

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2023-0268

Consideration and Request for Adoption of the Final Historic District Study Committee Report - Winkler Mill Pond Historic District - Boundary Change (*McLeod memos dated 11-10-23 and 10-4-23, Staff Reports prepared by K. Kidorf dated 11-10-23 and 10-02-23, Letters sent to Winkler Mill Pond property owners, Draft HDSC Minutes for 10-12-23, SHPO letter dated 9-29-23, Draft Final HDSC Report (October 2023), Email from Linda Monks-1921 Washington, Notice of Public Hearing and reminder, draft Planning Commission minutes dated 9-19-23, McLeod memo to the Planning Commission dated 9-19-23, draft minutes from HDSC meeting of 8-10-23, McLeod memo dated 8/3/23, Staff report prepared by K. Kidorf dated 8/1/23, Preliminary HDSC Report, Winkler Mill Pond District Boundary Change dated August 2023, and HDSC Draft Minutes 6/13/23, had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record thereof.*)

In attendance was Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting.

Chairperson Granthen noted that this item had been postponed at last month's meeting. She called for any additional public comment.

Jay Flaherty, 1700 Washington Rd., questioned what the implications would be for Washington Road if properties were removed from the district. He noted that people coming from Stony Creek Park would make it a thoroughfare and pointed out that only a few slivers of land would remain. He asked what would happen to the dirt road.

Chairperson Granthen responded that it is a County road. She stated that the City has not had any information on any future plans, and noted that Dr. Stamps had previously indicated that there was some discussion prior to 2012, but it was set aside because it is a historic district.

Mr. Flaherty stated that it would change the neighborhood completely if cars would be going through at 60 mph. He commented that the last time the historic district stopped any plans, and it may not be stopped the next time.

Chris McLeod stated that as it is a County road, the decision to do anything would be relative to County funding in coordination with the City. He noted that there are no published plans for paving improvements, and the City's Transportation Plan identifies safety concerns for Washington Road, but also keeps the speeds down.

Mr. Tischer stated that if the County did decide to come through and pave they would update the drainage and it would alter the look of the district.

Mr. McLeod responded that under the proposed district most of the roadway would come out but some elements would stay in. He noted that if the HDC said that the road had to stay the same, that body would still have jurisdiction.

Kristine Kidorf pointed out that in addition to this district, the Stoney Creek Historic District is immediately to the south and Washington Road is in that district. Furthermore, those boundaries are not being reconsidered at this time. She noted that the rural nature of the road and the home setbacks are justification to leave that district as it is.

Mr. Flaherty stated that he bought his house in 2013 and it was in shambles. He explained that they came before the HDC over several issues and planted 40 trees trying to turn it into a more natural property, and had no difficulties. He commented that he prefers not to have to deal with it, but to balance that with the road concerns, he would prefer that it stay as-is.

Bonnie Fults, 1965 Washington Rd., stated that she is where Dequindre meets Mt. Vernon, and is in full support of keeping things the way they are. She noted that she witnesses cars going 50 mph while she is pulling out of her driveway and mentioned that three cars have missed the turn and ended up in her rock bed.

Mr. Tischer asked her thoughts on her non-contributing property coming before the HDC.

Ms. Fults responded that she would stay in the district and come before the HDC for any future renovations to stop a paved road.

Chairperson Granthen stated that she has no knowledge of any plans to pave the road; however, it is something to keep in mind if the district loses its status.

Jeff Young, 1740 Washington Rd., stated that he has lived in a historic home there for 20 years that was built way back in the 1800s closer to the road than they build now. He expressed concern that they might want to make it into a five-lane road plus paved shoulders and eliminate the hills and curves. He stated that he likes living on a dirt road, and mentioned that with its proximity to Stony Creek Park, they get a lot of bicycles and joggers and even with the potholes people still do 50 mph. He noted that paving the road would lead to more cars and trucks per day.

Ms. Deel asked where Mr. Young obtained his information regarding road paving.

Mr. Young responded that he heard it at the City.

Mr. Thompson stated that 10 years ago it was before the HDC and not the HDSC, and commented that even if the County changed its mind tomorrow they could not do anything without going before the City and City Council.

Mr. McLeod explained that typically the County would not fully fund such a project and it would be a part of a conversation with the City. It would also be put into a transportation improvement plan and funding sources sought out.

Mr. Thompson concurred, noting that four jurisdictions would be involved, Oakland County, Macomb County, Shelby Township and Rochester Hills, and it

would be a cumbersome process.

Tom Monks, 1921 Washington Rd., stated that it would make things easier to deal with if the change were not allowed. He commented that people like it the way it is.

Chairperson Granthen reiterated that the Committee makes a recommendation to City Council.

Mr. Monks commented that if the boundaries are left intact it makes another barrier.

Ms. Deel asked if there were concerns about the redistricting outside of the possible paving of Washington Rd.

Mr. Monks responded that he has pavement in front of his house, and stated that the traffic situation will be outrageous if this is changed. He noted that it would be one less layer of bureaucracy to be dealt with in paving.

Chairperson Granthen suggested that comments could be directed to their City Council representative as well, as the Committee is only giving a recommendation.

Mr. McLeod stated that as they have gone through the Study and the Public Hearing, the HDSC will make a recommendation to City Council. He noted that the Committee has some different options to consider. He added that if there is a change in the District, Council will have to draft an ordinance to adopt simultaneously. He reiterated that this is a recommending body.

Linda Monks, 1921 Washington Rd., stated that she has seen both of the illustrations of the boundary. She noted that if it does not cost anything to change the boundary, and people do not mind coming before the HDC to make changes to their property, she does not understand why there is a big push to do it. She noted that the City of Rochester is asking people to put plaques on their homes if they are 50 years old, and her house is 100 years old and they are trying to remove it from the district.

Chairperson Granthen noted that the concern is that people without historic homes must come before the HDC.

Mr. Flaherty suggested that the boundaries could be redrawn so that Washington Road stays in and some of the houses could come out, or a larger map be included to show that the district to the south would protect them.

Ms. Kidorf responded that they cannot justify just including the road as it does not fit into the story or standard historical preservation practice.

Mr. Tischer made a motion to postpone this item referencing Motion #3 in Mr. McLeod's memo to the Committee, and revise the report to not justify changing the boundaries. The motion was seconded by Mr. Thompson.

After the vote, Chairperson Granthen noted that the motion passed unanimously.

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

Aye 5 - Deel, Granthen, McCracken, Thompson and Tischer

Excused 2 - Lemanski and McGunn

Resolved, that the Historic Districts Study Committee (HDSC) has reviewed the final Winkler Mill Pond Historic District (the District) Draft Study Committee Report (the Report); the HDSC postpones action on the Report and requests that the Report be revised to support no modifications being made to the District boundaries due to the overall character of the area, including other historic homes or homes that have been previously reviewed under the Historic Preservation Ordinance, which although they may not contribute specifically to the period of significance, they still provide historic value to the City and to the character of the district; and also due to the potential negative impacts to the District that may occur as a result of the removal of Washington Road from the District.