



Rochester Hills

Minutes

Historic Districts Commission

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Chairperson Brian R. Dunphy, Vice Chairperson Jason Thompson
Members: Steven Branstner, Dr. Jay Eastman, Micheal Kilpatrick, Dr. Richard Stamps,
Sue Thomasson, Charles Tischer, Nicholas Winters

Thursday, March 8, 2012

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairperson Thompson called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. in the Auditorium.

ROLL CALL

Present 8 - Steven Branstner, Brian Dunphy, Dr. Jay Eastman, Richard Stamps, Jason Thompson, Charles Tischer, Sue Thomasson and Nicholas Winters

Absent 1 - Micheal Kilpatrick

Also Present: James Breuckman, Manager of Planning
Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting
Sandi DiSipio, Recording Secretary

Chairperson Dunphy arrived at 7:06 p.m. Vice-Chairperson Thompson turned the meeting over to the Chairperson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2012-0067 February 9, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes

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

Aye 8 - Branstner, Dunphy, Eastman, Stamps, Thompson, Tischer, Thomasson and Winters

Absent 1 - Kilpatrick

COMMUNICATIONS

A brochure describing Michigan Historic Preservation Network's May seminar was given to all members. Ms. Kidorf pointed out the Saturday session of the conference that she is putting together and said the commissioners can attend the Advanced Historic District Commissioner training for \$30.00, which includes breakfast. Dr. Stamps reported that on April 14, 2012, the Oakland County

Historical Commission is sponsoring the next in their on-going series of workshops entitled The History of the Railroad in Oakland County. This workshop is co-sponsored by the Oakland County Parks. More information to follow. Ms. Thomasson also passed out a brochure about Stony Creek Village.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

NEW BUSINESS

Oakland Regional Historic Sites Website

Chairperson Dunphy welcomed Jim Hopkins, a representative for the Oakland Regional Historic Sites and the Rochester Avon Historical Society (RAHS), and thanked him for being present to explain the website. Mr. Hopkins summarized why the site was developed, went into the actual site and explained how it is organized and what information is contained on each property. The main idea was to get historical properties listed for use by communities, planning commissions, schools and other educational organizations and genealogy groups. A quick response code will be added to historic buildings in downtown Rochester that will take the user's smartphone directly to the page for that building. Users could, in a sense, do their own walking tour and get information about the structures. Mr. Hopkins thanked the Commission for creating and sharing Rochester Hills' information that is contained in the website. The site is open to other organizations and historical societies so that their information can also be put on the site. Individuals who have photographs or additional information can submit them to RAHS or Chairperson Dunphy. Credit is given to whomever submits historical information for inclusion on the website. Chairperson Dunphy reminded the Commission that the Planning Department was instrumental early on in providing the survey sheets that were used to input the original core of material about the historic sites in the City of Rochester Hills. Communities and historical societies can become supporting members of this project for an annual fee of \$150.00, which helps to further develop the project and ensure its continuation. This also entitles the community to be listed as a member on the website's Members/Sponsors page - currently, there is a pending agreement with the City of Rochester Hills. Two new Historical Societies have become members of the organization - Oakland Township and Orion Township. Mr. Hopkins explained he is working hard to contact other organizations to invite them to enter their historical information on the website and become members. He added he will be making a presentation about this website at the Historical Society of Michigan's regional conference to be held March 30-31. The Commission is in support of this great activity.

***Ms. Melinda Hill, 1481 Mill Race**, came forward and indicated she has been aware of this site before this evening and commends the Historical Society for taking this excellent project on to try and pull everything into one place and have a site available for the public and other organizations to use. She believes this will be an excellent resource for the whole county. She made a list of the designated districts and/or photographs that are missing from the website and will forward that to Mr. Hopkins. She also suggested that the push pins on the*

map be color coded to show designated properties and to distinguish the nationally registered properties.

The Commission feels congratulations are in order, thanked Mr. Hopkins for all the efforts that have gone into this project and for being here tonight to explain the website. This fits right in with the County's attempt to identify and recognize places as far as heritage tourism. Dr. Stamps indicated he has had conversations with both the Oakland County Historical Commission and the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society about this project. Hopefully both groups will become members of this project, have their logos put on the membership page and have their information entered into the database.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2012 Earl Borden Award

Included in the packet is the list of previous winners and the award selection criteria. Chairperson Dunphy called for any nominations for this year's award. There was discussion last month about nominating the Oakland University Gatehouse work. Mr. Pat McKay of the Museum sent emails to the Commission nominating two other candidates for this year's award - Deborah Remer for her participation in and leadership role in the archaeological dig at the Museum site and coordination of the writing of the final report; and for the improvements to the Stoney Creek Schoolhouse. Dr. Stamps stated he is very supportive of both nominations provided tonight and suggested that the Oakland University Gatehouse be considered for next year's award. Mr. Breuckman mentioned that Ms. Remer received the Preservation Leadership Award in 1995. There is nothing that says someone can't receive the award twice, and it is a significant work that she has completed.

