



Mayor & Council of Berlin

10 William Street, Berlin, Maryland 21811

Phone 410-641-2770 Fax 410-641-2316

www.berlinmd.gov

**Town of Berlin
Historic District Commission
December 3, 2025 – 5:30 PM
Berlin Town Hall – Council Chambers**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Agenda Adoption**
- 3. Approval of Minutes:** November 5, 2025
- 4. Case # HDC-12-03-25-31:** 10 William Street – Town Hall Renovations / Exterior Façade Changes
- 5. Comments from the Public**
- 6. Comments from the Staff**
- 7. Comments from the Commissioners**
- 8. Comments from the Chairman**
- 9. Adjournment**

Any persons with questions about the above-referenced meeting or any persons needing special accommodations should contact Kate Daub at 410-641-4002. Written materials in alternate formats for persons with disabilities are made available upon request. TTY users dial 7-1-1 in the State of Maryland.

Town of Berlin
Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 5, 2025

Chairman Bunting called the Historic District meeting to order on November 5, 2025, at 5:32 PM. Members present were Vice Chair Laura Stearns, John Holloway, Mary Moore, Lisa Doyle, and Carol Rose. Staff in attendance were Acting Planning Director Ryan Hardesty, Special Projects Coordinator Kate Daub, and Permits Coordinator Kaitlin Ahlers.

Chairman Bunting requested a motion to adopt the agenda for the November 5, 2025, meeting. Mr. Holloway moved to approve the agenda, and Ms. Stearns seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Bunting called for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 2, 2025, meeting. Ms. Moore mentioned she had a note regarding the minutes but said she could overlook it. Ms. Stearns then made a motion to approve the minutes, which Mr. Holloway seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

Chairman Bunting introduced the first case, HDC-9-3-25-28, which continued the discussion from September's Historic District Commission meeting regarding the renovation of the outdoor area at 2 Bay Street. The project was presented by Travis Lingo, a contractor from Topio Landscape Architecture. Mr. Lingo outlined the plan to transform the existing asphalt of 2 Bay Street, specifically the site of the former PNC drive-through, into a public pocket park. He explained that they intend to soften the existing asphalt and add downspouts to help manage stormwater runoff from the adjacent buildings. The proposal includes installing pavers and planters. The designs featured various types of pavers and asphalt, a white arch, a metal waterfall installation, metal planters, and a selection of flowers for the planters.

Mr. Holloway asked about the height of the planters that would be blocking the park from the road. Mr. Lingo stated that they would be 18" to 24" in height, with the most desirable being 24". Ms. Stearns asked about the arbor and water feature, and Mr. Lingo stated that he aims to maintain a classic design. Ms. Stearns complimented Mr. Lingo on how it adheres to the town's historic design while providing a nice distraction from a busy area. Chairman Bunting asked Mr. Lingo about the waterfall and if it would run continuously. Mr. Lingo stated that the waterfall has a timer that can be set up to automatically stop the water from running through

Ms. Stearns commented on the design's visual appeal and thanked Mr. Lingo for presenting such great work. Mr. Holloway made a motion to approve HDC-9-3-25-28 as presented, which Ms. Moore seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously.

Chairman Bunting introduced the next case, a continuation of case # HDC-10-01-25-29 at 10 South Main Street, involving a request for approval to install a mural on the north side of the Poole Building. Presenting the proposal were Ms. Ivy Wells, Director of Economic and Community

Development, property owner Mr. Mike Poole, and Mr. Evan Fitzgerald, a local artist and the designer of the proposed mural. Ms. Wells began by thanking the commission for their time and expressed her utmost respect for what they do for the Town of Berlin.

The discussion shifted to Mr. Poole, who was asked if he supported the mural, and he confirmed that he did. Chairman Bunting thanked Mr. Poole for his attendance, then moved the discussion to Mr. Fitzgerald and his mural design. The commission inquired about the changes Mr. Fitzgerald made to the original design. He explained that he sat down twice to try to move items and erase sections of the mural, but he kept encountering restrictions or elements he found offensive.

