



Rochester Hills

Minutes - Draft

Planning Commission

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Chairperson Deborah Brnabic, Vice Chairperson Greg Hooper
Members: Susan Bowyer, Gerard Dettloff, John Gaber, Marvie Neubauer,
Nicholas O. Kaltsounis, David A. Reece, and Ben Weaver

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Deborah Brnabic welcomed everyone and called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She outlined the procedure for the virtual meeting, stating that "In compliance with the Open Meetings Act, as amended, the Planning Commission will continue to move forward and carry out our Planning and Development meeting agendas using Zoom video conferencing to limit the potential exposure to the Covid-19 virus. Any member of the public who would like to speak on a particular agenda item or during Public Comment, which is for non-agenda commentary, will be recognized by calling into the Zoom meeting and using the I.D. number. Once you are on the call, press 9 to speak on the phone or raise your hand in the Zoom application. All comments and questions will be audio only and limited to three minutes per person. All questions will be answered together after every person has had the opportunity to speak on the same agenda item. Each member of the public that wishes to speak will be asked to state and spell their name and give their address for the record. Members of the public may also comment on an item by sending an email to Planning@rochesterhills.org prior to discussion on the agenda item."

ROLL CALL

Present 9 - Deborah Brnabic, Gerard Dettloff, John Gaber, Greg Hooper, Nicholas Kaltsounis, David Reece, Susan M. Bowyer, Ben Weaver and Marvie Neubauer

Quorum present.

Also present: Mayor Bryan K. Barnett
Sara Roediger, Director of Planning and Economic Dev.
Maureen Gentry, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2021-0086](#) February 16, 2021 Regular Meeting

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

Aye 9 - Brnabic, Dettloff, Gaber, Hooper, Kaltsounis, Reece, Bowyer, Weaver and Neubauer

COMMUNICATIONS

A) *Planning & Zoning News dated February to April, 2021*

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Brnabic opened Public Comment at 7:03 p.m. Seeing no one wishing to speak online or in the Auditorium and no communications received, she closed Public Comment.

PRESENTATION

[2021-0088](#) Proclamation for Arlene Rampson

Mayor Bryan Barnett was in attendance to present a proclamation to Ms. Arlene Rampson, the first woman named to the Planning Commission in Avon Township.

Mayor Barnett thanked the Commission for giving him a couple of minutes to introduce them to someone he claimed was pretty exceptional. He welcomed Ms. Rampson to the meeting. He noted that he had been introduced to Ms. Rampson via her daughter, Wendy, who shared some interesting stories. He knew that some of the Commissioners had been in the community longer than he had who might have known of Ms. Rampson's roots and impacts. He had not known about her until he started reading a little more about the role she played in the formative days of the community. As the Administration worked hard during the month of March to celebrate many of the strong and formidable women who had led the community and created the place that everyone loved, they did not get too far down the list before recognizing the achievements of Ms. Rampson and the leadership she had provided throughout the years.

Mayor Barnett read, "Arlene Bell Rampson was born in Pennsylvania in 1933 and moved to the City of Detroit in the early 1940's. She moved out to Avon Township in 1959, and had lived in Streamwood since the early 1990's. In 1970, she was appointed to the Planning Commission by Harold Pepper, the Supervisor of Avon Township. She recalled that one

of the members of the Planning Commission walked into Mr. Pepper's office and said that if he was going to appoint Ms. Rampson to the vacancy, he was leaving. Mr. Pepper pushed the papers away and said, "We will see you later." Ms. Rampson was the first woman to serve on the Avon Township Planning Commission. She ran for City Council a couple of times, and won one time, but the Township's bid to become a City failed, and she was not appointed. She was again appointed to the Avon Township Planning Commission in 1981, reappointed by Earl Borden in 1984 and in 1985, and appointed by Billy Ireland in 1987. She served until 1990 as the first woman on the Planning Commission both in Avon Township and Rochester Hills."

