



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

CITY OF NOVI

Regular Meeting

September 9, 2026 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 Reddi, Member Dismondy, Member Avdoulos, Member Roney, Member Verma

Absent Excused: Member Lynch

Staff: Lindsay Bell, Director of Planning; Elizabeth Saarela, City Attorney; Brad Doane, Planner

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Member Verma and seconded by Member Roney to approve the September 9, 2026, Planning Commission Agenda.

ROLL CALL ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 9, 2026, PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA MADE BY MEMBER VERMA 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.

Ms. Martha Ryznar of 44875 Yorkshire Drive stated that she has lived across from Ella Mae Power Park for twenty-three years, which is the topic of discussion this evening. Ms. Ryznar expressed that the vote tonight is about reducing Novi's parkland and allowing the Novi School District to own and change a pond which has become a living ecosystem. This park and pond are a large part of our community and there is no other place like it within the City. It is full of aquatic life, including decades old snapping turtles. Bat houses have been installed by the City next to the pond to attract bats. It was expressed that Novi families and their children have enjoyed this pond for decades. Ms. Ryznar relayed that when her children were small, they saved baby turtles in the parking lot making their way to the pond from the baseball diamond sandy area. If anyone can understand the fun and enrichment this pond has brought to people and children in Novi, I hope that it is our Novi Community School District officials. With all the rights given to the Novi Community School District in this proposed transfer the pond could be decimated. We saw this happen to the south at the new baseball development, that pond is lifeless now. The Ella Mae pond is now targeted for new school district athletic construction, stormwater runoff, and expansion. Ms. Ryznar inquired what alternative drainage solutions are available along with detailed costs and why an ecological assessment of the pond has not been completed. It was stated that the pond is on land federally protected and the Department of Natural Resources has said that approval has not been given to convert the pond. Ms.

Ryznar requested the vote be paused for further answers.

Ms. Ann Nelke of 48646 Windfall Road stated that the proposal on the agenda this evening regarding the Future Land Use Map and the swapping of land between Ella Mae Power Park and Novi High School is not a good fit. It was stated that per the Home Rule City Act that a city may not sell parkland, yet it is appropriate to swap this land as a perceived benefit to meet the overall needs of the community members it serves. Ms. Nelke inquired who might be these community members, it appears the residents of Novi deserve to have this very special place preserved and kept in its current state. One of the overriding themes of the Novi 2050 project was environmental sustainability. The statement that this area has "no functional park use" it is quite a misnomer. Thousands of residents per year take their children to see how life within a wetland pond evolves and changes with each season. This area is home to endangered clams, frogs, turtles, and is an active thriving habitat to a plethora of birds and native plants. Ms. Nelke expressed that this does not meet the quasi-public definition of the term. It is a public park and not a continuation of extra drainage for a new field house, practice field, or competition pool. Additionally, Ms. Nelke inquired if there is a way to amend the sidewalk repair program to give residents the option of paying for the concrete slabs in order to preserve healthy mature trees in front of their homes. It was noted that the recent changes in the character of some subdivisions are not a reflection of a tree city. Lastly, the Future Land Use Map revisions being made to accommodate the new fire stations are justifiable as they are for the benefit of Novi residents. In contrast, the Future Land Use Map has no place for the Providence Meadows proposal which desires to change the zoning from I-1 Light Industrial to RM-2 High Density Multi Family and does not in any way benefit residents, hospital staff, or surrounding businesses. Merjent stated in their independent review that the parcel to the south should have been included in the regulated woodlands map. Ms. Nelke expressed that she is doing what she can hopefully with the guidance and support of City officials through the appropriate channels to see this change happen. All those who take the time to research and attend meetings to use their three minutes of time do so out of a deep commitment and caring for the community.

