



Rochester Hills

Minutes

Historic Districts Study Committee

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*Chairperson Jason Thompson, Vice Chairperson Julie Granthen
Members: Steven Branstner, Suzanne Carlson, James Hannick,
Sue Thomasson, LaVere Webster*

Thursday, June 14, 2012

5:30 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Thompson called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Auditorium.

ROLL CALL

Present 6 - Steven Branstner, Suzanne Carlson, Julie Granthen, Sue Thomasson, Jason Thompson and LaVere Webster

Absent 1 - James Hannick

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2012-0221 February 9, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes

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

Aye 6 - Branstner, Carlson, Granthen, Thomasson, Thompson and Webster

Absent 1 - Hannick

COMMUNICATIONS

No announcements or communications were brought forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

NEW BUSINESS

2012-0126 1631 W. Avon - Preliminary Report
Proposed boundary amendment to remove 1651 W. Avon property from the

non-contiguous historic district

Ms. Kidorf indicated the Committee received the preliminary report she prepared. A short bio is needed for the new members of the Study Committee for insertion in the report. Ms. Kidorf explained she did not spend an extensive amount of time on the research because we are only doing a boundary change, just enough to justify the retention of the existing district with a smaller boundary. She summarized the report. The upright and wing Greek Revival farmhouse was probably constructed in the 1870's. The 1872 atlas shows a 97 acre parcel owned by Hubbell and Brother, but is not clear whether a house is located on the property. By the time of the 1896 atlas, the parcel is owned by Abram Miller and shows the footprint of the house. The 1908 atlas calls the property Crystal Brook Farm owned by S.A. Potter and his wife (except for a picture of them in the atlas, Ms. Kidorf could not find anything else about them). The 1938 Rural Property Inventory shows the property being owned by Homer Welch with a 6521 Second Boulevard, Detroit address. The form says the house was being remodeled at that time, but did not give a date of construction. A 54 x 16 garage/tool shed was constructed in 1922. The total acreage of the property was 170 acres and all but 20 acres was used for agricultural crops. Homer Welch, vice president of the T.H. Welch Company, a real estate and insurance firm, was in business with his father. In 1946 the next owners were Elmer W. and Maude E. Eyster and Thomas and A. Lillian Hitchman, who platted the Eyster's Avon Estates subdivision. In 1978, the property was designated as a non-contiguous historic district, designated to the structure on the property. Initially the designation was to the first 100 feet around the property, but state law changed in 1995 and Rochester Hills amended their ordinance to include the entire parcel with all of its historic and non-historic resources. A new garage was constructed in 1987. Documents mention a barn at this time, but no record for the demolition of the barn was found. In 2004 the property was subdivided into two parcels, and a new house, which was approved by the Historic District Commission, was constructed on the western parcel. Since the western parcel only contains the new house, it makes sense to remove that parcel from the historic district. The house at 1631 W. Avon does meet the National Register Criterion C as a significant upright and wing farmhouse which was popular at the turn of the century. Ms. Kidorf is suggesting that the Study Committee find the district should be revised to only include the parcel currently associated with the historic house at 1631 W. Avon.

Ms. Thomasson asked if the current owners requested this boundary change or if the City is cleaning up loose ends. Ms. Kidorf explained it was initiated by staff, and added that Mr. Breuckman has spoken to the property owner of 1651 W. Avon who agreed it would be beneficial to them not to have their parcel in the district.

In looking at the aerial photograph, Mr. Branstner said it appears that the boundary is right down the middle of a driveway. Ms. Kidorf indicated there are two driveways there, the new house has a paved driveway and the historic house has a gravel driveway. Ms. Kidorf said she went with the parcel boundary the City has on file, so she is assuming that the driveway is not down the middle of the parcel, but she is not sure. She will look into it, and make sure the boundaries are accurate for the final report. The Committee could send the preliminary report to SHPO now and research the boundary for accuracy,

making any necessary changes to the final report.

Chairperson Thompson asked the Committee if they had any suggested changes to the report prior to submitting it to SHPO other than updating the biographical information. No other changes were suggested.

The public hearing could be set for the September meeting.

MOTION by Webster, seconded by Carlson, **Moved**, that the Study Committee accepts the preliminary report and requests it be transmitted to SHPO and the Planning Commission for their review.

A motion was made by Webster, seconded by Carlson, that this matter be Accepted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 6 - Branstner, Carlson, Granthen, Thomasson, Thompson and Webster

Absent 1 - Hannick

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Webster said he was at the Museum a few days ago and noticed in the artifacts an historic district plaque that used to be given out years ago. It was learned there are about 30 of these plaques at the Museum. Mr. Webster wondered if there are any historic district houses that do not have one of these signs - if so, we could get the plaques off the Museum shelves and onto the houses. They are left over from 1978, when the historic districts were first established. Chairperson Thompson thinks this is a good idea, but we can't force someone to put it on their house if they don't want to. If they want one and will put it on the front of the house, we should give it as a gift. This is more of a function of the HDC than the Study Committee; Mr. Thompson will bring it to the Board's attention tonight.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Chairperson Thompson reminded the Committee the next Regular Meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2012.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, the Chair adjourned the Regular Meeting at 5:55 p.m.

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

Sandi DiSipio, Recording Secretary