



Rochester Hills

Minutes

Historic Districts Commission

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Chairperson Jason Thompson, Vice Chairperson Julie Granthen

Members: *Katherine Altherr-Rogers, Yousif Elias, Bryan Lemanski, Kelly Lyons, Michael McGunn, Dr. Richard Stamps, Charles Tischer*
Youth Representative: *Aimee Zhao*

Thursday, November 9, 2023

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Thompson called the Historic Districts Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Michigan time.

ROLL CALL

Present 6 - Katherine Altherr-Rogers, Yousif Elias, Julie Granthen, Richard Stamps, Jason Thompson and Charles Tischer

Excused 3 - Bryan Lemanski, Kelly Lyons and Michael McGunn

Others Present:

Chris McLeod, Planning Manager

Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting

Jennifer MacDonald, Recording Secretary

Members Lemanski, Lyons, and McGunn provided prior notice they would be absent and were excused.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2023-0512 August 10, 2023 HDC Meeting Minutes

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

Aye 6 - Altherr-Rogers, Elias, Granthen, Stamps, Thompson and Tischer

Excused 3 - Lemanski, Lyons and McGunn

COMMUNICATIONS

Chairperson Thompson noted that Museum staff shared an article regarding the Van Hoosen Farmhouse that recently appeared in Michigan History Magazine.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

DISCUSSION

2023-0513 Discussion of 1021 Harding Ave. Lot C new home designs

(McLeod memo dated 11-9-23, Applicant's letter, Site Plan, Applicant's submission of potential home architecture, Applicant's submission of architecture in the Rochester Hills area, and HDSC report on the Eureka Fruit Farm had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record thereof.)

Present were Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting, and applicants Art Hug II and Shannon Greene, purchasers of Lot C, 1021 Harding.

Mr. Hug stated that they are before the Commission as they just purchased the subject property and throughout the process learned that it is a part of a Historic District. He noted that at one time there was an old farm house and two structures on the land that were deemed historic were demolished. He stated that he spoke to Mr. McLeod several times and it seems a little unclear of the expectations for this property.

Chris McLeod stated that this is a noncontiguous district and since the house was demolished the property has been split into three parcels. He noted that he indicated to Mr. Hug that it will still have to come before this body for review. He added that he indicated that the City does not have specific design guidelines and follows the Department of Interior Standards to look back at the pictures and pay tribute to the farmhouse that was there along with the large pine tree on the lot. He explained that all of this would be taken into consideration, and he invited Mr. Hug to come to the Commission to listen to their thoughts for the property and also to look at some of his design ideas. He stressed that this is not binding. He mentioned that it was considered for delisting in 2021.

Kristine Kidorf stated that this noncontiguous district is left with historic landscape. She noted that at this point now that it has been split, she does not see how that can be maintained. She stated that she suggested they look at the building at 1841 Crooks that was a design that the Commission approved in the past.

Dr. Stamps stated that the previous owner's mother lived in the house across the street and it was his mother's dream to buy the big house and move into it as they had a passion for history. He stated that it was an interesting house and at the time it was put into a historic district it was appropriate and they moved into the house to fix it up. He noted that after going to the basement to put the furnace on, it caught fire and flashed into the attic due to the amount of things stored. The damage was so great that the City determined that it was unable to be fixed and the cost would outweigh the financial reality. He noted that the Commission members determined after a site visit that while it was sad to demolish it, it was the smartest thing to do. He added that the barn was questionable and was demolished. He commented that he loved the idea of saving some of the brick.

Mr. Hug stated that they had a lot of debates over what to do.

Dr. Stamps asked if anyone could justify why this should be listed as historic.

Chairperson Thompson noted that delisting it would be a process whereby Council would direct the Study Committee.

Ms. Kidorf added that City Council would have to direct the HDSC to study it for the delisting process, which would be approximately five months long.

Chairperson Thompson stated that as long as what they are doing would meet the Department of Interior Standards, it would not be an issue as whatever they would do would be noncontributing at this point.

Dr. Stamps stated that they could recommend to City Council to delist it or leave it alone.

Mr. Tischer asked whether the owner wanted it to be delisted or left alone.

Ms. Kidorf noted that the Study Committee did look at delisting it after the fire, and it would have to go through a new study.

Mr. Hug explained that when they made the offer on the property, they did not know about the historic status. He noted that they considered whether it could become a money pit or if their vision might not exactly come to fruition. He stated that if it makes the process easier it would be preferred to delist it.

Ms. Kidorf noted that they would not be building a historic house and anything built would be noncontributing, depending on how quickly they want to build.

Mr. Tischer noted that if it is left historic they would still have to come before the Commission.

Ms. Kidorf noted that delisting it would include all three parcels.

Dr. Stamps stated that it makes sense to delist the whole property as it does not make sense to try to duplicate anything. He commented that it is not worth the City's staff time to be expending efforts on a property that no longer exists.

Chairperson Thompson concurred, noting that there will be two more parcels and it would be much easier than reviewing a contributing property.

Mr. Yousif concurred that it made sense.

Mr. Hug stressed that they want to build a nice home and live in the community.

Chairperson Thompson expressed his appreciation for the applicant's coming to the Commission for discussion. He asked what their timeline would be.

Mr. Hug responded that they would be flexible with a shovel in the ground by next summer.

Chairperson Thompson stated that he does not want to see the delisting process pause everything for six months.

Dr. Stamps moved the recommendation that the Eureka Fruit Farm property be delisted as the contributing factor of a house and a barn no longer exist and that City Council ask the Historic Districts Study Committee to study the delisting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tischer.

After the vote, Chairperson Thompson noted that the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Stamps, seconded by Tischer, that this matter be Referred to the City Council Regular Meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 6 - Altherr-Rogers, Elias, Granthen, Stamps, Thompson and Tischer

Excused 3 - Lemanski, Lyons and McGunn

Resolved, that the Historic Districts Study Committee recommends that the Eureka Fruit Farm property be delisted as the contributing factor of a house and a barn no longer exist and that City Council direct the Historic Districts Study Committee to study the delisting.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Stamps noted that the archaeologist consulted on the Adams Road potential widening has passed away.

Mr. McLeod noted that the Road Commission engineers have provided no update regarding a conceptual rendering of what the project would look like. He explained that they are tasked with providing up to five scenarios ranging from zero change to a five- or six-lane boulevard, and nothing has come out for concepts. He noted that they have cancelled progress meetings and there is nothing to report.

Dr. Stamps stated that he would like to empower City staff to call the Road Commission and say that the HDC is concerned as they were noted to have a three-year timeline, and then all of a sudden will be given proposals and have two months to review them.

Mr. McLeod responded that the timeline is more than three years and they are having internal conversations where to go with this, and the City has not been a part of those conversations.

Dr. Stamps stated that it bothers him that it is supposed to be the City and the University providing input.

Dr. Stamps noted that a construction fence has been installed on the Lorna Stone property.

Mr. McLeod responded that to solidify site plan approval for a senior facility, the developers needed to get fencing up to protect trees. He stated that the chain link fence appears to be their weak attempt at a gate. He mentioned that the

landowners as of last Friday are not sure what direction they are going to move, and they would have to break ground in the next four months. If they modify the request, they may be back in front of the Planning Commission. He stated that in any event, the development is now paused and they will know more in four months.

Dr. Stamps stated that if Staff has communications with them, he would encourage relating that the members of the HDC want to thank them for their attempts to preserve history.

Dr. Stamps noted that there was a ribbon cutting for the O'Neill Pottery property on Crooks Road, and stated that he was pleased to see that the barn is still there and that they have publicly made that a part of their name. He stated that they are committed to protecting the barn and is glad that it is going forward.

Mr. McLeod noted that part of their temporary Certificate of Occupancy was a commitment letter that the barn work is yet to come.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- December 14, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, it was moved by Tischer, seconded by Thompson, to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Jennifer MacDonald.

*Minutes were approved as presented/amended at the _____
Regular Historic Districts Commission Meeting.*

Jason Thompson, Chairperson