



## PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

CITY OF NOVI

Regular Meeting

**August 27, 2014 7:00 PM**

Council Chambers | Novi Civic Center | 45175 W. Ten Mile  
(248) 347-0475

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at or about 7:00 PM.

### ROLL CALL

**Present:** Member Baratta, Member Giacometti, Member Greco, Chair Pehrson, Member Zuchlewski

**Absent:** Member Anthony (excused), Member Lynch (excused)

**Also Present:** Barbara McBeth, Deputy Director of Community Development; Kristen Kapelanski, Planner; Jeremy Miller, Engineer; David Beschke, Landscape Architect; Gary Dovre, City Attorney.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Member Baratta led the meeting attendees in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Member Baratta and seconded by Member Greco:

### VOICE VOTE ON THE AGENDA APPROVAL MOTION MADE BY MEMBER BARATTA AND SECONDED BY MEMBER GRECO:

Motion to approve the August 27, 2014 Planning Commission Agenda. *Motion carried 5-0.*

### AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

No one in the audience wished to speak.

### CORRESPONDENCE

There was no Correspondence.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee Reports.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPUTY DIRECTOR REPORT

Deputy Director McBeth said the City Council, on Monday evening, approved the second reading of the ordinance amendment that relates to the outdoor displays areas in the OSC, Office Service Commercial District.

### CONSENT AGENDA - REMOVALS AND APPROVAL

There were no Consent Agenda items.

### PUBLIC HEARINGS

**1. TRILOGY, JSP14-13**

Public hearing at the request of DMK Development Group LLC for Preliminary Site Plan, Wetland Permit, Woodland Permit, and Stormwater Management Plan approval. The subject property is located in Section 14, on the south side of Twelve Mile Road, west of Meadowbrook Road in the OST, Office Service Technology District. The subject property is approximately 10.25 acres and the applicant is proposing a 59,926 square foot senior assisted living facility.

Planner Kapelanski said the applicant is proposing to develop a 90 bed senior assisted living facility on 10.25 acres of property on the south side of Twelve Mile Road, west of Meadowbrook Road. The proposed parcel is adjacent to Tollgate Farms to the north, South University to the east, medical offices to the west and vacant land to the south. The subject property is currently zoned Office Service Technology. The site is bordered by OST zoning to the east, west and south with Residential Acreage zoning to the north. The future land use map indicates Office, Research, Development and Technology uses for the subject property and properties to the east, west and south with residential uses planned to the north. There are significant woodland and wetland areas on the site that cover a majority of the property. The applicant is proposing woodland and wetland impacts and mitigation as part of the project.

The planning review recommends approval of the plan as it generally meets the requirements of the ordinance. A Zoning Board of Appeals variance is needed to permit a loading zone in the interior side yard instead of the required rear yard. The wetland review recommends approval of the plan stating a City of Novi Non-Minor Use Wetland Permit and an Authorization to Encroach into the 25 Foot Natural Features Setback will be required. An MDEQ permit may be required as well. As previously noted wetland mitigation is proposed and appears to meet the standards of the ordinance. The woodland review recommends approval of the plan noting a Woodland Permit is required. The applicant has proposed tree removals and plantings as part of the plan. The façade review notes deficiencies in the façade including an underage of brick on all facades, and an overage of cement fiber siding and asphalt shingles on all facades. The façade consultant has recommended the applicant add additional brick on the north, east and west elevations and dormers within the shingled areas. The engineering, traffic, landscape and fire reviews all recommend approval of the plan noting items to be addressed on the final site plan submittal.

No one from the audience wished to speak and there was no correspondence. Chair Pehrson closed the public hearing.

Craig Peachry, the engineer of the project, said the developer is not here yet. He should be here any minute. I'm here with Micheal Kitchen of DMK Development who works with Trilogy.

Member Baratta said looking at the drawing, where is the proposed loading zone? Is it on the east or the west side?

Mr. Peachry said it's on the west side.

Member Baratta asked where that would be in relation to the building on the adjacent property.

Mr. Peachry said its 90 feet from the property line to the loading zone. The courtyard shields off the three sides and then we're also proposing a landscape buffer and it's almost like a berm going up on that side to help shield that whole side as well.

