



# Rochester Hills

## Minutes

### Historic Districts Study Committee

Chairperson Jason Thompson, Vice Chairperson Dr. Richard Stamps

Members: John Dziurman, David Kibby, Dennis Mueller,

Peggy Schodowski, LaVere Webster

1000 Rochester Hills Dr.  
Rochester Hills, MI 48309

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Wednesday, April 30, 2008

6:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

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~~MINUTES of a ROCHESTER HILLS REGULAR HISTORIC DISTRICTS STUDY COMMITTEE meeting held at the City Municipal Offices, 1000 Rochester Hills Drive, Rochester Hills. Oakland County, Michigan.~~

~~1. CALL TO ORDER~~

~~Chairperson Thompson called meeting to order at 6:30 PM.~~

~~2. ROLL CALL~~

~~Present 4 - Richard Stamps, Jason Thompson, LaVere Webster and Peggy Schodowski~~

~~Absent 3 - John Dziurman, David Kibby and Dennis Mueller~~

~~Others Present: Derek Delacourt, Deputy Director, Planning Department  
Judy Bialk, Recording Secretary~~

~~3. DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM~~

~~Chairperson Thompson stated for the record that a quorum was present.~~

~~4. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS~~

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

~~5. PUBLIC COMMENT (Non-Agenda Items)~~

~~No public comments were received on any non-Agenda items.~~

~~6. PUBLIC HEARINGS~~

~~Chairperson Thompson announced that the Study Committee would hold a Public Hearing regarding the following property and for the following purpose:~~

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6A. 2005-0537 PUBLIC HEARING - FILE NO. HDSC 05-002

Location: 3976 S. Livernois Road, located on the northwest corner of Livernois

Road and South Boulevard, and further identified as Parcel Number 15-33-476-027 and the southern 90-feet (approximately) of Parcel Number 15-33-476-014, zoned R-4 (One Family Residential).

**Purpose:** To receive public comment regarding a proposal to establish the subject property as a Historic District within the City of Rochester Hills, in accordance with Public Act 267 of 1976 (MCL 15.261 et seq., MSA 5.3407(3) et seq.) and the Rochester Hills Historical Preservation Ordinance, Section 118-131.

Chairperson Thompson explained the information received at this Public Hearing would be included in the Historic Districts Study Committee (HDSC) Final Report for the property commonly identified as 3976 S. Livernois Road.

Chairperson Thompson stated that 3976 S. Livernois had been studied by the Historic Districts Study Committee in accordance with the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, and a Preliminary Report had been prepared. He explained the Minutes from this Public Hearing would be included in the Final Report, along with all other relevant material. He noted that once the Final Report is completed, it would be forwarded to City Council for action.

Chairperson Thompson summarized the procedure used to establish a district. He explained the duties of the Study Committee outlined in Section 118-130 of the Rochester Hills Code of Ordinances included conducting a photographic inventory of the resource; conducting basic research regarding the proposed historic district; determining the number of historical and non-historical resources within the proposed district; preparing the Preliminary Report, which included the charge of the Committee, the composition of the Committee, the boundaries of the proposed historic district, the history of the proposed historic district, the significance of the proposed district, and the Committee's recommendation to establish, modify or eliminate.

(Arrive David Kibby 6:34 PM)

**Present** 5 - **Richard Stamps, Jason Thompson, LaVere Webster, Peggy Schodowski and David Kibby**

**Absent** 2 - **John Dziurman and Dennis Mueller**

**2005-0537**

Chairperson Thompson stated the Study Committee transmitted a copy of the Preliminary Report for review and recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Office on November 30, 2007. He noted a Staff Report and Comments were received from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the State Review Board on January 29, 2008.

Chairperson Thompson stated that in accordance with Section 118-131 of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Public Hearing is to be held sixty (60) days after the transmittal of the Preliminary Report to the SHPO. The Public Hearing is held in accordance with Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended (the Open Meetings Act), which includes notice to the property owner of any proposed district no less than fourteen (14) days prior to the Public Hearing. He noted written notice was provided to the property owner of record on April 11, 2008.

Chairperson Thompson stated that notice of the Public Hearing was published in the Rochester Eccentric on April 13, 2008, as required by Ordinance to be published one time only at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date of hearing.

Chairperson Thompson stated that in accordance with Section 118-132 of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Study Committee would prepare a Final Report with a recommendation, along with any recommendation received from the Planning Commission, to be submitted within one (1) year after holding the Public Hearing to the Mayor and City Council. He noted if the Study Committee's recommendation was to establish a district, the Final Report would include a draft Ordinance Amendment.

Chairperson Thompson noted for the record that if the Study Committee's recommendation was to establish a district, any final action on this matter would be taken by City Council.

Chairperson Thompson stated the intent of the Public Hearing was not to conduct a debate or dialog between the members of the HDSC and the public, but rather to allow the public to place any comments or concerns they may have on public record to be provided to City Council. He noted the HDSC Members would be available for questions at the conclusion of the Public Hearing.

Chairperson Thompson opened the Public Hearing at 6:37 PM.

**Mark Gavulic, 520 Nichols Drive, Auburn Hills**, stated he was present representing the Oakland-Steiner School. He explained the school's Administrator had intended to be at the meeting but was out of the country.

Mr. Gavulic stated that the Oakland-Steiner School was the current owner of the Stiles School Building. He indicated he had been a parent at the school since 1990, and noted the school was founded in 1989 so he was considered one of the founding parents of the school. He commented his three-year old son would attend the school, and by the time his son completed his education at the school, he, himself, would be associated with the school for over thirty years.

