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~~A motion was made by Yalamanchi, seconded by Pixley, that this matter be Adopted by Resolution. The motion CARRIED by the following vote:~~

~~Aye 7 Ambrozaitis, Brennan, Hooper, Pixley, Rosen, Webber and Yalamanchi~~

~~Enactment No: RES0153-2009~~

~~**Resolved**, that the request from Free Desire, Inc. located at 557 Andover Ct., Rochester Hills, Michigan 48306, Oakland County, asking that they be recognized as a nonprofit organization operating in the community for the purpose of obtaining a charitable gaming license, be considered for approval.~~

~~(Recess 8:55 PM 9:05 PM)~~

2005-0537 Request for designation of the Stiles School Historic District

Attachments: [Agenda Summary.pdf](#)
[Stiles School Final Report.pdf](#)
[Suppl Stiles School Presentation.pdf](#)
[SHPO 012908 Comments.pdf](#)
[SHPO 063008 Comments.pdf](#)
[Public Hearing Minutes 043008.pdf](#)
[PC Minutes 102108.pdf](#)
[Survey Sheet.pdf](#)
[HDSC Minutes 031209.pdf](#)
[HDSC Minutes 091108.pdf](#)
[HDSC Minutes 031308.pdf](#)
[HDSC Minutes 110807.pdf](#)
[HDSC Minutes 061407.pdf](#)
[HDSC Minutes 051106.pdf](#)
[HDC Minutes 081105.pdf](#)
[HDC Minutes 051205.pdf](#)
[Photographs.pdf](#)
[Resolution.pdf](#)

Derek Delacourt, Deputy Director of Planning, explained the Historic Designation process, and noted that HDSC is charged by City Council with the task of studying potential historic resources within the City, evaluating them by a set of specific criteria and standards, and developing a report to present to Council with the HDSC's recommendation. He introduced the HDSC members in attendance, including John Dziurman, AIA, Dr. Richard Stamps, Ms. Peggy Schodowski and Mr. LaVere Webster.

John Dziurman, AIA, Historic Districts Study Committee, introduced the HDSC's report on the Stiles School property and stated that the school has been a part of the community since 1924. He noted that originally the Avondale School District had originally approached the HDSC about having the school designated as a Historic property, when it was learned that a developer might wish to develop that property as commercial. He noted that the developer funded the study; and once it was determined that the property was recommended for Historic Designation, the developer backed out of the project. The current owners of the school do not favor a Historic Designation. Mr. Dziurman presented the following report on the Stiles School.

How Does a District Get Designated?

- The Study Committee receives a request to make an initial determination if enough evidence exists to conduct a study
 - The Study Committee prepares a preliminary report
 - The report is distributed to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Planning Commission, and made available for public comment
 - The SHPO and the Planning Commission forward comments to the HDSC
 - A public hearing is held
 - A recommendation is made to City Council
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- **The Study Committee recommends designation of Stiles School**
 - City Council accepts the recommendation
 - City Council adopts and the Ordinance is Amended

Significance:

- The proposed Stiles School Historic District is significant under National Register Criterion A, for its association with a pattern of historical events and;
- Criterion C, for its embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type of architecture
- The district's period of significance is from 1929 to 1947

National Register Criteria:

- The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and:

A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

CRITERIA A "Broad Patterns of Our History"

- Schools were, and are, a symbol of the community
- Commitment to education
- Significant nationally - manifested locally

Stiles School Criteria A

- Three schools built in Avon Township during the 1920s survive and retain integrity (Stiles, Brooklands and Avon School District No. 2 [A.C.E. High School])
- Last intact school to join the Avondale School District
- Used as a community center, including as a distribution center during the Depression
- First built as a one-room school house in 1871
- Current brick building constructed in 1929
- Named for Mr. Samuel Stiles, a teacher at the school

- 1939-1953 student population grew from 240 - 623
- Stiles School is one of three remaining examples of Avon Township Schools of a distinct period in the history of this City, the State and the County

CRITERIA C "Architecture"

