

**CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
31555 W ELEVEN MILE ROAD
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN
NOVEMBER 21, 2024, 7:30 P.M.**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The Planning Commission Regular Meeting was called to order by Chair Trafelet at 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Aspinall, Brickner, Trafelet, Varga, Countegan

Commissioners Absent: Grant, Mantey, Ware, Stimson

Others Present: City Planner Perdonik, Planning Consultants Tangari and Upfal (Giffels Webster), Engineering Division representative Natasha Sonck, City Attorney Schultz

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION by Countegan, support by Aspinall, to approve the agenda as published.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. AMEND PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) 1, 2015

LOCATION: 28050 Grand River Avenue
PARCEL I.D.: 22-23-36-404-010
PROPOSAL: Construction of freestanding and wall signs within B-3, General Business District, and SP-2, Special Purpose District
ACTION REQUESTED: Recommendation to City Council
APPLICANT: Signworks of Michigan, Inc.
OWNER: Robert Mount

Chair Trafelet introduced this request to amend PUD 1, 2015, Corewell Health Hospital.

Applicant Presentation

Claire McCready, Senior Project Manager, Signworks of Michigan, Inc., was present on behalf of this request to amend PUD 1, 2015. Ann Frass, Signworks owner, was also present, as was Derk Pronger, President, Corewell Health Farmington Hills.

As mentioned during the discussion on October 17th, the proposed signage is among the most critical in the City. The hospital is an essential institution, serving as the largest employer in Farmington Hills and one of the city's most significant sources of revenue.

Corewell is requesting approval for the following changes to the Planned Unit Development (PUD) Agreement:

1. Height Adjustment for the Main Entrance Monument Sign:

The applicant proposes replacing the existing monument sign, which is currently 10'8" tall and 7' wide, with a new sign measuring 12' tall and 6' wide, for a total of 72 square feet. This update would make the sign 1 foot narrower and 1 foot 4 inches taller than the current version. Both modifications will improve visibility for vehicular traffic.

2. Replacement of the Main Wall Sign:

The applicant also seeks approval to update the wall sign identifying the hospital on the building. The current sign, which reads "Beaumont," would be replaced with signage displaying "Corewell Health, Farmington Hills Hospital."

Ms. McCready noted that the existing locations for both signs are structurally sound and provide optimal visibility for vehicular traffic.

Consultant comments

Planning Consultant Tangari explained that the Corewell Health Hospital property is subject to PUD 1-2015, which requires any amendments to the Development Agreement—no matter how minor—to be treated as major amendments. Such amendments necessitate a public hearing process, with ultimate approval resting with the City Council. The focus of this amendment is solely on signage, with no other site modifications requested.

- For the monument sign, the applicant is requesting to modify the deviation that is permitted under the PUD Agreement, with a 1'4" increase in height from the currently approved deviation. This request is the sole reason for holding the public hearing tonight.
- For the wall sign on the ground floor south elevation, the size of the sign is being reduced from the current 73.33sf to 40.15sf. The PUD Agreement already permits the requested deviation of 15.15sf, as the new sign is smaller than the one it is replacing.

MOTION by Countegan, support by Aspinall, to RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL that the application to amend Planned Unit Development 1, 2015, dated September 19, 2024, submitted by Signworks of Michigan, Inc., BE APPROVED, because the plans are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Master Plan and applicable provisions of the Planned Unit Development Option in Section 34-3.20 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

B. PUD PLAN 2, 2024, INCLUDING SITE PLAN 56-8-2024

LOCATION:	South side of Thirteen Mile Road, just west of Middlebelt Road
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-11-201-001, -002, -004, -005, -006, -020, and -021
PROPOSAL:	Construction of multiple-family dwellings within RA-1, One Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Recommendation to City Council
APPLICANT:	Steven Schafer
OWNERS:	Detroit Baptist Manor and MOBI Investments

Aaron and Steven Shafer, Shafer Development, were present on behalf of this application for a Planned Unit Development to construct multiple-family dwellings within RA-1, One Family Residential District.

Applicant presentation

Overview

Aaron Schafer gave an overview of this proposed development:

- The 12.04 acre site is located on the south side of 13 Mile between Middlebelt Road and Orchard Lake Road. The development site is directly east of the Baptist Manor facility. To the north is Westgate Subdivision, and to the south is Holly Hill Farms.
- The project is a planned unit development, with two different residential communities within a single PUD:
 - The Mulberry Way townhouse site (5.9 acres) will feature 40 two-story, for sale units, directly east of property owned by the Baptist Manor
 - The Tabernacle community will feature 36 one-story age-restricted rental ranch homes, on property owned by and directly adjacent to the Baptist Manor.

Timeline

- January 2024 the property was put under contract
- April 18, 2024 Applicant secured PUD qualification from the Planning Commission
- October 17, 2024 Applicant presented to the Planning Commission, who set a date for tonight's public hearing.

Community outreach

- February 2024 – present. Met multiple times with both the Westgate and Holly Hill Farms Homeowners Associations.
 - February 2, 2024 – Westgate HOA
 - February 6, 2024 – Holly Hill Farms HOA
 - March 3, 2024 – Westgate Annual HOA Neighborhood Meeting
 - March 26, 2024 – Holly Hill Farms HOA
 - April 9, 2024 – Holly Hill Farms Neighborhood Meeting
 - September 23, 2024 – Westgate HOA
 - October 11, 2024 – Holly Hill Farms HOA

Background work regarding the site

Since the April and October Planning Commission meetings, Schafer Development has completed the following:

- Assisted the Baptist Manor team in selecting an architect to design their ranch units
- Engaged with Civil Engineering Firm Nowak & Fraus to prepare the Site Plan/PUD Package
- Incorporated Giffels Webster, Engineering and Fire Department Review Letter(s) feedback into Site Plan/PUD Package
- Engaged with Wetlands Consultant ASTI and conducted on-site pre-application meeting with EGLE (Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy) to verify no wetland permits are required for this project.

Special planning area – flex residential

- The site has been designated as a special planning area since the adoption of the 2009 Master Plan.
 - This designation recognizes that the thoroughfare frontage along 13 Mile Road, particularly between Orchard Lake and Middlebelt, is less desirable for single-family residential lots.
 - Homes in this area back directly onto 13 Mile Road, which experiences significantly higher traffic levels compared to nearby neighborhoods like Westgate and Holly Hill Farms, which are set farther back from the thoroughfare.
 - The special planning area designation encourages cluster development to preserve as much natural vegetation as possible.
- On the 2024 Future Land Use Map, the property is identified as "flex residential," which:
 - Supports creative redevelopment approaches for challenging sites.
 - Allows for a maximum building height of three stories.
 - Emphasizes the preservation of open space and natural buffers to adjacent established communities.
 - This project includes a substantial southern perimeter setback of approximately 60 to 70 feet from Holly Hill Farms, the adjacent development to the south.
 - The development prioritizes preserving as many existing trees as possible to maintain natural buffers and open space.

Site plan updates:

- Road Design Updates: A key point in Mr. Cubera's Engineering review letter was the recommendation to eliminate the "road to nowhere" located in the southwestern corner of the Baptist Manor property. The design has been revised to replace this road with a more cohesive horseshoe-shaped ring road.
- Entrance Configuration: The review letter also suggested consolidating two separate entrances into a single combined boulevard. The updated site plan now reflects this change, with the boulevard aligned with Westgate Road to improve traffic flow and site access.
- Potential Secondary Access: The updated plan also considers the addition of a secondary access point for emergency services along 13 Mile Road. This secondary access, potentially located near the Tabernacle property, could feature a breakaway gate or chain for exclusive use by fire and life safety personnel. The developers will collaborate with City Engineering on this issue.
- Stormwater Management Improvements: The initial site plan included three stormwater basins, but further analysis determined that one basin in the northeast corner of the property could be upsized to meet the site's needs. This revision reduces the total number of basins to two, avoiding the need for a basin near a single-family residence, a concern raised in a review letter and by a neighbor.
- Stub street request: The engineering review letter included a request to provide a stub-street to the east, connecting to four single-family lots adjacent to the property near the corner of 13 Mile Road and Middlebelt. However, the topography of the eastern lots presents significant challenges, including steep elevations that make further expansion impractical. Additionally, two of the four adjacent lots have recently been sold, and the new owners plan to maintain the properties as single-family residential, further supporting the decision not to extend the development eastward. The decision to upsized the stormwater

basin in the northeast corner of the property, reducing the number of basins on-site, has further limited available space for a road extension.

Landscape plan updates:

The landscape plan was designed based on multiple site walks with and feedback from neighboring residents and the homeowners' associations. Buffering, natural screening, and overall landscape design were identified as top priorities.

- **Tree Planting Details:**
 - There will be over 140 new trees planted across the property, with a focus on filling gaps along the southern property line where a forested tree stand exists. Evergreen trees will be added along the southern property line to provide consistent screening for adjacent properties.
 - Along the southern perimeter and portions of the eastern and western property lines, 89 new trees are proposed to enhance the existing canopy and address gaps identified during site walks.
- **Tree Count and Ordinance Compliance:** While the design maximizes tree placement throughout the site, the plan is 34 trees short of the ordinance requirements. The applicant proposed three options to address this shortfall:
 1. Requesting a waiver (not preferred by the applicant or the City), or
 2. Donating funds representing the 34 trees to the City's tree fund, or
 3. With the City's permission, collaborating with neighbors along Holly Hill Farms to plant the 34 trees in their rear yards, addressing concerns about development near their properties.
- **Commitment to the neighbors:** Shafer Development is willing to work directly with affected neighbors to ensure their concerns are addressed.

Architectural and Design Overview

- Shafer Development is under contract with M/I Homes for the development of the 40 townhomes, and renderings showed a representative sample of this new product, which will be 3 bedroom, 2-1/2 bath 2,200sf units, with 2-car garages.
- While architectural plans for the Baptist Manor portion of the development are still being finalized, the developers are committed to ensuring that exterior materials and masonry will complement both communities. Maintaining a cohesive aesthetic for the development along 13 Mile Road remains a priority.

Traffic Impact Study

- As requested in the Giffels Webster review comments prior to the October meeting, a traffic impact study has been conducted by Fleis & VandenBrink and submitted to the City. The traffic study recommended a right-turn deceleration taper along eastbound 13 Mile Road at the site driveway.
- The Engineering review letter suggested relocating the boulevard slightly further west to avoid left-hand turning conflicts with Westgate. The developer is open to this suggestion.

Planning Consultant Comments

Referencing the November 14, 2024 Giffels Webster review letter, Planning Consultant Tangari highlighted the following information:

- The April motion qualifying this project for a Planned Unit Development is included in the packets.
- The proposed development complies with RC-1 district standards for both the number of units and bedrooms.
- Regarding Master Plan and Zoning Standards: The site is designated as "flex residential" in the Master Plan, and the development meets all dimensional standards of the underlying RA-1 district, including setbacks and height requirements, for both the Tabernacle and Mulberry Park portions of the site.
- Curbside pickup of trash is planned, with no dumpster enclosures included.
- Lighting Plan: The only proposed lighting consists of residential wall sconces with frosted glass, directed toward the ring road. The photometric plan shows that light is concentrated on the ground and driveways in front of the units, ensuring minimal light spillage.
- Tree Preservation and Screening: The plan preserves significant tree coverage along the southern property line and 13 Mile Road frontage, with additional trees added to fill gaps. The southern screening is particularly dense, although its adequacy remains a point for discussion, as this has been a major concern.
- Tree Shortfall and Ordinance Relief: The 34-tree shortfall has been acknowledged and discussed.
- The only ordinance relief being sought under the Planned Unit Development is to permit attached units at RC-1 density. All other standards appear to be met.

Commission clarifying questions

Chair Trafelet raised safety concerns for pedestrians walking by the retention pond in the northeast corner of the site, which was very close to the road. Would fencing be installed?

Steven Shafer responded that the slope of the basin, which determines the need for fencing, has not yet been finalized. However, they would commit to addressing safety concerns during detailed engineering. If fencing is not required, alternative protective measures, such as split rail fencing or landscaping, will be implemented.

Chair Trafelet asked if the project could be moved closer to 13 Mile Road to increase the setback on the southern property line.

Mr. Shafer explained that the current placement maximizes the southern setback in response to concerns from neighboring residents, while adhering to engineering constraints, including the required 64-foot road right-of-way.

In response to further comments, Mr. Shafer explained that the detention basins have been designed to capture all stormwater runoff from the site, ensuring that no flooding will occur on neighboring properties, including Holly Hill Farms. The basins meet current, stringent stormwater standards, and should help to mitigate existing runoff issues. Additionally, the site grading plan redirects water away from Holly Hill Farms and toward the street, significantly reducing the runoff currently affecting neighboring areas during rain events.

Public Hearing

Pam Gerard, resident, asked if any of the proposed dwellings were ADA compliant.

In response, Mr. Shafer said the Tabernacle single story homes will be accessible. The two-story townhomes will not be accessible.

Isaac Dunn, resident, said he lived directly east of the development. He asked the distance between the enlarged detention basin and his property. Would there be a complete tree line separating his property from this development?

