



Rochester Hills

Minutes

Historic Districts Commission

1000 Rochester Hills Dr
Rochester Hills, MI
48309
(248) 656-4600
Home Page:
www.rochesterhills.org

Chairperson Jason Thompson, Vice Chairperson Julie Granthen
Members: Yousif Elias, Bryan Lemanski, Kelly Lyons, Michael McGunn, Carol Morlan, Dr.
Richard Stamps and Charles Tischer
Youth Representative: Sasha Joshi

Thursday, May 14, 2026

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Thompson called the Historic Districts Commission meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Michigan time.

ROLL CALL

Chris McLeod, Planning Manager
Kristine Kidorf, Preservation Consulting
Jennifer MacDonald, Recording Secretary

Ms. Morlan, Mr. Tischer, and Mr. Lemanski provided prior notice that they would not be in attendance and were excused.

Present 6 - Yousif Elias, Julie Granthen, Kelly Lyons, Richard Stamps, Jason Thompson and Michael McGunn

Excused 3 - Charles Tischer, Bryan Lemanski and Carol Morlan

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2026-0217](#) March 12, 2026 Draft Historic Districts Commission Minutes

A motion was made by McGunn, seconded by Elias, that this matter be Approved.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 6 - Elias, Granthen, Lyons, Stamps, Thompson and McGunn

Excused 3 - Tischer, Lemanski and Morlan

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

NEW BUSINESS

2026-0218

Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness - File No. PHDC2026-0008 - to replace an existing gravel driveway with asphalt at the residence at 1470 W. Tienken, located on the north side of Tienken and west of Livernois in a noncontiguous historic district, Parcel No. 15-04-377-035, zoned R-1 One Family Residential; Richard H. Thomas III, Applicant

(Staff Report dated 5/1/26, HDC Application, Location Map, and Plans & Photos had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Present for the applicant was Richard Thomas, property owner.

Chairperson Thompson introduced the item and invited the applicant to the table. He asked staff if there was anything to add to the record.

Ms. Kidorf stated she had nothing to add but was available for questions.

Mr. Thomas stated for the record that he is the owner of the property at 1470 West Tienken Road. He referenced the slides submitted with his application, noting that the current driveway is gravel and dirt. He explained that he is seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to pave the driveway with asphalt to make property improvements. Mr. Thomas pointed out that other historic homes in the area, including the original Fairview Farms owner's home and a property directly across the street, feature paved driveways. He emphasized that the request is not an attempt to change the historical character of the house or property itself, but rather to follow a precedent that has previously been deemed acceptable.

Chairperson Thompson opened the floor for questions or comments from the Commissioners.

Dr. Stamps expressed appreciation for the property owner's investment in maintaining the historic district, noting that the district comprises a collection of homes spanning various ages, and that preservation efforts help increase property values. Drawing from personal experience with a gravel driveway replacement, Dr. Stamps noted the advantages of a paved driveway and expressed strong support for the proposal.

Chairperson Thompson asked if there were any further questions or comments and called for a motion.

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

Aye 6 - Elias, Granthen, Lyons, Stamps, Thompson and McGunn

Excused 3 - Tischer, Lemanski and Morlan

Resolved, in the matter of File No. PHDC 2026-008, that the Historic Districts Commission APPROVES the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the removal of an existing gravel driveway and parking area and paving the driveway and parking area in the same location and size, Parcel Identification Number 15-04-377-035, with the following

Findings and Conditions:

- 1) The existing driveway and parking area is not a character defining feature of the property. The work as proposed is/is not appropriate for the property; and
- 2) The proposed excavation and paving as proposed is in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, in particular standard numbers 9 and 10 as follows:
 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

2026-0219

Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness - File No. PHDC2026-0002 - to construct a new multi-family development on the east portion of the lot and new parking, drives, and landscaping on the entire site, including repairs and new windows for the existing stone house. The property is a noncontiguous historic district located at 3861 S. Adams and 3880 South Blvd. W., on the east side of Adams and north of South Blvd., Parcel No. 15-31-301-011, zoned R-4 One Family Residential with the FB Flex Business Overlay; Tony Perez, O'Brien Construction, Applicant

(Staff Report dated 5/1/26, HDC Application, Applicant's Presentation, Site Plans, and Floor Plans & Elevations had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Present for the applicant were Tony Perez of O'Brien Construction, representing the owner, and Mark Von Werder of Hobbs & Black Architects.

