



## PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

CITY OF NOVI

Regular Meeting

**SEPTEMBER 10, 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, Member Lynch, Chair Pehrson

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

**Also Present:** Barbara McBeth, Deputy Director of Community Development; Kristen Kapelanski, Planner; Rod Arroyo, Traffic Consultant; Beth Saarela, City Attorney.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Deputy Director McBeth led the meeting attendees in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Pehrson said he would like to add the Northville Master Plan as item three under Matters for Considerations.

Moved by Member Giacometti and seconded by Member Lynch:

### VOICE VOTE ON THE AMENDED AGENDA APPROVAL MOTION MADE BY MEMBER GIACOPETTI AND SECONDED BY MEMBER LYNCH:

**Motion to approve the September 10, 2014 Planning Commission Agenda, as amended to correct the title and action for Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment 18.271, and to add the City of Northville Master Plan as item 3 under Matters for Consideration. *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 had nothing to report.

### CONSENT AGENDA - REMOVALS AND APPROVAL

There were no Consent Agenda items.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were no Public Hearings.

## **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **1. SET PUBLIC HEARING FOR OCTOBER 22, 2014 FOR TEXT AMENDMENT 18.271 – REFORMATTING OF ZONING ORDINANCE WITH MINOR MODIFICATIONS**

Deputy Director McBeth said I just want to clarify on the agenda it says it's a public hearing but really we're asking the Planning Commission this evening to set the public hearing for about a month from now. Last year the City Council approved a requested budget item to reformat the City's existing zoning ordinance through the Clearzoning process. The reformatted code replaces traditional texts, charts and graphs by consolidating text, adding graphics, reducing bulk and clarifying regulations. The end result will be an electronic file providing hyperlinked text references that will serve the development community, the Planning Commission and City Council and the City's staff and consultants in reading and applying the standards of the Zoning Ordinance. The intent is to make no substantive changes to the ordinance during this process, but to simply format the language into a new version that will be easier to use. Rod Arroyo, President of Clearzoning is here tonight to introduce the proposed ordinance amendment, make a presentation and answer any questions that the Commission has at this point. This evening, the Planning Commission may choose to set the public hearing for the second meeting in October. At that time, the Planning Commission can take comment from the public, provide further review, and make a recommendation by to the City Council.

Rod Arroyo, of Clearzoning, said thank you very much and good evening. I wanted to give you just a brief history of Clearzoning and how we got to where we are today and then I have a short presentation and a couple things I want to show you that will make it a little more helpful while you're working with the ordinance. Clearzoning started back in 2007. We created it in response to the fact that most people look at zoning ordinances and their eyes kind of glaze over and a lot of people have a difficult time determining what the intent of the ordinance is because they are not designed to be user friendly. Trying to find information isn't always easy. The way the information is presented doesn't always make sense. I think it provides a service to the public in assisting with governmental transparency and it's a good customer service tool for a committee to put forward to all of the users of the code.

Clearzoning is now either adopted or in a draft format in 5 different states. We have been fortunate to have it expand beyond Michigan. Oakland County has the greatest concentration of our work. We've got Lathrup Village, Farmington Hills, Bloomfield, West Bloomfield, and White Lake Township.

Mr. Arroyo continued. The idea behind this project is not to make substantial changes to the code. We're not trying to rewrite it; we're only trying to reformat it. While we're doing it however, we go through a health checkup of the zoning ordinance and once you start to tear it apart and start double checking and cross referencing, you'll find that some things are not quite the way they should be. This happens in every community; yours is not unusual in that regard. Ordinances are amended over time. So after 20 or 30 years of a variety of different people getting involved with amending ordinances, sometimes there are a couple little things that are missed and cross references that need to be cleaned up. So those are things we try to take care of because we want to check every cross reference and make sure it fits the new numbering style and numbering format. We've provided you with a memorandum that goes through the basic changes and gives you an idea of what they're all about. You can see they're mostly just

clean up type items. I'll try to address a couple others in more detail. I think you also received a copy of this cross reference sheet which provides you the current section number and the current ordinance and where that provision is now within the Clearzoning ordinance. It's very helpful when you first start working with it to have that kind of a cross reference.

