

**SPECIAL JOINT VILLAGE PLANNING COMMISSION COUNCIL MEETING**  
**September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013 – 7:00 P.M.**

Dan LeBlond – Elk Rapids Area Historical Society President

Elk Rapids Historic Preservation Research Classes: 2007 to 2009

During 2007 through 2009, college students enrolled in Eastern Michigan University's (EMU) Historic Preservation Program had the opportunity for "real-life field experience" in the Village doing various research techniques projects as part of their curriculum. These master degree candidates work resulted in inventorying commercial buildings and residential structures to determine if there was any specific area in the Village limits that could be a potential historic district. After three years of research, their final cultural landscape report was presented to Council in the summer of 2010. It consisted of five documents: 1. Historic Core, 2. East Elk Rapids, 3. Industrial Area, 4. Residential and Tourism Area, and 5. Waterfront Area. These reports are available to download off the Elk Rapids Area Historical Society's Website URL: <http://elkrapidshistory.org/> (click-on bottom left-hand tab).

This project was initiated as a result of conversations held at an informal meeting in September 2006 among members of the Elk Rapids Village Council, the Elk Rapids Area Historical Society, the Elk Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce and citizens of the community who attended a Historical Society program, "*Preserving Community Character: What's Up With That*," presented by Dr. Ted Ligibel, Director of EMU's Historic Preservation program.

The group founded a "Community Character Council (CCC)." Their mission is to "further develop, define, integrate and educate a unified vision of the concepts of "small town character," historical character," and "economic character" for the greater Elk Rapids area." The CCC is concerned that Elk Rapids needs a sound growth policy, economic development, natural resource protection and historical preservation - all contributing to protecting the qualities which make Elk Rapids special. Successfully preserving these special qualities involves organization, planning and action.

The Elk Rapids Area Historical Society (ERAHS) agreed to take action and "sponsor" a Reconnaissance Level Survey and has committed to provide \$1,000.00 of funding for the project in addition to their volunteers who will provide archival research assistance to the students. EMU has provided matching funds for the project and there are other pending grant requests. Jon Hoover, in 2007 was Superintendent of the Elk Rapids School District, made available the High School Library's Computer Lab for the students to use while they are in town.

In 2007, Dan LeBlond, President of the ERAHA stated "If the citizens of Elk Rapids would ever like to have a local historic district, corridor, or area as a "tool" to preserving "small town character," then a lot of the necessary preliminary groundwork would have been completed. If they do not wish a historic district, then the Elk Rapids Area Historical Society would still have an "inventory" of historical structures for their archives as reference material for people who are interested in obtaining the history of the land and/or structures they own."

The final cultural landscape report assesses both the physical and cultural aspects of the development of Elk Rapid's historic core. The goal was to provide a thorough chronicle of these places by providing comprehensive documentation of their evolution so that the DDA, city planners, preservationists, historians, and the like, will be able to understand the physical and cultural evolution unique to these locations. The report documents in detail the survey area and specific places within that area.

# Historic Preservation Definitions:

A **Local Historic District** is a historically significant area that is protected by a historic district ordinance. The local unit of government appoints a historic district commission to review proposed work to the exterior of resources in the district to determine if the work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation. Designating an area as a local historic district is one of the few ways a community can provide legal protection for its historic resources.

Michigan's Local Historic Districts Act, Act 169 of 1970 provides the legal foundation for the creation of local historic districts.

## **Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation:**

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm>

## **Preservation Briefs** (your tax dollars at work – free! – just download):

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>

Forty-seven (47) Preservation Briefs provide guidance on preserving, rehabilitating, and restoring historic buildings. These NPS Publications help historic building owners recognize and resolve common problems prior to work. The briefs are especially useful to Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program applicants because they recommend methods and approaches for rehabilitating historic buildings that are consistent with their historic character.

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A **National Heritage Area** is a site designated by United States and intended to encourage historic preservation of the area and an appreciation of the history and heritage of the site. There are currently 49 National Heritage Areas, some of which use variations of the title, such as National Heritage Corridor. To view the 49 areas go to: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Heritage\\_Area](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Heritage_Area) .

National Heritage Areas (NHA) are not National Park Service units nor any type of federally owned or managed land. National Heritage Areas are administered by state governments or non-profit organizations or other private corporations. The National Park Service provides an advisory role and limited technical, planning and financial assistance.

NHAs are created by Congress. Each area has its own authorizing legislation and a set of unique resources and goals. Areas are considered for designation, have specific elements. First, the landscape must be a nationally unique natural, cultural, historic, or scenic resource. Second, when the related sites are linked, they tell a unique story about the U.S.

In Michigan we have one National Heritage Area: MotorCities National Heritage Area. It is a federally designated National Heritage Area that commemorates and promotes the automobile industry in Detroit and surrounding areas of Michigan. The National Heritage Area includes portions of sixteen counties in southeastern Michigan. The scope of the heritage area includes sites and events relating to the motor industry as well as the industry's impact on labor, society and the environment. The heritage area comprises more than 1200 automotive-related sites.