



# PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

CITY OF NOVI  
Regular Meeting

**July 9, 2025 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 Lynch, Member Becker, Member Roney, Member Verma

Absent Excused: Member Avdoulos, Member Dismondy

Staff: Barbara McBeth, City Planner; Elizabeth Saarela, City Attorney; Lindsay Bell, Senior Planner; Diana Shanahan, Planner; Rick Meader, Landscape Architect; Milad Alesmail, Project Engineer.

## 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 Becker to approve the July 9, 2025 Planning Commission Agenda.

**VOICE VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE JULY 9, 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BECKER. *Motion carried 5-0.***

## 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

### 1. JF25-09 POTTERY BARN FAÇADE

Approval at the request of Ashley Montague of Rebecca Olson Architect, LLC, on behalf of Pottery Barn, for a Section 9 Façade waiver. The subject site is on a portion of the 18.74 acre parcel located at 27500 Novi Road at Twelve Oaks Mall (Section 14). The site is zoned R-C: Regional Center. The applicant requests approval to paint the existing brick on the east (front) façade of the former California Pizza Kitchen space as part of the Pottery Barn storefront modification.

Motion to approve the JF25-09 Pottery Barn Façade Section 9 Façade Waiver made by Member Lynch and seconded my Member Roney.

**In the matter of JF25-09 Pottery Barn Façade, at the request of Ashley Montague, Rebecca Olson Architects, LLC, motion to approve a Section 9 Façade Waiver based on and subject to the following:**

- a. **Painting of existing brick on the east (front) façade (33% proposed, 0% permitted) will not adversely affect the aesthetic quality of the building. The proposed paint will improve color coordination between existing and proposed materials, and the overall design is consistent with the intent and purpose of the Façade Ordinance Section 5.15.**

**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 VOICE VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE JF25-09 POTTERY BARN FAÇADE SECTION 9 FAÇADE WAIVER MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY. *Motion carried 5-0.***

### 2. JSP21-33 MAPLE MEDICAL OFFICE

Approval of the request of AJSS Property, LLC for the first one-year extension of the Final Site Plan approval. The subject property is located east of Novi Road and south of Fourteen Mile Road, in the RA, Residential Acreage District, with a Planned Unit Development. The applicant is proposing to construct a 2558 square foot medical office building. The Planning Commission approved the Preliminary Site Plan on June 8, 2022. Final Site Plan approval was granted August 2, 2023.

Motion to approve the one-year extension of the Final Site Plan approval made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Becker.

**ROLL CALL VOICE VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE JSP21-33 MAPLE MEDICAL OFFICE ONE-YEAR EXTENSION OF THE FINAL SITE PLAN APPROVAL MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BECKER. *Motion carried 5-0.***

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

### 1. JSP25-03 TWELVE MILE TOWNES

Public hearing at the request of Singh Development, LLC for JSP25-03 Twelve Mile Townes for Planning Commission's recommendation to the City Council for a Preliminary Site Plan with a PD-2 Option, Special Land Use, Wetland Permit, and Stormwater Management Plan approval. The subject property is located at the southeast and southwest corners of Twelve Mile Road and Twelve Oaks Mall access drive in Section 14. The applicant proposes utilizing the Planned Development 2 (PD-2) option to develop 125 townhome units.

Senior Planner Lindsay Bell stated the subject property is approximately 16 acres and is located south of Twelve Mile Road, northeast of the Twelve Oaks Mall in Section 14. The property is zoned RC Regional Center, with the same to the east (which is a medical office facility) and west. To the south is zoned RM-1 Low Rise Residential and developed with the Waltonwood senior living facility, and RC, the Twelve Oaks Mall property. To the north is part of the MSU Tollgate Farm property, which is zoned RA Residential Acreage, and an assisted living center, zoned OS-1.

The Future Land Use map indicates Regional Commercial with a Planned Development option (PD-2) for the subject property and those to the west, Educational Facility and Community Office to the north, Office R&D Technology to the east, and Multiple family and Regional Center to the south.

Senior Planner Bell noted you may recall a few years ago you reviewed a project on the eastern parcel only called Griffin Novi. That project contained both apartment buildings and townhomes with a total of about 174 units. It was approved by the City Council, but the applicant never completed the final steps for Stamping Set approval.

The applicant has now redesigned the site to incorporate the parcels on the western side of the Twelve Oaks Mall finger road. They are now proposing to develop the vacant parcels with 125 townhome units in 20 buildings using the PD-2 Option, which is about 8 dwellings per acre. The project would be completed in 3 phases as shown in the Phasing Plan. Pocket park amenities and decks are shown on the plan to fulfill the requirement for usable open space. Parking would be provided in direct-entry garages for the townhomes as well as driveway aprons, with a few off-street spaces for visitors. A private street network is proposed to connect the development to Twelve Mile Road and the Twelve Oaks Mall access drive. Sidewalks are provided to the "front" of the units or along the roadways for the most part, as well as an off-site sidewalk to the south along the east side of Twelve Oaks Mall road for residents to be able to walk to the mall area. There is also a SMART bus stop at the corner of Twelve Mile and 12 Oaks Mall access drive.

Stormwater management for the west side would be collected and discharged to Bishop Creek, while the east side would be collected and discharged to the existing storm water system along Huron Circle. On-site detention will be required before release. Public utility connections would be made for water and sewer service.

Section 3.31.4 of the zoning ordinance outlines the review procedures for Preliminary Site Plans using the PD-2 Option. This requires the Preliminary Site Plan to receive a recommendation for approval or denial from the Planning Commission with the City Council ultimately approving or denying the proposed plan. It also outlines specific factors the Planning Commission and City Council shall consider in the review, as well as the findings for Special Land Use review, and demonstrating compliance with Section 3.31.7.B as it relates to standards for residential developments. These findings and standards are all listed in the Planning Review in your packet. The Final Site Plan would be reviewed administratively if the preliminary receives approval.

Under the PD-2 Option, the City Council is authorized to grant deviations from the strict requirements of the Zoning Ordinance related to area, bulk, yard and dimensions. For this project the applicant is requesting 15 deviations, which are listed in the draft motion. Several of these are for building setbacks. Because the site will have road frontage on 3 sides this does create some constraints. The applicant also states the setbacks for the district are more suburban-style development while they describe their proposal as more urban in nature. Deviations for distance between buildings are also requested for certain buildings, with a similar justification that the project is more of an urban style, as well as site topography. There are several landscaping deviations requested. A few of these are necessary due to the presence of utilities or existing trees that provide alternative screening, and others due to the constrained layout. All deviations are supported.

The proposed Section 9 façade waiver is recommended by our Façade consultant for the underage of brick on some elevations because it is minor in nature and not detrimental to the aesthetic quality. The applicant has provided a façade board.

A wetland delineation indicated there are two small wetland areas on the site, which will be permanently impacted by the proposed development. The proposed fill amount requires a Non-Minor Wetland Permit, but the area of impact does not meet the City's threshold for mitigation. There are no regulated woodlands on the site.

The Planning Commission is asked to hold the public hearing and consider making a recommendation to City Council to either approve or deny the Preliminary Site Plan with PD-2 Option and Phasing, Special Land Use Permit, Wetland permit, and preliminary Storm Water Management Plan. The City's engineer and traffic consultant are also here to answer any questions you may have. The applicant Matt Delapp from Singh Development and engineer Jason Rickard are here to tell you more about their project. Thank you for your time.

Chair Pehrson invited the applicant to address the Planning Commission.

Mr. Matthew Delapp with Singh Development thanked the Planning Commission for their time and consideration and stated they are requesting a recommendation for approval of the Twelve Mile Townes Project. The project is located on Twelve Mile Road between Meadowbrook Road and Novi Road. The property is zoned RC with a planned development PD-2 option being utilized. He noted the project proposes 125 townhome units split between 20 separate buildings to be built in three phases.

Mr. Delapp stated they expect the project to have a tremendously positive impact on the community. Building residential units near the mall provides additional customers for the mall as well as the surrounding businesses. Additionally, it provides a place for the employees of those businesses to live. He noted the 125 additional units will create an added tax base for the City of Novi. Lastly, during the course of construction a substantial number of jobs will be created.

Mr. Delapp shared elevations from Pulte's Townes at Main Street project which is currently under construction. He stated the plans that are being proposed are very similar and the Townes at Main Street elevations give a very good idea of what the proposed project will look like. The elevations consist predominantly of brick and stone with fiber cement siding. Architectural details such as metal roof overhangs and decorative brackets are included. Mr. Delapp stated each unit has ground level parking with additional parking provided on the site itself. The units begin with three bedrooms and two and a half bathrooms with customized options to add more. It was noted a unique aspect of the design is the option for the addition of a loft to the top level with an additional option for a deck. These options for the townhomes help to create an urban aesthetic and feel. Site amenities included are pocket parks, benches, and bike racks.

Mr. Delapp stated it is always a great process working through site plan approval with staff before coming before the Planning Commission. He noted they are happy to say so far everyone is recommending approval and hope to count on the Planning Commission's approval this evening.

