

**MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING/REGULAR MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
July 18, 2019, 7:30 P.M.**

Chair Schwartz called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. on July 18, 2019.

Commissioners Present:       Brickner, Countegan, Goerke, Mantey, McRae, Orr, Schwartz, Stimson, Turner

Commissioners Absent:       None.

Others Present:               City Planner Stec, City Attorney Schultz, Staff Engineers Kennedy and Olson, Planning Consultant Tangari

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION by Schwartz, support by Stimson, to amend and approve the agenda as follows:**

- **Delete Item A: Lot Split 2, 2019 (Preliminary)**

**MOTION carried unanimously.**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**A. LOT SPLIT 2, 2019 (Preliminary)**

LOCATION:                       33737 Twelve Mile Rd.  
PARCEL I.D.:                 23-16-201-005  
PROPOSAL:                   Split one parcel into three parcels in an OS-4,  
   Office Research District  
ACTION REQUESTED:       Preliminary Lot Split approval  
APPLICANT:                 Matthew S. Sosin of W12 Investment Partners, LLC  
OWNER:                      W12 Investment Partners, LLC

This item was withdrawn at the request of the applicant.

**B. SITE AND LANDSCAPE PLAN 66-6-2019**

LOCATION:                       34918 Eight Mile Rd.  
PARCEL I.D.'s:               23-33-376-024  
PROPOSAL:                   Eight (8) building multiple-family residential development  
   containing 78 dwelling units in RC-2, Multiple-Family District  
ACTION REQUESTED:       Approval of site and landscape plans  
APPLICANT:                 Ari Kosterlitz  
OWNER:                      CLR18, LLC

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, and referring to his July 8, 2019 letter, Planning Consultant Tangari gave the review for this application for approval of site and landscape plans, in order to construct an 8-building multiple-family residential development at 34918 Eight Mile Road, Farmington Hills.

The applicant was proposing a multi-family development with 78 total units and 144 total rooms. The apartments were spread over 8 buildings. There was also an office building for the complex.

Planning Consultant Tangari reviewed adjacent zoning and land uses, and the project's compliance with ordinance standards.

Outstanding issues included:

- The rear setback of 67.6 feet was not compliant; an 84.467-foot setback was required, per ordinance formula.
- The plans showed a row of 11 spaces, plus one additional space near the office, located within the required 50-foot front yard setback.
- Proposed utility improvements would be subject to engineering review.
- There was an optional requirement for a marginal access road. However, the two neighboring properties fronting on 8 Mile Road were fully developed, and neither had a stub for marginal access.
- A landscape cost estimate was required.
- The applicant should verify that planting and snow fence details matched the approved Farmington Hills details.

Planning Consultant Tangari summarized that the two main issues were (1) rear setback noncompliance, and (2) parking in the front yard setback.

In response to questions from the Commission, Mr. Tangari explained that per the ordinance formula – which used height and length of structures – the buildings on the neighboring sites might not have the same setback requirement. The formula created a site-specific setback.

Reid Cooksey, Stonefield Engineering Design, 607 Shelby Street, Suite 200, Detroit, was present on behalf of this application.

In response to questions from Chair Schwartz, Mr. Cooksey explained that there was a drain at the rear of the site which made that portion undevelopable, and which impacted the decision to place parking in the front setback. Dividing the rear building into two buildings would cause encroachment into the side yards.

Mr. Cooksey further explained that there was a proposed office and workout facility in the front, which needed parking in that area. Because of the constraints of this narrow site, and because of their desire to maximize green space, variance for parking in the front yard setback would be required.

In response to a question from Commissioner Stimson regarding the Fire Marshal requirement for a 50' turning radius, Mr. Cooksey explained fire truck access to the site. They would make sure the emergency access complied with Fire Department requirements.

Chair Schwartz asked if variances could be avoided if the number of units were reduced. Mr. Cooksey said they had looked at different configurations for the site and losing buildings didn't solve the problems of the very narrow site. Geometrically and economically, it was not feasible to reduce the number of the buildings.

Commissioner Orr thought if the road was straight with a T-turnaround, more room would be provided on the site. Having a 30-foot-wide lane plus a traffic circle seemed to waste space.

Mr. Cooksey explained that there was a utility pole in the middle of the southern traffic circle, and the northern traffic circle was critical for emergency vehicle access.

Commissioner McRae thought this plan was a better fit for the property than the plans previously proposed. Not having the parking places in front would be detrimental to the renting of apartment units.

Mr. Cooksey said that was the case. Further, they were providing a substantial hedgerow and trees in the greenbelt to screen the parking. Their landscape plan exceeded requirements, and would provide an aesthetically appealing site.

In response to further comments from Commissioner McRae, Mr. Cooksey said the proposed plan protected the rear drainage area. To install parking behind the rear building would require not just parking spaces, but a drive lane. Alternatively, splitting the rear building would require a 41-foot building separation. There was not room on the site to do that without encroaching into the side yard setbacks.

Planning Consultant Tangari noted that a floor plan had not been submitted for the actual office portion of the front building, and the parking requirements were calculated on the size of the building, without removing the gym area. The parking requirements were likely excessive.

Mr. Cooksey said the office parking calculation only accounted for 11 spaces in their overall parking total. Even without those spaces, they would still need a front yard variance. The final design of the building's interior had not yet been finalized; they preferred to offer a worst-case scenario for parking needs.

Seeing that discussion had ended, Chair Schwartz brought the matter back to the Commission.

**MOTION by Countegan, support by McRae, that Site and Landscape Plan 66-6-2019, dated June 18, 2019, submitted by Ari Kosterlitz, be approved because it appears to meet all applicable requirements of the Zoning Chapter, subject to the following conditions:**

- **The front and rear setback deficiencies be corrected either by an administratively approved revised site plan or ZBA variances.**
- **The tree identification notes on the landscape plan be corrected.**
- **A landscape cost estimate be provided.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** June 20, 2019

**MOTION by McRae, support by Countegan, to approve the June 20, 2019 minutes as published.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:**

The Commission discussed the progress of various road projects in the City.

Commissioner Brickner noted that the telephone pole was still on the ground on Drake Road. He also invited everyone to participate in the Founders Festival, July 18-22.

Commissioner Mantey said that during a recent study session, there was discussion regarding how single-family zoning was changing throughout the country, including, for example, the elimination of single-family zoning districts in St. Paul, MN. As he had been receiving more information about this subject, his views were evolving.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Seeing that there was no further discussion, Chair Schwartz adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dale Countegan  
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem