Laytonsville Historic District Monthly Meeting, April 17, 2023

**LAYTONSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**Videoconference Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, April 17, 2023**

**Present:**

Charles Hendricks, Chair

Andy Drouliskos

Jennifer Sizemore

Michael McDonald

**Absent:**

Kris Bradsher

**Attendees:**

James Schneider, Secretary

Jim Ruspi, Mayor

**Opening:**

Chair Hendricks called the meeting to order at 7:33. He noted that a quorum was present. Chair Hendricks, and Members Sizemore and McDonald were present.

The first order of business was to approve the minutes from the March 20, 2023, HDC Public Hearing and Meeting. Chair Hendricks asked if his edits of the minutes were OK with his fellow members, and if they feel that they were appropriately reported in the minutes of the last meeting. Members agreed. Member Sizemore made a motion to approve the minutes as edited, which was seconded by Chair Hendricks. Chair Hendricks asked for any discussion. All members in attendance were in favor; minutes were approved.

Member Drouliskos and Mayor Ruspi joined the meeting at this time.

Discussion of how the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission’s solar technology policy guidance could be adapted for use by Laytonsville’s Historic District Commission:

* Chair Hendricks read the recommendations that he suggested the HDC make relative to the county’s solar technology guidelines.
* Chair Hendricks pointed out that the county provides a lot of information in its guidelines and also states that the county needs to approve requests. He stated that he has shared the Montgomery County guidelines with the Town Council. He asked for input from HDC members as to how they might want to move forward with this.
* Member Sizemore stated that it’s a great idea to use the Montgomery County guidelines for Laytonsville. Clarification is needed to guide residents about who to apply to for approval for solar panel installation.
* Member McDonald asked if there was any feedback from the Town Council or Mayor Ruspi.
* Mayor Ruspi stated that adopting such a large county document can be overwhelming.
* Member Sizemore responded that the county guidelines just give suggestions to put up solar panels as unobtrusively as possible.
* Chair Hendricks stated that there are a lot of options for installing solar panels on historic properties mentioned in the document. He suggested that if the HDC does recommend approval of the county guidelines by Laytonsville, the Town Council will need time to study what we are proposing.
* Mayor Ruspi stated that he is not a fan of long ordinances; can the HDC use the guidelines to make decisions without incorporating them into an ordinance?
* Chair Hendricks responded that the HDC could use the county guidelines to make decisions only by incorporating them into a set of local guidelines.
* Member Sizemore stated that the HDC needs to let residents know and be aware of the guidelines if the HDC uses them. The document is mainly images and diagrams, and would assist residents when applying for the installation of solar panels as to where to put them on their property.
* Member McDonald stated that if the HDC is comfortable with the county guidelines and their language, then we should use them.
* Member Drouliskos stated that probably everyone in the county is using these guidelines and would be comfortable approving it now.
* Members Sizemore and McDonald agreed.
* Chair Hendricks summarized that the HDC should not pressure the Town Council to approve the county guidelines quickly but should let it know that the HDC believes these guidelines would be helpful to address residents’ applications for solar panels.
* In line with Chair Hendricks’s initial suggestions, Member Sizemore moved that the HDC make the following recommendations:
  + 1. That the Town Council approve by resolution the evaluation provisions of the document “Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission Policy Guidance #20-01: Solar Technology” as an additional set of guidelines to be applied by Laytonsville’s Historic District Commission in evaluating historic area work permit applications for the installation of solar panels and other solar technology, and
  + 2. That, after Town Council approval, this county policy guidance be posted on the town’s website along with an explanation that, while its evaluation provisions are to guide HDC decisions in this sphere, that all solar installations in the town’s historic district and historic sites will require a historic area work permit from Laytonsville’s Historic District Commission, rather than from the county’s Historic Preservation Commission referenced in the policy guidance document.
* Member Drouliskos seconded.
* The motion carried unanimously, with Chair Hendricks and Members Drouliskos and Sizemore voting yes. Member McDonald was no longer present to vote. Member Bradsher was absent.

Open forum on Laytonsville historic preservation issues:

* The new house on Rolling Ridge Lane appears to be completed. Exterior photos were shared, and the interior design was discussed.
* The brick patio and wooden landing, steps, and ramp on the back of Town Hall have been completed.
* Chair Hendricks stated that he anticipates the town will receive a historic district work permit application from the owners of the Citgo gas station to install LED signs and to do some more asphalting over some of the gravel area. The HDC declined an LED sign proposal in 2016, and the property owners have the right to apply again.
* Mayor Ruspi stated that Laytonsville has a memorandum of understanding with the gas station, and there appear to be a larger number of cars being stored on the gas station property for longer periods of time than agreed upon. Mayor Ruspi contacted them regarding this and would like a response before more asphalting is started.
* Member McDonald commented that up until recently, there have been trucks parked along Brink Road.
* Chair Hendricks stated that there was also a large car carrier truck being parked in various places which might not be associated with the gas station. Montgomery County police appear to have ticketed it recently.
* Chair Hendricks asked Member McDonald about selling his house. Member McDonald stated that realtors approached him saying that there was some interest in his house.
* Member Sizemore asked about the building approval for Lot 2, Area C, Laytonsville Preserve. Chair Hendricks stated that the site plan was approved by the Town Council.

Member Sizemore moved to adjourn. Member McDonald seconded, and all approved at 8:35pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

James Schneider, Secretary