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 no correspondence received, Chair Pehrson closed the public hearing and turned the matter over to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Member Lynch stated typically when this many deviations are requested, he is concerned. He stated there are two strategic reasons in this case that alleviate the concern. The first reason being there is an entrance off Twelve Mile. The second reason being we have been strategically aiming to achieve higher density closer to the mall as there are more businesses in that area. He noted this proposal meets the strategic objective to have higher density populations closer to where the businesses are. He stated he thinks this project will fit in very nicely.

Member Becker inquired if there are sidewalks planned for the driveway side of any of the buildings.

Mr. Jason Rickard with Seiber Keast Lehner stated there are no proposed sidewalks on the driveway side. He noted that typically with this type of product the road and driveways are already overwhelmed with concrete, so the pathway system is usually in front of the homes.

Member Becker stated he likes the basic idea of this project as it addresses the need for this type of

residential option while also potentially providing additional nearby customers for the businesses at Twelve Oaks Mall and West Oaks. Additionally, the development will not visually or aesthetically clash with other types of buildings in the vicinity. This development could add 125 additional families to a relatively compact space; it is on a property where roads were specifically developed to accommodate a large amount of traffic for Twelve Oaks Mall. Member Becker noted the mall in the current state generates far less traffic than the roads were designed to handle so he does not see a problem with the additional concentration of traffic twice a day getting in and out of the development.

Member Becker stated what he wished he'd seen in this site plan was a nod toward another specific type of residential option which is truly needed in Novi but seems to be difficult to address. Single floor residences are needed for those who no longer want to take care of a home or lawn, negotiate stairs in their residences, and want to age in place in Novi. He noted in looking at the proposed building layout he couldn't help but wonder if some of the buildings could be reimagined as single floor residences. He stated building 17 could potentially go from 5 three story residences to 3 single story residences, the footprint would have to be bigger. Additionally, buildings 16, 19, or 13 could go from four residences to two. Member Becker inquired if going from 125 residences to 119 residences would make the project physically impossible to do. He expressed he had thought about at which point in his life he would have been interested in a townhome like this. Would it have been as a double income couple with no kids, when a family was started, as an empty nester? He noted it seemed curious to walk up three flights of stairs to the bedrooms.

Member Becker stated the largest issue he sees involves safety. All the interior streets are marked as fire lanes with no street parking allowed. The applicant has indicated that there are ten extra parking spaces provided. In phase one there are forty-one residences with a total of five designated parking spaces including one designated for handicap parking. This visitor parking area is on the far south end of phase one making it virtually unusable for guests in the northern half of this phase. For the forty-one residences in this phase there are just four visitor parking spaces that can be used by anyone, averaging one space for every ten families. In phase two there are forty-five residences with no guest parking spaces provided. In phase three there are thirty-nine residences with a visitor parking area for five spaces with one dedicated for handicap parking. This visitor parking area is on the far south end of phase three and is unusable for those living in the northern section of the area. In phase three there are just four spaces that anybody can use. It was noted each residence can accommodate two vehicles in their own driveway for visitors to park in. There are very few visitor parking spaces provided, and all the interior streets are designated as fire lanes with no parking. This site plan will force visitors to ignore the no parking designation and park in the street if they pull up to their destination and find that the driveway is full. When this happens on both sides of the street there are safety issues for traffic, delivery vehicles, the fire department, and emergency vehicles. Member Becker stated we are being asked to believe that all residents will limit the number of visitors coming to their homes to no more than two vehicles. With this site plan, a guest who arrives at a residence whose driveway is already filled has been left with no real option other than to park illegally on the street. There are almost no sidewalks on the driveway side of the buildings, if a guest does park illegally on the street, they will have to walk in the street to get to the residence they are going to. The same applies to visitors who happen to find one of the designated visitor parking spaces, they will have to walk in the street a long way to get to where they are going. He stated he tried to find an intractable reason why there could not be more off-street parking spaces, something to do with the topography of the land or wetlands and could not come up with one. Additional off-street parking for visitors would be easy to accomplish but it would mean having fewer residences to sell. It was noted according to the information provided by the planning department staff that the applicant has more than met the ordinance requirement for off-street parking by providing space for two vehicles to park in each residence's driveway. These residences have three bedrooms and are meant for families with children. There will be birthday parties and holiday parties, to expect that these events will never exceed the parking capacity for two vehicles in the driveway is not realistic. It was stated while it is true that the applicant's plan has provided 516 off-street parking spaces with 250 of those in the garages. The deeper truth is each resident only has four parking spaces to use, two in the garage and two in the driveway with a mere handful of others located somewhere in the development.

Member Becker expressed during public hearings the Planning Commission is often accused of being more interested in encouraging development, because it increases tax revenues, than looking for other concerns and issues. The concern that has been raised this evening is not about cutting down trees, possible traffic congestion, or causing Novi Public Schools to have to deal with an influx in the student population. The concern is about the safety of people. For this project the applicant could increase the off-street parking to mitigate the public safety concerns that have been raised. Member Becker noted single-floor residences could be included, which would help meet a very real need in the City for single-floor residences. Addressing both concerns would mean fewer residences to sell. He expressed that the applicant has done nothing wrong with the way the project is being presented; but sometimes when realistic concerns and needs that are relatively easy to address are present good enough really isn't good enough.

Member Verma stated since there are no sidewalks along the road, he has concern due to the proximity to the shopping center. Secondly, he expressed concern regarding students who will be walking to the bus stop for school.

Senior Planner Lindsay Bell clarified where the sidewalks are being proposed, indicating where the sidewalks are located on the slideshow presented. It was stated the location of the bus stop is yet to be determined.

Member Roney stated he remembers the previous project for this location that was looked at a few years ago and likes this project much better. In the previous project proposal, the density was much higher in a smaller space. He noted he was concerned back then that the density seemed too high, so this current project pleases him in that regard. Another concern two years ago was the number of deviations. He noted he read through the rationale for the deviations requested for this project and understands the rationale behind them. He stated he likes this project much better.

Chair Pehrson stated he also approves of the project. Relative to the Special Land Use Permit it was stated that criteria items one through seven are reviewed anytime a special land use comes before the Planning Commission. Chair Pehrson stated he concurs that the proposed use will not cause detrimental impact on the thoroughfare of the area and is consistent with the goals and objectives recommended in the City's Master Plan for housing options. He noted he is in agreement with Member Becker regarding wishing to see a developer come in with single family homes on a single level. He stated he also believes the project fulfills criteria number six, in that it will promote the use of land in a socially and economically desirable manner.

Motion to recommend approval to the City Council for JSP25-03 Twelve Mile Townes Special Land Use made by Member Roney and seconded by Member Lynch.

**In the matter of JSP25-03 Twelve Mile Townes, motion to recommend approval to the City Council for Special Land Use based on and subject to the following:**

- 1. The proposed use will not cause detrimental impact on existing thoroughfares (based on Traffic review);**
- 2. The proposed use will not cause a detrimental impact on the capabilities of public services and facilities (based on Engineering review);**
- 3. The proposed use is compatible with the natural features and characteristics of the land (because there are no regulated woodlands on site, and minimal impacts to wetland areas are proposed);**
- 4. The proposed use is compatible with adjacent uses of land (because the proposed use is similar to the residential community to the south and complements other nearby uses);**
- 5. The proposed use is consistent with the goals, objectives, and recommendations of the City's Master Plan for Land Use (as it fulfills the Master Plan objectives to provide a wide range of housing options and to provide residential developments that support healthy lifestyles);**
- 6. The proposed use will promote the use of land in a socially and economically desirable**

- manner (as it fulfills one of the Master Plan objectives to ensure compatibility between residential and non-residential developments);
7. The proposed use is (1) listed among the provision of uses requiring special land use review as set forth in the various zoning districts of this Ordinance, and (2) is in harmony with the purposes and conforms to the applicable site design regulations of the zoning district in which it is located.

*This motion is made because the plan is otherwise in compliance with Article 3, Article 4, Article 5, and Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinance and all other applicable provisions of the Ordinance.*

**ROLL CALL VOICE VOTE TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL FOR JSP25-03 TWELVE MILE TOWNES SPECIAL LAND USE MADE BY MEMBER RONEY AND SECONDED BY MEMBER LYNCH. Motion carried 4-1 (Becker).**

Motion to recommend approval to the City Council for JSP25-03 Twelve Mile Townes Preliminary Site Plan with a PD-2 Option and Phasing Plan made by Member Roney and seconded by Member Lynch.

