

LAYTONSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
September 21, 2015

Roll Call:

A meeting of the Laytonsville Historic District Commission (HDC) was called to order by Chair Sheree Wenger at 7:38 p.m. Commission Members Charles Hendricks, Jill Ruspi and Lisa Simonetti were present. Member Michele Shortley and Alternate Member Joanne Howes were absent.

Matt Honacki and Ben Crisafulli of NV Homes and resident Ann Hendricks were present.

Chair Wenger administered the oath of office to Member Ruspi.

Minutes: The minutes from the August 17, 2015 meeting were presented. Commission Member Ruspi made a motion to accept the minutes. Commission Member Simonetti seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Preliminary Statement by Chair:

The preliminary statement was read.

New Business:

Chair Wenger opened the hearing for application 02-15 submitted by NV Homes to discuss the models for Laytonsville Preserve that fall within the Historic District. Chair Wenger stated that a lot had been learned in working with NV Homes on the Rolling Ridge homes. She noted that the Dartmouth model had been approved for Rolling Ridge and was one of the models being proposed for Laytonsville Preserve.

Matt Honacki introduced Ben Crisafulli and stated that NV Homes was proposing 3 models with 2 elevations each for the Historic District of Laytonsville Preserve. He stated that all homes would have attached garages. Chair Wenger noted that one house in Rolling Ridge has a detached garage due to well and septic reasons. Member Hendricks commented that there is a historic quality to a detached garage. He also commented that attached garages can make the house look imposing. Mr. Honacki indicated there would not be any two story garages.

Mr. Honacki presented artistic renderings of the facades of the 3 proposed models, each with 2 elevations. Each was shown in brick and in siding.

Dartmouth Elevation A - Chair Wenger stated that in the past, the HDC had preferred vertical elements. She commented that she would like to see the 1x3 vertical windows over the front door changed. Mr. Honacki suggested removing the gable in the middle above the door and adding a different window in the middle. Chair Wenger also commented she was opposed to mixed materials on the front of the houses. The material below the water table can be different. Member Ruspi commented that she would not want to see stripes with the bricks. Mr. Honacki stated that all brick colors are available to be viewed in the model home.

Chair Wenger asked the average size of the proposed models. Mr. Honacki responded that the size for

the upper two levels is 3600-3700 square feet for the Dartmouth; 3500 square feet for the Beaconsfield and 2592 square feet for the Abingshire. Mr. Honacki noted that a finished basement, morning room and family room bump-out add additional square footage. Chair Wenger commented that morning rooms and bump out had been disallowed in Rolling Ridge and her personal opinion was that they should enforce the same restrictions.

Dartmouth Elevation B –The HDC members agreed that they did not like the porticos. Chair Wenger suggested adding a porch. Again, the HDC members agreed that they did not want to see mixed materials above the water table. The Commission tentatively rejected this elevation as presented.

Beaconsfield Elevation A – HDC members commented that the same restrictions on mixed materials apply. Chair Wenger suggested that the porch could be extended. Mr. Honacki commented that the spindle types could be changed to differentiate the houses. Member Hendricks asked if the rounded windows could be considered.

Beaconsfield Elevation B – Again, members commented about the restrictions on mixed materials. Chair Wenger noted that a wraparound porch would enhance the house. It was noted that the siding is six inch beaded vinyl siding.

Abingshire Elevation A – Mr. Honacki stated this is the smallest of the 3 models. The same comments about restrictions on mixed materials were made. There was discussion about the curved windows.

Member Hendricks questioned the width of the proposed model homes and asked whether they would all fit on the lots. Member Ruspi noted that lot 16 is a very narrow lot. She asked if the shared driveway had to exist on lot 15 and 16. Mr. Honacki indicated that an attached garage may not work on those lots. Members noted that the site plan showed detached garages. Chair Wenger requested the front footage of the lots. There were questions from HDC members about how close to the road the houses would be built and if they would be the same distance back from the road. Mr. Honacki explained that the houses must be behind the building restriction line which the county determines but that the intention was to build them in a row facing the street. Chair Wenger asked if there would be swales. Mr. Honacki stated that he would talk to Natelli Communities for more details. Member Hendricks commented that there were aspects of the back and sides that need to be discussed further. For example, there may be a need for more windows on the sides of the houses.

