



Rochester Hills

Minutes

Historic Districts Commission

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Chairperson Brian R. Dunphy, Vice Chairperson Paul Miller
Members: Steven Branstner, Maria-Teresa L. Cozzolino, John Dziurman, Nicole Franey,
Micheal Kilpatrick, Dr. Richard Stamps, Jason Thompson

Thursday, December 9, 2010

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Dunphy called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium.

ROLL CALL

Present 6 - John Dziurman, Paul Miller, Richard Stamps, Brian Dunphy, Steven Branstner and Nicole Franey

Absent 3 - Maria-Teresa Cozzolino, Micheal Kilpatrick and Jason Thompson

Also Present: Derek Delacourt, Deputy Director
Sandi DiSipio, Recording Secretary

COMMUNICATIONS

No announcements or communications were brought forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the audience came forward with any comments on non-agenda items.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2010-0448 Washington Road Paving Project - Discussion
- Road County for Oakland County

Chairperson Dunphy commented representatives from the Road Commission for Oakland County are present this evening and have provided the Commission with additional information.

Mr. Delacourt summarized that the Road Commission appeared before the HDC last month with a proposed plan to pave Washington Road. After discussion with the Commission and suggestions for improvement, the Road Commission requested the opportunity to come back tonight and go through the proposed changes to the project, having provided a packet of additional information based on those requests. They are not requesting approval of the project tonight, only to hear additional input from and discussion by the Commission. Mr. Delacourt then turned the floor back to the Commission

and/or Mr. Jeff O'Brien from the Road Commission.

Chairperson Dunphy asked when the HDC will be asked for approval of the project. Mr. O'Brien replied that depending on how this meeting proceeds, and how other discussions go, the Road Commission may be back in January for an approval, but the request might be pushed back to February.

Mr. O'Brien commented that most of the audience probably attended the public information meeting held last week and have already seen the recent changes being summarized tonight. Mr. O'Brien then summarized the project changes based on comments received during the last HDC meeting. The center left turn lane near Dunham Drive, as well as various right turn lanes throughout the project have been removed. Essentially, from end to end of the paving project, it is a two-lane roadway. Two right turn flares are proposed to remain - one at Dunham Drive and the other at Winkler Mill Road. The Road Commission still needs to review and fine tune the proposed vegetation loss and tree removals on the plans. In response to requests for additional information made by the HDC members at the last meeting, the Road Commission has provided a six page letter providing this information. Mr. O'Brien explained the letter. Additional information in the letter includes the definition of "rural collector road", accident history for Washington Road, existing traffic counts and proposed traffic volumes, re-evaluating the need for right/left turn flares, and background on the maintenance activities of the existing gravel road. The Road Commission's letter also contains a summary of how the proposed project addresses the recommendations pertaining to Washington Road as contained in the Mayor's Advisory Committee report. The recommendation to reconfigure the Washington/Runyon/Tienken roundabout as part of the Washington Road paving project can not be accomplished as the roundabout is outside the limits of this project. The recommendation to make a request to the Road Commission to extend the Truck Prohibition Traffic Control Order (TCO) for Washington Road can't be accomplished, as the TCO approved in 2003 was based on gravel road maintenance issues and understood by all parties that it would be rescinded upon paving of the road. There is no intent at this time to extend the TCO, but Mr. O'Brien explained that is not the Road Commission's call - it is the Board of County Road Commissioners' decision. Mr. O'Brien indicated the Road Commission will be talking to both communities regarding this particular issue in the near future to see if there is a potential compromise.

Dr. Stamps commented that discussion relative to the TCO should occur before the decision to pave or not pave Washington Road is made. After a definitive answer regarding the TCO is realized, the Road Commission can then return for discussion relative to the Washington Road project.

Mr. Dziurman agreed with Dr. Stamps and added he doesn't understand why the Road Commission wants to turn this residential street into a paved collector street with left turn lanes and deceleration lanes. Mr. Dziurman indicated he spoke with SHPO and they indicated they were waiting for information from the Road Commission in order to complete the Section 106 review. This review needs to be completed and the information relayed to the HDC before a decision can be made relative to the Washington Road project.

Mr. O'Brien indicated he disagreed with the analysis on whether or not Washington Road is a residential road - it is a collector street. The information for SHPO was forwarded to them either yesterday or today.

Mr. Dziurman clarified that Washington Road is in an historic district, and must be reviewed based on the Secretary of Interior standards. Nothing the Road Commission is planning complies with these standards. Mr. Dziurman then summarized the review standards. This project can't move forward until these issues are resolved.

Dr. Stamps added that the Commission is sworn to protect the City's historic resources and asked Mr. O'Brien to explain how this project and the paving of the road will add to and/or enhance the City's historic resource - how it will enhance the feel and ambience of the historic district.

Chairperson Dunphy stated he is concerned with the combination of the effects of rescinding the TCO and the inability to address the realignment of the Washington and Dequindre intersection, because in effect, high speed traffic will be funneled through the area. These two issues could be deal-breakers.

Ms. Franey added she does not see how the project will benefit the value of City's historic area. Putting high moving traffic through this area will destroy it within a very short period of time.

