

**MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
FEBRUARY 16, 2017, 7:30 P.M.**

Chair Rae-O'Donnell called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. on February 16, 2017.

Commissioners Present: Brickner, Countegan, McRae, Rae-O'Donnell, Schwartz, Stimson

Commissioners Absent: Fleischhacker, Mantey, Orr

Others Present: City Planner Stec, Staff Planner Lawrence, Staff Engineer Darnall, City Attorney Schultz, Planning Consultants Arroyo and Tangari

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Stimson, support by McRae, to amend the agenda to move Item D to be first on the agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR MEETING:

Chair Rae-O'Donnell welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Dale Countegan.

D. Presentation of Historic District Commission Annual Report for 2016

Staff Planner and Historic District Commission (HDC) Liaison Lawrence introduced the Vice-Chair of the HDC, Michael Hegarty.

Mr. Hegarty noted that member Don Millington had resigned this year, and new member Bryan Brincat had been added.

The goal of the Historic District Commission was to promote the preservation of the historic community while issuing Certificates of Appropriateness and Notices to Proceed for minor work on the homes in the area. In 2016 five Certificates of Appropriateness had been granted, including:

- Spicer House Heritage Park, 24915 Farmington Road (HD#508)
- Lone Ranger House, 24105 Locust Street (HD#17)
- Lawrence Simmons House, 33742 W Twelve Mile Road (HD#301)
- Elliot Sprague House, 26445 Drake Road (HD#205)
- Sherman Goodenough House, 24705 Farmington Road (HD#312)

Administrative Certificates of Appropriateness were granted for:

- Royal Aldrich House, 31110 Eleven Mile Road (HD#1)

A new historic designation had been approved for the Carl Licht House (HD#603), located at 26291 Pillsbury Road. This home was constructed in 1956 and was a unique and well-maintained example of Mid-Century Modern architecture.

Historic Marker maintenance continued, including:

- John Harger House, 36500 Twelve Mile Road (HD#13)
- Samuel Davis House, 32330 Twelve Mile Road (HD#303)
- West Farmington Cemetery, Twelve Mile and Halsted Roads (HD#910)

Special Projects included:

- Alternative materials for replacement of brick pavers, including stamped colored concrete.
- Farmington Hills Historic Cemeteries
- Preservation Farmington

Public Education and Awards included the 2016 Beautification Awards:

- The Farmington Hills Historic District Commission Ruth Moehlman Preservation Award was presented to Sivakumar Properties, LLC, HD#7 Lawrence Simmons House.
- The Environmental Award was presented to Robert Bosch LLC, for the environmentally focused and sustainable landscape.
- The Beautification Commissioners' Award was presented to St. Fabian Catholic Church and School, in recognition of the colorful and beautifully maintained grounds there.

Challenges and Transitions

- HB 5232 and SB 720 were introduced in the State Legislature. The bills would drastically revise Public Act 169 and endanger local historic districts. While HB 5232 was eventually suspended from consideration, local historic districts continued to watch for possible action regarding historic districts in the Legislature.
- The Sarah Fisher Home, 27400 Twelve Mile Road (HD#507) was purchased by a private developer in 2016. The HDC had approved a Notice to Proceed that would allow for the demolition of many of the existing structures in 2015. Approvals from City Council on the PUD agreement must be granted before work could continue on the site. The owner had not yet moved forward with finalizing the PUD agreement.
- David Simmons House, 22000 Haggerty Road (HD#7), had been on the market for 3 years. The original owners were deceased and their children had asked to have the historic designation removed. The HDC had declined to make this recommendation. A potential purchaser was proposing to relocate the home on the property and construct a hotel on the remaining portion.
- Mark Arnold House, 26490 Drake Road (HD#16) had ongoing construction of an approved 2-story addition that should be complete in the summer or fall of 2017.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell indicated she was ready for a motion.

MOTION by McRae, support by Brickner to accept the Historic District Annual Report for 2016.

MOTION carried 6-0.

A. REVISED SITE AND LANDSCAPE PLAN 71-11-2016

LOCATION:	31015 Grand River Ave
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-35-101-005
PROPOSAL:	Used Car Dealership in a B-3, General Business District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Approval of site and landscape plan

APPLICANT: Richard Kovanda of ARK-Tec, LLC
OWNER: Woodgate Development Company

Utilizing overhead slides, and referring to the February 9, 2017 Giffels Webster review letter, Planning Consultant Arroyo gave the background for this proposal, which was for a revised site plan for a used car dealership located at 31015 Grand River Avenue, Zoned B-3.

Outstanding issues included:

- The applicant needed to indicate that the new plantings met the two-foot height requirement for screening vegetation, and update landscaping notes to indicate that additional landscaping was proposed.
- Regarding dimensional requirements, the applicant should provide the actual setbacks of the building. It appeared that the site would meet most of the dimensional requirements of the district, except for the front yard. However, this was an existing nonconformity.
- Parking in the front yard appeared to be less than 8 feet; 10 feet was required. However, this was an existing condition. The required two-foot-high screening would help meet the spirit of the ordinance.
- Aisle width was required to be a minimum of 20 feet. This standard was not met for the customer/employee parking areas located on the east side of the site, where the drive was 15'9". If a few of the parking spaces were eliminated at the corner the 20-foot requirement could be met.
- Between the vehicle display area where parallel display of vehicles was proposed at the corner, and the property lines, the applicants were proposing to leave the pavement as it was. This would typically be required to be landscaped with grass. Leaving it as asphalt could encourage blight, as the asphalt would break up over time and weeds would break through.
- There was a pedestrian connection from the existing walkway to the building entry on Grand River, so the minimum requirement was met. The applicant was proposing a new 5-foot wide, 4-inch-thick concrete walkway along a segment of the site along Orchard Lake Road, which was an improvement over the existing condition. No pedestrian connections from the internal parking areas to the building had been provided from the Orchard Lake sidewalk. A previous driveway along Grand River was being removed and replaced with landscaping and sidewalk.

Planning Consultant Arroyo concluded his presentation.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell asked if the added sidewalk was near the pavement discussed above that would normally be torn out. Planning Consultant Arroyo said the proposed sidewalk was right next to that portion of pavement.

Commissioner Brickner noted that at one time this location had been a Dodge car lot. It had since been a heating and cooling establishment.

Commissioner McRae asked if the issue of the 20-foot aisle width could be resolved by making the traffic one-way. Planning Consultant Arroyo said there were a number of problems with doing this, including changing the entire orientation of that area of the site. Also one-way drives as suggested were often confusing and ended up being used as two-way drives.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell invited the applicants to speak.

Eric Siegel, EDS Investments, and Richard Kovanda, Ark-Tec Architects, LLC, both at 17376 West 12 Mile Road, Southfield MI, were present on behalf of this application. They distributed pictures of existing

site conditions. They were tied to the existing site, which had previously been a dealership for 30 years. They were only contemplating a 3-year lease, and they felt they could not meet every requirement on the site.

Mr. Siegel said the one pedestrian connection from the Grand River sidewalk was being made. The plan had been updated since they had conversations with Engineering Manager Cubera and their understanding was that the sidewalk along Orchard Lake Road would not be required because it was a sidewalk to nowhere.

Mr. Siegel said they would meet the continuous hedge requirement with burning bush. They were 12 feet short on the front setback. This was a 3.4-acre site with an 18,000-foot building. The building coverage was only 12.5% of the site. The required side yard setback was 10 feet, but the actual side yard setback was over 100 feet. Other than the front yard pinch point, the building met setback requirements and more than fit with buildings up and down the street, some of which were at zero setback. They were 33 feet set back from a greenbelt along Grand River Avenue. This was the densest, most landscaped property in that area. This was not a situation where cars would hang over the sidewalk, as was the case with some of the other properties on Grand River.

Regarding the drive aisle that was 15'9", Mr. Siegel said they were willing to move the two handicapped spaces and remove 2 other spaces in that area. That might get the drive to 18' wide. It was a straight shot and vehicles would not be impeded. Planning Consultant Arroyo said that this could be resolved and approved administratively. Mainly the parking spots on the Grand River side were in question. One space might also need to be removed on the Orchard Lake Road side.