- That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction

Stiles School Criteria C

- Schools are architectural landmarks
- Stiles School was unquestionably a landmark in the rural landscape of agricultural fields, farmhouses, and newer suburban houses along in the 1920s
- Today the school is a historic landmark at a busy intersection devoid of other historic buildings
- Stiles is the only school in the city designed by Architect Frederick D. Madison of Royal Oak
- It is one of two Collegiate Gothic style schools retaining architectural integrity in the City of Rochester Hills
- Collegiate Gothic was chosen because of its scholastic connotations
- The style is characterized by Tudor arches, stepped parapets, and multi-paned windows
- Stiles is pictured in the 2003 Michigan SHPO publication, *An Honor and An Ornament: Public Schools in Michigan*, as an example of a later, simpler version of the Collegiate Gothic Style
- The interior of the building, simple in style, is highly intact and is an excellent example of school design at the time
- The original terrazzo floored hallways and the extensive use of wood trim and doors throughout the building do not usually survive in school buildings built in the 1920s
- The kindergarten room, with its bay window, fireplace, and murals is demonstrative of school design and philosophy of the 1920s
- There are seven round murals depicting classic nursery rhymes painted on the upper portions of two walls. The murals may be original to the building or possibly were painted during the Depression by an itinerant worker or through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) program
- With its intact exterior Collegiate Gothic detailing and intact interior, the building retains its historic character

Boundary Justification:

- The proposed historic district contains the entire parcel originally associated with the 1929 school building and a portion of the parcel that contains the 1963 addition
- Per National Register guidelines, the boundary must include the entire building with additions

Peggy Scho dowski, HDSC Member, discussed many of the significant

features of the school, including some of the rare tiles that still exist, and stated that she had learned a great deal about the City during this research process. She stated that she is thrilled that Oakland Steiner School is occupying the building.

LaVere Webster, HDSC Member, related the history of the Bristol Farmhouse, a property he owns just west of Stiles School. He stated that this corner was originally part of an 80-acre farm and noted that when Bristol purchased the property the corner was excluded with a clause that if the property was not used for a school, it would revert back to the original owner. He noted that when the Avondale School District decided to move the existing school to a new location, it was rented to the Oakland Steiner School on a temporary basis and would be sold to a developer. After the developer withdrew his offer, Steiner School representatives requested the property be designated as Historic. He stated that he would strongly urge Council approve Historic Designation.

President Hooper requested that Board Members from Oakland Steiner School in attendance comment on the proposed Historic Designation.

Public Comment:

Katherine Thivierge, 3976 S. Livernois, stated that Oakland Steiner School is a private school and is not a part of any school district.

Mark Gavulic, 520 Nichols Drive, Auburn Hills, stated that he was a long-time parent at the school and stated that he had no direct knowledge that any of the official Board Members of Oakland Steiner School ever approached City Council or any City body as official representatives of the school. He stated that the School and the HDSC have the same goal to protect the building. He commented that the State of Michigan describes the 1957, 1962, and 1963 portion of the buildings as inappropriate and nonconforming. He noted several other examples in other communities where a 1920s school building had additional buildings and questioned whether these have all been designated as Historic. He commented that a decision made tonight for historic designation would exist in perpetuity. He stated that renovations to the windows and exterior occurred in the 1970s and questioned why a Historic Designation would apply to these changes. He expressed concern that the entire property will be considered for Historic Designation and requested that the District be resized to only include the 1929 portion.

Katherine Thivierge, Administrator, Oakland Steiner School, stated that she could find no references in prior minutes that anyone from the School requested the Historic District Commission (HDC) consider a Historic Designation for the property. She expressed concern that the School would be obligated to go to the HDC for any repairs or improvements. She commented that the School does not anticipate making any changes to the outside of that building and is interested in preserving its historic character; however, the economic burden of following HDC requirements for Historic properties is more than the School could possibly bear on its humble budget. She also noted that their insurance agent stated that the School's rates would increase if the property were designated Historic based on the additional cost of replacement value. She commented that designating the entire property

as Historic is onerous and would stand in the way of the programs the School provides.

William Kennis, 249 Hurst, Troy, stated that he was School Board President at the time the property was purchased from the Avondale District; and commented that although the District was interested in getting the community to rally behind the school's historic significance, the Board did not take official action in favor of, nor had any idea that the whole campus could be encumbered by a historic designation. He noted that the historic portion of the building only encompasses a small portion of the facade, and the remainder of the campus resembles the architecture of the 1950s and the renovations of the 1970s. He agreed that the cost of a historic designation for the entire parcel would be onerous to the school.

President Hooper questioned whether Steiner School representatives supported any portion of the building being given a Historic Designation.

Ms. Thivierge responded that the School does not wish any portion to be designated because of the financial obligation it places on the School. She commented that as the School is currently tax-exempt, there would be no tax benefits of a designation.

Mr. Dziurman commented that the HDC would not require approval for any ordinary repairs and maintenance, however, new additions or changes to the building would need to be presented to the HDC for approval. He noted that the Ordinance requires the entire parcel to be designated.

Dr. Stamps, referred to National Register guidelines, stating that the Historic District's boundary must include the entire building with additions.