As Barb mentioned the idea is to make it more user friendly, add more graphics and enhance the graphics that are already there. The end product is a digital, hyperlinked version. The one you have right now is not fully hyperlinked. We'll do that once it's all adopted and then you'll be able to click around and get from one point to another fairly easily. But there's also a paper copy. We have to maintain a paper copy and I'll show you how they both actually work better than a typical paper copy just because we're adding references to that as well. We think that it's a common sense format to take the multiple articles that are in a zoning ordinance and boil it all down to seven articles. Some of the highlights include all the definitions being in the definitions section. Believe it or not, in most ordinance you'll find definitions pop up all over. So we extract all the definitions from throughout the ordinance and put them all in one location. The nice thing is there's a cover page with that that has all the words listed that you can just click on and it'll take you to the one you want.

Mr. Arroyo continued. All site standards are now all in one section. So if you've got standards that relate to landscaping, parking, loading or unloading, anything related to site development, that's all in one section. All the use standards are all in one section. It cuts down on the number of words and shortens the length of the ordinance. Also in an effort to provide consistency with the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), we've done a couple things. One, we've changed the words "churches" to "places of worship" to be broader in scope. And now we've made sure that they're permitted where other places of assembly are permitted such as theaters, meeting halls, private clubs. That's one of the specific requirements or the RLUIPA is that you can't discriminate against religious facilities and treat them of lesser stage than other places of assembly for secular activities. We've fixed a number of incorrect cross references I've mentioned. Fortunately I have a copy of your 1984 zoning code and I had to go back to that to actually find what some of those cross references were. Inconsistencies between parking and landscaping requirements have been resolved as well.

We've updated City department names and document names and other important references like that. For example there were some instances that referred to the master plan by date. Well you really just want to make a generic term because when a master plan gets updated it no longer has that date associated with it. The terms are all searchable. You can search by phrase or by term. So if you type in the word fences, everywhere the term fences appears it'll show up in blue. You can do it by phrase. All of that is available and that's very handy if you're trying to find out quickly how you would address a specific topic in the ordinance. There are some user notes and symbols that are helpful to know. When you see the book symbol that's a term that's defined within the ordinance so you can know to go to the definitions section. The little quill marks indicates that there is a graphic associated with that standard. The digital user note, which has a little computer symbol, is a note that's helpful if you're using only the digital copy versus the paper copy. Probably one of the most important things is wherever you see text that is in blue that means it's going to be hyperlinked on the final version. So if you click on that blue text, it's going to take you somewhere else. So if you've got gas stations as a listed permitted use and you click on that, it's going to take you right to the use standards for gas stations. So you'll have that information right at your fingertips.

Mr. Arroyo continued. So I mentioned the common sense organization, this is the basic table of contents. You have the detailed table of contents and a section that's called 'how to use this

ordinance', which helps you understand how it's organized and then you have the seven basic articles: purpose, introduction, definitions, zoning districts, use standards, site standards, development procedures, and administration appeals and enforcement. You can see all that text is in blue so that means if you were to click on any of that it would take you right to that section. This is the 'how to use this ordinance' page which gives you a typical two page spread for an individual district. The top bar is color coded with the zoning maps. So for R-1, single family residential, that color is the same color you would find on your zoning maps. So there is a visual connection between the districts and the map. And then you see a number of symbols that are there to help you. For example, the seven articles that I referred to, here they are on each side of the paper you'll see the seven tabs. You can click on any of those tabs to move around to the other sections at any time. Down at the bottom there will always be these three buttons. The home is the link back to the table of contents. The eye takes you back to how to use this ordinance. The map takes you right to the zoning map so you can pull that up at any time. So those are all available on every single page.

On the left side of the page you have the principal permitted uses, special land uses and intent. On the right side you have the basic development regulations, setback, height, bulk density, and a graphic that shows you how those particular regulations would look on a sample piece of property. So let's take a closer look. On the left hand side, since we're on the R-1 district, under special land uses you'll see many of them in blue but you'll also see there's a section number next to it so if had the paper copy of this I wouldn't be able to click on the blue and get to that section but I can now know where I need to go. Then on the right hand side where we see the development regulations we've provided a number of important selected references that would apply to this district and that's where you would find site standards such as off-street parking requirements, landscaping, signs, lighting. All of those things are there so that if you're developing in this district you would want to know this information and have easy access to it so it's provided in hyperlinked as well. The other thing that we have here is an up-to-date use matrix. This is probably one of the most helpful tools for finding real basic answers to questions for where is the use permitted. Here we have the zoning map, once again, it's all color coordinated. If you go up here and click on the RA it would take me right to the RA district.

