



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

CITY OF NOVI
Regular Meeting

March 6, 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: Member Avdoulos, Member Becker, Member Lynch, Chair Pehrson, Member Roney, Member Verma

Absent Excused: Member Dismondy

Staff: Barb McBeth, City Planner; Beth Saarela, City Attorney; Heather Zeigler, Planner

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Avdoulos to approve the March 6, 2024 Planning Commission Agenda.

VOICE VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE MARCH 6, 2024 PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER AVDOULOS. Motion carried 6-0.

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

There was no City Planner report.

CONSENT AGENDA - REMOVALS AND APPROVALS

There were no Consent Agenda – Removals and Approvals.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. 2024-2030 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

City Planner McBeth stated that City Manager Victor Cardenas will present the 2024-2030 Capital Improvement Program.

City Manager Cardenas stated that as a reminder the CIP is a planning document, a part of the planning enabling act, which helps Planning Commissions across the state understand the plans and infrastructure for the next six years. It helps coordinate the efforts when we look at new developments and projects that we have going out in the city.

A slide presentation of the 2024-2030 Capital Improvement Program in the Planning Commission packet was shown. City Manager Cardenas relayed, as always, the three biggest categories we have in the CIP are roads, water and sewer, and parks, recreation and cultural services. Roads is the biggest category since it not only funds roads, but it funds non-motorized activities as well.

The CIP is broken into 11 different categories of funds. The roads category is number one on the list, with 51% of the total program costs. Per our City Council guided directive, we need to have balanced budgets for the first three years, as shown in the red box on the Totals by Fiscal Year slide, then we have more of the ambitious projects in years four, five, and six. That will probably be modified as the years go on since our new Mayor and some new Council members are looking for us to be more realistic in those further out years. The CIP may be reorganized so that the ambitious projects are on a different sheet, and then projects that we actually have funding for or commitments from, such as federal or other grants, are the ones that are in the official CIP.

A slide was shown with funds by year and by category. The red box in the right-side column shows that the local street fund and major street fund are where our lion share of our dollars are spent on all the different roads around the city. Obviously, Beck Road consumes a lot of those funds with the future plans in that we only have one segment of that funded, that is almost up to a \$30 million project from the north and south lines of Beck Road.

City Manager Cardenas highlighted three significant projects. First, the Beck Road widening from Eleven Mile to Grand River is going to be done this coming fiscal year with federal funding. We have plans to look at Nine Mile Road to Ten Mile Road, which is going to be brought forward to City Council and is most likely is more of a resurfacing and not really a reconstruction like Eleven Mile and Grand River. The \$1.1 million is simply just maintenance, kind of a Band-Aid until we realize if we can do a complete reconstruction with federal dollars later down the road. That is going to be a big decision for City Council to wrestle with in the coming weeks as they get the proposed budget.

The second highlighted project, a salt storage dome replacement, a project that in the 13-14 years City Manager Cardenas has been here, has been pushed off because it just hadn't made sense. This is really going to improve efficiencies and allow trucks to be loaded up quicker with salt. We may get this done and it will never snow again this season, but regardless, we will have this in place for next winter.

The third highlighted project, to appease the Chair, is a fire truck replacement in 2024-2025. This will be the fourth fire truck replaced in the last five years. It is in this year's budget but is planned out three years. This is another decision for the City Council in that it takes a three-year build for these fire trucks now. We might be moving it to next year's budget since unfortunately we are not going to receive it until three years later. With the financing guidelines through GFOA (Government Finance Officers Association), if we sign an agreement committing it to purchase it, we have to book that in our financials. Hence why it's in the budget. Our fire department is pushing to plan for it now, so we get it when we need it in three years. Unfortunately, it's just the supply chain. Fire departments across the country are dealing with this with the different manufacturers, it is not just the manufacturer we're dealing with.

And the last slides of the presentation, part of our CIP, are all the other projects that we have going on this upcoming construction season. This information is from our Department of Public Works. There are some projects from last year, like Wixom Road, which was in the CIP last year, but was postponed. We have help on some projects from our friends at the different road commissions and counties. Grand River west of us is being done by the Oakland County Road Commission, Wayne County is finally doing some work on Eight Mile. We have our friends with MDOT doing work on I-96, hopefully finishing up the flex route. We have our friends at the Great Lakes Water Authority that are still finishing up Meadowbrook north of Twelve Mile. This is all part of our CIP, but it's also part of the collaboration we have with our partners in the different jurisdictions around the region.