Chairman Bunting then directed the conversation to the point that the Poole Building is not a historic building within the district. He also noted that the building could be repainted in the future. Chairman Bunting stated that he was personally in favor of the mural but could only cast a vote in the event of a tie. He informed the commissioners that he had spoken with several individuals he respects since the last meeting. He further explained that, based on the guidance he received, it was not the commission's role to direct the artist to change the artwork, and that the commission should be voting on the plan itself, not the art. It was also noted that the commission appreciated the artist's attendance at the prior meeting to further explain his work.

Next, Ms. Moore began her statement by providing background on her experience serving as a member of a Historic District near Washington, D.C., specifically Montgomery County. She told the audience that she moved here when Berlin was a very run-down town and that the mayor appointed her and everyone on the committee after a lengthy interview process. Ms. Moore told the commission that she wants a sense of history in the mural, but does not see it depicted. She expressed that, as it is, she feels it does not belong in the Historic District.

Ms. Doyle stated that she was in favor of the mural and had given it a lot of thought since the last meeting. She stated that since Mr. Poole is in favor of the design as presented, she would not oppose it. Ms. Doyle directed the conversation to the dialogue and discussion of the previous meeting, and she felt that the discussion was not in the spirit of working together. She stated that she did not oppose the artwork, even though it is not necessarily to her taste.

Next, Ms. Rose explained that she enjoyed the piece from the start and was prepared to vote in favor of it at the last meeting, but then the meeting took a turn. She mentioned that when she first saw the image, she thought it was beautiful. She added that if the painting were going on red brick, she would have an issue with it, but she did not since it is not on a historic building.

Mr. Holloway agreed that it is not a historic building, and he would not ask Mr. Fitzgerald to change his ideas. Mr. Holloway stated that he has a strong liking for the ghost murals in town and supports local art, but said he would support the proposed design.

Finally, Ms. Stearns stated that she would pass it for the same reasons as the other commissioners shared. She reiterated that it can be painted over, and it is not a historical building. She stated that she does not believe it should be made to look like a postcard and that she appreciates the artist's work. Ms. Stearns stated that she had seen the backlash on social media regarding the mural

discussed at the October 1, 2025, meeting and that she found it very disheartening. She stated that the commission is appointed to approve projects that align with the goals of the Historic District Commission and that aim to keep the town's charm.

She compared it to leaving the Atlantic Hotel, saying that after looking at the pictures on the walls, the town appears the same. Ms. Stearns mentioned that Berlin has something unique that no other town has, and she fears the town will try to become more urban. She praised Mr. Fitzgerald's work but noted that the more things added to the town, the more that is taken away from what it already has, and she is keeping this in mind.

Ms. Rose stated that she, Chairman Bunting, and Mr. Holloway were born and raised in Berlin. She mentioned that she remembers a time when there were empty storefronts and buildings were falling apart, and she does not want to see that happen again. She added that she was really sad to see that, instead of people calling to ask for clarification, the commission received many horrible comments about their opinion.

Ms. Stearns explained that she wanted to clarify the ongoing question about the fake brick that was mentioned. She noted that when the board listens to a property owner, it can be very hard to tell them what they can and can't do with their property. She said she tries to be very aware of that, as do the other commissioners. She expressed her desire to approve projects that come before the commission, and the commission does its best, given the circumstances. She also reminded the audience and those watching remotely that they meet on the first Wednesday of each month and would love people to attend and share their opinions on proposals.

Ms. Rose mentioned that the public and press rarely attend meetings. She reminded the audience that they can always watch from home. She said the most upsetting thing was realizing that after the meeting, they received comments and messages claiming the mural had been rejected. She clarified that if the mural had been rejected, the commission would not be meeting to discuss it because it would not be eligible for consideration again until next year. She explained that the matter was simply tabled to allow for more research, as they can only discuss proposals in public.

Following no further discussion, Ms. Stearns made a motion to approve the mural, which Ms. Rose seconded. The motion passed with Mr. Holloway and Ms. Doyle in favor, and Ms. Moore opposed.