**In the matter of JSP25-03 Twelve Mile Townes, motion to recommend approval to the City Council for Preliminary Site Plan with a PD-2 Option and Phasing Plan based on and subject to the following:**

1. Planning Commission findings that the standards of Section 3.31.4 of the Zoning Ordinance are adequately addressed, as identified in the Planning Review Letter.
2. Planning Commission findings that the standards of Section 3.31.7.B.viii.d of the Zoning Ordinance are adequately addressed, as identified in the Planning Review Letter.
3. The recommendation includes the following ordinance deviations for consideration by the Planning Commission in its recommendation to the City Council:
  - i. Deviation from Section 3.31.7.D for not meeting the minimum building setback requirements for front yard (Twelve Mile frontage). A minimum of 50 feet is required, 20 feet is provided. *The standard setbacks of the district are for a more suburban style of development and the deviations would be consistent with a more urban development as they propose.*
  - ii. Deviation from Section 3.31.7.D for not meeting the minimum building setback requirements for the exterior side yard (Twelve Oaks Mall Road frontage). A minimum of 50 feet is required, 30 feet is provided. *The setbacks of the district are for a more suburban style of development and the deviations would be consistent with a more urban development as they propose.*
  - iii. Deviation from Section 3.31.7.D for not meeting the minimum building setback requirements for the eastern side yard. A minimum of 35 feet is required, 20 feet is provided. *The setbacks of the district are for a more suburban style of development and the deviations would be consistent with a more urban development as they propose.*
  - iv. Deviation from Section 3.6.2.H for not meeting the requirement for additional setback from a residential district to the south. A minimum of 111 feet is required for a building 37 feet in height, 40 feet is provided. *This deviation is supported as the uses are both multi-family residential and the additional protection afforded by the larger setback is not warranted. However, the ZBA granted conditional approval for a setback variance for the Waltonwood Phase 2 in 2003 that stated any building on the subject property would be a minimum of 150 feet from those buildings. The applicant will need to seek ZBA's amendment of the previous conditions of approval and amend the deed restriction that was placed on the property prior to Final Site Plan approval.*
  - v. Deviation from Section 3.8.2.H to allow a reduction in the minimum distance between buildings (20 feet proposed, at least 30 feet required), *as the layout seeks to optimize the space to maintain adequate open space and circulation.*
  - vi. Deviation from Section 3.31.7.B.viii.b.xi for the lack of sidewalk on the west side of Twelve Oaks Mall Road south of the entrance, and on the south side of Bishop Drive

- as shown on the plan.
- vii. Deviation from Sec. 5.10.1.B to allow perpendicular parking along a Major Drive. There are 4 spaces proposed on the west side of the project along Bishop Road, which is anticipated to have low traffic volume.
  - viii. Landscape deviation from Section 5.5.3.B.ii and iii for lack of 4.5-6 foot landscaped berm along eastern property line. *Supported by staff as alternative screening is provided with six-foot fencing.*
  - ix. Landscape deviation from Section 5.5.3.B.ii and iii for lack of berm or wall in the greenbelt of Twelve Mile Road for the western 616 feet, *to preserve the existing vegetation in the area that is not being developed.*
  - x. Landscape deviation from Section 5.5.3.B.ii and iii for deficiency in street trees on Twelve Oaks Drive north of the entry drives on the west side, *due to utility conflicts and lack of space between curb and sidewalk.*
  - xi. Landscape deviation from Section 5.5.3.B.ii and iii for deficiency in street trees on Twelve Mile Road for the western part of the site, *due to utility conflicts.*
  - xii. Façade deviations from Section 5.15 for an underage of brick on the rear facades of the high-visibility buildings (25% proposed, 30% required), and an underage of brick on all facades of the standard visibility buildings (23-28% proposed, 30% required), *as the deviation is minor in nature and not detrimental to the aesthetic quality. No vinyl siding is permitted.*
4. 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 Article 3, Article 4, and Article 5 of the Zoning Ordinance and all other applicable provisions of the Ordinance.*

**ROLL CALL VOICE VOTE TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL FOR JSP25-03 TWELVE MILE TOWNES PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN WITH A PD-2 OPTION AND PHASING PLAN MADE BY MEMBER RONEY AND SECONDED BY MEMBER LYNCH. Motion carried 4-1 (Becker).**

Motion to approve the JSP25-03 Twelve Mile Townes Wetland Permit made by Member Roney and seconded by Member Lynch.

**In the matter of JSP 25-03 Twelve Mile Townes, motion to approve the Wetland 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.***

**ROLL CALL VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE JSP25-03 TWELVE MILE TOWNES WETLAND PERMIT MADE BY MEMBER RONEY AND SECONDED BY MEMBER LYNCH. Motion carried 5-0.**

Motion to recommend approval to the City Council for JSP25-03 Twelve Mile Townes Stormwater Management Plan made by Member Roney and seconded by Member Lynch.

