



Rochester Hills

Minutes

Historic Districts Commission

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Chairperson Jason Thompson, Vice Chairperson Julie Granthen
Members: Katherine Altherr-Rogers, Yousif Elias, Bryan Lemanski, Kelly Lyons, Michael McGunn, Dr. Richard Stamps, Charles Tischer
Youth Representative: Henry Hall

Thursday, January 11, 2024

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Thompson called the Historic Districts Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Michigan time.

ROLL CALL

- Present** 5 - Yousif Elias, Julie Granthen, Kelly Lyons, Jason Thompson and Michael McGunn
- Excused** 4 - Katherine Altherr-Rogers, Richard Stamps, Charles Tischer and Bryan Lemanski

Others Present:

Chris McLeod, Planning Manager
Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting
Jennifer MacDonald, Recording Secretary
Henry Hall, Rochester Hills Government Youth Council Representative

Members Altherr-Rogers, Lemanski, Stamps, and Tischer provided prior notice they would be absent and were excused.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2024-0008](#) November 9, 2023 HDC Meeting Minutes

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

- Aye** 5 - Elias, Granthen, Lyons, Thompson and McGunn
- Excused** 4 - Altherr-Rogers, Stamps, Tischer and Lemanski

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

NEW BUSINESS

2024-0007

Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness - File No. PHDC2023-0003 - to replace an existing ground sign for Somerset Child Care, 1385 S. Adams Rd., zoned R-1 One Family Residential, Parcel No. 15-20-151-022, Michael Engerer, Printology, Inc., Applicant

(Staff Report prepared by K. Kidorf dated 1-2-24, Sign plans received 12-20-23, Building Review, Application and Location Map had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record.)

Present for the Applicant was Michael Engerer, Printology, Inc., the sign supplier, and Anne Porter, representing the owner of Somerset Childcare.

Chairperson Thompson introduced this item requesting a certificate of appropriateness for replacement of an existing ground sign for Somerset Childcare at 1385 South Adams Road. He invited the applicant to the presenter's table and asked if staff had any additional information to present.

Seeing none, and seeing no Commission comments or questions, he asked for a motion.

Mr. McGunn moved the motion in the packet to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness and the motion was seconded by Mr. Elias.

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

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

Aye 5 - Elias, Granthen, Lyons, Thompson and McGunn

Excused 4 - Altherr-Rogers, Stamps, Tischer and Lemanski

Resolved, in the matter of File No. PHDC2023-0011, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for removal of the existing sign and installation of the new sign in the new location as proposed at 1385 S. Adams Road, Lawnridge Hall, Parcel Identification Number 70-15-20-151-022, with the following Findings and Conditions:

- 1) The proposed removal of the existing sign and construction of the new sign is appropriate;
- 2) The proposed removal of an existing sign and construction of a new sign as proposed is in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, in particular standard numbers 9 and 10 as follows:

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2024-0015 Discussion regarding 947 E. Tienken Rd., Ralph Putman, Owner

(McLeod Memo dated 1-2-24, Designhaus Letter dated 12-11-23, Plans, Location Map, and Photos had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record.)

Present was Ralph Putman, property owner and Joe Latozas of Designhaus Architecture, Architect for Mr. Putman.

Chairperson Thompson noted that this item is for discussion and a request for feedback and is not a formal application on what is being proposed. He asked for any staff comments

Mr. McLeod displayed the items that were submitted and stated that he would defer to Ms. Kidorf for any commentary.

Ms. Kidorf stated that while the existing house and additions were not all built at the same time, they were all built within the period of significance for the historic district and the additions would still be considered contributing or historic. She stated that she is aware that the house is in very poor condition, and Mr. Putman has come several times looking for some guidance for the project. She stated that the addition as currently proposed would not meet Secretary of Interior Standards as it overwhelms the house, only preserving one little piece of the historic house. She stated that as submitted, the scale just overwhelms the historic house and it is almost like the historic house itself is an addition.

She commented that she applauds Mr. Putman's efforts to try to preserve the house, and moving both the house and barn back are something that could be considered appropriate based on the conditions out there. She stated that the proposed addition, along with eliminating all of the current additions on the house would not be appropriate. She questioned whether it was proposed to deconstruct the existing house, and if that is the case would it look as it does now; and asked if the house was stable enough to be picked up and moved. She asked what landscaping would need to be changed to accommodate such a move.

Mr. McLeod stated that the parcel configuration is unique, and displayed on the screen how the barn is within the road right-of-way and is actually on Road Commission property. He noted how the house sits on the front property line at one point. He commented that this is part of the reason that from a Planning and Engineering point of view, moving the house back may ultimately be a better scenario.

