

**MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER  
31555 11 MILE ROAD, FARMINGTON HILLS MI  
September 18, 2014**

Acting Chair McRae called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. on September 18, 2014.

Commissioners Present: Fleischhacker, Mantey, McRae, Orr, Stimson

Commissioners Absent: Blizman, Rae-O'Donnell, Topper, Schwartz

Others Present: Staff Planner Stec, City Attorney Schultz, Planning Consultants Arroyo and Sterling

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION by Mantey, support by Stimson, to postpone Items C and D to a later meeting, and to approve the agenda as so amended.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**REGULAR HEARING**

**A. SITE PLAN 62-8-2014**

LOCATION:	39001 Sunrise Dr.
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-18-201-002
PROPOSAL:	Addition to existing building and parking to support engineering center in IRO, Industrial Research Office District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Site Plan approval by Planning Commission
APPLICANT:	Douglas Falzon-Ventura & Associates
OWNER:	Nissan North America

Planning Consultant Arroyo referred to his review letter of September 8, 2014 as he described the location of this request for site plan approval for an addition to an existing building and additional parking to support an engineering center in an Industrial Research Office District. Utilizing overhead schematics and photographs, Mr. Arroyo explained that there were two proposed building additions (indoor Vehicle Holding – Building A, Wind Testing – Building B) and two surface parking areas (Program Vehicle Parking – Lot A and Lot B), to an existing automotive engineering center (Nissan Technical Center – North America). The property was zoned IRO Industrial Office District with FRW-3 Freeway Overlay District. The adjacent properties to the east, west, and south were zoned the same as the subject property. Properties to the north with frontage on Twelve Mile Road were zoned OS-1, Office Service District and OS-4, Office Research District.

In his summary of findings, Planning Consultant Arroyo called out items still to be resolved as follows:

The approximately 49-acre property was improved with an office/research/industrial building. The applicant should include the following general information on the site plan: size of the lot, existing and proposed building's gross and usable floor area, existing and proposed number of parking spaces, and lot coverage of building and impervious surfaces.

The building was constructed of prefinished metal panel. The plans indicated that the assembly color would match the existing building. The applicant should provide a sample board showing all principal materials.

Regarding the proposed building addition for indoor vehicle holding (Building A), to the north of the building was an area labeled "new pavement markings." The applicant should provide more information regarding the area and its intended use and means of access.

Regarding the proposed building addition for wind testing (Building B):

- All rooftop equipment and apparatus should be housed in a penthouse or structure constructed of building material compatible with the material used in the principal building. The metal equipment screen was proposed to match the existing building. The applicant should provide a sample board displaying all principal building materials.
- Penthouses or structures should not have a total floor area greater than 15% of the total roof area of the building. The applicant should provide documentation to verify that this provision had been met.
- The proposed addition was to be constructed of prefinished metal panel. The plans indicated that the assembly color would match the existing building. The applicant should provide a sample board displaying all principal building materials.

Regarding the proposed program vehicle parking areas, included were Lot A with 63 spaces and Lot B with 148 spaces:

- The applicant had identified the parking spaces for "program vehicles." The IRO district prohibited the outdoor storage of goods or materials (34-3.13.1). In the past the "program vehicles" were not considered outdoor storage because they had the appearance of regular vehicles. The applicant should provide additional information regarding the designation of the spaces for "program vehicles."
- According to the tree survey prepared by Patrick Conroy and Associates dated August 11, 2014, the program vehicle lots would result in the removal of approximately 53 evergreen trees along the south property line (Lot A) and 19 deciduous trees along the west property line with 46 being tagged for transplanting (Lot B). The applicant was not required to submit a landscape plan with the proposed site plan. However, with the proposed tree removal, location of surface lots and building additions and the nature of an automotive research facility it would be helpful to have this information.

Regarding ordinance Section 34-5.2.13.E.i., which required that industrial or research establishments and related accessory offices provide the following parking:

Three (3) plus one (1) for every one and one-half (1 1/2) employees in the largest working shift, or three (3) plus one (1) for each five hundred fifty (550) square feet of usable floor area, whichever is greater. The applicant should provide the information and parking calculations for the entire site, including the proposed 24,360 sq. ft. of building additions. Based on information provided by city staff, it appeared that there was currently 473,170 square feet of usable floor area. Assuming 70 percent of the new area (24,360 | 17,052 sq ft) was usable, the new total usable floor area was 490,222 square feet. This would require 891 spaces (1/550). Clearzoning could not calculate demand based on total employees. With 1,455 spaces available based on the

previously approved plan, Planning Consultant Arroyo did not expect any parking problems, but all of the parking and total area calculations needed to be confirmed by the applicant.

