

LAYTONSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 18, 2018

Present:

Lisa Simonetti, Chair
Andy Drouliskos
Charles Hendricks
Jill Ruspi
Susan Phillips, Alternate

Absent:

Michele Shortley

Attendees:

Jennifer Sizemore, Secretary
Jim Ruspi, Mayor

Opening:

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

Minutes:

Alternate Phillips made a motion to approve the May meeting minutes, all approved.

New Business:

7111 Brink Rd., Ruspi Residence: Mr. Ruspi stated that his wooden front door is starting to fall apart, to the point that one can see daylight from top to bottom when the door is closed. He would like to replace the door with another wooden one, but the one contractor he's found quoted \$9,500 for the work. Alternate Phillips asked about the frame, and Mr. Ruspi said it's casement. He was seeking guidance from the Historic District Commission (HDC) about the option of using a fiberglass door for the replacement, stained to look just like wood, but with a cost of about one-third. The windows and siding are both vinyl, so the historic integrity has been lost. Chair Simonetti and Member Drouliskos both have fiberglass doors with a wood-grain finish, and they don't believe people can tell the difference. Alternate Phillips said she didn't have a problem with using fiberglass but noted that it does set a precedent. Non-historic replacements may be okay on three sides, but there should be a different standard for the street view. Though the desire is to hold property owners to the standard of original materials, cost is a significant issue. Member Ruspi mentioned that an HDC was formed when the Laytonsville Historic District was created, but it didn't work. In the period before the current HDC was formed, many people put up vinyl siding. She suggested that within a historic district, there may be different standards for contributing properties, such as buildings on the National Register or those where a historic event occurred. Alternate Phillips asked whether there were such houses in Laytonsville, and Mr. Ruspi said the Layton House on the corner of 108 and Brink Rd. was the postmaster's house and is on the National Register. Member Ruspi said there are suggested ways to determine which buildings should be registered. This would be a fair way to decide which buildings need to be held to the highest standard. She stated that her house is not considered

historic. Alternative Phillips asked how old a house has to be to qualify to be registered. Member Hendricks said the structure has to be at least 50 years old or has to have been the site of an unusual historic event, but not all houses built 50 years ago are historic. Member Phillips reiterated that, as long as there's a reason for treating certain properties differently based on specific criteria, it would be equitable rather than random. Member Hendricks said the town council had passed a set of guidelines, which he would need to refer to before feeling comfortable responding to Mr. Ruspi's inquiry. He said the guidelines do address some of the issues being discussed. Chair Simonetti asked whether there is a storm door, and Mr. Ruspi said there is, which is unusual for historic homes. The HDC members further discussed what they believe counts as historic and what doesn't. Alternate Phillips said she feels like the answer should be yes as much as possible when a resident wants to make improvement.

Member Hendricks asked about other doors to the outside, and Mr. Ruspi described the other external doors. Member Hendricks asked about the location of the crack, and Mr. Ruspi responded that it goes through one of the panels within the door. It has to be replaced. Mr. Ruspi said part of the reason for the high cost is that the milling is very specialized, so not as many places do it. Member Drouliskos agreed that the demand isn't as high as it used to be. Chair Simonetti asked whether Home Depot and similar stores sell wood doors. Mr. Ruspi said they're all fiberglass, and Member Ruspi added that the size is not standard. Member Drouliskos thought the quote for the fiberglass door was reasonable. Mr. Ruspi said he would get more quotes and submit an application. He added that fiberglass is much more energy efficient than wood.

HDC Guidelines: Member Ruspi said she writes the letters telling applicants whether their work is approved or disapproved along with the reasons for the decision. She said the guidelines used to make decisions are not available online, and she's uncomfortable quoting guidelines that aren't easily accessible. She believes there's more work that should be done on the guidelines but, regardless, the current version should be posted online. The HDC members agreed, and Mayor Ruspi said he would talk to Charlene Dillingham, the town clerk, about getting them posted. Member Ruspi mentioned a class she took related to improving the street scape, and Mayor Ruspi reminded members that the town is willing to pay for trainings related to historic districts.

Old Business

None

Member Ruspi moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 p.m. and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Sizemore