

Battlefield foundation to change New Market headquarters sign

By Kevin Green

The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation will be changing the sign on its New Market headquarters next week.

The foundation was set to plead its case to the New Market Board of Zoning Appeals on Thursday. However, the scheduled meeting was canceled that

morning.

Town Manager Mike Ritchie said, "We were contacted yesterday by the foundation, and they withdrew their request for a variance."

The foundation filed for a variance request to allow the sign to stay in place on June 12. The town's board of zoning appeals

would have decided whether to approve or deny that request.

The town was threatening to fine the foundation up \$1,000 per day if the sign was not changed.

Rob Aitcheson, director of policy and public communications for the foundation, said, "We could have potentially been looking at

up to \$75,000, if the board of zoning appeals agreed with the town and decided to levee the fine."

With the meeting canceled, Ritchie said that the foundation "will be taking steps next week to bring that sign into compliance with the town code."

New Market's town code

requires that buildings along that street have signs no larger than 90 square feet. The sign the foundation installed measured 164 square feet.

The foundation will pay a one-time fee of around \$2,000 to have a company from Pennsylvania replace the sign next week.

SIGN, A2

Sign

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Aitcheson said.

Aitcheson said, "The additional cost is not super exciting for us, but we'll bite the bullet."

The foundation installed the sign on May 9, which was part of renovations they completed to the headquarters for the 151st reenactment of the Civil War Battle of New Market.

"The sign was an appropriate size for a Civil War-era building," Aitcheson said. "That's pretty much how it would have looked."

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SHENANDOAH VALLEY BATTLEFIELDS FOUNDATION

Aitcheson said, "Pretty much right after the sign went up, we got a letter saying that we could potentially be fined up to \$1,000 per day."

After that, the foundation sought to strategically look at how to approach the town about the size of the sign, Aitcheson said.

"We were hoping that maybe we could argue that, if you took in the

square footage of the building that faces all streets on the corner, that it would be within code," Aitcheson said.

"We received some really great public support on it," Aitcheson said. "But there's a difference between having moral force in an argument and having legal force."

He said the foundation is looking forward to contin-

uing its good relationship with the town of New Market. "They've got a great staff over there ... there's no hard feelings."

Ritchie said, "We look forward to putting that matter behind us and applying our time and resources to more positive ventures."

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