



# PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

CITY OF NOVI  
Regular Meeting

**October 11, 2023 7:00 PM**

Council Chambers | Novi Civic Center  
45175 Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI 48375 (248) 347-0475

## CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

## ROLL CALL

Present: Member Avdoulos (Acting Chair), Member Becker, Member Dismondy, Member Lynch, Member Roney, Member Verma

Absent Excused: Chair Pehrson

Staff: Lindsay Bell, Senior Planner; Beth Saarela, City Attorney; James Hill, Planner; Rick Meader, Landscape Architect; Adam Yako, Plan Review Engineer

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Member Roney led the meeting attendees in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Becker to approve the October 11, 2023 Planning Commission Agenda.

**VOICE VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 11, 2023 PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BECKER.**

***Motion carried 6-0.***

## AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Acting Chair Avdoulos invited members of the audience who wished to address the Planning Commission during the first audience participation to come forward.

Mike Duchesneau, 1191 South Lake Drive, relayed Monday's City Council meeting agenda has a nice thirty-one page package on older adults, their needs, and the trends as far as Senior Citizens and the growth in the City of Novi. For anybody or any developer that hasn't seen that, it's noteworthy.

There is also a video recording available of the City Council meeting and near the end of the video, there are some interesting comments from the Council members as to what the older adults need.

We need more developments in Novi that are ranch style or all the housing needs, as in a studio, are on the first floor. We really haven't seen that in Novi. We always seem to get bigger, better houses. Mr. Duchesneau would recommend that anybody that has not read the Older Adults Needs Committee report or seen the Council meeting video should do so.

Seeing no one else, Acting Chair Avdoulos closed the first public participation.

## CORRESPONDENCE

There was not any correspondence.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

There were no Committee Reports.

## **CITY PLANNER REPORT**

There was no City Planner Report.

## **CONSENT AGENDA - REMOVALS AND APPROVALS**

### **1. ARMENIAN CULTURAL CENTER JSP17-37**

Approval of the request of Zeimet Wozniak & Associates, on behalf of the Armenian Community Center of Greater Detroit, for the one-year extension of the Final Site Plan and Special Land Use approval. The subject property is located in section 12, on the north side of Twelve Mile Road and east of Meadowbrook Road, in residential acreage (RA) zoning district. The project area is approximately 19.30 acres. A revised Special Land Use Permit was granted by the Planning Commission on October 14, 2020 to permit a Place of Worship, a daycare in a residential district, and a proposed Armenian Genocide Memorial structure within the courtyard.

Motion to approve JSP17-37 Armenian Cultural Center one-year extension of the Final Site Plan and Special Land Use approval made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Verma.

**In the matter of JSP17-37 Armenian Cultural Center, motion to approve the one-year extension of Final Site Plan and Special Land Use approval.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE JSP17-37 ARMENIAN CULTURAL CENTER ONE YEAR EXTENSION OF THE FINAL SITE PLAN AND SPECIAL LAND USE APPROVAL MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER VERMA.**

*Motion carried 6-0.*

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **1. ELM CREEK PRO JZ22-28 WITH REZONING 18.737**

Public hearing at the request of Toll Brothers, Inc. for revised initial submittal and eligibility discussion for a Zoning Map amendment from Office Service Technology (OST) and Low-Rise Multiple Family (RM-1) to Low-Rise Multiple Family (RM-1) with a Planned Rezoning Overlay. The subject site is approximately 37-acres and is located south of Twelve Mile Road, west of Meadowbrook Road (Section 14). The applicant is proposing to develop a two-phase 134-unit multiple-family townhome development.

Planner Lindsay Bell relayed the applicant is proposing to rezone about 37 acres south of Twelve Mile Road, on the west side of Meadowbrook Road, utilizing the Planned Rezoning Overlay option. The existing development to the north and east is largely office, with some vacant parcels. The Waltonwood senior living facility is to the west, along with Twelve Oaks Lake.

The current zoning of the property is mostly OST – Office Service Technology, and a portion on the west side is RM-1. The properties to the north, east and south are also zoned OST. The area to the west is RM-1 low rise multiple family.