Chairperson Thompson stated that he would echo Ms. Kidorf's comments in that while it looks nice, the historic home is well dwarfed by the addition; and he

commented that moving the house back is something that he could consider given the area that it is in and considering the vibration from the Tienken corridor.

Ms. Lyons thanked Mr. Putman and Mr. Latozas for coming in and commented that the drawings are very helpful for the Commission to be able to give feedback. She suggested a redesign that does not overwhelm the house and make it feel like as one is coming up the hill that the roofline makes it appear as there is another house on top. She suggested the possibility of a one-story connection instead of a two-story connection, so that anything bigger was set into the back. She commented that while she personally loves porches, the porches as presented make it stick out even farther and takes away from the character she would expect to see from that particular kind of house. She asked what the intention was for the rear portion of the house.

Ms. Kidorf responded that it is proposed to be demolished and it is just the two-story portion that is a part of the current plan.

Mr. Latozas responded that they did a thorough investigation into the structural soundness of not only the home but the foundations. He explained that the front two-story portion is built pretty well and is structurally sound, and they feel that it can be lifted and moved 40 feet back to a new location out of the right of way and conforming to setbacks. He noted that the foundation, walls and roof are failing in the back portion; and he stated that there is not a lot of structural capacity of that structure to be saved. He explained that their intent is to save the front two-story portion, move it back into a conforming location that is safe and then add an addition to where the existing one story portion is set.

He explained that Mr. Putman wants to save the materials from the second portion and use whatever is viable for parts of the addition or as decorative items within the addition to champion that part of the building within the living area or kitchen. He stressed that saving that portion would be a stretch without taking it apart piece by piece, replacing what is wrong, and then putting it back together, rebuilding it stick by stick. He commented that he appreciated the information and feedback being given as it is invaluable.

Mr. Putman stated that he would love for the Museum to take this house and leave it right where it is and save it, but he cannot do that as it is in the right-of-way. He explained that there are two additions and the first is comprised of two-by-twelve boards that are just nailed to the beams and would not conform to code. He noted that there is no foundation under the second addition. He stated that he had five builders and the City come out and every one said that they should be torn down. He commented that he already has a lot of money into that house and has gotten nowhere. He agreed that the house should be saved, but stated that a resident cannot be asked to try to save something like that as they will put twice as much money into it than they will get out of it.

He explained that this is the third architect that he has had, and this one has come up with some really nice plans. He invited the Commission to come out and go through the house. He stated that he did not realize when he bought it that it was in the right-of-way; and he noted that it has been flooded out, including

the hot water, heat, plumbing and drywall. He stated that he had to remove all of the drywall and insulation, and then saw the way the electrical was done. He noted that there is no foundation under the back at all and it is leaning out a bit. He added that the whole roof structure would have to be changed, and things were done in 1860 that you cannot do now. He stressed that he is getting old and has no choice. He stated that he offered it to Pat McKay, but Mr. McKay was not interested in moving it across the road to Museum property.

Ms. Kidorf noted that Mr. Putman withdrew plans for the barn and the other outbuildings.

Mr. Putman responded that he was waiting for the Commission's comments and noted that the barn is not on his property and is completely on the road right-of-way and the house sits on the right-of-way. He stated that there is not much left of the sheds.

Ms. Kidorf asked how long Mr. Putman has owned the property.

Mr. Putman responded that he purchased it in 1985.

Ms. Lyons asked if the architect had any questions based on the Commission's comments regarding what they are looking for to be in compliance with Department of Interior Standards.

Ms. Latozas asked if he could review his notes briefly. He commented that it appears that the Commission thinks that the scale of the addition being proposed is too grandiose and needs to be scaled back to limit the view of the addition from the road and let the existing portion of the building stand for itself and be the example of its historical architecture, letting the addition hide itself in the trees in the rear. He had a number of questions regarding rehabilitation of the existing two-story. He asked if the windows and doors could be replaced in the same design color, and commented that he was confident that the siding could be repaired and saved. He asked if it was appropriate to put a stone veneer on a concrete footing for the new foundation.

Ms. Kidorf responded that if the windows and doors are deteriorated beyond repair the color is not as much of a concern as the profile and profile materials. She stated that she did not know if a stone veneer would be required since it would be a new foundation.

Ms. Lyons noted that there is one line in the standards that talks about maintaining the character and the look, and stated that this is the key as to what they are looking for. She commented that she would be open to looking at something taller if the addition was farther back and did not appear overpowering.

Chairperson Thompson concurred, stating that having a little space for the connection would add confirmation that it is a historic home with a new addition. He added that landscaping could hide the house a bit.

Mr. Putman stated that he also would need to know what he can do with the

barn, as he is concerned he will put a lot of money into it and the Road Commission could come and tear it down to widen the road.

Chairperson Thompson stated that the Road Commission would have to come to the HDC. He noted that there are no plans whatsoever that they are aware of to widen Tienken Road.

Mr. Putman stated that he would love to see the hill cut down a bit for the kids who try to walk on that side of the road.

Mr. McLeod displayed a map showing how the property lines are positioned up and down Tienken. He commented that it is unlikely that the Road Commission would come through to take the barn out absent of any expansion plans for Tienken, and stressed that there are none. He stated that ultimately as a part of any improvement to the site, the expectation or hope would be that the barn would shift backwards closer to the other barns in the back.

Mr. Putman asked if there would be an acceptable location elsewhere on the site for the barn, and noted that there is a large walnut tree, two sheds and a three-seater outhouse. He asked if it might be possible as he has some property in the woods.

Mr. McLeod responded that one of the conversations that could be had is whether there is an acceptable location elsewhere on the site for the barn and if it should need to be moved. He stated that if the site is to redevelop in some fashion the hope would be that there is a new home to assure the barn stays as a part of the overall collection of buildings on the site.

Chairperson Thompson asked Ms. Kidorf if it would be an issue to move the barn to a different part of the site as long as it stayed intact.

Ms. Kidorf responded that it would be perfectly reasonable for the Commission to consider moving the barn especially if the house is moving back as well. She noted that she would like to add into the discussion the connecting addition and suggested that perhaps it could look similar to the current addition.

Ms. Lyons stated that she is not clear on the original floor plan of the house and what portion is being moved, and suggested this be made more clear for the next round of discussion.

Mr. McLeod suggested that for future submittals it would be helpful if the proposal shows the square footage of the existing building, the square footage of what will be preserved, and the square footage of the resulting building to provide some context of scale.

Mr. Putman offered that he had some interior photos of the existing building.

Mr. Latozas and Mr. Putman thanked the Commissioners for their input and feedback.

Discussed

2024-0014 Approval of 2024 Meeting Schedule

Mr. McLeod noted that the proposed meeting schedule for the year included a May 9 meeting where Ms. Kidorf would not be available as she would be attending the Michigan Historic Preservation Network statewide conference. He explained that they may not need that meeting; however, holding May 2 would be an alternate if that works for the Commissioners.

Ms. Kidorf noted that any deadlines would be adjusted for that meeting date.

Ms. Lyons moved approval of the suggested schedule with May 2 as the date of the May meeting. Chairperson Thompson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Aye 5 - Elias, Granthen, Lyons, Thompson and McGunn

Excused 4 - Altherr-Rogers, Stamps, Tischer and Lemanski

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills Historic District Commission hereby establishes its 2024 meeting schedule at the January 11, 2024 Regular Meeting as follows:

**ROCHESTER HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION
2024 MEETING DATES***

January 11, 2024	July 11, 2024
February 8, 2024	August 8, 2024
March 14, 2024	September 12, 2024
April 11, 2024	October 10, 2024
May 2, 2024*	November 14, 2024
June 13, 2024	December 12, 2024

*Meetings will be held on the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. unless noted. The Historic Districts Commission reserves the right to add Special Meetings or Workshops as necessary. Meetings may be cancelled if no applications are received in the appropriate timeframe. Meetings will be held in the Auditorium of the City Municipal Offices at 1000 Rochester Hills Dr., Rochester Hills, MI 48309.

2024-0013 Election of Officers - Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary for a one-year term

Chairperson Thompson stated that the Commission was requested to elect its officers for 2024.

Mr. McGunn moved to retain the same slate of officers for 2024.

Chairperson Thompson confirmed that the motion would be that he would retain the Chair, Ms. Granthen would retain Vice Chair, and Mr. Tischer would retain the Secretary's position for 2024. The motion was seconded by Lyons. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Aye 5 - Elias, Granthen, Lyons, Thompson and McGunn

Excused 4 - Altherr-Rogers, Stamps, Tischer and Lemanski

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission hereby appoints Jason Thompson to serve as its Chairperson, Julie Granthen to serve as its Vice Chairperson, and Chip Tischer to serve as its Secretary, each for a one-year term to expire the first meeting in January 2025.

Mr. McLeod stated that the February meeting would likely include a training and education study session. He noted that the Historic Districts Committee Members were invited and it would function as a joint meeting opportunity for both the Committee and the Commission. He explained that they would determine the logistics of whether the session would be an agenda item at the end of the HDC's business or would be held after adjournment.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- February 8, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, it was moved by McGunn, seconded by Lyons, to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

Minutes were prepared by Jennifer MacDonald.

*Minutes were approved as presented/amended at the _____
Regular Historic Districts Commission Meeting.*

Jason Thompson, Chairperson