Ms. Patricia Shaw of 26065 Whipple stated that she was saddened when she read the following "Novi City West development plans along Grand River Avenue between Taft and Beck Roads are actively moving forward after receiving key approval from the City of Novi. Sponsored by Blair Bowman co-owner of the Vibe Credit Union Showplace the investment spans nearly 55 acres along Grand River Avenue." Ms. Shaw stated that she is here this evening to ask the Planning Commission to protect our community's future and vote no on further development. When you look at the blueprints for this project with its hotels, shopping facilities, and condominiums it is easy to view this land as just an empty space on a map waiting to be filled. Ms. Shaw inquired when the last time you turned over a log and found a salamander, saw a praying mantis or enjoyed a walk along a trillium-filled path. This acreage is not empty space; it is a vibrant mature ecosystem. The flora and fauna living there took decades to establish and cannot be replaced by the artificial landscape of a concrete city. If we proceed with this plan a generation of children will lose the opportunity to experience nature here in our own backyard. This is also about the safety and infrastructure of the City. These acres act as a natural sponge and a shield for the community. When acres of forest and natural soil are replaced with concrete, rooftops, and asphalt natural flood protection is stripped away. Additionally, the local infrastructure is not built to handle this scale of development. A hotel, shopping facilities, and hundreds of new residential units will significantly increase local traffic causing gridlock and safety hazards. This is not a community addition; it is a small city being dropped into our town. It was expressed that people choose to live in Novi because we value our green spaces and the community's character. Ms. Shaw stated that we do not need another generic shopping development at the expense of the environment. Once this level of high-density development is approved there is no turning back. You cannot un-pave a forest to get the trilliums and salamanders back. Ms. Shaw requested that we preserve the sense of wonder and nature for our children.

Mr. Gerlad Bissi of 23415 Dutchess Court stated that he has lived in Novi for forty-one years. He relayed that his children grew up riding bicycles to the park almost every weekend. He noted that he now takes his grandchildren to the park and always visits the pond to see what is going on there. Mr. Bissi stated he is opposed to giving up parkland or the pond for the school district to expand. He stated that he has voted for every millage for the school district and parks since living here but will have a hard time doing that in the future if we give up parkland and the pond.

Ms. Tracey Arbour of 47205 Scarlet Drive relayed that she has been a Novi resident for thirty-three years and agrees with what others have stated this evening. She noted that she has seen the City grow over the years and lose what precious land is left. It was expressed that her family enjoys the wetland by their home and regularly see sand hill cranes and deer. The question was asked if we are trying to be a big city or if we are trying to be a community. She expressed that she looks to the Planning Commission to keep Novi community orientated.

Ms. Julie Gold of 22032 Greentree stated that she is in attendance this evening to support those who have come to speak. She noted she has spoken at previous Planning Commission meetings regarding overdevelopment, removal of trees, and flooding concerns. She stated that she appreciates the green spaces and nature that the city has to offer and it would be a shame to see it lost.

Seeing no one else, Chair Pehrson closed the first public audience participation.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was not any correspondence.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee reports.

PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT

There was no Planning Director Report.

CONSENT AGENDA - REMOVALS AND APPROVALS

There were no Consent Agenda Removals and Approvals.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. AMENDMENT TO THE MASTER PLAN'S FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Public hearing for Planning Commission's adoption of the amendment to the 2025 Master Plan for Land Use, so as to reclassify a portion of Ella Mae Power Park for a transfer of land between the City and Novi Community Schools, and three other parcels acquired by the City for public purposes, to Public/Quasi-Public.

Director of Planning Lindsay Bell stated that the Novi Community School District is planning improvements to its High School campus that will include a new field house, new athletic practice field, and a competition pool, among other improvements. These major improvements will increase stormwater runoff and require additional storm drain basin capacity. The School District has asked the City to transfer ownership of the City-owned stormwater basin at the southwest corner of Ella Mae Power Park to the School District so that the District can expand it and use it to accommodate the current and future drainage needs of both the city and the District. The basin is directly adjacent to the high school campus and is located south of Ten Mile Road and east of Taft Road.

On the June 22nd, City Council unanimously approved a Purchase Agreement by and Between the City and the Novi Community School District. This amendment began in relation to the need to change the designation of the portion of the park to be transferred.