Mr. Gavulic stated he was credited with bringing the Stiles School to the attention of the Oakland-Steiner location committee as they had outgrown their Bloomfield

Hills location. He noted he was attracted to the building because of its architecture, and knew it was a wonderful match for a Waldorf School. He indicated his sister was a chairperson of a historical committee in Genesee County in the 1970s, and his brother is a historical preservation architect in Clarkston. He stated he had a deep appreciation for the building and its significance.

Mr. Gavulic stated he was the chairperson of the school's master plan committee, and now that the school owned the building and the site, they had to begin the process of figuring out how to make it their own, which he did not take lightly. He applauded what the Study Committee was doing, and noted he had an opportunity to read the Preliminary Report and it was excellent, thorough work. He was impressed with the resources the Committee used to prepare the Report.

Mr. Gavulic stated that Waldorf Schools were very sensitive to materials. He explained Rudolph Steiner spoke of the "touch sense" which was very different than the sense of touch. He stated it was fundamental in their education process, and natural materials such as wood and stone were universally important to them. He commented they sometimes had trouble with the regulators who came in to the school and wanted to know where the plastic toys were, and the school continually has to explain they will not cover a wood floor with carpet.

Mr. Gavulic felt that the school and the Study Committee had the same goal, which was to protect the building as the touchstone it was and the Community gem it was in the past in terms of being a community center. He stated the Oakland-Steiner School wanted to use the building as it was and restore the Community access. He commented they wanted their neighbors to be glad they were there, and wanted everyone to be proud of their beautiful building.

Mr. Gavulic stated that as the proposed designation stood, the Oakland-Steiner School could not support it, for the following reasons:

First, they appreciated they were only stewards of this property and the decision that will be made will affect generations. He noted the proposed district included the 50-year old wings that the State Historic Preservation Office called "inappropriate additions" and "non-contributing resources". The Oakland-Steiner School did not believe they should have to preserve those errors in perpetuity, especially because those additions themselves were ruined in the 1970s when EIFS was added to them. He stated the school would like the right to raze those wings and construct something more complementary to the original school building that adhered to the Department of the Interior Standards and guidelines. He noted he had been told that similar projects were done in both Clarkston and Birmingham. He stated the Birmingham project was a 1920s school that added an addition that did not attempt to duplicate what was

there, but created a beautiful building that complemented the original. He was told there was a similar situation in Clarkston with a 1920s collegiate gothic building with a 1950s single-story, rectangular addition. The addition was razed, and a new addition added on to the original 1920s building in a very tasteful way.

Secondly, the designation would cost the school immediately. He stated it would be an immediate financial penalty for the school, and there were no tax advantages to offset that since the school was a tax-exempt entity. He noted that about a year ago there was a lightening event that caused some damage to one of the additions on the school. He stated they were still in the process of recovering from that event, and the entire process was still going on and had not been settled at this point. He indicated that the school's insurance agent, who was in constant contact with the school, was told about the proposed designation, and advised the school they absolutely should not go along with it and should fight it because the insurance agent felt their insurance rates would quadruple. He noted that at this point the school had not been able to ascertain whether that was factual information or whether there were alternatives. He stated the school had not yet received their new insurance rates based on the restoration of the building, so they did not know what that cost might be. With the current economic times, that affected their enrollment and their programs. He explained if they became a historic district and had to pay the insurance rates, it would come at a direct expense to their programs.

Thirdly, the proposed district includes land that is significantly removed from the original Stiles School building, and the Oakland-Steiner School is worried that local Ordinances, such as setbacks from the proposed historic district, would inadvertently limit what they could construct on the property, including structures that would be removed from the original building and would not affect that building.

If the proposed historic district could be reduced within a reasonable interpretation of the enabling legislation to include only the property that the 1929 building occupied and the 1929 building itself, then the Oakland-Steiner School would reconsider their position. He noted that the inappropriate non-contributing 1957 and 1963 additions are functionally free-standing. He commented when the Oakland-Steiner School moved in, they did not use the Stiles Building proper for two years and it was shut down and not heated. The additions and the heating plant, which is part of the additions, are functionally independent, and the 1929 building functions as an annex to the newer construction. He believed it was within the Committee's reasonable discretion to declare the additions are two attached buildings and, therefore, under the Department of Interior rules, the Committee could shrink the proposed district.

Chairperson Thompson asked if anyone else wished to speak on this matter. Upon hearing none, he closed the Public Hearing at 6:50 PM.

Chairperson Thompson stated the Committee was pleased to receive the input and thanked the representatives from the school for attending the Hearing.

**This matter was Discussed**

~~6B. 2006-0425~~

~~**PUBLIC HEARING - FILE NO. HDSC 04-005**~~

~~Location: 1290 E. Auburn Road; 1304 E. Auburn Road; 1344 E. Auburn and 1356 E. Auburn Road, located on the south side of Auburn Road, east of John R Road and west of Dequindre Road, and further identified as Parcel Numbers 15-36-126-004 (1290 E. Auburn); 15-36-126-005 (1304 W. Auburn), and 15-36-126-029 (1344 and 1356 E. Auburn), zoned R-3 (One Family Residential).~~

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~~Chairperson Thompson explained the information received at this Public Hearing would be included in the Historic Districts Study Committee (HDSC) Final Report for the properties commonly identified as 1290 E. Auburn Road, 1304 E. Auburn Road, 1344 E. Auburn Road and 1356 E. Auburn Road.~~

~~Chairperson Thompson stated that 1290 E. Auburn Road, 1304 E. Auburn Road, 1344 E. Auburn Road and 1356 E. Auburn Road had been studied by the Historic Districts Study Committee in accordance with the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, and a Preliminary Report had been prepared. He explained the Minutes from this Public Hearing would be included in the Final Report, along with all other relevant material. He noted that once the Final Report is completed, it would be forwarded to City Council for action.~~

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