Laytonsville Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes, October 24, 2022

**LAYTONSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**Videoconference Meeting Minutes**

**Monday October 24, 2022**

**Present:**

Charles Hendricks, Chair

Jennifer Sizemore

Kris Bradsher

Andy Drouliskos

Michael McDonald

**Absent:**

**Attendees:**

Mary Burke, Secretary

Jim Ruspi, Mayor

Anne Wolf

Dan Wolf

**Opening:**

Chair Hendricks called the meeting to order at 7:35. He noted that a quorum was present. He stated that this is the meeting postponed from October 17, 2022, due to technical difficulties.

**New Business:**

Approval of minutes from September meeting: Member McDonald made a motion to approve the minutes as edited. Member Drouliskos seconded and all approved.

Discussion of how to respond to comments received from Mayor Ruspi on the draft consolidated design guidelines approved by the commission at its September 19 meeting:

* Comments on email covered it well and included remarks from Eric Wenger of the Tree Commission.
* Mayor Ruspi does not want a conflict between the Historic District Commission and the Tree Commission. He does not want the Historic District Commission to approve a landmark tree coming down without the approval of the Tree Commission.
* Mayor Ruspi stated that Member Sizemore’s comments were simple and straightforward.
* Chair Hendricks asked if the Historic District Commission wanted to add language to the design guidelines or just approve as is and leave it to the Mayor and Council to take care of any changes.
* Chair Hendricks also suggested rewording Member Sizemore’s 2-line sentence.
* The design guidelines need to speak to the two ordinances.
* Member Bradsher stated that guidelines are not enforceable, and ordinances are. She suggested that we change the word “governed” to “enforced” by the Town Tree Ordinance.
* Member McDonald said that Member Bradsher made a good point, but that we could also just add the word “also” in front of the word governed. We also need to be clear that there are two rules. Landmark trees are governed by the Tree Commission, and in the Historic District landmark trees are governed by the Historic District Commission.
* Mayor Ruspi wants it to be clear that the Historic District Commission doesn’t approve the removal of a landmark tree without the consultation of the Tree Commission.
* Chair Hendricks noted that “should be” could be replaced by “shall”. He also discussed his longer, 7-line proposed addition.
* Member McDonald stated that the Mayor and Town Council need to determine who has jurisdiction over trees – one commission and not both.
* Chair Hendricks said that we should move forward with approving the draft to the Town Council. We can then come up with a plan to resolve issues that need to be discussed.
* Mayor Ruspi reiterated that the guidelines can easily be edited or modified to state that before the Historic District Commission approves a permit, they need the approval of the Tree Commission. If this change is not made in the design guidelines, the mayor would not support it.
* Member Sizemore made a motion that the HDC submit the consolidated guidelines to the Town Council with the addition of the following sentences: “Removal of certain trees is also governed by the Town Tree Ordinance. The Tree Commission shall be consulted prior to the removal of any tree as specified in the ordinance.” Member McDonald seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Discussion of the commission’s potential role relative to a proposal by the Laytonsville Historical Center to erect with financial support from the town a number of historical markers around town:

* This was discussed at some length at the special Town Council Meeting on October 18. The original proposal was 10 signs, and the Town Council was favorable to 5 signs. No action was taken at the Town Council meeting. Mayor Ruspi asked at the Town Council meeting whether the Historic District Commission would need to approve a permit regarding these signs. The Historic District Commission does need to approve signs in the Historic District.
* Member Sizemore thought that Anne Wolf’s information was great but does think that they need approval by the Historic District Commission.
* Chair Hendricks shared the Sign Ordinance on the screen with the HDC. He said that he was excited for this project and looks forward to ensuring it blends in with the historical nature of the district.
* Anne Wolf shared that during the pandemic, the Historical Center realized they weren’t doing a great job of outreach to the community. These signs arose from that feeling.
* Member McDonald thinks it is a great idea and loved the presentation.

Discussion of the construction underway at Lot 5, Rolling Ridge (21720 Rolling Ridge Lane):

* Chair Hendricks shared a photo of what the house looks like today. The rounded ground floor windows have been replaced with rectangular ones.
* Member Drouliskos said it is the builder’s intention to replace the rounded center top window.
* Chair Hendricks stated that he doesn’t think there is any need for action on our part now due to the minor discrepancies from the approved plan.

Discussion of the work undertaken and anticipated at the Citgo station at 21625 Laytonsville Road:

* The owner of the Citgo station plans on eventually paving with asphalt the graveled areas on the side and behind the building. Mayor Ruspi asked if there was a limit as to how much of a lot can be covered with pavement. There is no open space requirement in Residential Historic lots.
* Should this process require a permit? Member Sizemore said yes, as did Member McDonald. Member Drouliskos said it would be a good way to document the work. Chair Hendricks would like it for both phases of the asphalt work. Member Bradsher could go either way.
* The majority of the HDC approved requiring a permit for any future asphalt work. Chair Hendricks will send the owner of the Citgo station a letter regarding this.

**Old Business:**

**Open Forum:**

* A Historic District Work Permit application has been filed for 21517 Laytonsville Road. Steve and Samantha Marsteller are replacing windows. There will be a public hearing at the next meeting.
* Susan Phillips (a former HDC member) and her husband have a tentative contract on their house at 21513 Laytonsville Road. The buyers are a young couple.
* Member Sizemore asked if there had been a contest for Halloween decorations due to a post that she saw on social media. The answer was no. A town resident took it upon himself to give an award to a homeowner because he thought the decorations brought joy to the students at the elementary school.

**Miscellaneous:**

The next meeting will be Monday, November 21, 2022.

Member Sizemore moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:24. Member Bradsher seconded, and all approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Burke