The Future Land Use Map identifies this property and those around it as Office, R&D and Technology, which is consistent with the current zoning. The area to the west is designated Planned Development 1, which allows for multi-family development.

The natural features map shows significant wetland and woodland areas on this property as well as to the north and south. The tree and wetland surveys provided by the applicant confirm these features.

The Planning Commission reviewed the original request for this property in December 2022. Based on feedback received from Staff and the Planning Commission, the applicant has revised their PRO Plan to

include the entire parcel, rather than just the northern portion. This also means that Singh Development, who controls the southern portion of the parcel, is now a party to the PRO process. Their portion of the property is shown as Phase 2 of the project and lacks many of the details provided for Phase 1. For instance, there is no topographic survey of that area, no wetland delineations, no woodland tree surveys, or detailed development plans provided for Phase 2.

The applicant is proposing to utilize the Planned Rezoning Overlay (PRO) to rezone the whole property to RM-1 Low Density Multiple Family. The revised initial PRO plan shows a total of 114 attached townhome units between the 2 phases, clustered along two public roads. However, the requested conditions would permit up to 20 additional units in Phase 2, for a total of 134 units. All units will comply with height limits of the RM-1 District.

The development is accessed by one entrance off Meadowbrook Road. A secondary emergency access drive has been added to connect along the northwest portion of the parcel to the existing emergency access route that connects Waltonwood to the DMC property. Another emergency access route is shown for Phase 2 that would connect to the existing stub road on the Oliver Hatcher property.

Rezoning to the RM-1 category would permit the use proposed, however the multifamily zoning is not in compliance with the current Master Plan designation as Office Research Development and Technology. The current update to the Master Plan is under review, and the land use designation for this area may change.

The public benefits offered are virtually the same as what was proposed originally, so it appears no new benefits are offered with the additional land area included. Some of the conditions proposed include:

1. Preservation of 7.06 acres of City regulated woodlands.
2. Preservation of about 3 acres of City regulated wetlands.
3. Overall density shall not exceed 4.75 dwelling units per acre (More limiting than the 5.4 dwelling units per acre allowed in the RM-1 District).
4. Providing the community amenities shown in the PRO Concept Plan, which includes a walking trail and scenic overlook point in Phase 1. Another walking trail is shown in Phase 2.
5. The applicant has also proposed to provide the off-site sidewalk segments on properties to the north and south along Meadowbrook Road – a total of 314 feet, which would fill gaps in the City's sidewalk network.

Staff and consultants have identified some issues with the proposed rezoning and PRO Plan. First, as discussed in the planning review letter, the Phase 2 area is lacking details for both existing conditions and future development. The details that are provided don't exactly match up with the conditions proposed. The conceptual layout shows 34 units, but the request is for up to 54 units, or 5.4 dwellings per net site area, which is the maximum density allowed for 3-bedroom units in the RM-1 District. Usable open space is not quantified but would be expected to meet the ordinance requirements if they were to come in for site plan approval.

Some other issues identified include questions of compatibility and buffering from the adjacent uses that will remain OST. The applicant has requested a deviation to provide a lesser setback from these developments than would be permitted under the RM-1 standards. An 8' vinyl fence is proposed where the units on the east side of the road back up to parcels zoned OST. Being adjacent to a residential development can require additional setbacks or other restrictions on those property owners, which can be an added burden to surrounding non-residential landowners.

The wetland impacts for Phase 1 have been reduced with this revised layout, which moved some of the units further back from Meadowbrook Road, which was recommended by the Planning Commission last December. The mitigation area is now between three smaller wetlands, so essentially those would become one big wetland.

Many woodland trees are also proposed for removal, and only a limited number of replacements can fit on-site which means the rest of the credits would be paid into the tree fund for Phase 1 at least, because we don't know the impacts for Phase 2.

The façade review notes that the elevations provided are now in conformance with the minimum standards of the ordinance. As PRO projects are supposed to be an overall enhancement to the area, we would recommend exceeding the façade ordinance standards. Staff has also recommended additional landscape screening along the south of the entry drive and a non-motorized connection along the northern emergency access road to connect to the Twelve Oaks area. The anticipated Griffin Novi development would provide sidewalks to the mall area to connect to.

