



Rochester Hills

Minutes

Historic Districts Study Committee

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Chairperson Jason Thompson, Vice Chairperson Dr. Richard Stamps
Members: John Dziurman, James Hannick, Peggy Schodowski, Sue Thomasson, LaVere Webster

Thursday, May 13, 2010

5:30 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Thompson called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present 6 - Richard Stamps, John Dziurman, Jason Thompson, LaVere Webster, James Hannick and Sue Thomasson

Also Present: Derek Delacourt, Deputy Director
Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting
Sandi DiSipio, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2010-0179 April 8, 2010 Regular Meeting

Mr. Dziurman commented that at last month's meeting, an actual motion was made to elect a Committee Member to act as the Chairperson for the meeting as both the Chair and Vice-Chair were absent, but the minutes do not reflect a motion, only that Mr. Delacourt turned the meeting over to Mr. Dziurman. Mr. Delacourt indicated we would review the audio tape and correct the minutes as necessary.

A motion was made by Dziurman, seconded by Webster, that this matter be Approved as Amended. The motion CARRIED by the following vote:

Aye 6 - Stamps, Dziurman, Thompson, Webster, Hannick and Thomasson

COMMUNICATIONS

The Committee expressed sadness relative to the passing of Judy Bialk, their Recording Secretary for many years. They thanked her for her service and indicated she will be tremendously missed by everyone. It was suggested that a letter of appreciation from the Study Committee to her family be drafted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public came forward to speak on non-agenda items.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2009-0411 1585 S. Rochester Road (HDC File #03-003)

Chairperson Thompson indicated City Council had a meeting and made a motion to approve an additional sixty days to prepare the final report and report back to City Council with the recommendation. Any changes to the report need to be defined at this meeting. Mr. Delacourt clarified that the sixty day time limit ends between Council's June 14 and 21 meetings.

Mr. Dziurman stated he found and spoke with Sara Johnson, the granddaughter of Wayne Eddy, who purchased the property in the 1930's. She offered that Mr. Eddy was the chief lead engineer for Pontiac Motors and that the family received the first Pontiac car off the assembly line. Immediately after purchasing the farm, Mr. Eddy extensively renovated the existing house. John Burns, the architect who designed the renovations, reportedly designed the home at 1812 Rochester and a lot of homes in Romeo. The original farm had a tenant house, a number of barns and covered the area to John R Road on the east. Mr. Eddy was imprisoned for taxes for a short time around 1946. Newspaper articles should be reviewed for this information. Mr. Eddy started Allen Cooling & Ventilating Co. in Rochester near Dillman & Upton. After he died, Mrs. Eddy ran the company for years and then sold it to Solaronics. Ms. Johnson has a cousin that lives in Eddington Farms. Older plat maps listed the property as Fairview Farm. Mr. Dziurman commented that Mr. Rod Wilson sent him photographs of the farm and buildings, as well as the inter-urban electric street car that had a stop in front of the house. Mr. Dziurman feels additional research is required relative to this property, especially the imprisonment situation, the Allen Cooling & Ventilating Co., and checking General Motors records to see if there is a connection. He feels another couple of weeks is necessary to gather this information.

Dr. Stamps commented the preliminary report states that "the Study Committee finds the house at 1585 S. Rochester Road should no longer be designated as a local historic district. The original Study Committee did not have the benefit of the complete history of the property." Dr. Stamps feels that they probably did have an awareness of the history, but they didn't write it all down. They knew that the house was significant. As such, Dr. Stamps disagrees with that statement in the preliminary report, and feels it should be changed. Dr. Stamps feels the house does possess the historic and architectural integrity needed for it to be considered significant for its architecture. The State Historic Preservation Office comments disagreed with our draft preliminary finding. The Committee needs to pull the additional information into the report and reassess the findings and conclusions. Every effort should be made to preserve and save this resource, recognizing it for its importance to our history and architecture.

Chairperson Thompson asked what is the latest date this report could go before Council. Mr. Delacourt explained that it is the Study Committee's decision whether or not to move this back to Council, and is uncomfortable giving a last

possible date - the dates represented within Council's motion's timetable would be the meetings falling between June 14th and June 21st.

Mr. Delacourt pointed out that staff is ready to make all requested revisions. This has been discussed with the consultant and we know the sections that need to be changed to represent the revisions. All that is needed is a motion from the Study Committee to make these changes to the report. Staff just needs to know that this is the consensus of the Committee.

Ms. Kidorf stated she reviewed the local history collection both here and at the Burton Historical in Detroit for additional information and found that the 1930 census lists a Wayne and Etna Eddy with children, Ruth and Mary, living in Pontiac. Mr. Eddy is listed as a production superintendent in a motor factory. As far as the imprisonment issue, Ms. Kidorf suggested searching the microfilm files at various newspapers. As far as Mr. Eddy's employment history, there might be information at the National Automotive History Collection. She was not able to find additional information on Jack (John) Burns - the architect.

Chairperson Thompson allowed public comments pertaining to this item. He asked that each comment be limited to four minutes.

Greg Domka, 891 River Bend, stated he has been present at the last couple of Study Committee meetings, the Council meeting and also the Planning Commission meeting. He is passionate about this topic and requests that the Committee not delist the house. He commented many people spoke at the Council meeting in favor of the request for additional time and noted that the HDSC ordinance allows up to one year after the public hearing for the final report to be submitted. He referred to a letter that Mr. Gaber gave to City Council at their meeting, and expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that no one from the Study Committee was copied on said letter. Mr. Domka feels more information is needed and asked that the original 1978 designation be upheld as no one has proven beyond a reasonable doubt that the house should be delisted.

Lisa Winarski, 194 Bedlington, stated she is on the Eddington Farms Homeowner Association and commented that sending the report to a consultant was really premature, and asked who requested the consultant's involvement in this process. *Chairperson Thompson explained the consultant is on contract by the City to do this work and the Study Committee requested her services.* Ms. Winarski asked if the consultant was involved with the original PUD, and if not, if anyone was consulted relative to this property being historic. Ms. Winarski feels that the developer always wanted to demo the house, and from the time of the original PUD until now, has done nothing to maintain the house. She feels the consultant didn't do all the necessary research to complete the job and is concerned that the consultant is recommending something that she didn't investigate completely. Ms. Winarski suggests the report not be given to Council at all, or that the conclusion be stricken from the report. She suggested that a State-level grant be obtained to preserve this structure despite the developer's lack of respect for the home.

Stevie Morris, 1276 Pembroke Dr., stated she is on the Eddington Property

Owners Association Board and speaks for all 305 homeowners. She implored the Committee to please not delist this property as historic. There is more history that needs to be researched further.

Melinda Hill, 1481 Mill Race, stated feels the City is in a rush to eliminate the few designated historic districts they have in order to develop another empty strip mall. The preliminary report was just that - preliminary, and some people feel it was all-inclusive and that there is no more information. As early as January, the HDSC had concerns about the preliminary report and said there were people in the community that needed to be contacted. Even the SHPO questioned the conclusions of the preliminary report. More information has been provided tonight, and Ms. Hill hopes the Committee will incorporate this into the report. Also, it is hoped the Committee will produce further research where that can be done. There are 30 days to finish the report before the next meeting. Ms. Hill suggested the Committee make a motion that the recommendation be not to delist the property at 1585 S. Rochester since there is not conclusive information substantiating insignificance.

Mr. John Gaber, 1024 Adele Ct., present as the attorney on behalf of the property owner, stated insignificance does apply to the property. Ms. Kidorf, as well as Mr. Finiken, the historical architect retained by the property owner, feel the architectural character did not rise to the level of significance, so the property is not significant in that manner. The information brought forward about Mr. Eddy is good, but stories such as this could be found with probably any house. The property owner did take action relative to the demolition by neglect issue by repairing the porch column and other repairs that satisfied City officials as the issue was dropped. Mr. Gaber stands by his March letter because it contains accurate comments. Mr. Gaber asked the Committee to do the job they are charged with and return the report to City Council within 60 days listening to the architect's comments that this is not historically significant.

Mr. Scot Beaton, 655 Bolinger, wished the Committee best of luck on this project and commented he hopes Council takes their recommendation very seriously.

Mr. Paul Miller, 1021 Harding, displayed a late 1800's map showing the subject site as the Frank farm. The map shows numerous farms. Today, there is little left, especially the houses from those farms. This house is one of them even though it's been altered and changed. The changes become part of the historical record. One of the criteria is what the use of the property was, and in this case - it was agricultural. This house is important because it represents what Rochester/Avon Township was known for - agriculture. Mr. Miller encouraged the Committee to examine all the evidence, and thanked the Committee for all the work they have done.