Mr. Siegel said that the display area could be striped 90 degrees. He understood that the asphalt situation might be a problem for other applications. However, that area would be used for customers walking around and it would be maintained. While the lease was only for 3 years, if the location worked out the business owner would likely purchase the site and at that point do some additional site work. To tear out pavement and do all the site improvements listed in the review letter for a 3-year lease was not financially viable.

Mr. Siegel said they would provide a photometric plan. They would also provide the required 2 additional parking lot trees. He asked that the Planning Commission consider not requiring the hedge along Orchard Lake Road. Also, they were talking with Engineering Manager Cubera regarding storm water modification on the site. This was an expensive improvement, particularly on a site that they were not otherwise modifying. He would also like to revisit the dumpster location issue. They were hoping they could leave the dumpster in its current location, with access doors swinging to the rear of the site.

Mr. Siegel noted that they were willing to tear out the abandoned access drive and replace that. They were not sure what the comments about snow fencing referred to. Wood planter boxes existed.

Mr. Siegel said he met with the Fire Marshal on site regarding emergency vehicle access and they were resolving all issues there.

Mr. Siegel emphasized that the site would be "much less noncomplying" than many of their neighbors.

Commissioner Schwartz wondered if the Planning Commission approved this site plan and the tenant later purchased the property, could the Commission require that the pavement in the display setback area be removed at that time? City Attorney Schultz said the maintenance of the pavement would be a code

enforcement issue, unless a condition were added that should the tenant actually purchase the property then they would have to remove it that pavement.

Commissioner Schwartz asked why the tenant couldn't just stripe that pavement and put vehicles there. Planning Consultant Arroyo said there was a setback issue; the pavement in question could not be used for parking or car display.

Commissioner McRae said that in all the years he had been on the Commission, he did not remember anyone making an issue of the duration that the user would be there, other than for temporary flower sales. Whether the tenant was there for a day or for 30 years, the applicant was asking for site plan approval. The Commission needed to be responsive to that request for approval and not be concerned with how long the use was going to last.

Commissioner McRae continued that site plan requirements existed for a reason. It did not make sense to waive requirements because the lease was only for 3 years.

Commissioner Countegan asked about the possibility of shrinking the display area so that less pavement would be required to be removed, thus saving a substantial cost.

Mr. Siegel wasn't sure the owner would agree to that, and the owner was not present. They were there on behalf of the tenant. He explained that the property owner was interested in selling; no one wanted to invest the necessary money into the site without being surer of a return. MLC wanted to buy the property but it was easier to get financing once they were in the property and the business proved to be a going concern. They wanted to have a clear understanding to present to the owner about what absolutely had to be done. If they had to do everything in the Giffels Webster letter, which treated the property as if it were brand new construction, the whole project would not work.

Mr. Siegel said they were trying not to tear out the pavement as discussed. They would be open to a condition of the tear out if MLC could later purchase the property. The storm water improvements alone might represent six months' rent.

Planning Consultant Arroyo returned to Commissioner Countegan's earlier remarks about reducing the number of display spaces. If there was less area for display vehicles – perhaps reduced to six vehicles – and more for standard parking, less pavement would have to be removed and the costs would therefore be reduced.

Mr. Siegel said that six spaces for display vehicles would be inadequate. Given the depth of this site, with the mature trees and landscaping, the visibility of this for a car dealership was extremely low. If they were going to redevelop this site by retrofitting it they would certainly have more work to do, but that was not the current plan.

Mr. Kovanda said the ordinance was written in order to hide the customer's product. The customer was trying to get that product out to be visible to traffic driving by the site.

Commissioner Schwartz said if he were the tenant and his business was to sell cars, the last thing he would want to do was restrict the number of cars on display. He acknowledged that this was a short lease for a commercial property. While this was an area that the Commission wanted to see revitalized, he was struggling with this application. He also agreed with the comments made by Commissioner McRae regarding the site plan approval generally.

City Planner Stec noted that the Engineering Department was not looking to waive the complete sidewalk along Orchard Lake Road. The applicants were still required to provide the sidewalk from Grand River to the first curb cut on Orchard Lake.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell asked if the parking were reconfigured as suggested by Planning Consultant Arroyo, would the Fire Department have any issues with the new configuration? City Planner Stec said this would actually help to alleviate Fire Department concerns.

