



City of Rochester Hills
AGENDA SUMMARY
NON-FINANCIAL ITEMS

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Legislative File No: 2008-0663 V11

TO: Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Ed Anzek, Director, Planning and Economic Development Department
DATE: August 3, 2012
SUBJECT: Elimination of a Potential Historic District – National Twist Drill Property

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting City Council remove a portion of the National Twist Drill site that has been on the potential historic district designation list. The total Twist Drill site is comprised of 2 parcels totaling 40.25+/- acres. The applicant is asking for the removal of the southern parcel, 6875 N. Rochester Road, parcel Number 70-15-02-300-004. The applicant made this request by email to President Hooper.

BACKGROUND:

The site known as Twist Drill, located on the northeast corner of Rochester and Tienken, has been on the City's potential designation list since the program's inception in 1978.

In 2002, the City retained the services of Dr. Jane C. Busch to conduct a citywide analysis of all Historic Districts, both contiguous and non-contiguous; all sites on the potential list, and any other properties that might qualify by her observation in her city-wide efforts. In all, Dr. Busch evaluated over 200 properties.

Her work and her recommendation was that the Twist Drill site remains on the potential list.

When this study was presented to the City Council in 2002, Mr. Rhein Mozer, then owner of the southern parcel under consideration asked the City Council that the site be removed. Council took no action at that time on any parcels. As I understand the situation as it exists today, Mr. Eric Mozer, petitioner as executor for the Trust that owns the property, is now making the request to remove the parcel.

In 2008 the Historic District Study Committee initiated a study to evaluate the Twist Drill site (both parcels). As was the custom then, the City's Historic Preservation Consultant prepared a Preliminary Report for discussion with the Study Committee. As I understand the sequence, this study was never finalized nor brought forth for the City Council to consider 1) designation as historic or 2) removal from the potential list.

On January 12, 2009, the City Council passed an amending ordinance that placed the authority to initiate the designation, delisting, or removal from the potential list with the City Council. This ordinance was done at the insistence of the State Historic Preservation Office for the City to be more in line to be certified as a Certified Local Government. The Preliminary Study initiated by the Study Committee, was done in 2008 that preceded the City Council's amending Ordinance.

With the pending request it is suggested the City Council has the following actions available:

1. Remove the parcel from the potential list. That would leave the remaining northern portion still on the list.
2. Request the Historic District Study Committee to take up the question by reconvening and revisiting discussions that began in 2008, request Ms. Kidorf to review and update as she deems appropriate the Preliminary Study done in 2008. Conduct the appropriate procedures and make a recommendation to the City Council.

Chapter 118, Historical Preservation, of the City's Code of Ordinances identifies the process for establishment, modification, or elimination of Historic Districts within the City. Section 118-126 of the Ordinance establishes Council's authority to review such requests. The following is directly from the Ordinance.

Sec. 118-126 Authority

- *The city council may at any time establish by ordinance additional historic districts, including proposed districts previously considered and rejected, may modify boundaries of an existing historic district, or may eliminate an existing historic district.*

The Ordinance establishes a standing Historic Districts Study Committee (HDSC) to review such requests and make recommendations to City Council. The Ordinance requires the initial request to be made to City Council and then City Council may refer it to the Study Committee for review.

Sec. 118-129. Initial determination and investigation.

- *Upon receipt of a request to establish, modify or eliminate a historic district, the city council, after making a determination that there are reasonable grounds for such a request, may refer the request to the study committee to conduct an investigation in accordance with this section.*

If Council determines there are reasonable grounds for the request, and refers it to the Committee, the Ordinance outlines the process that must be followed. The process requires development of preliminary and final reports, a public hearing held by the HDSC, review of the report by the State and City's Planning Commission, and a final recommendation to City Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that City Council refer the applicant's request to the Historic Districts Study Committee to reactivate those efforts began in 2008; to consider both parcels as provided in previous documentation that the basis for potential historic preservation is identical for both; and that the matter be done as expeditious as possible. Note however, the process includes State agencies of which we cannot control their timeframe.

From staff's position it is difficult to estimate a timeframe for the study but much of the time-consuming work has been completed by Ms. Kidorf and only reasonable time to conduct an update, along with the HDSC's discussion, a public hearing, a review by the SHPO and the Planning Commission, followed by a final recommendation to City Council would be required.

Staff makes this recommendation given that there is a body of work and research that has been previously done documenting how this site meets the Secretary of the Interior's standards for designation.

APPROVALS:	SIGNATURE	DATE
Department Review		
Department Director		
Mayor		
City Council Liaison		