Ms. Moore explained her opposition by saying she sees no historical significance and recognizes the artist's vision. She clarified that she does not object to the painting itself but believes it does not meet the standards of the historic district. Ms. Moore emphasized that the commission maintains very high standards and often faces criticism. She added that social media criticism will not influence her vote. She also noted that Colonial Williamsburg and Nantucket Island would not be what they are today if it weren't for the historic districts coming together. Ms. Moore further said that the commission has worked hard to understand that some people may see their decisions as personal, but they are simply trying to keep standards pristine and high. She expressed that the commission cares deeply about the residents of Berlin. Ms. Moore acknowledged that some Facebook users expressed that they liked the mural and wanted it, but she pointed out that it is not

the commission's role to follow public input. Nonetheless, she stated that she and the commission do appreciate public opinion.

Mr. Poole addressed the commission, noting the improvements to the building's appearance since he purchased it and comparing its former condition with its current appearance. He expressed his appreciation for the commission and remarked that the proposed mural would become a feature people would want to take photos with, similar to the butterfly mural. Mr. Poole reiterated his respect for the commission, explaining that he frequently appears before various boards and understands the significance of their role.

Mr. Poole, Mr. Fitzgerald, and Ms. Wells thanked the commission for their time. Chairman Bunting asked when painting would begin, and Mr. Fitzgerald responded that they plan to start around April 2026, once the weather begins to warm.

Ms. Moore stated that she was sorry that the Town Attorney, Mr. David Gaskill, was not present at the meeting. Ms. Hardesty answered that Mr. Gaskill had to leave and was unable to stay for the length of the meeting. Ms. Moore commented on the legal opinion from Attorney Mr. Gaskill included in the meeting packet regarding the commission's duties, specifically stating, "I believe the HDC should give greater weight to the approval of the Arts Committee since that committee's expertise is art and the HDC's is not." She expressed disagreement with the notion that the commission members' backgrounds are unknown.

Ms. Moore emphasized her extensive experience in fine arts and as an art teacher. She stated that she has never seen anyone lack a sense of balance, as it is not something learned but something a person is born with. Ms. Moore reiterated her disagreement with Mr. Gaskill and criticized the statement as poorly expressed. She then referenced the mural's musical element and how the design creates discord because the eye does not move smoothly across the imagery. Ms. Moore continued to describe the mural as discordant and jarring, asserting it was not interesting despite her understanding of art.

Following no further comments from the public, commission, or staff, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kaitlin Ahlers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kaitlin" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Ahlers".

Kaitlin Ahlers, Permits Coordinator



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Historic District Application

Date: 11/4/2025 Subject Property Location: 10 William Street Case #: HDC-12-03-25-31

Property Owner: Town of Berlin Owner Phone #: 410-641-3845

Owner Address: 10 William Street Owner Email: mayorzack@berlinmd.gov

Agent/Contractor: Haley Architecture, LLC Agent Phone #: 410.726.7880

Work Involves (check one): ☒ Alterations ☐ New Construction ☐ Addition ☐ Demolition ☐ Sign ☐ Other

DESCRIPTION OF WORK PROPOSED:
Town Hall Renovations / Exterior Facade changes

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO BE FILED WITH APPLICATION

All required documents must be submitted to the Planning Department prior to at least thirty (30) days prior to the next regularly scheduled hearing. Failure to include all the required attachments and/or failure of the applicant or his/her authorized representative to appear at the scheduled meeting may result in postponement of the application until the next scheduled meeting. If an application is denied, the same application cannot be resubmitted for one year from date of such action. The Berlin Historic District Commission Rules and Regulations are available for review in the Town of Berlin Planning Department.

The following items, if applicable, must be provided to Town Staff in order for the proposal to be considered:

1. Site Plan
2. Scaled drawings of plans and/or elevations of the proposal, or in the alternative, a scale model.
3. Color photographs of the existing structure, the area to be altered and close-ups of architectural details.
4. For a proposed new structure, photographs of the subject site and all buildings in the immediate vicinity.
5. All photographs shall be printed on 8 ½ x 11 paper or provided in digital format and shall be labeled with a description of the context of the photographs.
6. Samples of materials or copies of manufacturers' product literature.

The applicant, or an authorized representative, has been advised to appear at the meeting of the Berlin Historic District Commission scheduled for Wednesday, December 3, 2025 (date of meeting).