City Manager Cardenas concluded his presentation by stating that he and Carl Johnson, CFO, stand ready for any questions.

Chair Pehrson opened the Public Hearing and invited members of the audience who wished to participate to approach the podium. Seeing no one, and confirming there was no correspondence, Chair Pehrson closed the Public Hearing and turned the matter over to the Planning Commission.

Member Lynch noted he is on the Capital Improvement Committee. Beck Road really needs to be redone, the City is faced with a tough decision as they can't wait much longer to do something there. The fire truck purchase is a supply and demand issue, there are very few suppliers and with all the COVID money out there, all the municipalities are trying to buy fire trucks. Manufacturers can only build so many and now require enormous down payments, about \$1.7 million down, before putting you on the schedule.

There are always more projects than we have money for. One thing that wasn't mentioned is we are putting in several pickleball courts, for approximately \$593,000. Some of the money came out of Capital Improvement and then we had some funding for that.

Member Lynch relayed his overall impression is a deep dive was done and he is satisfied that staff researched completely. These will be tough decisions for the City Council.

Member Becker relayed he is also on the Capital Improvement Committee and was at the meeting where the fire truck was discussed. We have to pay upfront and won't take delivery for three years no matter who we choose to build it. There is no guarantee for the three-year delivery date, if it is not met, we don't get any money back. We are just buying a \$1.7 million truck, three years from now we might see it, and there is no way to get out of it. If you want an example of why you plan out three years, this is it, because if we waited until the year before we need it, it's too late.

The whole process is really fascinating to look at. There are some people from the City who are saying we need to rethink the process of putting projects out six years from now, then we just keep putting it out six years, then another six years. They are trying to come up with a more realistic way other than just having placeholders to someday get to a project. We are not really ever going to spend the money, but we put it out there in case we get the money.

Member Becker inquired to City Manager Cardenas regarding the Beck Road widening funding - we've planned for \$3.569 million, and secured outside funding for \$4.7 million, is the entire project \$8.2 million? City Manager Cardenas responded that it depends on the different segments. We have secured the funding from the Feds for the segment from Grand River to Eleven Mile, but then have the other segment from Nine Mile to Ten Mile, which is another \$1,000,000. The total is \$1.6 for that whole stretch, but for the one segment for reconstruction is the money we got from the Feds.

Member Becker inquired regarding how many lanes the Grand River to Eleven Mile stretch would have. City Manager Cardenas responded that he believes that will be four lanes, then two lanes south of Eleven Mile. We are struggling with that now in terms of having the right of way to be able to make the expansions, if we can get the federal dollars for the whole stretch in our jurisdiction, the problem is our neighbors to the south at Eight Mile would still have that bottleneck.

Member Becker relayed as that area builds up more and Beck Road becomes more traveled, the ability to have a left turn only lane would really ease big traffic congestion. Member Becker is hoping we can find ways to do that. He thinks the CIP is a great plan and expressed his thanks for all the work done.

Member Verma inquired if we are replacing existing fire trucks or adding additional trucks. City Manager Cardenas responded that the new trucks ordered are all replacements. We are in the holding pattern for a couple others that we've ordered, waiting for those to be delivered. We have a new ladder truck as of a few years ago as well. Once we receive a new truck, we try to sell an old one. We usually keep one emergency backup if something happens to the other ones, but we get rid of the rest of them.

Member Verma inquired if the fire trucks we have now are in good condition to serve the community. City Manager Cardenas responded that we are held to standards by NFPA, the National Fire Board, and MDOT for trucks on the roads. We have to maintain them, and make sure that they are running and have all the different emergency components to be on the road. In terms of the mileage and the components, we have projected out the end of life for those vehicles being replaced. At that time, they'll probably have 150,000 miles on them, and more parts are breaking on them. New technology continues to come out, the new trucks will have new components on them, they'll have foam and other updates.

Member Verma inquired about the number of lanes for the widening of Beck Road between Eleven Mile and Ten Mile. City Manager Cardenas responded he is not 100% certain, at some point there might be three lanes or four lanes, he would verify and get the answer to the Planning Commission after the meeting. Member Verma inquired about whether the City has started acquiring land to widen the road. City Manager Cardenas responded that we have been acquiring right of way for many years now in preparation for all these projects, that has been taken care of by our fantastic engineering staff.