Mr. Arroyo continued. All the definitions are listed on a two page spread so if I wanted to find out the definition for building height, I would just click on it and it would take me right to the building height definition. I also have a graphic there which describes, depending on the roof type, how to measure the building height according to the code. Also, on the right hand side, we show a basic building height calculation but also you'll see this tab 'How do I calculate building height'. If you click on that it takes you back to the definitions again and you've got that graphic there to help you determine how to measure a building.

I thought it might be helpful to show you the before and after of some of the graphics. One of the things about Clearzoning is we're trying to make the graphics more clear. We're trying to make them so that they portray the regulations. Here we see you're existing parking lot layout illustration which is pretty standard, black and white. It's pretty clear but it could be better. This new standard provides you with a lot more information. It's provided in a way that illustrates other possibilities. Here's another example. This is your existing corner clearance requirement. This is not unlike many graphics and many zoning ordinances. Probably originally this graphic looked a little bit better. It was photo copied and scanned multiple times and we probably don't know where the original is. So now we have a color, digital version of that graphic to show you what corner clearance is and how it is measured and the impact that it has.

Mr. Arroyo continued. So the next steps is, as Barb mentioned, a public hearing in October. The Planning Commission, as you know, within the Zoning Ordinance has to make a recommendation to Council. City Council has the ultimate say in terms of adopting the ordinance. Then hyperlinking takes place and it will be uploaded on the City website. One other thing I wanted to show you, and I'm actually going to pull the code up too, is that when you're working with the actual code, there are some things that you can do with your Acrobat Reader to make it a little more user friendly. And one of the things we'll do is we'll create a little video that will help describe all this that you can have on your website if you want. But if you go up to this tool bar right here and right click on it, it gives you an option for things that you can display that a lot of times are not displayed. For example, page navigation, previous view and next view, are very handy if you check them. Under select and zoom, sometimes it's handy to have this little hand tool and grab certain sections and pull them down. Under page display, this two page scrolling is kind of nice. If you click on that, it will pull them up side-by-side and then you can scroll down and find information faster. Find is another good one because you can click on that and start typing in the term you're in search of. I think that covers most of what I wanted to present. I'd be happy to turn it back over to you if there are any questions.

Member Baratta asked when you show that measurement on the building height, would there also be a scale or measurement diagram for size in the ordinance for square footage purposes.

Mr. Arroyo said I don't know if there was one exactly on that for sure. But we could think about it at some point.

Chair Pehrson asked once the City Council approves this, how long would it before its fully hyperlinked and ready to go.

Mr. Arroyo said it would happen quickly. Once they've approved it, we should have everything ready within a couple weeks of that and it will be all ready to go. In fact, if we know the date of when they've got it scheduled we could start hyperlinking it and getting it ready once we know it's moving forward so it can be on there as soon as possible.

Moved by Member Greco and seconded by Member Lynch:

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT MOTION MADE BY MEMBER GRECO AND SECONDED BY MEMBER LYNCH:**

**Motion to set the public hearing for Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment 18.271 for October 22, 2014. *Motion carried 5-0.***

**2. APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 27, 2014 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

Deputy Director McBeth said there is one minor modification the City's Attorney's office found on the motion and we'll correct that. If it's okay with the Planning Commission, we'll make that change on the final copy.

Moved by Member Greco and seconded by Member Lynch:

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

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

### **3. NORTHVILLE MASTER PLAN**

Deputy Director McBeth said The City of Northville has provided the City of Novi the opportunity to comment on their proposed Master Plan update as required by the State of Michigan Municipal Planning Act. The City of Northville borders the City of Novi's south boundary between Beck Road and Novi Road, The City of Northville includes land on both the north and south sides of Eight Mile Road. The draft document, represents an update to the City of Northville Master Plan adopted by the Planning Commission on May 6, 2008.

Staff just received the notice of this request last week, and wanted to share information with the Planning Commission at tonight's meeting, since Oakland County Planning is asking for comment prior to October 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the Planning Commission will not have another meeting until October 8<sup>th</sup>. If the Planning Commission is comfortable supporting the plan after tonight's meeting, we will ask Chair Pehrson to sign the letter in support of the plan. If additional time is needed for review and comments, we can certainly hold off on sending the letter.

