



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

CITY OF NOVI
Regular Meeting

September 24, 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 Dismondy, Member Avdoulos, Member Roney, Member Verma

Staff: Barbara McBeth, City Planner; Elizabeth Saarela, City Attorney; Diana Shanahan, Planner; Dan Commer, Planner; Rick Meader, Landscape Architect; Milad Alesmail, Project Engineer

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Roney to approve the September 24, 2025 Planning Commission Agenda.

ROLL CALL VOICE VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 24, 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY. *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

1. JSP17-37 ARMENIAN CULTURAL CENTER

Approval of the request of Zeimet Wozniak & Associates, on behalf of the Armenian Community Center of Greater Detroit, for the third one-year extension of the Final Site Plan and Special Land Use approval. The subject property is located in Section 12, on the north side of Twelve Mile Road and east of Meadowbrook Road, in the Residential Acreage (RA) zoning district. The project area

is approximately 19.30 acres. A revised Special Land Use Permit was granted by the Planning Commission on October 14, 2020 to permit a Place of Worship, a daycare in a residential district, and a proposed Armenian Genocide Memorial structure within the courtyard.

Motion to approve the JSP17-37 Armenian Cultural Center third one-year extension of the Final Site Plan and Special Land Use Approval moved by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Dismondy.

ROLL CALL VOICE VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE THIRD ONE YEAR EXTENSION OF THE FINAL SITE PLAN AND SPECIAL LAND USE APPROVAL MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER DISMONDY.
Motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. JSP25-14 RAISING CANE'S

Public Hearing at the request of Raising Cane's to consider Special Land Use and Preliminary Site Plan approval to convert a former Wendy's to a Raising Cane's restaurant. The applicant is proposing modifications to accommodate improved drive-through and by-pass lanes, modifications to the building façade, and providing covered patio seating. The subject property is within the TC, Town Center Zoning District, which lists Fast Food Drive-Through Restaurants as a Special Land Use.

Planner Dan Commer stated the subject property is a former Wendy's drive-through restaurant located north of Grand River and west of Novi Road at Crescent Boulevard.

As shown on the Zoning Map, the site and surrounding properties are zoned TC, Town Center. The TC, Town Center district is designed and intended to promote the development of a mixed use/ pedestrian-oriented, regional commercial service district in which a variety of retail, commercial, office, civic, residential uses and open space are permitted. The Future Land Use Map promotes the Town Center Mixed-Use category for the site and all of the adjacent properties located along Novi Road. The natural features map shows that there are no protected Woodlands and Wetlands on-site, and the proposed improvements as presented do not impact on these natural features.

Planner Commer stated the existing building is approximately 3,795 square feet and minor modifications are proposed that will result in a gross 3,835 square foot building. Additional modifications include landscaping upgrades, a covered outdoor patio with seating, and changes to the exterior façade which will require a Section 9 Façade Waiver. General site improvements are also proposed to improve vehicle circulation, pedestrian safety, a relocated dumpster enclosure, and overall aesthetics of the property.

Planner Commer stated the applicant is requesting four landscape waivers which are supported by staff. The landscape waivers are as follows, parking bay longer than 15 spaces, deficiency in accessway perimeter trees along south accessway, deficiency in accessway perimeter trees along the cross accessway east of the building, and less than 75% of the building's foundation is landscaped. The Façade review indicates that a Section 9 Façade waiver is needed for the "1" logo proposed on the side of the building.

Due to the anticipated buzz surrounding the grand opening of Raising Cane's in Novi, City staff and the applicant worked together to find a plan to address possible traffic congestion around the time that the restaurant opens for business. Use of the bypass lane as a drive-through lane during the grand opening peak is proposed. Additional details regarding the proposed Drive-Thu Phased Queuing Plan (Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3) were provided, as requested, including a proposed timeline of 2-4 weeks for grand opening peak before resuming normal business operations. It was noted the applicant has committed to

collaboration between Raising Cane's Operations Team and their Crew Safety Team and a third-party vendor to ensure comprehensive coverage for the Drive-Thru Queuing Plan's successful implementation. The Operations Team is prepared to meet with Novi's Public Safety Department to confirm the details of this plan collaboratively. The proposed drive through queueing plan is supported by staff, the Fire Marshal, and the City's traffic consultants.