Commissioner McRae said that the Commission needed to decide what they would accept for this property. They needed to make sure the City was protected. The applicants could then go back to their clients and engage in negotiations.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell reviewed the outstanding issues and asked for the applicant's response.

- New plantings needed to meet the two-foot height requirement for screening vegetation. Mr. Siegel said they were hoping to replace any dead bushes and fill in any breaks in the screen, using the existing hedge from the very north line, and then wrapping it around to the south access road. They were hoping to waive the portion along the southern part of Orchard Lake Road. Commissioner McRae noted that this would be acceptable to him, as long as no cars were parked south so that their headlights would shoot out into the road. Commissioner Stimson said he would prefer the screening go to where the employee/customer parking was located on Orchard Lake Road.
- Regarding parking deficiencies, were the applicants willing to eliminate any of the parking spaces? Mr. Siegel said the 2 handicapped spaces and one or two additional spaces could be moved or eliminated. Outdoor display spaces could not be reduced.
- Commissioner Brickner asked if flower boxes could be placed on the asphalt and filled with dirt and plantings. Mr. Siegel said this might be possible.
- Planning Consultant Arroyo revisited adding a condition that the pavement in the display area setback would be torn out and replaced with landscaping within a certain amount of time.
- City Planner Stec asked what the City could do to enforce the pavement removal at a future date. City Attorney Schultz advised that this condition would be enforceable.
- Commissioner Stimson asked how far into the pavement display cars could be parked. Planning Consultant Arroyo said there was a 25-foot setback requirement.
- Commissioner McRae said that he would accept landscape boxes temporarily, with a definite date determined for future compliance.
- Chair Rae-O'Donnell asked about the dumpster. Planning Consultant Arroyo said changing the enclosure would be an upgrade. The dumpster would still be in the exterior side yard, which would technically be a violation of the ordinance. The Planning Commission could probably accept this as proposed.

Commissioner Schwartz indicated he was ready to make a motion.

MOTION by Schwartz, support by McRae, that Revised Site Plan 71-11-2016, dated January 18, 2017 submitted by Richard Kovanda of Ark-Tec, LLC be approved because it appears to meet all applicable requirements of the Zoning Chapter, subject to a revised site plan submitted for administrative review that addresses the following items:

- 1. All dead and missing hedges in the planter boxes along the Grand River and Orchard Lake frontages are replaced to establish a solid hedgerow, and a continuous minimum**

- two (2) foot tall hedgerow is provided along Orchard Lake Road south of the access point into the site terminating at the southernmost end of the area designated on the Site Plan as employee/customer parking.
2. Per Item 10 in the Giffels Webster review letter, the removal of three (3) parking spaces to the east of the easternmost Grand River access point, in order to increase the width of the maneuvering lane.
 3. The dumpster enclosure be relocated as shown on the site plan, with dumpster screening to be brought into compliance with ordinance requirements.
 4. A photometric plan be submitted.
 5. A public sidewalk be installed in the right-of-way from the Grand River sidewalk to the north side of the Orchard Lake access point.
 6. The asphalt within the 25-foot vehicle display setback areas along Grand River and Orchard Lake Roads be removed and replaced with landscaping within 24 months of the issuance of a certificate of occupancy of the used car dealership. Revised site and landscape plans are required to be submitted for administrative review prior to doing this work.

MOTION carried 6-0.

MOTION by Schwartz, support by Brickner, that Landscape Plan 71-11-2016, dated January 18, 2017, submitted by Richard Kovanda of Ark-Tec, LLC be approved because it appears to meet all applicable Zoning chapter requirements, and applicable Design Principles as adopted by the Planning Commission, subject to a revised landscape plan submitted for administrative review addressing the following items:

1. Two additional minimum 3” caliper parking lot canopy trees including species and planting details be added to the plan.
2. The plan be revised to reflect any changes made to the site plan.
3. Add a two-foot hedgerow between the employee/customer parking spaces and the Orchard Lake right-of-way.
4. Protective tree fencing be shown at the drip edges of the trees within the work area for the removal of the abandoned Grand River drive.

MOTION carried 6-0.

B. SITE AND LANDSCAPE PLAN 51-1-2017

LOCATION:	29250 Eleven Mile Rd.
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-13-351-006
PROPOSAL:	Parking lot improvement, Mercy High School in a SP-5, Special Purpose District and RA-2, One Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Approval of site and landscape plan
APPLICANT:	Spalding DeDecker
OWNER:	Mercy High School

Chair Rae-O'Donnell disclosed that her daughter attended Mercy High School. She did not believe this constituted a conflict of interest. It was the consensus of the Commission that Chair Rae-O'Donnell could remain on the Commission during discussion and action for this application.

Utilizing overhead slides, and referring to the February 7, 2017 Giffels Webster review letter, Planning Consultant Tangari gave the background for this application, which was a request to add an additional

parking lot with a dedicated driveway to the property. Some existing backstop poles and netting and an existing scoreboard would be moved further toward the existing soccer field to make room for the parking lot. The property was located in an SP-5 Special Purpose District and RA-2, One Family Residential District. The work area was north of the school.

The new parking lot would serve the tennis courts and the playing field with access onto Middlebelt Road. Existing uses would not change. A stand of trees would be impacted.

The only outstanding site plan issue was the question as to whether or not any exterior lighting was being added. If lighting was planned a photometric plan should be submitted.

Outstanding issues regarding tree removal and the landscape plan included:

1. Notes needed to be added regarding the tree removal as outlined in the review letter. These could be reviewed administratively.
2. The applicant should confirm that no trees would be located within the corner clearance area.
3. The Planning Commission had the authority to approve the distribution of the parking lot trees, which were grouped within the parking lot islands.
4. Other items called out in the review letter could be reviewed administratively.

Further, the Engineering Department had expressed some concerns with the width of the driveway, which they felt was too wide and should be narrowed to clarify where vehicles were exiting the site. This could be worked out with the Engineering Department.

Planning Consultant Tangari concluded his review.

Commissioner Stimson was concerned with visibility on Middlebelt Road, which had an incline just past this proposed driveway. Would drivers turning left be able to see traffic coming from the north?

Planning Consultant Arroyo said that the Engineering Department and the Road Commission would be the final arbiters of site distance and would be making the final call on that exit.

City Planner Stec noted that the January 26, 2017 Engineering letter showed strong opposition to the curb cut on Middlebelt. Engineering would prefer internal access to the new parking lot. If the Commission did approve this site plan, traffic access would be approved or denied via the final engineering process.

Commissioner McRae asked for clarification regarding the lane being too wide. Planning Consultant Tangari said that when there was a three-lane access drive, when drivers came down to exit there was a chance of confusion as cars both entered and exited via the wide driveways. If the drives were narrowed, the traffic pattern would be clearer, especially for vehicles exiting the parking lot.

Planning Consultant Arroyo said the Engineering Department was not convinced that this plan needed two outbound lanes, and would need some additional justification for these. Their preference would be to narrow the drive to one lane in and one lane out. A traffic study would help with this determination.

Commissioner Stimson said he felt two exit lanes would be necessary in order to move traffic out of the site.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell invited the applicant to speak.

Larry Baker, Associate Principal Operations, Mercy Hospital, 29300 Eleven Mile Road, Farmington Hills, was present on behalf of this application. He noted that women's sports had grown and they now had 18 women's sports. As they had added teams, they had added sports fields north of the school along Middlebelt Road. He described the fields that were there, including softball diamonds, track, soccer fields, etc. The tennis courts were north along 696. Access to the tennis courts was long and inconvenient. The outdoor sports were attended by grandparents and disabled persons, who found the long trek to the courts difficult. He described the existing internal configuration, which had some natural elements along with conflicts with pedestrian traffic, and which, for safety reasons, ruled out a completely internal driveway. Without available parking close to the fields of play, opposing teams brought with them attendees who parked on the shoulder along Middlebelt, and also who parked in the condo lot across the street, resulting in police tickets, etc. This was a chronic problem. The proposed lot would not be for student use, but would be dedicated to sports attendee parking. There would be no lights, as the play fields did not have lights. Play was only after school from about 3:30 through the evening. The parking lot would be gated, and parking would not be allowed other times.

