



Rochester Hills

Minutes

Historic Districts Commission

1000 Rochester Hills Dr
Rochester Hills, MI
48309
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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, March 12, 2026

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

In accordance with the provisions of Act 267 of the Public Acts of 1976, as amended, the Open Meetings Act, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission will hold a Special Meeting on Thursday, March 12, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium at City Hall, 1000 Rochester Hills Drive, Rochester Hills, MI 48309, to consider a request to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for 950 Van Hoosen Rd. for building addition; approve the 2026 meeting schedule; discuss HDC mission and goals; and for other administrative business.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Thompson called the Historic Districts Commission meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Michigan time.

ROLL CALL

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

Ms. Altherr-Rogers, Ms. Lyons, and Mr. Lemanski provided prior notice that they would not be in attendance and were excused.

Present 6 - Yousif Elias, Julie Granthen, Richard Stamps, Jason Thompson, Charles Tischer and Michael McGunn

Excused 3 - Kelly Lyons, Bryan Lemanski and Katharine Altherr-Rogers

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2026-0101](#) August 14, 2025 Historic Districts Commission Minutes

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

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

Excused 3 - Lyons, Lemanski and Altherr-Rogers

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

NEW BUSINESS

2026-0102

Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness - File No. PHDC2026-0001 - to alter the existing windows and chimney, and to construct a new front porch and rear addition at the property located at 950 Van Hoosen Rd., located on the east side of Van Hoosen Rd. in the Stoney Creek Historic District, Parcel No. 15-02-477-005, zoned R-4 One Family Residential; Designhaus Architecture for Michael Martens, Applicant

(Staff Report dated 2/7/26, Location Map, Site Plan, Elevations, Floor Plans, Application and Additional Documents had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Present for the applicant was Andrew Miller, Designhaus Architecture.

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. Miller stated the request was straightforward and offered to answer questions regarding the proposed addition or alterations. Chairperson Thompson opened the floor for questions or comments from the Commissioners.

Dr. Stamps expressed appreciation for the property owners' support of the historic district concept, noting that while they live in a newer home and must navigate the commission's requirements, their efforts help protect the district from incompatible developments like skyscrapers or cell towers. He indicated that the proposal made sense to him. Chairperson Thompson asked if there were any further questions or comments and called for a motion. Mr. McGunn made the motion in the packet to approve the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tischer. After a roll call vote, Chairperson Thompson announced that the motion passed unanimously.

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

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

Excused 3 - Lyons, Lemanski and Altherr-Rogers

Resolved, that the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES** the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for constructing a new front porch, rear addition, new windows, and chimney re-cladding at 950 Van Hoosen Road, Parcel Identification Number 15-02-477-005, with the following Findings and Conditions:

1) The house at 950 Van Hoosen is not a contributing property of the Stony Creek Historic District

2) The proposed front porch, window replacement and new openings, chimney re-cladding, and two-story rear addition to the house is compatible in massing, size, scale, and materials with the remainder of the Stony Creek Historic District; and

3) The proposed work as proposed is in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines, in particular standards number 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.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2026-0103 2026 HDC Meeting Schedule

(McLeod Memo dated 3/5/26 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 McGunn, seconded by Elias, to approve the schedule as presented.

Chairperson Thompson noted that the vote passed unanimously.

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

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

Excused 3 - Lyons, Lemanski and Altherr-Rogers

Resolved, the Rochester Hills Historic District Commission hereby establishes its 2026 meeting schedule at the March 12, 2026 Regular Meeting as follows:

ROCHESTER HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION 2026 MEETING DATES*

January 8, 2026 (cancelled)
 February 12, 2026 (cancelled)
 March 12, 2026
 April 9, 2026
 May 14, 2026
 June 11, 2026

July 9, 2026
August 13, 2026
September 10, 2026
October 8, 2026
November 12, 2026
December 10, 2026

2026-0104 Election of Officers 2026

Chairperson Thompson opened the floor for nominations for the election of officers. Dr. Stamps expressed his satisfaction with the current slate of officers, noting their experience, enthusiasm, and commitment to history. He proposed that the existing leadership continue to serve, as they have served well in the past. Dr. Stamps made a motion to reelect the existing leadership, which was seconded by Mr. Tischer. Chairperson Thompson clarified that the slate consisted of Jason Thompson as Chairperson, Julie Granthen as Vice Chairperson, and Charles Tischer as Secretary. There were no other nominations or comments. The motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.