Ms. McBeth continued. I'll go over a few of the highlights from the plan and our review memo. The plan recommends Single Family Low Density and Single Family Medium Density land uses along the majority of the common boundary with the City of Novi. Along the west side of Novi Road, north of Eight Mile, the recommended land uses include Multi-Family Townhouse/ Apartment and Local Commercial uses. It does not appear that there are any recommended land use changes along our shared border area. Existing and recommended land uses in the City of Novi are consistent with the recommended and existing land uses in the City of Northville, both having similar recommendations for low- to moderate-density single family land uses along the common boundary. The local commercial uses along the Novi Road frontage in the City of Northville, are consistent with commercial uses on adjacent parcels in the City of Novi. One recommendation in Northville's plan is for entryway commercial areas to include landscape elements, such as walls, city welcome signs, landscaping planters, plazas, seating and similar site design at those entryway areas. Our memo notes that Novi's planning staff supports the City of Northville's efforts to beautify and improve the "entry" areas with landscaping, decorative walls and other elements.

The City of Northville adopted a Non-Motorized Master Plan in March of 2014, and components of the plan are incorporated into the Master Plan for Land Use. A copy of Northville's Non-Motorized Plan is provided with the paperwork. Northville's Non-Motorized Plan depicts the proposed non-motorized routes and connections along with the recommended design treatment. Sidewalk and bike lane treatments are shown as existing along Taft Road, connecting to Novi's non-motorized systems along Taft Road, and providing a good Non-Motorized connection to Eight Mile Road. Northville's Plan also shows a planned future sidewalk and bike lane connection along Center Street, in order to connect downtown Northville to planned and existing non-motorized routes in Novi. Future improvements are also shown along Eight Mile Road. Novi's Planning staff appreciates the fact that Novi's adopted Non-Motorized Master Plan was reviewed and incorporated along our common border with the City of Northville. As we know, many City of Novi residents have expressed an interest in improved non-motorized connections to downtown Northville, as well as along Eight Mile Road, with a goal of achieving non-motorized access to Maybury State Park.

Ms. McBeth continued. The draft plan provides a number of Goals, Objectives and Strategies. The categories provided include: Neighborhood Character, Downtown, Major Road Corridors, Traffic and Roads, and Parks and Recreation. Additionally, the plan indicates that the City

Street/South Center Street/ Northville Downs Area should “continue to be improved in a manner which complements the downtown and which provides an attractive entrance into the City of Northville.” Details of these three sub area plans are included with the paperwork provided this evening. It appears that the City of Northville is seeking a mix of land uses in this area which will incorporate residential, office and commercial uses. Northville may establish architectural review guidelines or form-based policies for new commercial establishments and major redevelopments in this area.

The draft Master Plan identifies goals, objectives and strategies that will help maintain and enhance the City of Northville’s record of being an attractive and economically- sound community. Novi’s Planning Staff believes that, once implemented, Northville’s new strategies will likely have a positive impact on the City of Novi and will not cause any land use conflicts or negatively impact the City of Novi’s infrastructure. It is the planning staff’s recommendation that the Planning Commission authorize the Planning Commission Chair to send a letter to the City of Northville’s Planning Commission complimenting them on their proposed Master Plan amendments and state that their proposed Plan supports the City of Novi’s Master Plan for Land Use.

Moved by Member Greco and seconded by Member Lynch:

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE NORTHVILLE MASTER PLAN MOTION MADE BY MEMBER GRECO AND SECONDED BY MEMBER LYNCH:**

**Motion to authorize the Planning Commission Chair to send a letter to the City of Northville’s Planning Commission supporting the proposed amendments to the City of Northville Master Plan. *Motion carried 5-0.***

**CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS FOR COMMISSION ACTION**

There were no Consent Agenda Removals.

**MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**

There were no Matters for Discussion.

**SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES**

There were no Supplemental Issues.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

No one in the audience wished to speak.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Baratta:

**VOICE VOTE ON MOTION TO ADJOURN MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BARATTA:**

**Motion to adjourn the September 10, 2014 Planning Commission meeting. *Motion carried 5-0.***

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 PM.

Transcribed by Valentina Nuculaj

September, 2014  
Date Approved:

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Richelle Leskun, Planning Assistant  
Signature on File