Tom Sovel, Spalding DeDecker Associates, Inc., 905 South Boulevard, Rochester Hills, said that they had reviewed the Giffels Webster review letter. They would resolve all issues. He did ask for clarification regarding the requirement to identify parcel boundaries with dimensions on the tree survey. This was a 40-acre site but the affected area was only about 2 acres. City Planner Stec said the City required a tree survey within 50 feet of the work area.

Regarding the traffic study, Mr. Sovel said that the drive would have limited usage as described by Mr. Baker. The busiest time was on weekdays in the afternoon and evenings during the spring. They were trying to correct existing parking issues. They had met spacing requirements regarding the condominium driveway across the street. From what they could tell, site distance should not be an issue, but they would follow up with Engineering Manager Cubera, and would be consulting with the Road Commission as well. As far as the inbound driveway width, they had no problem narrowing that, and would put signage on the one side of the driveway indicating "Do Not Enter."

Commissioner McRae asked if the gate would be operated remotely. Mr. Sovel said the intent was that the gate would be closed at all times except during events. A staff member would open the gate prior to the events and close it when the events were over.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell indicated she was ready for a motion.

MOTION by Countegan, support by McRae, that Site Plan 51-1-2017, dated January 18, 2017 submitted by Spalding DeDecker be approved because it appears to meet all applicable requirements of the Zoning Chapter.

During discussion of the motion, it was noted that the inclusion of the Middlebelt access drive would require approval by the Road Commission of Oakland County, and the final design of the Middlebelt drive aisles, including internal design, would be subject to review by the City Engineering Department.

MOTION carried 6-0.

MOTION by Brickner, support by Countegan, that Landscape Plan 51-1-2017, dated January 18, 2017, submitted by Spalding DeDecker be approved because it appears to meet

all applicable Zoning Chapter requirements, and applicable Design Principles as adopted by the Planning Commission, subject to the following condition:

- 1. That a revised plan be submitted for administrative review and approval showing the addition of three (3) parking lot canopy trees.**

MOTION carried 6-0.

C. LOT SPLIT 8, 2016 (Preliminary)

LOCATION:	21730 Wheeler
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-36-152-003
PROPOSAL:	Split existing parcel into two (2) parcels in RA-4, One Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Approval of preliminary lot split
APPLICANT:	Daniel Stanton
OWNER:	Daniel Stanton

Utilizing overhead slides, and referencing the February 7, 2017 Giffels Webster review letter, Planning Consultant Arroyo gave the review for this application, which was a request for preliminary lot split approval.

The Planning Commission denied this application in November 2016, ruling that the split would result in two lots that met neither the minimum lot size nor the minimum lot width. The applicant appealed the denial to the Zoning Board of Appeals, which in January granted the following variances:

- For proposed Parcel A: 3,242.5 square feet from minimum lot area of 8,500 square feet, resulting in a lot of 5,257.5 square feet.
- For proposed Parcel A: 10 feet from minimum lot width of 60 feet, resulting in a lot width of 50 feet.
- For proposed Parcel B: 3,239.7 square feet from minimum lot area of 8,500 square feet, resulting in a lot of 5,260.3 square feet.
- For proposed Parcel B: 10 feet from minimum lot width of 60 feet, resulting in a lot width of 50 feet.

Planning Consultant Arroyo reviewed the Summary of Findings outlined in the review letter. He especially called out the information in item 7: Subdivision of Land Ordinance 27-110(2)(e), Compatibility with Existing Parcels. One-third of the lots in the surrounding area were 50 feet wide, which was the width proposed. Two or more lots were actually less than 50 feet.

Planning Consultant Arroyo also called the Commission's attention to item c on page 4 of the review letters, which directed the Planning Commission to consider:

- The conformity of the resultant parcels with zoning ordinance standards and the creation of parcels compatible with surrounding lands as to area, width, and weight-to depth ratio.
- The orientation of the yards.
- The impact of any existing flood plains, wetlands, topography, etc.
- The relationship of the front, side, and rear yards to the yards and orientation of buildings on other existing and potential parcels.