On July 8, 2026, the Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider opening up the Master Plan review process for an amendment to the 2025 Master Plan for Land Use. As presented at the meeting, the amendment would reclassify land on the Future Land Use map as follows: The portion of Ella Mae Power Park to be transferred to the School District from Public Park to Public/Quasi-Public, 42000 Thirteen Mile Road from Single Family to Public/Quasi-Public (future Fire Station No. 2), 26125 Lee BeGole Drive from Industrial/Office to Public/Quasi-Public (future Public Safety Headquarters), and 22700 Venture Drive from Industrial/Office to Public/Quasi-Public (future Fire Station No. 3). At that same meeting, the Planning Commission approved a resolution opening the Master Plan review process and recommending approval

to City Council for distributing the amendment to the required entities as provided for in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.

On July 27, 2026, the City Council approved a resolution authorizing the distribution of the amendment to the required entities and chose not to assert its right to approve or reject the amendment after the required review period of 42 days and following public hearing. On July 28, 2026, staff notified and distributed the draft amendment to the required entities.

Director Bell stated that after tonight's public hearing, the Planning Commission is asked to approve the suggested Resolution adopting the proposed amendment to the 2025 Master Plan for Land Use. If approved, the adopted map amendment will be published and sent for distribution to all required entities, as required by State law.

Chair Pehrson opened the public hearing and invited members of the audience who wished to speak to approach the podium. Seeing no one, Chair Pehrson relayed that three correspondences were received. Mr. Floyd Peterson at 42525 W. 11 Mile Road is in support. A letter was received from the Oakland County Economic Development Department stating that the proposed amendment is not inconsistent with the bordering communities as determined by the Oakland County PZLU staff. Ms. Martha Ryznar at 44875 Yorkshire Drive objects due to the school district not offering an alternative, reduced available parkland, and disturbance of aquatic life in the pond. Chair Pehrson closed the audience participation and turned the matter over to the Planning Commission.

Member Reddi stated she has no comment.

Member Dismondy stated that the superintendent of the Novi Community School District attended the City Council meeting on June 22 and reassured those who were concerned at that time. Member Dismondy inquired if anything has changed since then.

Director Bell stated that the City has not received plans for the pond, however it is her understanding that the pond will be enlarged but will remain a pond.

Member Verma stated that he has no comment.

Member Roney stated that we have previously heard from the school district that they very much consider their property public property as well. The pond will be expanded to accommodate improvements to the high school but will still be an accessible pond.

Member Avdoulos stated he has no comment.

Motion to approve the Amendment to the 2025 Master Plan for Land Use as detailed in the Suggested Resolution.

In the matter of an Amendment to the 2025 Master Plan for Land Use, motion to approve the Amendment as detailed in the Suggested Resolution.

This motion is made for the reasons stated in the Planning Report, as well as the following:

- 1. The Home Rule Cities Act states that a City may not sell land that is a park except where the park is not required under an official Master Plan of the City (MCL117.5(e)). Since the City land that is being exchanged is designated as "Public Park" on the Future Land Use Map, adopting the amendment is appropriate to ensure that the Home Rule City Act is complied with (even though the City land is not technically not being "sold").**
- 2. The identified property designated as "Public Park" on the City's Future Land Use Map is not used as parkland available to the City's residents, but rather is used as a stormwater detention facility that serves both the City parkland and other City property as well.**

3. The terms of the property transfer confirm that if the property is transferred it will still be available for use by the City (including continuing to be available as drainage to serve the park) while also helping the Novi Community School District meet the overall needs of the community members it serves.
4. The other properties at issue, the three parcels purchased by the City for public facility purposes, are to be redesignated Public/Quasi-Public consistent with other properties in the City owned by governmental, school districts, and other public entities.

ROLL CALL ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENT TO THE 2025 MASTER PLAN FOR LAND USE AS DETAILED IN THE SUGGESTED RESOLUTION MADE BY MEMBER AVDOULOS AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY. Motion carried 6-0.

2. PBR26-0246 49195 ELEVEN MILE ROAD WOODLAND PERMIT

Public Hearing at the request of J Michael Homes for consideration of a Woodland Permit to remove 17 trees to build a single-family home.

