

**CITY OF WIXOM
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 3, 2024**

**APPROVED
JUNE 17, 2024**

This meeting was called to order by Chairman Day of the Planning Commission at 7:01 p.m. at which time allegiance was pledged to the American flag.

PRESENT: William Day (Chairman), Cheryl Tacy (Vice Chairperson), Commissioners: Ray Cousineau, Sandro Grossi, Mark Helsom, Mark Lada

ABSENT: None

OTHERS: Matteo Passalacqua (Carlisle Wortman Associates), Drew Benson, Assistant City Manager; and Mona Freiburger (Recording Secretary)

Determination of a Quorum:

A quorum of the Planning Commission was present for this meeting.

Changes or Additions to the Agenda:

None

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION made and seconded by Commissioner Grossi and Commissioner Cousineau to approve the May 8, 2024, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, as submitted.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

May 28, 2024, City Manager Update
Charter Township of Milford – Notice of Distribution of Draft Master Plan

Call to the Public: (Limited to 5 minutes per speakers, addressing Agenda items on Agenda only)

No public comments.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

1. **SITE PLAN REVIEW SPR 24-001: 49450 GRAND RIVER AVENUE, WIXOM, MI. 48393.** The applicant is requesting site plan approval to replace the existing McDonald's structure with a new building with modified dual drive-through lanes, parking layout and landscaping modifications. The site is located at the northwest corner of the Wixom Road and Grand River Avenue intersection. The site is zoned FS, Freeway Service and currently contains an existing McDonald's restaurant. Parcel ID: 22-07-401-013

Discussion:

The applicant is requesting site plan approval to raze the existing McDonald's structure (4,138 square feet) and construct a new building using current corporate design standards (4,433 square feet). The current layout provides dual drive through lanes which will be retained but modified. Parking layout and substantial landscaping modifications are proposed. The site is located at the northwest intersection of the Wixom Road/Grand River Avenue intersection. The site is zoned FS, Freeway Service and, currently, contains an existing McDonald's restaurant. Parcel ID: 22-07-401-013.

Recommendation by Carlisle Wortman Associates dated June 3, 2024 to the Commission:

The application is substantially complete and provides enough information for the Planning Commission to consider approval, approval with conditions, or denial. If considering approval or approval with conditions, the Planning Commission will need to determine whether the following waivers shall be granted:

1. Planning Commission should decide whether to waive minimum window coverage requirements outlined in Section 18.14.010 C3 for the building's south elevation (Grand River Frontage) per the proposed use of spandrel glass.
2. Planning Commission should decide whether to waive the landscaping adjacent to structures requirements per Section 18.14.010 C4.
3. The Planning Commission should decide whether to waive the commercial driveway requirements stated in Section 18.15.050 B1, B2 and B3.

4. The Planning Commission should decide whether to waive west buffer landscaping requirements.

Carlisle Wortman Associates recommends the proposed site plan be approved with the following conditions:

1. City Engineer to confirm the legal description provided on Sheet C includes the ingress/egress drive;
2. Applicant must provide documentation from the Road Commission of Oakland County showing approval of the access drives;
3. Any issues or concerns cited by City Engineering or Public Safety departments must be addressed. These conditions may be administratively approved.

Mr. Passalacqua gave background information from the McDonald's proposal located at the corner of South Wixom Road and Grand River Avenue, just south of the I-96 interchange. The applicant is proposing to raze the current building and build a new one that will be approximately 300 square feet larger, adjust the parking and landscaping layouts.

Mr. Passalacqua went through their report. It is zoned FS, and the proposed new building meets all the bulk and placement requirements. As far as natural resources on the site, it is not within a flood plain and there is no major grading proposed for the site. The new building will be moved approximately 20 feet to the west. All specific requirements for drive-throughs have been met.

Mr. Passalacqua noted, as it relates to issues with the building itself, some things noted with the architectural and design standards for the code are as follows: One, there is a requirement that elevations along major thoroughfares should have at least 20% window coverage. It is noted in the original review, the applicant did not meet that standard, the revised drawings presented tonight have the 20% coverage requirement along Grand River Avenue met by Spandrel Glass (black tinted windows). It is noted that this side of the building is oriented towards operations per the floor plan submitted. If these windows were clear, deep fryers, and people running around with hamburgers, etc., would be viewed. It is the Planning Commission's decision as to whether to waive the 20% requirement in lieu of a continuation of the exterior construction materials the applicant has proposed. Two, there is a requirement that landscaping abut to the building except for the landscaping at the rear of the property. The west elevation where the drive through equipment is and part of some initial landscaping beds, there is no landscaping abutting the other elevations of the property. There was no community area shown on the new plan, however, this is an encouraged design, it is not required. As it relates to this Section, the waivers that the Planning Commission need to consider is the requirement for the 20% window coverage and the requirement for landscaping abutting the building.

