



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

CITY OF NOVI
Regular Meeting

December 11, 2024 7:00 PM

Council Chambers | Novi Civic Center
45175 Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI 48375 (248) 347-0475

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Pehrson, Member Avdoulos, Member Becker, Member Dismondy, Member Lynch, Member Roney, Member Verma

Staff: Barb McBeth, City Planner; Beth Saarela, City Attorney; Lindsay Bell, Senior Planner; Rick Meader, Landscape Architect; Ben Nelson, Project Engineer; Doug Necci, Façade Consultant

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Pehrson led the meeting attendees in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Verma to approve the December 11, 2024 Planning Commission Agenda.

VOICE VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 11, 2024 PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER VERMA. Motion carried 7-0.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Chair Pehrson invited members of the audience who wished to address the Planning Commission during the first audience participation to come forward. Seeing no one, Chair Pehrson closed the first public audience participation.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was not any correspondence.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee reports.

CITY PLANNER REPORT

City Planner Barbara McBeth shared that there was a personnel change in the planning department. Diana Shanahan who had been with the department as planning assistant for a couple of years was promoted to planner. City Planner Barbara McBeth introduced the new planning assistant as Stacey Choi. She shared that Stacey has a bachelor's degree in fine arts with a major in interior design and had worked for an interior design group previously. More recently, she was a stay at home mom before moving to Novi.

CONSENT AGENDA - REMOVALS AND APPROVALS

1. JSP19-34 TAFT KNOLLS III

Approval of the request of Trowbridge Companies for Taft Knolls III for a one-year Final Site Plan extension. The site plan proposes a 13-unit single-family residential development on the east side of Taft Road, north of Ten Mile Road.

Motion to approve the request of Trowbridge Companies for Taft Knolls III for a one-year Final Site Plan extension made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Avdoulos.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE TAFT KNOLLS III ONE YEAR EXTENSION OF THE FINAL SITE PLAN APPROVAL. MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER AVDOULOS. Motion carried 7-0.

2. JSP24-19 GENTHERM PATIO PERGOLA AND COVERED PATHWAY

Approval of the request of Brian Hughes of Northern Equities Group on behalf of Gentherm for a Section 9 Façade waiver. The subject parcel is 5.94 acres and is located at 28875 Cabot Drive in the Haggerty Corridor Corporate Park in the OST, Office Service Technology district. The request is to construct a wooden pergola and covered pathway on the patio at the rear of the building.

Motion to approve the request of Brian Hughes of Northern Equities Group on behalf of Gentherm for a Section 9 Façade waiver made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Dismondy.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE A SECTION 9 FAÇADE WAIVER, MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER DISMONDY. Motion carried 7-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. JSP24-13 QUICK PASS CAR WASH

Public Hearing at the request of Novi Road Management, LLC for Preliminary Site Plan, Woodland Permit, and Stormwater Management Plan approval to build a Quick Pass Car Wash.

Senior Planner Lindsay Bell stated that the site is located on the west side of Novi Road north of Ten Mile Road (Section 22). The site is currently vacant, although the former Goat Farm/DICE building still stands. The Pine Ridge retail center is to the south, a various retail and service businesses are on the east, and undeveloped parcels to the north and west.

The site is zoned B-3 General Business as is the area to the south. To the north and west is zoned Office Service, and the east is zoned Light Industrial. The Future Land Use map indicates Local Commercial for the subject property and those to the north and south. To the west is the Community Office, and the east is planned for Industrial Research Development and Technology. The subject property has regulated wetlands and woodlands along the west side of the property, which are connected to a larger system of off-site forested wetlands.

As indicated on the site plan, the applicant is proposing to demolish the existing structure to redevelop the site with a new Quick Pass car wash. Access to the site will remain from a driveway on Novi Road, which will be shifted southward. Stormwater is proposed to be managed by collecting stormwater in a storm detention basin west of the building and discharged to the wetland on the west side of the property.

The wetland area to the west will not be impacted except by a stormwater outlet, which requires a minor permit. Wetland review also notes that the wetland flagging has been removed from the site before it could be verified and should be restored in accordance with the Wetland Ordinance and remain in place throughout the duration of the project. A woodland permit is required for the impact to critical root zones of 3 regulated trees, requiring 6 replacement credits.

The proposal mostly complies with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. However, the applicant is requesting waivers from some requirements:

There are a few facade waivers that are proposed, some of which are not recommended for approval by our consultant. The requested waivers for the absence of Brick and overage of C-Brick on all facades are not supported because the color of the C-Brick does not appear to qualify to replace brick as it is not "rich dark earth-toned hues consistent with red bodied fired clay brick."

