



City of Rochester Hills
Historic Districts Commission
2009 Annual Report

HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSIONERS

*Brian Dunphy, Chairperson; Maria-Teresa Cozzolino, Vice Chairperson
John Dziurman, Nicole Franey, Micheal Kilpatrick,
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The Historic Districts Commission (HDC) is a nine-member board of Rochester Hills residents appointed by City Council for three-year terms. Some of these volunteer Commissioners may reside in designated historic properties or districts; others have a clearly demonstrated interest in or knowledge of historic preservation. The City's Historical Preservation Ordinance requires that at least two members of the Commission be members of existing preservation societies; at least one member shall be an architect, and to the extent available, City Council shall appoint an archaeologist, a historian, or an architectural historian.

The Commission was established in 1978 pursuant to Section 118-61 of Chapter 118 (Historical Preservation) of the Rochester Hills Code of Ordinances, and pursuant to State of Michigan Public Act 169 of 1970, as amended.

CLG STATUS OBTAINED

The City of Rochester Hills was pleased to receive its Certified Local Government Status from the U.S. Department of the Interior on July 24, 2009.

2009 MEETINGS

The Commission held eight regular meetings and one special meeting in 2009. Meetings were held on the second Thursday of the month at the Rochester Hills Municipal Building, 1000 Rochester Hills Drive, with the exception of one meeting that was held at the Dairy Barn at the Van Hoosen Museum, 1005 Van Hoosen Road. That meeting afforded the Commissioners an opportunity to tour the Stoney Creek Historic District (a National Register District) with a view toward a public works project being considered by the Commission.

The Commission also held one joint meeting with the Rochester Hills City Council and the Historic Districts Study Committee on March 23, 2009 at the City Municipal Offices to discuss the City's Historical Preservation Ordinance, and the ordinance prescribed role of each of the Commission and the Study Committee, with some focus on the City's Potential List and how

those properties are studied and recommended for designation with a particular view toward property owner rights versus designation.

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

1585 S. Rochester Road:

The Commission provided feedback and input regarding the potential move of the designated structure located at 1585 S. Rochester Road, including a discussion of the implications of moving the structure from its original location; whether the structure would retain sufficient integrity to remain designated in a new location, and whether tax credits for rehabilitation work would be available if moved. Currently, the house is the last remaining structure on this former farmstead.

Replacement of Tienken Road Bridge over Stoney Creek:

The Commission dedicated several meetings to the review of the proposed plans of the Road Commission for Oakland County regarding the replacement of the Tienken Road Bridge over Stoney Creek, which had failed earlier in the year. Because the bridge was located within the boundaries of the Stoney Creek Village (National Register District), the Commission paid particular attention to the size and design features of the replacement bridge, including the existing vegetation around the bridge.

This public works project was heavily followed by the residents of the Stoney Creek Village, and the Commission received a considerable amount of comment and input from those residents.

Another component of this replacement bridge was the inclusion of a pedestrian bridge which did not previously exist in the Village, but due to safety considerations was deemed necessary to avoid conflicts between the motoring public and pedestrians and bikers. Ultimately, the Commission approved a replacement bridge with an attached pedestrian facility that incorporated the use of vintage railings. The vintage railings were located by the Road Commission at a Michigan Department of Transportation garage in Mason, Michigan, and required a materials transfer between the two agencies.

1046 E. Tienken Road:

The Commission approved a request to restore and rehabilitate this house located in the Stoney Creek Village, part of the Stoney Creek Village. This home was constructed between 1845 and 1850 and is one of the original homes built in the Village. The home had sat vacant for more than 15 years, and was severely dilapidated, both inside and outside.

1841 Crooks Road:

The Commission denied a request for a Notice to Proceed with the demolition of the house located in this non-contiguous local historic district. The demolition request followed the Commission's issues of Duty to Maintain and Demolition by Neglect notices issued in 2007 and

2009. Upon denial, the property owner filed an Appeal with the State Historic Preservation Office. The Appeal will be heard in 2010.

1021 Harding Avenue:

The Commission approved the request for the installation of a farm fence on this non-contiguous historic district, which is the last remaining example of a working farm in the City. The property is the site of the former Eureka Fruit Farm, and still contains many varieties of fruit trees and berry bushes.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

2009 Earl Borden Award:

The Earl E. Borden Historic Preservation Award was created in 1989 by the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission upon recommendation by Patrick McKay, Director of Interpretative Services at the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farms.

The Award was developed to honor both Mr. Borden (Avon Township Supervisor and first Mayor of Rochester Hills upon becoming a City) and those award recipients who have demonstrated their love of our historic heritage by restoring, preserving and/or maintaining their properties according to the principles outlined in the U.S. Department of the Interior's Standards for preservation and the City of Rochester Hills Historic Preservation Ordinance.

The Commission updated their selection criteria for this local award, and selected the following recipients:

971 Runyon Road
(restoration of exterior house back to its original 1800's look)

Deborah Larsen
(Author: Home Town Rochester)

The 2009 Earl Borden Awards were presented at the May 18, 2009 City Council, which is a televised on the local cable channels, followed by a brief reception for the award recipients and their guests.

Routine Maintenance of Historic Resources:

In early 2009, the Commission mailed letters to historic district property owners discussing routine maintenance of historic resources and reminding the property owners that the Commission was their "partner" in safeguarding historic resources. The letter included a "Frequently Asked Questions" insert to help property owners understand what type of maintenance project required prior approval from the Commission. The letter also directed the property owners to additional information available on the City's website.

Preservation Documentation:

In 2008, the Commission undertook the complete revision of its Historic Property Owner's Guide, and several other historic preservation related documents, such as Frequently Asked Questions; Review and Permit Process; a Question and Answer Guide, and an Information Resource List. These documents have been posted on the City's website for ease of access by historic property owners and the general public.

Workshops and Seminars:

The Commission has conducted several resident workshops over the past years. An Open House was held at the Museum at Van Hoosen Farms in 2007, which included participation from the State Historic Preservation Office; the Michigan Historic Preservation Network; Oakland County Planning & Economic Development, and local preservation societies.

A General Maintenance Workshop and a Tax Credits Workshop were held on 2008. Historic District property owners were invited to attend all these sessions, along with historical societies from the adjacent communities.

In 2006, the Commission hosted a training workshop for historic district commissioners, which included participation from some of the adjacent local historic district commissions

In 2007, a survey was mailed to all historic property owners seeking feedback on such items as the Community's perception of the Commission, and asking what the Commission could do for the owners of designated properties. The response from the survey resulted in the workshops held in 2008.

BUDGET

The Commission is not funded through any millage or other funding mechanism. It is allocated funds through the City's Planning and Development Department which are sufficient to cover the meeting fees, Earl Borden Award, and a small allocation for seminars.

FUTURE PLANS

The Commission plans to continue its outreach to the property owners of designated resources. As funds permit, additional workshops will be scheduled and held.

The Commission will continue to assist homeowners of designated resources to ensure their rehabilitation and restoration projects meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.