



# Rochester Hills Minutes

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## Historic Districts Study Committee

Chairperson Jason Thompson, Vice Chairperson Dr. Richard Stamps  
Members: John Dziurman, James Hannick, Peggy Schodowski, LaVere Webster, Murray Woolf

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Thursday, May 14, 2009

5:30 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

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**MINUTES** of a **ROCHESTER HILLS REGULAR HISTORIC DISTRICTS STUDY COMMITTEE** meeting held at the City Municipal Offices, 1000 Rochester Hills Drive, Rochester Hills, Oakland County, Michigan.

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Thompson called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

### 2. ROLL CALL

**Present** 5 - **Richard Stamps, John Dziurman, Jason Thompson, Peggy Schodowski and James Hannick**

**Absent** 2 - **LaVere Webster and Murray Woolf**

Others Present: Derek Delacourt, Deputy Director, Planning Department  
Judy Bialk, Recording Secretary

Chairperson Thompson noted for the record that Mr. Webster had left prior notice he could not attend this meeting and was excused.

### 3. DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Chairperson Thompson stated for the record that a quorum was present.

Chairperson Thompson stated that the Committee was well aware of the on-going discussions taking place regarding the proposed road project for Tienken Road and the Tienken Road bridge located in the Stoney Creek Village. He reminded the Committee those issues were a matter for the Historic Districts Commission to discuss, and there was nothing about either project that the Committee needed to discuss at this time.

### 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

#### 4A. 2009-0193 March 12, 2009 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Thompson asked for any comments or corrections regarding the March 12, 2009 Regular Meeting Minutes. Upon hearing no comments or corrections, he called for a motion to approve.

A motion was made by Stamps, seconded by Dziurman, that the Minutes be Approved as Presented. The motion CARRIED by the following vote:

**Aye** 5 - Stamps, Dziurman, Thompson, Schodowski and Hannick

**Absent** 2 - Webster and Woolf

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the March 12, 2009 Regular Historic Districts Study Committee meeting be approved as presented.

## 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

### A. 04-24-09 Letter from A. Holtz (re Frank Farm)

Chairperson Thompson stated that the Committee had received copies of a letter prepared by Anita Holtz, dated April 24, 2009, regarding the thoughts of the Frank Family regarding the proposed designation of the property.

Mr. Delacourt noted it appeared Ms. Holtz had reversed her opinion regarding the proposed designation since the last time she meet with the Committee. Ms. Holtz' letter is unclear about whether the family intends to support the recommended designation. It appears Ms. Holtz had met with the other family members and it no longer appeared they supported the designation unless the City was willing to participate cost-wise.

Mr. Dziurman stated that the Study Committee would still proceed with the recommended designation, noting it would ultimately be up to City Council to decide.

Mr. Delacourt stated he had spoken to Ms. Holtz since she submitted her letter, and although he was not sure what the intent of her letter was, Ms. Holtz was not going to revise the letter.

The Committee discussed how State Law affected property owner rights versus City Council's right to designate a local resource. Comparisons were made to how property was zoned without property owner consent, and the fact that City Council listened to both the Study Committee and the property owner before making a decision regarding designation. It was noted if a property owner did not agree with designation, the matter could be appealed through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and then through Circuit Court.

Mr. Dziurman noted that former State Attorney General Kelly had handed down a ruling regarding local designation, which has been held up in court many times since across the State.

The Committee discussed the current condition of several designated homes in the City where it appeared the property owner no longer agreed with the local designation and the homes were falling into ruin. Mr. Delacourt pointed out that the

Historical Preservation Ordinance permitted the Historic Districts Commission and the City to follow-up on properties that were falling into disrepair. There was some discussion regarding the property owner's desire to let a resource fall apart versus the City's ability to enter the property and mothball the structure. It was noted that obnoxious weeds and/or uncut grass was addressed by the City and a lien for the work filed against the property.

The Committee commented their charge was only to research the properties. Mr. Hannick talked about a family that resided near him that told him about an old barn that used to be on their property. Although the prior property owners had wanted to retain the barn, they did not have the funds available to fix it up, and the City required it be demolished as a dangerous building.

Mr. Dziurman commented it was a shame those situations occurred. He noted if a resource is designated as a contributing resource, tax credits would be available for repair and rehabilitation work. Mr. Hannick stated that many residents do not want local designation because they do not want any additional restrictions placed on their property.

Mr. Delacourt noted that currently tax credits are only being given to those resources that qualify for National Register designation. Mr. Dziurman commented that the local designation should be based on the National Register criteria, so they should meet that requirement. Mr. Delacourt stated it appeared to be a matter of whether the resource could document the National Register eligibility before tax credits were given.