In response, Steven Shafer said he could not immediately answer the distance question regarding the detention pond but he would talk to Mr. Dunn after the meeting. The setback for that area is 45'. There were trees proposed at the property line, and they would work with Mr. Dunn regarding potentially planting additional trees offsite.

Louise Lieberman, Southbrook Street, expressed appreciation that the developers had been willing to talk with residents. She remained concerned regarding density, traffic, and the need for an animal relocation plan.

Eric Schmidt, Woodbrook Court, opposed the proposed development, citing concerns about its impact on the natural environment and quality of life in the neighborhood. While acknowledging the developers' efforts to mitigate impacts, Schmidt emphasized that the construction would disrupt the area through noise pollution and loss of green space, ultimately detracting from the neighborhood's character. He questioned the long-term viability of the proposed landscaping and asked that the proposal be denied.

Lindsey and Zack Matych, Woodbrook Street, opposed this development. Ms. Matych cited concerns over extensive tree removal, loss of privacy, and excessive density beyond the standards of both RA-1 zoning and the recommendations of the 2024 Master Plan. She said the plan fails to preserve natural vegetation, including landmark trees, and does not provide the deep buffering necessary to protect adjacent neighborhoods as outlined in the Master Plan. She argued that the project creates environmental, traffic, and drainage issues while compromising the privacy and well-being of neighboring residents. She stated that the proposal does not align with zoning ordinances, city objectives, or Master Plan goals, calling it aesthetically undesirable and detrimental to the character of the historic neighborhood.

Spencer Krauss, Westgate, expressed deep concern about the increased traffic hazards the proposed development may cause, particularly at the Westgate entrance which he already finds dangerous when turning left. As a parent, he emphasized the safety risks to his children, citing aggressive traffic conditions and the potential for accidents with the addition of the new development. Krauss urged the Commission to conduct thorough traffic studies to ensure the community's safety.

Amy Brooklyn Peterson, Westgate, emphasized the importance of preserving the natural tree line along 13 Mile Road and ensuring substantial and well-maintained landscaping. She raised concerns about wildlife preservation, overflow parking, and traffic management, noting the area's significance for local species and the challenges residents already face with traffic.

As no other public indicated they wished to speak, Chair Trafelet closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the Planning Commission for discussion and/or a motion.

Commission discussion and action

In response to public comments, Commissioner Countegan clarified that the project had previously been qualified under the applicable Planned Unit Development criteria. The property in question is privately owned, and the owner has the right to develop it. The Commission's role is limited to regulating and overseeing development within the framework of the Zoning Ordinance and Master Plan.

MOTION by Brickner, support by Varga, that the Planning Commission recommend to City Council that Planned Unit Development Plan 2, 2024, including Site Plan 56-8-2024, both dated September 4, 2024, submitted by Steven Schafer, BE APPROVED, because the plans are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Master Plan and applicable provisions of the Planned Unit Development Option in Section 34-3.20 of the Zoning Ordinance, SUBJECT TO:

- **Modifications of Zoning Ordinance requirements as indicated on the proposed plan.**
- **Resolution of outstanding issues in the November 14, 2024 Giffels Webster review letter.**

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The Chair declared a 5 minute recess at 8:34pm and reconvened the meeting at 8:39pm.

C. PUD PLAN 1, 2024, INCLUDING SITE PLAN 54-7-2024

LOCATION: 27815 and 28025 Middlebelt Road
PARCEL I.D.: 22-23-11-477-013, -014, and -109
PROPOSAL: Construction of gasoline service station with drive-through restaurant within RC-2, Multiple-Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED: Recommendation to City Council
APPLICANT: SkilkenGold Real Estate Development
OWNER: HRA Farmington Hills, LLC

Applicant Presentation

Alex Siwicki, 39300 W. 12 Mile Road, Sheetz, was present on behalf of this request for a positive recommendation to City Council of a Planned Unit Development in order to construct a gasoline station with drive-through restaurant at 27815 and 28025 Middlebelt Road. Mr. Siwicki provided the following information:

Project Overview:

- Proposed 6,139-square-foot Sheetz facility to include a restaurant, convenience store, and gas station on a 3.83-acre site.
- Site includes six fuel pumps (12 stations) and a convenience drive-through.

Actions/Improvements Made Following September 19 meeting:

Based on continued conversations with neighbors and staff reviews, the following modifications have been made since the September 19 meeting:

- Additional evergreen buffering to the west and north.
- Pedestrian access enhancements.
- Installation of a six-foot vinyl fence along western and northern property lines.
- Replacement of all sidewalks on 12 Mile and Middlebelt Roads.

Design Features:

- High-quality, four-sided architecture utilizing brick and stone.
- A decorative three-foot knee wall along Middlebelt and 12 Mile Roads.
- Increased open space and reduced impervious surfaces.
- Enhanced landscaping, including evergreen trees for buffering.

Compliance with Zoning and PUD Standards:

- The proposal meets all use standards for a convenience store, gasoline station, and drive-through restaurant.
 - Regarding the standard requiring separation of a drive-through restaurant from residential properties by a roadway, Sheetz believes that the intent of this standard—to ensure sufficient space between a drive-through and residential areas—is met. The plans demonstrate significant distance between the drive-through restaurant and nearby residential properties, providing ample space that could accommodate a roadway if necessary.
- Increased setbacks: Increases of 50% from Middlebelt, 38% from 12 Mile, 17% from the west, and 33% from the north (75' increase) compared to existing development.
- Parking spaces reduced by 63% (reduction of 75 spaces to 44 total spaces), with pavement area decreased by 19%, creating 16,000 square feet of additional green space over the existing site.

PUD Compliance Criteria:

- At its June 20th meeting, the Planning Commission determined that the plan meets PUD criteria and qualifies for a PUD. Additionally, the developer believes they meet 7 of the 8 objectives outlined under Section 34-3.20.2.E.i through viii, when only 1 is required.
- Offers community benefits such as enhanced buffering, landscaping, pedestrian access, and architectural standards exceeding traditional zoning requirements.

Community Benefits Highlighted:

- High quality four-sided architecture utilizing brick and stone.
- Preservation and addition of 16,000sf of green space.
- Improved site aesthetics with enhanced landscaping, reduced impervious areas, and a decorative knee wall.
- Replacement of deteriorating structures with a high-quality, state-of-the-art facility.
- Pedestrian and bike-friendly features, including bike racks and sidewalk improvements.

Company Overview:

- Sheetz, founded in 1952, is a family-owned and operated company with 760 stores nationwide, emphasizing quality, innovation, and community engagement. The company operates without franchises.
- The Sheetz model includes a full-service kitchen, a Sheetz Brothers Coffee Bar, and a variety of convenience items. The facility will feature 30 interior dining seats, outdoor seating, and free Wi-Fi, fostering a welcoming environment for customers to dine, work, or socialize.
- Drive-through orders are managed via intuitive touch-screen menus, eliminating noise and enhancing customer experience.