Planning Consultant Arroyo noted that the motion should include a finding of compatibility.

Chair Rae-O'Donnell invited the applicant to speak.

Daniel Stanton, 38513 Rhonswood, Northville MI, was present on behalf of this application. Mr. Stanton said that after receiving appropriate variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals, he was back in front of the Commission to request this lot split in order to build homes on the resultant parcels.

Commissioner Schwartz asked if notice had been sent to the neighbors. City Planner Stec said the neighbors were not noticed for tonight's hearing. However, notification was sent prior the ZBA hearing.

In response to a question from Commissioner Countegan, City Planner Stec said the original home was already demolished.

Commissioner McRae asked about the size of the proposed homes. Mr. Stanton said they would have approximately 700 square feet as a first floor footprint, with about 1600 square feet of living space. There would be a two-car garage. Dimensional requirements would all be met. The architecture was compatible with other newer homes in the area.

Commissioner Schwartz said that when he had driven the neighborhood, he had concluded that building these new homes would help stabilize the neighborhood. He did not feel that this lot split would start a trend as most homes on this block appeared to be well maintained, and it would not make sense to tear them down in order to split other lots. However on Wheeler and Roosevelt there were some empty lots. Owners there might also want to split their lots, which might be a good thing for the neighborhood. He supported looking at the zoning in this area, and perhaps allowing a new zoning district that permitted smaller lots.

MOTION by Stimson, support by Schwartz, that Preliminary Lot Split 8, 2016, submitted by Daniel Stanton be approved because it appears to meet applicable provisions of the Zoning Chapter and of Chapter 27, Subdivision of Land, of the City Code and will result in land parcels which are generally compatible with surrounding lots in the area; and that the City Assessor be so notified.

MOTION carried 6-0.

E. Presentation of Planning Commission Annual Report for 2016

City Planner Stec presented the 2016 Planning Commission Annual Report to the Commission. Charts included in the report demonstrated trends in the City. After reviewing the number of meetings held, City Planner Stec noted that the City was close to being built-out, and project proposals often utilized the Planned Unit Development option, and/or Overlay District opportunities and requirements.

City Planner Stec reviewed the past year's activity, including 17 Site Plan approvals, 5 Special Approvals, and 17 Landscape Plan Approvals, along with 8 Lot Split hearings, a major Zoning Text Amendment regarding the Sign Ordinance, and 2 Rezoning approvals. Three City Code Amendments were completed. He noted that the Site Condominium shown as approved was actually on hold. The Halsted Hollow Open Space Plan had been through City Council approval and should begin this spring.

Minor corrections to the report were pointed out during the discussion.

City Planner Stec pointed out the map of 2016 Development Reviews provided by Giffels Webster.

MOTION by Brickner, support by Schwartz, to accept the Planning Commission Annual Report for 2016 with minor revisions as called out during tonight's discussion, and to forward it to City Council.

MOTION carried 6-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION by McRae, support by Stimson, to approve the meeting minutes of January 19 and January 26, 2017, as submitted.

MOTION carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:

Commissioner Schwartz said he had given an article to City Attorney Schwartz on the new legislation regarding medical marihuana. He would like to have this topic discussed at a future study session. City Planner Stec said direction would come from City Council as to whether they wanted any ordinance changes regarding medical marihuana. City Attorney Schultz agreed, although a discussion designed to educate the Commission was appropriate at the study session level. Planning Consultant Tangari noted that all the information had not yet been completed at the State level.

Commissioner McRae asked for an update regarding the Shopping Center (West River Centre) at 9 Mile and Grand River. City Planner Stec said the Center had a new owner and was listed as an area for Planning Commission discussion during 2017.

Commissioner Countegan commented that he was happy to join the Commission.

The next meeting was scheduled for March 23, which would be the public hearing for the Capital Improvements Plan.

ADJOURNMENT:

Seeing that there was no further discussion, Chair Rae-O'Donnell adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Steven J. Stimson
Planning Commission Secretary
/cem