

**LAYTONSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**July 17, 2017**

**Roll Call:** Mayor James Ruspi called to order a meeting of the Laytonsville Historic District Commission at 7:36 p.m. He swore in Andrew Drouliskos as newly appointed commission member, Lisa Simonetti as reappointed commission member, and Susan Phillips as newly appointed alternate. Commission members Charles Hendricks and Jill Ruspi were also present. Member Michele Shortley was absent. Mayor Ruspi informed Alternate Phillips that she would enjoy full voting privileges at this meeting due to the absence of Member Shortley. At this point Member Simonetti assumed the gavel, having been appointed chair by the mayor.

**Public Attendance:** Matt Benning, John Pawulak, and Councilman Paul Simonetti were also present.

**Volunteer Assistant:** Mayor Ruspi introduced Matt Benning as a man with Laytonsville ties who, having worked on historic buildings, has volunteered to provide expertise to the commission. Mr. Benning stated that he moved to Laytonsville during his freshman year of high school, graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in architecture, and has since done historic restoration carpentry on a number of projects. He now lives in Walkersville, Maryland. He observed that his father, Richard Benning, owns All Stage and Sound in Laytonsville and his grandfather, Stan Benning, was until recently Laytonsville's town planner.

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

**Minutes:** Member Hendricks had prepared and provided to commission members minutes of the meeting of June 19, 2017. Member Ruspi moved to accept the minutes as presented. Member Hendricks seconded the motion, and it was approved without dissent.

**Old Business:**

21611 Laytonsville Road (St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church): Chair Simonetti reopened discussion on the portion of application HDWP-03-16 relating to light fixtures for the expanded parking lot and related access paths for St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church. She invited Mayor Ruspi to make a statement on the matter. Mayor Ruspi reported that he had some concerns about the tall lights proposed in the plan for the expanded church parking lot and had an opportunity to discuss them with Bill Fitts, who has been representing the church on this project. The mayor acquiesced with the placement of the lampposts in concrete pillars, he asked that the lampposts have round poles, he said that he would prefer black lampposts but could accept another dark color, he objected to the use of bright bluish-white bulbs of 5000° K. and said that he thought bulbs no brighter than 4000° K. should be used in town, he has no objection to the 105-watt bulbs the church proposed,

and he endorsed the shoebox-style lights that focus light toward the ground. He observed that Bill Fitts had agreed that the church would use 4000° K. bulbs.

John Pawulak addressed the commission on behalf of St. Bartholomew's Church. He explained that the church wants to erect three round 20-foot-tall dark-bronze-color Rab lampposts of the same height as the current wooden lampposts with shoebox-style fixtures holding 105-watt 4000° K. LED bulbs. Rectangular concrete pedestals will be used to protect the poles from vehicle impact. In answer to a question from Member Hendricks, Mr. Pawulak stated that the poles and fixtures are not the Hyperikon products that had been proposed earlier. In answer to a question from Member Drouliskos, Mr. Pawulak stated that the bulbs had an anticipated lifespan of 100,000 hours, or some 25 years.

The commission discussed the extent of its authority over the brightness of light bulbs used in the historic district and concluded that the approval of a limitation on brightness for the lights at the church parking lot need not govern other properties in the district. Member Ruspi pointed out that the question of authority did not now arise since the applicant and the commission were in agreement on the appropriate brightness in this instance. Member Hendricks observed that not all of the lampposts would be erected in the historic district.

Member Ruspi observed that the commission had not yet approved lights to be installed along the path from the back parking lot to the office building. Member Hendricks read a portion of the minutes of the commission's meeting of March 20, 2017, showing that when the commission had approved the remainder of the parking lot work permit, no design had been presented or approved for either the tall lampposts for the parking lot or the short mushroom-style guide lights proposed for the path. Mr. Pawulak said that the church was not ready to present designs for the guide lights and might ultimately decide not to install them. He said that the church would return to the commission if it does decide it wants these guide lights.

Member Hendricks moved that the commission approve the request of St. Bartholomew's Church to install parking lot lights produced by Raab Lighting in concrete pillars with round lampposts, dark bronze in color, using shoebox-style light fixtures with 105-watt bulbs producing light at 4000° Kelvin, with the fixtures to be installed in the positions proposed in application HDWP-03-16, to the extent they are within the commission's jurisdiction in the historic district. Member Ruspi second the motion. The motion was approved without dissent.

Member Drouliskos asked about the church's plans for work on the parking lot. Mr. Pawulak said that drainage work had begun and that paving could begin in the next week, with the construction of the concrete pillars anticipated at an early stage.

Member Ruspi moved that the request for mushroom-style guide lights be dropped from the church's application, and Member Hendricks seconded the motion. Mr. Pawulak consented to this proposal and said that the church would submit a new application if it decided to revive this proposal.