Applicant Signature [Signature] Date 11-04-2025

APPROVED:

Historic District Commission Chair

Date

Planning Director

Date

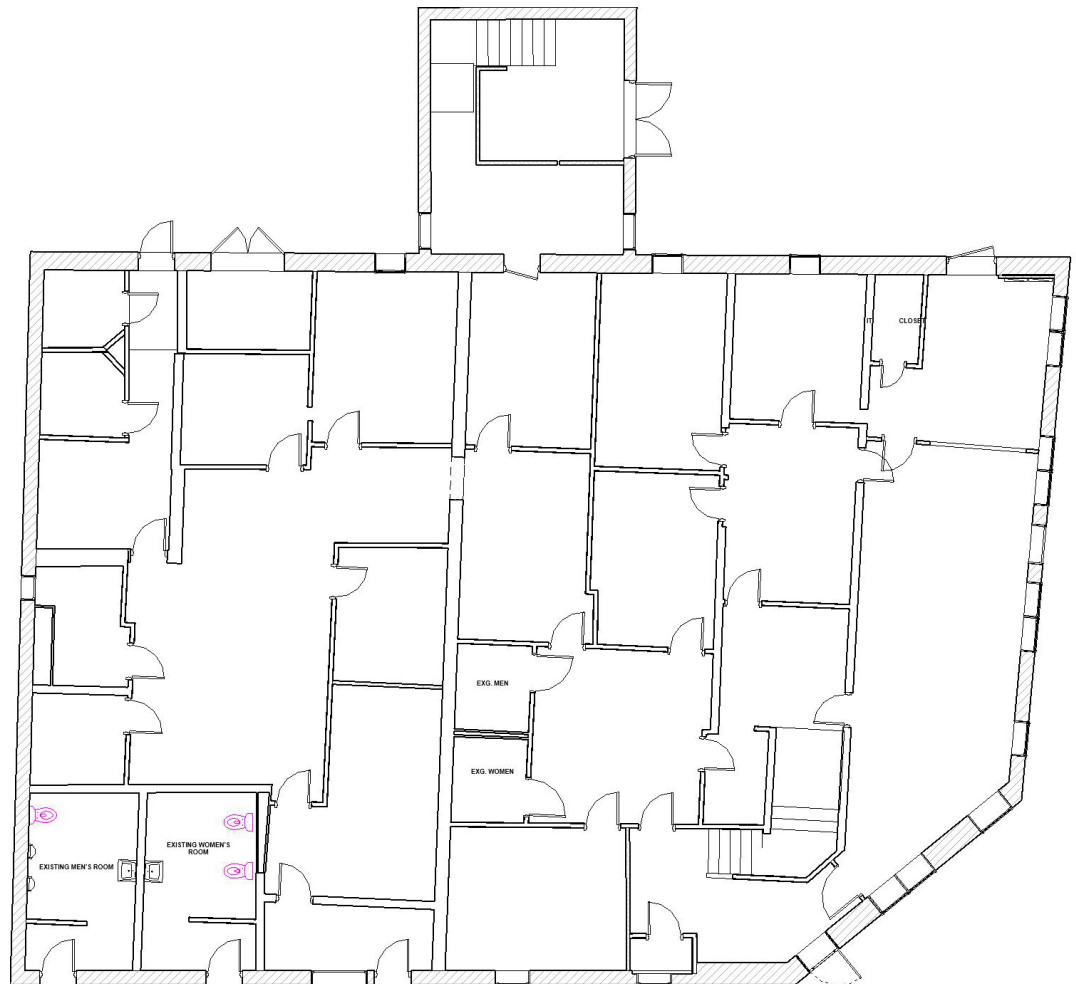


Town of Berlin Town Hall Renovations



Historic Commission Meeting –
December 3, 2025

EXISTING FLOOR PLAN



PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN



PROPOSED CHANGES

New double-entry door in place of existing double windows.

New window in existing front door opening with brick infill to match opposite side.

