

Meeting
01/14/2025

1 REGULAR MEETING - ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

2 CITY OF NOVI

3 Tuesday, January 14, 2025

4 Council Chambers/Novi Civic Center

5 41725 Novi Road

6 Novi, Michigan

7

8 BOARD MEMBERS:

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Mike Longo, Secretary
Siddharth Mav Sanghvi, Member
Linda Krieger, Member
W. Clift Montague, Member
Larry Butler, Member
Joe Samona, Alternate Member

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13 ABSENT UN-EXCUSED:

Joe Peddiboyina, Chairperson.

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ABSENT EXCUSED:

Michael Thompson, Member

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ALSO PRESENT:

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Elizabeth Saarela, City Attorney
Alan Hall, Deputy Community Development
Director
Sarah Fletcher, Recording Secretary

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19 REPORTED BY:

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Melinda R. Womack
Certified Shorthand Reporter

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1 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Call to order the
2 meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals for
3 Tuesday, January 14th. I'd like to start with the
4 Pledge of Allegiance.

5 (Pledge of Allegiance recited)

6 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Roll call, please.

7 MS. FLETCHER: Chairperson Peddiboyina?
8 Absent. Member Sanghvi?

9 MEMBER SANGHVI: Here.

10 MS. FLETCHER: Member Thompson. Absent
11 excused. Member Montague?

12 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Here.

13 MS. FLETCHER: Member Longo?

14 MEMBER LONGO: Here.

15 MS. FLETCHER: Member Krieger?

16 MEMBER KRIEGER: Here.

17 MS. FLETCHER: Member Butler?

18 MEMBER BUTLER: Here.

19 MS. FLETCHER: And Member Samona?

20 MEMBER SAMONA: Here.

21 MS. FLETCHER: Thank you. We have a
22 Quorum.

23 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Thank you. We'll go
24 over the rules of conduct a little bit. If you
25 have cell phones, put them on silence or turn them

1 off. We will ask the applicant to come forward,
2 present themselves, give their name, spell their
3 name for the secretary and be sworn in. They're
4 allowed ten minutes to address their issue. And
5 then we will ask for comments from the public, and
6 they're limited to three minutes per talk. That's
7 the critical things.

8 I'm looking for approval of the meeting
9 minutes from December 2024. Does anybody have a
10 motion?

11 MR. LONGO: I move we accept it.

12 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Second?

13 MEMBER KRIEGER: Second.

14 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Everybody say aye if
15 you approve.

16 THE BOARD: Aye.

17 MEMBER MONTAGUE: So they're approved.

18 On the agenda tonight we have two cases. Are
19 there any modifications to the agenda?

20 MR. HALL: No, sir.

21 MEMBER MONTAGUE: I will look for a
22 motion to approve the agenda then.

23 MEMBER KRIEGER: I move to approve the
24 agenda tonight.

25 MEMBER BUTLER: Second.

1 MEMBER MONTAGUE: All right. All in
2 favor say aye.

3 THE BOARD: Aye.

4 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Any nays? Agenda is
5 approved. We have an open session for public
6 remarks. Are there any remarks from the public?
7 All right. I don't see any.

8 So we have two cases tonight. The
9 first case, PZ24-0062 (Lineage Logistics). The
10 applicant is requesting variances from the City of
11 Novi Zoning Ordinance Section 5.15.12.b to allow
12 52.5 ft wide carports. 40 foot is allowed, so
13 it's a variance of 12.5 feet, and to increase the
14 maximum allowable height by 5 ft, 12 feet is
15 there, so it would be a variance of 5 feet. This
16 property is zoned General Industrial (I-2). Do
17 the applicants have representatives here? Good
18 evening.

19 MS. ALLEN: Good evening.

20 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Please state and
21 spell your name.

