



Rochester Hills Minutes

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City Council Special Meeting

*Erik Ambrozaitis, J. Martin Brennan, Greg Hooper, Vern Pixley, James Rosen,
Michael Webber and Ravi Yalamanchi*

Vision Statement: The Community of Choice for Families and Business

*Mission Statement: "Our mission is to sustain the City of Rochester Hills as the premier
community of choice to live, work and raise a family by enhancing our vibrant residential
character complemented by an attractive business community."*

Monday, March 23, 2009

7:30 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

Joint Meeting with Historic Districts Commission (HDC) and the Historic Districts Study Committee (HDSC)

In accordance with the provisions of Act 267 of the Public Acts of 1976, as amended, the Open Meetings Act, notice was given that the Historic Districts Commission and the Historic Districts Study Committee would be joining the Rochester Hills City Council at their Special Meeting held Monday, March 23, 2009 to discuss Historic Preservation within the City of Rochester Hills.

CALL TO ORDER

President Hooper called the Special Rochester Hills City Council Meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Michigan Time.

ROLL CALL - City Council / Historic Districts Commission / Historic Districts Study Committee

Present 16 - Greg Hooper, James Rosen, Erik Ambrozaitis, Ravi Yalamanchi, Michael Webber, Vern Pixley, Maria-Teresa Cozzolino, Brian Dunphy, John Dziurman, Nicole Franey, James Hannick, Melissa Luginski, Paul Miller, Richard Stamps, Jason Thompson and LaVere Webster

Absent 4 - J. Martin Brennan, Micheal Kilpatrick, Peggy Schodowski and Murray Woolf

Others Present:

Ed Anzek, Director of Planning and Development

Bryan Barnett, Mayor

Judy Bialk, Planning Assistant

Paul Davis, City Engineer

Derek Delacourt, Deputy Director of Planning

Jane Leslie, City Clerk

Patrick McKay, Supervisor Interpretive Services

John Staran, City Attorney

Approved as presented at the May 4, 2009 Regular City Council Meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

LEGISLATIVE & ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS

Mr. Ambrozaitis mentioned an e-mail he received requesting that a noise study be performed in relation to the M-59 widening project and questioned whether Mr. Paul Davis received this request.

NEW BUSINESS

2009-0124 Discussion regarding Historic Preservation within the City of Rochester Hills

Attachments: [Agenda Summary.pdf](#)
[Historical Preservation Ordinance.pdf](#)
[Ordinance Amendment 499.pdf](#)
[Ordinance Amendment 527.pdf](#)
[Ordinance Amendment 528.pdf](#)
[Historic Districts Map.pdf](#)
[Local Historic Districts Act 169.pdf](#)
[Secretary of Interior Standards.pdf](#)

President Hooper spoke about the importance of this meeting to discuss the Members' various roles and responsibilities, the historic preservation process and the important benefits to the community. He stated that this discussion would help facilitate future discussions and deliberations between City Council and the Historic District Commission (HDC). He requested Mr. Ed Anzek, Director of Planning and Development, and Mr. Derek Delacourt, Deputy Director of Planning, give a brief introduction of the charge and responsibility of the HDC and the Historic District Study Committee (HDSC).

The Preservation Ordinance and State Public Act

The Preservation Ordinance was adopted to establish the process for designation, elimination or modification of districts and for review and approval of work conducted within a designated local district. The Ordinance states that preservation is a public purpose to safeguard the City's heritage, stabilize and improve property values, foster civic beauty, strengthen the local economy and promote historic districts for the education, pleasure and welfare of the citizens of the city, state and nation.

The Charge and Responsibility of the HDC and HDSC

Mr. Delacourt stated that part of his function with the Planning Department is to perform as a staff liaison for both the HDC and the HDSC, both established by the City's Preservation Ordinance (PO) adopted in 1976 and subsequently,

amended several times. He stated that the HDC was established by Ordinance to enable the City to manage designated historic resources within the City. The HDC is a committee charged with review of proposed work, such as an addition or alteration of a designated property. The process begins with the homeowner making an application and providing the plans of proposed work to be reviewed by the HDC. Approval is granted by the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness. He explained that sometimes there are circumstances when the HDC may request minor alterations in a plan, materials and/or design. He stated that the HDC educates and works with local property owners through seminars and workshops to help residents improve their Historic District ownership property investment. HDC does not designate properties.

Mr. Delacourt explained the more limited charge and responsibility of the HDSC as follows:

- Identify potential historic resources for designation.
- Review the potential historic resources based on guidelines of the National Register Bulletin that are related to architecture, event, person, archaeology, etc.
- Report/recommend to City Council.

President Hooper noted the qualifications for members of HDC:

- Architecture accreditation, Mr. John Dziurman.
- Archaeologist, Dr. Richard Stamps.
- Historian, Mr. LaVere Webster.
- All members should have a clearly demonstrated interest or knowledge of historic preservation.

It was noted that other members serve on the Rochester Avon Historical Society or reside in one of the districts or designated properties and have an interest in historic preservation. The HDSC is similar in its qualifications.

Pat McKay, Supervisor of Interpretive Services for the Rochester Hills Museum at VanHoosen Farm, stated the Museum was established thirty years ago this month to enable the City to have a repository for historical records, documentation and photographs. He explained that the Museum staff has compiled a comprehensive list of materials and is in the process of organizing these materials so that the Museum can provide information to answer historical questions about the community and make the information accessible to the public.