**In the matter of JSP 25-03 Twelve Mile Townes, motion to recommend approval to the City Council for Stormwater Management Plan 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 it is otherwise in compliance with Chapter 11 of the Code of Ordinances and all other applicable provisions of the Ordinance.***

**ROLL CALL VOICE VOTE TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL FOR JSP25-03 TWELVE MILE TOWNES STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN MADE BY MEMBER RONEY AND SECONDED BY**

**MEMBER LYNCH. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **1. JSP25-17 21420 NOVI ROAD**

Consideration at the request of Kap and Rich Restaurant Group for approval of Preliminary Site Plan, Landscape Waivers, and a Section 9 Façade Waiver. The subject property at 21420 Novi Road totals approximately 1.73 acres and is located east of Novi Road, south of Nine Mile Road (Section 35). The property is zoned B-3: General Business District and P-1: Vehicular Parking District. The applicant is proposing building and site renovations to support the new restaurant use.

Planner Diana Shanahan stated the 1.73-acre site at 21420 Novi Road, the former Border Cantina, is located in Section 35 of the city. The site is zoned B-3: General Business District on the western portion of the site, consistent with neighboring properties to the north and south, and P-1: Vehicular Parking on the eastern portion of the site. To the west along Novi Road and to the east beyond the railroad tracks is zoned R-4 One Family Residential.

The Future Land Use map designates the western portion of the property, as well as the adjacent properties to the north and south, as Local Commercial. The eastern portion of the site, along with neighboring properties to the north, is designated Industrial, Research, Development, and Technology. Properties to the west are designated Single Family, while those to the east are designated Public Park and Single Family. No regulated natural features are present on the property.

The applicant is proposing to renovate the existing 4,391 square-foot restaurant building for a new restaurant use. Proposed renovations include enclosing the existing patio to expand the interior dining area and constructing new additions on the north side of the building to further increase seating capacity and on the east side of the building to accommodate back-of-house operations. A 237 square foot office will be added on the second floor above the new back-of-house addition. Upon completion, the total building area will be approximately 6,400 square feet.

Planner Shanahan stated site enhancements include resealing and restriping the existing 112 space parking lot, resulting in 103 spaces after the addition. As 105 spaces are required, a ZBA variance will be sought for the deficiency of 2 spaces. The existing dumpster will be relocated to the rear of the site to maintain the required minimum drive-aisle width, which was reduced by the new building addition. Landscaping improvements will restore elements from the original Lone Star Grill and Border Cantina plans, while introducing new pleached hornbeam trees along the front facade of the building along Novi Road. The project also includes energy-efficient LED lighting upgrades in the parking area. Architectural enhancements to the building's exterior will incorporate longboard-style metal paneling, built-up parapets, and accent lighting at the entrance. The proposed materials are represented on the facade materials board. The Section 9 Façade Waiver for overage of EIFS on the south and east elevations is supported by the Façade consultant. All reviewers are recommending approval of the Preliminary Site Plan.

The Planning Commission is asked to approve or deny the Preliminary Site Plan, landscape waivers, and Section 9 façade waiver. Representing the project tonight are Roman Bonislowski, the project architect, and owners Mike Richardson and Glenn Kaplan. Staff is also available for any questions.

Mr. Roman Bonislowski from Ron and Roman Architects stated in working with Mike Richardson and Glenn Kaplan, they discovered a building with potential in Commerce Township and converted it into a successful casual/fine dining restaurant known as the Benstein Grill. He noted Mike Richardson's

background is in food and Glenn Kaplan is successful in real estate. Since opening the Benstein Grill, Mike and Glenn have been looking for an opportunity for their next facility.

Mr. Bonislowski stated the building to start is a beautiful building. He noted his business partner designed the building twenty-five years ago. He stated as you study the building and survey the interior you can see where things over time have dropped off. There are maintenance issues on the interior of the building along with several things that are due to be improved. Current ownership has now come to the extent of which they would like to continue with the project, so they have found the opportunity to make a deal with Mike and Glenn.

Mr. Bonislowski stated they are enthusiastic about coming in with a very good set of bones on the building, It was noted Mike and Glenn have expanded onto their location in Commerce Township twice and understand their operational needs quite well. As such, they know that the current building's interior has insufficient kitchen and storage space to produce the type of menu that the existing Benstein Grill offers. He expressed the food and service at the existing Benstein Grill is outstanding.

For the restaurant operation to work efficiently the food storage and preparation areas much be designed correctly. Mr. Bonislowski noted there is a small unusable basement in the building and the kitchen preparation area is much undersized. He stated that part of what is driving this whole project is the need to make the space work operationally; the addition of cooler and freezer space outside of the building was needed to accomplish this.