New signage

New suspended canopy

New built-up cornice at roof parapet

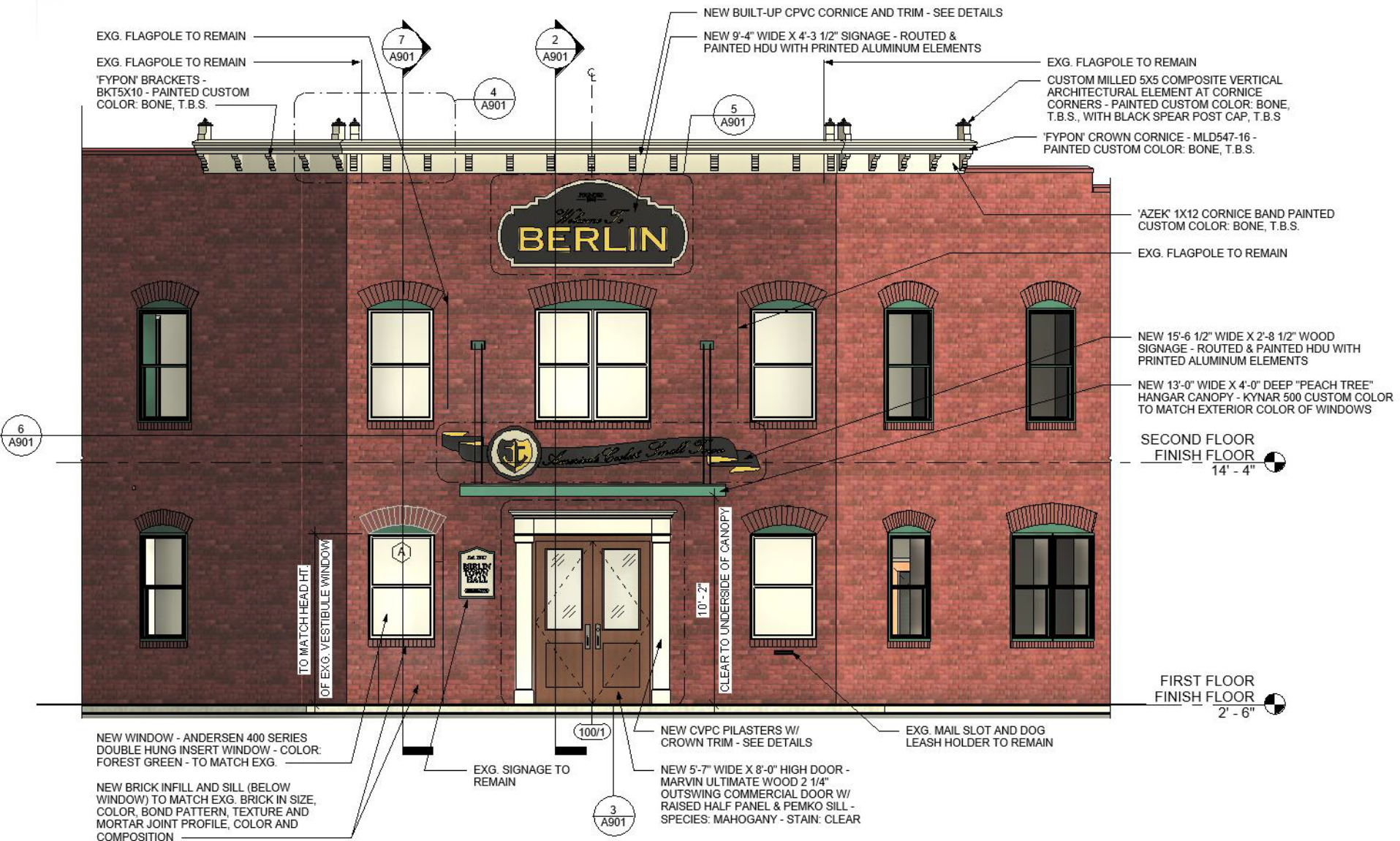
Existing flag poles, mail slot, dog leash holder, & Town Hall entry sign to remain.