Member Roney stated since we are talking about Beck Road, which is a hot topic in this City right now, he trusts that Staff will do a great job listening to all the comments and do the best we can with the money available.

Member Roney is not on the CIP committee but having been on the Planning Commission for almost three years now, he understands that projects are thought out for years and then percolate to the top. He is impressed that a little over \$30 million is to be invested in the City if everything goes through, 34 projects out of a list of 152. He thinks the CIP is a really good plan and hopes it's very successful.

Member Avdoulos stated he has nothing to add but agrees with the other Planning Commissioners that the CIP is a great tool to use, and to understand what's coming up. As residents might ask, Planning Commissioners will at least have an idea, so this is great.

Motion to approve the Capital Improvement Program to be forwarded to the City Manager's office for further inclusion in the budget made by Member Avdoulos and seconded by Member Roney.

Chair Pehrson added he would like to thank City Manager Cardenas and Mr. Johnson for all the work the staff does behind the curtain. If anybody wants to see the CIP in detail, the website has a very elegant dashboard where each individual year can be viewed. It's very well laid out. Chair Pehrson doesn't know if Staff have ever won an award for financial modeling and presentations, but they should. He appreciates it.

Member Lynch added that in regard to a lot of projects the City is doing for millions of dollars, he has heard about efficiency. Who is looking at headcount reductions? We are getting these efficiencies, why does our headcount keep creeping up? For example, is somebody looking at when we get a better salt dome, do we lose a 10th of a head there? The cost of one individual over their career is well over \$1,000,000. While we are doing all these things that are making our people more efficient, somebody needs to be looking at our headcount, are going to lose a 10th of a head, whether it's from the Fire Department, Police Department, or Water and Sewer. It's tough, but as a taxpayer Member Lynch is hoping somebody is looking at that.

City Manager Cardenas responded we run an especially lean organization, definitely when positions come available in terms of attrition or resignation, we evaluate if that needs to be refilled. City Manager Cardenas can guarantee we don't have individuals twiddling their thumbs throughout the community on a daily basis. It's a very flat organization, so that's one of the issues we have in that there are not a lot of opportunities for advancement, that's one of our hindrances. We always look at positions, and there's a lot of responsibilities that come in that a lot of people wear a lot of different hats.

Member Lynch responded that as long as the efficiencies are being looked at he is satisfied.

In the matter of 2024-2030 Capital Improvement Program, motion to approve the CIP document for Manager's Office use in the City Budget.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE CIP DOCUMENT FOR MANAGER'S OFFICE USE IN THE CITY BUDGET MADE BY MEMBER AVDOULOS AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY. Motion carried 6-0.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. JSP23-14 FORMA BEAUTY SALON RENOVATION

Consideration of Forma Beauty Salon for a Section 9 Façade Waiver. The subject parcel is 0.57 acres and is in Section 15 of the city, west of Novi Road and north of Grand River Avenue. It is zoned TC, Town Center. The façade alterations impact the entire structure and represent an improvement to the façade in general.

Planner Heather Zeigler relayed the subject parcel is located at 26179 Novi Road, on the west side of Novi Road and north of Grand River Avenue. It is a former medical office which is soon to be occupied by the Forma Beauty Salon. It is located in the Town Center district and neighboring parcels to the north, south and east are also within the Town Center district.

The site plan itself remains largely unchanged. The applicant proposes renovations only to the façade. All existing brick is to remain, with added glazing as well as flat metal panels to the top section of the structure.

The applicant is requesting a waiver from Section 9 of the Ordinance, for the composition of façade materials being utilized on the structure. These waivers are supported by the City's Façade Consultant as the site plan meets all other zoning ordinance requirements.

The Section 9 waiver is requested for the following deviations from the Façade ordinance, which are demonstrated by the submitted color renderings of the proposed façade alterations.

- An overage of flat metal panels, and an underage of brick and stone on the east front facing façade.
- An overage of asphalt shingles & horizontal siding as well as an underage of brick and stone on the west (rear facing façade).
- An overage of Horizontal Siding on the south facing façade.
- An overage of Horizontal Siding on the north facing façade.

The waiver is supported by the City's façade consultant who has determined that these deviations will not adversely affect the aesthetic quality of the building and noted that the renovations will represent an improvement to the building façade in general.