Next, Mr. Bonislowski touched on the changes that will be made to the interior of the building. He stated the washing area will be relocated, and a supplementary preparation space will be added. The restrooms will remain in their current location. Additionally, a separate employee restroom will be added. He noted a good amount of the plan addresses improving the infrastructure of the space to ensure smooth operations. Regarding the front of the house, he stated the current bar is poorly placed, so relocation of the bar is being proposed. The relocation of the bar will accommodate the flow of service in and out of the restaurant. Furthermore, the front of the house was redeveloped to enclose two patios on the north and west side of the building. With this change, the parking is deficient by two spaces. He noted the current façade facing Novi Road is not ideal as it has five parking spaces in front of the building. By removing the parking spaces from the front of the building and creating a much nicer landscape format that faces Novi Road the number of landscape foundation plantings are improved. This creates an inviting and pleasant environment as you approach the building as well as from inside the building looking out.

Regarding the parking lot itself, it was noted the landscaping had disappeared from the north and south property lines over the years. Mr. Bonislowski stated during preliminary meetings with staff it was recommended to refer to the previously approved landscape plan for Border Cantina and replace all the plantings along the north and south property lines to restore it back to the original state. He expressed they will be restoring the north and south property lines to the original state.

Mr. Bonislowski stated they are proposing to replace the existing heads of the lighting poles in the parking lot. The replacement will allow the color index and temperature to be closely controlled. He noted that a desirable feature of this property is that the back of the property has a beautiful tree line which presents a backdrop to the entire building. The addition of three up lights to the parking lot will enhance the backdrop of the tree line. This enhancement will create an inviting environment as the appropriate perimeter lighting is important.

Next, Mr. Bonislowski stated a few parking spaces were lost based on code requirements. The building was originally planned with two barrier free parking spaces. He noted a certain percentage of barrier free parking spaces are required based on the total number of spaces. He stated the new barrier free parking spaces have been located directly across from the barrier free entrance. There are a total of five barrier-free parking spaces with one being van accessible. It was stated the zoning ordinance requires a run of no more than fifteen cars without a tree island. Along the northern property line, one parking space was removed to accommodate a tree island. Additionally, directly behind the building where a double row of cars abuts the eastern face of the building there are sixteen cars, which is a unique condition. The improvements planned for the parking field include a seal coat and restriping.

Mr. Bonislowski stated knowing that both Mr. Richardson and Mr. Kaplan have developed a successful concept to date with a specific attitude and look; it was important to do something with this building that will carry through that aesthetic. He noted the name of the restaurant is being developed and the signage will be submitted under separate permit. He stated it was important to elevate the parapet wall along the front and sides of the building to provide a more contemporary appearance. Several waivers are requested due to working within the confines of an existing building. Mr. Bonislowski thanked the Planning Commission and expressed he would be happy to answer any questions.

Chair Pehrson turned the matter over to the Planning Commission.

Member Lynch thanked the applicant for the presentation and redevelopment proposal. It was stated Novi is past the rapid growth phase and is at a point where redevelopment is desired. He expressed he has been criticized in the past for being too lenient with redevelopment. He stated if there is one thing that will hinder the City, it will be to make redevelopment difficult for business owners. For that reason, he does not have any issue with the requested waivers. He stated this project can be used as an archetype for redevelopment in the future. If redevelopment is made too difficult, we may end up accelerating rapid decline. He expressed the proposal will be a good addition to Novi.

Member Becker stated he agrees with Member Lynch and loves seeing this reimagined and refreshed restaurant proposal. The few tweaks and modifications that we are doing to what is technically required are well justified. He noted he will enjoy seeing this project when it is developed.

Member Verma stated he is in support of the project and inquired when the project will be started and completed.

Mr. Bonislowski stated the engineering and construction documentation has already commenced. There are several months in terms of generation of all the documents, building department approvals, and then jumping into construction. He noted they are looking at January or post-January to open.

Member Roney stated he was pleasantly surprised to see this in the packet. He noted when he heard that Border Cantina was closing his fear was that the building would sit empty for a while, so he was happy to see that someone had a plan for the building.

Motion to approve the JSP25-17 21420 Novi Road Preliminary Site Plan made by Member Roney and seconded by Member Lynch.