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

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

Excused 3 - Lyons, Lemanski and Altherr-Rogers

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission hereby appoints Jason Thompson to serve as its Chairperson, Julie Granthen to serve as its Vice Chairperson, and Chip Tischer to serve as its Secretary, each for a one-year term to expire the first meeting in January 2027.

2026-0108 Earl Borden and Preservation Month Discussion

(McLeod Memo dated 3/5/26 and Earl Borden Awards List had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Chairperson Thompson opened the discussion regarding potential nominations for the annual Earl Warden Preservation Month award. Mr. McGunn suggested Mr. Putnam on Tienken Road, noting his perseverance in maintaining his property. He acknowledged that while Mr. Putnam had received the award in 1995, over 30 years ago, his continued dedication remained admirable.

Vice Chairperson Granthen proposed honoring the Rochester Hills Museum and the Stony Creek Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) for their collaboration on a traveling history exhibit held in January. She noted that the exhibit was hosted at the library for approximately one week and included a lecture by a history professor from Rochester University that was well-attended. Ms. Granthen highlighted that the event received positive reviews and featured an opening "sendoff" attended by Mayor Barnett. She suggested that honoring both organizations would be an appropriate way to recognize their contribution to local history education. Dr. Stamps inquired if the exhibit was related to the displays currently in the meeting room, but Ms. Granthen clarified it was a traveling exhibit that was visiting various cities in Michigan and other states.

Discussion continued regarding the categories for the Earl Warden Preservation Month awards. Vice Chairperson Granthen suggested that the collaboration between the museum and the Daughters of the American Revolution could fit under "Preservation

Leadership" or "Special Recognition," particularly as it helped kick off the 250th anniversary of the United States. She offered to email the Commission a link to a Rochester Media article and suggested that photos might also be available on the Rochester Hills Library website. Dr. Stamps expressed support for honoring the joint effort between the museum and the community group. Regarding the earlier suggestion for Mr. Putnam, Dr. Stamps noted he had received a personal email from him regarding a proposed walkway and expressed a preference for seeing the house project completed before granting a new award. Mr. McGunn and Mr. Tischer agreed with this approach, though Mr. McGunn reiterated his admiration for Mr. Putnam's persistence.

Vice Chairperson Granthen moved that the Commission honor the Stony Creek Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), the Rochester Hills Museum, and the Rochester Hills Library for their roles in bringing a significant traveling history exhibit to the city. She emphasized that Rochester Hills was one of the few cities in the United States to host this exhibit. The motion proposed recognizing these groups under either the Special Recognition or Historic Preservation Award categories for providing a reception, hosting a historical lecture, and offering the facilities to kick off the nation's semi-quincentennial year. The motion was seconded by Dr. Stamps and was passed unanimously.

Mr. Elias spoke in favor of including the library, noting they play a significant role in many community events. Vice Chairperson Granthen expressed her appreciation for the exhibit's quality and promised to send further information to the members.

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

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

Excused 3 - Lyons, Lemanski and Altherr-Rogers

Resolved, that the Historic Districts Commission recognizes the Stoney Creek Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm, and the Rochester Hills Public Library for their work with regard to the United States Semiquincentennial Celebration at the Rochester Hills Public Library on January 11, 2026 for the Historic Preservation Award or Special Recognition.

2026-0108

Earl Borden and Preservation Month Discussion

Mr. Tischer requested an update regarding the Stone House and the property on Adams Road.

Mr. McLeod first provided a follow-up regarding the recognition awards, noting that the City's official focus on the America 250 celebration will occur in June and July. He indicated that the award presentation would likely take place during a City Council meeting in that time frame to align with those festivities. Staff will draft the resolution and order the plaques, and the Commission will have the opportunity to review and provide input on the resolution text before it is finalized.

Regarding the Stone House, Mr. McLeod reported that a new developer is working with the current landowner to develop the property. The city has received one concept plan and the first iteration of a site plan for the redevelopment. The developers are fully aware of the requirement to preserve the Stone House and were communicating with staff regarding the context of the

house versus the rest of the development just prior to the meeting. Administratively, staff intends to bring the developers before the HDC for commentary once the concept generally works.

The proposed project includes a series of multiple-family housing options, such as townhouses, apartments, and one-story ranches. Ms. Kidorf has provided initial input on the site plan iterations. The current idea is for the stone house to sit by itself to respect its territory and setting, while the rest of the development proceeds behind it to the east and down toward South Boulevard.

While the developer has not yet defined a specific use for the building, they are attempting to place it in a setting appropriate for preservation. The plan will eventually be brought to the Commission for formal approval. Mr. McLeod reported that the Stone House project is moving forward with a different developer who is part of a very well-funded group that has owned the property for approximately four or five years. He noted that this group appears very adamant about developing the property this time.

Mr. McLeod provided an update on the Adams Road project, stating that the group has presented a preferred alternative for the design. This concept consists of a series of three lanes, two lanes with a boulevard, and roundabouts at three of the major intersections. He noted that the draft plans currently sit at this stage while the study remains ongoing. Currently, the project is in the process of conducting noise studies, which is the only active work taking place. Mr. McLeod informed the Commission that there is still no funding available for the construction of the road. He explained that while the initial study was expected to take about five years, the project is currently in year three or four. A significant part of the design concept involves the removal of the rock walls, and the group is investigating ways to reutilize the rocks in a historically appropriate fashion.

Dr. Stamps expressed concern regarding the lack of communication from the engineering and commercial firms involved in the project. He noted that based on the project timeline, a formal proposal should be underway, yet no communication or questioning has occurred with the Historic Districts Commission or the local ad hoc preservation group. Dr. Stamps said there is an engineering tendency to favor a "straight line" approach that might involve tearing down and reassembling historic features rather than exploring preservation options. He suggested that there is room to move the road several feet to the east to accommodate a third lane without moving the historic stone walls, even if a mid-century modern house on the hill is impacted. He emphasized that the site is a National Historic Landmark and questioned if the firms had communicated with the City, Oakland University, or Oakland County officials as previously promised.

Mr. McLeod responded that there has been no direct communication regarding historic preservation. He explained that the project team has an ad hoc meeting group and, in their view, they have completed the historic preservation aspect by finishing their inventory. Regarding the suggestion to move the road, Mr. McLeod noted that the current proposal already involves the potential condemnation of one or two houses.

Mr. McLeod clarified that moving the road further east to avoid the historic features would result in the consumption of additional houses. He explained that the primary challenge is not just the east-west alignment, but the vertical grade of the road. Engineers have determined that to meet modern safety standards, the road must be lowered by 12 feet at the location of the rock walls. This elevation change would effectively remove the walls, as the only alternative, a new vertical concrete wall, is not currently being entertained.

Mr. McLeod noted that while these are not the final drawings, they represent the preferred option. He suggested that Oakland University is the entity with the most significant influence on the project's outcome since it is their property, and they are active participants in the discussions. stated that the project is a difficult balance of competing interests, including tree preservation, the historic walls, and traffic flow, and that ultimately, a scenario where every party wins is unlikely.

Dr. Stamps stated that while trees can grow back, the historic rock wall cannot. He expressed disappointment that the project team had reached a "preferred alternative" decision that eliminates the wall without discussing alternatives with historical representatives. He raised a concern regarding the "dangerous" precedent of approving plans while funding is unavailable, noting that once money becomes available years later, the project may proceed based on previously approved plans that the Commission never formally reviewed. Dr. Stamps recalled that previous meeting proposals were vague, utilizing "dotted lines" and uncertain details.