The project also proposes a greater use of corporate colors, which are a concern due to the intensity and quantity on both the building and on the vacuum stations. Senior Planner Lindsay Bell pointed out on the renderings that the colors look muted, while the physical samples are intense blue and orange. Staff notes that other recent car wash facilities have complied with these facade standards, or received only minor waivers. The waiver for a minor overage of Split-faced CMU on the south and north is supported.

A Planning Commission waiver for same-side and opposite-side driveway spacing are also requested. These are supported by our Traffic consultant. The applicant will need to apply to the ZBA for Variances for the overhead door facing Novi Road and the lack of a separate 18-foot bypass lane.

Due to the facade deviations that are not supported, Staff is recommending the Planning Commission postpone decision to allow the applicant to work on resolving these unsupported waivers.

The Planning Commission is asked tonight to hold the public hearing and consider the Preliminary Site Plan, Woodland Permit and Stormwater Management Plan. Representing the project tonight are owner Scott Griffin, engineer Dan LeClair, and architect Marsha Horning. Staff and our Facade consultant are available to answer any questions.

Chair Pehrson invited the applicant to address the Planning Commission.

Dan LeClair from Green Tech Engineering addressed the Planning Commission and expressed that it is good to be back in Novi and bring another project to the city. He stated this project is exciting for him to work on because like many others he had the opportunity to play softball and various other sports on the piece of property many years ago.

Mr. LeClair stated that Scott Griffin, who is the owner of the property, has been working with staff on getting a demolition permit. He explained that this is Scott's fourth or fifth car wash. Scott has previously opened locations in Canton, Livonia, and Plymouth. Mr. LeClair said that Scott is seasoned in the car wash business and knows the business well. Quick Passes' operator, who is a partner, was in attendance. Their contractor who built their last location in Canton was also in attendance.

Secondly, Mr. LeClair stated with respect to the wetlands that they did have a wetland consultant flag the wetlands. He stated that Scott's normal process is to have two consultants come out and flag the wetlands. Green Tech Engineering did go out to survey the wetlands and then the flags were pulled. He said that prior to final site plan approval they will have the wetlands reflagged. He indicated this is not an ideal time of year to flag the wetlands and that they will be back out to flag the wetlands in the spring.

Thirdly, Mr. LeClair said there are a few items that will need to be brought before the Zoning Board of Appeals. The first item being the overhead door facing Novi Road. He stated that tunnel washes need to have a door on both ends and that is not inconsistent with many other buildings up and down Novi Road and within the city. The second item is regarding the 18-foot bypass lane. He directed the attention of the Planning Commission members to a photo showing the bypass lane. Mr. LeClair stated the bypass lane is dual use and is consistent with Quick Pass's other car washes. He explained that as guests come through the car wash and proceed through the pay station, in the case of an emergency or stalled vehicle, the remaining cars can go through the outside lane clearing up the stalled lane. Quick Pass employees are trained in this type of situation and many other types of situations. Quick Pass's employee manual includes information regarding this scenario.

Mr. LeClair stated that Marsha Horning, with Jeffery Scott Architects, was available to answer questions regarding the façade. He expressed that they are humbly requesting preliminary site plan approval, keeping in mind they are aware they will need to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a couple of waivers. In requesting approval, he indicated that with approval they can confidently go to the Zoning Board of Appeals knowing that everyone is on the same page moving forward.

Lastly, he stated this development only takes up a portion of the property. This is the first user for this property, and there are no other plans for this property at this point. Furthermore, as additional users or Mr. Griffin develops further plans, they do plan to come back for site plan approval for those things. Mr. LeClair thanked the Planning Commission and stated that the team is available to answer any questions.

Chair Pehrson opened the public hearing and invited members of the audience who wished to speak to approach the podium. Seeing no one and confirming there was one correspondence received, Member Lynch read the correspondence.

Heather Robertson located at 24360 Novi Road objected for the following reasons:

1. There is another car wash on Novi Road just north of Grand River.
2. Concern about additional traffic on Novi Road.

Chair Pehrson closed the audience participation and turned the matter over to the Planning Commission.

Member Lynch thanked the applicant for bringing the project to Novi. He stated that the overhead door is not an issue. He agreed that a door is needed on either end. He said he believes they had been approved in the past and does not see it being a stumbling block. He stated in regard to the 18-foot bypass lane he agrees and thinks that it satisfies the intent. He recognized the applicant's explanation regarding the wetland flags and said there was no problem there.

Member Lynch expressed the area of concern is the façade waiver request. Member Lynch asked the façade consultant Mr. Doug Necci to comment on what is being requested and if this has been done in the past.

