



Rochester Hills

Minutes

Historic Districts Commission

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Rochester Hills, MI
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Home Page:
www.rochesterhills.org

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: Brennan Deel

Thursday, May 8, 2025

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 5 - Katherine Altherr-Rogers, Julie Granthen, Richard Stamps, Jason Thompson and Bryan Lemanski

Excused 4 - Yousif Elias, Kelly Lyons, Charles Tischer and Michael McGunn

Others Present:

Chris McLeod, Planning Manager
Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting
Janis Ferry, Historic Districts Study Committee
Jennifer MacDonald, Recording Secretary
Brennan Deel, Rochester Hills Government Youth Council Representative

Mr. Elias, Ms. Lyons, Mr. McGunn and Mr. Tischer provided prior notice that they would not be in attendance and were excused.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2025-0208](#) December 12, 2024 Draft HDC Meeting Minutes

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

Aye 5 - Altherr-Rogers, Granthen, Stamps, Thompson and Lemanski

Excused 4 - Elias, Lyons, Tischer and McGunn

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Janis Ferry, member of the Historic Districts Study Committee, reported that

she and Kelly Lyons have been researching the creation of plaques for buildings in the Rochester Hills Historic District, following up on a previous meeting's discussion. She provided some historical context, noting the Van Hoosen Farm's National Historic Registry status and the dedication of residents to adhering to the district's regulations, some even wanting to join after initially being outside the boundaries. Inspired by seeing plaques in other historic areas, they believe it's important for Rochester Hills. They envision plaques to identify buildings within the district, regardless of age, as all share a desire to be part of the historic community. To move forward, the project would require a budget and decisions on plaque design and materials. Ferry distributed a packet showing an example from Rochester. She explained that various materials could be considered, including tin, aluminum, and the more expensive, but beautiful, Pewabic Pottery. She also mentioned the possibility of commissioning a world-renowned artist, a Rochester Hills native, though this would be a significant expense. Ferry emphasized that any plaque chosen will become a permanent part of the area's historical record.

Dr. Stamps thanked Janis Ferry for her efforts and noted that signage enhances the sense of place in Rochester Hills, both for residents and to educate the public about significant buildings. He acknowledged the widespread use of historic signage elsewhere and agreed it's a good idea. However, he raised concerns about the Commission's budget, stating it might currently have very limited or no funds for such a project and is not in a position to immediately fund signage. He suggested they could support ideas or fundraising and mentioned that homeowners may have to pay for some aspects of registering their properties. He added that owners of State registered historic properties have to pay for their plaque.

Ms. Ferry noted that some are provided by cities so that they all match.

Ms. Altherr-Rogers noted that a number of years ago there were plaques for historic districts in Avon Township, and stated that she has one. She commented that it is not very big and is brass.

Ms. Ferry commented that she knows someone that works for Ford and has a connection to CNC stamping. She stated that she thought that the Commission would want something more special. She noted that she and Ms. Lyons cannot go any further without funding.

Mr. McLeod suggested that the cost range for similar plaques could be anywhere from a low amount to several hundred dollars. He noted that there is no current budget for this, so funding would require a budget amendment be approved by City Council, who would want to know the potential cost. McLeod also pointed out the need for a policy decision on whether the plaques would be fully city-funded, cost-shared with residents, or entirely resident-funded, proposing the committee discuss both the cost range and the funding policy.

Ms. Ferry noted that Pleasant Ridge has plaques done by Pewabic Pottery, and those are running close to \$800 each. She explained that for the City of Rochester, the homeowner's portion is around \$170 and the City is picking up part of the cost. She commented that it could be made cheaply or something a

bit more grand, and it would depend upon the Commission's desires. She stated that she doubted that people would pay \$800, but if she was living in the district, she would want something special, even if the home were not historic.

Dr. Stamps thanked Ms. Ferry again for her efforts and commented that he definitely thought it should be pursued. He suggested that more specifics needed to be obtained as to costs. He commented that he had a problem with a pottery piece, stating that it seems a bit more delicate to him. He stated that he would go for a metal plaque that would hook onto the wall externally.

Ms. Ferry suggested that the ones in Alexandria are oval and are beautiful. She suggested that the tree or the outline of the schoolhouse could be incorporated.