Chairperson Dunphy asked if any member of the Commission is prepared to formally nominate either of the two candidates so that discussion and a vote can take place.

MOTION by Thomasson, seconded by Stamps, to nominate the Stoney Creek Schoolhouse renovations for the 2012 Earl Borden Historic Preservation Award.

Ms. Thomasson had provided each of the members with an informational pamphlet relative to the new programming for the schoolhouse. Dr. Stamps commented this is a great nomination and project, and this award would reinforce the value of the structure and the value of the activity.

Vote on the Motion:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED.

Before we move to the second nomination of Ms. Remer, Dr. Stamps feels a key issue has been raised about someone being eligible for the award more than once. He feels this may not be the best precedent to set and would like some discussion on the issue. Dr. Eastman explained the last time Ms. Remer won the award was 17 years ago, and this is a completely different project. He supports the nomination and feels the work done by Ms. Remer, and described

by Mr. McKay, is really outstanding. Chairperson Dunphy added that certain organizations have also been presented with the award more than once, so this is not setting a precedent.

MOTION by Thomasson, seconded by Eastman, to nominate Ms. Deborah Remer for the 2012 Earl Borden Preservation Leadership Award for her leadership on the archaeology dig at the Rochester Hills Museum site for the 1823 Taylor Log Cabin and the 1840 Van Hoosen Farmhouse.

Ms. Thomasson has copies of her book should anyone like to review it.

Vote on the Motion:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Breuckman commented that the Oakland Regional Historic Sites website was a pretty significant accomplishment and could be considered for an award next year.

Mr. Thompson volunteered his assistance in coordinating the Earl Borden Awards Ceremony and Reception. Chairperson Dunphy indicated he will contact the Council liaison to see if the presentation can take place at a May Council meeting. Ms. Thomasson added that whether or not the presentation takes place at a Council meeting, the Museum would welcome sponsoring the reception for the award recipients. Chairperson Dunphy said he would review that option, as the Museum has been gracious hosts in the past.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to an assignment arising out of the fact that a prior applicant indicated he was not aware he was in an historic district, Mr. Breuckman has identified a few options to notify potential purchasers of property that the property is located in an historic district. He has spoken with the Assessing Department and the City Attorney and has prepared a memo for the members' review tonight. The first would be to do periodic monitoring of property transactions, because when a property is sold, the Assessing Department is notified. This is an "after the fact" notification - the property has already been transferred at that point. But it would be pretty simple to flag all of the historically designated properties in the assessing system. Then, we would have to run a report every 30, 60 or 90 days to see if any of those properties have been transferred. At that point, the City would send a letter apprising the new owners that they are located within an historic district and the responsibilities that entails. This option would be low-cost, but labor intensive on a continuing basis.

The other option is to file affidavits with the property records for each designated property with the Oakland County Register of Deeds. It's around \$14 to file a one-page affidavit, so there would be a one time cost of approximately \$1,500 the City would have to incur. We would have to write all the affidavits and deliver them. This was done for the non-contiguous districts in 1978, a sample of which is attached to the memo. We would have to go back to verify that paperwork was filed for properties delisted and/or added since that time. The good thing

about going this route is that it shows up a lot earlier in the transaction process - before someone has closed on a property. The potential buyer would know going into purchasing the property, that it is historically designated. It will show up in any chain of title or title search. The only drawback to this procedure would be the cost. We would also have to write a letter to each property owner to advise what is happening and what is being filed.

Mr. Breuckman feels that filing the affidavits is the way to go. He has spoken to Mr. Anzek, who believes some things can be moved around in the budget to accommodate this cost. We can also go back and request more money from Council if we run out of money in the budget this year.

Chairperson Dunphy is very interested in pursuing this option as this has been a concern - the Board has heard this from more than one applicant. He thinks that anything staff can do to make sure the process is tightened up will be helpful. Mr. Thompson agrees this is how to handle the situation.

Mr. Winters pointed out that this approach will solve two problems; 1) putting people on notice before they close on a piece of property, and 2) by sending the informational letter to the current property owners about what we are doing, we are confirming they are in an historic district in case they don't realize it.

***Ms. Melinda Hill**, address previously given, came forward and suggested that besides the affidavits being filed with the County, these properties be flagged on the Assessing Department records as well.*

Mr. Winters suggested that this information also be available in the Assessing records that are viewed on the City's website.

Dr. Stamps agrees filing the affidavits is the smarter option as it will make everything clear to any prospective buyer and supports the idea.

***MOTION** by Eastman, seconded by Stamps, **Moved**, that the HDC approves that the Planning and Economic Development Department file an affidavit for each parcel in the two historic districts with the Oakland County Register of Deeds.*

Ayes: All

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Chairperson Dunphy called for any other business, noting that the next meeting was scheduled for April 12, 2012.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before the HDC, and upon motion by Eastman, seconded by Tischer, Chairperson Dunphy adjourned the Regular Meeting at 8:25 p.m.

*Brian R. Dunphy, Chairperson
City of Rochester Hills
Historic Districts Commission*

Sandi DiSipio, Recording Secretary