



# 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, July 16, 2009

5:30 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

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**MINUTES** of a **ROCHESTER HILLS RESCHEDULED 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 5:41 PM.

### 2. ROLL CALL

**Present** 4 - Richard Stamps, John Dziurman, Jason Thompson and James Hannick

**Absent** 3 - LaVere Webster, Peggy Schodowski and Murray Woolf

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

### 3. DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

### 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

#### 4A. 2009-0224 May 14, 2009 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Thompson asked for any comments or corrections regarding the May 14, 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 Hannick, that the Minutes be Approved as Presented. The motion CARRIED by the following vote:**

**Aye** 4 - Stamps, Dziurman, Thompson and Hannick

**Absent** 3 - Webster, Schodowski and Woolf

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the May 14, 2009 Regular Historic Districts Study Committee Meeting be approved as presented.

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**4B. 2009-0259 June 11, 2009 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Chairperson Thompson asked for any comments or corrections regarding the June 11, 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 Hannick, that the Minutes be Approved as Presented. The motion CARRIED by the following vote:**

**Aye** 4 - Stamps, Dziurman, Thompson and Hannick

**Absent** 3 - Webster, Schodowski and Woolf

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the June 11, 2009 Regular Historic Districts Study Committee Meeting be approved as presented.

**5. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

Chairperson Thompson asked if there were any announcements or communications. No announcements or communications were provided.

**6. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Non-Agenda Items)**

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

**7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS****7A. 2009-0226 Follow-up regarding City Council Meeting**  
- June 1, 2009 Regular City Council Meeting

Dr. Stamps stated he had a discussion with Lynn Evans of the Fort Mackinaw State Park about the importance of selecting a time period to focus on for historic properties as he had noticed that Fort Mackinaw was currently emphasizing the French period. The Committee could apply that same thought process by looking at the whole history of the Stiles School structure and defining the boundary, noting the request that went before City Council was to approve designation of a larger area including all additions to the structure. He suggested perhaps the Committee could go back to City Council and propose that just the 1920s building (the brick portion) be designated. He thought that both City Council and the Steiner School might support that, although he was not sure if that would set a precedent.

Mr. Dziurman was not sure that designating a portion of a building would meet the State Law criteria. He believed the Committee had always focused on a date as a reference point. He questioned whether such a proposed designation could be done and whether it would meet the National Register requirements. He agreed it made

sense to pick an era. If such a designation was allowed, it would be a way to designate the building and stay within the Standards.

Chairperson Thompson commented that if only the 1920s portion of the building was designated, it would prohibit anything drastic occurring on the rest of the property.

The Committee discussed whether the Ordinance required the entire parcel to be designated. Past practice has been by the parcel. The Committee discussed limiting the designation to the footprint of the structure including the land running to the intersection of South Boulevard and Livernois, and whether the boiler room addition would be included. It was suggested that the existing structures be checked against the era selected as the focus of the proposed designation.

The Committee discussed the date of the additions, and whether such a narrow focus was outside the charge of the Committee.

Mr. Dziurman suggested the Committee could try to obtain a copy of the Sanborn Insurance Maps, which would tell them what structures existed when. He did not think a subscription was very expensive, and noted engineering firms used those maps all the time. The Committee requested City Staff find out if the City's Engineering Department had access to the Sanborn Maps, and requested copies of the 1929 and 1959 maps. The Committee suggested perhaps the City Preservation Consultant had access to the maps. The maps would tell the Committee when the various additions were added.

The Committee discussed the fact that City Council had postponed this matter pending receipt of further information from the Committee. They discussed the fact it did not appear City Council was willing to designate any property without the property owner's consent.

The Committee discussed the Frank Farm proposed designation, noting the property owner wanted the designation; however, the second generation of that family did not.

#### **This matter was Discussed**

**7B. 2009-0225 Follow-up regarding Presentation to Planning Commission**  
- June 16, 2009 Regular Planning Commission Meeting

The Committee discussed the fact that the Planning Commissioners appeared to feel the same as City Council about designation without a property owner's consent, despite the fact the Planning Commission had worked on several parcels involving designated districts.

Mr. Dziurman commented that the Rochester College situation had ended well. He suggested the Committee needed to develop a long-term approach that included more marketing and an understanding of property rights.

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Mr. Hannick asked who the Committee would market to, or whether that would move outside the parameters of the Committee's charge. Mr. Thompson thought any marketing would have to be fairly broad and to the Community as a whole, and noted the Historic Districts Commission was charged with education of the Community.

The Committee noted they were attempting to respond to requests from City Council for additional information regarding both the Stiles School and the Frank Farm. The Committee discussed whether they should take the entire Potential Property List to City Council and ask them what should be studied by the Committee. Doing so might provide the Committee with a clear direction.

The Committee felt it was good they had met with the Planning Commission in an effort to be transparent, open and to find out what was important to the Planning Commission. No properties were under development pressure at this time, and no potential structures were under threat of demolition.

The reason for meeting with the Planning Commission was to develop a relationship with them, hold a discussion and establish whether the Committee and Planning Commission could help each other.

Educational outreach would also be helpful, such as what resources exist in the City and what is left. Perhaps the Rochester-Avon Historical Society could be approached to give a talk about the City's resources, or perhaps focus on a particular potential property, such as National Twist Drill.

#### **This matter was Discussed**

**7C. 2008-0663 National Twist Drill**  
- Discussion

Dr. Stamps stated that a group called the Friends of Tienken Road had held public meetings to discuss the plans for Tienken Road and all the features situated along that Road, such as the trail, schools, and the neighborhood community in general. That large coalition was creating awareness within the Community.

The Committee proposed designation of National Twist Drill because it was important, however, the owner did not want designation at this time.

