

April 5, 2017

Re:1841 Crooks Road – Farmhouse and Barn

Dear Rochester Hills Historical Committee:

My husband and I would like to ask the Historical Committee to consider removing the property at 1841 Crooks Road from the historical designation. We request this for a multitude of reasons. Please keep in mind we love our city's history and the story of the O'Neil Pottery Barn, however the restraints that the designation places on a property is, in this case, unrealistic. When we purchased the property in 2000 we were instantly in love with the idea of living in Rochester Hills on two acres with the barn and farmhouse that we could make into our dream home. We spoke to the neighbors and they mentioned the parcel was deemed historical. We did research and found an architect that understood and worked with historical properties. He drew up beautiful plans to incorporate the existing, yet run down, farmhouse. We took the plans to the city for approval. Much to our surprise, our plans were rejected. After multiple attempts and upwards of \$40,000 to the architect designing our home, the city told us ..."they did not want an estate on the property" ... so, we gave up. Here we are today, 17 years later, attempting to make this property into something viable; not only for us, but for the community that surely is tired of seeing the beautiful property with a boarded-up home.

As mentioned, the historical designation was not noted at the time we closed on the house – we have painstakingly reviewed the closing documents and the title work and nowhere is it mentioned that it was designated as historic. This is something that should have been brought to our attention though the title search. After all there are truly no benefits for the owner: no tax breaks, no help financially maintaining the structure; just the committee having the right to impose their desires on the property you have paid for. For most people that are buying a home, historic designation is a negative, not a positive.

Since we purchased the home, we have not made any changes to any of the structure(s); much of the original home is not original. The roof is not original. Half of the windows are not original. Much of the siding has been replaced and or is rotten beyond repair. The fireplace and chimney that once stood in the center of the home has since been removed. The inside of the home is completely gutted: no walls, plumbing, electrical, kitchen, bathroom, etc. Surprisingly, even some of the main joists holding up the foundation have been cut completely through. Please remember, we did not make any of these changes or alterations to the farmhouse. For these reasons, we feel the home is lacking any integrity to be considered of historic.

Safety is clearly another issue with the farmhouse. Not living on the property, we have no way to keep an eye on things. We have posted and registered it as a No Trespassing parcel; but unless it's being monitored we have very little control. There have been multiple instances of graffiti and breaking and entering; the property continues to be destroyed further. Thankfully no one has been hurt, yet.

During the course of the past 17 years our financial situation has changed as well. We no longer have the means to build our dream home. We have spent the last five years in bankruptcy. I have retired and my husband is due to retire in the next year. Quite frankly we could not possibly bring the home to the historic committee's required level of restoration. Speaking to a builder it would be well over \$500,000 to restore it correctly. This is a huge financial burden we just cannot endure.

We love our barn and property on Crooks Road. We are there nearly every weekend enjoying the property. We take our dog for runs, enjoy wiener roasts in the summer with our kids and grandkids, and would love to live there full time. However, with the restraints of the historic designation that was not disclosed when we purchased it and the financial burden to restore the property properly, we kindly ask that the committee consider removing the property from the designation. With much of the original farmhouse destroyed or removed, the historic value of the structure has clearly been compromised. As Rochester Hills residents for the past 40+ years, we too would like the "eye-sore" on Crooks Road fixed.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathryn Dunn".

Kathryn Dunn