**Meeting Minutes of Planning Commission**

**Town of Laytonsville**

**December 15, 2022**

Chair Wenger called the 4th quarter meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:31 p.m. Members Brian Kline, Obed Pellegrino, Tom Jackson, and Tim Shortley were present. Mayor Jim Ruspi, Clerk Mary Burke, and Historic District Commission Chair Charles Hendricks were also present. Chair Wenger welcomed Tom Jackson to his first meeting and Tom shared that he has lived in Laytonsville since 1989, is retired from the Federal Government, and is looking forward to learning.

The minutes of the Planning Commission meeting on September 22, 2022, were unanimously approved as submitted.

**Meeting with New Council Representative:** County Council member Dawn Luedtke and her Chief of Staff, Aaron Kraut, met with Mayor Ruspi, Town Council members and Chairs at Town Hall. Chair Wenger has met with other council members, and he was very impressed with Dawn. She was astute and aware, and she knew what is going on. She is a breath of fresh air that will bode well for the Town of Laytonsville.

**Sewer/WSSC:** Member Kline has been working on this. The County Executive has remained the same, which will allow continuity. Member Kline put together a letter and has gotten one from the LVFD. He is waiting on one from the owner of the shopping center but knows that he is in full support. Member Kline asked for other suggestions for letters of support. Chair Wenger mentioned Stadler Nursery and the owner of the old bank building. He also stated that as we go through this process, we will learn that not everyone is behind this. There will be push back and we need to be ready to hear other sides.

We shouldn’t pursue this as a town wide project but focus on the commercial and historic districts. Will we be able to get a letter from MCPS? We do not know. The septic project for the elementary school is very costly and won’t happen for several years. We need to consider that the newer developments don’t need to have sewers as they have large lots and best available technology septic systems. Member Shortley said that it is brilliant to shrink the upfront request.

Chair Wenger explained that the reason this is not universally accepted is because it promotes new development and changes the look of the town. We need to think about the future of the town. The environmental aspect is extremely important. Failing septic systems have a negative impact on groundwater, streams, etc. Member Jackson asked if we need to look at properties that have failing septic systems and have lots that are too small? We’d need to rely on people being forthright, and that may not be the case. Chair Wenger said that the current requirements are based on the watershed. West of 108 is the Seneca watershed and properties need 10,000-sf field plus reserve. East of 108 is the Patuxent watershed and properties need a 17,000-sf field plus reserve. Some of the homes in town were built before these requirements were set. We need to approach this with a very basic understanding that we’re looking at 1\2 acre lots, the historic district, and the commercial district. We are laying the groundwork, and we have to combine this with a comprehensive plan. Any changes for the future of the town need to be in the comprehensive plan for something to be adopted by the county. We’ve got to think about how we want to pursue it and how we want to write it.

Chair Wenger forwarded Member Kline’s letter to the County Commission to the Planning Commission for review. It will need to be approved by the Town Council

Mayor Ruspi reiterated that the lots on 1st, 2nd, Montgomery, Howard, and Sunset are not in the Historic District. We need to focus on the ½ acre lots in town. To be clear, our focus should be Commercial, Commercial Historic, Residential Historic and properties with ½ acre lots with no room to expand.

Chair Wenger said this is not an agenda to promote development. It is an agenda to promote the future viability of the town. Member Shortley suggest that we include a map with the letter that is color coded. Member Kline stated that it is really “old Laytonsville” that is our focus. He agreed to make a color-coded map. Charley Henricks pointed out that not all homes in the Historic District will need to be coded red, because some of them are newer homes.

At this point we are basing everything on infrastructure and not knowledge of failed systems. For the next Town Council Meeting we should have the letters and the map ready for their review. Member Kline will have them ready for the commission the week before that.

**Old Business:**  Laytonsville Grove has been turned over to the town. It means that the town will now pay for snow and ice treatments there.

The woodchip trail from Barberry Lane to Miller Park is not shown properly on the recorded map. The mayor is having the map re-platted by engineers at Macris, Hendricks & Glascock so it is not in the forest conservation area. This will allow us to pave it in the future.

**Comprehensive Plan Review 2024:** Beginning in 2023, this is our business. Chair Wenger will assign each member to go over a section. We will also request the Mayor and Town Council that we get professional help. We will be making changes and additions and will need to comply with state mandates.

**Members:** Member Jackson watched the recording of the last meeting. He saw that Members Kline and Shortley were working on the words for the letter. Was it resolved? Yes.

Member Pellegrino asked if Atco, All Stage and Sound and Frye Insurance be asked for letters of support for sewers? Yes, down the road, all businesses should have that opportunity.

Charlie Hendricks asked when you develop the comprehensive plan, when will you be ready for input? Answer: In the first quarter of the year.

**Adjourn:**

Member Kline made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 p.m. Member Jackson seconded the motion. **Unanimously approved**.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Burke

Town Clerk

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