The submitted tree survey was limited to the 4-acre project area. The survey showed the total number of trees onsite to be removed and replaced. The survey did not show the location for replacement trees. There were a total of 129 trees within the project areas. Six trees were tagged to remain, 49 trees were tagged to be transplanted, 74 trees were tagged to be removed (4 landmark trees) with 90 trees required for replacement. Several of the trees identified for transplanting were listed in "fair" condition. The applicant should provide the following information, in accordance with Section 5-18:

- Location of relocated trees. All trees to be removed should be marked for field inspection.
- Grade at the base of each tree with contour lines at 2' intervals.
- Additional information on tree protection measures, in accordance with Section 5-18.

The applicant might wish to consider the viability of the trees to be transplanted identified in "fair" condition and preserve/transplant those that are in "good" condition. A complete tree protection permit application package was required. Also, a full landscape review would take place after site plan review.

Planning consultant Arroyo concluded by noting that:

- Compliance with signs (Section 34-5.5) would be determined at a later review.
- Compliance with exterior lighting requirements (Sections 34-5.16) would be determined at a later review.

Referring to submission C1-7, Existing Site Plan, Commissioner Orr noted that there were trees required on the west side of the property that did not seem to exist. That is, the current site did not appear to conform to its approved site plan.

Douglas Falzon, Ventura & Associates, Incorporated, 411 W. Thirteen Mile Road, Suite 100, Madison Heights, Michigan 48071, was present to speak on behalf of this site plan approval request. Mario Phillips, Facilities Manager, was also present. Mr. Falzon gave an itemized reply to each of the items called out in the consultant's letter, and distributed a written response to the Commission. He noted that he had brought samples of the metal siding.

Mr. Falzon said that the building had been constructed approximately 25 years ago with some intermediate expansions. Materials included masonry, glass and flat/coated metal siding. The intent was to change texture at the facility while keeping the color the same. They would provide an industrial concealed fastener metal siding system on the two additions and match the color of the building as close possible. Because the color had faded over time the color match would not be exact. Therefore they had designed the additions so the wall planes were not contiguous. The difference in plane would minimize the color difference.

Mr. Falzon explained that the proposed additions would be on the south side of the building, where the building was secure and where confidential properties were housed. Regarding outdoor storage, the situation was as described by Planning Consultant Arroyo. Anyone driving through would simply see a parking lot full of cars. The program vehicles were complete vehicles. They were necessary to support the business and work accomplished at this research center.

Regarding parking ratios, two things applied: How much parking did the business need and what were the City requirements? In the current case, the employee count had not changed.

Regarding the tree survey, Mr. Falzon said the tree survey was complete as far as he knew. They had identified four different development areas: 2 additions and 2 parking areas. Since the site plan was good for two years, the actual implementation would probably proceed in steps. The landscape plan would be provided as projects went forward. They were likely to pay into the City's tree fund as opposed to finding locations for the required replacement trees.

Mr. Falzon displayed color boards showing the bone white color of the proposed siding and examples of two patterns to be used: a 12-inch flat panel with concealed fasteners and a 6-inch intermediate panel pattern. Both would pick up the existing building lines.

Acting Chair McRae noted that when he drove through the site in the early evening (6:30 – 6:45 pm) there were still many vehicles parked on site.

In response to a question from Commissioner Orr, Mr. Falzon said that program vehicles parked on the west end would not have the same security as those parked on the east end; this was not an issue for Nissan. There would be a dense screen of planted trees around the perimeter of the property.

Noting that there were four areas on the site under consideration this evening, Acting Chair McRae directed the Commission to focus on one area at a time.

**1. Regarding the west end of the site:**

Acting Chair McRae recapped Mr. Falzon's comments, confirming that there would be no parking islands but instead a dense perimeter planting of trees.

In response to a further question from Acting Chair McRae, Mr. Falzon said that there were no regulated wetlands in that area.

Commissioner Orr encouraged the applicants to include native or close to native trees in the landscape plan.