Economic and employment opportunities:

- The \$8.5 million project will bring 30-35 local full-time jobs to Farmington Hills with competitive benefits, including medical, dental, vision, paid time off, parental leave, and tuition reimbursement. Sheetz is recognized as one of Fortune's "100 Best Companies to

Work For" over the past decade and is ranked as the second-best retailer to work for in the U.S.

- The company engages in local philanthropy, including donations to schools, athletic programs, and community organizations.
- The project will utilize local contractors and engineering firms, increase tax assessments, and contribute to the area's property values.

Hours of Operation

The proposed Sheetz will operate as a 24-hour one-stop shop.

Planning Consultant Comments

Referencing the November 14, 2024 Giffels Webster memorandum, Planning Consultant Upfal provided the planner's review for this application for Planned Unit Development, in order to construct a Sheetz facility at 27815 and 28025 Middlebelt Road.

- The site is located at 12 Mile and Middlebelt Roads, formerly Ginopolis restaurant. Current structures include a commercial building and a residential house.
- Surrounding uses include single-family residential (north and east), offices (east), and a gas station (east).
- The PUD was qualified at the June 20 meeting. In its motion, the Planning Commission found the proposal met 4 of the 8 objectives outlined under Section 34-3.20.2.E.i through viii; only 1 is necessary.
- Proposal includes:
 - 12 fueling positions and six pumps.
 - A 24-hour convenience store with carry-out food service, drive-through, and outdoor dining.
 - 44 parking spaces (required: 38).

Key Planning Considerations:

Future Land Use and Zoning:

- Future land use map designates the corner parcel as commercial and the rear portion as multiple-family residential.
- The Master Plan acknowledges the growing demand for drive-through facilities. However, drive-throughs are not conducive to pedestrian movement, as they are designed to move people through a site without leaving their cars. The Planning Commission should carefully evaluate this aspect when considering approval.
- PUD allows for uses not typically permitted in RC-2 zoning, requiring Planning Commission discretion regarding compliance with commercial district standards.
- Dimensional and Site Standards:
 - The reviewed use standards were based on commercial district requirements, not RC-2 zoning. All dimensional standards are met, exceeding setback requirements and providing pedestrian access. The project reduces impervious surfaces compared to current conditions but includes departures from ordinance standards, including:
 - Excessive maneuvering lane width (35 feet; required: 20 feet).
 - Lack of a required bypass lane for the drive-through.
 - Dumpster enclosure is proposed in the street side yard, which is inconsistent with zoning requirements.
- Parking and Loading:

- 44 parking spaces provided; 38 required.
- Loading space proposed in the interior side yard, facing apartments, which deviates from the preferred rear yard location.
- Parking of motor vehicles and storage throughout the site is prohibited, except during non-operating hours for truck loading.
- Signage Standards:
 - Deviations from RC-2 zoning signage requirements include:
 - Exceeding wall sign allowance of 25 square feet with two signs (16.52 sq. ft. each) and one (21.47 sq. ft.). Applicant indicated intent to remove the third sign, pending clarification.
 - Canopy-mounted signs exceed allowable dimensions and height.
- Landscaping and Buffering:
 - Landscaping standards are largely met.
 - Screening requirements for residential adjacency require Planning Commission review for a possible waiver.
- Lighting Standards:
 - Several deviations noted, including:
 - Pole height: Proposed 23 feet exceeds the 15-foot limit for RC-2 but complies with commercial standards (30 feet).
 - Canopy lighting tilt: Angled 5% outward, which is non-compliant with flush-mount standards.
 - Illumination levels: Exceeds allowable limits, particularly at doorways and paved areas. Doorway illumination is 3,111 lumens per door, vs. 2,000 lumens permitted in commercial districts and 1,000 lumens in residential.
 - Total lumens: 628,227 lumens far exceed the RC-2 maximum of 74,943.75 lumens, and the commercial standard of 149,887.5 lumens.
 - Consultant Upfal recommended reducing color temperature to below 3,500 K to minimize disruption to sleep cycles.
- Tree Replacement:
 - One additional tree is required to meet replacement standards.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

There are numerous deviations requested for signage, lighting, parking, and loading, as detailed in the staff report, along with items needing additional Planning Commission consideration (pages 11-12 of the review). The Planning Commission is encouraged to evaluate these deviations, particularly those related to lighting, dumpster placement, and impervious surfaces, as part of the PUD approval process, and in the context of the PUD objectives and overall community benefit.

Commission questions

In response to questions, Mr. Siwicki provided the following further information and assurances:

- The proposed 6' vinyl wall will be along the entirety of the western and northern property lines in lieu of the required 6' masonry wall. A masonry wall would require substantial footers that would damage the root system of existing mature trees.
- Mr. Siwicki agreed to keep light poles to the residential standard of 15' high, although more light poles will be needed as a result.

- There will be no light shed onto the neighbor's properties except for the driveways, and that will be minimal.
- Mr. Siwicki said they would shield the lights per ordinance, and could adhere to the commercial standard of 149,887.5 lumens
- Sheetz will add a bypass lane to the drive-through.
- Sheetz was willing to convert the 5 spaces by the ordering area to landbanked parking, reducing the parking spaces from 44 to 39, which was only one space more than the allowed 38 spaces.
- While the dumpster location as proposed in the street side yard along 12 Mile Road represents a deviation from ordinance standards, the alternative location on the other side of the exit of the drive-through lane would put the dumpster closer to the residential neighbors.
- In response to a question regarding the compatibility of the 24-hour operation with the surrounding residential uses, Mr. Siwicki said that the continuous operation was non-negotiable. However, the effect of the 24-hour operation was mitigated by the additional fencing and landscaping.

Public Hearing

Chair Trafelet opened the meeting for public comment.

PG, Farmington Hills resident, opposed the Sheetz proposal, highlighting concerns about the company's recent federal fines for discriminatory hiring practices. The site, formerly home to a historic restaurant, would be better suited for a fine dining establishment or coffee bar instead of a gas station.

Dennis Layton (phonetic), Farmington Hills resident, opposed the Sheetz proposal. He cited an oversaturation of gas stations in the area and noted the lack of successful 24-hour food establishments, both locally and in surrounding cities, as evidence that such operations are unsustainable. He raised concerns about potential late-night safety issues.

