

November 14, 2012

VIA EMAIL

breuckmanj@rochesterhills.org

Mr. Jim Breuckman
Historic Districts Study Committee
CITY OF ROCHESTER HILLS
1000 Rochester Hills Dr.
Rochester Hills, MI 48309

Re: PUBLIC HEARING FILE NO. HDSC 08-002

Dear Historic Districts Study Committee Members:

I write in support of designating the property located at the northeast corner of Rochester and Tienken Roads (hereinafter collectively the "Ferber Property") a Historic District.

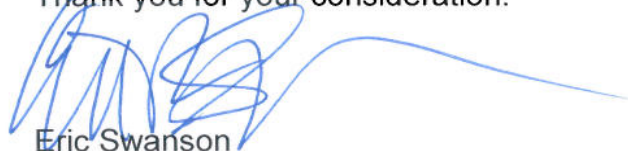
Rochester Hills is my hometown. I have been a resident of the City for more than thirty (30) years, and have personally witnessed the transformation of our rural community into a bustling city. My wife and I chose to return to Rochester Hills almost ten (10) years ago to start and raise our family. We chose the Cross Creek Subdivision based on its northern, somewhat quiet 'out of the way', location. What we have seen in our almost ten (10) years of living in this particular section of the City is rampant and unnecessary development of the intersection of Tienken and Rochester Roads and the failure by our City to place any value on preserving our City's history. Every corner of this intersection, except one, has undergone major development in the last 5 years.

Taking an overview of the intersection, the City Walk was erected on a vacant tract of land adjacent to North Hill School. It was promoted as being complimentary to the Village of Rochester Hills development and was supposed to house a Carrabba Grill, among others. In reality, since completion, that development has maintained significant unoccupied retail space (and the Carrabba Grill never opened). I would hazard a guess that this development currently has a less than 50% occupancy rate. Across the street, the North Hill Plaza is equally substantially vacant with likely 30-40% available occupancy. Looking to the other end of the corner is the the Papa Joe's strip mall. Continuing the theme of the City Walk, this relatively new development also has significant vacancy along with a revolving door of restaurants and businesses coming and going. Directly across Rochester Rd is the Ferber Property. It is comprised of unique and historical buildings---and probably one of the few original significant industrial-related buildings from our City's past. It is not an eyesore. It is not a dilapidated complex, and it does have historical value in terms of maintaining our cityscape with original buildings from our past. According to my research, National Twist and Tool dates back to Rochester, MI to the 1920s and manufacturing was moved to the area in 1942. This is not insignificant in terms of our City's heritage and past.

A recent letter was sent by the owners of the Ferber Property to residents in my neighborhood urging support against a Historic District designation of the property. The message (although likely unintended) was loud and clear. The owners have no interest whatsoever in maintaining the heritage of our town. I will gladly take the view of the rusty water tower that has been visible from my backyard for the last 10 years, than another significantly underutilized and undesired development. I did not move back to this area, or purchase my home in the Cross Creek subdivision with the understanding that I would be surrounded by vacant developments or that little to no value would be placed on historic surroundings.

As I drive through our town, there is very little evidence left of the original heritage. It is the duty of your Committee to take steps to maintain the roots and heritage of our community. This duty is not only owed to our current residents, but to our children and future generations to come. Designating the Ferber Property a Historic District will ensure that at least some level of our City's history is preserved.

Thank you for your consideration.



Eric Swanson
1202 Lakeview Dr.
Rochester Hills, MI 48306