



Rochester Hills

Minutes

Historic Districts Commission

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Chairperson Brian R. Dunphy, Vice Chairperson Jason Thompson
Members: Steven Branstner, Dr. Jay Eastman, Nicole Franey, Micheal Kilpatrick,
Dr. Richard Stamps, Nicholas Winters, Murray Woolf

Thursday, March 10, 2011

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Dunphy called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium.

ROLL CALL

Present 6 - Richard Stamps, Brian Dunphy, Jason Thompson, Steven Branstner, Dr. Jay Eastman and Nicholas Winters

Absent 3 - Micheal Kilpatrick, Nicole Franey and Murray Woolf

Also Present: Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting
Sandi DiSipio, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2011-0118 December 9, 2010 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Eastman, seconded by Thompson, that this matter be Approved as Presented. The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye 6 - Stamps, Dunphy, Thompson, Branstner, Eastman and Winters

Absent 3 - Kilpatrick, Franey and Woolf

COMMUNICATIONS

No announcements or communications were brought forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the audience came forward with any comments on non-agenda items.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2011-0119 2011 Earl Borden Award - Selection of Recipient(s)

Chairperson Dunphy indicated there is a memo included in the packet summarizing last month's discussion and subsequent five nominations for this year's award. Chairperson Dunphy called for additional discussion and/or nominations and commented it seems five nominations is a bit much for a single year. He suggested trying to whittle the list down, and is open to suggestions and comments from the other Commission members.

Mr. Thompson commented and was supported by Mr. Branstner, to remove the Road Commission for Oakland County (Tienken Road bridge) from 2011 Borden Award nominations.

Mr. Branstner commented and was supported by Dr. Stamps, to remove the Rochester Avon Historical Society (the Rochester Elevator) from the 2011 Borden Award nominations.

Ms. Melinda Hill, 1481 Mill Race, Rochester Hills, MI came forward and commented she is not opposed to the recommendation of the Brocks for the award, but stated the project has not been completed and asked if the Commission would care to hold off for a year.

MOTION by Stamps, supported by Branstner, **Moved**, that the 2011 Earl Borden Award recipients are the Nathaniel Brock Family for the construction of the barn on their property, John Dziurman for preservation leadership, and the Oakland County Planning & Economic Development Department for preservation leadership for their efforts towards the Stoney Creek and Winkler Mill Pond Historic Districts Advisory Report.

Ayes: All Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED.

Discussion then turned to the logistics of the presentation. Chairperson Dunphy asked for volunteers who would be willing to take on the responsibility of arranging this ceremony. Once we lock in on a date (usually mid-May for historic preservation week), Chairperson Dunphy indicated he would make the request of Council that it be presented at a Council meeting. Last year, this request was turned down. We need to coordinate invitations to the recipients and the ordering of the plaques. Mr. Thompson offered his assistance. Ms. Franey also helped with last year's presentation and Chairperson Dunphy will ask for her assistance this year. Ms. Kidorf reported that per the National Trust for Historic Preservation - preservation week is now preservation month - all during May. We need to have a back-up plan in case Council declines the presentation at one of their meetings. Last year the presentation was held at the Museum - and if it becomes necessary this year, Mr. McKay could be asked if he could accommodate the presentation again. Dr. Stamps feels a City Council meeting should be the first option. If, however, they decline, it was suggested possibly having the presentation at Mr. Brock's barn.

NEW BUSINESS

2011-0054 Request for Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness - Yates Cider Mill

Residing Project - City File #HDC 98-002

Chairperson Dunphy indicated the request is for approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the Yates Cider Mill. The applicant is not present for discussion of the project. As he had questions of the applicant, Mr. Thompson feels it would be more appropriate to postpone action on this item until the next meeting so the applicant can be present to answer these questions rather than take action tonight. Ms. Kidorf reminded the Commission of the 60-day requirement for making a decision. The application was received on February 25, 2011 and the next meeting is April 14, 2011 - so that would be within the 60 day timeframe. If the applicant does not appear at the April 14th meeting, the HDC should deny the application and allow the applicant to reapply later. Chairperson Dunphy indicated as long as we have the 60-day window, action should be postponed until the next meeting.

Ms. Melinda Hill, address previously given, came forward and commented it is appropriate to have the applicant present to have discussion. She stated the applicant would have the tax credits available to complete the appropriate work. She doesn't know how many other structures are being rehabilitated with a synthetic material - but it's almost a rebuilding process that happens versus a "wood for wood" replacement. She almost feels like we're replicating the building to some extent. Is this really retaining our true historic resources? She also asked if the applicant has had someone inspect the building, as she wants to know the extent of deterioration of the existing wood.

