

TROY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Regular Business Meeting

October 5, 1977

City Hall

The regular business meeting of the Troy Historic District Commission was held on October 5, 1977 at the City Hall, 500 West Big Beaver. The meeting was called to order at 7:55 p.m.

PRESENT: Fellrath
Dill
Holdburg
Schilling
Renshaw

ABSENT: Confer
Midgley

MINUTES

Motion: Dill
Support: Holdberg

Accept minutes of August 3 and September 7 meetings corrected to show Mr. Fellrath present on Sept. 7 at 9:30 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED

OLD BUSINESS

The letter asking for the replacement of Mr. Confer was tabled by City Council and rescheduled for October 10.

Fact: Sarah Lee Howard asked about markers and letter was submitted to City Council. Returned to District Commission for resolution.

Motion: Scott
Support: Dill

RESOLVED: that City Council allocate funds of 395.00 for each of three historic markers and issue a purchase order to the State of Michigan as soon as possible pursuant to the order form submitted to Roger Kowalski February 2, 1977.

Aye: all
Nays: none.

The comment was made that the price of a marker has increased 95.00 since the inception of this request and waiting period from 9 to 12 months.

A-1

Pamphlet: Folded pamphlet enclosed from Royal Oak to show what can be done.
Items still in the information selection stage since financial support has been investigated.

NEW BUSINESS

NONE

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mrs. Scott, representative to Oakland County Historic Study Committee reports a survey sent to all 61 communities to acquire information regarding historic records of all areas of the county. This report is due back at the county on October 15, 1977.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Dill
Support: Renshaw

Aye: all
Mays: none

8:25 p.m.

NOTE: MEETING TIME CHANGED TO 8:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday
November 2, 1977
8:00 p.m.
City Hall

- WOOD FAMILY HOME, 211 South Knowles at Second Street. Like homes of 100 years ago. Now owned by Mrs. Anna Hitzinger. The house was moved from Third Street between Troy and Williams Streets.
- FARMERS' MARKET, 316 E. Eleven Mile Road. Farmers' Market, originally called Oakland County-Royal Oak City Community Market, was completed in 1925. The costs and income are shared on a 60-40 basis between the county and the city. This is still an active market today.
- LANDS PHARMACY, Eleven Mile and Sherman Drive. A 750 square foot, two story triangular building, was designed and built by world famous architect Minoru Yamasaki & Associates in 1954. The building was the first drive-up prescription center in the area. Notice the high drive-up windows.
- SHERMAN DRIVE - OLD RAILROAD BED, Eleven Mile Road and Sherman Drive. Raised railroad bed can be seen where the Detroit & Pontiac Railroad ran through Royal Oak to Eleven Mile and then turned toward Woodward on what is now known as Sherman Drive and then up Woodward toward Birmingham.
- GEORGE ERB HOUSE, 112 North Washington Ave., North of 11 Mile Road. The oldest house still remaining, was built in 1840 and was moved to its present location in 1899.
- OAK TREE, 309 North Center. Widest spread, 110 feet. Measured in 1968 by members of the Royal Oak Beautification Council.
- FIRST HIGH SCHOOL, Northeast corner of Main and University Streets. Constructed in 1913, it became a junior high school in 1927. It is now Clara Barton Junior High.
- AREA OF FORMER CRANBERRY BOG, Lying between Woodward and the railroad. This delicious red fruit was one of Royal Oak's first natural products to be shipped out of the Village. In the 1930's Royal Oak was the cranberry center of the world. This product was shipped daily by rail.
- GRANITE MARKER - GOLDEN JUBILEE 1971, Intersection of Main Street, Rochester & Crooks Roads. The Triangle. "This 'Royal Oak' is dedicated April 23, 1971 as a symbol of citizens awareness of the City of Royal Oak as a community of trees. Royal Oak's 50th Anniversary Golden Jubilee Year." One of the original Royal Oak trees from the English Grove at Memorial Park was transplanted to this spot. Dedication ceremonies were arranged by the Royal Oak Beautification Council.
- THE TRIANGLE, Main Street, Rochester & Crooks Roads. In 1819 Governor Lewis Cass and a small party of men slept beneath a huge oak tree at this site. Upon rising at daybreak, Cass looking up at the spreading branches of the tree said, "This is indeed a royal oak," impressed by the majesty of the tree and recalling the famous story of Prince Charles's flight. From that time the tree bore the name of its English predecessor, and passed the name along to a township, a village and finally a city, Royal Oak.
- HISTORICAL MARKER, Rochester Road, Northeast of the Triangle at the entrance of Oak View Cemetery. "Near this spot stood the oak tree named by General Cass 'The Royal Oak' from which Royal Oak Township received its name. Erected by Royal Oak Woman's Club June 1917". The marker was moved from the Triangle because it was felt it was a traffic hazard.
- ROYAL OAK CEMETERY, Located within the triangle bounded by Main Street, Rochester and 12 Mile Roads. Many early gravestones are still legible in Royal Oak's oldest

