



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: Brennan Deel

Thursday, August 14, 2025

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Present 5 - Katherine Altherr-Rogers, Julie Granthen, Kelly Lyons, Richard Stamps and Charles Tischer
Excused 4 - Yousif Elias, Jason Thompson, Bryan Lemanski and Michael McGunn

Others Present:

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

Chairperson Thompson, Mr. Elias, Mr. Lemanski and Mr. McGunn provided prior notice that they would not be in attendance and were excused.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2025-0344](#) July 10, 2025 Draft HDC Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Stamps, seconded by Lyons, that this matter be Approved.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 5 - Altherr-Rogers, Granthen, Lyons, Stamps and Tischer
Excused 4 - Elias, Thompson, Lemanski and McGunn

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

NEW BUSINESS

2025-0343

Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness - File No. PHDC2025-0006 - to remove a lean-to between two barns at the property located at 1568 W. Avon Rd., located on the north side of Avon between Livernois and Old Perch, zoned R-3 One Family Residential District, Parcel No. 15-16-377-037; Linda Peterson, Applicant

(Staff Report dated 8-4-25, Location Map, Application, Photos and Letter from Contractor dated 7-20-25 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Present for the applicant was Linda Peterson, 1568 W. Avon Road.

Vice Chairperson Granthen introduced this item and noted it was an application requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove a lean-to between two barns at the property located at 1568 West Avon Road. She invited Ms. Peterson to convey what she was requesting.

Ms. Peterson stated that she is the homeowner of a historical home, and there has been a problem discovered between the two barns. She noted that prior to when the barns were moved on the property, there had been a silo, which has been gone for a long time. She noted that the lean-to has had a lot of damage to its section of roof, and they had never used it except to store wood and equipment when they had horse trailers as they felt it was not safe.

She explained that their insurance company is stating that something has to be done so that it does not damage the two barns. She noted that she consulted with a contractor, along with a retired barn doctor, who noted that at some point there is a reality check that if the structure is not safe anymore it should be taken down.

She stressed that everyone knows that they go the extra mile to maintain everything with the house, barns, grass, and trees, as this is a very visible property. She pointed out that they have not come before the HDC since the house was moved.

Vice Chairperson Granthen asked if Ms. Kidorf had anything to add.

Ms. Kidorf stated that she had nothing beyond what was included in the Staff Report.

Vice Chairperson Granthen opened discussion up to the Commissioners.

Dr. Stamps thanked Ms. Peterson on behalf of the Commission for taking care of one of the gems in the city. He noted that he did visit the property and got to see the dilemma that the Petersons face, and stated that it makes sense to him to respond to the request and approve the Certificate as it will protect the barns.

Vice Chairperson Granthen noted that no other Commissioners had any comments, and asked if anyone wished to make a motion.

Mr. Tischer made the motion in the packet to approve the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lyons.

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

Following the vote, Dr. Stamps stated that he appreciated the background information submitted and the fact that there are not very many barns left in the city. He appreciated the fact that they have been able to preserve and care for them in addition to the house.

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

Aye 5 - Altherr-Rogers, Granthen, Lyons, Stamps and Tischer

Excused 4 - Elias, Thompson, Lemanski and McGunn

Resolved, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the collapsing 1-story lean-to between the barn and tool shed, Parcel Identification Number 15-16-377-037, with the following Findings and Conditions:

1) The collapsing lean-to is deteriorated beyond repair and is not a character defining feature of the property. The work as proposed **is** appropriate for the property, provided that the adjacent barn and tool shed walls are repaired to match the existing after the lean-to is removed; and

2) The proposed lean-to demolition as proposed **is** in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, in particular standard number 2 as follows:

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

2025-0342

Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness - File No. PHDC2025-0005 - for the barn roof, siding and windows located at 1841 Crooks Rd., zoned R-1 One Family Residential District, Parcel No. 15-20-428-003; Lijo Anthony, Grace Properties Group, LLC, Applicant

(Staff Report dated 8-4-25, Location Map, HDC Application, Window Form, Window Quote, Window Catalog, Photos of New Roof, Full View, and Windows had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Present for the applicant was Lijo Anthony, Grace Properties.

Vice Chairperson Granthen invited Mr. Anthony forward and introduced this item relative to a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the barn roof, siding and windows for 1841 Crooks Road.