Mr. Doug Necci explained that the request is to use C-brick. He indicated that C-brick stands for concrete brick. He stated that concrete block is 8"x16" and C-brick is half that height at 4"x16". In the past there were projects in which submitted samples of C-brick looked so much like brick that it was accepted as brick; contingent on it being a color consistent with brick.

Additionally, Mr. Necci referenced the 52nd District Court Building in which burnished block was used. This was a costly selection but looked like cinder block because of the color. This occurred when the façade ordinance first started. Following that, the ordinance changed, and language was put in place outlining those selections had to be in deep rich brown colors.

Mr. Necci explained that we are really allowing a non-brick material to be used as brick; contingent on it being a color that is consistent with brick. Unfortunately, on this application the applicant has selected very light colors that could and likely will look like uncolored block. For that reason, Mr. Necci did not recommend approval.

Mr. Necci stated that on all the other car washes we have done, the colors were used as accent bands. In those previous projects the colors were not used on the canopies, the vacuum canopies, or on a sign like the tower part of this building. This one is a little different than the previous ones approved because there is a lot more color being used. That is coupled with the fact that the colors seen on the samples are fairly intense. It was noted that there is a section of the ordinance that prohibits the use of intense colors and in addition prohibits it being used as part of a sign. Those inconsistencies with the ordinance on this design needed to be brought to attention.

Member Lynch stated that he understands the applicant's desire to have their corporate image represented in the design. He said he believes they have come across this in the past, specifically on car washes, where a distinction separating them from other car washes was allowed but the facade ordinance was still met. Member Lynch inquired if that was possible in this case.

Mr. Necci indicated there were two car washes approved recently that did have corporate colors but in those cases the colors were relegated to simple accent bands on the building and/or kiosk. He stated this building also has similar accent bands. The main element that you would likely say is not an accent band is the tower that has the logo together with façade materials forming a sign.

Member Lynch stated he understands what the applicant is trying to do but his concern is with setting a precedent. He said that he believes having a car wash in this area is a good fit. He does agree with the applicant in the need to be distinct from competitors. At the same time, his role is to be consistent with every applicant. He would like to see a solution that uses materials that both meet the ordinance and gives the applicant the distinct corporate identity that they seek. In his opinion, he cannot go forward approving the preliminary site plan until this gets resolved.

Member Becker stated in staying on the façade waiver issue, he had a question for the applicant's architect, Marsha Horning. Member Becker indicated that on one of the sample boards, it looked like there were five or six C-brick colors that based on the description seemed like they would be dark red or brick color. He inquired if there was a reason why the applicant thought that it wouldn't be an appropriate color.

Ms. Horning with Jeffery Scott Architects stated that this is a new look and prototype for Quick Pass. Originally, they were going for metal panels and in trying to meet the ordinance they backed off the metal panels and went with C-brick. Ms. Horning stated that the way the ordinance was written is that C-brick is acceptable if it is red in color which is very consistent with traditional brick. She noted we are also seeing across the board in a lot of buildings right now different colors in brick. Marsha said one example of this is Chick-Fil-A. The brick on the new Chick-Fil-A is a taupe color. She indicated that the color selection for Quick Pass is a little bit lighter in color than what was used on the Chick-Fil-A building.

Ms. Horning stated the color of the C-brick was chosen to match the colors of Quick Pass which are blue and orange. She said that red brick does not match the colors of Quick Pass. The original design was white with metal panels. Ms. Horning stated that they were trying to back off from that design and warm up the tones a little bit. She felt that if the C-brick that was chosen was in regular brick the color would be consistent with the color of Mattress Firm on Novi Road which has a lighter taupe color. Another example is the Tru Hotel which also has a lighter color. Ms. Horning stated they are approaching it by trying to create those taupe colors in a variegated C-brick form.

Member Becker stated that they are frequently asked to approve minimal overage or deficit for façade material. He indicated in this request there seems to be more than a minimal deviation. He stated that not too long ago a new car wash was approved at 10 and Meadowbrook that has a light-colored façade but did not recall if that façade was stone, brick, or C-brick. Member Becker expressed that he has not heard a defensible reason as to why a darker color could not be used as opposed to the lighter color.

Moving to a different subject, Member Becker asked the applicant though the chair what color the overhead door that faces east is when the door is closed.

The applicant responded that the overhead door would be white or brown.

Member Becker asked if no cars were in line during the day in the months of January/February whether the overhead door would be closed.

Mr. LeClair stated the door would remain open.