A residential development will likely result in smaller wetland and woodland impacts compared to an OST development due to the typical size of buildings and parking needs. OST permitted uses include offices, research & development, data processing, and hotels, which all have a larger footprint than the RM-1 uses proposed. The traffic study notes that the number of residential units proposed would likely result in fewer vehicle trips compared to an OST development. There are relatively few deviations from Ordinance requirements requested by the applicant.

Under the terms of the new Planned Rezoning ordinance, the Planning Commission will not make a formal recommendation to City Council at this meeting. Instead, the initial Public Hearing is an opportunity for the members of the Planning Commission to hear public comment, and to review and comment on whether the project meets the requirements of eligibility for a Planned Rezoning Overlay proposal.

Following the Planning Commission public hearing, the project would then go to City Council for its review and comment on the eligibility.

After this initial round of comments by the public bodies, the applicant may choose to make any changes, additions or deletions to the proposal based on the feedback received. The subsequent submittal would then be reviewed by City staff and consultants, and then the project would be scheduled for another public hearing before the Planning Commission. Following this Public Hearing on the formal PRO Plan, the Planning Commission would make a recommendation for approval or denial to City Council.

The Planning Commission is asked to hold the public hearing, and review and comment on the proposed rezoning. Planning Commission members may offer feedback for the applicant to consider that would be an enhancement to the project and surrounding area, including suggesting site-specific conditions, revisions to the plans or the deviations requested, and other impressions.

The applicant Scott Hansen from Toll Brothers, as well as engineer Jason Rickard from Sieber Keast Lehner are representing the project tonight. Staff is also available to answer any questions.

Acting Chair Avdoulos invited the applicant to address the Planning Commission.

Scott Hansen, with Toll Brothers, relayed that Senior Planner Bell covered many of the relevant points, but he would like to highlight two real key points based on the feedback received last December. One point was maintaining Meadowbrook Road as a commercial corridor. To try to achieve that two buildings were eliminated, basically increasing the setback from Meadowbrook Road from about 100 feet to 400 feet to the first unit. The only thing visible coming down Meadowbrook Road will be an entrance, which will help maintain that commercial character.

The other main comment or piece of feedback was regarding the OST zoning remaining on the southern portion of the parcel. That portion is now incorporated into the PRO. The goal was to provide as much flexibility for Singh to come in in the future and put their own product on that portion of the site. It is conceptual at this point, but any deviations requested from a PRO perspective would go back through the process for a PRO amendment, which would come to the Planning Commission for approval. If Singh decided to go with this plan, it would go in for preliminary site plan review, which would also come to the Planning Commission for approval.

Mr. Hansen relayed those are the main two points he wanted to touch on. He is available to answer any questions and looks forward to feedback.

Acting Chair Avdoulos opened the Public Hearing and invited members of the audience who wished to participate to approach the podium.

Paul Hatcher, 27333 Meadowbrook Road, the Oliver Hatcher building, relayed he was at the Planning Commission meeting in December of last year and voiced concern. He appreciates Toll Brothers removing some of the previously shown buildings that were closer to Meadowbrook Road. Mr. Hatcher's request last December and tonight is that the buildings that are in the parcel inside or east of the west property line of his property, and the properties to the north and south of his property, are eliminated or pushed back even further.

When Mr. Hatcher bought his parcel and built 17 years ago, the intention was for the whole area to be OST, however he does not have an issue with the residential buildings behind his property. He has been on the property, and it doesn't appear there are really many OST type uses that would be compatible with the property with all the wetlands and woodlands. Residential is a good use for it, but Mr. Hatcher requests that the Planning Commission consider asking for the units he identified earlier to be eliminated.

Mike Duchesneau, 1191 South Lake Drive, relayed that this is not a solid concept plan. The applicant does not own or control the Phase 2 property and that is a major issue. The Phase 2 property is landlocked and needs to be part of a total development.

The applicant is asking for 80 units in Phase 1 and 54 units in Phase 2. The concept plan shows only 34 units, not the 54 that they're asking for. The applicant is asking for setback variances for these 54 imaginary units. Traffic information supplied was based on 80 units, not the 134 requested. Based on daily trips for the total development, a traffic study will be required to determine if an acceleration/deceleration lane is needed on Meadowbrook.