Member Baratta said that's leading up to my question and that's why I asked it. So if I'm on the second story building adjacent will I see into the loading zone?

Mr. Peachry said I think at some point those trees will grow up and help shield that. Right from the start, you might see it until the trees mature and get taller.

Member Baratta said how high are the trees?

Mr. Peachry said they're going to be around 937. So those are probably 25 to 30 foot trees. Then we have that berm that's up to 941.

Member Baratta asked staff for the height of the adjacent building.

Planner Kapelanski said we don't have that information. You can see on the site plan that was provided in your packet though that the loading zone is pretty much dead center to the existing building. There is a retaining wall that borders that existing building on the adjacent property right now and it is set a little bit farther back from the property line. We don't have the information on how high that building is.

Member Baratta said so there's a high probability that they'll see inside that loading dock, assuming that there are offices up there, at least initially.

Planner Kapelanski said they may, yes.

Member Zuchlewski said with that loading zone, with the vehicles in there, obviously there will be some refrigerated trucks that need to stay running or whatever bringing in food. I hope there would be no fresh air intakes with the vehicles dieseling out there. Has that been taken into consideration?

Mr. Kitchen said just to make sure you understand. This isn't a typical loading dock. There's not a loading dock area where you pull in semi's or whatever because there is not that high of a level of traffic for this use. So the deliveries are not that frequent. I would need to check the plans to see if there is any kind of fresh air intake. I don't want you all to look at this as a large loading dock where they back up into it and unload things. It is a maybe once every other week the food truck may come, or smaller trucks.

Member Zuchlewski said the only reason I'm asking is I did a project up at U of M and they had a diesel sitting outside waiting to come in. Every once and awhile everybody would be getting sick. It wasn't all the time; it was just one of those freak things. So I always try to look, especially when you have a closed in area that is closed in on three sides and you're pulling in. That was my only concern. Moving on, why are the courtyards fenced in?

Mr. Kitchen said the courtyards are typically gated. There are emergency egress and ingress requirements that they have with those a lot of times, but they have to have them gated for the healthcare regulations.

Member Zuchlewski if that is so that patients don't wander off?

Mr. Kitchen said it's just to keep the residents from wandering.

Member Zuchlewski said so the doors themselves out to the courtyard, they're not monitored so they can go out any time they want to into the yard. Is that way the program works?

Mr. Kitchen said yes.

Member Giacometti said the staff was kind enough to print out this larger version for us to see the façade. I just want to understand, this is essentially a very high roof. This is just a one floor building, is that correct?

Mr. Kitchen said this is a single story building being that it's for elderly patients. Some senior buildings have elevators but Trilogy's model has always been single story the entire way. So yes this is one single story throughout the entire thing and that's why you have one roof line. You'll see on the plan, the one large area there in the middle of the building is a very large activity/dining area. We've got this exact same model right now that we've just built in Okemos, Michigan. That whole area is raised in the whole center corridor for activities and dining.

Member Giacometti asked how the issue of brick underage on the façade could be addressed.

Mr. Kitchen said my understanding is that the architect in working with the consultant is taking and doing brick on the entire frontage.

Planner Kapelanski said our façade consultant, Doug Necci, recommended a couple things that they could do to closer meet the intent of the ordinance. One is to provide brick on the portion to the north, east and west elevations that are visible from Twelve Mile Road. The applicant has agreed to do that. Another is to add dormers within the shingles areas that are in the above mentioned elevations; the east, west and north elevations that are visible from Twelve Mile and they've agreed to do that as well. So we would expect the applicant to continue to work with the façade consultant to flush out exactly how that will look. But it is our belief that with those additions it will meet the intent of the façade ordinance.

Member Greco said his concerns with the façade issue have been satisfied. I thought the excellent points made by the other commissioners regarding the loading dock really pointed out some things that we had some questions about. With that being said, I think I'm prepared to make a motion to approve this project because I think it looks overall very good and maybe something necessary that the City needs as far as a need for elderly housing.

