Laytonsville Historic District Monthly Meeting, March 20, 2023

**LAYTONSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**Videoconference Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, March 20, 2023**

**Present:**

Charles Hendricks, Chair

Andy Drouliskos

Jennifer Sizemore

Kris Bradsher

**Absent:**

Michael McDonald

**Attendees:**

James Schneider, Secretary

Jim Ruspi, Mayor

Michael Eanes, President, Laytonsville District Volunteer Fire Department

**Opening:**

Chair Hendricks called the meeting to order at 7:34. He noted that a quorum was present.

The first order of business was to approve the minutes from the February 20, 2023 HDC Public Hearing and Meeting. Chair Hendricks asked if his edits of the minutes including the identification of all attendees (some as town residents) was OK with his fellow members, and if they feel that they were appropriately reported in the minutes of the very long meeting. Members agreed. Member Bradsher made a motion to approve the minutes as edited, which was seconded by Member Drouliskos. All members in attendance were in favor; minutes were approved.

Consideration of Historic District Work Permit Application 04-23 submitted by

the Laytonsville District Volunteer Fire Department for the replacement of

the garage bay doors at the fire station at 21400 Laytonsville Road:

* Chair Hendricks noted that he forwarded photos provided by Michael Eanes of LDVFD to all commission members and asked Michael to explain the status of the garage bay doors project.
* Michael Eanes of LDVFD reported that a contract has not been signed yet. They are looking for a mason because the row of blocks above the bay door will have to be filed down or removed and then covered up in order to mount the new door. This needs to be done before a contract can be signed to install the new doors.
* Chair Hendricks asked if removing the stonework above the bay door will also cover up the lettering (Laytonsville District Volunteer Fire Department, and the number 17).
* Michael Eanes said that lettering will have to come off the building, but the number 17 is probably high enough up to remain on the front of the building. Photo was displayed showing how the front of the building currently looks. Michael explained that the small roof projection on the left side of the bay door will have to be taken back a little. The stonework in between the two bay doors will probably remain visible. The issue is that the new door will have to be hung on the outside of the building vs. the inside of the building, as the current bay doors are. New doors will fold up into an exterior structure that will cover up the stonework and the current lettering on the front of the building.
* Chair Hendricks displayed a photo of an example of what the new doors might look like. He asked what we would be seeing if this type of door is installed.
* Michael explained that since there is not enough room to mount them on the interior of the building, we would be seeing the stainless steel boxes that contain the retracted doors on the outside of the building. He also said that at some point some type of awning may be added to cover or soften the look of the stainless steel boxes, however, that may not even be possible.
* Member Drouliskos wonders if there is even enough room for adding an awning.
* Member Sizemore asked about the color of the new door slats; will they be burgundy.
* Michael stated that they will be coming from Wisconsin and should be dark red. The box will be stainless steel though.
* Chair Hendricks asked if the lettering (Laytonsville District Volunteer Fire Department) could be moved up or placed on the stainless steel boxes.
* Michael stated that the lettering had been there since 1966, and we do not want to get rid of it, but maybe keep it in smaller lettering. The number 17 was added in a 2008/2009 renovation.
* Chair Hendricks asked how many of the door slats will be see through glass, and how will the be spaced with the non glass slats.
* Michael stated that we would like as much natural light as possible. We can have up to 10 window slats, but it has to be in a two window slat and then one solid slat pattern. We want the max of ten total see through window slats. The window slats will start in the middle of the door waist high) and then go up. Definitely eye level to look through.
* Chair Hendricks asked about procedural concerns. You’re asking us to approve the part of the plan as it is so far, but in terms of the lettering, you’ll need to come back to us. Back to discussion: the normal procedure for a work permit is to have a public hearing, We need to decide if we want to approve this on an emergency basis, or do we want to go through a public hearing. Commission members agreed that this is a safety issue. We need to have reliable fully functional doors for the fire department. This is not a cosmetic issue.

Member Sizemore made a motion to approve the work order for the new doors on an emergency basis. The motion was seconded by Member Drouliskos, with votes in favor unanimous.

Discussion of how to address solar panels in the guidelines for the Historic

District Commission

* Chair Hendricks previously shared some materials to look at guidelines of Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission regarding guidelines for the use of solar panels. He asked what the HDC members thought of them.
* Member Sizemore stated that she was concerned because we have not gotten the consolidated guidelines approved yet by the town council. She questions whether we would add this to the guidelines that we have not been able to pass, or create new guidelines, and is this worth our time at this point. She thinks that we need find a solution to the HDC landscaping guidelines first.
* Member Bradsher stated that we currently are in process of having guidelines approved; shouldn’t we do this before amending them with guidelines for solar panels. I think we should get the guidelines proposed approved first before amending them.
* Mayor Ruspi stated that he had no problem with the Montgomery County guidelines to solar panels. We can adopt it, as we did with the noise ordinance.
* Chair Hendricks asked HDC members if we are in the position to move to the Town Council with the Montgomery County solar panel guidelines.
* Member Bradsher asked move to the Town Council as guidelines or as an ordinance. Guidelines are not enforceable in court, ordinances are.
* Chair Hendricks stated that we can adopt them as a specific set of guidelines.
* Member Bradsher asked if we are going to add it to the draft of the guidelines that we are still in the process of getting approved.
* Member Sizemore asked can we just add it to the website as a set of guidelines that we will be referring to; then when we eventually have our guidelines, we can link out to it.

Chair Hendricks motioned that the HDC recommend to the Town Council the adoption of the Montgomery County solar panel guidelines for the Town of Laytonsville. Member Sizemore seconded.

* Member Bradsher asked for clarification if I add solar panels per the Montgomery County guidelines, do I need to get permission from Laytonsville HDC. How does this process go for our residents. If we post the Montgomery County guidelines with no further clarification, then we are relinquishing the HDC oversight for these solar panels.
* Member Sizemore suggested that we recraft them in such a way so that the HDC uses the Montgomery County guidelines as a reference for Laytonsville town residents. We should go to the Town Council and explain this process for Laytonsville.
* Chair Hendricks withdraws the motion.
* Mayor Ruspi stated that the guidelines serve dual purposes. Solar panels can be used and the HDC has recommendations for their use, therefore residents need to follow them.
* Chair Hendricks concluded by stating that we should provide the Montgomery County guidelines to the Town Council, saying that this is what we are thinking about. We have to evaluate if Laytonsville wants to do this.

**Open Forum:**

* Lot 2 HDWP tomorrow for public hearing for site plan review.
* Town Hall patio work was seen today by Chair Hendricks who spoke to Mr. Jordy, contractor. Mr. Jordy will build the landing at the back door first to determine the slope and length for the ramp; 20-22 inches from the ground. The ramp will be 10 feet, then 12 feet in length.
* LED signage for the gas station is in question. They were invited to this meeting.
* The house on Rollin Ridge (photo was shown) work is almost complete. Member Drouliskos reported just a few little things need to be finished.
* Pellegrino’s tree is still there; no branches appear to be falling, but no signs of leaf budding.
* Member Bradsher gave a detailed description of lighting issues that may be due to the moving of power lines for Laytonsville Preserve.

Member Bradsher motioned to adjourn meeting. Member Drouliskos seconded, and all approved at 9:21pm.

Respectfully submitted,

James Schneider,

Secretary