The Planning Commission is asked tonight to approve or deny the Section 9 Waiver. Representing the project is Artur Kokaj, from Arko Design Associates, as well as owner Jakup Islami. Staff is also available for questions.

Chair Pehrson invited the applicant to address the Planning Commission.

Artur Kokaj, principal at Arko Design Associates, relayed that Planner Zeigler has covered the scope really well. The building size remains unchanged, the owner did want to go through a full remodel, the cost of

that would be way too high since it is a smaller building. The renovations mainly are going to be on the interior, but the exterior was touched up. The amount of glass increased in the front and on the sides of the building. The front windows facing Novi Road were enlarged. The added metal panels really complement the brick. They are going to be black in color, with the brick and the glass it's a great improvement to the façade.

Chair Pehrson turned the matter over to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Member Lynch stated it looks good to him. He inquired as to why something this simple could not be done administratively if it is just a change in material. He recalls that was discussed years ago and our City consultant controls this. City Planner McBeth stated that Staff will certainly take the Commission's lead on that if it's an Ordinance amendment that they would support. Typically, Staff encourages compliance with the Façade Ordinance as much as possible. With an existing building such as this, it is very hard to comply with the Ordinance standards, but the Ordinance does indicate that it would be brought in front of the Planning Commission for a Section 9 waiver, if needed.

Member Becker stated he looked at the underage of brick and stone on the east side, 38 percent is proposed, 51 percent is the ordinance minimum, then looked at the really nice renderings and considered how would that improve if there was 20 percent less aluminum panels and 20 percent more bricks. The Planning Commission always has to consider if precedent is being set when approval is given for a project, but this is a minor change, even though the numbers look big. It is a great-looking building.

Member Verma had no comment.

Member Roney stated he agrees with Member Becker that it is not a big building so the difference in percentages won't be noticed by any means. The building does need some love on the exterior, this is definitely an improvement, Member Roney is in support.

Member Avdoulos stated that he also appreciates the repurposing of an existing facility, and it is a nice refresh. He trusts the City façade consultant, if he is good with it, Member Avdoulos is good with it.

Motion in the matter of the request by Jakup Islami for a Section 9 Façade Waiver for Forma Beauty Salon made by Member Avdoulos and seconded by Member Roney.

In the matter of Forma Beauty Salon JSP23-14, motion to approve a Section 9 Façade Waiver to allow:

- i. An underage of Brick & Stone on the east, front facing façade (38% proposed), and on the west, rear facing façade (37% proposed), where the ordinance minimum is 51%.**
- ii. An overage of Flat Metal Panels on the east, front facing façade (62% proposed, 50% ordinance maximum).**
- iii. An overage of Asphalt Shingles on the west, rear facing façade (56% proposed, 25% ordinance maximum).**
- iv. An overage of Horizontal Siding on the west facing façade (7% proposed), the south facing façade (6% proposed), and the north facing façade (6% proposed), where the ordinance maximum is 0%.**

These approvals are based on and subject to the following:

- a. The deviations will not adversely affect the aesthetic quality of the building. The proposed alteration represents an improvement to the facades and is consistent with the intent and purpose of the Façade and TC Ordinances.**
- b. The findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the consultant review letter and the conditions and items listed in that letter 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.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE SECTION 9 FAÇADE WAIVER FOR FORMA BEAUTY SALON MADE BY MEMBER AVDOULOS AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY. *Motion carried 6-0.*

2. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 21, 2024 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Motion to approve the February 21, 2024 Planning Commission minutes made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Avdoulos.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 21, 2024 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER AVDOULOS. *Motion carried 6-0.*

CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS FOR COMMISSION ACTION

There were no consent agenda items.

SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES/TRAINING UPDATES

City Planner McBeth stated that an email went out, but she would like to provide a reminder that the Michigan Association of Planning has a workshop that is being held on Monday, April 29th from 3:00 PM to 8:30 PM at the Oakland County Executive Office Building conference center in Waterford. Member Becker has already signed up, if any other Commissioners would like to attend, please let City Planner McBeth know.

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 seconded by Member Roney.

VOICE VOTE ON MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MARCH 6, 2024 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY. *Motion carried 6-0.*

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 PM.

*Actual language of the motion sheet subject to review.