**LAYTONSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, February 19, 2018**

**Present:**

Lisa Simonetti, Chair

Andy Drouliskos

Charles Hendricks

Jill Ruspi

Michele Shortley

**Absent:**

Susan Phillips, Alternate

**Attendees:**

Jim Ruspi, Mayor

Jennifer Sizemore, Secretary

Ann Fitts and Bill Fitts, St. Bartholomew’s Church

Caroline and Mike Maurer, residents

Arieh Katz, resident

**Opening:**

Chair Simonetti called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. and read the mission statement. She noted that a quorum was present.

**Minutes:**

Member Ruspi made a motion to approve the November meeting minutes, Member Hendricks seconded, all approved. Member Ruspi made a motion to approve the January meeting minutes, Member Hendricks seconded, all approved.

**Old Business:**

HDWP 01-18: Memorial Garden with Labyrinth on Parcel P662 (6920 Sundown Road):

Since the last meeting, Ms. Fitts said they had placed the “Notice of Public Hearing” sign in front of the church and on Sundown Rd. She provided the requested documentation related to the labyrinth. From the brochure of pavers, they selected the dark grey for paths and light beige for spacers. She pointed to the company’s website for a photo showing this specific color combination. It’s a seven-circuit design following a meandering path. The pavers are precut in a factory in Hagerstown, MD. A local company that put in the church sidewalks will pave a sidewalk from the driveway to the labyrinth. Ms. Fitts referred to photos of the property and further discussed the visibility of the location. She also provided a sample for leaves of the Tree of Life. Mr. Fitts said they were considering granite or slate with a matte finish for the background of the tree. Ms. Fitts said they had decided on two lights on the ground, a few feet in front of and pointed up at the Tree of Life. Chair Simonetti asked about how the leaves attach to the tree, and Ms. Fitts showed her a picture. She said the leaves would be in clusters of 25 to 30 with 200 total leaves. They are proposing low-voltage lights just around the outside of the labyrinth with a few toward the middle, similar to what people use to light home walkways. The lights would be placed about every 10’, so there would be five or six around the outside and three or four coming up the sidewalk. Member Drouliskos asked whether the lights could be easily repaired, and Mr. Fitts said they would be placed firmly in the ground such that mowing equipment wouldn’t disturb them. Ms. Fitts added that they might add mulch around the lights so mowers don’t have to get too close. The lights are low voltage, so they should provide safety while allowing for a meditative atmosphere. The church has an electrician they have worked with before who will help them select the best lights for their purposes.

Ms. Fitts was happy to report that they had raised the needed money, including seven benches (rather than the planned five), which will be placed in front of the cherry trees. Any additional money may be used to buy more trees. Chair Simonetti asked about the benches, and Ms. Fitts said they are premium-quality teak park benches that are curved to mirror the design of the garden. Ms. Fitts commented that donors were torn between buying benches or trees; the benches are less expensive than the trees. The chosen trees will enable the garden to always have color. Member Drouliskos asked about recognition for the trees, and Mr. Fitts said there would be a plaque recognizing the donor. Member Ruspi asked about the height of the memorial wall. Ms. Fitts said the Tree of Life is about 7’ tall and there would be about 2’ of wall underneath for a total height of 9’ including the arch. Member Ruspi asked about landscaping on the back side of the wall, noting that it may not be clear to residents on 1st Street that there is a garden behind the wall. Ms. Fitts said there is an existing cherry tree and the maple trees will be visible. Member Ruspi suggested some shrubbery could add visual appeal. She asked about the media under the pavers. Mr. Fitts said the installers will lay compacted gravel then sand to level, which will be compacted prior to placing the pavers, compacted again, and a bonding agent that locks the pavers into place will be spread on top. Member Ruspi asked about rain runoff, and Mr. Fitts said there won’t be any issues with rain leaving the property given the amount of ground around the site. Members Hendricks and Ruspi both thought shrubs would be a nice addition, though Mr. Fitts questioned whether shrubbery or the fieldstone wall would be more historic. The Historic District Commission (HDC) members debated the pros and cons, and Member Ruspi suggested it be left to the professional landscaper. Ms. Fitts thought it may be possible to have the wall at an angle so more of the garden is visible. Member Ruspi asked whether there would be something at the path entrance, and Ms. Fitts said there would be a plaque on a large, natural stone to acknowledge large donors. Member Ruspi made a motion to approve the application with the stipulation that the plan needs to be amended to show the changes with the benches and lighting. Member Shortley seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. Ms. Fitts noted that they hope to have construction completed by May. Mr. Fitts asked about removing the chimney from the church and replacing the roof, and Chair Simonetti said an application would be needed for the chimney.

21728 Rolling Ridge Lane (historic Rolling Ridge house, Lot 14, Rolling Ridge subdivision): Member Hendricks shared the resolution of the Town Council from 2005 designating the house and surrounding property as a historic resource with Chair Simonetti.

6924 Sundown Road: Member Hendricks noted that the homeowner’s application for a new stone wall was good for one year, so the homeowner probably needs to reapply for approval. The stones on the sidewalk are hazardous to children riding bikes and pedestrians. Member Drouliskos offered to follow up with the homeowner. Mayor Ruspi noted that Montgomery County has agreed to replace the sidewalk but cannot do so until the wall is completed due to a nearby trench that could crumble.

**New Business:**

7115 Brink Road: Caroline and Mike Maurer purchased the property last spring and wanted to know whether an application for HDC approval was needed to remove a shed on the property. Ms. Maurer provided a picture of the shed and said the two contractors they talked to about restoration said it would be very costly. The foundation has shifted, and it’s a safety and infestation hazard. Also, the shed is unusable due to its proximity to the wall for the basement steps. She is interested in building a new shed in another area of the property. The HDC members agreed that an application and hearing were needed and should include both the removal of the old shed and the plans for the new shed.

Arieh Katz is a new resident to Laytonsville, with a house on Cracklin Road, and attended the meeting to learn more about the HDC.

Chair Simonetti moved to adjourn the meeting 8:31 pm. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Sizemore