Mr. Honacki asked if a work session could be scheduled. Chair Wenger indicated that she would leave the record open on the hearing and schedule a work session to discuss more of the details. Chair Wenger read testimony submitted by Dan Prats of 7115 Brink Road.

Testimony of:
Dan Prats
7115 Brink Rd.
Laytonsville, MD 20882
301-455-4320

Dear Historic District Commission,

I am writing today as a private citizen who lives in the historic district, not as Mayor or President of the Laytonsville Historic Center. The views expressed herein are my own and are not a reflection of the will of the Town, the Town Council, nor the Mayor's office. I am also not speaking on behalf of the Historic Center.

In considering the housing styles for the historic district in Laytonsville Preserve, I would like the Commission to

consider making full porches a requirement (with wraparound option) and approve only houses with siding. (Not brick or stone front)

The reason I am making these two requests has to do with the HDC's hard work on the Rolling Ridge subdivision and the lessons that can be learned from that experience. Originally, the house models were specific to each lot, but we loosened that requirement while I was serving on the Commission, allowing models with brick and porticos for the last 2 lots on Brink Road.

The result is a streetscape that breaks up at the end of town. If you walk down the street past the historic homes, West along Brink Road, you will walk into a group of new houses that fit nicely with the streetscape as they have siding and full porches. At the end of the line are our compromise homes which are brick with porticos instead of porches.

Since I travel up and down Brink Road every day, I have often noticed that while they are very nice homes, it's striking how out of place they appear. The street is dominated by homes with siding and porches, and I feel the new brick ones, without porches, seem a little out of place. Upon reflection, and after living with the outcomes, I feel we may have erred in that compromise.

Along with a couple of members of the HDC, I live directly across the street from the proposed new homes. These homes will be part of our new neighborhood and should add to the small town feel already existing on Brink Rd. With all of the effort Sidra and I went through to work with the HDC when we built our house, I think it is a fair request that we maintain the aesthetics we abided by to construct a home that fits in well with its neighbors.

I think it would be unfortunate to see some modern brick front home with a portico across the street from what is perhaps the HDC's first, and best, new home project. (Granted I may be biased since I'm talking about my home) Our house adds to the streetscape and Sidra and I are glad we had the chance to hear the opinions of the HDC and work with its members at the time to make a great home for our family even better.

A porch is a great thing for a small town and I have greatly enjoyed our porch which I feel adds value to our lives as well as adding to the town. I interact daily with people walking by, and it provides a great place to wait for Ellie to come home on the bus. It's a social platform and is in line with the stories I have heard from Dottie Tessier and Lousia Riggs of how the porches in town were the living rooms and social centers in the summer when they were little. We should encourage porches to keep our community close and engaged as we build on a strong tradition in Laytonsville.

It would be a shame to miss this opportunity to add such value to our street, historic district, town, and to the lives of the new families who will join us. It's the right style for this street and would create a consistent streetscape that compliments the existing historic homes of our small town.

Maintaining that small town feel and concept of streetscape, encouraging neighbors to come outside and interact, and adding to the enjoyment of the families who will move into these homes seems to be a win-win situation.

I am sorry I cannot be there tonight to testify in person, but if you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dan Prats
7115 Brink Rd.
Laytonsville, MD

Ann Hendricks of 7011 Brink Road expressed concern about the level that the homes on Brink Road would be built. Chair Wenger stated that the zoning ordinance had been modified to prevent homes from being built on a hill and dwarfing the existing homes. The height cannot exceed thirty five feet from the original grade. Mr. Honacki added that the town and county have a checkpoint when building permits are requested for each lot before construction begins.

Member Hendricks asked about a landscape plan. Chair Wenger stated that there was a landscape plan approved with the subdivision site plan. More recently, Natelli Communities had shared a more detailed plan with Mayor Prats.

Member Ruspi asked about the timeframe for building on Brink Road. Mr. Honacki replied that he felt the earliest that homes might take residents would be May or June of 2016.

Member Hendricks asked when the HDC would be asked for recommendations on the Phase 3 homes that abut the Historic District. Chair Wenger observed that the Town Council had not approved those lots yet.

Adjournment: Commission Member Ruspi made the motion to leave the record open, which was seconded by Commission Member Hendricks. Motion carried unanimously. Chair Wenger made the motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Commission Member Hendricks. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Charlene K. Dillingham
Clerk, Town of Laytonsville