If approved by the Planning Commission, the applicant will proceed to the Zoning Board of Appeals for the lack of a required loading zone.

The Planning Commission is asked to consider approval or denial of the Special Land Use and Preliminary Site Plan. Representatives for the applicant are present to discuss the project and answer any questions.. Staff are also available for questions.

Chair Pehrson invited the applicant to address the Planning Commission.

Ms. Kelly Agnor, Project and Development Manager for Raising Cane's, expressed appreciation to the Planning Commission for taking the time to take a look at their case as well as City staff for taking the time to review the project and step through the process with them.

Ms. Agnor stated Raising Canes was founded in 1996 by Todd Graves in Batton Rouge, Louisiana with a single-minded focus on serving craveable chicken fingers. Raising Cane's is named after Mr. Graves yellow labrador Cane. The first location quickly became a local hit, and the company grew rapidly due to its strong commitment to fresh ingredients as well as the customer and employee experience. At Rasing Cane's, they are about "One Love" chicken finger meals. Cane's vision is to have restaurants that would provide a place in the community where people can come and have a high-quality meal in a clean and safe environment.

Raising Cane's is known for its speed of service, clocking in at just 2.5 minutes from order to pick up. It is one of the fastest in the industry. This speed is due to the focused menu of fresh chicken fingers, homemade coleslaw, premium cut center fries, and thick cut buttered Texas toast. The only selection customers are making at the menu board is how many chicken fingers they would like.

The Novi location is expected to bring fifty-five to sixty jobs to the community. An average of thirteen crew members will staff each shift. Rasing Cane's prides itself on always paying higher than minimum wage, with managers and upper-level employees being paid at executive level salaries.

Ms. Agnor shared Rasing Cane's is actively involved in local communities. They focus on six areas that they help support. These areas include education, feeding hunger, active lifestyles, pet welfare, entrepreneurship, and everything else. In Michigan, Raising Cane's has become actively involved in the community since entering the market in 2022. Cane's is currently involved in over one hundred local organizations including schools, food banks, animal shelters, sports leagues, and more.

Ms. Agnor thanked the Planning Commission for their time and consideration and expressed their team is available to answer any questions.

Chair Pehrson opened the public hearing and invited members of the audience who wished to speak to approach the podium. Seeing no one, but noting one letter in support of the request, Chair Pehrson closed the public hearing and turned the matter over to the Planning Commission.

Member Lynch stated this project is a reuse of the former Wendy's. It was noted that each organization who reviewed the project is recommending approval. Regarding the queueing, the only time expected to be busy above normal is during the grand opening. Member Lynch stated he has no issue with this reuse.

Member Dismondy stated he is in support.

Member Verma inquired if there will be signage on Crescent Boulevard.

Mr. Paul Schultz stated one sign is proposed on Crescent Boulevard which will direct customers toward the drive thru. Additionally, the reuse of Wendy's monument sign on Novi Road is proposed.

Member Verma inquired if delivery trucks will access the site from Crescent Boulevard or Novi Road.

Ms. Agnor stated delivery trucks will access the site from Novi Road. It was noted deliveries are not made during operating hours. Deliveries are typically made during the overnight hours when traffic on the roads is reduced.

Member Verma inquired if Crescent Boulevard can be used for deliveries due to the busyness of Novi Road.

Ms. Agnor stated their team will look into using Crescent Boulevard for deliveries.

Member Roney stated he had no comment.

Member Avdoulos inquired if a member of the Raising Cane's team could further describe the grand opening queuing plan.

Ms. Juliette Stoesser with Kimley Horn stated phase one as shown in blue on the queuing plan is representative of normal restaurant peak operating hours during a lunch or dinner rush. The cars shown in green designate phase two which is the grand opening peak. Phase two includes additional capacity in the bypass lane where cars will begin to stack if the initial lane is full. Phase two will activate crew members and traffic guards to begin directing traffic on the site. Additionally, at this time crew members will be deployed with tablets to take orders, further increasing efficiency. Phase three accommodates additional capacity by directing cars to the drive isles and additional traffic guards will be posted at the entrances. Ms. Stoesser stated this plan can be adjusted as needed to make sure there is a plan in place that works.

Member Avdoulos stated there will be an initial rush as Raising Cane's is a franchise that people get excited about. He expressed appreciation that the queuing plan is being discussed with the City. It was stated the reuse of an existing business type is appreciated.