## 6. PUBLIC COMMENT (Non-Agenda Items)

Chairperson Thompson called for any public comments. No public comments were received.

## 7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chairperson Thompson suggested the Agenda be amended to include a new Agenda Item 7A, in order to allow the Committee to discuss the Frank Farm and the Stiles School properties. Based on a consensus of the Committee Members, the Agenda was amended to add a new Agenda Item 7A, Discussion Regarding the Frank Farm and the Stiles School Properties.

### 2006-0425 Frank Farm Potential Historic District - Discussion

Chairperson Thompson explained it was anticipated that both properties could be placed on the June 1st City Council Meeting Agenda. He noted the Public Hearings for these properties had been a year ago, and it was appropriate for the Committee to bring both properties before City Council with their recommendation.

Mr. Delacourt stated that it had been slightly over a year since the Public Hearings had been held for these two properties, and if they were delayed much longer, another Public Hearing would have to be held for each property.

The Committee agreed both properties should be scheduled for a City Council meeting and moved forward in the process.

Mr. Delacourt pointed out the Committee had made a good faith effort to work with both property owners regarding the proposed designation. He stated the packet information would be forwarded to the Council Coordinator, and the Council President would decide if both properties would be on the same Agenda.

The Committee discussed whether two recommended designations might be too much for one Council Agenda, noting the time that would be spent discussing them. Mr. Delacourt indicated that if the Committee wanted to prepare a PowerPoint presentation on the properties, a copy of the presentation should be included with the packet information. Packet material for the June 1st Council meeting was due to the Council Coordinator by Noon on Friday, May 22, 2009.

Mr. Dziurman stated he had taken some recent photographs and looked up the aerials via Google Earth.

Chairperson Thompson stated that since the reports were ready to go, they would be forwarded to the Council Coordinator for scheduling on the June 1st Council meeting Agenda. He reminded the Committee Members that City Council had changed the start time of their meetings to 7:00 PM.

Mr. Delacourt stated he would forward the Agenda packet materials to the Council Coordinator for scheduling on a Council Agenda. The Committee would be advised if the items were scheduled for the June 1st Council Meeting, and reminded the Committee the meeting would begin at 7:00 PM.

**This matter was Discussed**

**7A      2005-0537      3976 S. Livernois (Stiles School)**

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Mr. Delacourt noted that Katherine Thivierge from the Oakland Steiner School had emailed that June and July were particularly busy months for the school, and that it would be nearly impossible for representatives from the School to attend a Council meeting during those months.

Chairperson Thompson stated that the Stiles School report had been finished for some time. Ms. Schodowski noted that it had been delayed because of the fire at the school, and she did not think the Committee should drag the matter out any longer. The Committee concurred.

Mr. Delacourt stated he would forward the Agenda packet materials to the Council Coordinator for scheduling on a Council Agenda. The Committee would be advised if the items were scheduled for the June 1st Council Meeting, and reminded the Committee the meeting would begin at 7:00 PM.

**This matter was Discussed**

**7A. 2008-0663 National Twist Drill  
- 6875 N. Rochester Road**

- **6841 N. Rochester Road**  
- **Review Preliminary Report**

Chairperson Thompson stated that the investigation and research regarding both these properties began before the Historical Preservation Ordinance was amended by City Council through Ordinance Amendment 528, which became effective on January 19, 2009. The Committee would need to decide whether it was appropriate to finish the reports or follow the new process and ask City Council for approval to finish them. He explained the Ordinance now required that the Committee receive approval from Council before proceeding with a study. However, because of the length of time that had occurred since the Ordinance Amendment was passed, the Committee should decide if it was better to continue with these two studies through the process.

Dr. Stamps suggested the Committee could advise City Council that the two studies began before the Ordinance Amendment was passed, and point out that since the new system was in place, ask whether Council wanted the Committee to continue with the studies.

Ms. Schodowski agreed the Committee should ask if they had Council's approval to complete the studies.

Mr. Dziurman suggested it might be better to take the Frank Farm and Stiles School reports to Council first. The Committee might then have an opportunity to talk about the new system. He noted that the National Twist Drill property was an important piece of the history of the Community, but a proposed designation could be quite controversial. He suggested a meeting be scheduled with the City's Planning Commission or perhaps a meeting with both the Planning Commission and City Council or selected representatives from each to gain their input regarding the site.

The Members asked why both Boards. Mr. Dziurman stated the Planning Commission and the City Council would have the most input regarding the site.

