



City of Rochester Hills
AGENDA SUMMARY
NON-FINANCIAL ITEMS

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Legislative File No: 2024-0087

TO: Mayor and City Council Members

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

DATE: February 12, 2024

SUBJECT: That City Council accept the Historic District Study Committee review and recommendation of the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District boundaries pursuant to the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District Re-Survey conducted by Kristine Kidorf and not amend the boundaries of the current district.

REQUEST:

That City Council accept the Historic District Study Committee review and recommendation of the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District boundaries pursuant to the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District Re-Survey conducted by Kristine Kidorf and not amend the boundaries of the current district.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Rochester Hills is a Certified Local Government (“CLG”). CLG status is jointly administered through the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the National Park Service (NPS) in an effort to promote, support and enhance historic preservation at a local level. Since the City is a CLG, the City and its Historic District Commission is charged with developing and carrying out a plan for the ongoing survey of historic resources in the City. Therefore, in late 2018 and throughout 2019 the HDC, City Staff and the City’s Historic Consultant discussed surveying options and prioritizations for the City’s historic resources. Once priorities had been established, the matter was brought before City Council. At the January 2020 joint meeting, the City Council authorized the re-survey of the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District that was originally designated in 1978. The re-survey would be a continuation of the 2002 efforts that recognized that portions of the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District could benefit from additional surveying efforts and recommended a “re-survey” of the District. The re-survey work is now complete and based on the findings, it is recommended that the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District remain unchanged.

The following provides a brief background on the process undertaken by the City in regards to reviewing the District:

The Historic District Commission, at their March 9, 2023 meeting, recommended that the City Council consider changes to the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District, based on the findings of the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District Re-Survey, along with other previous efforts that reflected the same.

At the April 17, 2023 meeting, the City Council resolved to request the review of the boundaries of the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District by the Historic Districts Study Committee, and provide Council with a complete report of their findings and recommendations per ordinance requirements.

On August 10, 2023, the HDSC adopted the draft Preliminary Historic District Study Committee Report and transmitted such to the State Historic Preservation Office and the Rochester Hills Planning Commission for review and comment.

On September 14, 2023, the city held an educational open house at the city offices. Two property owners attended. One non-contributing property owner was in support of the smaller district, the second was concerned about being eliminated from the district.

On September 19, 2023, the Rochester Hills Planning Commission accepted the report as written with no comments.

On September 29, 2023, staff received the comments on the report from the State Historic Preservation Office which recommended several changes to the district boundaries and to the report, including that the resource counts be clarified in both the existing and revised district, consideration of removing 1725 Washington Road from the revised district as it isn't really needed to include 1740 Washington Road and that the report focus more on what is being eliminated from the district rather than what is being retained.

On October 12, 2023, the HDSC held the required public hearing on the proposed boundary revision. At least three residents were opposed to the district being revised and raised concerns as to why the changes were being proposed to the District along with how the proposed changes could affect the review authority of the Historic Districts Commission on Washington Road, particularly regarding future improvements or paving of the roadway, thereby changing the rural setting of the roadway.

The HDSC postponed consideration of the final decision and report until the November meeting and asked that another letter be sent to the effected residents prior to the next meeting explaining the process which has been completed by city staff and seeking additional public input. Staff also sent an explanatory email and invitation to a member of the Winkler Mill Pond Homeowners association to answer various questions about the project.

At the November 9, 2023 HDSC meeting, the HDSC once again considered the proposed boundary change in conjunction with the additional information provided and also took additional public input. The HDSC determined that Washington Road should also be considered a contributing element to the District along with the residence at 1921 Washington Road. The HDSC also determined that the District boundaries should remain unchanged based on the determination that Washington Road is a contributing element to the overall character of the area and directed staff to revise the Study Committee Report as necessary.

Ms. Kidorf provided an updated Final Study Committee Report and Staff Report for consideration. At the January 11, 2024 meeting, the HDSC unanimously approved the following: to adopt the proposed Final Study Committee Report for the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District as written, and forwards a recommendation that the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District boundary remain unchanged from its original configuration

RECOMMENDATION:

Finding that, the Historic District Commission recommends that City Council accept the Historic District Study Committee review and recommendation of the current Winkler Mill Pond Historic District boundaries pursuant to the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District Re-Survey conducted by Kristine Kidorf and not amend the boundaries of the current district, subject to the findings and conditions noted in the attached resolution.

APPROVALS:	SIGNATURE	DATE
Department Review		
Department Director		
Mayor		
Deputy City Clerk		

Contract Reviewed by City Attorney Yes N/A