Mr. O'Brien continued with his summary of the Mayor's Committee's recommendations. One recommendation was to pave Washington Road, protecting the rural character of the road and at the same time, improve EMS, address drainage issues, driveway grading issues, reduce dust while complementing its function as a primary road. Mr. O'Brien indicated the plan that is presented today does all of the above. The profile and alignments have been adjusted to minimize the vegetation loss throughout the length of the corridor to preserve the rural character and narrowness of the road. There are no plans to include water or sewer as part of this project, and both communities have indicated that they have no plans in the future to place utilities in the ground along this corridor, with some exceptions. The City of Rochester requested the Road Commission complete a water main loop along 1266 and 1280 Washington, and a short section of sanitary sewer that needs to be relocated as it is in conflict with the proposed storm sewer. Another recommendation was to replace existing vegetation that is removed. The Road Commission does not use their funds to replace vegetation within the road right-of-way, however, discussions will be held with both cities to come to a compromise on this issue. Bike lanes have not been included in the plan in order to keep the road and the proposed paving as narrow as possible. There is no proposal to realign the Washington/Dequindre intersection as part of this project as it is outside the limits of the gravel road paving project.

Chairperson Dunphy opened the floor to public comment at 8:03 p.m., reminding the residents to limit their comments to three minutes and to address them to the Chairperson.

Mr. Scot Beaton, 655 Bolinger, Rochester Hills, MI 48307, commented he

can visualize what these plans would do to character of Washington Road - it would destroy the character. We need to have a creative approach and solution to any further road improvements in that area. The Road Commission's vision for Washington Road is not the same as the residents' vision.

Ms. Suzanne Carlson, 1421 Mill Race, Rochester Hills, MI 48306, said the Commission's purpose is to safeguard the heritage of the City by preserving historic districts and to stabilize and improve property values in these districts. The plan as presented by the Road Commission would not maintain or improve property values of the homes in close proximity to Washington Road. The increased speed and traffic volumes in addition to the lifting of the TCO are sure to devalue the properties throughout the district. This plan does not maintain the character of the district and will destroy the nature of the district. There are no funds dedicated or intended for vegetation restoration either within the right-of-way or on private property. She asked that the Commission carefully consider the permanent impact this project will have on the district. This community deserves a better solution.

Dr. H. James Boldt, 1280 Washington, Rochester Hills, MI 48306, indicated he purchased his property because it provided a rural setting for his family and provided a buffer between the home and the road. The current proposed plans will eliminate the buffer and change the landscape by removing 31 trees and numerous lilac bushes. The road bed in front of his home is proposed to be raised two feet. He asked the Road Commission and City representatives of both cities to reassess the paving of Washington Road.

Mr. Don MacDonald, 1850 Washington, Rochester Hills, MI 48306, said he and his wife are not in favor of the present proposal to pave Washington Road. After reviewing the detailed proposal, he finds the plan more intrusive into his property than it needs to be, and that a lot of trees and shrubs will be removed. He asked the HDC not to approve the proposed plan, but to request a more elegant solution.

Ms. Cindy Young, 1740 Washington, Rochester Hills, MI 48306, advised she lives 50 feet off the road and can hear one car per every five minutes and does not understand why the Road Commission needs to pave this beautiful road. The road can be better maintained, and it has been better maintained in the past. She feels it is the Road Commission's desire to make this road five lanes, but in order to do that her home would have to be demolished. This goes against everything and she can't imagine what can be accomplished.

Ms. Melinda Hill, 1481 Mill Race, Rochester Hills, MI 48306, said the paving of Washington Road can be viewed in two separate aspects; the actual plan design and the impact, compatibility, appropriateness of the proposed plan on the two designated historic districts through which the road passes. This Commission is charged with taking care of the latter aspect. Ms. Hill hopes that the Commission will keep its focus on how the present proposal does or does not impact the area, and whether the Commission believes it appropriate to grant approval to the Road Commission for their plan. Is paving the road, removing many trees and scrubs, and raising and lowering the road bed going to retain the integrity that provides the sense of what existed in the area for more

than 100 years? The streetscape is an integral part of these districts' historic designation. The increase in the volume of traffic, the elimination of the TCO restricting heavy trucks, the increase in traffic noise and the likely 45 mph speed limit through the residential neighborhood are neither compatible nor an appropriate means of protecting the heritage of these designated districts. She commented that this project is not appropriate and asked the HDC to not allow the Road Commission to destroy the City's greatest gem. She suggested the HDC request an overlay of the projected project over the existing roadbed and streetscape so you can see how the paving will eliminate much of what currently exists.

Ms. Deanna Hager, 1841 Carter Road, Rochester Hills, MI 48306, came forwarded, handed the Commission copies of the Friends of Washington Road Petition signed by 146 residents to Stop the Paving of Washington Road and read the cover letter. Copies were provided for Mayor Barnett, the HDC and the Road Commission for Oakland County.

Mr. Tom Hager, 1841 Carter Road, Rochester Hills, MI 48306, expressed appreciation for the HDC's service to the community. It is clear that the Commission has the best interests of the community and the historic resources at heart. The only way to stop this project is for the City to withdraw their funding or to make Washington Road a city road rather than a county road. He asked why this project has not been discussed in front of City Council.