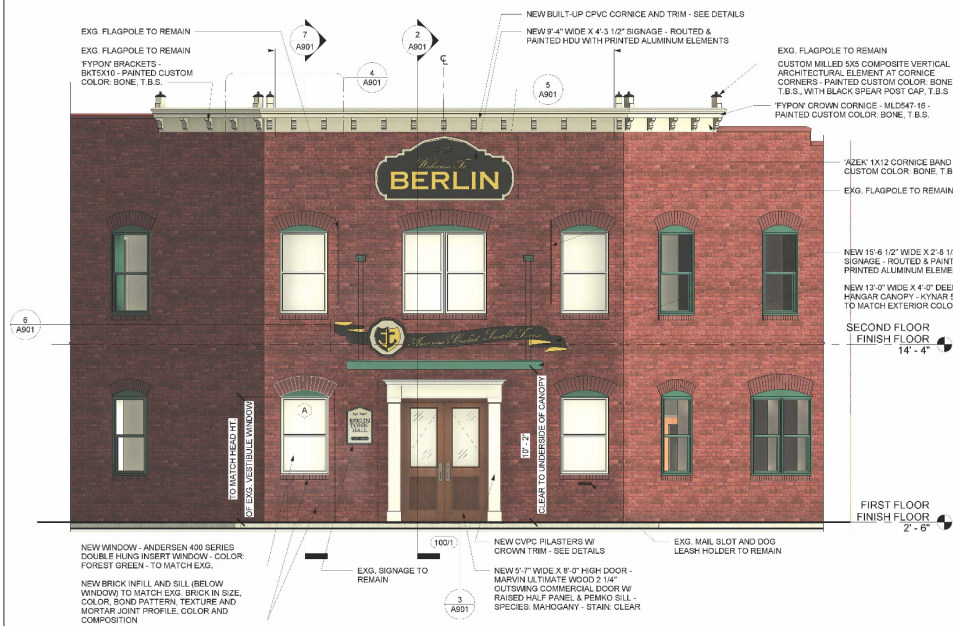
EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION



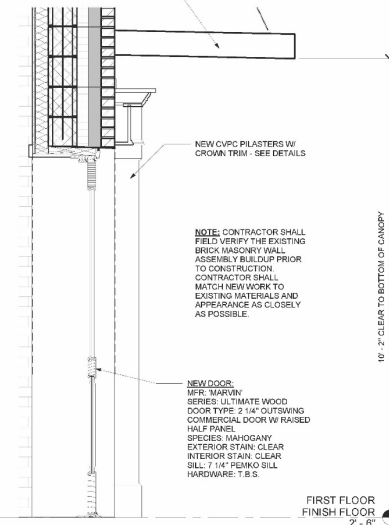
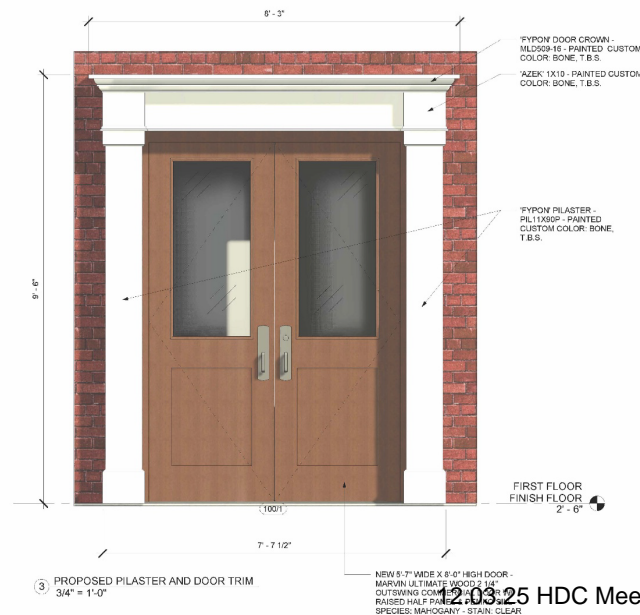
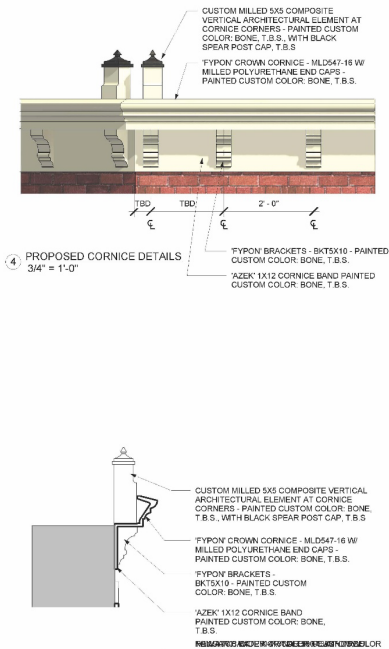
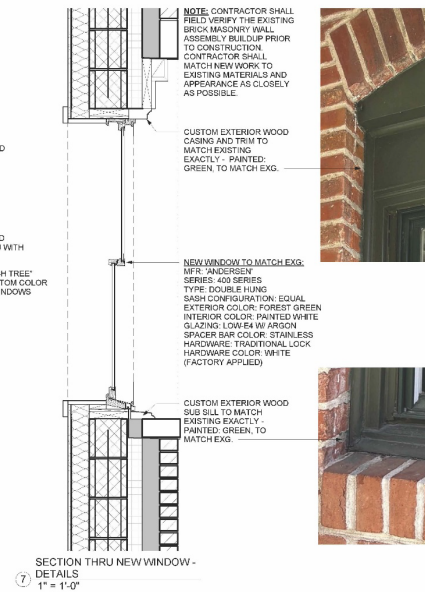
PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION







PROPOSED PARTIAL FRONT ELEVATION - DETAILS
1/4" = 1'-0"



PROPOSED FRONT DOOR & MOLDING

GEORGIAN STYLE DOOR TRIM / MOLDING

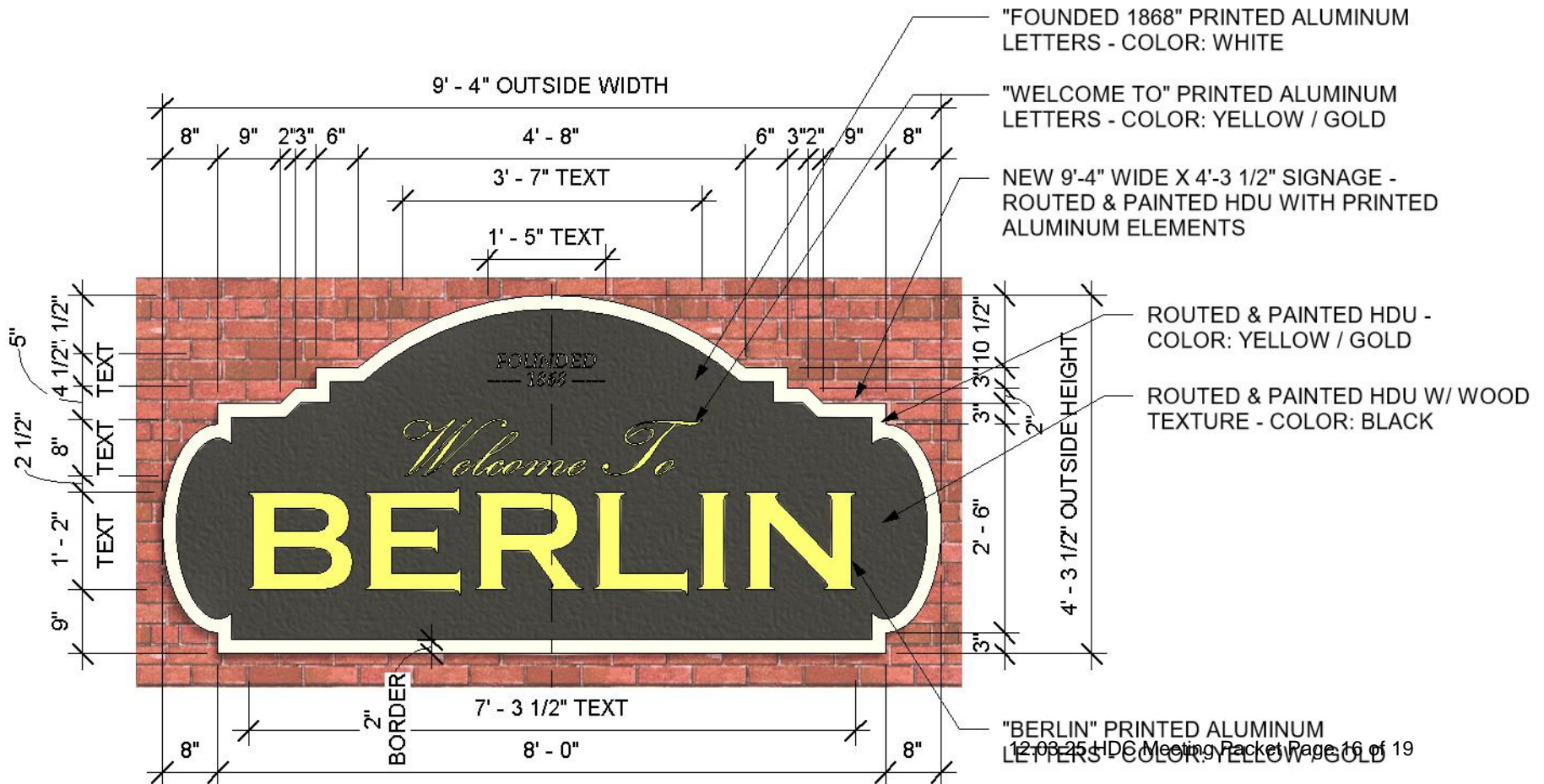


MARVIN ULTIMATE COMMERCIAL DOORS