Mr. Anthony, who stated he purchased the property in 2019, and requested approval to replace the windows on the barn. He explained that during a recent renovation, he discovered that the existing windows were not original and were in poor condition, with broken glass and some falling out when the siding was

removed. To protect the interior from water damage, the windows were boarded up. He is now requesting permission to install new vinyl windows that are black to match the existing trim on the barn. He stated that the barn has already been extensively renovated with a new roof and that the goal is to have the new windows complement the new look.

Vice Chairperson Granthen stated that she has been watching the progress since she lives nearby. She asked Ms. Kidorf if she has any comments.

Ms. Kidorf noted that she requested Mr. Anthony bring photos of the existing windows, as she wanted to ensure that what they would be putting in would match the openings that are there.

Mr. Anthony provided photos and responded that when the company came out, they indicated that they would match exactly to have the same appearance, whether it be a slider or double-hung.

Ms. Kidorf noted that the windows do not appear to be original; however, it is hard to tell. She mentioned an aluminum slider window, noting it would not be original and would be appropriate to replace with a vinyl window.

Mr. Tischer asked if it was unusual historically for a barn to have this many windows.

Ms. Kidorf responded that she suspects that they were added when it was a pottery studio. She commented that barns particularly with a stone foundation had windows in the lower level; however, it depends on the barn and what it was used for.

Ms. Lyons asked Ms. Kidorf to speak to the Secretary of Interior Standards relative to something that looks like it had already been replaced and is not original.

Ms. Kidorf responded that if it were a historic window, it would need to be deteriorated beyond repair. She noted that there is more leeway if he is matching what is there now, as it is basically replacing a non-historic window with a non-historic window. She commented that she would guess that there is no prohibition on it in the standards.

Ms. Lyons stated that if they are already non-traditional windows, and there is no accurate data as to what the original windows were, she would personally like to see Mr. Anthony have leeway to make it look like the windows that have the two-over-two. She added that casement windows would not have been used and double hung would be best.

Discussion continued as to whether the windows should be double hung, or slides.

Mr. Anthony stated that the barn is full of surprises and he found two more windows yesterday that are behind the sliding door which is aluminum or vinyl that cannot be seen from the outside.

Ms. Kidorf stated that for the sideways window, she would not have them change the opening to make that window a double-hung and it should remain a slide. For the other double-hung windows, they should be two-over-two.

Dr. Stamps stated that if the idea is to make it look more like a barn than a pottery studio perhaps something should be put in to make it look more like a rural barn from Avon Township.

Mr. Tischer commented that there are no existing previous photos.

Mr. Anthony stated that as in previous meetings, he had suggested that he wanted to make it into a library or something for the residents to use, as they love to go in there; however, the condition of the barn is such that the insurance companies would not allow it. He added that when he goes in there, he sneezes, which is problematic. He explained that right now it is intended for storage, and they plan to clean it up and get a dumpster for the contents.

Dr. Stamps asked if it was known whether it was used as a hay barn, and he described some of the materials or pulleys and lifts that might be there.

Mr. Anthony responded that it actually had a furnace, electrical, and lighting; and everything had been done without permits. He noted that when he took it over he was made to remove a lot of that as a part of the City's requirements before the building permit was issued. He commented that he does not honestly know what historic value is there anymore; however, he loves the look of it and his business is named after the Barns.

Vice Chairperson Granthen asked if anyone wanted to make a motion.

Ms. Lyons made the motion in the packet to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tischer, who asked if he could add a third condition relative to the proposed replacements being in line with something that looks like it belongs with the barn as acceptable alternatives, with the exception of the slider window.

Ms. Kidorf noted that the proposed resolution asked for photographs to be provided of the windows to be replaced along with the window order form, which were submitted tonight; therefore, the motion could remove those first two conditions.

Vice Chairperson Granthen asked for a roll call vote on the motion, as was amended by Mr. Tischer's suggestion and Ms. Kidorf's comments of what had been provided tonight. After the vote, she announced that the motion passed unanimously. She thanked Mr. Anthony for all he has done to preserve the barn.

Mr. Anthony noted that the whole property has changed over from vacant land and overgrown bushes to something everyone comments on.

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

Aye 5 - Altherr-Rogers, Granthen, Lyons, Stamps and Tischer

Excused 4 - Elias, Thompson, Lemanski and McGunn

Resolved, in the matter of File No. PHDC 2025-005, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of 6 aluminum windows, repair and painting of siding, and replacement of the asphalt shingle roof on the historic barn at 1841 Crooks Road, Parcel Identification Number 15-20-428-003, with the following Findings and Conditions:

1) The existing aluminum windows are not original to the building and are not character defining features, the siding has been repaired to match the existing, and the asphalt shingle roof replaces an existing asphalt shingle roof. The work as proposed **is** appropriate for the historic barn on the property; and

2) The proposed window replacement **is** in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation provided the following conditions are met to the Commission's satisfaction:

1. The size and configuration of the proposed replacement windows are to be in a style and configuration that is harmonious with the original design aesthetic of the barn, specifically the two-over-two double hung windows, with the exception of the existing slider window due to its orientation, as approved by Staff.