**2. Regarding the parking area on the south side of the site:**

In response to a question from Acting Chair McRae regarding the planned removal of pines along the service drive, Mr. Falzon explained that originally those trees were not required by the site plan. However, now they were mature trees – too mature to transplant - and therefore were regulated. The trees would have to be removed to widen the service drive. Nissan would plant a single row along the service drive, and either replace the other trees elsewhere on the site or pay into the City's tree fund. Again, the work would be done in phases.

Commissioner Mantey noted that this location was next to the freeway; he had no objections to using tree contributions to the tree fund.

**3. Regarding Building A:**

Responding to a comment in Planning Consultant Arroyo's review letter (Item 6.a), Mr. Falzon said the parking spaces for "program vehicles" already existed. They were just planning to restripe to indicate vehicle positions.

Acting Chair McRae noted that on submission page C7-7, both buildings were labeled "B". This needed to be corrected.

In response to a question from Commissioner Orr, Mr. Falzon explained that the bump-out on the

plan was a barrier around an existing transformer.

**4. Regarding Building B:**

Acting Chair McRae noted that when he drove the site he noticed crates of materials stored outside on the other side of the gate. These should be stored inside.

In response to a question from Commissioner Orr, Planning Consultant Arroyo said that many of the issues called out in his review letter and discussed this evening could be resolved administratively. Items related to tree replacement and landscape plan would come before the Planning Commission as the project moved forward.

After brief further discussion regarding tree replacement, Acting Chair McRae indicated he was ready to entertain a motion.

**MOTION by Fleischhacker, support by Mantey, that Site Plan No. 62-8-2014, dated August 19, 2014 submitted by Douglas Falzon, Ventura & Associates, be approved because it appears to meet all applicable requirements of the Zoning Chapter, subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Landscape plan review and approval by the Planning Commission.**
- 2. Administrative review of a revised site plan including additional site information cited in item 2 of the September 8, 2014 Clearzoning review letter.**
- 3. Labeling of building additions on Sheet C7-7 be corrected.**
- 4. Approval of a photometric plan.**
- 5. Any future dumpster placement comply with City Code.**
- 6. Information regarding tree removal, transplanting, and replacement outlined in Item 8 of the September 8, 2014 Clearzoning review report be addressed in the Landscape Plan.**

Commissioner Fleischhacker also acknowledged the sample materials as presented this evening.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**B. SITE PLAN 63-8-2014**

LOCATION:	39001 Sunrise Dr.
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-18-201-002
PROPOSAL:	Accessory building to support engineering center in IRO, Industrial Research Office District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Site Plan approval by Planning Commission
APPLICANT:	Douglas Falzon-Ventura & Associates
OWNER:	Nissan North America

Planning Consultant Arroyo referred to his review letter of September 9, 2014 as he described the location of this request for site plan approval for two stand-alone structures to be used for vehicle storage at an existing automotive engineering center (Nissan Technical Center – North America) in an Industrial Research Office District. Most of the comments from the review letter for the previous case applied and had already been discussed this evening.

The proposed structures would be located on the eastern end of the site, in an existing area already used for vehicle storage.

In his summary of findings, Planning Consultant Arroyo called out items still to be resolved as follows:

- *Item 2.* The approximately 49-acre property was improved with an office/research/industrial building. As reflected on site plan application 62-8-14, the applicant should include the following general information on the site plan: size of the lot, the existing building's gross and usable floor area, number of parking spaces, and lot coverage of building and impervious surfaces.
- *Item 8.* The proposed buildings would be constructed of a steel tube frame and pallet system. The sides of the building would be screened using a fire retardant material in black. The plans called for a prefinished metal roofing system in green with a 1 to 12 slope. The applicant should submit revised plans showing the north, east and south sides of the structure being screened. The applicant should also provide a sample board showing all principal materials.
- *Item 11.* Ordinance Section 34-5.2.13.E.i. required that industrial or research establishments and related accessory offices provide the following parking:

Three (3) plus one (1) for every one and one-half (1 1/2) employees in the largest working shift, or three (3) plus one (1) for each five hundred fifty (550) square feet of usable floor area, whichever is greater.