- cemetary, plotted in 1826. (Original lot-marker stones are incorporated in the fireplace of the Royal Oak Woman's Clubhouse. See #9) The southern two acres of about 9.75 acres are shared with St. Mary's Cemetery, purchased by the Catholic Society in 1874.
- OAK TREE, 223 Dewey, east of Rochester Road. Largest girth, 166 inches. Measured in 1968 by the Royal Oak Beautification Council.
- VINSETTA BRIDGES & OLD RED RUN CREEK BED, Vinsetta Boulevard south of Twelve Mile Road. This creek flowed through the city along a route which is now called Vinsetta Boulevard. Some of the original bridges remain and are still in use. The ravine in Wagner Park is also part of the old creek bed.
- SHRINE OF THE LITTLE FLOWER CHURCH, Twelve Mile & Woodward Ave. This church was organized in 1926 by Father Charles E. Coughlin, a well-known radio priest. The present church was built with donations contributed by persons from around the world. Designed by Henry McGill of New York, it was constructed 1929-1933. The main altar, a solid block of white Carrara marble weighing over 18 tons, is the largest monolithic altar in the U.S.A.
- EVERGREEN DRIVE, at Twelve Mile Road west of the railroad tracks. The F.W. Clawson Land Company in 1902 planted approximately 1500 trees in the city. The stately spruces are still employed today.
- RED RUN GOLF CLUB, Northeast corner of Rochester & Twelve Mile Roads. 137 acres of T-shaped property, started about 1907. On the famous Red Run Shield is a five pointed star, a symbol of Red Run's part in pioneering golf in America. In 1918 it was enlarged to an 18 hole golf course.
- WINDMILL, Lakeside Drive & Main Street, north of 12 Mile Road. In 1911 Rudolf Hagelestein dug the well, under contract to Anthony Dondero & in 1923 was made into a Dutch motif. In 1930 a generator was installed that provided electricity for the big house and the out buildings. Changed to be run by electricity in 1960. Struck by lightning in 1974 and rebuilt in 1975.
- "CHAMPION" OAK TREE, 126 E. LaSalle. The largest oak tree measured in Royal Oak, using the American Forestry Association formula, during a project sponsored by the Royal Oak Beautification Council in 1968. Girth 150", Height 94.7', Spread 101', (289.9 pts.)
- ORSON STARR HOUSE, 3123 N. Main Street, one block south of 13 Mile Road. This two story, ten room house was built in 1845 by cow bell manufacturer Orson Starr. Five generations of the Starr family lived there. This second oldest remaining house was obtained by the city in 1976 with Community Development Funds.
- JOHN ALMON STARR HOUSE & REMNANT OF SAGINAW INDIAN TRAIL, 3123 Crooks Road at 13 Mile Road. One of the oldest remaining homes made of Starr bricks. Saginaw Indian Trail remnant may be seen as a depression passing northwestward under the house. Stand on the northwest corner of Crooks Road and Essex Street and look northward.
- CHASE'S CORNERS (STARR CORNERS), Thirteen Mile and Crooks Road area. Settled in the 1830's, some of the original buildings still stand today. This was the center of community activity in pioneer days. The first store in the Township was opened by Daniel Chase in 1826. One of the first post offices was located in this store.

