



City of Rochester Hills
AGENDA SUMMARY
NON-FINANCIAL ITEMS

1000 Rochester Hills Dr.
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Legislative File No: 2020-0540

TO: Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Sara Roediger, Director of Planning and Development, ext. 2573

DATE: December 4, 2020

SUBJECT: Request to delist the locally designated historic district located at 1021 Harding Ave.

REQUEST:

The applicant, Paul Miller, has requested that City Council eliminate the locally designated historic district located at 1021 Harding Ave., zoned single-family residential with Parcel No. Number 15-15-327-002. The district includes a house, barn and pumphouse (this well was still used up unto recently).

BACKGROUND:

The property is approximately two acres in size and was designated by the City in 1978. The house was constructed in 1860 according to the City's Assessing records. The owner has a photo from 1870 which shows a different barn which he thought was built on an earlier foundation, and on which he put a metal roof in 2002. As noted in the attached Michigan Historic Preservation Office survey sheets, the district contributes to the Eureka Fruit Farm, established in 1870. The survey lists a statement of significance for the farm.

The property suffered an extensive fire approximately three years ago. The applicant states that the extent of the damage is far beyond his means to repair. Discussions with builders, investors and realtors have stated that the expense to repair the property would far exceed the value the property would have after repairs, and he does not believe that anyone would purchase the house with the intent to repair. He had initially planned to repair the structure to keep it as his family home. He planned to go before the Historic Districts Commission once he determined the cost of the materials and repair work, however, after talking with experts, he found that the costs would be too exorbitant.

The Building Department has inspected the house on the property and is concerned that it is unsafe.

Chapter 118, Historical Preservation of the City's Code of Ordinances, identifies the process for establishment, modification or elimination of Historic Districts within the City. Section 118-126 of the Ordinance establishes Council's authority to review such requests.

Sec. 118-126 Authority: The City Council may at any time establish by Ordinance additional historic districts, including proposed districts previously considered and rejected, may modify boundaries of an existing historic district or may eliminate an existing historic district.

The Ordinance establishes a standing Historic Districts Study Committee (HDSC) to review such requests and make recommendations to City Council. The Ordinance requires the initial request to be made to City Council and then City Council may refer it to the Study Committee for review.

Sec. 118-129, Initial determination and investigation: Upon receipt of a request to establish, modify or eliminate an historic district, the City Council, after making a determination that there are reasonable grounds for such a request, may refer the request to the Study Committee to conduct an investigation in accordance with this section.

If Council determines there are reasonable grounds for the request to delist and refers it to the Committee, the Ordinance outlines the process that must be followed. The process requires development of preliminary and final reports, a public hearing held by the HDSC, review of the report by the State and City's Planning Commission and a final recommendation to City Council. Before the HDSC can review the information, Council must refer it to them. Based on prior City Council discussions regarding delisting requests, the City Attorney has indicated that should Council consider the delisting, it must be forwarded to the City's Historic Districts Study Committee in conformance with the Ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that City Council refer the applicant's request to the Historic Districts Study Committee for review and that the Committee conduct a study in conformance with the Ordinance.

APPROVALS:	SIGNATURE	DATE
Department Review		
Department Director		
Mayor		
Deputy Clerk		

Contract Reviewed by City Attorney Yes N/A