

LAYTONSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 20, 2017

Present:

Lisa Simonetti, Chair
Charles Hendricks
Jill Ruspi
Andy Drouliskos
Michele Shortley
Susan Phillips, alternate

Attendees:

Jim Ruspi, Mayor
Matt Benning, consultant
Jennifer Sizemore, secretary
Elizabeth Bouchard
Edwin and Glenna Banania
Michael and Elizabeth Bladen
Rich Benning
Matt Logan

Opening:

Chair Simonetti called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and read the mission statement. She noted that a quorum was present.

Minutes:

Member Drouliskos clarified a statement from the October meeting, and the meeting minutes were edited. Member Hendricks motioned to approve the minutes, and Member Ruspi seconded. All approved.

Old Business:

21532 Laytonsville Road (Figuroa residence): Chair Simonetti said the Figuroas have not yet returned.

21728 Rolling Ridge Lane (historic Rolling Ridge house, Lot 14, Rolling Ridge subdivision): Member Drouliskos reported that he spoke with Mr. Davila for an update on the renovations. The house is currently uninhabitable. Mr. Davila is focused on external repairs including painting, cutting down and removing fallen trees and brush, and replacing missing and rotted wood with existing wood from other parts of the house. He is proceeding as his budget and time allow. The historic district commission (HDC) members discussed the original color of the siding. Member Drouliskos said Mr. Davila had shown him different layers, with different shades of red, but the original color was white. Member Drouliskos also noted that Mr. Davila has had issues with vandalism and has installed cameras. He eventually wants to live in the house, though there are some foundation issues. Some next steps include removing the chain-link fence and replacing the windows, which are currently boarded up.

New Business:

21720 Rolling Ridge Lane (Lot 5, Rolling Ridge subdivision): Elizabeth Bouchard, with Classic Homes of Maryland, is working with Edwin and Glenna Banania, who have entered into a contract to purchase the lot. She is conducting a feasibility study to determine whether the Bananias can build the house they want within budget. Mr. Banania said they are interested in a single-level ranch-style house because their son is quadriplegic. They currently live in Montgomery Village and have a good support system in the area. Laytonsville is an attractive option because it seems like a safe community.

Ms. Bouchard provided a floor plan with the hopes of finding out whether the HDC will approve prior to spending money on a building permit. Member Hendricks clarified that the lot is not technically within the historic district, but the Mayor and Town Council passed a resolution asking for the HDC's recommendations related to three specific lots close to the historic Rolling Ridge house. Ms. Bouchard asked whether a permit needed to be filed for town council permission, and Mayor Ruspi clarified they need just elevation, siding, and other details, not necessarily a detailed plan. The council would schedule a hearing to allow comments from the HDC and the public then make a decision. There was some discussion related to portions of the lot being in the historic district versus the agricultural district.

Ms. Bouchard had heard that the HDC is not in favor of single-story homes, and Member Ruspi clarified that the HDC doesn't have an opinion for or against but is interested in ensuring the structure adheres to the general aesthetics of surrounding historic properties. The HDC members debated whether the proposed plan fit with the historic character of the Rolling Ridge subdivision. Several members thought some minor modifications to the plan could help make the house a better fit. Ms. Bouchard said the family was very open to ideas as long as they were not cost prohibitive. Chair Simonetti suggested lot 12, but Ms. Bouchard said it was too expensive.

Chair Simonetti asked whether fill was needed, and Ms. Bouchard said it's possible, though a civil engineer she spoke with thought it wouldn't be necessary. They are willing to do whatever the HDC requires and will ensure proper water flow. Member Ruspi said the HDC can't make an actual decision tonight but will need an application. Ms. Bouchard responded that she could put a more thorough plan together. Chair Simonetti suggested petitioning the Rolling Ridge Homeowners Association (HOA) would be a logical next step to make sure they feel the design fits with the neighborhood. She offered to reach out to the co-president to discuss the issue. Other residents would also need to have input. Member Drouliskos suggested the child's disability needed to be considered, and Ms. Bouchard mentioned the county's preference for "design for life." Member Drouliskos thought the lot was ideal because it's close to a path; the community is walkable and could be accessible/friendly for those with disabilities. Member Hendricks said that he thought the house shown in the drawing presented by Ms. Bouchard would fit in very nicely with the historic Rolling Ridge house. Member Shortley asked about the possibility of a faux two-story design, and Ms. Bouchard said it could be considered though it would add cost without increasing square footage. Other adjustments to siding, color, windows, and gables are also possible as long as it's not cost prohibitive. Member Ruspi suggested looking at the national list of historic buildings to see pictures of historic homes to use as models. The

next steps are for Chair Simonetti to put Ms. Bouchard in contact with the Rolling Ridge HOA and for Mayor Ruspi to provide more information about the application process. The standard application form wouldn't apply because the lot is not in the historic district, but Member Hendricks suggested a letter with supporting documents would allow the HDC to make a recommendation. He said that, although the Town Council takes the HDC's recommendations under consideration, they are a very independent body and would make a well-considered decision.

21412 Laytonsville Rd. (Michael and Elizabeth Bladen): Mr. Bladen said they are having a dispute with NVHomes related to their back boundary. They had a survey performed prior to building a fence, which was placed 4" inside the property line. There are iron posts that clearly mark the lot, which is rectangular. Recently, the Bladens received a demand letter on November 13 from NVHomes stating they were encroaching 9' 2" on the property of the adjacent home. They called the surveyor to re-survey the property, and the results were the same. Mr. Bladen showed the HDC members a diagram of the property lines and said he thought NVHomes didn't do a full boundary survey. There are multiple markers that don't seem accurate. The adjacent Laytonsville Preserve house has been occupied for some time, and apparently the homeowners had their own survey conducted so they could build a fence, though Mr. Bladen said it wasn't a certified appraisal. Member Shortley asked how extensive the problem is, and Mr. Bladen said they looked at 7 lots and the discrepancy gets smaller from south to north. She said it may affect her property as well because 9' would encroach on her easement. Member Hendricks suggested legal action and Mr. Bladen said they had responded to the letter with their survey documentation.

Rich Benning, owner of All Stage & Sound at 21500 Laytonsville Rd. said NVHomes installed a 3' chain link fence with sediment control on top when building started, though they were not supposed to put any fences up. The fence is on the property Mr. Benning rents, and he doesn't believe it is for sediment control. He trusted that NVHomes knew where the property line was and moved some of his equipment in response to their request. He suggested the issue be revisited, particularly whether there is a need for a sediment fence. Member Hendricks suggested that it was an issue for the Town Council because the new homes are not within the historic district. Matt Logan (21416 Laytonsville Rd.) said he also has a fence inside his property line and is concerned about the issue. Mayor Ruspi said this is the first he's heard about the issue, and he would reach out to his contact at NVHomes to try to find a resolution.

Member Ruspi motioned to adjourn at 9:03 p.m. Member Hendricks seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Sizemore