3) The proposed siding repair and roof replacement **is** in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, in particular standard number 6 as follows:

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

DISCUSSION

[2025-0204](#) Discussion of HDC Mission, Goals & Projects

(Historic District Goals, Objectives and Strategies dated 8-5-25, McLeod Memos dated 7-3-25 and 5-1-25, Draft HDC Minutes of 7-10-25, and HDC Minutes of 5-8-25 had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Mr. McLeod led the discussion about the goals for the Historic Districts Commission. He explained that these goals were developed at a previous meeting, are tied to the City's Master Plan, and were sent to the Commission members to review. He explained that the Master Plan is currently in a 63-day review period and will be considered for approval by the Planning Commission in October. He noted that many of the Commission's goals have already been included as action items in the Master Plan. He opened the floor for discussion, welcoming any questions, comments, or suggestions for changes to the goals before they are finalized and sent to the City's consultants working on the Plan.

Dr. Stamps asked if Mr. McLeod had gotten any response regarding the verbiage that they had been discussing for inclusion in the Master Plan.

Mr. McLeod explained that the consultants have incorporated the Commission's suggestions into the City's Master Plan as a list of action items. He noted that the Master Plan focuses on themes like historic preservation, sustainability, and maintaining the city's historic assets. He assured the Commission that their recommendations align with these themes and were readily accepted by the consultants for inclusion in the final draft.

Ms. Lyons looked at the Goals provided in the packet, and stated that they look better organized and more succinct. She commented that she appreciated the categories of communication, education and projects.

Vice Chairperson Granthen noted that the Rochester Hills Museum Foundation Board is having their meeting tomorrow morning, and asked if it would be appropriate to mention its inclusion.

Mr. McLeod stated that obviously this is the HDC's list, but if the Foundation Board has any ideas or thoughts, whether it is something the HDC should be doing as a body or something the City should be doing relative to the Master Plan, and by all means that discussion could determine what best fits or what course of action should be suggested.

Vice Chairperson Granthen stated that it couldn't hurt.

Mr. McLeod noted that Council approved the distribution of the Draft Plan on Monday night, and hopefully the website will be live tomorrow. He pointed out that it has always been public content, and anyone could go on Legistar to see the information, just as the Commission sees their agenda items. He explained that the review period is for all comments, whether HDC related or otherwise, and they could be brought to him or to Ms. MacDonald for the Planning Commission and ultimately City Council to consider whether it is appropriate to put into the Plan.

Vice Chairperson Granthen asked if there were any other comments.

Dr. Stamps stated that he noted that during the May discussion, they talked about America's 250th anniversary, and some ideas such as a time capsule, or requesting a proclamation from City Council in January. He noted that it might be an opportunity for the HDC to write up some things to share with the City, or perhaps contribute to the Hills Herald publication.

Mr. McLeod noted that the upcoming Hills Herald would be due in mid-September is a Fall/Winter edition. He explained that in 2026, there will be a Spring edition out in February, and a Summer/Fall one in June covering July through October.

Ms. Lyons suggested having an article in the Hills Herald every issue.

Vice Chairperson Granthen noted that the Museum Foundation Board has the

250th anniversary on their agenda tomorrow as well, because the Museum is interested in doing something. She offered that the programming could possibly coordinate.

Dr. Stamps stated that he has been working on possible ideas toward a proclamation, and shared possible wording: "On this, the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America, we wish to express thanks and appreciation to the individuals listed below. These are the people who live in care for and preserve, not only for us today, but for generations to follow the cultural resources of our city." And go ahead with a list of names. He suggested listing the homeowners who deserve recognition.

Vice Chairperson Granthen suggested that the homeowners' permission should be secured before listing them.

Discussed

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. McLeod reported that the Adams Road project is slated to go to another Public Comment Period in October. He explained that it was originally going to be this month; however, they were having difficulty getting communication back from the schools. He noted that he will keep the Commission informed.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- Regular Meeting, Thursday, September 11, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, it was moved by Lyons, seconded by Tischer, to adjourn the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

Minutes were prepared by Jennifer MacDonald.

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

Julie Granthen, Vice Chairperson