



City of Rochester Hills
AGENDA SUMMARY
NON-FINANCIAL ITEMS

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Legislative File No: 2021-0145 V3

TO: Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Sara Roediger, Director of Planning and Economic Development, ext. 2573

DATE: October 15, 2021

SUBJECT: Request by the owner to delist the noncontiguous historic property located at 1021 Harding Ave.– Parcel No. 15-15-327-002, Paul Miller, Applicant.

REQUEST:

Request that Council delists the locally designated historic district located at 1021 Harding Ave., Parcel No. 15-15-327-002.

BACKGROUND:

The property is two acres and was designated by the City in 1978. The house was constructed in the later 1800's and was formerly the Eureka Fruit Farm. The property is developed with a single-family home, barn and two outbuildings. The home suffered a major fire approximately four years ago, and the applicant has submitted information indicating that the home no longer meets the criteria for historic designation. Pursuant to the owner's request for delisting, City Council granted review rights to the HDSC to study the property and prepare a report at its December 14, 2020 meeting.

The HDSC and the City's historic consultant, Kristine Kidorf, researched and studied the property and all known family names associated with the property and prepared a Preliminary Report. The Preliminary Report was forwarded to the State Historic Preservation Office and to the City's Planning Commission on March 16, 2021, and the Planning Commission made a motion determining that the delisting will not have any impact on the property with respect to the City's Master Land Use Plan or any other development related issues. On April 22, 2021, the HDSC held the required Public Hearing to receive comment regarding the request and Report. Prior to the public hearing, the HDSC met with the applicant twice. Following the April 22 public hearing, the HDSC adopted the Final Report which stated that the property should remain historic, and it was forwarded to City Council at its May 10, 2021 meeting. Please see the attached minutes.

At the May 10, 2021 meeting, Council accepted the HDSC's Final Report, which recommends that the house should retain its historic designation. The property owner maintains that the property is not economically viable to be restored and continues to request that the property be delisted. Please see their attached letter. Therefore a request to delist and amend the ordinance is being brought forward to the City Council per the request of the property owner.

At the July 26, 2021 meeting, Council heard the request to delist the property and postponed the request to the October 25, 2021 regular meeting. Council indicated that they did not have enough information to override the recommendation of the HDSC and asked the applicant to provide an engineering assessment on the current state of the property, the ability and cost to repair to house, and documentation to support a financial hardship. In addition, a potential buyer spoke at the meeting indicating a desire to purchase the property. Since that time, the two parties have not been able to come to an agreement and the potential buyer has moved onto another property.

A new buyer has since come forward, and is scheduled to close on the property before the Council meeting on October 25, 2021. The new buyer has submitted an updated engineering report dated October 19, 2021 that concludes that the rehabilitation of the structure to maintain the historical characteristic of the exterior brick is not feasible and would like to continue to the request to de-list the property. Please see attached report and letter.

SUMMARY:

Based on the research conducted by the Committee; the review comments received from the State Historic Preservation Office and the input provided at the public hearing, the HDSC concluded that the property does not meet the criteria for delisting a Local Historic District. The applicant still wishes to have the property delisted, and City Council has the final authority to initiate the change in designation.

RECOMMENDATION:

The HDSC recommends that City Council denies the request to delist 1021 Harding Avenue from the City’s list of historic properties. However, Council may consider additional factors when deciding whether to keep the historical designation of this property that the HDSC could not. Such factors include economic hardship, the likelihood of restoration, the damage to the site from the fire, the presence of an attractive nuisance in the community and potentially unsafe condition, and ultimately the overall health, safety and welfare of the community.

If, after considering all of these factors, City Council determines that the request to delist the property as requested by the property owner is appropriate, Council can approve the resolution and direct staff to prepare an Ordinance for First Reading. Conversely, if Council determines to uphold the HDSC recommendation, Council can deny the attached resolution.

APPROVALS:	SIGNATURE	DATE
Department Review		
Department Director		
Mayor		
Deputy Clerk		

Contract Reviewed by City Attorney Yes N/A