
Zimmerman – Yes
Mulvaney – Yes
Brunson – Yes

Zimmerman asked for a motion to approve 26-COA-10 231 Division Street, for approval of the roofing material. Motion made by Brunson, seconded by Whitmer; motion carried with the following roll call vote:

Whitmer - Yes
Zimmerman – Yes
Mulvaney – Yes
Brunson – Yes

Zimmerman asked for a motion to approve 26-COA-10 231 Division Street, for approval of the siding material assuming that applicant will work with staff on the material and the direction of

the siding. Whitmer said she would move by changing the wording to assuming to conditioned on working with staff.

Zimmerman asked for a motion to approve 26-COA 231 Division Street, for approval of the siding with the condition to work with staff for those two areas: material and direction of the siding. Motion made by Whitmer, seconded by Doug; motion carried with the following roll call vote:

Whitmer - Yes
Zimmerman – Yes
Mulvaney – Yes
Brunson – Yes

Staff Items:

A. 26-COA-05: 931 West Franklin Street – Fence Replacement

Anthony-Petter asked the commission if they wanted him to read the full staff report. Doug suggested to incorporate the reports by reference it, like previous time. Whitmer suggested reading the recommendation part aloud.

Anthony-Petter read:

Description of proposed project:

1. Remove and replace existing 6-foot-tall wood fence and install 6-foot-tall wooden fence in the rear yard.

Anthony-Petter said that it was approved as it matched what the guidelines say in regard to replacing like for like.

Anthony-Petter read:
Recommendation
The Staff recommends **approval** of the request based on the following findings of fact:

1. The proposed fence comes from the pre-approved designs and material list.
2. The proposed fence will match the existing fence in height, installation, material, and design.
3. The proposed fence is in the rear yard, minimally visible from the street.
4. It meets historic district guidelines for size, location, material, and design, and can be approved by staff.

Zimmerman asked if there were any questions from staff. There were no questions.

Zimmerman said that he would accept a motion to approve 26-COA-05 931 West Franklin Street, as presented. Motion made by Whitmer, seconded by Brunson; motion carried with the following roll call vote:

Whitmer - Yes

Zimmerman – Yes
Mulvaney – Yes
Brunson – Yes

B. 26-COA-06: 234-236 Division Street – Concrete Pad

Anthony-Petter read Staff Report:

Description of proposed project:

1. To install a new 3ft by 13 ft long sidewalk along fence line in the front yard.
2. Install a 10ft wide by 15ft long concrete pad in the front yard along the sidewalk.

Recommendation
The Staff recommends **approval** of the request based on the following findings of fact:

1. The proposed driveway will be paving a part of an existing gravel driveway.
2. The proposed fence will match the existing fence.

Anthony-Petter said that there would be a little bit of changes and read:

2. The proposed sidewalk will match the existing sidewalk in installation material and design.
3. The proposed sidewalk will be on the side yard and will be minimally visible from the street.
4. It meets historic district guidelines for location, material, and configuration, and can be approved by staff.

Recorder Secretary said to Anthony-Petter that he was reading 26-COA-07 and not 26-COA-06.

Whitmer asked the reason they were only doing a small pad not the complete driveway. Anthony-Petter said that part of it was financial and that was how much they were able to install a portion, but what they are looking to do is over time replace more. Anthony-Petter continued to say that this was the area that has the most divots and collects the most water. The applicants will slowly be replacing the entire driveway as finances come forward, but for now they are looking to replace just what was the most immediate. Doug added that looking at the pictures, the spot they want to replace is the most beat up and used.

Zimmerman asked if they were looking into pour concrete over the gravel area and the commission needed to okay the removal of the gravel or the pouring of the concrete over the gravel just in that area. Anthony-Petter confirmed, yes.

Zimmerman said that he would accept a motion to approve 26-COA-06 234-236 Division Street in reference to the concrete pad, as presented. Motion made by Doug, seconded by Whitmer; motion carried with the following roll call vote:

Whitmer - Yes
Zimmerman – Yes
Mulvaney – Yes

Brunson – Yes

C. 26-COA-07: 234-236 Division Street – Sidewalk Replacement on the East side of the house

Anthony-Petter read Staff Report:

Description of proposed project:

1. To install a new 3ft by 23ft long sidewalk along the east side of the house to replace an existing 17in. wide sidewalk.

Recommendation
The Staff recommends **approval** of the request based on the following findings of fact:

1. The proposed sidewalk will be designed and installed like other sidewalks found throughout the district.
2. The proposed sidewalk will be a secondary path on the site and will be installed within the side yard.
3. The proposed sidewalk will match the existing and will not affect the historic integrity of the house.
4. It meets historic district guidelines for location, material, and configuration, and can be approved by staff.

Zimmerman asked Anthony-Petter if the sidewalk was going to be extended and widened. Anthony-Petter responded, yes, and explained that they are expanding it, but the length will be the same. Zimmerman said that the picture shows it will stop where and it will not proceed on to past that red line and asked if that was correct. Anthony-Petter responded that Zimmerman was correct and that the applicants were extending it to the sidewalk. Mulvaney added that it will just connect with the existing sidewalk and it will be the same size. Anthony-Petter explained that the applicant wanted to make it easier for them to take their trash to the sidewalks.