Moved by Member Greco and seconded by Member Baratta:

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN APPROVAL MOTION MADE BY MEMBER GRECO AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BARATTA:**

**In the matter of Trilogy, JSP14-13, motion to approve the Preliminary Site Plan based on and subject to the following:**

- a. The findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the staff and consultant review letters and the conditions and the items listed in those letters being addressed on the Final Site Plan;**
- b. Prior to submission of the Final Site Plan, the applicant shall secure an appropriate cross-access agreement with the neighboring site and the City attorney shall review and approve that agreement as part of the final site plan review;**
- c. Section 9 waiver provided the applicant revises the façade as described in the façade review letter including the following:**

1. Providing full height brick on portions of the north, east and west elevations visible from Twelve Mile Road;
2. Adding dormers within the asphalt shingle areas on the above mentioned elevations;
- d. Zoning Board of Appeals variance for the location of the loading dock as depicted which is supported by staff because the loading zone is well screened and far exceeds the required setback.

This motion is made because the plan is otherwise in compliance with Article 23A, Article 24 and Article 25 of the Zoning Ordinance and all other applicable provisions of the Ordinance. *Motion carried 5-0.*

Moved by Member Greco and seconded by Member Baratta:

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE WETLANDS PERMIT APPROVAL MOTION MADE BY MEMBER GRECO AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BARATTA:**

In the matter of Trilogy, JSP14-13, motion to approve the Wetlands Permit based on and subject to the findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the staff and consultant review letters, and the conditions and items listed in those letters being addressed on the Final Site Plan. This motion is made because the plan is otherwise in compliance with Chapter 12, Article V of the Code of Ordinances and all other applicable provisions of the Ordinance. *Motion carried 5-0.*

Moved by Member Greco and seconded by Member Baratta:

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE WOODLAND PERMIT APPROVAL MOTION MADE BY MEMBER GRECO AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BARATTA:**

In the matter of Trilogy, JSP14-13, motion to approve the Woodland Permit based on and subject to the findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the staff and consultant review letters, and the conditions and items listed in those letters being addressed on the Final Site Plan. This motion is made because the plan is otherwise in compliance with Chapter 37 of the Code of Ordinances and all other applicable provisions of the Ordinance. *Motion carried 5-0.*

Moved by Member Greco and seconded by Member Baratta:

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN APPROVAL MOTION MADE BY MEMBER GRECO AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BARATTA:**

In the matter of Trilogy, JSP14-13, motion to approve the Stormwater Management Plan, subject to the findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the staff and consultant review letters and the conditions and the items listed in those letters being addressed on the Final Site Plan. This motion is made because the plan is otherwise in compliance with Chapter 11 of the Code of Ordinances and all other applicable provisions of the Ordinance. *Motion carried 5-0.*

**MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**1. APPROVAL OF THE 2015 PLANNING COMMISSION CALENDAR**

Deputy Director McBeth said every year about this time, the Community Relations division asks for important dates to include on the next upcoming City calendar. So for 2015, staff has

provided some suggested dates for the Planning Commission meetings, primarily the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. Also note the City recognized holidays. They are there just for reference. Also, we wanted to point out that the library board typically uses the Council Chambers on the third Wednesday for each month so we're limited in that as well. So again, for 2015, staff is suggesting one meeting for November and December. If the Planning Commission wishes, you can schedule two meetings for those months and we can cancel meetings that aren't necessary but over the last few years it's been working out well with just one meeting per month. So what we're looking for this evening is if this is generally acceptable then we can go ahead and send this to the Community Relations Department to include in the calendar.

Moved by Member Giacometti and seconded by Member Greco:

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE PLANNING COMMISSION CALENDER APPROVAL MOTION MADE BY MEMBER GIACOPETTI AND SECONDED BY MEMBER GRECO:**

**Motion to approve the 2015 Planning Commission Calendar. *Motion carried 5-0.***

**2. APPROVAL OF THE AUSUST 13, 2014 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

Deputy Director McBeth said there is one minor modification that the City attorney's office weighed in earlier and that's why you have a copy of the minutes on the table. On the bottom of page five, Attorney Dovre just a minor modification to that sentence to improve the readability and have the intent explained a little better.