22 MS. ALLEN: My name is Brittany,
23 B-R-I-T-T-A-N-Y, Allen, A-L-L-E-N.

24 MEMBER LONGO: Brittany, are you an
25 attorney?

1 MS. ALLEN: No. I'm a civil engineer.

2 MEMBER LONGO: Do you promise to tell
3 the truth in this case?

4 MS. ALLEN: Yes.

5 MEMBER LONGO: Thank you.

6 MEMBER MONTAGUE: All right. Present
7 your case, please.

8 MS. ALLEN: Yeah. So I am a civil
9 engineer for the site. I'm with PEA Group. I'm
10 joined here tonight by Nick Perge. We previously
11 developed, added on a parking Lineage Logistics
12 site locate at 46500 Humboldt Drive. And now
13 after we've gone through we've added a parking lot
14 about five years ago. We want to add carports
15 above it that have the capacity to generate
16 electricity with them so there will be solar
17 panels on top. We are requesting the variance
18 because the 40 feet is the length of two like
19 stacked parking spaces on top of each other. But
20 the previous layout that was approved was to stack
21 parking spaces with a walking aisle in between.
22 So the extra 12 feet is to allow for the walking
23 aisle. And then the height variance is just
24 because of the angle of the solar panels that's --
25 it's required to add a little bit extra to allow

1 cars to get under the --

2 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Excuse me. I don't
3 mean to interrupt. Do you have something to show
4 on the screen that shows the plan or something
5 like that?

6 MS. ALLEN: I do not. My apologies. I
7 do have a plan though here.

8 MS. FLETCHER: No, just put it on the
9 projector.

10 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Then you have
11 something to talk to to comment or understand.
12 Thank you.

13 MS. ALLEN: So this is the overall
14 site, this is the overall site layout. The
15 parking lot is oriented towards the back of the
16 building. Humboldt Drive is down towards this end
17 of the site. The two rows that we're looking to
18 add the solar panels to are located closest to the
19 building here. And let me turn to the next page.
20 So this is the closer up view of the two drive
21 aisles where we want to add solar panels. So you
22 can see that here and here we have the drive --
23 the sidewalk here. So that is why we need the
24 extra 12 and a half feet just to allow the solar
25 panel to cover the entire parking spots.

1 And then as for the height variance,
2 you can see that to accommodate the solar panels
3 we need to angle the solar panels to better
4 capture the sun. So in doing that, it kind of
5 just increased the height on this back end that's
6 required to get the part underneath it. So that's
7 where the extra five feet comes in.

8 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Does that cover it.

9 MS. ALLEN: That about covers it.

10 MEMBER MONTAGUE: All right. We have
11 to see if there's one person in the public has any
12 comment. No? All right. The city.

13 MR. HALL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
14 just have a couple questions for you. So the
15 angle of the pitch of the roof corresponds to the
16 solar panel, is that correct?

17 MS. ALLEN: Yes, it does.

18 MR. HALL: And so it can't be flat
19 because it would render the solar panels
20 ineffective, you have to get it up to get the
21 perfect angle.

22 MS. ALLEN: That's correct.

23 MR. HALL: And that angle would be the
24 minimum angle that you would need for the solar
25 panels to be active. It's not the maximum, it's

1 the minimum. So you're only asking for just a
2 minimum height increase, is that correct?

3 MS. ALLEN: That's correct.

4 MR. HALL: Is there any lights that are
5 going to be in these carports, like any kind of
6 light underneath or shielding on the lights so
7 it's not going to be exposed? So what's the plan
8 for the lights?

9 MS. ALLEN: Yeah. There are -- there
10 are proposed lights beneath the car panels to
11 light the pathways especially. I believe they do
12 meet the code of what's required.

13 MR. HALL: So they're not going to have
14 any clear issues.

15 MS. ALLEN: Yeah, no issue with
16 surrounding neighbors or anything like that.

17 MR. HALL: And then what are the solar
18 panels energizing? Why are you using them?

19 MS. ALLEN: So part of it will be sent
20 to the building. But then also beneath carports
21 there's going to be a few electrical vehicle
22 charging stations that will also be charged by it,
23 and that's for use not to the public but to
24 employees or visitors to the business.

25 MR. HALL: Okay. All right. So yeah.

1 So they're seeking two variances tonight. One is
2 for 12 and a half foot increase for the width as
3 we discussed. We're going to get that pedestrian
4 aisleway covered with one parking carport roof
5 rather than doing two. And then they're also
6 requesting a five foot height variance, so there's
7 two variances they're asking for tonight. Other
8 than that, I don't have any other questions.

9 Thank you.

10 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Mr. Secretary,
11 correspondence?

12 MEMBER LONGO: So we sent out 26
13 notices, three were returned. There were no
14 objections and there were no approvals.

