



City of Rochester Hills
AGENDA SUMMARY
NON-FINANCIAL ITEMS

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Legislative File No: 2008-0663 V15

TO: Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Ed Anzek, Director, Planning and Economic Development Department
DATE: December 10, 2012
SUBJECT: Potential Historic District – National Twist Drill Property

REQUEST:

Request for Historic District Designation – National Twist Drill site, located at the northeast corner of Rochester and Tienken Roads, consisting of two parcels totaling 40.25 acres. The southern parcel is 6875 Rochester Road, parcel number 70-15-02-300-004 and the northern parcel is 6841 Rochester Road, parcel number 70-15-02-300-015. The site is zoned I: Industrial with a FB-1: Flexible Business Overlay.

BACKGROUND:

The site known as Twist Drill, is located on the northeast corner of Rochester and Tienken. 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. The Twist Drill properties were identified as potential historic districts, and have remained on the potential historic district list since 2002.

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. In 2009 Council made a policy change that the listing and de-listing process was to begin at the direction of Council. It was during this time of transition that the original study was completed but never formally brought forth through the process to either designate or remove the properties from the potential list.

The process was restarted by Council at the request of the property owners earlier this year. At this time the Historic Districts Study Committee has completed the study and met all of the procedural requirements required by the Historic Preservation Ordinance, including holding a public hearing on November 15, 2011. The Study Committee has made a recommendation that City Council adopt a historic district for the above referenced parcels finding that the parcel meets three of the National Register criteria for designation.

Council has three potential options available:

1. Designate the entirety of the two parcels as a historic district.
2. Designate a portion of the two parcels as a historic district.
3. Decline to designate any historic districts and remove the two parcels from the potential historic districts list.

Note that option 2 was discussed by the Study Committee in 2008-2009 as a way to preserve the frontage office buildings along Rochester Road while excluding the majority of the site from the historic district. This option is intended to strike a balance between preserving the publicly visible and more easily re-used office buildings, while allowing for the majority of the site to redevelop as current zoning (which is consistent with the Master Land Use Plan) will allow. This option is predicated on the understanding that the reuse of the industrial buildings on the site would likely be more difficult than the continued use or adaptive reuse of the office buildings along the Rochester Road frontage.

The Study Committee did not explore or recommend this option at this time because the study found that all but one building on the site has historic significance and the National Register criteria do not allow for boundaries to be drawn through buildings.

While the Study Committee cannot recommend district boundaries that divide buildings, it would be acceptable for Council to designate a historic district that divides buildings. The historic district could contain buildings that may be more feasibly reused as a historic district, while allowing for buildings that may be more outdated to be redeveloped. A map is attached to this summary showing the potential boundary of a district including only the frontage office buildings.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Historic Districts Study Committee recommends that the two parcels comprising the National Twist Drill site be designated as a Local Historic District within the City of Rochester Hills, and that the City Attorney be requested to prepare the appropriate ordinance amendment per Section 118-126 of the City's Code of Ordinances.

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