Moved by Member Giacometti and seconded by Member Baratta:

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES APPROVAL MOTION MADE BY MEMBER GIACOPETTI AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BARATTA:**

**Motion to approve the August 13, 2014 Planning Commission Minutes. *Motion carried 5-0.***

**CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS FOR COMMISSION ACTION**

There were no Consent Agenda Removals.

**MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**

**1. PARKING LOT LANDSCAPING STANDARDS**

Deputy Director McBeth said because we had a relatively light meeting this evening, we thought we'd put a little bit of an information piece out there for you, also because there's been quite a bit of discussion in recently about parking lot landscaping. So Landscape Architect Beschke prepared a nice memo that was included in the packets and it highlights some of the items that are included in both the Zoning Ordinance and the Landscape Design Manual. It references some changes that were made to the ordinance in about 2003.

So sometimes you hear us refer to the long expanses of parking spaces without being broken up by a landscape island. There was a reference prior to 2003 where that was not included but about 2003 and after there was a need to have rows of parking lot spaces broken up with landscape islands. A couple of other things that you frequently see in David's letters are the end islands that are included in parking lots. Those typically need to be raised and curbed landscape islands. There are some specifics of those in the ordinance. Generally also vegetation trees are typically found in those islands. At some points the landscaping in those end islands needs to be a little bit lower so that people in vehicles can see around the corners. There are also mathematical calculations that relate to the size of the parking lot and the number and

square footage of the amount of landscaping that is required for some of the larger lots and you'll see those calculations provided on the plans and review letters. There also discussion about the canopy trees that are required and those are based on the amount of the proposed pavement in the parking lot. There is a requirement for snow storage areas that you may have seen on the plans. There is a requirement for perimeter parking lot trees that soften the edges of the parking lot. Trees are required at one tree per every 35 linear feet of the parking lot edge. There are also maintenance requirements, so ongoing maintenance of the landscaping in the parking lot.

Member Baratta said I have a couple questions. Does the memo also include requirements for irrigation of those shrubbery and plants?

Landscape Architect Beschke said no but that is a requirement of the ordinance that landscape islands be irrigated. In past years, we've been going with a term called xeriscaping where if you can find plants that can handle very little water, then that's preferable to irrigating stuff that needs water. We've used them on a couple of different projects that have gone very well. They look good years later.

Member Baratta said so that would be an option. When a project comes in and they want a modification to the façade or whatever it is, do we go back and look at the original landscape plan of that facility if it's combined with something else to see all the plants are the same as the original plan?

Landscape Architect Beschke said in general the sites have to stay the same as the approved plan but if they can submit a plan that meets our current ordinance then we can administratively sign off on it. That's been going on for some time and actually has worked out very well because landscapes get tired sometimes so it's nice to see a renovation.

Member Baratta said so they do actually have to do that.

Landscape Architect Beschke said they do.

Member Giacometti said it seems that some of the incidences that have come in recently there seems to be one standard regardless of the location of the parking lot, correct? So if the parking lot is in the front of the building facing the street or in the rear, it's all the same standard. Is that correct?

Landscape Architect Beschke said no. If there is parking on a frontage, there are different standards, higher standards than if the building is forward. So it's based upon rather or not parking is along the frontage.

Member Giacometti said okay so there are two cases that we've seen recently with Catholic Central and Brightmoor Church at the last meeting. It seemed like one was way back in the woods and then the other one was facing the street and it just seemed like the standard could have been different.

Landscape Architect Beschke said it's important that any parking lot has greenery inside of it. Developers and applicants have been looking to reduce islands because they don't have to pay for curbing and they don't have to plow around it in the snow season and I still think it's worth it to have it there. As a matter of fact, I have a great article from the Free Press yesterday that talks about Detroit having half the amount of trees that it should have and they blamed a

lot of the flooding on that because it would additional tress would slow water down and it would take a lot longer for it to rush down to do damage to people's homes and businesses.

Member Giacometti said is there a distinction in the ordinance about the difference between zones. Where I'm going with this is with the Town Center District, if we were to create a more walkable City and a denser environment then parking would become a premium so we may need to look at a different standard if that were the case. I'm not proposing paving the entire zone, but I was just curious if there were differences.

Landscape Architect Beschke said there are differences in the zone. It is based upon zone and the percentage by zone. Rather it's a park or a pond. And it's different for each zone. I think it's pretty reasonable. You do want to create that walkable community but that also has to do with the greenery and the human scale of putting those plants in.

