

## **Town of Odessa**

Minutes from the Historic Commission Meeting  
Thursday, December 11, 2025  
7:00 PM Meeting

- I. Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.
- II. Roll Call – Commission members present were Debbie Buckson, Neeka Grove, Todd Nelson, Melissa Steeley (arrived late at 7:08 PM) and Carla Pyle. Also in attendance was Mayor Harvey C. Smith Jr. and Town Secretary Amy Marie Ottinger. Representing Friends of Zoar Inc was Treasurer Steve Johnson and Katie O'Donnell, Gary Cigmaglia with i3a LLC and John Bansch. There were no residents in attendance.
- III. Approval of the Minutes
  - a. Meeting Minutes from 11-20-25 – Neeka Grove requested to add to the minutes a statement that during the initial meetings with the developer the commissioners were consistently told not to include mention of these new homes being ‘adjacent’ to the historic district, which they then accepted and adopted new guidelines for this development only. However, the builder and the Town came back asking the commission to now accept the ‘adjacent’ properties so that concrete and interior muntins would be considered.

**MOTION BY DEBBIE BUCKSON, SECONDED BY TODD NELSON, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM 11-20-25 TO INCLUDE THE ADDITIONAL STATEMENT BY NEEKA GROVE. MOTION WAS APPROVED. VOTE: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION (STEELEY NOT PRESENT AT THE TIME OF VOTE)**

- IV. New Business
  - a. Friends of Zoar Inc – Zoar Methodist Episcopal Church – 620 Main Street
    - Parcel #24003.00041
    - Steve Johnson thanked the committee and stated they are very excited to bring Zoar back into use again. He stated they have great architectural and engineering plans in place. They have been blessed with grants from the State, the Welfare Foundation and most recently the National Trust for Historic Preservation. They are working with Ed Ide and Gary Cigmaglia with i3a, LLC to act as their construction managers. They have begun work at the social hall removing some asbestos. The next project is the social hall basement so that plumbing can be installed and it will continue on from there. They have signed contracts with plumbing, mechanical and electrical contractors. They have no target date for completion but are hoping that a good bit of the work will be done next year. The response from the community has been very positive.
    - The church’s engineering firm, i3a LLC, submitted a historic review application for approval of seventeen (17) exterior changes, attached hereto as Attachment A (2-page letter with 16-page packet of drawings) with the goal being to restore the church as close as possible

to its circa 1935 appearance. The commissioners reviewed each request separately and provided comments when necessary.

1. Construction of new vestibule, connecting existing social hall and existing church – Drawings A-1.1 and A-2.3 depict what they are proposing. The door and the entrance to the vestibule will be a new door (Door 102). The commissioners requested that the door be of the same architectural period as the social hall, constructed of wood, and contain exterior muntins. The sidelight would also need to contain exterior muntins. The commissioners preferred that the vestibule door (and sidelight if possible) be 2/3 wood 1/3 glass. The roof for the vestibule will be a standing seam metal roof. The roof color will be decided by the property owner, as the commissioners have no say on colors, just materials. Debbie Buckson added that classic metal roof colors for that time period would have been red, black or dark green. The owners are leaning towards black. They will use composite/Azek materials for any trim work. The commissioners requested the address numbers not be placed where shown on the drawings.
2. Restoration of existing exterior brick – Gary stated that the brick is in decent shape but there are areas that are disintegrating so they would like to address any of those areas to prevent further erosion and replace any areas in kind that they need to. They will brick match as closely as possible to the church. The commissioners stated that there is a special softer mortar that needs to be used with older brick otherwise it pops the face of the brick off. Gary stated he would discuss it with the contractor.
3. Reinstallation of existing church windows – the church will be using the contractor that last repaired them. The contractor has removed (5) broken panels and is replacing and restoring them. Next step will be to repair the sashes.
4. Restoration of rose window at front of building
5. Restoration of existing exterior church doors
6. Construction of cupola on roof of church – Drawing A-2.3 and A-3.5 depict what they are proposing. The contractor will verify the condition of the existing roof before they add the cupola. The box framed cupola will have a steep pitched roof. The goal is to recreate the circa 1938 cupola as depicted on Drawing A-3.5. The bell will not be installed in the tower. The cupola roof will match the main church roof.
7. Replacement of existing roof with slate or composite slate – The church originally had a slate roof, so they are proposing either a real slate roof or a synthetic composite slate roof. Currently the church has an asphalt roof.
8. Remove existing chimney and provide new sheathing and roof system – Since there is no fireplace and no current connection to the heating system, the owners requested to remove the chimney. Gary stated that the goal is to have a water-tight roof system. The commissioners agreed that they could either remove the chimney or repoint it if they wanted to keep it.
9. Replace existing fascia with Azek composite trim product – all existing fascia will be inspected and if possible, the commissioners would like it to be salvaged, but if it must be replaced, then an Azek composite trim product would be acceptable.
10. Install half round aluminum gutters with round aluminum downspouts – the product chosen should blend with the roof color so that they are not obvious. The commissioners suggested copper or simulated copper.

11. Remove existing soffit on eaves, leaving original rafter tails exposed – the commissioners had no objection to this item.
12. Proposed trim work at each rake of the church – the goal is to restore and salvage any trim that they can, and if it must be replaced, replacing in kind or using a composite Azek material when applicable.
13. Repoint brick on church bell structure
14. Install (2) exterior wall louvers and (2) outdoor compressors for HVAC system – The commissioners requested that the exterior condensing units be moved to the rear of the building so that they are not visible from the street. If they are unable to relocate them to the rear, then the commissioners requested that they be screened from the street with a wood privacy fence.
15. Remove (2) existing trees at front of property – Steve stated that DelDOT came and removed half of each of the river birch trees because they viewed them as a traffic hazard as they were encroaching on the roadway. They requested to remove the remaining split trees as they are an eyesore. The commissioners did not object. They added that there is no landscaping plan yet for the parcel.
16. Prepare and install new concrete sidewalk connecting church and social hall to DelDOT's future sidewalk project along Rt. 299 – Drawing A-1.1 shows the proposed sidewalk. Gary stated that the plan is very open ended as DelDOT is planning on adding sidewalks on the south side of Rt 299 (Main Street). DelDOT is requiring that handicap curb cuts be installed at the East and West side of the property entrances to provide handicap accessibility to the church. The church would like to create a pathway to each of the entrances to the building. Discussions with DelDOT still need to take place but they wanted to make the commissioners aware that it is a part of the scope of the project and will need to be implemented. The commissioners requested brick sidewalks in lieu of concrete if possible as this property is located in the Historic District.
17. Prep and paint all exterior wall surfaces of social hall – The commissioners suggested pulling hues from the interior woodwork for exterior paint choices.

**MOTION BY NEEKA GROVE, SECONDED BY DEBBIE BUCKSON, TO APPROVE THE PROJECT AS PRESENTED WITH AGREED UPON SUGGESTIONS. MOTION WAS APPROVED. VOTE: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTAIN**

- V. Old Business – There was no old business.
- VI. Public Comment – There was no public comment.
- VII. Next Meeting Date and Time – Next regularly scheduled meeting is Thursday, January 8, 2026 @ 7:00 PM.
- VIII. Adjournment – There was a motion by Debbie Buckson to adjourn, and it was seconded by Neeka Grove. Motion was approved. Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays. The meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.