To recognize her leadership, Mayor Barnett presented Ms. Rampson with a proclamation, noting that it would be sent to her afterwards. He read:

Whereas, *Arlene and Richard Rampson moved to Avon Township in 1959, where they raised their family and became increasingly involved in their community; and*

Whereas, *appointed by Township Supervisor Harold Pepper in November 1970, Arlene was the first woman to serve on the Avon Township Planning Commission, where she continued to serve through June 1981; and*

Whereas, *meanwhile, Arlene enrolled in Oakland University's legal assistant program, earned her diploma in 1980 and worked as a paralegal. She continued her studies and received a B.A. in Political Science in 1984; and*

Whereas, *in 1984 Township Supervisor Earl Borden appointed Arlene to the Planning Commission, which then became the Rochester Hills Planning Commission when the City of Rochester Hills was established on November 20, 1984; and*

Whereas, *Arlene was reappointed to the Planning Commission by Mayor Earl Borden in 1985, reappointed again by Mayor Billie Ireland in 1987 and served on the Planning Commission through March 31, 1990; and*

Whereas, *Arlene also served on the Rochester Hills Zoning Board of Appeals (Chair), Rochester Hills Recreation Committee, Avon Township Senior Citizen Housing Committee, Avon Township Bike Path Advisory Committee, Avon-Rochester Consolidation Committee and the Avon*

Township Second Charter Commission (Secretary); and

Whereas, Arlene stands out as a pioneer for women in local government who dedicated herself to two decades of civic service, lending her talents and perspective to several committees and boards, most notably the Planning Commission.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that I, Bryan K. Barnett, Mayor of Rochester Hills, hereby recognize and thank Arlene Bell Rampson for her valuable input on the Planning Commission and her commitment to the betterment of Avon Township and the City of Rochester Hills.

Mayor Barnett congratulated Ms. Rampson and thanked her for her many years of service. He asked if Ms. Rampson wished to make some comments.

Ms. Rampson thanked Mayor Barnett for his kind words. She said that it had been an experience for all the years she served on the various committees, and it made her very happy to serve in those positions.

Mayor Barnett said that he saw an article from Oakland University in which Ms. Rampson had appeared. It was titled "Thanks to Working Women, Thousands of Men Have Learned How to Vacuum." It talked about Ms. Rampson's entry into the political realm and the impact she had in the community. He hoped that Ms. Rampson would find it inspiring that as she fought her way to be the first woman on the Planning Commission, the City was now chaired by a woman, and had been for many years. He thanked Chairperson Brnabic and Ms. Rampson.

Chairperson Brnabic thanked the Mayor. She said that it was nice to meet Ms. Rampson and hear about her history and contributions to Avon Township and Rochester Hills. She thanked Ms. Rampson for her service to the community, and said that it was very nice to hear how involved she was.

Mr. Reece thanked Ms. Rampson, and Mr. Kaltsounis thanked her for being one of the people who laid the groundwork for what the Commission was doing today. Mr. Hooper thanked Ms. Rampson for her service, and Dr. Bowyer thanked her for breaking the glass ceiling for women on the Planning Commission.

Mayor Barnett offered congratulations and thanks to member Dave Reece, as it was last meeting. Mayor Barnett thanked him for his 16

years of service. He stated that Mr. Reece had provided tremendous guidance with his professionalism, and the perspective he brought as an Architect had been incredibly valuable to the community and to his friends and colleagues on the Commission. He hoped that Mr. Reece could feel a sense of pride driving through the City, recognizing the impact he had and the positive role he played. He thanked Mr. Reece and wished him much success in his next chapter, and he stressed that he was very appreciated.

Mr. Reece thanked Mayor Barnett, stating that it had been a privilege and honor. He had not realized that it had been 16 years. He grew up in the City of Detroit, but he indicated that Rochester Hills was his home and where he raised his family. He met a lot of great people while serving the City. He thanked the Mayor for his faith and leadership and for appointing him to the Commission for all the years he had.

Mr. Hooper agreed that Mr. Reece would be missed. He noted that Mr. Reece had been on the Commission when Paul Cornelliussen was the Architect, and he had recommended Mr. Reece. Mayor Barnett thanked everyone for their leadership and dedication to the City.

NEW BUSINESS

[2021-0089](#) Request for Acceptance of the Preliminary Study Report for 1021 Harding Ave.