Motion to approve the JSP25-14 Raising Cane's Special Land Use Permit moved by Member Avdoulos and seconded by Member Lynch.

In the matter of Raising Cane's, JSP25-14, motion to approve the Special Land Use Permit based on and subject to the following:

a. Relative to other feasible uses of the site:

- 1. The proposed use will not cause any detrimental impact on existing thoroughfares in terms of overall volumes, capacity, safety, vehicular turning patterns, intersections, view obstructions, line of sight, ingress and egress, acceleration/deceleration lanes, off street parking, off-street loading/unloading, travel times, and thoroughfare level of service (as it is an existing building with a drive-thru queuing plan in place);**
- 2. The proposed use will not cause any detrimental impact on the capabilities of public services and facilities, including water service, sanitary sewer service, storm water disposal, and police and fire protection to serve existing and planned uses in the area (no impacts to utilities are anticipated);**
- 3. The proposed use is compatible with the natural features and characteristics of the land, including existing woodlands, wetlands, watercourses, and wildlife habitats (no impacts to existing natural features are proposed);**

4. The proposed use is compatible with adjacent uses of land in terms of location, size, character, and impact on adjacent property or the surrounding neighborhood *(the parcel borders other TC and TC-1 Town Center properties on all sides)*;
 5. The proposed use is consistent with the goals, objectives, and recommendations of the City's Master Plan or Land Use *(as it fulfills one of the Master plan objectives to attract new businesses to the City of Novi)*;
 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 attract new businesses to the City of Novi)*; and,
 7. The proposed use is listed among the provision of uses requiring special land use review as set forth in the various zoning districts of this Ordinance, and is in harmony with the purposes and conforms to the applicable site design regulations of the zoning district in which it is located.
- b. 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 revised Final Site Plan submittal.

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 JSP25-14 RAISING CANE'S SPECIAL LAND USE PERMIT MADE BY MEMBER AVDOULOS AND SECONDED BY MEMBER LYNCH. *Motion carried 6-0.*

Motion to approve the JSP25-14 Raising Cane's Preliminary Site Plan made by Member Avdoulos and seconded by Member Lynch.

In the matter of Raising Cane's, JSP25-14, motion to approve the Preliminary Site Plan based on and subject to the following:

- a. Zoning Board of Appeals variance for the absence of a loading zone.
- b. Landscape waiver for parking bay longer than 15 spaces, and is supported by staff as an existing condition, which is hereby granted;
- c. Landscape waiver for deficiency in accessway perimeter trees along south accessway, and is by staff as an existing condition where there is no room for trees, which is hereby granted;
- d. Landscape waiver for deficiency in accessway perimeter trees along the cross accessway east of the building, and is supported by staff as alternative attractive landscaping is proposed in that area, which is hereby granted;
- e. Landscape waiver for deficiency in building foundation landscaping, and is supported by staff as an existing condition, which is hereby granted;
- f. Planning Commission Section 9 Façade Waiver for the "1" logo proposed on the side of the building, and is supported by the City's façade consultant, which is hereby granted;
- g. Contingent on the applicant executing the proposed Drive-Thru Phased Queuing Plan for Grand Opening Peak, and is supported by staff, the Fire Marshal, and the City's traffic consultants;
- h. The findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the staff and consultant review letters and the remaining items listed in those letters being addressed on the revised Final Site Plan submittal.

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 JSP25-14 RAISING CANE'S PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN MADE BY MEMBER AVDOULOS AND SECONDED BY MEMBER LYNCH. *Motion carried 6-0.*

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Motion to approve the September 10, 2025 Planning Commission Minutes.

ROLL CALL VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2025 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

Chair Pehrson stated he would like to take a moment to recognize Mr. Gary Becker, a dear friend and fellow Planning Commissioner who was taken from us way too soon. We send an outpouring of love to his family and any and all of his friends. He was a wonderful gentleman both personally and professionally and will be missed.

City Planner Barbara McBeth stated the Michigan Association of Planning will be holding their annual conference next month in Kalamazoo, Michigan. If any members of the Planning Commission would like to attend staff would be happy to assist with registration.

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 September 24, 2025 meeting made by Member Lynch and all in favor said aye.

Meeting adjourned at 7:23 PM.