

LAYTONSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2017

Roll Call: Chair Lisa Simonetti called to order a meeting of the Laytonsville Historic District Commission at 7:36 p.m. Commission members Charles Hendricks, Jill Ruspi, and Michele Shortley and Alternate Susan Phillips were present. Member Andrew Drouliskos was absent.

Public Attendance: Brian Dribben, Mayor Jim Ruspi, and Marcos Ulloa (representing Moises Figueroa) were also present.

Opening Statement: Chair Simonetti read the statement of the purpose of the commission.

Minutes: Chair Simonetti distributed to the members present and to the alternate draft minutes prepared by Andi Tozzoli of the Commission's meeting of August 21, 2017. Member Hendricks, who had received a copy of the draft minutes from the town clerk before the meeting, distributed a sheet containing proposed revisions to the draft minutes. The Commission decided to hold the draft minutes over until the next meeting for further review.

Public Hearing:

21532 Laytonsville Road (Figueroa residence): Chair Simonetti reopened the hearing on the portion of application HDWP-05-17 submitted by Moises Figueroa relative to the installation of fencing around a portion of the rear of his lot. Marcos Ulloa, who is living in the house, presented to the commission on behalf of his father, Mr. Figueroa, a plat of the property showing the proposed location of the fence for which approval was requested. The fence would be placed on the west and north sides of the property in an "L" shape, extending across the entire west side of the property but extending no further east along the north side of the property than the rear corner of the house, and the fence would be connected to the house at that corner. Except for that connection, the fence would run along the property line. Member Shortley recused herself from the decision on this matter as co-owner of the adjoining property to the north.

Member Ruspi stated that placing a fence directly on the property line requires the agreement of the owners of the property on both sides of the line. Mr. Ulloa indicated that his family could be flexible regarding whether the fence would be located on the property line or set back from that line. In response to a query from Member Hendricks, Member Shortley observed that her wrought-iron fence was placed about one foot north of the property line to avoid cherry trees. This three-foot-high fence is finished only about halfway from the street to the rear of the property and behind that point only fence posts have been installed, Member Shortley stated.

Mr. Ulloa showed photos of the stockade-style fence proposed for the Figueroa property. He said that he did not plan to paint the fence. Member Ruspi read from the town's guidelines pertaining to fences. These included requirements that the finished side

of the fence should face the exterior of the property and that fences should be painted or covered with a solid stain. Member Shortley stated that she and her husband had decided they had no objection to having the fence placed on the property line. Mr. Ulloa stated that the proposed fence would be six feet high. Member Hendricks observed that the commission had in May 2015 approved a six-foot-high privacy fence behind the house of Elizabeth Besteder at 21412 Laytonsville Road.

Member Ruspi moved that the wooden picket fence proposed in HDWP-05-17 as shown in the plat submitted to the commission be approved in accordance with the town guidelines, that it be six feet in height and stained. Member Hendricks seconded the motion. The motion was approved without dissent with Member Shortley not participating. Mr. Ulloa and Member Shortley then made arrangements for a conversation between her husband Tim Shortley and Mr. Figueroa relative to the exact placement of the fence.

New Business

21741 Rolling Ridge Lane (Lot 10, Rolling Ridge subdivision): Mayor Jim Ruspi reported that the Town Council held a public hearing on September 12 on the plans submitted by Brian Dribben for this lot. At that hearing Member Hendricks stated his belief that this lot was one over which the commission had historically been asked to provide comments to the Council on development plans. The Council closed the hearing at the conclusion of testimony that evening but decided to keep the record open for further written comment until a special meeting of the Council set for September 26. Subsequent research at Town Hall failed to find records of any requirement for consultation with the commission with regard to the lot in question. Mayor Ruspi stated that the final orientation of the house was not set by the time of the September 12 hearing, that Mr. Dribben did not own the lot at that time, and that Council members were concerned that the plans called for the use of three materials on the front of the house, so a few matters had not then been resolved. Mayor Ruspi, however, anticipated that the house would be approved in some form.

Alternate Phillips asked whether the use of three materials on the front of the house conformed with historic guidelines. Member Ruspi stated that the guidelines did not directly address new home construction.