Mr. McLeod offered to coordinate with the city administration to bring the project group before the HDC for a presentation. This would allow the Commission to see the current status, understand how historic elements were weighted in the decision-making process, and review the project's overall methodology.

Dr. Stamps specifically requested that the engineers comment on the possibility of lowering the road the required 12 feet while installing a large concrete retaining wall-similar to sound barriers found on I-75-to hold the soil and allow the historic stonework to remain on top. He argued that engineering examples must exist elsewhere in the country for such a solution. Mr. McLeod agreed to approach the group with these questions, including asking who was consulted in the historical community and clarifying which authority has the legal power to alter a National Historic Landmark.

Dr. Stamps requested a legal clarification regarding which entity - the county road commission or another body - possesses the formal authority to alter a National Historic Landmark. Vice Chairperson Granthen noted that the land in question is state-owned and suggested that the Commission engage with Oakland University (OU) Vice President Westfall. She proposed that a meeting with Vice President Westfall could help him better understand the Commission's concerns, especially since OU's approval is a critical factor in whether the project proceeds.

The Commission discussed the most effective way to communicate with OU

leadership. While some members considered a smaller delegation visiting his office, the consensus shifted toward extending a formal invitation for Vice President Westfall to attend a Commission meeting. Members Elias and Tischer noted that a presentation before the full body would provide a more official and impactful venue for the discussion.

Mr. McLeod and Chairperson Thompson clarified that while the Commission lacks the authority to compel attendance through legal mandates, they would extend a formal request for his presence to explain the university's position to the historic group. Dr. Stamps noted that Vice President Westfall has previously been recognized by the Commission for the preservation of the gatehouse and expressed hope that the same commitment would be applied to this landmark.

Ms. Kidorf clarified that National Historic Landmarks, despite being the highest form of recognition, do not have protective status unless federal funds are involved in a project, requiring a Section 106 review. She noted that for privately owned landmarks without federal funding, there is no governing body to dictate what happens, as the designation is primarily honorific. She assumed the road commission would likely use federal funds at some point, which would mandate a Section 106 review.

Dr. Stamps noted that an archaeologist had been present at two previous meetings and questioned if they might already claim to have completed enough of the Section 106 review. Ms. Kidorf responded that without a defined plan, the Section 106 process could not be complete because the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) would not have had the opportunity to comment. She stated that demolition would clearly be an adverse effect requiring mitigation through the Section 106 process, though she guessed the developers might not know yet if they will have federal funds.

Dr. Stamps requested that the list of questions for the developers include whether they have completed a proposed Section 106 review or are prepared to handle one. Ms. Kidorf added a question regarding whether they are performing an environmental impact statement or Environmental Assessment (EA). Mr. McLeod explained that they are currently conducting a PEL (Planning and Environmental Linkages) study, which is so intensive and inclusive that most environmental impact assessments are already being addressed within it, and currently, their focus is specifically on noise studies.

Dr. Stamps expressed concern that the historic review might be lumped together within the larger study. He noted that while representatives were present, the Section 106 process had not been formally completed as it requires identification and state-level coordination. Ms. Kidorf guessed that once federal funding is secured, the developers might have to redo their assessments because environmental impact statements or EAs can expire for federal funding purposes. She reiterated that Section 106 is not complete if they haven't sent the alternative to the state.

Ms. Kidorf also pointed out that the statewide preservation conference would be held May 7th through the 9th at the Edsel and Eleanor Ford House. Mr. McLeod and Ms. Kidorf briefly discussed the location, noting it sits on the border of St.

Clair Shores and Grosse Pointe Shores, with the parking lot in one and the building in the other. Ms. Kidorf noted that the flyer was sent by mail and that she would be happy to send around extra copies, and encouraged other members to attend.

Discussed

NEXT MEETING DATE

April 9, 2026

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, it was moved by Lyons, seconded by Tischer, to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 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