Mr. McLeod stated that staff will provide some support to Ms. Ferry in terms of seeing if they could get some additional numbers and statistics. He commented that he would expect that the City would want this designed by a professional as to what the design aesthetic would look like and that would be a cost. He suggested that staff will approach administration and see if they would support it.

NEW BUSINESS

2025-0202

Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness - File No. PHDC2025-0003 - to construct a pergola at 6587 Cornerstone Ln., located on the north side of Cornerstone, west of Washington Rd., zoned R-1 One Family Residential, Parcel No. 15-01-326-010; Skyview Detroit, Applicant

(Staff Report dated 4-14-25, Location Map, Site Plan, Elevations, Rendering and Application had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Present for the applicant was Taylor Calero, Skyview Detroit, contractor.

Chairperson Thompson introduced this item and invited the applicant to the presenters' table. He noted that the request is for a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a pergola at 6587 Cornerstone Lane.

Mr. Calero stated that they are the contractors working with the homeowner who is looking to construct a pergola as shade for an adjacent pool in their backyard.

Ms. Kidorf explained that it is a newer house that is non-historic, and the pergola is compatible with the materials, size and massing of the historic district.

Dr. Stamps commented that it is good to remind the Commission and the community that there are some standards, that this has been reviewed, and what is being proposed fits in with respect to massing and size. He stated that he supports the request.

Chairperson Thompson asked for any additional comments from Commissioners. Seeing no further comments or questions, he made the

motion in the packet to grant the Certificate of Appropriateness. The motion was seconded by Dr. Stamps.

After calling for a roll call vote, Chairperson Thompson announced that the motion passed unanimously.

After the vote, Dr. Stamps stated that this is another example of working together, and commented that the Historic Districts Commission is not here to slow things down relative to growth and development.

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

Aye 5 - Altherr-Rogers, Granthen, Stamps, Thompson and Lemanski

Excused 4 - Elias, Lyons, Tischer and McGunn

Resolved, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a pergola at 6587 Cornerstone Lane in the Stoney Creek Historic District, Parcel Identification Number 70-15-01-326-010, with the following Findings and Conditions:

1) The property is in the Stoney Creek Historic District, the house is non-contributing to the district (non-historic), and the proposed pergola is compatible in massing, size, scale and materials with this part of the district;

2) The proposed pergola construction 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 will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

2025-0203

Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness - File No. PHDC2025-0004 - to construct and addition at 1046 E. Tienken Rd., located on the south side of Tienken between Van Hoosen Rd. and Washington Rd., zoned R-4 One Family Residential, Parcel No. 15-01-352-036; Vincent Sinacola, Applicant

(Staff Report dated 4-17-25, Site Plan, Floor Plans and Elevations, Materials List, HDC Application, Previously Approved Plans, and HDC Minutes of 3/14/24 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Present for the application was Vincent Sinacola, owner.

Chairperson Thompson introduced this item, noting it was a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for an addition at 1046 E. Tienken, and invited the applicant forward. He asked Ms. Kidorf if she had anything to add.

Ms. Kidorf noted that the application is essentially the same as what had been approved previously.

Mr. Sinacola expressed his appreciation for the Commission's time, and explained that the reason this has taken so long is that contractors, especially engineers, are hard to come by. He added that the extent of tying a new foundation into the old foundation from a house built in 1850 was fairly extensive, and it took a couple of rounds with different engineers to finally give a report on how to underpin the new foundation. He stated that they are now ready to take plans to the City for permits, and mentioned that there had been a few minor changes, including the chimney and removing the walkout basement.

Dr. Stamps asked if it was basically what had already been approved.

Mr. McLeod responded that the previous approval had become null and void due to the time lapse. He stated that there were some minor changes; however, as Ms. Kidorf indicated the intent and overall scheme of what is being proposed is very much similar to what had been previously approved.

Chairperson Thompson asked if anyone had anything else to contribute. Seeing no one, he made the motion in the packet, and along with consulting Ms. Kidorf, noted that the first finding was that the existing home is not contributing at this point. He noted that the proposed addition is compatible in massing, size, scale and materials, and the proposed addition is in keeping with the Department of Interior Standards. Mr. Lemanski seconded the motion.