Dr. Stamps suggested that the Committee move forward on two fronts. Go to City Council and discuss the fact that the studies began prior to the Ordinance Amendment to be sure Council wanted the Committee to complete the reports. The Committee would also like to meet with the Planning Commission to discuss the National Twist Drill property.

Mr. Dziurman pointed out that the studies did begin prior to the adoption of the Ordinance Amendment, which meant the Committee could proceed under the prior Ordinance process.

Mr. Delacourt agreed the Committee did not need to bring the studies before Council, but it would give the Committee an idea of whether Council wanted them to proceed with the studies.

Mr. Dziurman commented there was interest in the Community about the history of the National Twist Drill property. He stated that Rod Wilson from the Rochester-Avon Historical Society told him that his father or father-in-law had worked there. He felt there was interest in the Community in seeing the property preserved, particularly the office building in the front. He felt it could be adaptively reused as a movie studio.

Mr. Delacourt understood from the joint meeting between City Council, the Historic Districts Commission and the Study Committee, that Council preferred that the Committee work with the property owners to find a common ground.

Chairperson Thompson clarified that the Committee did not think they needed to request Council's permission to continue with these two studies. Dr. Stamps suggested that Council be advised about the studies in an effort to keep them apprised about what the Committee was doing. He suggested the Committee could ask those in the Community who were interested in the preservation of the property to attend the Council meeting. Mr. Dziurman pointed out that Council would not be deciding on a designation, but rather providing their feedback on whether the studies should continue. Any decision about the Twist Drill property would be huge.

Mr. Delacourt reminded the Committee that any meeting with representatives of the City's Boards and Commissions would have to be properly posted per the Open Meetings Act. The affected property owners should also be notified a meeting is taking place.

The Committee agreed they should meet first with the Planning Commission and discuss the proposed sites with them. Mr. Dziurman stated it would be an exploratory meeting discussing the process and potential adaptive reuse of the Twist Drill property, and an opportunity to receive the Planning Commission's feedback.

The Committee discussed the current ownership of the Twist Drill property, and whether a slide show presentation could be prepared for a joint meeting with the Planning Commission. Mr. Delacourt reminded the Committee that Mr. Rein Mozer had previously written a letter to then Councilwoman Linda Raschke asking to be removed from the City's Potential List.

The Committee asked if the property owners had a proposed plan for the site. Mr. Delacourt stated he had received inquiries about the property, most with an intent to demolish the existing structures and build something new on the site.

Mr. Dziurman commented that designation would probably not stop that type of development, if the front corner office building were kept intact.

The Committee discussed the current zoning of the property and the potential zoning and uses. It was noted that not much was being developed in the current economy. Mr. Delacourt stated that the City's Master Plan did not promote more retail at that corner, but rather Business/Flexible uses.

The Committee referred to the Stiles School property and noted it was not just the corner or just the 1929 portion of the building that was being recommended for designation.

Mr. Dziurman noted that State Law had been changed. At one time, it was the structure and one hundred (100') feet around the structure that was designated. Now, under the current State Law, the entire parcel is designated. Mr. Delacourt pointed out that an agreement had been reached with the Rochester College to reduce the designated portion of the College's property to a few acres that included the farm buildings.

Mr. Hannick discussed the development of large-scale malls along I-75 over the years, noting developers selected properties that followed the freeways and major roads as well as the growth of residential development in communities such as Birmingham, Bloomfield and Troy. He noted the growth along Rochester Road moving north, and commented that the owners of the Twist Drill property may want to sell or may not have the funds to rehabilitate the site. He pointed out that designation could become a hindrance to an equitable sale.

Ms. Schodowski stated that would depend on what a potential purchaser wanted to do with the property. Mr. Dziurman pointed out the extensive renovation and development going on in Downtown Detroit, most of which could not be done without the historical designation and related tax incentives.

Mr. Delacourt noted that a historical designation could be used as a vehicle to allow for increased density of a project. The Committee then discussed the proposed project north of Bordine's, which had received some incentives from the City through the use of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Agreement and which included the renovation and reuse of the historic home located on the property.

Chairperson Thompson suggested that a meeting with the Planning Commission be requested. Dr. Stamps suggested that members of City Council could be invited to attend as well. Mr. Delacourt noted that Mr. Hooper was the Council representative on the Planning Commission.

Mr. Delacourt asked if the Committee wanted to just discuss the National Twist Drill site with the Planning Commission, or whether this was an opportunity to discuss several of the properties on the potential list and their possible development.



Mr. Dziurman stated it would be helpful to discuss several which could provide a more neutral discussion. The Committee suggested that economic development might be another avenue to discuss.