Chairman Day asked if there was landscaping at the front of the building. Mr. Passalacqua stated none that abuts the building directly. There is a small landscaping bed in the parking lot area between where the drive through lets out and the ADA parking. There is buffer landscaping all around the perimeter of the property, as well. Chairman Day stated where the cars stack for the drive through area would not be an easy place for landscaping under those conditions.

Mr. Passalacqua commented there are no issues with utilities. The parking and loading requirements have been met. For circulation, the ingress/egress off Wixom and Grand River are existing and are proposed to remain the same. The original site was developed in 1985 (40 years ago), the existing ingress/egress does not meet with today's standards for Section 18.15.050(b)(1), (2) and (3). However, part of that section states the Planning Commission can waive these requirements if a minimum standard is met; that minimum standard has been met. The Planning Commission can waive those with that in mind.

Commissioner Cousineau inquired which standards are the applicant not able to meet. Mr. Passalacqua answered the standards are set up now where there needs to be a certain distance from other commercial driveways on the same side. The ingress/egress with other ingress/egresses across the street and your ingress/egress need to be a certain distance from major intersections. Burger King to the north, is not aligned approved site access from the side; being at Wixom and Grand River creates a trifecta of issues.

Commissioner Lada inquired if the egress can be right hand turn only on Wixom side. Mr. Passalacqua indicated this was proposed in their writeup and from the perspective that an individual can do as they choose but whether the applicant would be agreeable to some signage and painting to deter people from trying to make a left turn onto Wixom Road, he believed it was a fair request. Mr. Passalacqua felt that this was a fair conversation to have with the applicant. There is nothing in the zoning ordinance for this to be required.

Vice Chair Tacy indicated the illustration does not depict if the Spandrel Glass is only visible on the plan. She inquired if the Spandrel Glass was used, would it go over the brick face with no intent of allowing any light inside or is it simply an exterior façade, so it appears to meet the standard. Mr. Passalacqua stated he would let the applicant answer this question.

Mr. Passalacqua continued the discussion regarding the landscaping. The site has substantial improvements to the landscaping. Greenbelt requirements have been met; the north buffer meets the requirements, but the west buffer does not. The property abuts is Auto Zone; the rear side of Auto Zone. There is some existing landscaping,

both on McDonald's property and Auto Zone's property that aids in the intent of the buffer, but by count, they do not meet the requirement.

Vice Chair Tacy indicated the statement was made in the packet that there are ornamental trees that are planned to be installed. She indicated the ornamental trees may not meet the count but in terms of the quality of the buffer; she asked if it is going to be a little lushier than what physical number of plants would be. Mr. Passalacqua stated he would agree with that statement because the ornamentals bring more color than either an evergreen or deciduous. The Planning Commission could consider that the ornamental trees would be acceptable in lieu of not meeting the overall count.

Mr. Passalacqua indicated Burger King submitted their revised plans based on their conditional approval, and at first glance, there is not a major conflict with what McDonald's is proposing with more low growth blooming shrubbery as opposed to tree count. McDonald's doesn't have major trees proposed in the areas of Burger King, so there is not going to be competing trees.

Chairman Day inquired what is proposed in terms of the Spandrel Glass, just replacing that with brick? Mr. Passalacqua stated to allow for the continuation of the proposed materials that they already have for that elevation as opposed to the Spandrel Glass. The rendering is the better reflection of what it would look like without the Spandrel Glass. Chairman Day stated it seems like a lot of brick, blank wall. He was wondering if there could be some sort of banding to break up the brick. Vice Chair Tacy suggested wood slats that are being decoratively used elsewhere would break it up.

Mr. Jeff Brinks, Venture Engineering, 8515 Ridgebluff Drive, Byron Center, Michigan, representing the applicant, McDonald's, introduced himself to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Brinks indicated this restaurant has been at this site for 40 years. McDonald's reaches a point where they are in good communities with successful businesses where they cannot remodel anymore. The way they interact with customers has changed, the way people use the restaurants changed, so it makes better sense for them to rebuild, if they are in a good location and in a good community. As 40 years has gone by, the zoning ordinances have, obviously, changed. Mr. Brinks stated Mr. Passalacqua has been great in assisting and trying to make sure that they try to apply the current zoning standards. Mr. Brinks indicated McDonald's is open to deal with those as the Planning Commission sees fit.