After calling for a roll call vote, Chairperson Thompson noted that the motion passed unanimously;.

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

Aye 5 - Altherr-Rogers, Granthen, Stamps, Thompson and Lemanski

Excused 4 - Elias, Lyons, Tischer and McGunn

Resolved, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of an addition at 1046 E. Tienken in the Stoney Creek Historic District, Parcel Identification Number 70-15-01-352-036, with the following Findings and Conditions

1) The existing house is not a contributing building in the Stoney Creek Historic District and the proposed addition is compatible in massing, size, scale and materials with the existing house and district;

2) The proposed addition 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 will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

DISCUSSION

2025-0204

Discussion of HDC Mission and Goals

(McLeod memo dated 5/1/25 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.

Chairperson Thompson noted that a discussion on the Historic Districts Commission had been started a year ago, and he asked if Staff had anything to add.

Mr. McLeod noted that the discussion originated from a conversation at the museum. He explained that a key focus is evaluating the current role and activities of the Historic District Commission and historic districts in general, and leads to questions of whether there is more that the Commission can be doing, and how the Commission fits into the larger scheme of the city as the city has continued to grow and evolve. He noted that another aim is to identify any specific items the Historic District Commission wants to include in the ongoing Master Plan Revision.

He suggested that the Commission discuss where they want to see this body move toward, and whether it feels like it is doing what it needs to do. He commented that the core question is whether the Commission is fulfilling its intended role effectively, and this prompts a discussion on whether the Commission should adjust its scope or commitment.

Dr. Stamps expressed the importance of the Commission and its role in creating a meaningful and proud community. He suggested holding a meeting at the calf barn, inviting all historic district residents. The event would thank residents for preserving history and start a discussion about the districts' future. Gathering residents' input is critical to determine their vision for the next 20-50 years, with an open forum to address goals, objectives, and concerns. The invitation could include the agenda and a prompt for their concerns. The idea of signage for recognized districts or homes was discussed, seeking resident feedback. Concerns about the alleyway within the Stoney Creek Historic District, including its condition, access, and resident preferences, were raised, with a potential role for the Commission to lobby the City. He noted that the overall objective is to understand residents' issues and vision for the districts' future.

Chairperson Thompson endorsed the idea of organizing an event to gather resident input, noting previous attempts to redraw district boundaries met with resistance, indicating a clear preference to maintain current boundaries. Thompson emphasized the need to understand what residents want and how the Commission can assist within its mission. The suggestion of signage was supported, but concern was raised regarding potential costs, which can be a challenge within city budgets. Despite the financial concern, Thompson stated

that exploring a feasible signage proposal is worthwhile.

Dr. Stamps added that in the discussion it can be expressed that residents are doing a great job in taking care of these buildings, and that the Commission wants to honor them, suggesting that they install a sign. He suggested providing other examples on how other communities have funded the signs and asked for the residents' input.

Mr. McLeod noted that the conversation seems to be very much Stoney Creek-centric and asked if it should be focused on that particular historic district or if all three districts would be invited.

Chairperson Thompson responded that he would say all three should be included, along with individual non-contiguous properties.

Dr. Stamps emphasized the importance of including all districts and specifically mentioned the little schoolhouse at Brewster and Tienken Road, noting the deteriorated roof of its garage. He suggested inviting its representatives to the meeting, along with all others. He also expressed appreciation for the new roof on the Crooks Road barn, recognizing progress being made. Dr. Stamps also pointed out the Lorna Stone house on Adams Road, still surrounded by a fence, and suggested adding an agenda item for updates or feedback on properties where certificates of appropriateness were issued to track progress. He felt this would provide insights into ongoing projects and highlighted that staff might have knowledge of developments unknown to the Commission. He proposed creating a regular agenda item for these updates, potentially with a positive or catchy title to encourage discussion.

Vice Chairperson Granthen suggested that a program to present the Earl Borden award this year could be incorporated. She mentioned a couple of different ways to possibly secure funding for work.

Dr. Stamps recalled that there had been a meeting at the Calf Barn and noted that Mr. McKay had some ideas relative to the alley and boundaries.