15 MEMBER MONTAGUE: All right. Thank
16 you. So I'll open it up to the board for
17 comments.

18 MEMBER SAMONA: Yes. Just a couple of
19 questions here. So just to be clear, the only --
20 only variance request that you're asking for here
21 is in regards to the two rows of parking. The
22 third row is not going to have a carport, is that
23 correct?

24 MS. ALLEN: Yes. Just the two closest
25 to the building will have the carports.

1 MEMBER SAMONA: I actually drove by the
2 property -- I'm sorry. I actually drove by the
3 property immediately prior to coming here. Just a
4 couple of questions. Is the parking, is it
5 strictly going to be employee visitor parking or
6 is there going to be storage of any type of
7 equipment under those carports?

8 MS. ALLEN: No. I think just be
9 employee and visitor parking.

10 MEMBER SAMONA: Got it. Is there any
11 pumps or fans that are, you know, that are going
12 to allow the solar panels to generate that may
13 create any type of noise or nuisance, I guess, for
14 lack of better words, to the budding land users?

15 MS. ALLEN: I might have to defer to
16 Nick with that.

17 MR. PERGE: Nick Perge, P-E-R-G-E, and
18 I'm with Madison Energy for the system owner.

19 MEMBER LONGO: Nick, are you an
20 attorney?

21 MR. PERGE: No.

22 MEMBER LONGO: Do you promise to tell
23 the truth in this case?

24 MR. PERGE: Yes.

25 MEMBER LONGO: Thank you.

1 MR. PERGE: They're are no pumps or
2 fans. There are electrical inverters that will
3 make maybe a low buzz, but nothing that would be
4 audible to a neighbor or anything like that.

5 MEMBER SAMONA: I guess nothing that
6 could be audible outside of the property lines?

7 MR. PERGE: Correct.

8 MEMBER SAMONA: That's the only
9 questions I have.

10 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Any other questions?

11 MEMBER SANGHVI: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
12 I was there yesterday and looked at your property.
13 Somehow I felt I have been here before some years
14 ago, and that was the same time they were going to
15 put in some carport over there, but I didn't see
16 them this time. You've got a huge property. This
17 is a super idea to put a carport in this weather
18 in Michigan. And solar panel is also excellent
19 idea saving energy and good for the climate change
20 and all that. But I wasn't quite sure what part
21 of your parking lot you were going to put this
22 carport and the solar panel because it's a huge
23 thing, and I don't think you're putting it all
24 over. And when you showed those first plans
25 there, I think your orientation was, note to self,

1 upside down, then you can see because I know I
2 came there yesterday so I know the orientation.

3 MR. PERGE: This is the actual -- this
4 is the office building right here. This is
5 Humboldt Drive. And then back behind it are the
6 areas where we're going to put the carport.

7 MEMBER SANGHVI: So that's on the
8 backside you're going to put the panels.

9 MS. ALLEN: Correct.

10 MEMBER SANGHVI: And the carport and
11 everything.

12 MR. PERGE: Yes.

13 MEMBER SANGHVI: I have no problem with
14 your idea, and I think it's a great idea. So I
15 wholeheartedly support your request for the
16 variance. Thank you.

17 MR. PERGE: Thank you.

18 MEMBER SANGHVI: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

19 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Any other questions?
20 I'm going to ask you, what's minimum -- you've got
21 the slope. What's the minimum clearance height on
22 the low of the slope?

23 MS. ALLEN: It is 13 feet minimum.

24 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Thank you. Any other
25 questions? I guess we're ready to entertain a

1 motion.

2 MEMBER KRIEGER: For case number
3 PZ24-0062 for 46500 Humboldt Drive, the applicant
4 is seeking request. I move that we grant the
5 variance for this case for the 12.5 feet variance
6 for the roofing and the 5 foot variance for the
7 maximum because of the angle because of the solar
8 panels. That the petitioner has shown practical
9 difficulty for their business walking. That to
10 cover it for adequate use of the solar panels for
11 the business and for charging electric vehicles.
12 It's a minimal area that it's not the entire three
13 parking areas that they have. Without the
14 variance the Petitioner will be unreasonably
15 prevented or limited with respect to use of the
16 property because of the solar panels for the
17 building will be used for assisting the charging
18 of the vehicles. The property is unique because
19 of its location in the general industrial area.
20 The Petitioner did not create the condition
21 because the building came as is with the parking
22 lot structure as is. The relief granted will not
23 unreasonably interfere with adjacent or
24 surrounding properties as stated by the
25 petitioner, that any noise would be minimal and

1 not disturb the neighbor. It is general
2 industrial area. The relief is consistent with
3 the spirit and intent of the ordinance because it
4 will help the business and not disturb neighboring
5 businesses.

