

~~Districts Study Committee be approved as presented.~~

4B. 2009-0545 November 12, 2009 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Thompson asked for any comments or corrections regarding the November 12, 2009 Regular Meeting Minutes. Upon hearing no comments or corrections, he called for a motion to approve.

A motion was made by Hannick, seconded by Webster, that the Minutes be Approved as Presented. The motion CARRIED by the following vote:

Aye 4 - Thompson, Webster, Schodowski and Hannick

Absent 3 - Stamps, Dziurman and Woolf

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the November 12, 2009 Regular Historic Districts Study Committee Meeting be approved as presented.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS / COMMUNICATIONS

Chairperson Thompson asked if there were any announcements or communications. No announcements or communications were provided.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT (Non-Agenda Items)

Chairperson Thompson called for any public comments. No public comments were received.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chairperson Thompson suggested the Committee move Agenda Item 7D (1585 S. Rochester Road) ahead on the Agenda, due to the fact the City's Preservation Consultant was in attendance and had to leave at 6:30 PM. The Committee agreed to consider Agenda Item 7D.

7D. 2009-0411 1585 S. Rochester Road (HDC File #03-003)
- Review Preliminary Report

Chairperson Thompson stated the Committee had received a copy of the draft Preliminary Report prepared by the Consultant, along with copies of the applicant information that was provided to the Committee last month.

Mr. Delacourt provided a brief summary, noting that the applicant made a request to City Council to delist the property. City Council forwarded the matter to the Study Committee per the process outlined in the Historical Preservation Ordinance. Ms. Kidorf had prepared the draft Preliminary Report. He reminded the Committee they would decide what the recommendation to City Council would be. Ms. Kidorf had conducted her review and provided her objective opinion.

Ms. Kidorf stated this was not an easy task, noting there was not a lot of historic

information available. She visited the site with an architect and Mr. Delacourt and looked carefully at the exterior of the building and the details of the property. She did as much research as possible at the Burton Historical Collection in Detroit, Michigan; at the Rochester Hills Library; at the Van Hoosen Farm, and at the Oakland County Register of Deeds, which did reveal some names that helped with additional research at the Burton collection.

Ms. Kidorf stated if the entire Fairview Farm was still intact and the house still in its original "Queen Anne" form, she thought there would be no question about the site. The biggest or most troubling matter was that she could not determine when the house was altered to its current Colonial Revival state and the entrance changed. Based on the architectural details and the way the building is assembled, which may have been over fifty (50) years ago, she did not think it was an outstanding example of Neoclassical architecture in Rochester Hills, especially with the aluminum and the changes to the details.

Chairperson Thompson thanked Ms. Kidorf for the well-written, detailed draft report. He stated he did not realize until how "mish-matched" the property was. In his opinion, it did not meet the criteria to remain designated. He called for comments from the Committee.

Ms. Schodowski clarified this property had been failing and needed to be updated. Mr. Delacourt stated the City's Historic District Commission (HDC) had issued demolition by neglect notices and although some preliminary restoration was done on the exterior, the interior was in very bad condition, although that was not something the Study Committee evaluated. Ms. Schodowski stated she had driven by the home many times, and thought it would be great if the home was in its original form.

Ms. Kidorf agreed that in driving past the home on Rochester Road, it did look like a historic home and it looked like the details were just covered in aluminum siding. It was not until she got closer and looked at the house and some of the oddities of it, that she realized it was not what it appeared to be.

Ms. Schodowski commented it would be extremely difficult to restore the home to the form it was originally. Ms. Kidorf did not think it could be taken back to original look. She commented that if the farm buildings were still intact it would have more integrity, even with the house in its current form. The loss of the farm buildings reduced the significance.

Chairperson Thompson pointed out that when the property was originally designated in 1978, the standards were not as comprehensive as they were now. He asked if that was going to cause problems in the future, noting the applicant had listed "defective procedure" as a reason for the delisting request. Although the standards were different in 1978, they were followed. He asked if every designated property could cite the same reason for delisting.

Ms. Kidorf stated that currently it only appeared to apply to a couple properties in the City. She stated it was not a matter of defective procedure. Rather it was a case that this building was not as historically significant as originally thought. She believed the original Study Committee relied on a "windshield survey" and did not have the benefit of the National Register Criteria. She stated she had talked to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) about the National Register Criteria, and was advised that just because a property was not eligible for the National Register, that was not a sufficient reason to de-designate a property.

Mr. Delacourt stated it would have to be demonstrated that there were factual mistakes in the information relied on for designation in 1978. For instance, if a house was designated as having been built in the early 1900s, and it turned out to be built in 1975, perhaps the argument could be made that the process itself was defective or the designation was based on non-factual information. He thought the City was pretty thorough at the time of the original designations, and had always been over-cautious. He did not know if the designations had been reviewed by the SHPO back then. Ms. Kidorf did not think that would have been done.

Chairperson Thompson stated he had not realized until he read the draft report that the initial 1978 survey included many more potential properties, and that the Township Board withdrew some of them. He clarified this was not a matter of defective procedure.

Mr. Delacourt advised the Committee that another similar request had been made, identifying defective procedure. He explained that request had a different set of merits and considerations and would be discussed by the Study Committee at the next meeting.

Chairperson Thompson stated in reading the draft report, it appeared this may have simply been a mistake. Ms. Kidorf stated when it was designated, the outbuildings were there. Although the original designation did not cover the outbuildings, they contributed to the original thought that the property was historic.

Mr. Delacourt asked if the Study Committee members had any issue with the proposed recommendation contained in the draft preliminary report. He reminded the Committee this was not a final report and additional information could be generated before the final report is prepared.

Chairperson Thompson noted a Public Hearing would have to be held. Mr. Delacourt agreed, and noted the report also had to be submitted to SHPO and the State Historic Review Board for review and comment. He stated if the Committee accepted the draft preliminary report, it would be transmitted to the State and a Public Hearing date set.

Chairperson Thompson called for any questions or comments on the draft preliminary report.

Mr. Hannick agreed that from a distance, the home looked historic. In reading the report and reviewing the photographs that had been submitted, it appeared to be the typical older home that homeowners added on to, or changed other details about the structure.

Mr. Webster commented it was a very nice looking house from the street, but he had not seen it up close. He agreed with the draft preliminary report.

Ms. Kidorf thought the house had been remodeled in the 1950s or perhaps the 1940s. She stated the Eddy family must have done the remodeling because they owed the property from 1936 through the 1990s. She did not find any records about the Eddy family.

Chairperson Thompson asked if the Committee was comfortable accepting the report.

Mr. Delacourt reminded the Committee that City Council had imposed a time frame for a response, and if there were no questions about the report, Staff would transmit the report and set a tentative Public Hearing date for February 11, 2010. He hoped to have the State's review comments back at that time.

Ms. Schodowski asked if the property was de-designated, if the home would be demolished. Mr. Delacourt thought that could be the intent. The property owner had put together a huge packet of information, and this request appeared to be in response to the demolition by neglect notice. He advised the Committee the house was part of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Agreement, which would have to be dealt with before City Council could take any action. If the property is delisted, that Agreement would have to be amended, which the property owner was looking into.

Ms. Schodowski asked if the subject property was separate from the Bordine property to the south. Mr. Delacourt stated it was. He noted that City Council could weigh factors from both the development side and the preservation side in making their determination, which was something the Study Committee could not do.

Chairperson Thompson summarized the report would be transmitted and the public hearing scheduled.

This matter was Discussed