Ms. Debbie Prachaseri, 1860 Carter Road, Rochester Hills, MI 48306, said she appreciates the Road Commission addressing all the concerns previously made. She asked if a platted subdivision on Washington Road has any impact on the speed limit. She also asked if a listing on the National Register of Historic Places was found for Stony Creek Village Historic District. She notes that in the Section 106 application, the Stony Creek and the Winkler Mill Historic Districts are spelled out, but on the National Registry the word Village is added. She's not sure of what this means. It is her belief that Washington Road and the two historic districts hold historic significance for the City and the County. She indicated that the residents value this area and asked that the road and properties not be disrupted.

Mr. Jeff Young, 1740 Washington, Rochester Hills, MI 48306, indicated he purchased his home because of the neighborhood and the dirt road. He does not like the idea of the road being paved. He chose to live on the dirt road off the beaten path.

Mr. Tom Elkins, 8130 High Pointe Trail, White Lake, MI 48386, explained he is present on behalf Mr. Martins, the property owner of 1965 Washington Road. Mr. Martins' property is about 110 feet from the Dequindre intersection and his drive comes out onto a cement apron; therefore his home is not considered in the project. The paving would start right beyond his driveway. His issue is with the Dequindre intersection. Cars coming around the bend do not have a view of his driveway access. It will be more hazardous if the speed limit is increased. Something needs to be done with that intersection. He has asked the Road Commission to consider stop signs to slow traffic around the curve.

Ms. Beth Bartos, 1461 Mill Race, Rochester Hills, MI 48306, said she believes the Commission understands how the residents are feeling. She purchased her home because she feel in love with the beauty of the area and the historic aspect. If this area is ruined, there will no going back.

Mr. Art Rogers, 1401 Washington, Rochester Hills, MI 48306, stated he lives on a country road and the current proposal will turn this road into a high-speed, high traffic volume highway. The objective of the Road Commission is to build and maintain roads. The objective of the community is to preserve the historic district. These two objectives are in conflict with each other. He does not want to see Washington turned into a highway and appreciates anyone that can be involved to change the current plan. He also would like to be sure that any paving of the road is conditioned on maintaining the truck restriction.

Ms. Laurie Pucas, 1806 West Ridge, Rochester Hills, MI 48306, indicated she does not live on Washington Road, but as a resident, tries to stay informed with what's happening in the community. She went to the public information meeting last week and spoke with people from the Road Commission and listened to the residents expressing their thoughts. She feels the current plan will destroy the character of the area. This historic area should be preserved. She believes the project will adversely affect property values in the area. The speed limit should remain at 25 mph, and the road should have a residential designation. She hopes that the HDC will do everything they can in order to stop this project.

Chairperson Dunphy returned the meeting to Commission discussion at 8:45 p.m.

Mr. Dziurman clarified that the spelling of Stoney -vs- Stony Creek does not affect the historic registry. He also pointed out that Stoney Creek is a nationally registered site, and that Winkler Mill is a locally registered site.

Dr. Stamps asked if matching funds from the City are necessary for this project. Mr. O'Brien explained the tri-party funding system. Both communities entered into agreements to assist in funding the preliminary design and engineering of this project. There would also be agreements for right-of-way acquisitions. Federal funds cover 80% of the construction costs, the remaining 20% is covered by the Road Commission and the local community. Dr. Stamps asked what would happen if the City does not come up with their funding share. Mr. O'Brien indicated he can't answer that question as it's the responsibility of a higher authority.

Mr. Dziurman thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and appreciates the involvement and comments. He asked that an overlay of this project on the existing road be available for the next meeting. Mr. O'Brien explained the Road Commission does not have the software capabilities to create the rendering, but he will see what can be done. He can overlay the plan over an aerial photograph for the Commission's review.

Mr. Miller thanked the Road Commission for their efforts to address the concerns raised at the last meeting.

Chairperson Dunphy asked Mr. O'Brien what the next steps are. Mr. O'Brien explained that based on some of the questions that are still unanswered and the upcoming holidays, his best guess is that the Road Commission would return with additional information for discussion or a request for approval in February.

This item was discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairperson Dunphy reminded the Commission that the restored mural at the Rochester Schools Administration Building will be unveiled in mid-January. Mr. Webster, member of the Historic Districts Study Committee, completed the restoration. More information is forthcoming.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2011 Regular Meeting Schedule

MOTION by Dziurman, seconded by Stamps, **Resolved**, that the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission establish the 2011 Regular Meeting Schedule as follows: The meetings will be held on the second Thursday of each month at the Rochester Hills Municipal Offices, 1000 Rochester Hills Road, Rochester Hills, Michigan, and will begin at 7:00 PM Michigan Time.

Ayes: All Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The Chair reminded the Commissioners the next Regular Meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2011.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before the Commission, the Chair adjourned the Regular Meeting at 9:07 p.m.

Brian Dunphy, Chairperson
Historic Districts Commission
Rochester Hills

Sandi DiSipio, Recording Secretary