Existing Designated Districts

Mr. Delacourt stated that the City's historic resources consist of two contiguous Historic Districts, Stoney Creek and Winkler Mill, located in the northeast corner of the City and an additional thirty non-contiguous individual historic districts located throughout the City. All of these properties are locally designated and identified in the City's Historic District Ordinance.

The HDSC Review and Study Process

Mr. Dziurman explained that the tools utilized by the HDSC are provided by The Department of Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic

Properties and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Properties, more specifically for:

- *Preservation.*
- *Reconstruction.*
- *Rehabilitation.*
- *Restoration.*

Dr. Stamps discussed the responsibility of the HDSC for the following three areas of review:

- *Sites and land that are known and listed by boundary and territory.*
- *Sites on a potential list and when feasible, perform surveys.*
- *Unknowns - an area of historical value that needs to be investigated further.*

Mr. Webber inquired about the procedure for how 'unknowns' would be presented to the HDSC.

Mr. Delacourt responded that residents, City Council, HDC and HDSC members can submit inquiry requests.

Mr. Delacourt stated that as recent as six or seven years ago, there were over one hundred properties or sites on the potential historic designation list. He noted that the potential list has diminished to approximately twenty-nine due to mass review, elimination or studies. He stated that the HDC establishes the formal potential list, then the HDSC maintains an evaluation of the priorities of the various properties on this list.

Mr. Dziurman discussed a new term called the 'recent past' defining architecture and designs that were previously overlooked as too modern are now becoming of interest as time moves forward.

President Hooper inquired about the notification process of the purchaser if a historic home is purchased.

City Attorney Staran responded that there is a notice recorded in the chain of title that would appear during due diligence of the title insurance.

Mr. Delacourt responded that the Department flags the known properties when the property changes title because sometimes residents are surprised to find out that they own a designated property.

CLG Submittal Status

Mr. Dunphy acknowledged City Council's support of the ordinance changes to aide the HDC with the Certified Local Government Application (Application) and requested Mr. Delacourt for a quick update on the status of the City's Application at this time.

Mr. Delacourt responded that the Application has been reviewed by the State of Michigan Historic Preservation Office and has advanced to the Department of Parks at the national level for a review which can take approximately two months. He expressed his confidence that the Application will continue through the Federal Review Process but may take a couple of months before the final, official approval is issued.

Demolition By Neglect

The HDC does have the ability to issue a demolition by neglect violation when there is a determination that the City is in imminent danger of losing a historic district resource. HDC's charge is to preserve.

HDC Outreach Programs

Dr. Stamps spoke about the workshop hosted by the HDC, focusing on repair and maintenance of historic windows and structures. The HDC had issued written invitations to the public and historic district residents.

Mr. Dunphy stated that there were actually two events, a tax credit seminar in April of 2008 and an open house at the Museum in May 2007 with significant turnout for both events. He stated that the community outreach is a very important part of the HDC's responsibility to ensure that the community is educated and has all of the information necessary to understand the City's history and historic preservation process. He reiterated Mr. Delacourt's comment that documentation provided by the historic property owner is available on the City's website and available for download in a pdf format so the information is readily accessible to the public and the City's residents.

Mr. Webster advised that the City of Rochester Hills should advertise its rich resource of historic properties and potential historic properties, and could readily market them upon availability. He commented that the posting of historic street signs would be another way to market the City's historic properties for the tourism and vacation industry in the City.

Mr. McKay noted that there had been an active Historic Site Plaque program when the City was known as Avon Township. It has not been pursued since the mid-1980s.

Mr. Anzek stated when the City was conducting the gateway study, Historic Preservation was identified as one of the four key elements. He directed everyone's attention to the four paneled windows of the gateway sign stating that one of the panels was intended to recognize Historic Districts and was to be placed on a pole as motorists enter the various Historic Districts throughout the City while another panel would be for recreation or a park.

Historic Tax Credit Program

Mr. Dziurman stated that he has been on the HDC since 1988 and one of the

difficulties of the HDC is requesting residents of historic district designation properties is to spend money. He stated that the HDC has worked through the Historic Preservation Network to utilize the State of Michigan's twenty-five percent tax credit toward the maintenance and upkeep of a home whether it is a new kitchen, a new roof, or a new furnace. He stated that in some instances, some historic properties qualify for the Federal Government's twenty percent tax credit and by combining the two tax credits, can add up to some significant relief toward the maintenance of these properties. He gave an example of the Western Knitting Mills site, which became The Rochester Mills Brewing Company as having utilized both credits. He stated that the State of Michigan had given tax credit seminars at the Museum to assist residents utilizing these tools for the maintenance of their historic properties.

Mr. Yalamanchi *inquired if the use of tax increment financing (TIF) had been considered.*

Mr. Dziurman *responded that TIF is being implemented by the Downtown Development Authority in downtown Rochester.*

City Attorney Staran *responded that he did not think there would be any statutory authorization for the HDC or HDSC to utilize TIF because it is used for projects related to public improvements and the current discussion is for generating private property value enhancements.*

Mr. Dziurman *noted that the Brownfield Act is being used for urban development and may be reviewed as a possibility for Stoney Creek Village, utilizing \$.85 on the dollar savings.*

Since HDC inception in 1978, most properties listed are still there. Historic designation is more than dollars and cents as it relates to the quality of life.

Discussed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

NEXT MEETING DATE

Regular Meeting - Monday, March 30, 2009 - 7:30 PM

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before Council, President Hooper adjourned the meeting at 9:23 p.m.

*GREG HOOPER, President
Rochester Hills City Council*