City Attorney Staran explained that the City's Historic Districts Ordinance is modeled after State Law and does require that when a property is designated, the entire parcel is designated. He stated that he would look into whether the City could legitimately and lawfully designate a portion of a property.

Ms. Thivierge expressed concern for maintenance issues noting that the Avondale District had replaced the windows with a non-historic and modern window. She questioned whether the School would be required to replace all the windows with conforming historic windows if it needed to make window repairs.

Ms. Schodowski stated that she learned after the Study was completed that all the buildings were separate at one point and were connected together to appear as additions.

Council Discussion:

Mr. Webber stated that while a portion of the property merited designation, he could understand the desires of the representatives of the School to not designate the entire property.

Mr. Rosen questioned whether there would be a way to split the designation.

Ms. Thivierge stated that she would be happy to take City Council on a tour of the building.

Mr. Yalamanchi questioned what the qualifications were to be on the Oakland Steiner School's Board of Directors.

Ms. Thivierge responded that the private school is a non-profit corporation and owns the building; and commented that anyone could be on the Board of Directors.

Mr. Yalamanchi commented that if Council were required to make a decision tonight, he would want to revisit the idea of separating the different buildings into historic and non-historic.

Mr. Brennan stated that the Council should have the consent of the owners before voting for Historic designation, and commented that it was clear that the owners do not want this designation.

Mr. Dziurman noted that a Historic Designation for this property would benefit the community. He stated that if Council wished for the HDSC to look at a more limited designation for the property, the Committee would be happy to do that and return to Council with a recommendation.

Mr. Rosen questioned where the different buildings were connected. He noted that several of the historic photos show the different time periods prior to the additions.

Mr. Pixley questioned whether there was any way to project, anticipate or estimate what kinds of costs would be associated with a Historic Designation of even a portion of the original building.

Mr. Dziurman responded that it was his opinion that restoration of an older building was no more costly than a renovation of a newer building. He noted that rotting windows can be repaired in place and historically approved storms exist that could actually save money over total window replacement. He noted that recent renovations of the Paint Creek Cider Mill in Oakland Township was accomplished approximately 30 percent under budget.

Mr. Pixley stated he wished to find some form of compromise and not put the school at an undue risk position from a financial standpoint, yet still preserve the sanctity of the historical nature of the building.

President Hooper stated that if it was Council's consensus to have the HDSC come back with a recommendation of a delineation of the area of the 1920s building, the item could be postponed.

Mr. Ambrozaitis questioned whether any kind of hardship waiver could exist for either a non-profit or a school where they could be exempt from meeting the designation requirements.

Mr. Dziurman stated that at some point in time the additions will become a part of the historic value of the school. He further stated that there could possibly be legal ways of setting up ownership of the School where tax credits could be realized for renovations.

By consensus of City Council, this matter was Postponed until additional information is provided by the Historic Districts Study Committee.

~~2006-0425 Request for designation of the Frank Farm Historic District~~

Attachments: [Agenda Summary.pdf](#)
[Frank Farm Final Report.pdf](#)
[Holtz Ltr 042409.pdf](#)
[SHPO 012908 Comments.pdf](#)
[Public Hearing Minutes 043008.pdf](#)
[PC Minutes 102108.pdf](#)
[Frank Farm Survey Sheets.pdf](#)
[Suppl Frank Farm Presentation.pdf](#)
[HDSC Minutes 031209.pdf](#)
[HDSC Minutes 091108.pdf](#)
[HDSC Minutes 031308.pdf](#)
[HDSC Minutes 110807.pdf](#)
[HDSC Minutes 021207.pdf](#)
[HDSC Minutes 060806.pdf](#)
[Resolution.pdf](#)

John Dziurman, AIA, Historic Districts Study Committee (HDSC), introduced the Committee's report on the Frank Farm property:

How Does a Historic District Get Designated?

- Study Committee receives a request to make an initial determination if enough evidence exists to conduct a study
- Study Committee prepares a preliminary report
- The report is distributed to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Planning Commission, and made available for public comment
- The SHPO and the Planning Commission forward comments to the HDSC
- A public hearing is held
- A recommendation is made to City Council

- **The Study Committee recommends designation of Frank Farm**
- City Council accepts the recommendation
- City Council adopts and the Ordinance is Amended

Significance:

- The proposed Frank Farm Historic District is significant under National Register Criterion A, for its association with a pattern of historical events that has contributed significantly to Rochester Hills history and;
- Criterion D, for its Information Potential relating to prehistory or history
- The district's period of significance is from 1865 to 1958

National Register Criteria: