



City of Rochester Hills
AGENDA SUMMARY
NON-FINANCIAL ITEMS

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Legislative File No: 2017-0002

TO: Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Ed Anzek, Director of Planning and Economic Development, ext. 2572

DATE: December 19, 2016

SUBJECT: Request to remove 1171 E. Auburn (from the Historic Districts Potential List – Henry Sarnacki, attorney for Kelly Granger, Co-Trustee of the Stephan V. Pickens Self-Trusted Revocable Trust which is the owner of the above referenced property.

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting that the property located at 1171 E. Auburn be removed from the City's Historic Districts' Potential List in order to complete the sale of this property as ordered by Judge Marlinga according to Mr. Sarnacki's letter. The Co-Trustee has a pending sale to MJC Homes for this site plus the one immediately east and also owned by the trust. This parcel (15-25-352-017, 2.18 acres) is one of 2 parcels in the trust. The parcel immediately east (15-25-352-018, 2.96 acres) and abutting this one is not on the Potential List. This request concerns any historic value of the 1171 E. Auburn property and what subsequent steps should occur; remove the site from the list or study the site. The pending sale should not be a consideration in determining historic value.

BACKGROUND:

Once the City Council receives a letter from the property owner requesting the site be removed the Council decision is to:

- 1) removed from the potential list, or
- 2) send the issue to the Study Committee to determine if the site has any historic significance that would support it being designated historic.

When this question of removing the candidate structure from the potential list first surfaced I advised the potential buyer of the process. Anticipating questions from Council in deliberating the "study or remove from list" question I asked Ms. Kidorf to provide the City with some level of review to know if there were some identifiable value or merit in designating the site for study.

We arranged an on site meeting of the buyer, buyer's Engineer, seller, seller's rep, and an agent for the trust along with our Consultant and staff. Ms. Kidorf's initial assessment is attached. She states in her second paragraph, "With the limited information we have, the building does not appear to significant enough to warrant individual historic designation, however, further research could determine that the house is important to the 1920s development in Rochester Hills and worthy of designation."

In my experience with the City I do not recall any discussion, effort or intent by policy makers or HDC members to place any importance on the "1920s suburbanization" of Avon Township (Rochester Hills).

Unless the City Council wishes to establish this era as one to value; based on Ms. Kidorf's comments I would recommend that the site does not warrant designation.

On an associated issue, in December of last year, the Council had another request for the removal of a parcel from the Potential list. That was located at 820 E. Auburn. At that time Council directed staff to conduct an analysis of the remaining properties on the Potential list so this question of preservation or removal could be better resolved.

Staff began discussions with the City's Preservation Consultant as to approach, timeframe, and cost. Progress was halted when we learned of two Bills introduced in Lansing; HB5232 and SB720 amending Public Act 169. In staff's reading of these Bills along with the opinion of John Staran and Ms. Kidorf, the City's Preservation Consultant, the proposed legislation would significantly alter the process for historic preservation that has been in use by the State. Specifically, the Bills placed potential listing as a totally voluntary act by the owner. At that time, I informed Ms. Kidorf that I was stopping any further work on developing the process for evaluating the remaining potential candidates as any effort could be for naught.

The Bills were initially suspended in late February but not withdrawn until later in the year. We have reactivated our discussions with Ms. Kidorf as to approach and cost. Early estimates place this Study in the \$40-\$50,000 range. Those monies are not budgeted.

The difficulty in bringing these questions before Council in the past has always been the owner's desire NOT to have their property so designated. The Council has designated a portion of the Twist drill site while not designating others due to financial hardship that would be imposed on the owners as many are (were) in disarray such as the Goddard school site on Auburn.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on Ms. Kidorf's initial review I would offer that there is no significant historic merit to this structure and would recommend that it be removed from the Potential List for historic designation. The attached Resolution is offered for the Council's consideration.

APPROVALS:	SIGNATURE	DATE
Department Review		
Department Director		
Mayor		
Deputy Clerk		