Mr. McLeod suggested discussing several items during the resident meeting. He highlighted the ongoing discussion about a pathway or sidewalk along Tienken, specifically in the Stoney Creek area. He commented that this is viewed as a potential safety improvement due to nearby schools, but questions remain about its placement, impact on properties, and overall design. He also mentioned the idea of promoting the historic districts more prominently through the city's online presence and communication channels. Mr. McLeod suggested recognizing completed renovations of historic properties in city communications, such as the Hills Herald or RH Connect, drawing a parallel to how new businesses are promoted with ribbon-cutting ceremonies. He believes this type of recognition would highlight the importance of preserving historic properties.

Dr. Stamps brought up the upcoming 250th anniversary of America in 2026 and proposed several ways the Historic District Commission and the city could celebrate. His ideas included creating a time capsule, participating in the local

parade with themed signage, requesting a proclamation from City Council in January to declare it the "year of our 250th birthday," and publishing an article in the January edition of the Hills Herald to announce planned events and highlight the importance of history. He praised the City for its existing coverage of historical topics in the Hills Herald and suggested building on that. Dr. Stamps also discussed creating a proposed proclamation from the Historic District Commission to send to City Council, aiming to show the Commission's active role in the community and its desire to celebrate. He brainstormed various celebratory elements, such as fireworks and cake, encouraging others to share their ideas as well. He suggested asking the Mayor to incorporate the 250th Birthday into the annual fireworks program, on the last Wednesday in June.

He suggested themed costumes to incorporate into the fireworks program or a parade, such as one of the founding fathers or Betsy Ross. He noted that during the Bicentennial in 1969, people wore period clothing.

Dr. Stamps further discussed celebratory ideas, suggesting participation in the Memorial Day parade in addition to other events. He stated that participants could consider wearing costumes, like portraying George Washington. He mentioned that Oakland County and its historical groups, including the History Coalition, are also planning 250th anniversary celebrations, and mentioned examples of other groups' plans including cemetery walks honoring Revolutionary War soldiers and digitizing historical society information. He proposed the idea of a county-wide float that could be used in various parades, featuring a large birthday cake and adaptable signage to represent different historical societies at each event.

Dr. Stamps also suggested that the Commission compile a list of celebration ideas and distribute it for feedback and further brainstorming. He specifically mentioned that marking historical sites with markers would be a great activity to align with the 250th anniversary.

Discussed

2025-0205

Earl Borden and Preservation Month Discussion

(McLeod Memo dated 5/1/25 and Earl Borden Awards List had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Chairperson Thompson asked if anyone had any thoughts on any individual or building to nominate for this year's Earl Borden Awards.

Dr. Stamps responded that at this time there is nothing that is coming to mind. He mentioned the roof being done on the Crooks Road barn, but noted that something for an Earl Borden Award should be significant.

Mr. McLeod concurred, noting that he went through that same discussion with Ms. MacDonald that in terms of physical construction nothing rises to the level of an award. He suggested that if there is an organization or group someone may know about, they might mention it.

Dr. Stamps stated that the Commission is not mandated to give out an award,

and he commented that this would maintain the loftiness of the award if it is saved for special things.

He asked if anyone was aware of the future for Dinosaur Hill Nature Preserve or Borden Park. He stated that he had heard there were discussions between the City and the County relative to Borden.

Mr. McLeod responded that there are conversations ongoing relative to the City and County doing some form of partnership at one of the parks; however, these discussions have a long way to go and were relative to several different parks. He commented that whether or not that ultimately happens, both parties have to come to the table and say that it works for both.

Dr. Stamps stated that it is his understanding that Dinosaur Hill did not fit in with the kind of things that county parks do, so that was off the table. He commented that he likes the idea of conversation and cooperation. He suggested that cooperation with the County could help preserve, maintain, and educate people and bring more people in. He mentioned that Bret Rasegan is retiring from Oakland County's Planning and Economic Division and suggested that he could be recruited for the Commission in the future, as he lives in the Historic District and has had some great ideas. He suggested that Mr. Rasegan or one of his staff members be invited to come in and provide an update to the Commission about tourism in the County.