In the matter of JSP25-17 21420 Novi Road, motion to approve the Preliminary Site Plan, Landscape Waivers, and Section 9 Façade Waiver based on and subject to the following:

- a. Site Plan Review (Section 6.1.1.C.ix.b): Planning Commission approval of the site plan is required as the 1,776 addition is 40% of the gross floor area (greater than 10%) of the existing non-residential building and the building is approximately 175 feet (less than 500 feet) from the adjacent residential district.
- b. Loading Spaces (Section 5.4.4): The area required for loading, unloading and trash receptacles shall not cut off or diminish access to off-street parking spaces or to service drives. The applicant has indicated morning loading only to occur, prior to business hours.
- c. A waiver is granted for the greenbelt depth deficiency along Novi Road, under Zoning Ordinance Section 5.5.3.B.ii. The deficient depth reflects an existing condition; the proposed site plan will preserve, not reduce, the current greenbelt depth.
- d. A waiver is granted for the deficiency in greenbelt landscaping along Novi Road, under Zoning Ordinance Section 5.5.3.B.ii. The applicant will be restoring any missing plantings to match the original approved landscaping.
- e. A waiver is granted for lack of street trees along Novi Road, under Zoning Ordinance Section 5.5.3.B.ii. As the applicant is restoring all previously missing landscaping to bring the site into compliance, and street trees were not included in the original plan, the requirement for street trees is waived.
- f. A waiver is granted for the 16-space long parking bay, under Zoning Ordinance Section 5.5.3.C.ii.o.4. This is a pre-existing, non-conforming condition that will be improved under the current proposal.
- g. A waiver is granted for deficiency in building foundation landscaping, under Zoning Ordinance Section 5.5.3.D. This is an existing non-conforming condition which can remain provided there is not a further net decrease in the foundation area, or if there is a decrease in required area, the Final Site Plan shall show additional landscaping (shrubs, ornamental grasses, perennials and/or annuals) on the front side of the existing berm to make up the difference.
- h. A Section 9 Façade waiver, under Zoning Ordinance Section 5.15.9, is granted for overage of EIFS (69% proposed on south elevation, 50% proposed on east elevation, 25% permitted).
- i. The Zoning Board of Appeals granting a variance from Section 5.2.12.E of the Zoning Ordinance for the deficiency of two parking spaces (103 parking spaces proposed, 105 parking spaces required).

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 VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE JSP25-17 21420 NOVI ROAD PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN MADE BY MEMBER RONEY AND SECONDED BY MEMBER LYNCH. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES**

City Planner Barbara McBeth thanked the Planning Commissioners for sending their responses regarding the election of Officers and appointment to Committees. She stated all the committee members responded that their preference is to be on the same committees as the previous year.

Motion to accept Committee and Officer selections as presented made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Becker.

**Motion to nominate Chair Pehrson as Planning Commission Chairperson for 2025-2026.**

**Motion to nominate Member Avdoulos as Planning Commission Vice Chairperson for 2025-2026.**

**Motion to nominate Member Lynch as Planning Commission Secretary for 2025-2026.**

**Motion to accept Officer selections as nominated.**

**ROLL CALL VOICE VOTE ON MOTION TO ACCEPT COMMITTEE AND OFFICER SELECTIONS AS PRESENTED MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BECKER. *Motion carried 5-0.***

**3. APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 25, 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

**Motion to approve the June 25, 2025 Planning Commission Minutes.**

**ROLL CALL VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE JUNE 25, 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BECKER. *Motion carried 5-0.***

**CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS FOR COMMISSION ACTION**

There were no consent agenda items.

**SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES/TRAINING UPDATES**

Chair Pehrson stated one supplemental issue, which was raised by Member Becker, is relative to the parking standards for the kind of instances brought forth regarding off street parking. Chair Pehrson noted he has driven around in the City to the various sites that have an allocated number of parking spaces for guests and the point that was brought up was very valid. When fire trucks drive through it can be more challenging due to the fact people may not pay attention to the no parking signs. He expressed we need to be thinking about this with a little more guidance when going through the planning sessions to bring it to the applicant's attention.

City Planner Barbara McBeth stated she appreciates that as well as the thoroughness of Member Becker's comments. Staff typically does communicate to applicants that parking spaces are needed for guests, mail trucks, school buses, etc. Ms. McBeth stated it can be investigated further and if a text amendment is being requested, we can certainly propose one.

Chair Pehrson stated this seems to be the style that is coming before the Planning Commission, he stated we can ask for better than the status quo.

Member Lynch stated it is interesting in the PD-2 that a pocket park was put in that may not get much use. He inquired if it would make more sense to have more parking as opposed to the pocket park.

Chair Pehrson closed the supplemental issues as no further issues were brought forward.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Chair Pehrson invited member 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 July 9, 2025 meeting made by Member Lynch and all in favor said aye.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.