Zimmerman asked the commission members if there were any other questions for staff. There were no questions.

Zimmerman said that he would accept a motion to approve 26-COA-07 234-236 Division Street in reference to the sidewalk replacement, as presented. Motion made by Brunson, seconded by Whitmer; motion carried with the following roll call vote:

Whitmer - Yes
Zimmerman – Yes
Mulvaney – Yes
Brunson – Yes

D. 26-COA-08: 234-236 Division Street – Chimney Repair

Anthony-Petter read Staff Report:

Description of proposed project:

1. To repair existing chimney with matching brick and mortar joints.

Recommendation
The Staff recommends **approval** of the request based on the following findings of fact:

1. The proposed mortar repair will match the original mortar in strength, color and joint placement.
2. The proposed mortar repair will be minimally visible from the street.
3. It meets historic district guidelines for mortar replacement of strength, color and joint placement, and can be approved by staff.

Zimmerman asked if there was not going to be any increase in the height of the chimney. Anthony-Petter responded no. Zimmerman asked if there were not going to be any changes in the material and asked confirmation if it was replacement of the mortar joints and then the cap on the top of the chimney. Anthony-Petter confirms that what Zimmerman said is correct.

Whitmer pointed out that Anthony-Petter had one place in his analysis that indicated that it may be beneficial to use stronger mortar and asked if that was not happening. Anthony-Petter said that the applicants did not specify the mortar. Anthony-Petter explained the reason it was recommended is that it is in an area that because of environmental factors like wind and rain that having a slightly stronger mortar it may last longer. It might be able to help spread out the amount the time between making those repairs, but at the same time, with a harder mortar, you can run into if it is too hard, the brick might start to split off. That explains if you want to make sure that it is strong, but not too strong. Whitmer asked Anthony-Petter if he was still working with the homeowners on doing this and will he continue to work with the applicant with the strength issue. Anthony-Petter responded, yes. Zimmerman said that the applicants are also addressing the top of the chimney according to the photograph submitted with the application. Zimmerman said that it is bad on the top and asked if that was concrete opposed to mortar joint material and asked if the staff is recommending concrete on the top. Anthony-Petter said that staff would be recommending a concrete or some material that matches to what is there.

Zimmerman asked the commission members if they had any questions for staff. There were no questions.

Zimmerman said that he would accept a motion to approve 26-COA-08 234-236 Division Street in reference to the Chimney repair, as presented. Motion made by Mulvaney, seconded by Brunson; motion carried with the following roll call vote:

Whitmer - Yes
Zimmerman – Yes
Mulvaney – Yes
Brunson – Yes

Announcements:

Deb Parcell invited the commission members to attend a commission roundtable event that they were planning for all the commissions in the area. Parcell said that it is happening Monday October 5th at 6:00 pm in Nappanee at the Dietrich building. Parcell explained the location of the building right at the corner of 6 and 19, right downtown at the stoplight. The building is a two-story building right across from Benny's chocolate and across from the Main Street rosters and all the good places to eat. The roundtable would talk about how to find good, qualified commission members, have some discussion, and hear about everybody's successes and challenges. Parcell announced that they will be happy to see the members and particularly Ryan Dewiler, who knows Doug. Doug said that he did watch the meeting that morning but did not see Parcell. Parcell explained that Nappanee has a commission member, Ryan Deweiler, who is friends with Doug, and she had a meeting with them that same morning, which made this her second commission meeting. Parcell said that Gregor Smith, who is the city planner in Fort Wayne, will be talking about the challenges they had as a big city and it is not easy to seat a full commission and to find people that are reliable to show up and make good decisions.

Parcell invited the commission to their holiday open house in Fort Wayne, she did not remember the address, but she will send out an invite in December.

Zimmerman asked for the name of the building. Parcell responded Dietrich. Parcell will send the commission members a message with the information and added that the city of Nappanee just acquired that building recently. Parcell said that the previous owners were not doing anything with the building and it is such a major part of their downtown, the city hated to see it fall apart and they finally were able to get it from the owner. The building is in the process of transferring to a new owner that will develop it out, but right now the city is going to make some repairs to it before it transfers on. Parcell said that there may be one business on the first floor and then the second floor has just been the same for unknown time. Previously it was single rooms that people rented out and there is a big wide hallway. Every room has its own door, bedroom, kitchen, and a shared bathroom at the end of the hall. Every room even has a screen door on it for warm season and people could have the screen door open to get fresh air from the hall. After the meeting, the attendees can go upstairs, and see the original wallpaper upstairs, which could be fun.

Zimmerman said that for the record there would be a roundtable meeting on October 5th of 2026 and it is at 6:00 pm at the Dietrich building in Nappanee. Zimmerman asked if there were any other announcements.

Adjournment:

Zimmerman said that he would accept a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:48 pm. Motion made by Brunson, seconded by Whitmer; motion approved 4-0.

Bill Zimmerman

Bill Zimmerman, Chair