Mr. McLeod noted that Ms. Roediger and Ms. Valentik attended a couple of the Oakland County Economic Development presentations, and stated that he would touch base with them about the discussions held.

Discussed

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2025-0206

Election of Officers 2025

(McLeod Memo dated 4/23/25 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Chairperson Thompson noted that Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary should be appointed for this year.

Dr. Stamps stated that in an attempt to maintain stability, continuity and knowledge base, he would propose that he would nominate the current Chair, Jason Thompson, and Vice Chair, Julie Granthen, to continue. He noted that he did not speak with the current Secretary about continuing.

Seeing no other nominations, Chairperson Thompson asked for a vote to confirm Chair and Vice Chair.

The vote passed unanimously.

Vice Chairperson Granthen nominated Mr. Lemanski as Secretary. Dr.

Stamps seconded the nomination.

Chairperson Thompson called for a vote to confirm Mr. Lemanski as Secretary.

The vote passed unanimously.

Appointed Jason Thompson as Chairperson, Julie Granthen as Vice Chairperson, and Bryan Lemanski as Secretary.

2025-0207

2025 HDC Meeting Schedule

(McLeod Memo dated 4/23/25 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Chairperson Thompson asked for a motion to approve the meeting schedule as presented.

It was moved by Lemanski, seconded by Dr. Stamps, to approve the schedule as presented.

Chairperson Thompson noted that the vote passed unanimously.

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

Aye 5 - Altherr-Rogers, Granthen, Stamps, Thompson and Lemanski

Excused 4 - Elias, Lyons, Tischer and McGunn

Resolved, the Rochester Hills Historic District Commission hereby establishes its 2025 meeting schedule at the May 8, 2025 Regular Meeting as follows:

ROCHESTER HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION

2025 MEETING DATES*

January 9, 2025 (Cancelled)
February 13, 2025 (Cancelled)
March 13, 2025 (Cancelled)
April 10, 2025 (Cancelled)
May 8, 2025
June 12, 2025
July 10, 2025
August 14, 2025
September 11, 2025
October 9, 2025
November 13, 2025
December 11, 2025

*Meetings will be held on the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. The Historic Districts Commission reserves the right to add Special Meetings or Workshops as necessary. Meetings may be cancelled if no applications are received in the appropriate timeframe. Meetings will be held in the Auditorium of the City Municipal Offices at 1000 Rochester Hills Dr., Rochester Hills, MI 48309.

Agendas are available on the City's Web Page at www.rochesterhills.org.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- June 12, 2025

Mr. Thompson mentioned that he would not be in attendance at a June meeting as he would be out of town. It was mentioned that while there is no application for a June meeting, there were some discussion items needing follow up, and perhaps it could be a working meeting to make some plans.

Chairperson Thompson stated that as a part of preparing, perhaps the Earl Borden Award could be integrated into next year's plans. He suggested reaching out to Mr. McKay to see if the Museum wanted to be a part of the 250th anniversary.

Dr. Stamps asked if anyone had heard how Rod and Sue Wilson were doing, noting that they had been flag carriers for so many years and had received an Earl Borden Award in 2002. He added that a meeting could include discussion of signage, the 250th birthday, and perhaps include inviting Bret Rasegan to come and give an update on the County's planning and proposals. He mentioned that a piece of property has been acquired by the County just south of Telegraph County Complex for the Oakland County Bicentennial Park on the property that was once the old state hospital. He added that Mr. Rasegan could discuss Oakland tourism.

Vice Chairperson Granthen reported that she and Dr. Stamps attended the Michigan History Conference. They specifically saw a presentation by Samantha Lawrence, the Van Hoosen Museum archivist. Vice Chairperson Granthen also attended a play last week called "Three Needles and a Suture" about Bertha, Alice, and Sarah Van Hoosen. She note that the play was performed at the Macomb Community Center and later at the museum, where it was a sold-out show with professional actors.

Dr. Stamps suggested that the play could be brought back as a part of the 250th birthday celebration.

He mentioned that this year's County's Ice Cream Social dates are July 26 and 27.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, it was moved by Lemanski, seconded by Thompson, to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Minutes were prepared by Jennifer MacDonald.

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

Jason Thompson, Chairperson

