

# **Borough of Merchantville Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Date:** October 2, 2018  
**Meeting Time:** 7:30 PM  
**Meeting Location:** Borough Hall

**Members:** Lynn North , Rita Lammey, Marie Hanna, Maureen McLoone (absent), Shawn Waldron (absent). Alternates, Regina Lovelidge, Nathan Weiner  
**Counselor:** Mark Asselta  
**Community Development Director:** Mara W. Wuebker  
**Borough Council Representative:** Andrew McLoone (absent)

**Opening:** Chair called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM and publicly read the Notice of the Meeting.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** The Commission joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:** Roll call was taken. Those absent are noted above.

**Meeting Minutes:** Motion to approve the minutes, from September 4, 2018, was made by Rita Lammey, Nathan Weiner seconded, passed unanimously.

Two **Certificates of Appropriateness** were presented to Mara.

**Confirmation of Applications before the Commission:**  
There is one application.

**New Business:**

**Application: 1810-1**  
**Applicant Name:** Khushbyben Darji  
**Property Location:** 134 E. Park Ave.  
**Name of Property or Business:** Desi Food Junction  
**Proposed work:** Signage, paint.

Ms. Darji presented the application. The application was not complete and much discussion ensued. Commission members discussed there appeared to be too many words on the sign and that it would not be comprehensible, particularly from passersby; there was a discussion that the most important aspects of the business should be on there for clarity. The commission was not in favor of the proposed pictures of food on the windows, as not consistent with ordinance or historic character. There was a review of §94-57(B) (2) (e) sign content limitations.

It was resolved that the main sign “Desi Food Junction” will be located on the existing sign board above the front windows. The overhead sign will be no more than 24 sq/ft. It

will include the words, Desi Food Junction, in black letters on the top row. Exquisite Indian Street Food, in golden orange letters below the name, with the phone number centered in black lettering below, there will be an orange “flame” graphic on the upper right corner, and a golden orange chafing dish lid in the lower left corner, the background of the sign will be white.

This sign will be duplicated in a slightly smaller size, 6’ x 3’ (18 sq/ft) on the Park Avenue side of the building. A 12” band sign will be located across the bottom of the windows, this band will be in the same golden orange color as the chafing dish lid, with up to 10” black letters, saying “eat – in”, “take – out”, “delivery” and their website address. The door sign will be no more than 12 x 16 inches and will include the name of the restaurant, hours of operation, and web address.. The wall, facing residential area is currently green. The Park Avenue side of the building is required to be painted cream to match the cream on the other building features. No interior lit signage.

There was a discussion about the Commission’s role. One board member expressed concern that he was not comfortable with telling a business what they can and cannot have on their signage, colors, etc., as businesses have gone through a lot of effort to put together a business plan. The Solicitor explained that as a historic preservation commission, the principal jurisdiction of the commission is aesthetics. While part of the role is making sure zoning ordinance compliance, it is also to offer expertise in what would be appropriate to fit in with the historic nature of the districts.

**Public Comment:** No public was present.

**Motion:** Marie Hanna moved to approve the application, as amended, Rita Lammey seconded, Regina Lovelidge voted yes, Nathan Weiner, voted no. Passed by majority.

**Old Business:** Application 1809-1. Mr. Brandenburger will be adding a driveway at 34 E Rogers Avenue. A review of the site plan shows that he is able to meet the ZO max improvement requirements, and he has elected to do so.

**Board Discussion:**

**Blue Monkey Tavern:** There is a problem with one of the columns on the front porch, and possibly part of the roof where the two meet. He will try to re-use the column cap, but if that is not possible will replace it in kind (with wood). As he is making an exact replacement in material and paint colors he will not be required to come before the Commission.

**Antique Salvage:** On Centre Street (Brad Walkers old building) Chairperson Lynn North, noted a large sign in the window and was wondering when it was approved. It was noted by Ms. Lammey that the sign had been there for some time, but that they had not presented an application and had been told to move the sign back from the window.

**D & A Cleaners:** Building behind is falling down. Ms. Wuebker noted that the owners have applied for a demolition permit.

**Miscellaneous.** There was a discussion about wanting to make sure that businesses were treated similarly and whether the HPC wants to propose any changes to the sign

ordinance that it feels would be appropriate. Shawn Waldron prepared examples in the past to provide guidance to applicants. Ms. Wuebker will see if he still has it. Discussion that applicants can seek variances from Joint Land Use Board if want to propose something outside of the zoning ordinance parameters, so there is an appeal procedure in place.

The commission discussed how to calculate allowable signage for freestanding signs. The Board discussed, 177 S Centre Street as an example. Charlie's Crepes has a separate building so they would be allowed to have a second freestanding sign, as we believe them to be 30 feet from the street, but they have already maxed out their sign allotment. The Commission feels that the Trellis Plaza sign is a directional sign and doesn't count, but if were to add a tenant sign to it, then would need to take the whole sign calculation into consideration. The other tenant sign does not appear to meet the min 3' min requirement between bottom of sign and the ground.

Ms. Wuebker will email everyone copies of the sign ordinance, so they can use it as a tool when reviewing applications; the entire zoning ordinance and historic preservation master plan is on the google drive.

**Meeting Adjourned:** Motion to adjourn was made by Rita Lammey, seconded by Regina Lovelidge, passed unanimously at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
N. Lynn North, Chair