At Mayor Ruspi's suggestion, Chair Simonetti read an email message the mayor had sent her in which he said that, in the absence of any record of the Town Council asking for the commission's comments on Lot 10 in the past, the Council would, he believed, view any comments on this lot that the commission might wish to provide as it would comments from any citizen. He recommended that the commission move on to other business.

Member Hendricks stated that he too had researched since the September 12 Town Council meeting the history of Historic District Commission comments relative to the lot in question and other similar lots not mentioned in the Council resolution pertaining to Lot 5 in Rolling Ridge, where Mr. Dribben had first proposed to build a home. In November 2015 the commission made recommendations to the Town Council for which models to approve for each of the lots adjacent to the Historic District in Area C of Laytonsville Preserve, and Member Hendricks said that he understood that the Council had followed each of those recommendations. In April 2014, Member Hendricks stated, a representative of Craftmark Homes had asked the commission to recommend approval of a change in the orientation of

the proposed homes on Lots 10 and 11, Rolling Ridge, which the commission did, and the Council carried that recommendation into effect. In December 2013 the commission had considered models for Lots 5, 10, and 11 in Rolling Ridge and recommended a list for approval, but the Council did not then follow the commission's advice. Member Hendricks said he understood that whether the Mayor and Council wished to receive the commission's advice was entirely their call, and he simply hoped that they would make their wishes on this matter clear.

Mayor Ruspi said that he did not want to alter past practices with regard to commission recommendations relative to lots adjacent to the Historic District generally, but that, after consultation with the members of the Council, he did not believe that close consultation with the commission on Lot 10 in Rolling Ridge was warranted. He said that he felt that more extended discussion of Mr. Dribben's plans by the commission would not be wise. He concluded by observing that Mr. Dribben was present and he understood that he had some comments he wished to make.

Member Ruspi observed that the commission had explicit authority to make recommendations relative to Lot 5 in Rolling Ridge, which is why the commission examined Mr. Dribben's plans there carefully, but that the situation of Lot 10 was different.

Chair Simonetti invited Mr. Dribben to address the commission. Mr. Dribben reported that he had purchased Lot 10 earlier in the day. He presented a revised site plan along with exterior elevations. He explained that he had reoriented the house to face north, finding that he will be able to do so and still comply with legal requirements. The garage will face west. The location of the house is being moved, he stated, 35 feet south from its site in his previous proposal, and he hoped that this would accommodate concerns raised at the Council hearing by Chris Palamara, the owner of the house on the parcel directly west of Lot 10. Mr. Dribben said that he found that Lot 10 has several characteristics that made him prefer it to Lot 5.

Member Ruspi asked about the amount of glass on the back of the house. Mr. Dribben said that his two-story great room would have two sets of picture windows. This will allow for the entry of more sunlight and enhance his views from the house. There will also be French doors leading to the back yard. He added that the two-car garage would have a single door and the west side would have, in addition, a handful of bedroom and bathroom windows. Member Ruspi said that the plans looked nice. Member Hendricks said that he had reservations about the four identical panes of glass that composed each picture window but understood Mr. Dribben's rationale for eliminating the double-hung windows on the outer panes shown in the earlier plans. Mr. Dribben stated that window treatment plans had not been finalized.

In response to a question from Member Hendricks, Mr. Dribben stated that he intended to send his revised plans to the homeowners' association now. In response to a question from Mayor Ruspi, Mr. Dribben stated that he had added to the architectural drawings the certification that the mayor had sought stating that the height of the house would conform to town limitations. The height of the house will be 34 feet, Mr. Dribben observed.

Member Hendricks suggested that the commission might want to inform the Town Council that it approved the plans submitted by Mr. Dribben. Member Shortley responded that because the plans retained the multiple peaks and varied materials that the commission had criticized earlier, the commission should not express approval relative to

Lot 10. Member Ruspi, Alternate Phillips, and Chair Simonetti observed that there was no need for commission approval. Mr. Dribben recommended that commission members who wished to comment on his plans do so as private citizens. Commission members agreed with this approach.

Adjournment: Member Ruspi made a motion to adjourn. Alternate Phillips seconded the motion, and it was approved without dissent. Chair Simonetti declared the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charles Hendricks