

LAYTONSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 17, 2018

Present:

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

Absent:

Jill Ruspi
Michele Shortley

Attendees:

Jennifer Sizemore, Secretary
Matt Benning

Opening:

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

Minutes:

The members discussed changes to the August minutes. Member Hendricks made a motion to approve the August meeting minutes as amended, Alternate Phillips seconded, all approved.

New Business:

Member Drouliskos mentioned that he will be replacing some of the siding on the town hall because the siding is soft and some water is coming into the building. Those present discussed various types of siding that could be used and where to get them. Member Drouliskos said he's working with Charlene Dillingham, the town clerk, and the mayor is aware.

Old Business:

Historic District Commission (HDC) Guidelines: Mr. Benning said he's not sure whether the guidelines need to be revised. He thinks it would be helpful to track what the HDC approves and doesn't approve. He noted that smaller projects seem to get approval while larger projects do not and questioned how faithfully the guidelines are applied. Further, use of the word "should" implies the HDC is making suggestions rather than giving permission. The HDC members agreed that things need to be handled equitably. Mr. Benning suggested that an audit of past decisions, i.e., how often and under what circumstances exceptions are given, could prove useful. He also thought using "shall" rather than "should" would be more appropriate. For example, the guideline related to color is too vague and "replacement in kind" needs to be better defined. Member Drouliskos said having some things more vague makes it easier to approve applications. Member Hendricks pointed out that the HDC isn't the final arbiter. The HDC must give a reason for denying an application, and applicants can go to court if they disagree.

Mr. Benning suggested that, in addition to recording reasons for denying an application, the HDC should also record reasons for giving an exception. The HDC members didn't think exceptions were given often, and Member Hendricks said it's not required because it's not burdensome to the applicant. However, reasoning for any decision is captured in the meeting minutes. Member Drouliskos noted that Laytonsville is different than many other historic districts in that there is a broader mix of newer and older homes. The HDC members and Mr. Benning further discussed the residential/commercial mix of the town, specifically the property at 7000 Brink Road that the owner would like to have reclassified from residential to commercial.

The discussion returned to exceptions that had been given in the past and specific reasons for them. Those present also talked about non-historic replacements that had been made during a period of time that the HDC was not operating. Alternate Phillips suggested the HDC members take a walk through town to look at specific issues to better refine the guidelines. Mr. Benning agreed that a list of things that should be preserved or restored would be helpful along with consistent guidance for doing so. The HDC members further discussed the issue of compliance with the guidelines, and Member Hendricks noted that the Town Council does step in when they believe rules are being violated. The HDC members agreed with Alternate Phillips's idea of walking through the town, then meeting to discuss observations so they could be recorded in the meeting minutes. They will schedule something in October.

Alternate Phillips moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m., Member Drouliskos seconded, all approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Sizemore