Mr. Brinks stated regarding the Spandrel Glass, it is just on the face. That part of the building is the hot bed of activity in the restaurant. That entire wall on the interior of the building, the drive through operations, is approximately 80% of their business. The Spandrel Glass is on the face of the building, you won't see it. Regarding the west buffer, Mr. Brinks stated they are happy to meet the requirements. In reviewing with the

landscape architect, they decided to go for the intent more than the latter because they wanted it to look nice along the Auto Zone property line. The insertion of the ornamental trees to supplement the existing evergreens and deciduous present made sense from an aesthetic perspective; although it is the Planning Commission's decision. Regarding the driveway, Mr. Brinks indicated he had a discussion with Mr. Passalacqua, the driveways were a concern in terms of their location. There is an easement there that McDonald's obtained to get as far away as they could at the time it was built 40 years ago. They have tried to push them out as far as they could when it was built, and they are going to keep them as far away from that intersection. Mr. Brinks stated they would be open to signage on the Wixom Road access to indicate right turn only.

Chairman Day asked about the requirement for landscaping adjacent to the structure. He understood on the south side with the drive through but asked why not on the north side. Mr. Brinks answered because it is a hub of activity, people coming in and out, however, they do have opportunity there to possibly narrow the sidewalk in some places and create some landscape beds adjacent to the building. On the site plan, there is a label which is not updated. There is some opportunity there, if the Planning Commission would like to add some landscape along the face of the building. The front elevation face Wixom Road east, with windows all the way down, it would be low greenery perennials, etc. The applicant would be agreeable to add, if the Planning Commission would like for this to be done.

Mr. Passalacqua added for clarification between what the Commission asked, and the applicant provided, they were discussing the northern elevation and the eastern elevation, the eastern being the front of the building. Chairman Day stated yes. Mr. Brinks indicated it is on the site plan, but the box did not get updated on the landscape plan. He indicated they would certainly insert those, if that is something the Planning Commission desires.

Chairman Day inquired if the McDonald's would be amendable to add some architectural detail on the south side to break up the brick. Mr. Brinks stated yes, as opposed to the brick. Chairman Day stated wood slats would work but there may be other things that would work, as well. He would like to see it broken up.

Commissioner Grossi presented an unknown McDonald's in reference to the architectural design. There was (an inaudible) discussion regarding the architectural detail.

Vice Chair Tacy indicated it is not actually replacing the positioning of the Spandrel Glass, it is above it; it is more of a header façade. Mr. Brinks stated if they could provide the image, the applicant could come up with something that aligns with that image.

Assistant City Manager Benson asked the Commission to come back to the microphones for the purpose of the Minutes.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated the façade could be administratively approved or resubmitted to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Lada questioned the lighting, if it all fits within the ordinance. Mr. Passalacqua stated yes, it all complies.

Commissioner Cousineau inquired if the Planning Commission would request that the applicant come back before the Planning Commission with the revised landscape plan and revised rendering plan, or would the Planning Commission allow the applicant to handle this administratively? Chairman Day stated he thought this could be handled administratively.

MOTION made and seconded by Vice Chair Tacy and Commissioner Grossi to approve **SITE PLAN REVIEW SPR 24-001: 49450 GRAND RIVER AVENUE, WIXOM, MI. 48393.** The applicant is requesting site plan approval to replace the existing McDonald's structure with a new building with modified dual drive-through lanes, parking layout and landscaping modifications. The site is located at the northwest corner of the Wixom Road and Grand River Avenue intersection. The site is zoned FS, Freeway Service and currently contains an existing McDonald's restaurant. Parcel ID: 22-07-401-013; with the following conditions:

1. That the Planning Commission will waive the minimum window coverage requirements as outlined in Section 18.14.010 (c) (3) for the building south elevation; the southern façade would now include architectural detail similar to the east and north side which could be approved administratively; and
2. The Planning Commission will also waive the landscaping requirement adjacent to the structure on the south side, only; and
3. The Planning Commission will waive the commercial driveway requirements stated in Section 18.15.050(b)(1,2,3) in favor of the plan as it is submitted, however, the Commission would like to request that signage be added indicating "right turn only" as people are exiting the property on Wixom Road; and
4. The Planning Commission would waive the west buffer landscaping requirement in favor of the Plan, as submitted; and

The Planning Commission would also submit the following conditions:

1. City Engineer to confirm the legal description provided on Sheet C includes the ingress/egress drive; and
2. Applicant must provide documentation from the Road Commission of Oakland County showing approval of the access drives; and
3. Any issues or concerns cited by City Engineering or Public Safety departments must be addressed. These conditions may be administratively approved.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

Call to the Public:

No public comments.

Staff Comments:

Assistant City Manager Benson commented there are two special land uses scheduled to come before the Commission on June 17, 2024. If anyone has any conflicts for that meeting to let him know.

The Master Plan update scope will be ready to bring before the Commission, however, there are vacancies on the Planning Commission and trying to fill those vacancies would take precedence. Filling the vacancies would be the focus for now. City Council did approve a budget for the Master Plan project, so they do anticipate working with the Commission to get this rolling sometime during fiscal year 2024-25.

Mr. Passalacqua commented, the Renewable Energy Ordinance received some great feedback, the notes will be consolidated between Assistant City Manager Benson and Carlisle Wortman Associates. The drafting of text changes to the VCA sign ordinance is also being worked on to come before the Commission.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated City Council approved the budget for fiscal year 2024-25 which includes an even larger amount for ordinance code enforcement than originally proposed. The City will be hiring an in-house ordinance code officer. The City will be getting away from the reactive model of ordinance code enforcement and moving towards having a staff member to do this. They anticipate the funding to become available after July 1st. The City anticipates the realities of the hiring process to take place and hope to have someone in place late July or early August.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented Wixom Logistics Park applied for, and the City has been working with them over the last six months, land divisions. They had been seeking to sub-divide each of the buildings and individual units. They will be doing them as traditional acreage land divisions, which are administratively approved but they have the declaration of restrictions and other pieces that an original development agreement has in place. They have been individually reviewed and in conformance to what they originally were, but they still meet standards even as individual buildings. They will carry through the revised declaration restrictions. From a staff perspective, planning, engineering, and legal feels comfortable that the City will be protected in their original interest in the development agreement that will be communicated throughout the life of the project, no matter if they are individually owned or how that plays out. This is Wixom Logistics Park Buildings A through E.

Commission Comments:

Commissioner Cousineau commented he was planning to resign, but given the circumstances of Tony Lawrence's resignation, Commissioner Cousineau will remain on the Commission, as long as they need him, until there is a replacement. Commissioner Cousineau also asked that someone replace him as the Planning Commission liaison on the Zoning Board of Appeals. Assistant City Manager Benson indicated there may be an opportunity for an existing ZBA member, who may be interested in the Planning Commission, as well, to address the Planning Commission side. There is a similar scenario with the Zoning Board of Appeals in terms of several vacancies to be filled.

The Commission thanked Commission Cousineau for his flexibility.

The Commissioners thanked Commission Helsom for his work on the Commission. Commissioner Helsom stated he appreciated all the hard work they have done for Wixom.

Vice Chair Tacy commented the US Postal service in Wixom finally cleaned up their act, so if the City has something to do with it, she thanked them. Assistant City Manager Benson stated the City DPW guys were on their way to the postal office when they saw a gentleman outside of the postal service office cutting the grass. The City will be observing them regarding the maintenance.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated, currently, tall grass and weed complaints are handled directly as ordinance complaints through the public works department and takes approximately 10 business days.

Vice Chair Tacy stated if the Commission has an opportunity to visit the town of Brighton, to do so. Brighton has done a spectacular job of reinventing their downtown with blending their old architecture with the new architecture; they are finished with

installing new streets, curbs, gutters, etc. Brighton has also done a good job of attracting unique restaurants, boutiques, and so forth. Their streetscape is very nice. Vice Chair Tacy indicated she visited Brighton on Friday night, and it was hopping; the street was blocked off, there was a band, and it was very pleasant. She was particularly paying close attention to their signage, of course. Chairman Day stated he visits Brighton frequently and he agreed with Vice Chair Tacy that Brighton has done a great job in attracting a lot of businesses.

Commissioner Lada commented the Wixom Community Foundation will hold their annual Amazing Race; a family friendly event around the community showcasing businesses and site around the community. The race will be held on July 27th. Sign up is through the Wixom Community Foundation Facebook page. The grand prize is a set of Red Wings tickets. There will also be a bunch of gift baskets to be raffled.

ADJOURNMENT:

This meeting of the Planning Commission was motioned and adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Mona Freiburger
Recording Secretary