The Committee suggested that the discussion with the Planning Commission be under the general terms of future development of the northeast corner of the City, which would include Tienken Road and the Twist Drill site. Mr. Delacourt asked if economic development fell within the purview of the Committee's charge under Ordinance. The question was asked if whether the Study Committee could discuss what could happen to a site if it were designated, or whether that was more of a matter for the Historic Districts Commission to consider.

Mr. Dziurman stated that as the Community continued to grow, there was less and less property available for development, and much of what was available were the historical properties. One such property is the National Twist Drill site. He suggested the Committee could discuss all the properties with the Planning Commission.

Mr. Delacourt stated that if the discussion with the Planning Commission was germane to one particular property in the City, the property owner should be notified about the meeting.

The Committee suggested the discussion center around the pro's and con's of the properties. A discussion of how many properties were available for development ensued, and whether the discussion would center around potential commercial development or include potential residential development as well. It was suggested a map depicting the potential properties would be helpful for the meeting. The larger acreage properties such as 2040 S. Livernois; 920 South Boulevard; National Twist Drill; Juengels Orchard and the Stiles School property could all be included in the discussion.

Mr. Delacourt suggested the meeting could also include some discussion about the differences between the Study Committee and the Historic Districts Commission.

**This matter was Discussed**

**7B. 2007-0313 2040 S. Livernois  
- Review Preliminary Report**

Mr. Delacourt stated this was another property that could be discussed at a meeting with the Planning Commission.

Mr. Dziurman noted the property was currently listed for sale. He guessed the property owner would prefer to sell the property for a commercial use, and inquired about the size of the property.

Mr. Delacourt noted that the property and the adjacent parcel on the corner could be assembled for one development.

Chairperson Thompson stated that feedback from the Planning Commission on the parcel would be helpful. Mr. Dziurman agreed, noting that the pro's and con's of designation could also be discussed. He noted it was not part of the Study Committee's charge, but was a realistic part of their study.

Chairperson Thompson pointed out that the Planning Commission might have different ideas regarding the development of this property, which would assist the Committee with their recommendation to City Council.

Dr. Stamps stated that Council had suggested the Committee include adaptive re-use recommendations in their report. Mr. Delacourt noted that Council had also suggested the Committee meet with the property owners.

Mr. Delacourt stated he would find out if a meeting could be scheduled for the June or July Planning Commission meeting.

**This matter was Discussed**

7C. 2007-0392

**1207 N. Livernois**

**- Discussion regarding delisting or leaving designation**

Chairperson Thompson stated this designated property had been studied with a view toward delisting the resource. He noted the State Historic Preservation Review Board did not agree with the Committee's recommendation to delist, despite the external changes that had been made over the years.

The Committee discussed whether the integrity of the house remained based on the external changes that had occurred; the fact the house had been moved from Troy, and the fact the home was indicated to be the first frame house in Oakland County.

Mr. Dziurman questioned whether being the first frame house was significant enough to retain the designation. Chairperson Thompson stated that it was the first frame house and had been moved within Oakland County. He noted that State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) did not think so, but the Review Board did.

Mr. Delacourt asked if the Committee wanted to move forward with the delisting or shelve the report. It was the consensus of the Committee to shelve the report and the property would retain its local designation.

**This matter was Discussed**

## **8. DISCUSSION**

**8A. 2009-0197 Discussion regarding Meeting Start Time**

Chairperson Thompson stated that City Council had changed the start time of their meetings from 7:30 PM to 7:00 PM. He asked if any of the Study Committee members wanted to change their meeting date or time, or if continuing to meet at 5:30 PM on the second Thursday worked for all the Members.

Mr. Delacourt stated the Historic Districts Commission would also be asked to discuss their meeting start time, and asked if the Study Committee would have enough time to conduct their meetings should the Commission decide to start their meetings at 7:00 PM.

Chairperson Thompson stated he thought there had only been one time when the Study Committee meeting ran past 7:00 PM.

Mr. Delacourt pointed out that if the Commission moved their meetings to 7:00 PM, the Study Committee would have to wrap up their meetings by 6:45 PM.

The Committee agreed they would continue to meet at 5:30 PM on the second Thursday of each month.

**This matter was Discussed**

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairperson Thompson called for any other business. No other business was presented. He noted the next regular meeting was scheduled for June 11, 2009.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, Chairperson Thompson adjourned the meeting at 6:40 PM.

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Jason Thompson, Chairperson  
City of Rochester Hills  
Historic Districts Study Committee

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Judy A. Bialk, Recording Secretary

{ Approved as \_\_\_\_\_ at the \_\_\_\_\_, 2009 Regular Meeting of the Historic Districts Study Committee }

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