Member Becker stated this is an ordinance requirement that is often presented to the Zoning Board of Appeals. He said it was interesting to see the applicant's photos of various buildings around Novi that have an overhead door facing the main road. One such example being the fire station, which of course is not subject to the rules of normal ordinance. Of the other three photos, the most notable being Harold's Frame Shop, which has been around forever. The three examples were probably built before we had an ordinance that said you couldn't have an overhead door facing a main road. He stated the fact remains, as has been pointed out, there are many examples that have been approved because that is the only way to do that for the building.

Member Becker said this is also one of those difficult parcels to put just about anything on, especially if you are going to save wetlands. He stated they don't get into mitigation of the wetlands. Once you do that on this property it really limits what can be built there. Member Becker stated he felt this was a good project because we do save the wetlands and still allow the applicant to build something there. He expressed he felt stuck on what to do about the color and would wait for comments from the rest of the commission.

Member Dismondy stated it was zoned appropriately for the use but questioned how we got this far with the current design. He referenced the other locations in Canton and Plymouth and said those designs would suit the city fine. Member Dismondy inquired how we got here.

Jamie Burke from Quick Pass Car Wash responded to Member Dismondy's inquiry. He stated that the other car washes coming into the city are predominantly private equity and they are wowing people with their look. Quick Pass would like to keep up with these locations. He shared customers at their Canton location have commented how great these other car washes look. Mr. Burke said they had considered with their first locations if they branded themselves properly with their colors. Mr. Burke used the example of the recognizability of Starbucks green. Customers drive by and automatically know Starbucks locations based on their green color. Quick Pass would like the logo, sign, and colors to be recognizable.

Member Dismondy expressed that the other Quick Pass locations look classy and he would be inclined to visit those locations as opposed to the proposed location as it is presented.

Jamie Burke expressed that he was concerned that another car wash would be built further down and if it was all glass that theirs would perhaps look plain.

Scott Griffin stated in response Mr. Burke's comments that they looked at all the new national chains designs. Some looked like spaceships, some were glossy bright red. They did not want to go that far but wanted something that was recognizable as a brand because there is a necessity to distinguish yourself from the others. Their team looked at the top 100 car wash designs in the country. They did a charrette with an architectural firm and had three teams of architects designing different car washes. A competition was held, and they selected the best design elements from each group. Lastly, each group met again with a focus on using that design. Scott felt the design they arrived upon was a nice balance of using the Quick Pass colors. He notated a lot on the color would be behind the car wash where it would not be seen unless you are in the car wash and have pulled in behind it.

Member Verma inquired what the distance is between the Churchill Crossing subdivision and the Quick Pass car wash.

Mr. LeClair stated he estimates it to be about 1,000 feet.

Member Verma inquired whether there would be any buffer of trees.

Mr. LeClair responded that the property is wooded, even in the wintertime it would be difficult to see through. He stated it is well over 1,000 feet from the car wash to Churchill Crossing.

Member Roney stated he would like to see some way that the planning department is comfortable with the façade. He referenced Chick-Fil-A which is similar in color, for which some compromise was made. He reiterated he would like to see something worked out before a final decision is made.

Member Avdoulos stated he thought the overhead door was an easy one. He said regarding the 18-foot bypass lane the explanation was given but from the way you enter the site, three lanes turn into one lane and that one lane proceeds through the car wash. Each of those three lanes are 12 feet wide, but they are a bit narrower due to the curbs.

Member Avdoulos asked Senior Planner Lindsay Bell if this is something that went through the Zoning Board of Appeals, if it would be viewed positively. The reason for the question is because there is no way to get out of the queue. He noted the whole thing could be six feet wider and inquired if that still qualifies because that is not a bypass.

Senior Planner Lindsay Bell commented that it could be possible. She stated the Fire Marshal did not have an issue with it and is fine with having access on the one side. Eighteen feet would allow for two car widths. Mrs. Bell said it could be lower than eighteen feet. She noted the applicant said that staff is trained in allowing cars to go through. She expressed she didn't know how often that would happen and how big of a problem that could be.

Member Avdoulos expressed concern because it is so close to Novi Road and is a tight fit.

Mr. Burke offered to clarify and explained that when a customer comes around the bottle neck there is no curb, and the customer can drive straight out. This is referred to as an escape lane and it's for breakdowns, emergencies, or if a customer changes their mind. The gates are break away gates. The gate attendant can hit a button and walk the vehicle out. All their locations have break away gates. He stated you can get two cars through there and there is always a gate attendant, staff, and manager available.

Member Avdoulos said that he would like to make sure we provide a bypass lane that meets the ordinance and is safe. Regarding the façade Member Avdoulos noted that the Chick-Fil-A used brick and not C-brick. He inquired if brick was used keeping the same coloration if that would meet the ordinance. It is understood where the applicant is coming from related to branding but wants to make sure that we are working with each other in getting to a resolution.

Doug Necci stated if it was full brick, it would be in full compliance regardless of color. There would only be a minor waiver for 5% overage of split face. He said brick is not regulated as to color.

Member Avdoulos asked Ms. Horning if this was a cost/design issue.

Ms. Horning stated that they could go back and work with the tower as it is the most prominent face you are seeing from Novi Road. Ms. Horning said the tower could possibly be done out of brick consistent with the color of the rest of the building. The other sides of the building could be maintained with C-brick matching the brick on the tower. She indicated the colors of the C-brick could be tweaked and they could be consistent with the colors of Chick-Fil-A or the Pure Car Wash using C-brick. The desire is to keep the C-brick variegated. She stated that doing the tower out of brick would not be an issue.

Member Avdoulos inquired that in doing the tower out of brick if the current colors selections would be maintained.

Ms. Horning said they may have to go with slightly different hues when switching to a brick tower. She stated that red brick does not go with the Quick Pass colors of blue and orange. She would like to keep the colors lighter.

Member Avdoulos stated he would like to get to a reasonable solution and compromise. As an architect himself he questioned whether he would want to introduce another material.

In the matter of Quick Pass Car Wash JSP24-13, motion to approve the Preliminary Site Plan based on and subject to the following:

- a. ZBA granting the variance for an overhead door facing a major thoroughfare.
- b. ZBA granting the variance for deficiency of drive-through by-pass lane.
- c. Traffic waiver from Code of Ordinances, Section 11.216.d.1.d for same-side driveway spacing along Novi Road (129 feet proposed, 230 feet required).
- d. Traffic waiver from Code of Ordinances, Section 11.216.d.1.e for opposite-side driveway spacing along Novi Road (24 feet and 86.4 feet proposed, 150 feet (downstream) and 200 feet (upstream) required).
- e. Section 9 Façade Waivers for:
 - i. an underage of brick on all facades, (0% proposed, 30% required).
 - ii. an overage of C-brick on all facades, (45-64% proposed, 25% permitted).
 - iii. An overage of Split-faced CMU on the South and North facades (12-15% proposed, 10% permitted). Supported as it is a minor amount, provided the color harmonizes with the CBrick.
- f. Wetland boundaries shall be flagged on the site prior to Final Site Plan submittal, and must remain flagged throughout the duration of the project in accordance with Chapter 12 of the Code of Ordinances.
- g. 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 Article 3, Article 4, and Article 5 of the Zoning Ordinance and all other applicable provisions of the Ordinance.

In the matter of Quick Pass Car Wash JSP24-13, motion to approve the Preliminary Site Plan. Motion made by Member Avdoulos. There was no second. Motion failed.

Member Avdoulos offered another motion.

In the matter of Quick Pass Car Wash JSP24-13, motion to Postpone action on this matter in order to allow the applicant the opportunity to satisfactorily address the following issues:

- a. Wetland boundaries have not been flagged on the site in accordance with Chapter 12 of the Code of Ordinances.
- b. The requested Section 9 Façade waivers are not consistent with the standards and intent of the Façade Ordinance. The applicant shall bring the design into greater conformity with the ordinance.

In the matter of Quick Pass Car Wash JSP24-13, motion to postpone action. Motion made by Member Avdoulos and seconded by Member Roney.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO POSTPONE ACTION ON JSP24-13 QUICK PASS CAR WASH MADE BY MEMBER AVDOULOS AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY. *Motion carried 7-0.*

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 30, 2024 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Motion to approve the October 30, 2024 Planning Commission minutes made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Becker.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 30, 2024 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BECKER. *Motion carried 7-0.*

2. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 13, 2024 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Motion to approve the November 13, 2024 Planning Commission minutes made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Becker.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 13, 2024 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BECKER. *Motion carried 7-0.*

CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS FOR COMMISSION ACTION

There were no consent agenda items.

SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES/TRAINING UPDATES

Member Lynch stated regarding re-zonings it would be important to know the impact that has on DPW and Police.

City Planner Barbara McBeth stated the larger requests do require a community impact statement but with smaller requests that may not be received.

Chair Pehrson said the specific instance should be brought forward at a later time and comments can be requested from the Police Chief for comparison.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Chair Pehrson invited members of the audience who wished to address the Planning Commission during the final audience participation to come forward. Seeing no one, Chair Pehrson closed the final audience participation.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Member Lynch and all those in favor said aye.

Meeting adjourned at 7:52 PM.