Mr. Delacourt noted that the Committee was not limited to any specific time frame with this property as no Public Hearing had been held. Once the Public Hearing is held, the Ordinance set out specific time parameters that had to be met.

Mr. Dziurman stated he had spoken to a person who was knowledgeable about tax

credits and historical tax credits who used to reside in the area. He suggested the Committee develop a package that provided information about the value of those tax credits. That information could be provided to the property owner to help them understand the benefits associated with designation.

Dr. Stamps suggested perhaps the Committee could hold a public meeting with the property owners. The Committee and the preservation consultant could stage a dialog pertaining to designation; the historical value of the resources and potential properties, and the benefits associated with designation.

Mr. Delacourt stated that the current owners of the National Twist Drill property were interested in selling the property, and would not embrace designation unless a potential purchaser wanted the designation.

The Committee pointed out that several buildings located in the City of Detroit had been rehabilitated and renovated through the use of tax credits.

The Committee suggested they meet with the City's Economic Development Manager, who could provide the Committee with an overview of what he does. Perhaps the property rights issue would not be as complicated if property owners were aware of the credits available for renovation and rehabilitation of historic properties.

The Committee noted that discussion was held with the Planning Commission as it related to the advantages of Planned Unit Development projects and designated properties.

Mr. Delacourt stated that the National Twist Drill property owners were aware of the tax credits and the Planned Unit Development options. They would not pursue those options unless they had a purchaser who was interested in those options.

The Committee discussed the current zoning of the National Twist Drill property which is Industrial. The property is master planned for Flexible Business which allows mixed use development and which excludes large format retail. Flexible Business would allow office and business uses, as well as residential in some instances. The reason behind the Flexible Business zoning is that sufficient commercial retail currently exists at that intersection.

The Committee discussed the fact that in the event a project of that type was proposed, the property owner would request a rezoning or the use of a Planned Unit Development agreement. Mr. Delacourt pointed out that the current property owners would not make those requests, but would leave that decision to a potential purchaser.

The Planned Unit Development process was discussed, noting that such a

development is a negotiated development through the Planned Unit Development Agreement. Dr. Stamps noted that was the situation with Rochester College, which allowed the historic farmhouse to be saved.

The Committee agreed the City's Economic Development Manager would be invited to attend the next Study Committee meeting and provide an overview of what the City can offer potential purchasers.

Dr. Stamps stated that designation could give property owners some protection if they had a better understanding of the process, and that there are some good reasons for designation.

Chairperson Thompson summarized that City Staff would attempt to obtain Sanborn Maps and that the City's Economic Development Manager would be invited to the next Study Committee Meeting.

The Committee discussed whether the Rochester-Avon Historical Society could be approached about a program on the National Twist Drill property. Mr. Dziurman stated that Rod Wilson was the current President of the Society and he understood that a relative of Rod's had worked at the company.

Mr. Delacourt suggested the Committee could notify City Council that the National Twist Drill Preliminary Report had been prepared; however, due to the fact the current property owners are not in favor of designation, the report would be tabled until a future development is identified.

The Committee would finish the process in connection with any future development for the site. In that situation, the City would be dealing with a developer rather than a long-standing property owner. Any future developer discussing the property with the City would be advised of the potential designation during development discussions.

Mr. Dziurman pointed out that any developer looking at the site would do their "due diligence" before purchasing the property.

Dr. Stamps asked if the property would be flagged in some manner indicating that the Preliminary Report had been prepared. The Committee noted the property owner might not want potential purchasers to look at the report.

Mr. Delacourt suggested the Study Committee could advise City Council they would not make a recommendation at this time, but would come back when they could work with a potential purchaser.

The Committee suggested that any potential purchaser be advised they could meet

with the Committee and that the Committee would be happy to work with them. Tax credits information should also be provided to any potential purchaser.

Chairperson Thompson summarized that the National Twist Drill report would be tabled until the next Study Committee meeting pending the discussion with the City's Economic Development Manager.

**This matter was Discussed**

**7D. 2007-0313 2040 S. Livernois**  
- Discussion

Mr. Delacourt stated the exterior of the house had recently been repainted white. The house is currently listed for sale. He noted that the current owner and her attorney were well aware of what designation meant, and all related information had been provided to them for use as an additional sales tool. The current owner indicated she would prefer to leave the question of designation up to any future owner.

Mr. Dziurman clarified that the current zoning of the property is residential, which is correct.

The Committee discussed whether any other improvements had been made to the house. Mr. Delacourt stated he was only aware of the exterior painting.

Chairperson Thompson suggested the Committee handle this report in the same manner as the National Twist Drill report would be handled. No recommendation would be made pending the sale of the property and discussion with the new owner.

**This matter was Discussed**

**8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Committee discussed the fact that property owners had a fear of the unknown and how the Committee could deal with that question.

Mr. Delacourt stated Council had asked the Committee to work with the property owners. Chairperson Thompson stated the Committee had a very limited charge per the Ordinance, but that Council had asked for more. Mr. Delacourt stated that Council had asked the Committee to work with the owners and to come up with something the owners could agree to.

The Committee discussed the charge of the Historic Districts Commission which included an educational component. It was noted the Commission did not review a property unless it was designated.

Chairperson Thompson called for any other business. No other business was

presented. He summarized that the Committee would meet with the City's Economic Development Manager at the next meeting, and the National Twist Drill and 2040 S. Livernois Preliminary Reports would be forwarded to City Council after that meeting with no recommendation at the present time.

Chairperson Thompson stated that the next regular meeting was scheduled for Thursday, August 13, 2009 at 5:30 PM.

## 9. ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion duly made and seconded, Chairperson Thompson adjourned the meeting at 6:35 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