

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2023-0100

City of Rochester Hills Winkler Mill Pond Historic District Study

(Staff memo dated March 1, 2023 prepared by Kristine Kidorf and Winkler Mill Pond Historic District Re-Survey dated December 22 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record thereof).

Ms. Kidorf stated that she would first apologize that it took three long years to get this study done. She explained that this is the re-survey of the Winkler Mill Pond Historic District that City Council mentioned in the Joint Meeting with the Planning Commission and the Historic Districts Commission authorized in January of 2020. She stated that a lot of the information was from the 2002 survey. She noted that the findings reiterated the recommendation to change the district boundaries to just include the properties on the west side of the pond/east side of Winkler Mill Road and the pond, all the way to the east bank of the pond and including the properties south of the pond.

Chairperson Thompson asked for any questions or comments.

Dr. Stamps asked if the recommendation was to eliminate some structures from the district.

Ms. Kidorf responded that it would eliminate all except three properties that were constructed after the period of significance, 6255 Winkler Mill Road, 6271 Winkler Mill Road, and 1725 Washington Road. She stated that including those allow the contiguous district but they would be considered non-contributing. She explained that the rest of the nine non-contributing buildings that are currently in the district would be removed from the district.

Dr. Stamps stated that he has always thought this was a good idea because it seems like a lot of the Commission business is reviewing proposals in non-historic structures, not because they were historic, but they were in the district even though they were non-contributing. He commented that the applicants had to spend a lot of time and they had to come before the Commission. He stated that he is in favor of the concept of removing them from the Historic District. He noted however, that a couple of years ago the State Historic Preservation Network did an analysis and found that the value of your home increased if it was in a historic district. He questioned what the owners of the properties would say if they learned that their properties would be eliminated. He asked if there is any idea how they would feel if the Commission unburdened them of this need to come before the Commission.

Ms. Kidorf responded that those studies focused on districts that primarily had contributing buildings as opposed to non-contributing; however, she stated that it was true that property values stay more stable in historic districts than others. She noted that they would find out how those folks feel about it if City Council authorizes the Study Committee to study it, as they would have to have at least one public hearing and everyone that is currently in the district would be notified of that. She added that the study is already up on the City's website. It would be converted into a Study Committee report and the whole due process would follow, should City Council request the Study Committee to study it.

Dr. Stamps stated that given that response, he thinks it is a good idea and he stated he is strongly in favor of it. He questioned whether a motion was needed.

Ms. Kidorf responded that the only motion would be to accept the report and request staff take it to City Council.

Dr. Stamps made that motion. Mr. Tischer supported the motion.

Mr. Tischer complimented Ms. Kidorf's work, noting that he did read the report.

Ms. Kidorf commented that she would be correcting a couple of typographical errors.

Dr. Stamps stated that he would speak in favor of the motion as they are not taking the freedom away from someone because it will be going for a public hearing. The owners will have the opportunity to speak if they want to stay in a district.

Chairperson Thompson announced after a roll call vote that the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Stamps, seconded by Tischer, that this matter be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 9 - Altherr-Rogers, Elias, Granthen, Lemanski, Lyons, McGunn, Stamps, Thompson and Tischer

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission hereby accepts the Rochester Hills Winkler Mill Pond District Re-Survey and directs staff to forward the report to City Council.