On the positive side, both Toll Brothers and Singh are known to be high quality builders in Novi. The homes are for sale and not for rent and as a longtime resident Mr. Duchesneau likes that.

Traffic on Meadowbrook would be significantly less than under the OST zoning. The surrounding properties are predominantly developed, and minimal adverse impacts would result from the residential development in this location. New home buyers would know what's behind them or near them.

The Toll Brothers proposal consists of two types of homes. The end units have a nice first floor layout including a primary bedroom. A person could easily age in place in these units if the developer includes other senior friendly amenities.

The center units have all the bedrooms on the second floor. This development could consist primarily of two-family buildings with only the first-floor layout end units. The two-family buildings could have smaller side yard setbacks, 20 feet total between the buildings as in the RT Two-Family Residential zoning district, which is hardly ever used. Mr. Duchesneau does not know of an RT Two-Family development in Novi.

Some of the three or four unit buildings could be allowed to have 30 foot side yard setbacks. The five unit clusters should meet the 35 foot side yard setbacks per RM-1. There's no logical reason for reducing the setbacks for these clusters of buildings. There are concerns about not meeting the 75 foot rear yard setbacks of RM-1. There are many areas, such as to the north where there are large trees, or to the west where there are wetlands, that would make sense to have smaller setbacks.

There is a much-needed senior friendly multifamily development option that should be available under a PRO, but this is not currently the proposal. Some of the interior units should be designed to include everything on the first floor, including a bedroom. It might mean that that these units don't have a 2-car garage, but then this could be proposed as a senior development PRO.

One of the Council members stated at the Monday Council meeting that the only reason he would consider leaving Novi was to be near his grandkids. This kind of facility with the end units and perhaps a smaller one-story middle unit would accommodate seniors and their families very well. Mr. Duchesneau has multiple instances where he knows of people who want to be near their family, especially grandkids.

Seeing no other audience members who wished to speak, Acting Chair Avdoulos asked Member Lynch to read into the record the correspondence received. Member Lynch relayed Stephen Carey, 27421 Meadowbrook Road, is opposed to the expansion of the development into the southern portion of the parcel relating to wetlands and has concern regarding Meadowbrook Road congestion due to the community's one access point.

Acting Chair Avdoulos closed the Public Hearing and turned the matter over to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Member Lynch relayed that residential use in this area is probably more appropriate than OST. Member Lynch inquired as to what the adverse impact could be to adjacent non-residential property owners.

Senior Planner Bell responded that for some uses, when they abut a residential district, there are sometimes additional set back requirements or use restrictions on those parcels.

Member Lynch inquired as to whether the applicant intends to offer an elevator option for the interior units. Mr. Rickard responded no.

Member Lynch relayed that if this moves forward to City Council, it would be good to prepare an analysis that quantifies the reduction in woodland/wetland impact versus OST zoning. Mr. Rickard responded that an analysis was run, and it was estimated that four additional acres of city woodlands would be preserved for a residential use. Member Lynch relayed hearing the numbers is good but suggested that a pictorial with a property plan as currently zoned and an overlay with the proposed zoning, as a previous applicant presented, would be a very helpful visual in terms of determining whether OST or residential use is more appropriate for the property and how many trees are actually saved.

Member Lynch relayed he noticed that the applicant is also going to contribute to the tree fund and inquired if there is any way the trees can be put on site instead. Mr. Rickard responded unfortunately not, the property has so many woodlands, every inch of open space has been replanted.

Member Lynch relayed he is familiar with what one of the residents spoke about regarding first floor and the elder population. Member Lynch lives in a Toll Brothers property that has an elevator which works fine. It's becoming more and more important to have a first-floor bedroom. These are selling like hotcakes in South Lyon or the Kensington Ridge Del Webb development in Milford. If there is any way an elevator can be accommodated, it may be a win-win. It's expensive, and really doesn't take up that much space, especially if it is done at the in the beginning. It is something to consider although Member Lynch does not want to tell Toll Brothers how to market their product as they do a great job at that.

Mr. Rickard relayed that this site was originally planned for all primary down units. It ultimately came down to a function of economics where the loss of removing the buildings near the entrance had to be made up for by adding in the smaller two-story townhomes in between the first-floor primary bedroom end units.

Member Lynch relayed he is not saying it should be a standard to put elevators in, but it may be something to consider because it would accommodate what Novi is trying to do to fit the needs of the senior population. Mr. Rickard replied he would look into it.

Member Lynch relayed that he would also like the applicant to quantify the difference between OST traffic compared to RM-1. OST will have thousands more trips than RM-1, so in addition to quantifying the reduction in woodland impact, quantify the percentage of traffic reduction.

Member Lynch inquired if there is a reason why the buildings are not located closer to the lake to take advantage of that feature. Mr. Rickard responded that when the mall was developed this property was used as a dumping ground. Along the western side by the large wetland, the walking path is on 20 to 25 feet of fill that is over topsoil. The only way to support residential foundations or any foundation is with pilings or some other extreme measure, so it becomes a function of economics.

Member Lynch relayed overall he would like to see this property as residential. There are some goals that

the City Council has to meet, such as addressing the senior population, reduction of wetland destruction, and traffic but the best thing the applicant can do is show the facts between leaving the property as OST versus rezoning to residential.

Mr. Rickard inquired whether the Planning Commission has the right to waive requirements on OST parcels that are adjacent to residential. Senior Planner Bell responded that she would need to look into that, but usually would think that would be ZBA.

Member Becker relayed that the subject properties are currently zoned OST with, curiously, part of one of the properties already falling in RM-1 zoning that came shooting out of Waltonwood. He has not been able to determine whether The Enclave and or Waltonwood developments required rezoning. It would seem likely that they were originally zoned RC Regional Center, as is the rest of the Twelve Oaks property.

The Planning Commission had another proposal in the last three years to change the RC zoning for other parts of property around Twelve Oaks to accommodate multifamily development. Our Master Plan and Future Land Use plan are not meant to be unchangeable, but we must always take great care when making significant modifications, which Member Becker believes was the case with The Enclave and Waltonwood.

In the information packet, it was mentioned that in 2005 the City approved an RM-1 with the PRO change for a similar, if not the same property area. This meant modifying the then current Master Plan and Future Land Use plan. The approved request was never realized but it would seem to indicate some justification for considering a similar request at this time.

The current property is mostly OST. It's not zoned as city parkland. At some point the property owners would have the legal right to develop the property as OST with nonresidential buildings, outdoor parking areas, etc. Trees and woodlands would be disturbed as they always will be for undeveloped land that's not set aside as parkland.

When Member Becker visited the area, he wondered what the residents of the fifth and sixth floors of the luxury condos at The Enclave would rather see across the lake from them - OST buildings and parking lots or two-story residential units with mostly inside parking. He had the same thought about the third story residents on the south side of Waltonwood. Granted, they would all say they'd rather see the woods and wetlands as they are, but the subject properties are not parkland. Either as OST or RM-1, the property will be developed at some point.

Given the beautiful and rather large lake that abuts the existing residential buildings and the subject properties, Member Becker thinks an RM-1 use will enhance the aesthetics of the entire area around the lake far more than any OST development could, which would quite likely require substantial large acreage of woods and wetlands to be disturbed.

The applicant has pointed out that conceptual office park development shows the loss of an additional four acres of woods and wetlands. The applicant's current proposal preserves 7.06 acres of City woodlands and 3.02 acres of City wetlands. The use and aesthetics of the proposed development complement the other two existing residential developments in the area.

It now looks as if the additional property in the south will be enjoined as an RM-1 under the same PRO which addresses the concern Member Becker had last time: that a dead-end road OST development would be created.

Member Becker's last comment is more to the Planning Commission and the planning staff and concerns this project, others in the recent past, and those yet to come. The applicant tonight, as they did last year, states that Novi is underserved regarding medium rise, high density residential options. When the Planning Commission and perhaps City Council are asked to make decisions using this underserved designation as a rationale, it would behoove us for several important reasons to hire an unbiased third party to assess the state of Novi's residential options. To one of the comments earlier, let's look at adult living options and provide professional and unbiased guidance to use in the future. Modifying our guiding documents, the

Master Plan, Future Land Use plan, and the accompanying zoning designations will become more logical and justifiable if we had information and data to back up the decisions.