- MEMORIAL PARK & ENGLISH OAK GROVE, Woodward Ave. and 13 Mile Road. Twenty five acres with athletic and picnic areas. In 1949 the 47 young trees from the acorns (planted in 1937) of the Royal Oak Tree of England located near Wolverhampton, England were transplanted to this site as a living memorial to the men from this area who gave their lives in service. This site is known as the "English Grove." Twenty trees formed the outer circle and the entrance path to the Great Oak Circle. The inner circle was planted with the other twenty seven oaks. Dedications, June 26, 1938, Sept. 2, 1941, March 8, 1948 & Sept. 19, 1960. Named: October 22, 1945.
- N.J. QUICKSTAD PARK, Marais Ave. between Normandy & Lexington Blvd. north of 13 Mile Road. 31.5 acres, dedicated August 29, 1955. Two of three major kinds of forests in Michigan, beech-sugar maple on high ground and the elm ash silver maple on the low swampy ground. Nature trails. Named after a Royal Oak school superintendent. Maps available at City Hall.
- OAK TREE, Northeast corner Normandy Oaks Golf Course. Tallest tree, 96.3 feet. Measured in 1968 by the Royal Oak Beautification Council.
- PIONEER PARK & HISTORICAL MARKER, West side of Woodward Ave. on block north of Normandy Road. "During the early summer of 1818 the first white men to systematically explore this region camped near this spot on the first night they spent in what is now Oakland County..." This land was acquired by the city in 1949. The Royal Oak Historical Society erected a monument plaque in 1948.
- CUMMINGSTON PARK, Leatdale and Torquay Ave. north of 14 Mile Road. Twenty three acres of woods and trails. Serving as a wild flower sanctuary. Dedicated Sept. 1925. Named after the Cummings family. July 30, 1956. Maps available at City Hall.
- "LITTLE STARR" SCHOOL, 1730 W. Thirteen Mile Road. Northwest corner of Thirteen & Crooks. This fine two-room brick building was built in 1919 in what was known as School District No. 2. The quaint school house housed grades 1 to 8.
- EARLY INDIANS TRAIL (see map) Indian trails existed throughout the area when the first white settlers came in 1819. Paint Creek Trail, a route used by Indians from the shores of Lake Huron, is now known as Rochester Road. Saginaw Trail twisted and turned out of Detroit to Pontiac and beyond. A part of this trail is now Woodward Ave.

SOURCES

Crossman, Constance K. *Royal Oak, Our Living Legend 1787-1940*. Perkins, Owen A. *Royal Oak, Michigan-The Early Years, 1971*. *Royal Oak Beautification Council Arbor Day Pamphlet, April 23, 1971*. *The Daily Tribune*. Royal Oak, Michigan

Interviews and Compilation by members of the Royal Oak Beautification Council, Inc.

ROYAL OAK BEAUTIFICATION COUNCIL, INC.

211 Williams St. Royal Oak, Mich. 48067



HISTORICAL TOUR MAP OF ROYAL OAK, MICHIGAN

MAP OF CITY OF ROYAL OAK OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN

1. DETROIT ZOOLOGICAL PARK
2. WATER TOWER
3. WENDLAND PARK - FIRST CITY PARK
4. RAILROAD WATCHTOWER
5. ELECTRIC SUBSTATION
6. HORSE BARN
7. FIRE ALARM BUILDING
8. FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
9. ROYAL OAK WOMAN'S CLUB - FIRST CITY HALL
10. HERMAN'S BAKERY - OLDEST STORE BUILDING
11. FIELD'S DRESS SHOP
12. WASHINGTON SQUARE BUILDING
13. GLASPHALT PARKING LOT
14. WOOD FAMILY HOME
15. FARMER'S MARKET
16. LAND'S PHARMACY
17. SHERMAN DRIVE - OLD RAILROAD BED
18. GEORGE ERB HOUSE - OLDEST HOUSE
19. OAK TREE - WIDEST SPREAD
20. FIRST HIGH SCHOOL
21. AREA OF FORMER CRANBERRY BOG
22. GRANITE MARKER - GOLDEN JUBILEE 1971
23. THE TRIANGLE - MAIN STREET, CROOKS & ROCHESTER
24. HISTORICAL MARKER
25. ROYAL OAK CEMETERY
26. OAK TREE - LARGEST GIRTH
27. VINSETTA BRIDGES & OLD RED RUN CREEK BED
28. SHRINE OF THE LITTLE FLOWER CHURCH
29. EVERGREEN DRIVE
30. RED RUN GOLF CLUB
31. WINDMILL
32. "CHAMPION" OAK TREE
33. ORSON STARR HOUSE - SECOND OLDEST HOUSE
34. JOHN ALMON STARR HOUSE & REMNANT OF SAGINAW INDIAN TRAIL
35. CHASE'S CORNERS (STARR CORNER)
36. MEMORIAL PARK & ENGLISH OAK GROVE
37. QUICKSTAD PARK
38. OAK TREE - TALLEST
39. PIONEER PARK & HISTORICAL MARKER
40. CUMMINGTON PARK
41. "LITTLE STARR" SCHOOL

8. FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, Northwest corner of Washington and Seventh Streets. The first church built in Royal Oak was dedicated in 1843. In 1842 Sherman Williams donated several lots facing Washington as a site for this little white church. None of the original structure remains today.