Sam Dorchin (phonetic), Farmington Hills resident directly behind the proposed development, opposed the requested PUD. He highlighted the presence of two struggling gas stations nearby, the area's quiet and viable character, and his professional perspective as an architect that the proposed facility is incompatible with the neighborhood.

Dion DeGennaro, New Castle Road, represented his mother who resides across the street from the proposed development. They opposed the project as incompatible with the surrounding residential neighborhoods, noncompliant with several zoning requirements, with lighting levels that far exceed residential and business standards. He questioned the developer's claim of green space preservation as a community benefit, noting the space would remain regardless of the project.

Ken Polk, Farmington Hills resident, said he was a retired lieutenant medic with 40 years of experience in a neighboring metropolitan fire department. He opposed the project, citing safety concerns related to 24-hour operations. Based on his professional experience, 24 hour operations increase impaired driving incidents, injuries, and fatalities.

Faye Nemer, representing the Middle East and North African (MENA) Chamber of Commerce, spoke in opposition to the proposed Sheetz development, emphasizing its negative impact on small, locally owned businesses in the area. She described the proposed 3.3-acre site as more akin to a truck stop that does not fit the character of the community. Nemer cited a local survey conducted among 1,990 residents aged 21 and older, which revealed that 77% of respondents from the directly impacted zip code (48334) oppose the development. Nemer challenged Sheetz's claims of job creation and economic benefit, arguing that the development would cannibalize revenue from local businesses and reallocate, rather than create, jobs. She also noted that Sheetz sources products and fuel from out of state, further draining the local economy. She criticized the notion of Sheetz as a family-based business, pointing to its status as a \$7.5 billion corporate entity. Nemer urged the Planning Commission to reject the proposal, a decision that would be in alignment with community sentiment and local economic priorities.

Michael Madigan, Farmington Hills resident, opposed the Sheetz proposal, referencing the company's testimony to Congress about the safety risks of 24/7 operations, including increased shoplifting, robberies, and violent crimes. He contrasted the proposed residential-adjacent site with other Sheetz locations in commercial or rural areas, emphasizing this proposal's incompatibility with the surrounding residential community.

Amy Brooklyn Peterson, Farmington Hills resident, opposed the Sheetz proposal, emphasizing that the area already has seven gas stations within a one-mile radius. She urged the Planning Commission to prioritize the desires of residents over corporate interests and questioned the use of commercial zoning standards for a proposal in a predominantly residential area. Peterson also warned that the project could encourage loitering late at night, further detracting from the neighborhood's character.

Brian Ventura, Farmington Hills resident (WoodCreek) and professional engineer, opposed the Sheetz proposal, citing the numerous ordinance deviations, particularly regarding lighting, and emphasizing the negative impact on the surrounding residential area. He highlighted the incompatibility of a 24/7 operation with the quiet, peaceful nature of the neighborhood and raised concerns about increased crime, noise, and light pollution.

Kathleen Hayes Parvin, Farmington Hills resident, opposed the Sheetz development, as a 24/7 operation is incompatible with the neighborhood. Additional gas stations and fast food options are unnecessary. Ms. Parvin urged the Planning Commission to prioritize the voices of residents and stated that Sheetz is not suitable for the community.

Tim Parvin, Farmington Hills resident, opposed the Sheetz development, drawing parallels to a 1990s decision where a big-box store was denied due to traffic and neighborhood concerns, resulting in a more compatible use of the land. He pointed out that the area already has ample gas stations and questioned the need for another station given societal shifts away from fossil fuels. The project is incompatible with the neighborhood and would negatively impact the community.

Margaret Keyes Howard, Farmington Hills resident (Sylvan Circle), opposed the Sheetz development. She emphasized the neighborhood's support for small businesses and its character as a family- and pedestrian-friendly community. She expressed concerns about the safety of children and families who frequently walk the area, particularly near school bus stops, and criticized the lack of aesthetic appeal and cleanliness of Sheetz locations she had recently visited in Maryland.

Marilyn Joseph, Farmington Hills resident, opposed the proposed development. She cited Sheetz's acknowledgment of increased shoplifting, armed robberies, and violent crimes associated with its 24-hour operations. She also referenced citations from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for fuel storage violations and a lawsuit from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for discriminatory hiring practices.

Joe Noune, Farmington Hills resident (Berrywood Lane), opposed the Sheets development. He expressed concerns about the potential sale of alcohol at the proposed Sheetz convenience store and the likelihood of increased crime as affirmed by police officers he consulted. He emphasized the importance of a secure barrier between the development and the neighboring condominiums.

Robert Dall (phonetic), Farmington Hills resident, opposed the proposed Sheetz development. He had driven to Romulus to see the Sheetz facility there, and he described it as more suited to an interstate location than a residential neighborhood. He noted the oversaturation of gas stations within a mile of the site, counting eight existing locations.

Sheila Schoenberg, Farmington Hills resident (Berrywood Lane), opposed the Sheetz development, stating it would disrupt the quiet, residential nature of the neighborhood, particularly for its many elderly residents. The project would negatively impact the community's aesthetics and quality of life, citing concerns about excessive lighting and unattractiveness.

Shane Stephan, Farmington Hills resident (Beachwood Hills Condominiums), opposed the Sheetz development, citing concerns about increased crime, noise, and excessive lighting, which he described as making the area resemble an airport. He criticized the company's poor maintenance record, referencing online reviews showing overflowing trash at their locations.

Joan Gebhardt, Farmington Hills resident (Pine Knolls Condominiums), expressed concerns about the financial stability of Sheetz. She highlighted the risks of failure associated with newly installed gas stations, noting that if Sheetz were to fail, the site could face long-term abandonment due to the need for environmental remediation.

Mike Yandora, Farmington Hills resident (Moran Street), supported the Sheetz development. He cited past positive experiences with Sheetz during his travels. The property in question has been vacant for five years without any other offers or plans for development. He dismissed impervious surface issues as irrelevant due to the area's clay soil conditions and defended Sheetz against allegations of discriminatory hiring.

Steve Bridges, Farmington Hills resident, supported the Sheetz development, viewing the redevelopment of the long-vacant Ginopolis site as an opportunity to address urban decay. Bridges emphasized the value Sheetz would bring to the community, including 24-hour services, taxable revenue, good-paying jobs, and the revitalization of an unused site.

Johnene Koganti, Farmington Hills resident (WoodCreek Subdivision), voiced concerns about the increased traffic and safety risks associated with the Sheetz proposal, particularly when there are three nearby schools that require parents to drive children to school. She questioned the assertion that the development would only capture existing traffic, suggesting it could become a destination and exacerbate existing congestion. She echoed neighbors' concerns about excessive lighting, crime, and overall neighborhood impact.