Ms. Roediger advised that the property located at 1021 Harding Ave. was historic, and that the home, unfortunately, experienced a devastating fire about four years ago. The property owner had made attempts to try to maintain it and keep it from falling into further disrepair. Due to some unfortunate circumstances, the owner did not have the wherewithal to bring the home up to code and make it livable. She did not believe that there was electricity or water to the house. The owner went before City Council in December 2020 and asked for the property to be delisted because of the extensive amount of damage, and the fact that it was not financially feasible. Without the home, there would not be much, if any, historic value to the property. City Council authorized the Historic Districts Study Committee (HDSC) to proceed with a Preliminary Study to evaluate a potential delisting of the property. The Preliminary Report went to the HDSC in February, and as part of the delisting process, it had to go through the State Historic Preservation Office for comment and to the Planning Commission to evaluate whether the delisting would have any impact to the Master Plan and future use of the property. She noted

that the HDSC would hold a Public Hearing at a special meeting on April 22. After that, the HDSC would make a formal recommendation to City Council. It was Council's purview to decide whether or not to amend the district and remove the property from the Historic Districts Ordinance. The Planning Commission was being asked to consider the impact of the delisting from the Master Plan perspective. She had not seen a similar request since she had been with the City, but she knew that some of the Commissioners had. She felt that it was a fairly straight-forward recommendation, and she said that she would be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Hooper noted that he had been on the Planning Commission for quite a while and had seen a few similar requests. He had also reviewed them while on City Council. He said that Ms. Roediger was very accurate that the Planning Commission's determination was strictly limited to adherence to the Master Land Use Plan and whether it was listed or delisted, he felt that it would have no effect on that. He would not want to get into the politics behind it, and he related that he had known the property owner for a long time. He moved the following:

MOTION by Hooper, seconded by Kaltsounis, the Rochester Hills Planning Commission has reviewed the Historic Districts Study Committee Report regarding the delisting of the Designated Historic District located at 1021 Harding Ave., and has determined that the delisting **will not** have any impact on the property with respect to the City's Master Land Use Plan or any other development related issues and encourages the HDSC to move forward with the Report.

Mr. Gaber said that he was not aware of any impact the delisting would have relative to the Master Plan, land use planning or development of the property. He noted that there was no indication from staff that it would have any impact, and he asked Ms. Roediger her opinion.

Ms. Roediger said that whether or not the property was considered historic did not change its zoning. It would just change the review process associated with the type of structure that could be built. It would not affect the density or the underlying zoning. The underlying zoning allowed for residential uses, and the Master Plan called for residential uses. Whether or not it had to go through an historic review really just involved the aesthetics. Mr. Gaber also remembered reviewing the delisting request for 1585 Rochester Rd., which was similar. The property had been severely damaged, and he could understand where the applicants were coming from.

A motion was made by Hooper, seconded by Kaltsounis, that this matter be Accepted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 9 - Brnabic, Dettloff, Gaber, Hooper, Kaltsounis, Reece, Bowyer, Weaver and Neubauer

Chairperson Brnabic stated for the record that the motion had passed unanimously.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2021-0087

Request for recommendation of a Planning Commission representative to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a one-year term to expire March 31, 2022.

Ms. Roediger explained that it was that time again where they had to make sure that there was appropriate representation from the Planning Commission. She pointed out the motion for consideration and asked if anyone wished to volunteer or nominate someone.

Mr. Kaltsounis asked Chairperson Brnabic, who had been serving as the PC representative to the ZBA since 2005, if she would like to continue, and she accepted. Hearing no other nominations, he moved the following:

MOTION by Kaltsounis, seconded by Hooper, the Rochester Hills Planning Commission hereby recommends to City Council that Deborah Brnabic shall serve as its representative on the Zoning Board of Appeals for a one-year term to expire March 31, 2022.

A motion was made by Kaltsounis, seconded by Hooper, that this matter be Recommended for Approval to the City Council Regular Meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 9 - Brnabic, Dettloff, Gaber, Hooper, Kaltsounis, Reece, Bowyer, Weaver and Neubauer

Chairperson Brnabic stated for the record that the motion had passed unanimously, and she thanked everyone.

Chairperson Brnabic expressed that she was sorry to see that Mr. Reece would be leaving the Planning Commission. She said that she would truly miss his architectural knowledge and advice. She also truly respected his ability to present a well-balanced review, which equally represented development and the residents of Rochester Hills. She stated that it had been a pleasure working with him for so many years, and

that he would definitely be missed. She wished him the best.