The Applicant should provide the information and parking calculations for the entire site. Based on information provided by city staff, it appeared that there was currently 473,170 square feet of usable floor area. Assuming 70 percent of the new area proposed in SP 62-8-2014 (24,360 sq ft | 17,052 sq ft) was usable, the new total usable floor area would be 490,222 square feet. This would require 891 spaces (1/550). In addition, because the proposed storage rack structures were buildings, the usable floor area for these must also be included. The largest rack structure was 16,770 square feet and the other was 4,350 square feet. Assuming 70 percent usable, a total of 14,784 square feet of usable area was being added. This would bring the total project usable area to 505,606 square feet, which required 918 parking spaces. If the other building expansion proposed by SP 62-8-2014 were not assumed, the new usable floor area total would be 487,954 square feet, which required 887 spaces. Clearzoning could not calculate demand based on total employees at this time. With 1,455 spaces available based on the previously approved plan, Planning Consultant Arroyo did not expect any parking problems, but all of the parking and total area calculations needed to be confirmed by the applicant.

Planning Consultant Arroyo concluded by noting those items that would require future approval, including future accessory structures, sign compliance, landscape plan compliance, and exterior lighting standard compliance.

Douglas Falzon, Ventura & Associates, Incorporated, 411 W. Thirteen Mile Road, Suite 100, Madison Heights, Michigan 48071, was present to speak on behalf of this site plan approval request. Mario Phillips, Facilities Manager, was also present. Mr. Falzon noted that he had an itemized reply to the consultant's comments. There was no landscaping in this area so there were no trees to be removed. Mr. Falzon provided a sample of the screening materials. He noted that this would be a 3-layer shelf type structure.

Acting Chair McRae clarified that this area was currently being used to store non-functioning vehicles. The function of the area would not change. The structures were increasing the use of the area by going vertical.

In response to a question from Commissioner Stimson, Mr. Falzon said the screening was on 3 of the 4 sides of the structures. The black screening with a green colored roof was to minimize visual

disruption of space. When the trees were in leaf, the structures would be invisible from outside the property. During the winter season, only a black background would be visible.

In response to a question from Commissioner Fleischhacker, Mr. Falzon said that a forklift would be used to place and retrieve the vehicles.

In response to a question from Commissioner Orr, Mr. Falzon said the fabric walls would be replaced when necessary. The site was very well maintained and Nissan would not tolerate a ragged appearance.

Commissioner Mantey confirmed with City Attorney Schultz that the City could enforce maintenance and replacement of the fabric through the Property Maintenance Code.

In response to a question from Commissioner Stimson, Mr. Falzon said there would be no changes in lighting. Planning Consultant Arroyo noted that whenever the site plan changed lighting had to be brought into ordinance compliance. Therefore a photometric plan had to be provided.

In response to a question from Commissioner Orr, Mr. Falzon said the forklift would be stored inside the structure.

**MOTION by Orr, support by Stimson, that Site Plan No. 63-8-2014, dated September 4, 2014 submitted by Douglas Falzon, Ventura & Associates, be approved because it appears to meet all applicable requirements of the Zoning Chapter, subject to:**

- **The approval of a photometric plan for the site.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**C. DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED REVISIONS TO ZONING ORDINANCE**

**D. DISCUSSION OF GRAND RIVER NORTH FOCUS AREA**

As noted above, Items C and D were postponed to a later meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** July 17, 2014 and August 21, 2014

Noting that written amendments had been presented for the July 17, 2014 meeting, Commissioner Fleischhacker offered the following motion:

**Motion by Fleischhacker, support by Mantey, to approve the July 17, 2014 as amended, and the August 21, 2014 minutes as published.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:**

In response to a question by Commissioner Fleischhacker, City Planner Stec said the work on Farmington Road was scheduled to be complete by the end of September. Commissioner

Fleischhacker and Acting Chair McRae expressed displeasure at the time it had taken to complete this project.

In response to a question from Commissioner Orr, City Planner Stec said the owners of La Marsa Restaurant, 35558 Grand River, and the owners of the shopping center at Grand River and Drake both understood they would have to have City approvals if they wanted to install outdoor seating.

City Planner Stec noted that permits had been pulled for the new Auto Zone on the east side of Grand River and Drake. Permits were also out for the approved Burger King at 12 Mile and Orchard Lake Road.

Noting that there would be a millage item for roads on the November 4 ballot, Acting Chair McRae requested a copy of the Paser Rating for the City's roads.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Hearing no further comments, Acting Chair McRae adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Schwartz  
Planning Commission Secretary

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