Keith Henry Jr., President of the Orion Court Homeowners Association, spoke in opposition to the proposed Sheetz development, citing concerns about its impact on safety, environmental sustainability, and property values in nearby neighborhoods. The primary goals of HOA presidents include ensuring the safety of residents and visitors, protecting property, enhancing property values, and maintaining community privacy. Highlighting the effort invested in sustaining property values above \$500,000, he expressed strong opposition to the proposed development.

George Senawi, Farmington Hills resident (Orion Court), opposed the Sheetz development, citing potential safety risks for children in the neighborhood, including increased traffic and the likelihood of people congregating in the gas station parking lot. The project would bring heavy truck traffic, and he questioned the lack of detailed plans for traffic and site design. He urged the Commission to consider the project's impact on the peaceful, safe environment that has characterized the community.

Joseph Wade, President of the Timbercrest Condominium Association representing 165 homeowners, opposed the proposed Sheetz facility at 12 Mile and Middlebelt. He emphasized the development's large size, potential for increased traffic accidents, and negative impact on property values. Mr. Wade urged the Commission to consider more beneficial uses for the site that align with the area's norms and values.

Richard Olenzek, Farmington Hills resident (Holly Hill Farms), raised concerns about increased traffic and safety issues associated with the proposed Sheetz development. He highlighted the company's business model, which uses billboard advertising to attract travelers seeking low-cost fuel, 24-hour food, and other conveniences, potentially drawing additional traffic from already accident-prone exits such as Orchard Lake and 12 Mile.

Laura Gee (phonetic), Farmington Hills resident (Berrywood Lane) asked several clarifying questions regarding the property and the process being followed tonight. She raised concerns about the potential impact of the Sheetz development on property values, increased traffic congestion, and the compatibility of the project with the character of the surrounding community.

Jonathan Hommes, Farmington Hills resident (WoodCreek), voiced opposition to the proposed Sheetz development, citing concerns about its 24-hour operation and lighting levels, which he described as inconsistent with the character of the area. He questioned the necessity of another gas station in this area, warning it could lead to the closure of existing stations and create long-term environmental challenges related to buried fuel tanks and site remediation.

Joan Williams, Farmington Hills resident (Timbercrest), opposed the proposed Sheetz development, emphasizing that it is not a good fit for the Farmington Hills community. She referenced past issues with 24-hour operations, such as a former 7-Eleven, and highlighted concerns about the disruption to the neighborhood's quiet character.

Syed Razvi, Farmington Hills resident (Orion Court), opposed the proposed Sheetz facility, citing concerns about the impact on neighborhood safety. He addressed increased traffic, noise and light pollution, crime risks associated with a 24-hour operation, and the potential for local gas stations to be abandoned if unable to compete.

Hank Murawski, Farmington Hills resident (Village Lane), urged the Commission to deny the proposed Sheetz PUD, emphasizing that the development would disrupt the area's current character. He highlighted the stark contrast between the quiet, unlit nature of the 12 Mile and Middlebelt area and the proposed 24-hour, highly illuminated gas station and food complex. Mr. Murawski supported the community's concerns, noting the inevitability of traffic, crime, and other issues, and reinforced the validity of the objections raised by other residents.

Seeing that no other public indicated they wished to speak, Chair Trafelet closed the public hearing.

Applicant response

Mr. Siwicki addressed concerns raised by residents and provided the following key points:

Safety Measures:

- Sheetz locations prioritize safety with advanced security procedures and systems, creating spaces for activities like custody exchanges and online marketplace deals.
- Sheetz has built a reputation for safety over its 70-year history.

Environmental Protections:

- Nearly 100% compliance rate with EPA standards, exceeding inspection requirements with state-of-the-art systems and third party inspections at 4X the rate than required.
- Dedicated environmental protection teams ensure rigorous standards are met.

Traffic Impact:

- Convenience stores primarily serve existing traffic rather than generating additional traffic, as supported by traffic studies. Convenience stores are not a destination.
- The proposed site does not cater to semi-truck traffic and is not designed as a truck stop. The lot is not big enough for a semi-truck to park or maneuver comfortably. It would take 30 minutes for a semi to fuel up at the pump.

Market Competition:

- Sheetz introduces competition in the convenience industry, providing diverse offerings beyond fuel, such as made-to-order food and grocery items.

- Mr. Sawicki downplayed concerns about potential closures of existing gas stations, citing Sheetz's history of coexistence with competitors in other markets.

Light, Noise, Site Enhancements and Community Benefits:

- Significant improvements include increased green space, enhanced landscaping, buffer zones, pedestrian access, and new construction investments, all of which will reduce the effect of light and noise on the surrounding neighborhoods.
- The proposed PUD provides benefits such as architectural standards and noise mitigation that exceed traditional rezoning options.

Commission Discussion

Signage and Billboards:

- Commissioner Countegan inquired about the potential use of billboards to direct traffic to the site. Could a PUD agreement limit billboard signage off site? Would the applicant agree to this limitation?
- Mr. Siwicki indicated that off-site signage is not part of Sheetz's business strategy but deferred to the Sheetz marketing department.
- Applicant Attorney Pat Lennon, Honigman LLP, expressed surprise at the billboard question, noting uncertainty about the Planning Commission's authority to impose such restrictions. That said, Mr. Lennon indicated a willingness to discuss the matter prior to City Council review.
- City Attorney Schultz clarified that the inquiry was intended as a negotiation point and not a directive.

Zoning history of site

The site was zoned B-2 during the time Ginopolis was open. After the restaurant closed, the property was rezoned to RC-2 to accommodate a proposed senior apartment project, which did not move forward. If the property were rezoned back to B-2, a drive-through use would not be permitted. The current proposal is a request for a Planned Unit Development, which allows flexibility for property development. The proposed use mirrors what is on the other corners of the intersection, and the PUD, with City approval, could allow a drive-through use.

Master Plan Considerations:

The City's Master Plan designates the site for future commercial, with a small portion of the northerly portion within the multifamily category. The proposal aligns with the Master Plan's commercial designation part of the site.

Alcohol Sales:

Mr. Siwicki confirmed they would sell packaged alcohol for off-premises consumption only, subject to state licensing.

Traffic Study:

A traffic study has been completed and provided to the City.

Competition Concerns:

The Commission noted that one of the gas station owners at 12 Mile and Middlebelt owns multiple stations in the area, providing context regarding the competitive landscape.

Environmental and Design Considerations:

- The B2 zoning previously in place would not have permitted a drive-through use.
- The proposed PUD provides for enhanced design elements, including increased green space and buffers, which were discussed earlier in the meeting.

Commissioner Countegan said that he would make a recommending motion to City Council. All planned unit developments and their formal agreements between developer and the City, are ultimately decided at the Council level.