Member Dismondy relayed this property is a good use for residential. He agrees with the gentleman who came up and spoke that it would be odd to have residential units in line with the office buildings along Meadowbrook. Recognizing economics makes it difficult to do so, but if the units could be west of the rear property line of the office uses, then when driving down Meadowbrook Road the townhomes wouldn't be as visible.

Member Dismondy inquired to confirm that the north-south street is located as is and not further west due to the soil conditions and inquired what the buffer is behind the first couple of units heading to the south. Mr. Rickard confirmed that the street is located as is due to the poor soil and the buffer is 50 feet from the property line. An 8-foot vinyl fence was proposed there to help with screening as well as landscape plantings. Landscape Architect Rick Meader relayed that is in line with what would be required.

Member Dismondy relayed that if it doesn't disturb the feeling of the OST district going up and down Meadowbrook Road, then he thinks this is a better use for the wetland area there. Also, it is adjacent to other residential surrounding a lake, so he is in support.

Member Roney relayed it would be nice to have more clarity on what is proposed for the Phase 2 portion and thinks that would help justify the PRO process. It is understood this is still one parcel as far as the city is concerned, so Phase 2 wouldn't be landlocked, but Singh through a private agreement owns Phase 2.

Member Roney did struggle a little bit with the public value that this brings, but Member Lynch did a nice job of pointing out some things that could be highlighted as public uses or benefits. In addition, if the non-motorized walking path could get over to Twelve Oaks Mall that could really strengthen up this being a nice public benefit. Member Roney would like to see this go forward, but there are a few more things that need to be done.

Member Verma inquired if the Fire Department has provided review comments. Senior Planner Bell responded that the Fire Department provided comments in the last review but did not have any major concerns.

Acting Chair Avdoulos relayed that from the last time this was presented to where we are today, he is a little bit more comfortable with having residential. The Planning Commission packet referenced the 2005 PRO proposal for this property which was approved by City Council. Although Acting Chair Avdoulos did not think of asking for a copy of the prior proposal to review until later today, it would have been nice to compare how much was taken up with that proposal versus what we have now to have a better understanding, and also to understand how that was proposed as you enter the site.

Having this as residential creates more of a community with the residential area that's around Twelve Oaks Lake and that's where it starts making sense. There were a lot of great comments made this evening. The staff has provided some great comments as well. If there could be an opportunity for the applicant to look at the need for homes that may benefit more of the senior community, it would be nice to recognize that somehow even as a percentage of the homes, although it can't be required.

Acting Chair Avdoulos has some friends that moved to Florida, and they showed pictures of their home which was in a 55 and over community. They were all ranch homes, and it was kind of interesting but that is a whole different ball game and different demographic because people go down there for that. If seniors want to stay in the city, those are the things that we'd like to see incorporated if they can be.

Acting Chair Avdoulos had the same concerns as Member Roney to make sure that the south piece was part of all of this; as Mr. Duchesneau said in his presentation, that would make it a little bit more solidified and would be a good way to present that to the City Council.

**This agenda item was discussed, but a motion on the item was not required.**



**2. BLM GROUP BUILDING EXPANSION JSP23-24**

Public Hearing at the request of Dembs Development for approval of the Special Land Use Permit, Preliminary Site Plan, Woodland Permit, and Stormwater Management Plan. The subject property is located in Section 4, on the north side of Cartier Drive in the I-1, Light Industrial District. The subject property is approximately 7.62 acres and the applicant is proposing a 63,608 square foot addition to an existing 75,162 square foot building in the Beck North Corporate Park.

Member Dismondy requested to be recused from this hearing since in his day job he works with the tenant as a commercial mortgage banker with potentially a financial interest.

City Attorney Beth Saarela relayed if the Planning Commission wants to consider whether there is a conflict and make a motion to allow Member Dismondy to recuse himself, that would be the process.

Motion to recuse Member Dismondy from the public hearing for BLM Group Building Expansion JSP23-34 due to potential financial interest made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Roney.

