

2020-0398

Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness - City File No. 20-023 - for construction of a new 12-bed, senior assisted living facility (home) on 1.9 acres located at 1841 Crooks Rd., on the east side of Crooks, between Avon and Hamlin, zoned R-1 One Family Residential, Parcel No. 15-20-428-003, Lijo Anthony, Grace Properties Group, LLC, Applicant

(Reference: Staff report, prepared by Kristine Kidorf, dated September 30, 2020 and associated application documents and photos had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record thereof).

Present for the applicant was Lijo Anthony, Grace Properties, 2695 Powderhorn Ridge Rd., Rochester Hills, MI 48309.

Hearing no comments or questions regarding the staff report, Dr. Stamps indicated that he liked the idea, and he felt that it was well presented and would contribute to the community. He stated that they were all devastated by the loss of the resource, but they were excited that the barn had survived. He noted that the staff report showed that the mass, scale and materials were all compatible, which he felt was good. He asked Mr. Anthony how he planned to use the barn, noting that typically, a structure had to have a function in order to survive. He recalled that in 2002, when there was a survey done for the Historic Districts, only 25 barns were left, and the subject barn was a piece of the City's history. He liked the drawing of the barn, but he wondered how it was planned to be used.

Mr. Anthony said that he was not aware of the barn at first; he just knew that there had been issues with the previous owner. When he was cutting grass at the site last year, a neighbor, Glen, came to him and said that he had owned a great deal of the land around there, which made Mr. Anthony feel good. He wanted to keep the barn; it would be the focal point, and that was why he named his development Barnes Senior Living. He wanted to bring out the historic feel, but he claimed that it was in bad shape. It was two stories, and it was a nice, huge barn, but there was a lot of work to do. First, he would clean up the outside with new paint and landscaping. He said that he would set a budget every year and apply for grants if possible. Ms. Kapelanski had referred him to the architect who redid the barn at Rochester College. He commented that he could not promise that he would do everything to the barn tomorrow, but when he had capacity, he would. His goal was to clean the ground floor to use as a library, or a place where families could come and have a nice visit.

Dr. Stamps stated that he fully supported Mr. Anthony's idea. It was his understanding that to preserve a barn, it needed two things: a roof to keep the water out and clearing around the bottom so the water drained

away. Too often, grass grew next to the wood and moisture got in, and structures started to deteriorate. He liked the idea of using it as a library and meeting area. He could also envision putting the history of the property on the walls, with such things as maps and photographs. He reminded that Rochester Hills had only been a City for a few years. It used to be a Township, and the main industry was agriculture. Mr. Anthony had purchased an important part of the City's history that had survived, and he thanked him for acquiring it. He asked him to take care of the "jewel" they had.

Mr. Anthony assured that he would. He said that now that the pathway was completed, people walked by and thanked him. He planned to reach out to Ms. Kidorf about the history. He indicated that a lot of people did not even know that the barn was there. It would come up more as he built his business.

Mr. Tischer thanked Mr. Anthony for bringing the project before the HDC. The property had been a thorn in the side of the HDC and the City for many years. The site had a history going back to before he was on the board. He thought that it was great, and he echoed Dr. Stamps' comments that whatever Mr. Anthony could do to save the barn, which was what they were all interested in, would be appreciated. It was good to see that the property would be utilized and bring additional tax revenue to the City instead of being a vacant property with a barn in an historic district. He asked Mr. Anthony if he was given the history and knew he was buying an historic property when he purchased it.

Mr. Anthony said that he knew it was an historic property. He was told that the barn had to stay. He started reading about it. There was an article on line about the previous owner going to court, but that was all he knew. Recently, a lady from Ford Motor Co. who photographed cars, approached a neighbor for his number, and she called asking if she could take pictures of cars in front of the barn. He told her that she absolutely could. She also said that no one really knew the history, but she had read about it, and that was why she had come all the way from Flint.

Mr. Tischer said that he was glad Mr. Anthony had been told that it was an historic district property. The Commissioners asked people who came before them if they knew they had bought an historic property. Some people, for some reason, purchased homes not realizing they were in an historic district, and they did not know the ramifications that came along with owning an historic home and what the HDC did. He thanked Mr.

Anthony for running with the property and keeping the barn.

Ms. Janulis said that she really liked Mr. Anthony's answers. Since she had been on the HDC, that subject had come up over and over again with mixed responses from the people who owned an historic property. She felt that his goal was a good one. She agreed that it was important that there should be some kind of use for the barn or it would deteriorate. The HDC was very concerned that the barn was kept. They would have an ongoing relationship with Mr. Anthony as he moved along and wanted to do things, and they would see him again. She was in favor of the project. She thought that it was interesting that it would only be a 12-member facility. That made it unique, because other facilities being built were now were much larger, and she felt that there was a niche for him. She hoped that it would be a very successful endeavor, and she hoped that he could reach his annual goal for budgeting for the barn so that he could maintain it. A lot of people such as Dr. Stamps were very well versed in different things, and she knew that the Administration could also help steer Mr. Anthony in a good direction so that he might find grants to help maintain and keep the barn. She thanked Mr. Anthony.

Ms. Lyons said that she had a vague recollection of discussing paving and about maintaining the paving materials in front of the barn. She wondered if Ms. Kidorf could talk about that. Ms. Kidorf did not recall discussing paving, and she did not believe that there was any paving proposed in front of the barn. She thought that it would be gravel. Ms. Lyons said that the proposed building showed paving, and she thought she remembered having a conversation about it. Ms. Kidorf believed that the project had asphalt, which Mr. Anthony confirmed, which she felt was appropriate. It was a dark color, as opposed to brighter, white concrete. Ms. Kapelanski agreed that there was no paving proposed directly up to the barn.

Dr. Stamps said that he was glad that Mr. Anthony had become aware of the Rochester College barn. The company that did the restoration was a good one that got a vote of confidence. He hoped that Ms. Roediger could plug in with Mr. Anthony and get the specifics on the story where a photographer drove all the way from Flint to Rochester Hills to take pictures utilizing an historic resource in the City. He thought that it could be a nice little blip so that when someone said that they did not care about history and old buildings, the City could say that people who wanted to take photos for the auto industry did. He felt that it would be a nice thing to capture and use in some of the City's publications in the future. They could put something in about being excited, because the building

was being taken care of, and that the future looked bright. Dr. Stamps supported moving ahead with the project, and Mr. Tischer moved the following:

MOTION by Tischer, seconded by Janulis, in the matter of File No. HDC 20-023, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a new house at 1841 Crooks Road, Parcel Identification Number 15-20-428-003, with the following Findings and Conditions:

- 1) *The proposed drive, parking and house construction is compatible in massing, size, scale, and materials to the barn remaining on the property; and*
- 2) *The proposed drive, parking and house construction is in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, in particular standard numbers 9 and 10 as follows:*

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Dr. Stamps suggested that staff could offer the applicant guidelines for doing repair work or changing a color and make sure he understood the Secretary of Interior standards and what was required.

Mr. Anthony assured that he would not do anything to the barn without reaching out to the City and the HDC.

A motion was made by Tischer, seconded by Janulis, that this matter be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 9 - Granthen, Janulis, Lyons, Stamps, Stephens, Thompson, Tischer, Altherr-Rogers and Morlan

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Kapelanski gave updates for a couple of properties. The first was the "Lorna Stone" house property at Adams and South Boulevard. There had