



City of Rochester Hills
AGENDA SUMMARY
NON-FINANCIAL ITEMS

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Legislative File No: 2012-0126 V1

TO: Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Ed Anzek, Director, Planning and Economic Development Department
DATE: April 13, 2012
SUBJECT: Elimination of Historic District – 1651 W. Avon

REQUEST:

Staff is requesting that City Council begin the process to eliminate a portion of a locally designated historic district located at 1651 W. Avon Road, Sidwell Number 15-21-126-036 (City File HDC#12-002).

BACKGROUND:

This effort is being initiated by staff as a means to maintain accurate boundaries for historic resources. Several years ago a noncontiguous historic district consisting of a single parcel was divided into two parcels. The historic resource is located on one parcel and a new house has been built on the other.

As Council is aware a historic district designation is assigned to the parcel and not the structure. This means that both of the parcels are now designated as historic districts, even though there likely is nothing historic about the parcel with the recently built house. Staff is asking to begin the process to remove the historic district designation for the parcel with the new house.

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 a 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.

Note: this request is being made by staff. The purpose of historic districts is to preserve and protect historic resources, and historic designation requires Historic Districts Commission approval before any site or exterior modifications may occur. This process is unnecessary for non-historic sites that are not located within a noncontiguous district such as this.

The process to delist requires development of preliminary and final reports, a public hearing held by the HDSC, review of the report by the State Historic Preservation Office and our Planning Commission, and a final recommendation to City Council.

Before the HDSC can review the information Council must refer it to them. By past experience it is suggested the Council provide a time frame within which to complete this work. Unfortunately, because of the required Public Hearings, review time, Planning Commission review, and so on, the required tasks can take more than 6 months to complete. To that end staff would suggest a timeframe of 12 months to complete the task.

In summary, this is an effort to remove a likely no longer necessary historic designation. Although unlikely, should the research establish that the land itself is an historic resource the request to delist may be abandoned.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that City Council begin the process by referring the request to the Historic Districts Study Committee for consideration to delist the property in conformance with the Ordinance.

Thank you.

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APPROVALS:	SIGNATURE	DATE
Department Review		
Department Director		
Mayor		
City Council Liaison		