Mr. Reece thanked Chairperson Brnabic. He indicated that it had been a great run. He recalled some of the people who had served that they lost and miss, and Bill Boswell came immediately to mind. He remembered how much of a mentor Mr. Boswell had been to him when he first came on the Commission. He had been a calming influence for him and for a lot of other people. Sitting next to Mr. Schroeder for all those years gave him a unique perspective on a lot of things. He had formed some great friendships with people over the years, and he had served a long time with Mr. Dettloff, Mr. Schroeder and Mr. Kaltsounis. He had watched Ms. Roediger come up through the ranks and take over some big shoes, and she had done more than an admirable job filling that role. He felt that the Commissioners were all in great hands, and he wished them all the best of luck. He thanked them for giving him the opportunity to serve the City.

Mr. Dettloff thanked Mr. Reece. He asked him if there had been one particular project, out of all those years, that stood out. Mr. Reece asked if he meant in a good or a bad way, and Mr. Dettloff asked for one of each. Mr. Reece said that they had seen some great projects. There were some challenges with the residents who surrounded some of those projects who felt that they owned the land people wanted to develop. He commented that Mr. Hooper was good at setting the record straight and offering the residents a quick solution where they could buy the property and make it their own personal playground. He did not think that there was one particular project, but there were a lot of great ones the Commissioners had worked on together. They did it as a team, with great leadership from Chairperson Brnabic and Mr. Boswell. Personally, he had designed and built St. Mary of the Hills many years ago. He remembered coming to the Planning Commission representing the church, but he would not give his opinion of the Commission at that time. Shortly thereafter, he sensed that the Commission had become more user-friendly. They were not pro or anti-developer; they were balanced and fair in a lot of respects. That was what he enjoyed the most about the Commission - people were allowed to speak their mind if it was a legitimate argument or concern, and they were heard, which was what democracy was about. He thought that it might be time for some new, fresh thinking. He would be retiring in a couple of years and moving up north. He said that he would miss everyone. He had not gotten the chance to know Dr. Bowyer well, and had never had a face to face with Ms. Neubauer, but everyone had been great friends.

Dr. Bowyer said that they appreciated that. She said that Mr. Reece had

done a great job, and what the Commission had done over the last few years she had been a member made her appreciate their efforts as a team, and he was a key member on that team. She congratulated him.

Mr. Gaber remarked that Mr. Reece's would be big shoes to fill. He knew that it would be very difficult to find someone with his expertise and disposition and his way of presenting arguments. Mr. Reece was very fair-minded. They would try to replace him, but it would be difficult. Mr. Gaber said that he had appreciated the opportunity to serve with Mr. Reece. They had not always agreed, but he appreciated the arguments and positions and the way Mr. Reece expressed himself. He was a great credit to the City, and the Commissioners were very grateful.

Mr. Hooper echoed the comments. He recalled that whenever there had been an issue that had been architecturally-related, he always deferred to Mr. Reece. Mr. Hooper would always say that he was not the Architect, so he was not always sure what the right thing to do was. He agreed that having Mr. Reece's expertise was invaluable.

Mr. Kaltsounis said that even though he had not always agreed with Mr. Reece's architectural ideas, he offered that he could use him as a reference. He wished him good luck in the future. Ms. Roediger thanked Mr. Reece for his kind words. She agreed that it would be challenging to find a good Architect to serve on the Commission, so if anyone knew of any who lived in Rochester Hills, she asked them to let her know.

Chairperson Brnabic agreed with all the comments, and she reiterated that Mr. Reece would definitely be missed. She noted that there had been a certificate of appreciation prepared. When they met in person in April, everyone could sign it, and it would be mailed to Mr. Reece. She commented that it did not mean that he could not visit once in a while.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Chairperson Brnabic reminded the Commissioners that the next Regular Meeting was scheduled for April 20, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before the Planning Commission and upon motion by Mr. Kaltsounis, seconded by Mr. Reece, Chairperson Brnabic adjourned the Regular Meeting at 7:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

All Ayes

Deborah Brnabic, Chairperson
Rochester Hills Planning Commission

Nicholas O. Kaltsounis, Secretary