## **New Business**

21720 Rolling Ridge Lane (Lot 5, Rolling Ridge subdivision): Although not in the historic district, this is a lot over which the Mayor and Council has given advisory authority to the commission. Mayor Ruspi reported that Brian Dribben, who had earlier sought the

commission's approval for the design of a new house on this lot, had considered shifting his interest to Lot 9 in that subdivision but had ultimately decided to continue to pursue plans for Lot 5. While Mr. Dribben was not present at this meeting, Mayor Ruspi stated that the applicant intends to return to the commission to seek approval of his plans for a house on Lot 5. Chair Simonetti said that she had called Mr. Dribben to suggest that he develop a design that would be more similar to the existing houses in the Rolling Ridge subdivision. Member Ruspi observed that Mr. Dribben should submit a formal application so that a public hearing could be scheduled.

Member Drouliskos asked whether Mr. Dribben had submitted any plans, and Member Hendricks showed him photographs and drawings of possible house designs that Mr. Dribben had submitted at the commission's May 15, 2017, and June 19, 2017, meetings. Mr. Benning looked at the materials and said that the two proposals were similar. Member Hendricks wondered whether the commission or the Mayor and Council should hold a public hearing on a proposal on which the commission had advisory authority and the Mayor and Council would make the final decision. Councilman Simonetti observed that he hoped that Mr. Dribben had been given the town's historic standards adopted in, he believed, 2007, a copy of which Charlene Dillingham, the town clerk, had given him. He said that he thought the house design Mr. Dribben had originally presented would look magnificent on Lot 9. In response to a query from Alternate Phillips, commission members discussed the commission's advisory authority on lots adjacent to the historic district and along Rolling Ridge Lane.

Eagle Scout Project Proposal, Rolling Ridge Trail, west of 7329 Brink Road: Mayor Ruspi, speaking as an individual rather than as mayor, stated that his grandson, who he reported was in North Carolina, wanted to do an Eagle Scout project. The mayor said that he had presented his grandson's plan to the Council the previous week and, as part of its consideration, the Council was interested in the commission's views. The proposal involved planting trees (arborvitae) along a 100-foot section of the trail. The mayor said that, due to concerns over security expressed by three women, he would urge his grandson to modify his plan when he returns to Maryland in the next week, perhaps replacing some trees with shrubbery.

Member Drouliskos expressed support for the concept of providing some screening along the trail but urged that the plantings be dispersed, perhaps in 15-foot-long groups spaced some 60 feet apart. He said that the owners of properties that bordered the path also had security concerns, fearing that the path was a more likely access point to their property than was the street. In response to a question from Member Hendricks, Member Drouliskos stated that his lot extended to within ten feet of the path. Member Hendricks said that he understood that the project originally called for plantings to extend sixteen feet from the path, which would put some plantings on private property. Mayor Ruspi said that this was not the intent and that he had been unsure of the distance to the property line. Member Drouliskos said that he and his neighbor at 7329 Brink Road were willing to provide water to support any new plantings. Member Ruspi commented that extending the plantings beyond a 100-foot section of the trail would require the approval of the Boy Scouts.

At the request of the mayor, the commission members discussed whether the commission needed to review the final landscaping plan for this project. All agreed that this was not a project that required action by the commission.

21607 Laytonsville Road (Town Hall): Mayor Ruspi observed that he has been working on providing lights for the Town Hall's parking lot since he became mayor. He explained that he hoped to use the seven 12-watt LED light fixtures recently replaced on Mobley Farm Drive to provide lighting for the Town Hall parking lot and the fire pit on the Town Hall grounds. Commission members examined a sample fixture. Mayor Ruspi proposes to install the fixtures on new poles using underground wiring. He has come to accept the desirability of using round, black, fluted aluminum poles that are ten-feet long, with the bottom two feet in the ground. The mayor asked for the commission's reaction, expressing a willingness to be flexible.

Councilman Simonetti said that outdoor light should be expressed in terms of lumens rather than watts. He expressed confidence in the advice the town has been receiving from Boyland Electric.

Mayor Ruspi stated that a hearing would have to be held on the lighting issue. Member Ruspi recalled that Member Shortley, who was absent, wanted the town to adopt a standard light fixture. Member Hendricks urged the commission to be favorably disposed to whatever the Mayor and Council determine best solves the need for lighting for the Town Hall parking lot. Mayor Ruspi replied that the way he operates is to seek the commission's approval for a proposed improvement in the historic district before taking that proposal to the Council. Mr. Benning commented that perhaps the critical decision now is whether to make a decision simply on the pole and fixture presented, which could be made relatively quickly, or to seek a standard light fixture for the town, which might take longer.

Members of the commission discussed when to hold a public hearing on the proposal. Mayor Ruspi asked the commission to proceed to hold a hearing on the application. Member Hendricks asked that the hearing be held at the commission's August meeting.

**Adjournment:** Member Ruspi made a motion to adjourn, and Chair Simonetti ended the meeting ended at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charles Hendricks