In the current instance, key considerations offered by Commissioner Countegan included:

- **History of the Site:** The site was previously used commercially and designated for future commercial use in the Master Plan.
- **Redevelopment Benefits:** The proposal offers redevelopment of a long-vacant, declining property, with increased green space and reduced parking.
- **Compatibility:** Similar uses exist at nearby intersections.
- **Lighting Plan:** The motion will require that the project must meet commercial zoning lumen standards, with no spillover illumination on neighboring properties. The applicant is to work with staff to optimize 15' lighting pole height and placement to minimize impacts.
- **Vinyl Fencing:** The vinyl fence at the required height is preferred over a wall to preserve natural features and minimize tree disturbance.
- **Parking Spaces:** Five parking spaces are to be land banked as green space until needed.
- **Bypass Lane:** The project will include the required bypass lane for the drive-through. The bypass lane is an ordinance requirement as well as an engineering standard.

After discussion and amendment, the following motion was offered:

MOTION by Countegan, support by Varga, to RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL that Planned Unit Development Plan 1, 2024, including Site Plan 54-7-2024, both dated July 17, 2024, submitted by SkilkenGold Real Estate Development, BE APPROVED, because the plans are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Master Plan and applicable provisions of the Planned Unit Development Option in Section 34-3.20 of the Zoning Ordinance, SUBJECT TO:

- **All outstanding issues in the Giffels Webster review letter be resolved.**
- **All engineering standards be met relative to the development of the plans.**
- **Five parking spaces close to the drive-through pick-up location as discussed this evening be landbanked.**
- **Applicant to work with staff to determine the number of 15-foot poles that will sufficiently provide the lighting requirements for the site, to minimize the lighting effect on surrounding properties.**
- **Lighting lumens to meet the commercial lighting standard of 149,887.5 lumens total, and 2,000 lumens at doorways.**
- **Bypass lane be provided for the drive-through restaurant, per ordinance standard.**

And with the following finding:

- **The vinyl fencing as shown on the plans this evening at the required height is acceptable, and therefore the requirement for a masonry wall is waived.**

Motion discussion:

Chair Trafelet opposed the motion, citing incompatibility with the surrounding residential area due to the 24-hour operation. The Planning Consultant’s review letter specifically mentioned that the 24-hour operation could be a consideration at this location.

Roll call vote:

Ayes – Countegan, Aspinall, Varga, Brickner

Nay – Trafelet

Motion passed 4-1.

The Chair called a break at 10:53pm and reconvened the meeting at 11:08pm.

REGULAR MEETING

A. LOT SPLIT 5, 2024 (FINAL) (PUD 5, 1993)

LOCATION:	Southeast intersection of Twelve Mile Road and Investment Drive
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-17-201-014
PROPOSAL:	Split one (1) parcel into two (2) parcels within OS-4, Office Research District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Lot Split approval (final)
APPLICANTS:	Farmington Hills VI Corporate Investors, L.L.C., and Farmington Hills VII Corporate Investors, L.L.C.
OWNERS:	Farmington Hills VI Corporate Investors, L.L.C., and Farmington Hills VII Corporate Investors, L.L.C.

Chair Trafelet introduced this item, noting that the next agenda item was tied to this one.

Applicant presentation

Chris Kojaian, Kojaian Companies, was present on behalf of this application for lot split approval. Mr. Kojaian provided the following information:

- The lot split will create a new parcel to facilitate the development of a daycare facility as an amenity for the Farmington Hills Corporate Campus.
- This facility is expected to benefit both the community and the corporate tenants, such as Motorola, Allstate, and Comerica.

City Planner comments

City Planner Perdonik gave the following background to this request:

- The requested lot split complies with all applicable zoning ordinances and requires no waivers or variances.
- The lot split mirrors a previous Planning Commission approved lot split for the same site, originally intended for a restaurant/retail development.
- While the intended use has changed, the lot split itself remains unchanged from the prior approval.

MOTION by Aspinall, support by Varga, that Lot Split 5, 2024 (Final), dated October 18, 2024, submitted by Farmington Hills VI Corporate Investors, LLC, and Farmington Hills VII Corporate Investors, LLC, BE APPROVED, because it appears to meet the applicable provisions of Chapter 34, "Zoning," and Chapter 27, "Subdivision of Land," of the City Code and will result in land parcels generally compatible with surrounding parcels in the vicinity; and that the City Assessor be so notified.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote

B. SITE PLAN 60-10-2024 (PUD 5, 1993)

LOCATION: Southeast intersection of Twelve Mile Road and Investment Drive
PARCEL I.D.: 22-23-17-201-014
PROPOSAL: Construction of day care center within OS-4, Office Research District
ACTION REQUESTED: Site Plan approval
APPLICANT: Cunningham Limp
OWNER: Farmington Hills VI Corporate Investors, LLC

Planning Consultant Comments

Referencing the November 14, 2024 Giffels Webster memorandum, Planning Consultant Tangari gave the background and review for this request for site plan approval at the southeast intersection of Twelve Mile Road and Investment Drive (PUD 5, 1993).

- This request does not require a PUD amendment as the existing agreement for PUD 5, 1993 permits childcare uses.
- The applicant is proposing a childcare center within the larger, office-focused PUD. The development consists of one 10,000-square-foot building.
- The site plan complies with all dimensional standards. However, the dumpster is located in a front yard; this is not permitted under the ordinance.

Applicant Presentation

Chris Kojaian, Kojaian Companies, was present on behalf of this application for site plan approval. Mr. Kojaian provided the following information:

- The proposed childcare center, operated by The Learning Experience, will serve children aged six weeks to six years and focus on both childcare and education.
- Regarding the dumpster, they proposed reducing the number of dumpsters to one and relocating it at a 45-degree angle behind the setback line to comply with zoning requirements.

MOTION by Varga, support by Aspinall, that Site Plan 60-10-2024, dated October 18, 2024, submitted by Cunningham Limp, BE APPROVED, because it appears to meet all applicable requirements of the Zoning Chapter, SUBJECT TO addressing each of the outstanding items identified in Giffels Webster's review.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

C. SITE PLAN 55-8-2024

LOCATION: 29707 Ten Mile Road and 29580 Moran Street
PARCEL I.D.: 22-23-26-226-003, -008, and -009
PROPOSAL: Building addition to existing church within RA-1, One Family Residential District, and RA-3, One Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED: Site Plan approval
APPLICANT: Hisham Turk, Turk Architects
OWNER: Tawheed Center, Osman Habib (President)

Planning Consultant comments

Referencing the November 14, 2024 Giffels Webster memorandum, Planning Consultant Upfal highlighted the following points:

- The applicant is proposing a 38,000sf addition to an existing 33,800sf mosque (the Tawheed Center) to include additional lobby area and a gymnasium with second story mezzanine. In addition, they will be converting existing space into a 224-seat auditorium/conference center. The expansion includes two additional parcels of land, and when combined this will result in the creation of a through-lot with frontage on both W. Ten Mile (between Middlebelt and Creekside Dr) and Moran St.
- In addition to the building modifications, the plans propose modifications to parking and circulation, including the addition of new parking facilities. An existing single-family home will be demolished to accommodate the proposed expansion.