Chairperson Thompson introduced the item and invited the applicants to the table. He noted that a public comment request had been submitted by Jonathan Wyatt. Mr. Wyatt requested to defer his comments until after the applicant's presentation had concluded, which Chairperson Thompson approved.

Chairperson Thompson asked staff if there was anything to add to the record.

Ms. Kidorf stated that since the preparation of the staff report, the applicant had provided supplementary information regarding the eave and rake repair. She noted that the existing material is fiber cement and would be repaired to match. Additionally, Ms. Kidorf clarified that the applicant is proposing to install windows currently stored inside the house, which had been previously approved by the Commission under a prior owner. She indicated that this additional information successfully satisfied her initial concerns and requests for information.

Mr. Perez provided an update on the status of the Lorna Stone House project. He stated that the development team had evaluated several different concepts and approaches for preserving the house. He highlighted that a significant

modification made to the site plan involved relocating one of the primary access drives from the north side of the house to the south. Mr. Perez noted that shifting this entrance provides more space to preserve the area surrounding the historic structure.

He informed the Commission that after discussing various iterations with Ms. Kidorf, the finalized layout keeps the Stone House distinct while still welcoming both residents and the public to the site. He shared that the property is envisioned as a space where individuals can relax, have lunch, or attend community events. He emphasized the team's respect for the property and their focus on maintaining its unique characteristics.

Chairperson Thompson opened the floor for questions or comments from the Commissioners.

Dr. Stamps expressed gratitude to the development team for their sensitivity to preserving the City's unique cultural resources, noting that out of thousands of structures in Rochester Hills, only about one hundred possess recognized historic value. He then inquired about the proposed adaptive use for the structure, emphasizing that saving a building requires finding a functional use to offset ongoing costs like insurance and heating.

Mr. Perez responded that there are currently no immediate plans for the interior of the house. He explained that the present focus is on restoring the exterior and the surrounding grounds to create an inviting, outdoor gathering space for the public. He noted that while various ideas have been considered, the current phase is dedicated to stabilizing and restoring the outside of the property.

Dr. Stamps agreed that restoring the exterior is an excellent first step to ensure the building is preserved rather than demolished. However, he reiterated that leaving the interior vacant is not a viable long-term solution for the entity responsible for the building's upkeep and utility costs. He asked what specific ideas had been discussed for the eventual use of the structure's interior.

Mr. Perez explained that the development team had discussed numerous concepts, including utilizing the building as a community room for both residents and the public, or establishing a delicate interior historical exhibit to complement the existing outdoor historic marker. He noted that while retail or business uses had been considered, meeting modern building codes would be difficult, and the developer does not intend to act as a retail landlord.

Mr. Perez further explained that inviting people inside introduces increased insurance risks and other regulatory complexities. Consequently, the team decided on the current approach of preserving the exterior, programming the outdoor spaces for community enjoyment, and executing extensive landscaping around the historic marker.

Dr. Stamps inquired about the total number of residential units and the anticipated population of the full development.

Mr. Perez replied that the project features a mix of 132 total units. This includes

20 townhomes located on the west side at the front of the property, 96 walk-up units split between two buildings in the middle of the site, and 16 single-story cottage flats consisting of two bedrooms and two bathrooms.

Dr. Stamps then asked about the number of planned parking spaces for the 132 units. Mr. Perez stated that the project meets the maximum required totals, estimating it at over 250 spaces based on a ratio of two spaces per unit. Mr. McLeod clarified that City ordinance requires two parking spaces per unit, noting that the cottages would utilize individual garages and driveway spaces to meet this requirement, bringing the estimated total to approximately 230 or 240 spaces.

As a resident who lives near Adams Road, Dr. Stamps raised concerns regarding local traffic conditions, referencing an ongoing study to widen Adams Road that threatens a portion of the Meadowbrook Estate National Historic Landmark. He noted that the road is already inadequate for current traffic volumes. While acknowledging it may fall outside the immediate purview of the applicant, Dr. Stamps pointed out that adding an estimated 200 additional vehicles from this development would further exacerbate the overcrowding on Adams Road.

Dr. Stamps informed the applicant that he had reviewed historical documents and previous design proposals for the Lorna Doone Stone House from his personal archives. He asked the development team if they had reviewed these materials. Mr. Perez indicated he had not yet seen them but expressed a strong interest in doing so. Dr. Stamps offered to leave the archived documents with city staff so the applicants could review them at their convenience, which Mr. Perez accepted with appreciation.

Dr. Stamps provided historical context regarding a previous owner of the property, a church group that practiced family home meetings rather than utilizing a large cathedral. He recalled that when the group acquired the property, they planned to use the building as a meeting house, designating one section for seating and the other for a restroom and entryway. He noted that he had personally volunteered alongside church members to assist with clearing trash and removing modern additions from the site.

As a trained archaeologist with 50 years of experience at Oakland University, Dr. Stamps highlighted a specific historic feature identified on the previous development maps as a historic cistern. He requested information regarding the applicant's plans for this feature, explaining that 19th-century properties frequently used cisterns to supplement well water.

Dr. Stamps described the on-site cistern as being located approximately 19 feet east of the stone house, featuring a 35-inch opening at the top. He explained the technical structure of the cistern, noting that it drops down a couple of feet before expanding into a bell shape, reaching a total depth of nine feet. He detailed how rain collected from roof downspouts would fill the cistern to serve as a water source, contrasting it with a similar historic example located beneath the front porch of an old home in West Bloomfield that utilized a hand-crank pump. He emphasized that the preservation of this 19th-century cistern is an

important consideration for the site.

Dr. Stamps stated that because the Commission never approved the destruction of the cistern, it is presumably still intact beneath the surface, depending on past grading or dirt removal. He suggested integrating the feature into the proposed landscaping by constructing a walkway out to the area, filling the underground cavity with sand to preserve it safely for future generations, and outlining the top opening with historically appropriate bricks. He recommended installing educational signage with text and illustrations to explain 19th-century water systems, noting that this addition would enhance the preservation of the home's historic character.

Dr. Stamps also informed the applicant that he had placed three collections of artifacts on the display table, which he had surface-collected from dirt piles while volunteering at the site. The first collection consisted of old square-cut nails, which he explained were standardly used until the invention of mass-manufactured wire nails around 1900, thereby providing archaeological reinforcement of the structure's 19th-century origin. The other two collections contained broken ceramic shards spanning from the early 19th century to the turn of the 20th century. He highlighted a small, hand-painted ceramic piece, noting its specific design element serves as a clear diagnostic indicator of early 19th-century domestic and household activity on the property. Dr. Stamps concluded by expressing excitement for the project and suggesting a collaborative effort to explore preservation options for the historic water system.

Ms. Kidorf clarified that the feature Dr. Stamps referred to as a cistern was identified as a well in the staff report and was labeled as a "stone column" on the current site drawings. She recalled that during a previous site visit, small stone walls were visible around the top of the feature. Ms. Kidorf noted that her recommended conditions to the Commission included the preservation and restoration of this stone work, suggesting it be securely covered and filled for safety while keeping the structural stonework intact.

Dr. Stamps shared a similar precedent from downtown Rochester, where a historic stone-lined cistern was discovered beneath a sidewalk during a streetscape improvement project. He noted that the City successfully preserved the feature by building up the surrounding stonework, installing a plexiglass top, and adding historical signage to educate the public about early local water systems, suggesting a similar treatment could work well for this property.

Mr. Perez acknowledged the clarification regarding the cistern and expressed strong interest in the preservation concept. He agreed that the feature presents an excellent opportunity to showcase the property's historic water system to residents and visitors, and stated that the development team is fully willing to incorporate its preservation into the project design.

Chairperson Thompson called on Ms. Lyons for questions.

Ms. Lyons requested clarification regarding the grading plans, specifically referencing sheet C4.0 (page 15 of the PDF application packet). She noted that

the retention pond diagram on that sheet appeared inconsistent with the L-shaped or P-shaped basin displayed in the applicant's presentation, which shows the basin extending behind the house. She expressed concern that the proposed retention pond layout extends very close to the historic structure and appears to require the removal of a significant number of trees, which would substantially alter the historic character of the property.

Mr. Perez explained that the original proposal featured a wet detention pond. However, following discussions and recommendations to preserve the existing site conditions, the development team revised the design to a dry basin. He stated that by converting it to a dry basin, the team is able to preserve the existing trees, and they plan to supplement the area with additional plantings.

Ms. Lyons pointed out that the contour lines on sheet C4.0 still indicate grading changes occurring very close to the house, resulting in a rounded, rectangular basin shape. She questioned the necessity of altering the grade so close to the historic structure if the goal is to maintain the site's original character.

Mr. Perez noted that because he did not have his civil engineer present, he could not speak definitively to the exact contour line matches. He reiterated that because the basin is a dry pond, it will not hold standing water, and he offered to consult with the civil engineer to determine if the grading lines could be pushed further back from the house.

Ms. Lyons noted that the inconsistencies between the various drawings made it difficult to understand the developer's exact intent for the site layout. To resolve this, she requested that the applicant provide north-south and east-west section cuts running through and adjacent to the stone house to clearly illustrate the relationship between the existing and proposed contours. Additionally, Ms. Lyons requested an east-west section cut stretching from the road through the retention basin to help the Commission evaluate how the grading changes would impact the overall historic character and visual perception of the property from the road.

Dr. Stamps asked how the proposed grading changes around the retention basin would impact the preservation of the historic cistern.

Mr. Perez clarified that the cistern is located on the opposite side of the house from the basin and would not be affected by the grading. He reiterated that the cistern will remain fully intact, but he committed to reviewing the layout with his civil engineer to confirm if the basin's grading had already been pushed further back from the house as previously discussed.

Ms. Lyons commended the thoroughness of the tree inventory provided in the application materials. However, to streamline the Commission's review, she requested that the applicant provide a localized, shortened list specifying only the trees located in the immediate vicinity of the historic stone house.

Additionally, Ms. Lyons noted some confusion regarding how trees were being categorized under the City's tree ordinance. She pointed out that certain trees slated for removal appeared to be located outside the applicant's property

boundaries, yet they were being included on the inventory list as credits that did not count against the project's overall tree removal totals. She requested that the applicant review and clarify this discrepancy.

Mr. Perez noted that the development team had worked extensively with the City and their own consultants to ensure the project complies with the City's tree ordinance, confirming they are replacing required trees and paying all necessary tree removal fees.

Ms. Lyons pointed out that on sheet 40 of the application packet, several off-site trees were marked as not contributing to the standard calculations, yet their corresponding numbers appeared on the applicant's master spreadsheet and seemed to factor into certain metrics. She requested that the applicant double-check and run through the inventory data to clear up these discrepancies. Furthermore, Ms. Lyons noted that an American chestnut tree with no recorded health defects was scheduled for removal. She urged the applicant to remain mindful of the historical significance of rarer American tree species and suggested that the application notes highlight active efforts to preserve unique specimens rather than focusing solely on tree defects and justifications for removal. Ms. Granthen expressed agreement.