6 MEMBER SANGHVI: Second.

7 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Roll call, please.

8 MS. FLETCHER: Member Sanghvi?

9 MEMBER SANGHVI: Yes.

10 MS. FLETCHER: Member Montague?

11 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Yes.

12 MS. FLETCHER: Member Longo?

13 MEMBER LONGO: Yes.

14 MS. FLETCHER: Member Krieger?

15 MEMBER KRIEGER: Yes.

16 MS. FLETCHER: Member Butler?

17 MEMBER BUTLER: Yes.

18 MS. FLETCHER: Member Samona?

19 MEMBER SAMONA: Yes.

20 MS. FLETCHER: Thank you. Motion
21 carries.

22 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Thank you. The
23 second case tonight, PZ24-0063 Audi. The
24 applicant is requesting a variance from City of
25 Novi Sign Ordinance Section 28-5(a) to allow an

1 additional wall sign for this tenant (2 allowed,
2 variance of 1). This property is zoned General
3 Business (B-3). Is the applicant here to present?

4 MS. LONG: Yes.

5 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Spell your name.

6 MS. LONG: Tammy Long, T-A-M-M-Y,
7 L-O-N-G.

8 MEMBER LONGO: Tammy, are you an
9 attorney?

10 MS. LONG: No.

11 MEMBER LONGO: Do you promise to tell
12 he truth in this case?

13 MS. LONG: Yes.

14 MEMBER LONGO: Thank you.

15 MS. LONG: Audi Dealership is wanting
16 to put a service sign above where the service
17 department is going. Without that, without the
18 variance, they will not be able to put that so
19 people will not know where the service station is
20 at for their cars when they come in for oil change
21 and everything. So we are asking the city to
22 grant them this petition so they can have that
23 sign put up.

24 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Okay. Do you have
25 something you can put to show the sign?

1 MS. LONG: Right there. Audi decided
2 to make their three signs into one for the Audi
3 Novi. It's supposed to be Audi for the sign, Novi
4 second in the service one. But we talked to Audi
5 decided to make their Audi Novi into one sign so
6 we have to get a variance on that. So we're just
7 asking for that service sign to be able to be put
8 up.

9 MEMBER MONTAGUE: All right. City?

10 MR. HALL: Thank you, Chairman. Just
11 have a couple of questions for you. How is the
12 sign lit?

13 MS. LONG: It channel letter lit.

14 MR. HALL: So they're internally lit in
15 the letters?

16 MS. LONG: Yes.

17 MR. HALL: So there's no light shining
18 on it.

19 MS. LONG: If you allow me to get my
20 phone, I got a picture. I can put it underneath
21 there.

22 MR. HALL: Would you mind showing the
23 recording secretary the picture before you put it
24 on, please?

25 MS. LONG: This is how that sign is

1 going to be lit right there.

2 MR. HALL: So there's no animation in
3 the lighting, it's just a simple lit sign.

4 MS. LONG: Simple sign.

5 MR. HALL: So she's asking for an
6 additional sign variance tonight. Thank you. No
7 questions.

8 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Mr. Secretary,
9 correspondence?

10 MEMBER LONGO: Yes. We mailed out 25.
11 We have two returns. There were no objections and
12 there are no approvals.

13 MEMBER MONTAGUE: All right. I'll open
14 it up to the board.

15 MEMBER SAMONA: So the service door, is
16 the service door itself an average -- is the
17 service door itself an average height of what
18 service doors typically are at dealerships? I'm
19 trying to correlate that to how high up the sign
20 is.

21 MS. LONG: Let me see.

22 MEMBER SAMONA: Or in the alternative
23 is the service sign the same height and level as
24 the Audi Novi sign?

25 MS. LONG: It's going to be the same as

1 the Audi Novi sign. It's going to be level with
2 that one.

3 MEMBER SAMONA: It's going to be level
4 with that one. Okay. That answers mine.

5 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Any other questions?

6 MEMBER BUTLER: No.

7 MEMBER MONTAGUE: I just have one.
8 You've got this plan that basically looks like it
9 shows seven signs and you said you're combining
10 three of them?

