Laytonsville Historic District Commission Monthly Meeting, September 18, 2023

**LAYTONSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**Videoconference Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, September 18, 2023**

**Present:**

Jennifer Sizemore, Chair

Kris Bradsher

Andy Drouliskos

**Absent:**

Michael McDonald

Becca Saah

**Attendees:**

Shirley Dorsey, Secretary, Laytonsville Historical Center, Inc.

Anne Wolf, President, Laytonsville Historical Center, Inc.

Charles Hendricks, Mayor

Jim Ruspi, Former Mayor

James Schneider, Secretary

iPhone2

**Opening:**

Chair Sizemore called the meeting to order at 7:31. She noted that a quorum was present.

The first order of business was to approve the minutes from the July 17, 2023, meeting. Chair Sizemore asked if any members had any comments or edits to the minutes. Member Drouliskos made a motion to approve the minutes, Member Bradsher seconded. All members in attendance were in favor; minutes were approved.

**Public Hearing on Historic District Work Permit Application 06-23 submitted by the Laytonsville Historical Center, Inc., to install two historical interpretive wayside signs.**

Member Bradsher motioned to open the Public Hearing. Member Drouliskos seconded. Unanimously approved. Chair Sizemore began by stating that the wayside signs will be paid for using ARPA funds, and two of the signs are to be placed in the historic district on town hall property. Chair Sizemore asked for questions or comments from HDC members. There were none. Chair Sizemore asked about how long the signs would last. Ms. Wolf responded 10 to 15 years. Chair Sizemore asked if consideration was given to placing the sign closer to the sidewalk vs. along the walkway. Ms. Wolf responded that was considered, but due to the slope of the land, it would be easier to read by placing it along the walkway to town hall. Chair Sizemore asked for questions or comments from the public. There were none. Member Drouliskos motioned to accept the application as submitted. Member Bradsher seconded. All members in attendance approved.

Member Bradsher motioned to close the public hearing. Member Drouliskos seconded. Public Hearing closed at 7:42pm.

Chair Sizemore opened regular HDC monthly meeting at 7:43pm.

Consideration of Tree Removal Authority

Chair Sizemore asked what the HDC members feel the commission’s role should be related to trees and landscaping. Mayor Hendricks mentioned that there have been several recent requests for trees to be removed in the historic district. These trees were considered to be unsafe, thus warranting the Mayor to approve their removal. His opinion is that, before a resident comes to the HDC, they should consult the Tree Commission. The Tree Commission is capable of determining if the tree is healthy and viable. He pointed out that the Tree Ordinance only covers landmark trees. Chair Sizemore believes that the ordinance seems to say that the HDC has say in all trees and bushes in the historic district. The HDC will discuss what the ordinance means and make suggestions for clearer guidance for residents during next month’s meeting. HDC members were in agreement that the Tree Commission should be responsible for reviewing and approving removal requests for trees within the historic district; they could ask for HDC opinion if desired.

Topics for Future Meetings

Member Bradsher asked if there could be greater clarification on what Montgomery County regulations are in relation to houses/structures in historic districts. She asked what county inspectors do; there may be some houses in the historic district that do not meet code. Chair Sizemore said that perhaps the HDC could ask for a Montgomery County representative to speak at one of our meetings.

Member Bradsher stated that the town of Laytonsville has doubled in population over the past 10 years. She asked if everyone knows that the town has a Historic District Commission. Maybe a meet and greet can be scheduled where HDC members provide information pertaining to the preservation of the historic district.

HDC Secretary Position

Chair Sizemore reminded members that we are still looking of another member for the HDC, and we also need someone to assume the secretary position.

Discussion of Day and Time of HDC Meetings

After some discussion surrounding avoiding potential Monday federal holidays, it was decided to keep the current schedule for monthly HDC meetings as is. If there is a Monday holiday falling on the same day as a regularly scheduled HDC meeting, we will look at rescheduling it giving reasonable advance notice.

Open Forum on Laytonsville Historic Preservation Issues

Mayor Hendricks asked for opinions on the new home being built in the historic district. HDC members were very positive by what they have seen so far.

Member Bradsher stated that, with some of the elaborate Halloween decorations going up in the historic district, there may be many more trick or treaters than there have been in the past.

Mr. Ruspi stated that, although the population of Laytonsville has doubled in the past 10 years, the population within the historic district has been stagnant. He said that in the past, the town held some meet and greets for Town Council members to interact with the public at the shopping center. He believes that these types of events were very beneficial for both the council members and the residents who attended.

Chair Sizemore stated that the commission’s next regular monthly meeting is scheduled for October 16, 2023.

Member Bradsher moved to adjourn the meeting. Member Drouliskos seconded the motion. All approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

James Schneider, Secretary