



Rochester Hills

Minutes

Historic Districts Study Committee

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Chairperson Jason Thompson, Vice Chairperson Dr. Richard Stamps
Members: Suzanne Carlson, James Hannick, Sue Thomasson,
LaVere Webster, Murray Woolf

Thursday, March 10, 2011

5:30 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Thompson called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present 4 - Richard Stamps, Jason Thompson, Sue Thomasson and Suzanne Carlson

Absent 3 - LaVere Webster, James Hannick and Murray Woolf

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

COMMUNICATIONS

No announcements or communications were brought forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public came forward to speak on non-agenda items.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2011-0056 Final Report Recommendation to City Council - Discussion to determine members available to attend meeting and make the presentations

1. 2040 S. Livernois Road - Final Report
2. 3976 S. Livernois Road (Stiles School) - Final Report

Chairperson Thompson stated the Committee needs to finalize the date for Final Report Recommendation to City Council for 2040 S. Livernois and Stiles School, and determine which members are available to attend and make the presentation or to answer questions. The upcoming Council meeting dates are April 4th and April 11th. Dr. Stamps indicated he could attend on both dates. Ms. Thomasson indicated both dates are good for her to attend in support of the report. Ms. Kidorf is also available both nights if her presence is required. It is the consensus of the Committee to try and schedule final action on Council's April 4th or April 11th meeting. Dr. Stamps does not see the need for a formal presentation to Council, only to be there to answer any questions and explain that these reports were started and finished prior to the adoption of the new ordinance. As soon as the date has been confirmed, the Study Committee and Ms. Kidorf will be notified.

NEW BUSINESS

2011-0122 Stoney Creek and Winkler Mill Historic Districts

Discussion of possible re-survey and updating the boundaries for the contiguous districts

Chairperson Thompson commented that the Committee has had previous discussions about this issue, but other studies have come up in the meantime, so there has not been an opportunity to get back to the issue until now. Part of the impetus has been new structures in the district needing to come before the HDC for approval. It appears ludicrous sometimes to have to approve a fence or a pool permit for a house that is five years old, just because it happens to be in the district. It would take an order from Council to re-study and update the boundaries for the two districts.

When first appointed to the HDC, Dr. Stamps remembers wondering why people with new construction or newer houses were being questioned by the Commission about the structures and/or proposed additions. He thought - why is the Commission making the people in new houses jump through the hoops of the guidelines for the older houses. In the 2002 historic survey, Ms. Busch made the recommendation to reconsider looking at the boundaries of the two historic districts to possibly eliminate the newer houses. Originally, Dr. Stamps thought it was a good idea as it would cut down the amount of reviews that the HDC had to look at, and be helpful for the residents who lived in the non-contributing houses within the historic district. Then the Tienken Road bridge repair event brought out tremendous resident support, whether they lived in an historic house or a modern house, saying they lived in an historic district and want to preserve it as an historic district. This has caused Dr. Stamps to change his opinion. He added that we've had some history happen, both with the Washington Road paving project and the Tienken Road bridge project that changed his definition of what it meant to live in an historic district. Dr. Stamps stated his thinking at this point is to leave it the way it is and if citizens come forward in the future asking for a change we could always re-examine the issue.

Ms. Melinda Hill, 1481 Mill Race, Rochester Hills, came forward and stated she has concerns with looking into the elimination of certain properties within the two contiguous districts. Dr. Stamps commented on a lot of what she was going to say. When these properties were designated in 1978, there was a lot of open land and not a lot of building especially along Washington Road. These districts were designated for a reason - there were farmlands around the village. The members of the Commission at that time had some vision to protect not only the village, but some of how this area used to be. Over the years, there has been infill, but adhering to standards for the infill. This is why the Commission conducts reviews - so that the appropriate infill happens. We have proclaimed this area as our historic districts and the Mayor, City Council and the residents want this area protected. It's wrong to suggest that certain properties be pulled out of these historic districts. It's not the appropriate time to ask to study this.

Ms. Thomasson explained the only reason this issue came forward is because SHPO suggested this re-study when a grant request for some work on the schoolhouse was denied. SHPO said they would fund this type of study rather than the work on the schoolhouse.

Ms. Carlson agreed with previous comments and feels it is not the right time to take this project on.

Dr. Stamps summarized that this suggestion has come forward, the Committee has given it thought and consideration, and that the general consensus is to leave the districts the way that they are.

Ms. Kidorf clarified the SHPO request was for the National Register listed district and not the local district. Through the Certified Local Government Program, the Museum applied for a grant in 2009 for work to the schoolhouse. The State rejected the grant application and suggested that the City could reapply to look at the National Register district. Part of the requirement to do work for a CLG grant is that the property has to be listed in the National Register. Because the nomination was so old, Ms. Kidorf believes the State wanted to have current, up-to-date survey and National Register information. That is why they encouraged the City to apply for a National Register nomination. The City did not apply for that grant.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Election of Officers:

Chairperson Thompson opened the floor to nominations. Ms. Thomasson nominated Mr. Thompson as Chairperson; Ms. Thomasson nominated Dr. Stamps as Vice Chairperson, and the Planning and Development Department staff was nominated as Secretary. The nominations were duly seconded.

Chairperson Thompson called for any other nominations. No other nominations were made and the floor was closed. The following nominations were unanimously approved: Jason Thompson was unanimously elected to the office of Chairperson of the Historic Districts Study Committee for a term ending December 31, 2011. Dr. Richard Stamps was unanimously elected to the office of Vice Chairperson of the Historic Districts Study Committee for a term ending December 31, 2011. Staff from the Planning and Economic Development Department was unanimously elected to the office of Secretary of the Historic Districts Study Committee for the term ending December 31, 2011.

Dr. Stamps asked what the Study Committee believes it should study next. Twist Drill is still out there. Chairperson Thompson believes the Committee will need to ask Council for the request to conduct the study even though some of the work has already been done, to comply with the ordinance. This request needs to be heard by Council on a separate night from the two Final Report presentations. The Frank Farm report has been completed and was presented to Council, but no action was taken. The Committee should see if they can get the property owner to move in the direction of being favorable of designation.

This report should be on the next agenda for discussion, and the property owner should be invited to attend if possible.

Chairperson Thompson thanked Mr. Delacourt for his many years of service to the City, but especially to this board and the HDC. Mr. Delacourt made it possible to conduct the business of this board, and Mr. Thompson appreciated working with him. He made it easier to get things done, and he will be missed very much.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Chairman Thompson reminded the Committee the next Regular Meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2011.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before the Study Committee, Chairperson Thompson adjourned the Regular Meeting at 6:25 p.m.

Jason Thompson, Chairperson
Historic Districts Study Committee
City of Rochester Hills

Sandi DiSipio, Recording Secretary