Summary of Items to be addressed by the Planning Commission:

1. The plans do not show the required wall or berm. An existing wood privacy fence exists, but zoning regulations require a wall or berm around places of worship. The applicant requested a waiver to extend the existing wood fence instead of constructing a wall.
2. The average:minimum illumination calculation for parking lot lighting is 8.65:1, which exceeds the requirement of 4:1. Planning Commission may grant a waiver from this requirement when deemed necessary and appropriate for public safety.

Summary of Items to be addressed administratively:

1. The height of the existing building, which is located in the RA-3 district, is nonconforming. A small portion of the addition occurs in the RA-3 district, which would expand this nonconformity; the portion in the RA-1 district is a maximum height of 28.75 feet and is compliant. *The applicant may only proceed with a variance or modification to the design.*
2. There are existing trees that appear to be within the corner clearance triangle at the driveway. These shall be identified and a note shall be added stating that all trees within the corner clearance triangle will be trimmed up to a height of 6' or more.
3. Deciduous trees do not meet the size requirements for large deciduous trees. Spacing information is not provided, and height is not provided for shrubs.
4. None of the trees are proposed at a large enough size to meet the requirements for large deciduous trees, but large deciduous trees are required to meet the canopy tree requirement.

Planning Commission discussion

- Regarding the non-conforming height, City Planner Perdonik clarified that the building's

nonconformance is not attributed to zoning changes but may have resulted from past oversight. To proceed, the Planning Commission must deny the application, allowing the applicant standing to seek a variance from the ZBA.

- Regarding the fence/waiver discussion, Commissioner Countegan noted past approvals where the fence was deemed acceptable.

The Commission discussed the height request. The Planning Commission has sometimes approved a site plan conditioned upon a variance being granted, saving the applicant from having to return to the Commission if they are able to receive ZBA approval. There appeared to be consensus to follow this pattern for this request.

In response to questions, Hisham Turk, Turk Architects, explained that they wanted to extend the current wood fence.

After discussion and amendment, the following motion was offered:

MOTION by Countegan, support by Bruckner, that Site Plan 55-8-2024, dated October 14, 2024, submitted by Hisham Turk, Turk Architects, BE APPROVED, because it appears to meet all applicable requirements of the Zoning Chapter, SUBJECT TO:

- **Resolution of outstanding items in the November 14, 2024 Giffels Webster review.**
- **Project must receive a height variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals or modify the design so the height variance is not necessary.**

With the following finding:

- **The Planning Commission waives the wall requirement so that the applicant can extend the wooden fence as shown on the plans.**

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

D. AMEND PUD PLAN 2, 2021, INCLUDING REVISED SITE PLAN 59-5-2022

LOCATION: 27400 Twelve Mile Road
PARCEL I.D.: 22-23-12-476-008
PROPOSAL: Construction of site-built one-family detached dwelling units within RA-1B, One Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED: Schedule for Public Hearing
APPLICANT: Robertson Brothers Homes
OWNER: Evangelical Homes of Michigan

Planning Consultant comments

Referencing the November 13, 2024 Giffels Webster memorandum, Planning Consultant Tangari highlighted the following:

- The applicant proposes to amend the PUD to remove the 100-bed skilled nursing facility that was part of the original approval and instead now proposes a fully residential project with 75 detached ranch homes. The chapel that was to be preserved in the approved PUD plan will still be preserved in this new plan and will be part of a common park area in the center of the development.

- This is a major amendment to the PUD, and the Planning Commission will set a public hearing on the amendment and make a recommendation to Council.
- The review memorandum provides site plan review which will be more thoroughly presented at the public hearing.

Requested deviations include:

- a. Permit detached single-family at requested density of 75 units.
- b. Permit reduced exterior side setback along Cheswick (30 feet).
- c. Permit no installation of western buffer plantings.
- d. 111-foot lot width for splits where 140 feet is required.

City Planner Perdonik added the following:

- Per the Fire Department, the turning radius of the spur drive does not meet the 50-foot requirement.
- The front yard of unit 68 faces the side of the unit next door.
- Why are there sidewalks on only one side of the street?
- In order to minimize curb cuts along 12 Mile Road, the Engineering Division has suggested the possibility of a shared access drive for the 4 lots located on 12 Mile.

Applicant Presentation

Tim Loughrin, Robert Brothers Homes, provided the following information:

- Regarding the request for no installation of western buffer plantings, the existing natural buffer on the west side is sufficient and the applicant is requesting to reallocate those plantings to Inkster Road. A letter of support from the adjacent HOA was provided. Robertson Brothers has also offered to replace 10 trees on public land along Cheswick.
- The home lots exceed ordinance area requirements, even though at 111 feet wide they do not meet lot width requirements.
- They will work with engineering and the Fire Department regarding the turning radius. They believe they meet the 50-foot requirement, but if necessary they can reduce the island by Cheswick and Inkster to make sure the 50 feet are provided.
- Additional landscaping will be added to Unit 68.

Other issues:

- Robertson Brothers will work with Engineering regarding the request for gravity sewer systems; the applicant prefers low-pressure systems for those 4 properties, especially noting the new lift station that is being installed on the property.
- Regarding lot access on 12 Mile Road, Robertson Brothers prefers individual curb cuts for the four lots but expressed willingness to impose turnarounds or shared access as required.
- Regarding the chapel renovation, the chapel will be converted into a residential-style community building. Planned modifications include removing the glass entryway and updating the building's design to integrate with the neighborhood. The applicant has been before the Historic District Commission regarding this change.
- Robertson Brothers intends to apply for Brownfield funding to address asbestos removal and environmental remediation.

MOTION by Brickner, support by Countegan, that the proposed Amendment to PUD Plan 2, 2021, including revised site plan 59-5-2022, submitted by Robertson Brothers Homes, be set for public hearing for the Planning Commission's next available regular meeting agenda.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of October 17, 2024 Regular Meeting

MOTION by Brickner, support by Aspinall, to approve the October 17 2024 Regular Planning Commission meeting minutes as submitted.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

COMMISSIONER/STAFF COMMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Aspinall, support by Varga, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen Aspinall,
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem