

Northville Historical Survey Meeting June 6, 2019

Jim Nield 18234 Arselot, Martha and I have lived in Northville for 47 years. She is a past President of the Historical Society.

Many are extremely concerned about this new survey. The purpose was to update the 61 homes in the district established in 1972. The Historic District was established to identify Victorian and Gothic architecture from 1800s. Somehow the intent of the new survey was changed dramatically. A new date of 1968 was somehow established. No one person can identify who established this new date.

There was an effort to get 60 % in the district to be contributing, even to the point of reducing the size of the district to get up to 60% in the first 2 meetings. A local resident went to Lansing and was told there is no percentage. In the 3rd meeting Elaine Robinson, consultant, dropped the percentage requirement.

There are beautiful Victorian and Gothic additions in the district, many by Greg Presley, architect, but some are “not “contributing” while others are “contributing”. Elaine told us part of the criteria is who lived there. 212 West St, where Russell Amerman lived, who was principle and later superintendent of the school district, had a grade school was named after him. His home, per Elaine, is non-contributing because a second story was added. The house next to it at 216 had a second story added that is contributing with no important person ever living in it!

120 West St was an empty lot with a carriage house until 1958 when a ranch house was built by a kindergarten teacher and she was named in the survey and the house is contributing. The survey said the home is the original foot print. This is not true in 1977 an addition was added.

There are many homes in the survey that are incorrectly identified. The entire survey is way beyond the original intent. Expanded in several ways by the outside consultant. The survey is very subjective. It reminds us of judging ice skating and gymnastics in the Olympics.

There are houses in disrepair that need new young owners LOVE & HELP. 305 Dunlap is back on the market because the remodel plans, designed by an architect for buyer were rejected. Unfortunately, young families can't afford a 4 month wait, plus architectural fees and delays to take a chance in the district. Nor can the seller wait.

There is a lonely ranch at 521 Linden Ct surrounded by 2 story new homes built in the 80s & 90s. The ugly ranch is "contributing." This is probably the owner's largest asset, like most of us and he can't sell or demo it.

This survey should not be accepted in any form. It is inaccurate and VERY SUBJECTIVE. It puts many NEW more difficult restrictions on the district. Only old people with deep pockets will take the risk. Elaine Robison loves the National Registry. When asked if there were any tax advantages, there are none. She said when an expressway or airport is proposed it will help prevent it! The consultant, AS ALL DO, promote their knowledge way beyond what is necessary in this very expanded survey of 850 page survey. No matter how many notices are given to the citizen they will not individually correct their house history or description. We must eliminate the contributing vs. noncontributing. This is not a law or requirement. It is discriminating, confusing to residents and future HDC commissioners. Robison did not tell the special survey committee the truth on several occasions.

The original intent to establish the Historic District was to protect homes built in the 1800s and maybe up to 1920. We are not Williamsburg or a Greenfield Village, we are not a museum. We need to live in the district and want young people to be here. There are a number of homes that are in disrepair and a duplex in the district. We do not want to set the City of Northville up for future legal complaints with this inaccurate discriminating survey or impractical over restrictive guidelines. The City Council should not accept this survey, and contributing and non, is not necessary at all.