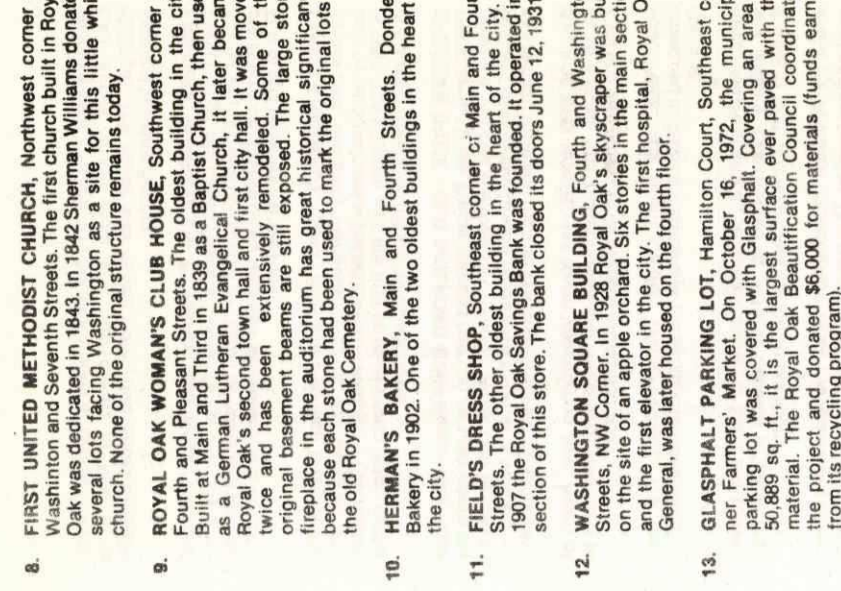
9. ROYAL OAK WOMAN'S CLUB HOUSE, Southwest corner of Fourth and Pleasant Streets. The oldest building in the city. Built at Main and Third in 1839 as a Baptist Church, then used as a German Lutheran Evangelical Church, it later became Royal Oak's second town hall and first city hall. It was moved twice and has been extensively remodeled. Some of the original basement beams are still exposed. The large stone fireplace in the auditorium has great historical significance because each stone had been used to mark the original lots in the old Royal Oak Cemetery.

10. HERMAN'S BAKERY, Main and Fourth Streets. Dondoro Bakery in 1902. One of the two oldest buildings in the heart of the city.

11. FIELD'S DRESS SHOP, Southeast corner of Main and Fourth Streets. The other oldest building in the heart of the city. In 1907 the Royal Oak Savings Bank was founded. It operated in a section of this store. The bank closed its doors June 12, 1931.

12. WASHINGTON SQUARE BUILDING, Fourth and Washington Streets, NW Corner. In 1928 Royal Oak's skyscraper was built on the site of an apple orchard. Six stories in the main section and the first elevator in the city. The first hospital, Royal Oak General, was later housed on the fourth floor.

13. GLASPHALT PARKING LOT, Hamilton Court, Southeast corner Farmers' Market. On October 16, 1972, the municipal parking lot was covered with Glasphalt. Covering an area of 50,889 sq. ft., it is the largest surface ever paved with this material. The Royal Oak Beautification Council coordinated the project and donated \$6,000 for materials (funds earned from its recycling program).



33. Orson Starr House

32. Champion Oak Tree

4. Railroad Watchtower

4. RAILROAD WATCHTOWER, Grand Trunk Western railroad crossing and Lincoln Ave. Constructed in 1927. One of the last 20 such towers in use today at which crossing men control traffic.

5. ELECTRIC SUBSTATION, East side of Main Street at Seventh Street. Built in 1909-10, just south of the railroad tracks. Used by four electric companies. Taken over in 1915 by the Detroit Edison Company and remained in service until March, 1949.

6. HORSE BARN, Southwest corner of Troy and Seventh Streets. Once used by the Detroit Creamery.

7. FIRE ALARM BUILDING, Northwest corner of Knowles and Sixth Streets. (after 1926) Control center for fire and police box No. 103.

ROYAL OAK TOUR

- ORIGINAL OUTLINE OF ROYAL OAK VILLAGE
- INDIAN TRAIL
- CITY BIKE ROUTE



SCHOOL

Legend

1. DETROIT ZOOLOGICAL PARK, Ten Mile and Lafayette Ave., one block west of Woodward Ave. The 122 acre zoo, built in 1928, was the first zoo in America to be designed extensively with barriers exhibits. Moats separate animals from visitors through the use of intricate, simulated rockwork making the animals appear as they would in their natural habitats. There are over 3,000 species and varieties. The Penquinarium is three times larger than any other similar building in the world.
2. WATER TOWER, Ten Mile and Woodward Ave. The 1,500,000 gallon tower was built in 1927 to provide additional water to the then overloaded natural well system. The tower is still in use today.
3. WENDLAND PARK, Bounded by Rhode Island, California and Delaware Streets. 0.79 Acres. First city park dedicated January 12, 1914 as Sunset Park. Name changed to Frank Wendland Park on April 19, 1926 in honor of a World War I Royal Oak soldier who gave his life in 1918.

HISTORICAL TOUR OF ROYAL OAK