Deputy Director McBeth said another aspect of the landscape section of the ordinance is that the Planning Commission can make determinations and waive certain requirements. And that was the case with Catholic Central plan. The arguments were made that the parking lot is basically in a well landscaped area so I think the Planning Commission saw that perhaps there wasn't a need to provided trees around the perimeter since there was a natural environment there.

Member Zuchlewski said everything that I've ever seen submitted is of 90 degree parking. The other day there was some discussion about getting three feet in a 100 or 300 feet parking area. I was wondering is that something we frown upon, angular parking with one way traffic. Do we frown upon that or is that acceptable?

Landscape Architect Beschke said that's an engineering standard. I think that 90 degree parking is most efficient for the least amount of space. The angular parking takes up a little bit more space because it's more pavement. But you're right, no one really proposes that because it's not the most efficient but we don't frown upon it.

Deputy Director McBeth said we do have standards in the ordinance and they do provide dimensions for parking spaces at different angles. So we do occasionally see something like that. As you said, some of the malls have that because of the larger parking lots.

Member Baratta said I'm seeing a trend. I was in Maple Grove, Minnesota this week, they're trying to create a downtown atmosphere. We have it here in Novi where they're putting the stores upfront to the street and parking behind. There really isn't going to be an opportunity to put that much landscape between the street and the building. Is there some way to soften that that you would recommend?

Landscape Architect Beschke said what we've looked for is at least street trees and then we've got requirements for at least the minimum bed in the front. I don't personally like to see pavement right up to a building and squaring everything off, you just might as well be on the street. So wherever we can we look for at least some greenery. We've gone to large planter pots on the sidewalk. That actually provides some greenery and makes it feel a little bit more homey.

Member Baratta said is that a standard currently?

Landscape Architect Beschke said the requirement for foundation planting is. Crescent I and II

are good examples of where pavement was right up to the building but we chose to go forward with the building to put all the parking in the back and create more greenery out there. Crescent II just came back in and provided a lot more greenery along the freeway side. So that's going to soften that up so that it doesn't look like a big block when you're coming up off the freeway.

Member Baratta said so would our standard take that trend into account then? I'm assuming we have some written standard that relates to that or will relate to that.

Landscape Architect Beschke said I think it does. We're trying to go building forward in a lot of places like the Town Center District.

Member Baratta said it's popular. I don't necessarily like it from a retail standpoint, but it's popular. The other thing that we're running into quite a bit is in order to facilitate the drainage you have a pervious asphalt where the water can drip in. Have we looked at that here as being something that we want to do?

Landscape Architect Beschke said we have started. I'm very much in favor of that. There is actually a spot in the Town Center where we did it. One section of the pavement is that pervious pavement and it seems like it's working great. It's holding up very well. I went and toured the Ford factory in Dearborn and all their parking lots are like that. They put all their cars in that and it works just fine. So we're trying to push towards doing more and more of that.

Member Baratta said are we doing a study of that to provide any data on usability or anything?

Landscape Architect Beschke said it actually works well. It takes water really well. It handles plows very well. It evaporates off the pavement. It's working really well. So I hope to see more of that here in the future.

Member Baratta said we don't require it at this point?

Landscape Architect Beschke said we don't require it.

Member Baratta said maybe we should. I mean inevitably we're trying to upgrade a standard. We've got to keep moving forward and this is a standard we have to consider.

Landscape Architect Beschke said I'll talk to engineering because I think if it's working as well as it seems to be in other places then maybe we should be requiring more of it.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES**

There were no Supplemental Issues.

#### **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

No one in the audience wished to speak.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Member Greco and seconded by Member Giacometti:

**VOICE VOTE ON MOTION TO ADJOURN MADE BY MEMBER GRECO AND SECONDED BY MEMBER GIACOPETTI:**

**Motion to adjourn the August 27, 2014 Planning Commission meeting. *Motion carried 5-0.***

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 PM.

Transcribed by Valentina Nukulaj  
September, 2014  
Date Approved:

---

Richelle Leskun, Planning Assistant  
Signature on File