Dr. Stamps provided additional architectural detail regarding the nine-foot-deep cistern, explaining that early pioneers built these structures with a brick wall typically coated in a rough and a fine layer of plaster to ensure it remained waterproof. Referencing his field notes from a 2012 site visit, Dr. Stamps recalled a recommendation that a trained archaeologist be present during major earth-moving activities. He clarified that since he is retired, he is not seeking the position himself due to a conflict of interest. However, based on the volume of historic ceramics and square-cut nails he previously surface-collected by hand, he recommended that the Commission consider adding a condition requiring professional archaeological oversight during major grading operations near the stone house to properly salvage artifacts and help tell the property's story.

Ms. Lyons remarked that she was surprised Dr. Stamps had not suggested turning the stone house into a formal museum branch in coordination with the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm. Dr. Stamps acknowledged that while museums are complex and expensive to operate, partnering with the local museum system to oversee a new historical segment could be a viable option, given that the developer is already responsible for the building's insurance, heating, and taxes.

Chairperson Thompson noted that a public comment card remained for the item and called Jonathan Wyatt to the podium.

John Wiant - 1934 Rainbow Drive - spoke representing the adjacent DOCSA Church located just south of the American House facility. Mr. Wiant stated that the subject property has been used for unauthorized dumping, tree harvesting, and artifact scavenging for a number of years, leaving it in significant need of cleanup. He expressed strong support for the proposed project, noting that it would enhance the property value, clean up rubbish like broken glass and discarded tires, and prevent the historic stone house from falling into further

disrepair. Sharing a personal appreciation for historic homes, Mr. Wiant commented on the site's vegetation, noting that while the lot contains beautiful hardwood trees and Eastern Redbuds, it is also heavily overgrown with invasive European Buckthorn. He observed that many of the high-quality trees had been previously tagged, possibly during the iteration of the prior Priya Living retirement facility project that never materialized. He concluded that he favors a development that restores the historic building, cleans up the invasive species, and provides more housing for the City.

Dr. Stamps shared a historical detail regarding a previous restoration attempt by the prior church group, noting that a member of their congregation was a professional stonemason from England who specialized in repairing British national monuments. He emphasized that the past stonework refurbishment was performed by a highly experienced specialist rather than an amateur using standard retail materials.

Chairperson Thompson asked if there were any further questions or comments from the Commissioners or additional input from staff, and asked how the Commission wished to proceed.

Commissioner Lyons requested that Ms. Kidorf provide a refresher on the procedural options available to the Commission if they chose not to make a standard motion to approve.

Ms. Kidorf explained that the Commission could move to approve, deny, or postpone the request. She clarified that an approval could be granted conditionally, with specific requirements delegated to staff for final review, or the Commission could require the applicant to return for a subsequent formal review. Ms. Kidorf then inquired about the project's current status within the City Planning and site plan approval process.

Mr. McLeod clarified that the project has undergone multiple iterations of administrative site plan review to ensure a viable working concept before presenting it to the Commission, with Ms. Kidorf reviewing each stage. He outlined the next steps in the approval process, stating the applicant will seek setback variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) in June. He explained that the site's Flex Business (FB) overlay requires buildings to be pulled forward up to the road, which would conflict with the location of the Lorna Doone Stone House and is unfeasible along South Boulevard due to property depth. Following the ZBA, the project is targeted for a Planning Commission review in July, pending the final administrative site plan submission. Mr. McLeod noted that the timeline allows the applicant the opportunity to return to the Commission's June meeting with the requested additional information, or the Commission could opt for a conditional approval delegated to staff.

Dr. Stamps expressed a preference for the applicant to return to a future meeting with a formalized plan, noting the development team's receptiveness to the Commission's suggestions regarding the tree inventory and the preservation of the historic cistern.

Mr. Thompson agreed, stating his preference is to review all finalized

components simultaneously. He noted that because the plans are close to completion, the review could comfortably take place at the next month's meeting, and he asked for Ms. Kidorf's input.

Ms. Kidorf raised a procedural concern regarding the statutory 60-day review window, noting that because a full and official application had been submitted, the review could not be treated as preliminary. She recommended that if the Commission was inclined to support the project, they grant approval conditional upon the applicant returning with final, Board-approved plans later in the summer, likely in July or August. Mr. McLeod confirmed that the targeted Planning Commission meeting is planned for July.

Ms. Lyons inquired if the applicant could return to the next month's meeting instead. Ms. Kidorf questioned whether the plans would change significantly following the upcoming Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and Planning Commission reviews. Mr. McLeod responded that administrative staff reviews were nearly complete and he did not anticipate further changes to the stormwater basin or grading near the stone house from the other boards. He stated that the design was highly vetted and any unexpected future modifications could be handled as a subsequent amendment before the Commission.

Chairperson Thompson reiterated his personal preference to review all finalized components at once, noting that the Commission could comfortably postpone and take formal action at the next meeting within the 30-day frame while remaining inside the 60-day statutory limit. Ms. Kidorf then recommended that the Commission formally postpone the matter for one month and list the specific information required for the next meeting.

Mr. Perez asked if a postponement would impact their scheduling with the ZBA or Planning Commission, and Ms. Granthen indicated it would not. Mr. Perez shared a real-time update from his civil engineer confirming that the existing grading at the front of the property would be maintained and that the high-quality trees in that area would not be disturbed unless dead. He expressed a desire to clear up the grading concerns and welcome the cistern preservation concept. To ensure the development team could fully comply at the next meeting, he requested clarification on the requested tree inventory details and structural cross-sections.

Ms. Kidorf suggested that the applicant locate the cistern on-site prior to the next meeting to provide the Commission with photographs, and she called upon the Commissioners to define their specific requests.

Commissioner Lyons clarified her requirements for the structural cross-sections using the digital site layout display. She requested an east-west section cut running through the center line of the retention pond to illustrate both the existing and proposed grade lines. Additionally, she requested a north-south section cut passing directly through the center line of the historic house, along with a secondary north-south section cut closer to the street. Ms. Lyons explained that these diagrams are necessary to determine exactly how many trees will be impacted within the excavation zone, noting that the sheer volume

of data in the master tree inventory was difficult to fully evaluate without clear visual cross-references.

Mr. Perez reiterated that the drawings under discussion might represent an older iteration of the plan. He stated that he had just re-verified the details with his civil engineer via text, confirming that the front portion of the site is not being touched or regraded, which should resolve the tree removal concerns. He apologized for the missing documentation at the meeting and committed to providing the updated, definitive layouts.

Ms. Lyons emphasized that absolute consistency between the presented concepts and the formal construction drawings is critical, noting that the Commission must be certain of the exact plan they are voting to approve. Mr. Perez acknowledged the importance of plan consistency and noted that his team is in constant, daily contact with the City engineering staff to finalize these details. Dr. Stamps expressed his satisfaction with this approach.

Mr. Perez sought clarification on whether the design team had successfully eliminated the grading changes in front of the house. Mr. McLeod clarified that the plans on display were from the early April submittal (dated April 9th) and represent the most recent iteration.

Mr. Perez noted he could not read the small grade numbers on the screen, prompting Mr. McLeod to point out the specific elevation levels. Mr. McLeod noted that the proposed grade sits at 473 feet while some of the existing grade is at 469 feet, confirming that grading changes will occur as the site approaches the street to the left. Mr. Perez agreed, clarifying that some re-grading is required near the road specifically due to right-of-way constraints, but he maintained that the remaining areas should be untouched and committed to confirming the exact boundaries.

Mr. McLeod confirmed that Commissioner Lyons' assessment of the landscape layout was correct. He explained that heavy dashed lines represent existing trees slated for preservation, whereas the numbered boxes represent individual trees. He noted that the area directly in front of the proposed detention pond will consist entirely of new trees, which are indicated on the plan by dark lines.

Providing further site context, Mr. McLeod explained that the property features a natural depression at an elevation of 866 feet. While Ms. Kidorf had advocated for the applicant to utilize this existing depression for stormwater management, it was not feasible. Instead, the current plan effectively shifts this natural 866-foot depression over to formalize it into the new detention pond footprint. He pointed out that within the specific quadrant directly in front of the stone house, only one existing tree is marked for preservation, while the remaining canopy in that area will be replaced by new plantings.

Ms. Lyons directed attention to sheet 36 of the architectural set (page 36 of the PDF application packet), pointing to the upper left corner detailing the basin area. She noted that zooming in on that section reveals numerous tree boxes that are slated for removal. While she acknowledged that new trees would be

planted, Ms. Lyons emphasized that removing the original growth would drastically alter the historical character of the property. Because she had not had sufficient time to cross-reference the extensive tree schedule since receiving the documents, she requested that the applicant ensure strict graphic consistency across all sets to resolve the contradictions between the conceptual renderings and the engineering drawings. Mr. Perez acknowledged the request.

Mr. McLeod pointed out the location of the proposed tree protection fencing around the trees being preserved in the upper area, but confirmed Ms. Lyons' observation that all other tree boxes within the full footprint of the shifting pond area are designated for removal due to the changing basin layout.

Mr. McLeod noted that the Historic Districts Commission evaluates landscaping and trees from a slightly different perspective than the City forester, who focuses primarily on strict numerical metrics. He reported that the current plan sits at 42% canopy preservation, which complies with the City ordinance requiring a minimum of 40% preservation. He explained that because the development site cannot physically accommodate all the necessary replacement trees, the trees designated for removal will either be replanted on-site or offset by a financial payment into the City's tree fund. Mr. McLeod offered to have the City forester re-evaluate specific areas if the Commission identified particular trees they wished to save, inviting the members to provide a targeted list.

Ms. Lyons requested that the tree inventory be provided as a text-editable Word or Excel document rather than embedded solely as text on the large blueprints, noting it would make the schedule much easier to print and review. While she clarified that this was a personal preference rather than a formal regulatory requirement, Mr. McLeod agreed that the data likely originated in a spreadsheet and could be provided by the applicant.

Mr. McLeod noted that even if the Commission simply identified the preferred types of trees, City staff could conduct the necessary analysis. Addressing the structural footprint, he explained that the City's engineering and safety standards prohibit the steep slopes found in the site's existing natural depression. As a result, municipal regulations require the new dry basin to have a wider, more gradual slope that spreads the pond further to the east. This necessary expansion forces additional grading and subsequent tree disturbance, which Mr. McLeod characterized as a complex effort to balance competing engineering, tree preservation, and historic preservation regulations.

Mr. Perez agreed that the project involves navigating numerous regulatory layers to satisfy all municipal parties, adding that the development team is doing its best and is close to finalizing a solution.

Ms. Lyons expressed hope that the discussion provided the applicant with a clearer understanding of the Commission's perspective, emphasizing that their questions were intended to highlight what is historically important to protect rather than to call out the development team. Mr. Perez responded that he welcomed the feedback and had gained valuable insights from the meeting. He

stated his commitment to ensuring the project is done correctly and expressed confidence that the team could successfully resolve the outstanding concerns before returning.

Dr. Stamps asked Ms. Lyons to clarify her earlier comment regarding rarer tree species that are lacking in the area. Ms. Lyons explained that an American chestnut tree was identified on the applicant's inventory list, noting the historical impact of the American chestnut blight. Dr. Stamps suggested that the applicant collaborate with Ms. Lyons to determine a selection of historically appropriate trees to plant on the property, noting that reintroducing these species would benefit future generations and be well-received by the Commission.

Mr. Perez asked if he was permitted to communicate directly with Commissioner Lyons prior to the next meeting to discuss the tree selection. Mr. McLeod clarified that for policy reasons, the City discourages direct communication between developers and individual Commissioners, advising instead that all queries and data exchanges be channeled through City administrative staff to maintain a transparent public record. Mr. Perez and Dr. Stamps agreed to this procedure, with Dr. Stamps noting he would forward his historical research and contact notes through staff.

Dr. Stamps added a final point of clarification, noting that while the original property survey located the well and cistern, the feature was missing from the newly submitted architectural and landscape sheets. He requested that the development team officially restore the feature to the plan drawings.

Chairperson Thompson asked if the Commission was ready to vote and inquired if any members had further data requests. Seeing none, he called for a motion.

Ms. Lyons made a motion to postpone the decision until the next monthly meeting. Ms. Granthen requested an amendment to the motion to explicitly state the specific items driving the postponement. Ms. Kidorf and Ms. Lyons agreed that outlining the exact deliverables would provide clearer guidance for the applicant.

Ms. Lyons amended her motion to postpone the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for one month, with the condition that the applicant return with the listed supplementary materials.

Ms. Lyons further advised that any digital slide presentations utilized at the next meeting must accurately reflect the dry basin design rather than displaying outdated wet pond concepts to prevent confusion. Mr. Perez agreed to compile a targeted revision packet addressing these exact concerns.

The amended motion was seconded by Ms. Granthen. Dr. Stamps withdrew his initial second in favor of the amended motion and seconded it as well. Chairperson Thompson called for a roll call vote.

A motion was made by Lyons, seconded by Thompson, that this matter be Postponed. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 6 - Elias, Granthen, Lyons, Stamps, Thompson and McGunn

Excused 3 - Tischer, Lemanski and Morlan

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission hereby postpones the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for File No. PHDC2026-0002 at the property located at 3861 South Adams Road and 3880 South Boulevard West for a period of one month, with the directive that the applicant return to the next regularly scheduled meeting with a revised and complete application packet addressing the following required findings, clarifications, and conditions:

1. Structural Cross-Sections: The applicant shall submit formal engineering and architectural cross-sections featuring both existing and proposed contour lines. This must include an east-west section cut running directly through the center line of the proposed dry retention basin, a north-south section cut running through the center line of the historic stone house, and a secondary north-south section cut detailing the changing grade near the right-of-way.

2. Historical Cistern Preservation Plan: The applicant must officially locate and restore the 19th-century water cistern/well to all master site, architectural, and landscaping layout drawings. Additionally, the applicant shall provide on-site photographs of the feature and outline a safe, structurally sound preservation and landscape integration strategy.

3. Localized Tree Inventory: The applicant shall provide a targeted, shortened text-editable list (Word or Excel format) detailing the exact species, health status, and designation (preservation or removal) of all trees located in the immediate vicinity and quadrant of the historic home.

Plan and Presentation Consistency: The applicant must resolve all graphical data and spreadsheet contradictions across the architectural, layout, and tree inventory sheets. Furthermore, any digital presentations or imagery utilized during the subsequent review must accurately depict the currently proposed dry basin design rather than outdated wet pond concepts.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Granthen provided an update regarding the Michigan History Conference, which she and Dr. Stamps recently attended. She reported that the Friday evening reception hosted at the Rochester Hills Museum received exceptional feedback from attendees, with many expressing a desire for the museum to become a permanent annual venue for the event. Ms. Granthen commended the museum staff and volunteers for their excellent hospitality. She noted that City Council member David Blair was in attendance, and Commissioner Morlan assisted at the event as a docent. She also expressed hope that Samantha from the Rochester Hills archives would have the opportunity to present at next year's conference.

Mr. McLeod reported that the historic property located at 1081 Tienken Road, situated near the roundabout, is currently listed for sale. He informed the Commission that City staff and Ms. Kidorf have received numerous daily inquiries from prospective buyers regarding potential building alterations and the

scope of historic district regulations. Mr. McLeod noted that while an application is unlikely to be finalized by next month, the property will likely come before the Commission for review in the near future.

NEXT MEETING DATE

June 11, 2026

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, it was moved by Lyons, seconded by McGunn, to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

Minutes were prepared by Jennifer MacDonald

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

Jason Thompson, Chairperson