

LAYTONSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 15, 2019

Present:

Lisa Simonetti, Chair
Andy Drouliskos
Charles Hendricks
Jill Ruspi

Absent:

Susan Phillips
Michele Shortley, Alternate

Attendees:

Jennifer Sizemore, Secretary
Jim Ruspi, Mayor
Joy Jackson, Assistant Clerk
Samantha and Steve Marstaller
Sheree Wenger
Mike and Caroline Maurer

Opening:

Chair Simonetti called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. She noted that a quorum was present.

Minutes:

Member Ruspi made a motion to approve the June 2019 meeting minutes as amended, Member Hendricks seconded, all approved.

Public Hearing:

HDWP 02-19, 7110 Brink Rd. (John and Eva Ols): The homeowners submitted an application to install solar panels but were not present at the meeting. The members of the Historic District Commission (HDC) looked at the application. Member Hendricks moved to postpone consideration of the application to the next meeting so they could hear from the homeowners; Member Ruspi seconded and all approved. The members further discussed the regulations and aesthetics related to solar panels.

HDWP 01-19, 21517 Laytonsville Rd. (Samantha and Steve Marstaller): Mr. Marstaller said he had contacted the county for a permit to move the driveway and was told to contact the state highway commission. He left a message but has not yet heard back. The HDC members discussed what aspects would fall under state jurisdiction, e.g., apron, retaining wall, curb, etc. Mr. Marstaller showed the HDC a tentative drawing. Member Ruspi suggested the purview of the HDC was to consider just the aesthetics related to the replacement driveway. Mr. Marstaller reiterated that he hoped to be able to keep the oak tree but would remove some bushes and confirmed that the shift of the driveway would be 9' and would still be on his own property. Member Hendricks asked if asphalt would be used for the new driveway, and Mr. Marstaller said

he wasn't sure. He thought something porous would be better, but clarified that he didn't want gravel. Member Drouliskos asked about pavers, and Mr. Marstaller said it could be an option. Ms. Wegner and Ms. Maurer shared their thoughts. Chair Simonetti made a motion for the Marstallers to move the driveway over 9' for preservation of the oak tree with replacement in kind; if replacement is not in kind, the Marstallers will return to the HDC to review the new material for the driveway without an additional application. Member Ruspi seconded and all approved.

New Business:

7329 Brink Rd. and 6924 Sundown Rd.: The HDC members discussed the renovations homeowners have made to the referenced properties without first submitting an application for approval. In the first case, the homeowner installed a paver patio behind the house and widened the driveway. In the second case, the homeowner has painted the house a different color and is installing a porch that seems to be different from the previous one. (A large tree fell on the house several months ago and the homeowner had to replace the roof). They recognized that property owners seem reluctant to seek permission for changes because the HDC is sometimes seen as being unreasonable or overly critical. The process also takes time, which can be an inconvenience. They discussed a lack of enforcement power—although cease and desist letters and fines are an option, there is little recourse without a costly legal battle if the property owner ignores them. They agreed that consistent policies are needed, and the ultimate goal is to allow people to make changes that improve the town. Member Ruspi suggested investigating the process Brookeville went through to cede oversight to Montgomery County. A decision on a solution was not reached.

August Meeting: Members Simonetti, Hendricks, and Drouliskos will be on vacation on the date of the next scheduled meeting, August 19, 2019. The HDC members discussed moving the meeting to August 5, 2019, so as to not delay the Ols' application to September.

Old Business:

Appointment of HDC chair. Mayor Ruspi thanked Chair Simonetti for her service to the HDC. He said he had wanted to take the HDC in a new direction as many people in town had complained that the HDC was unreasonable. Great progress has been made, but there are still issues to be resolved. Member Hendricks volunteered to take over the chair position, and all members approved. (Mayor Ruspi noted that the Laytonsville Town Council does not have to approve the change). Member Ruspi mentioned that she would not serve after this term, and Chair Simonetti suggested the HDC may want to elect a vice chair. Member Hendricks recommended that Member Ruspi serve again as HDC vice chair, she agreed, and the commission approved this without objection.

Member Ruspi moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m., Member Drouliskos seconded, all approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Sizemore