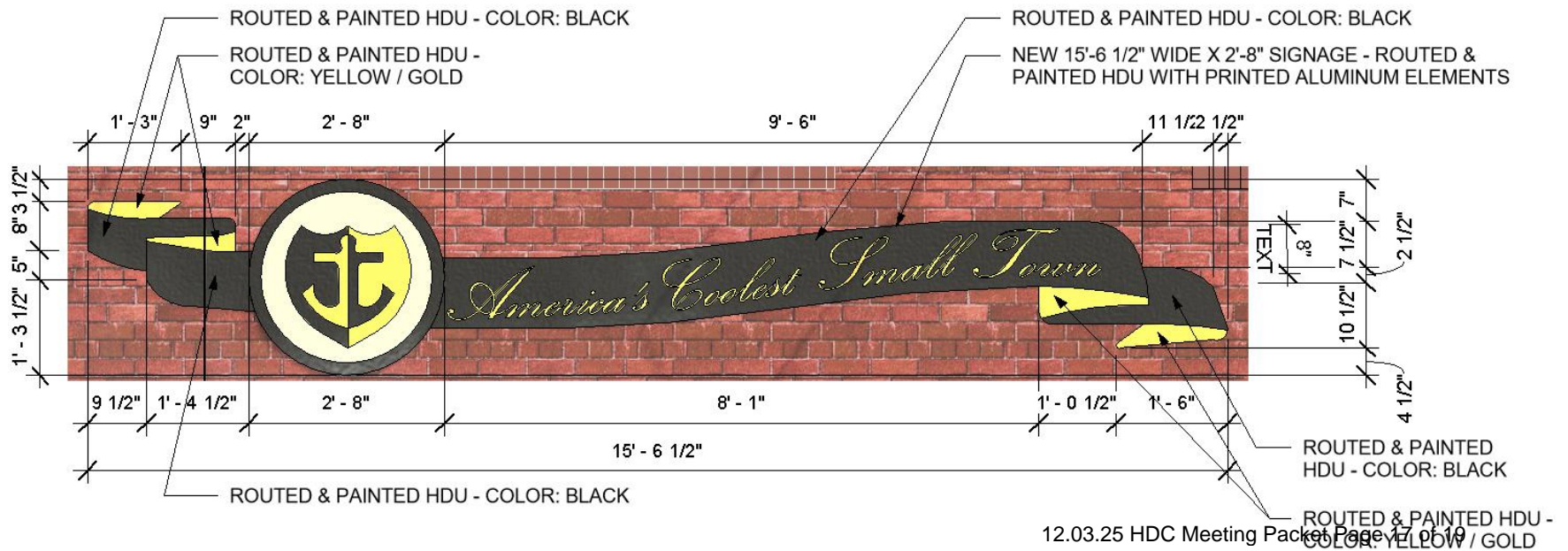
PROPOSED SIGNAGE



(SAMPLE OF SIGNAGE MATERIAL / STYLE)



PROPOSED SIGNAGE



PROPOSED CANOPY



(EXAMPLE OF PEACHTREE CANOPY STYLE ONLY)

PROPOSED CORNICE