Planner Brad Doane stated that the proposed Woodland Permit as requested by the applicant, William Moore, is to remove 17 regulated woodland trees from a single-family lot located at 49195 Eleven Mile Road in order to construct a new single-family home. The site is located on the south side of Eleven Mile Road and east of Wixom Road in Section 20 of the City.

The City's Woodland Consultant reviewed the request and prepared a letter dated July 22, 2026. The review letter indicates that the 17 trees proposed to be removed require 41 replacement credits and provides a detailed count and explanation of the required replacements. The submitted plot plan indicates the footprint for the new home. Although the applicant has not yet finalized a landscape plan, they intend to replace as many of the required trees as possible on the site, with any remaining tree credits to be satisfied through payment into the City's tree fund.

Planner Doane stated that the proposed removals are not located within any recorded conservation or preservation easements that abut or encroach onto the property. Pursuant to Section 37-31 of the Woodland Protection Ordinance, no tree removals are permitted until after the required 10 day waiting period following the date of approval.

The Planning Commission is asked to hold the public hearing and approve or deny the Woodland Use Permit. William Moore, the applicant, is present and is available to answer any questions. Staff are also available for any questions.

Chair Pehrson invited the applicant to address the Planning Commission.

Mr. William Moore with J Michael Homes stated that they plan on installing all the required replacements as they typically go above and beyond for the replacements. In a recent project on Nine Mile Road no protected trees were removed and twelve street trees were installed when only seven were required. Additionally, eight white pines were installed which count as one and a half tree replacements even though none were required. Mr. Moore stated that it is more cost effective to replace the trees as opposed to paying into the fund and most clients enjoy the aesthetics of having additional trees on the property.

Chair Pehrson opened the public hearing and invited members of the audience who wished to address the Planning Commission to approach the podium. Seeing, no one and confirming there was no correspondence received, Chair Pehrson turned the matter over to the Planning Commission.

Member Reddi stated she has no comment.

Member Dismondy stated that he has no comment.

Member Verma stated he has no comment.

Member Roney stated that it is nice to hear someone is going to put in all the replacements and possibly more. He noted that is refreshing to see and he hopes that happens.

Member Avdoulos stated that he has no comment.

Motion to approve the PBR26-0246 Woodland Use Permit made by Member Avdoulos and seconded by Member Roney.

In the matter of Woodland Use Permit, PBR26-0246, motion to approve the removal of 17 regulated woodland trees within an area mapped as City Regulated Woodland at 49195 Eleven Mile Road for the purpose of constructing a single-family home. The approval is subject to on-site planting to the extent possible of 41 required woodland replacement credits. If necessary, any outstanding credits may be paid into the City's Tree Fund. In addition, any other conditions as listed in the Woodland Consultant's review letter shall be addressed.

ROLL CALL ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE PBR26-0246 WOODLAND USE PERMIT MADE BY MEMBER AVDOULOS AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY. *Motion carried 6-0.*

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. APPROVAL OF THE 2027 PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE

Motion to approve the 2027 Planning Commission Regular Meeting Schedule as presented.

Director Bell stated it is that time of year again where we look at firming up the 2027 schedule. The suggested meeting dates were included in the packet. We have primarily kept with the second and forth Wednesdays of the month, with a few exceptions for holidays. As has been our practice, one meeting is planned for November and December.

Motion to approve the 2027 Planning Commission Regular Meeting Schedule made by Member Avdoulos and seconded by Member Roney.

ROLL CALL ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2027 PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE AS PRESENTED MADE BY MEMBER AVDOULOS AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY. *Motion carried 6-0.*

2. APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 19, 2026 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Motion to approve the August 19, 2026 Planning Commission Minutes.

ROLL CALL ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 19, 2026, PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES MADE BY MEMBER AVDOULOS AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY. *Motion carried 6-0.*

CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS FOR COMMISSION ACTION

There were no consent agenda items.

SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES/TRAINING UPDATES

There were no supplemental issues or training updates.

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 9, 2026, meeting made by Member Roney and all in favor said aye.

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 PM.