11 MS. LONG: No. We only combined one.
12 We had three going up on the south elevation. It
13 was going to be Audi, and then separate word Novi
14 and then the rings. They decided not to put the
15 rings up and we combined Audi and Novi into one
16 sign. So now the other sign service is the only
17 one that they had an issue with because be on the
18 south side as well. The other set of rings are
19 going to go on the east elevation, so that was
20 already approved.

21 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Okay. Got it.

22 MEMBER SANGHVI: Thank you. I came and
23 visited your place on Saturday and drove around.
24 There used to be a dealership there before Audi,
25 your company, came there. And I am looking at

1 some of the information you have provided, and one
2 of this chart you are showing seven different
3 signs on the list.

4 MS. LONG: Yes. We combined them down
5 to five.

6 MEMBER SANGHVI: As far as I'm aware,
7 two of those signs, exterior signs have been
8 approved with wall signs. How big is going to be
9 your service sign?

10 MS. LONG: That is going to be 5.27
11 square feet.

12 MEMBER SANGHVI: Maybe we should put it
13 on the record here the size of the sign. And once
14 it is done, I have no problem because you require
15 less sign than the previous one. Thank you.

16 MS. LONG: You're welcome.

17 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Any other comments?
18 All right. Then I guess we're ready for a motion.

19 MEMBER LONGO: I move that we grant the
20 variance in case number PZ24-0063 sought by Audi
21 Novi for an additional sign because the petitioner
22 has shown practical difficulty including customers
23 being where they want to go, requiring a third
24 sign. The failure to grant the relief will
25 unreasonably prevent or limit the use of the

1 property and will result in substantially more
2 than mere inconvenience or inability to attain a
3 higher economic or financial return because the
4 customers can be confused as to where to go for
5 service. The grant of relief will not result in a
6 use or structure that is incompatible with or
7 unreasonably interferes with the adjacent or
8 surrounding properties, will result in substantial
9 justice being done to both the applicant and the
10 adjacent and surrounding properties, and is not
11 inconsistent with the spirit and intent of this
12 chapter because it is a simple wall sign.

13 MEMBER SAMONA: Support.

14 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Roll call.

15 MS. FLETCHER: Member Samona?

16 MEMBER SAMONA: Yes.

17 MS. FLETCHER: Member Butler?

18 MEMBER BUTLER: Yes.

19 MS. FLETCHER: Member Krieger?

20 MEMBER KRIEGER: Yes.

21 MS. FLETCHER: Member Longo?

22 MEMBER LONGO: Yes.

23 MS. FLETCHER: Member Montague?

24 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Yes.

25 MS. FLETCHER: And Member Sanghvi?

1 MEMBER SANGHVI: Yes.

2 MS. FLETCHER: Thank you. Motion

3 carries.

4 MS. LONG: Thank you.

5 MEMBER MONTAGUE: Thank you very much.

6 Any other matters anybody would like to bring up?

7 MEMBER KRIEGER: I have a question.

8 For doing the cases do -- can the Chair ask or

9 assign cases or do we have to --

10 MS. SAARELA: Assign for what purpose?

11 MEMBER KRIEGER: Making the motion.

12 MS. SAARELA: You can.

13 MEMBER KRIEGER: In the past people
14 would just sit there, you have to wait and wait.

15 Then they got into the assigning. So then just
16 wanting re-clarification.

17 MS. SAARELA: You can if you want.

18 It's just procedural.

19 MEMBER SAMONA: If we did that, would
20 that maybe create a preconceived notion?

21 MS. SAARELA: No, because you can
22 approve or deny.

23 MEMBER SAMONA: Motion one way or
24 another. Trying to think like a lawyer.

25 MEMBER SANGHVI: One comment. I'd like

1 to welcome the two new members in the family.
2 Larry has been a member of this family in a
3 different capacity and I want to welcome to the
4 family of City Members.

5 MEMBER SAMONA: Thank you. It's a
6 pleasure to be here.

7 MEMBER MONTAGUE: All right. Then I
8 will entertain a motion to adjourn.

9 MEMBER BUTLER: Second.

10 MEMBER MONTAGUE: All in favor Aye.

11 THE BOARD: Aye.

12 (The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.)

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Meeting
01/14/2025

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