Ms. Martha Black, 2408 Jackson, stated she hopes the house is not delisted as it is part of the community's history. It would be nice to see the house donated to the community so that we may enjoy it and pass it on to those who are going to come after us. Ms. Black knows the Committee will do the right thing and hopes Council will agree.

Dr. Stamps thanked the public for coming and sharing their opinions. Dr. Stamps believes it is clear that the Committee recognizes the need to change the report conclusions. He thanked Ms. Kidorf for all her work on the report. In regard to possible grants to preserve the property, that is not something that Committee can do, that would be up to the property owner. Dr. Stamps commented that the Committee needs to do all it can to support the citizens and the reality that the house is part of the community's history, the individuals that lived there made a contribution, the house itself has architecture and it's recognized by the citizens. The Committee needs to take the report from preliminary to the final report and protect and preserve this resource.

Mr. Dziurman commented that Jack/John Burns, the architect, was also the architect for the house on Livernois that is part of the delisting. This architect seems to be a relatively well-known architect for that period. This needs to be researched.

Ms Winarski commented that the Burns family retired in the Charlevoix/Petosky area.

MOTION by Dziurman, seconded by Stamps, that the Study Committee agrees to change the inaccurate statements of the reasons to delist the house in the report's conclusion, and finds that the house at 1585 South Rochester Road should not be delisted.

A motion was made by Dziurman, seconded by Stamps, that this matter be Approved. The motion CARRIED by the following vote:

Aye 6 - Stamps, Dziurman, Thompson, Webster, Hannick and Thomasson

2009-0437

2371 S. Livernois Road (HDSC File #04-006)

Chairperson Thompson indicated the Committee was directed by City Council to send the preliminary report to SHPO.

Mr. Dziurman commented he has not had the time to get into this project because of the other one, and believes the Committee has a little time after finishing up 1585 S. Rochester to review this project before it needs to go back to Council. There is little information about this resource other than the architect. The people who nominated this house certainly knew it had been moved but realized there was something special about it.

Chairperson Thompson indicated that sending the preliminary report to SHPO does not make it the final report, we are just sending it in for comments.

Ms. Thomasson pointed out that even if we send the report, we have to wait for SHPO to have a meeting in order to receive their comments back. Her thought is to go ahead and send the report, and continue to do further research on our end. The preliminary report can always be changed before it becomes the final report.

Mr. Delacourt explained the report can be sent to SHPO without a conclusion.

Chairperson Thompson allowed public comments pertaining to this item.

Ms. Melinda Hill, 1481 Mill Race, agreed that the preliminary report does not have to include a conclusion in order to be forwarded to SHPO at this time. Ms. Hill believes there is more information about moving this resource and suggested that Avon Township records from the 70's be reviewed.

Mr. Mukesh Mangla, the property owner, stated he doesn't understand how the consultant's conclusion can be changed on the report. He's confused as to how the Committee can remove the conclusion. The report should not be changed - it is a person's opinion. Mr. Mangla indicated he has all the records back to the 70's for the house. This house is different from the one on Rochester as it has been moved and extensively renovated. Mr. Mangla commented that if the house is historical, he will donate it - but the house is not historical. He doesn't think single resource districts are allowed.

Mr. Dziurman responded that about three or four of the homes in the Stoney Creek Village have been moved. Also, the Committee is not taking out the consultant's opinion, but the conclusion of the report is saying that it is the Study Committee's conclusion, and that is incorrect as the Committee did not say that. The report is not being changed, only the inappropriate conclusion that was made for the Committee.

MOTION by Thomasson, seconded by Dziurman, that the Study Committee agrees to forward the preliminary report on 2371 South Livernois Road to SHPO with the conclusion removed.

A motion was made by Thomasson, seconded by Dziurman, that this matter be Approved. The motion CARRIED by the following vote:

Aye 6 - Stamps, Dziurman, Thompson, Webster, Hannick and Thomasson

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was brought forward to the Committee.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A special meeting was suggested within a week or two to review the revised final report. Staff will endeavor to arrange a mutually agreeable time. Mr. Dziurman reported that the Earl Borden Award ceremony will take place at the Museum on May 19th at 6:30 p.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE

June 10, 2010

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, the Chair adjourned the Regular Meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Jason Thompson, Chairperson
Historic Districts Study Committee

Sandi DiSipio, Recording Secretary