A motion was made by Stamps, seconded by Eastman, that this matter be Postponed until the April 14, 2011 meeting. The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye 6 - Stamps, Dunphy, Thompson, Branstner, Eastman and Winters

Absent 3 - Kilpatrick, Franey and Woolf

2011-0117

1081 W. Auburn Road - Discussion - Proposed Alternative Use

Chairperson Dunphy explained the next item is discussion of a proposed alternative use for 1081 W. Auburn Rd. Mr. Bob Bruhn came forward, introduced himself and stated he is interested in the historic Albert Terry house located at 1081 W. Auburn Road. Before Mr. Delacourt left the City's employ, he indicated that because this is an historical home, it was appropriate to approach the HDC as a first step to see how the Commission might feel about the proposed use of the property changing from totally residential to something more commercial, e.g., a tea house and garden. Mr. Bruhn acknowledged he has read the minutes relative to when this property was previously discussed by other Commissions for a proposed office use. That proposal would have removed a lot of the existing trees that were planted in the 1920's. Mr. Bruhn explained his plan would not remove trees. He displayed and explained photographs of the interior and exterior of the house through a power point presentation. Mr. Bruhn explained the layout of the house and basically took the Commissioners on a tour of the house through the photos. He pointed out structural damage to the home and indicated it is in serious danger of being lost. Water from the gutter drains against the outside wall. This has been happening

for so long there is moss growing on the wall and there is severe damage to the inside of the house. He explained deficiencies with the heating system and the stealth of copper piping. Mr. Bruhn indicated the house goes up for auction the end of this month. He would like to purchase the home if the Commission seems to be favorable to a tea garden use. Mr. Bruhn realizes that one issue would be parking because the original land was divided in a strange way. Parking is proposed along the western edge of the property line. The existing surface is asphalt, but Mr. Bruhn would like to install a surface that would drain, e.g. stone. He then explained he doesn't want to start out as being totally commercial. He would start out with the tea garden mainly during the summer months - May through October. He would also like to have the freedom to do special events, e.g., string quartet concerts or settings for wedding photos. Mr. Bruhn indicated he'd like to speak with the Baptist Church (adjacent property owner) about the possibility for carriage rides on occasion or during the weekend. He indicated he would not change anything inside the house except to remodel the kitchen so tea, sandwiches or scones could be served. He would not remove any of the trees that were planted by the previous home owners, as they are unique species. Mr. Bruhn asked for feedback and questions from the Commission.

Chairperson Dunphy clarified that adaptive reuse of historic properties is one thing the Commission supports and encourages. There have been positive examples of projects that have been done in the City, and in many cases, represent residential properties that were converted to commercial or office use. In general, this is the approach the Commission would take to this proposal. The purview for the HDC is the exterior of the building and the property. Whatever is done to the interior of the structure is up to the owner/developer. Chairperson Dunphy asked if any changes to the exterior of the structure are planned.

Mr. Bruhn responded he is not planning on doing anything to the exterior of the building other than necessary repair.

Dr. Stamps indicated the Commission only has approval on the exterior of the house, but commented Mr. Bruhn has demonstrated sensitivity to the interior features of the house. Dr. Stamps is pleased to hear that Mr. Bruhn wants to take of it. If the house is empty, it will continue to deteriorate. Dr. Stamps leans favorably toward adaptive re-uses, and asked if there be tea service inside the house as well as outdoors.

Mr. Bruhn explained the house will be used as a residence for his family and tea service would be done in the kitchen. People could wait in the entry room where tea and small gifts would be offered for purchase. Mr. Bruhn would like to make the sitting room into a period sitting room. Tables would be set up to offer tea in an intimate setting. Mr. Bruhn wants the public to come in and appreciate the home. He asked if the Commission looks at parking.

Chairperson Dunphy indicated the Board would review the parking. He advised the applicant that he will have other issues with other Commissions in order to make this proposal work, i.e., the Planning Commission, ZBA and/or City Council. Previously, a different applicant proposed a rezoning of this property to

office use. The Planning Commission minutes of that meeting reflect the neighbor's concerns with that proposed use.

Mr. Thompson hopes Mr. Bruhn is able to purchase the property and that the auctioneers know it is historically designated. He asked if anyone has examined the structural integrity of the house. Mr. Bruhn indicated an inspection has not yet occurred. Mr. Thompson stated he is concerned that the current owners are not maintaining the house and it's in danger of starting to collapse - then we are moving toward demolition by neglect. This is something the Commission needs to keep an eye on.

Ms. Melinda Hill, address previously given, came forward and commented the applicant has a nice vision for this house, but is disheartened to hear about the interior conditions. She asked if there was any consideration of just purchasing the house as personal property and conducting the proposed use on a smaller scale to start with. The best approach would be to look at a conditional rezoning versus an actual rezone. Ms. Hill feels the biggest problem will be the parking and how it will impact the neighbors. Previous minutes reflect that the neighbors did not want to have a commercial entity within a residential area.

The Commission wished Mr. Bruhn the best and hopes he is successful.

This item was discussed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

As Mr. Delacourt has left the City, it is suggested that a formal letter of appreciation be written to Derek to thank him for his many years of work for the HDC as well as the HDSC. The letter could be signed by both Boards. Messrs. Dunphy and Thompson will draft the letter.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The Chair reminded the Commissioners the next Regular Meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2011.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before the Commission, and upon Motion by Stamps, the Chair adjourned the Regular Meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Brian Dunphy, Chairperson
Historic Districts Commission
City of Rochester Hills

Sandi DiSipio, Recording Secretary