**VOICE VOTE TO RECUSE MEMBER DISMONDY FROM THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR BLM GROUP EXPANSION JSP23-34 MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY.**

***Motion carried 5-0.***

Member Dismondy, having been recused, left the room.

Planner Lindsay Bell relayed the subject properties are located in the Beck North Corporate Park on the north side of Cartier Drive, east of Beck Road. The site is estimated to be 7.6 acres and is located in Section 4 of the City.

The subject property is currently zoned I-1, Light Industrial. The properties to the north, west, and south are also zoned I-1, Light Industrial. The property to the north is a 50-foot buffer owned by the City of Novi that is zoned I-1. The parcels to the north of this buffer are zoned, RM-1, Low Rise Multiple Family Residential.

The Future Land Use Map indicates Industrial, Research, Development, and Technology for the subject property and for the properties to the east, west, and south. The properties to the north are proposed as private park and multiple-family residential.

The site contains woodlands along the west and north parcel lot lines. The proposed site plan indicates that 14 regulated trees are to be removed. This would require a total of 31 replacement credits. The plan is currently proposing to plant all tree credits on the site.

The applicant is proposing to construct a 63,608 square foot addition to the existing 75,162 square foot building to accommodate the growth of the current tenant, BLM Group. The use is considered a Special Land Use in the I-1 District because it abuts a residential district. The applicant has submitted a statement indicating the building addition will not house any excessive noise generating equipment. The tenant does not have a history of any noise ordinance infractions. The facility is a technical/research operation which supports the repair and training for laser machinery. No overhead doors or other openings will be left open during operating hours. Rooftop mechanical units will be enclosed by screening as required by the Zoning Ordinance. The findings for Special Land Use approval are in the Planning Commission packet.

Water service would be extended from the existing 8-inch water main along the north side of Cartier Drive. A domestic lead and fire lead would be provided to serve the building, along with 2 new hydrants. Sanitary sewer service would be provided via an extension from the existing sanitary lines on the south side of Cartier Drive. Stormwater would be collected and discharged to the existing stormwater system serving the corporate park.

The applicant is seeking two waivers from the Planning Commission. The first is for lack a of 10-15 foot landscaped berm between industrial and residential not provided due to preservation of 50-foot woodlands buffer along the north property line, and the distance from the existing multi-family buildings.

The second waiver is for reduction of greenbelt width at the southeast corner of the addition industrial subdivision frontage due to lack of space where the cul-de-sac curves into the property.

Zoning Board of Appeals variances will be requested for the building height and building setback at the eastern portion of the site. The building height matches the existing building, which was previously granted a variance. The setback issue is the same issue with the cul-de-sac curving onto the property that impacts the greenbelt.

The building addition is in full compliance with the façade ordinance.

The reviewers are all recommending approval with additional items to be addressed with final site plan submittal.

The Planning Commission is asked tonight to hold the public hearing, and approve or deny the Special Land Use, Preliminary Site Plan, Woodland Permit, and Stormwater Management Plan. The applicant Glenn Jones from Dembs Development is here tonight. Staff is here to answer any questions.

Acting Chair Avdoulos invited the applicant to address the Planning Commission.

Glenn Jones, Director of Operations, Dembs Development, relayed he is glad to be back. It's been about three years since Dembs has been here for a previous project that was approved by the Commission.

Senior Planner Bell did a great job describing the project. As further background on it, the original building was approved by Planning Commission in approximately 2016, the building was constructed in 2017, then occupied in late 2017. BLM Group is a very successful operation, a great tenant of Dembs Development, and they are looking to add a large building expansion because of their operation being such a success.

Acting Chair Avdoulos opened the Public Hearing and invited members of the audience who wished to participate to approach the podium. Seeing no one, and confirming there was no correspondence, Acting Chair Avdoulos closed the public hearing and turned the matter over to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Member Lynch relayed he is glad to see Mr. Jones back and that the tenant wants to expand in Novi. Based on what he's seen, this is basically just an extension of the same. The variances based on the location of it and with the woodlands around, Member Lynch has no problem with those. No need for a berm.

Mr. Jones relayed the ZBA approved the variances previously, and he doesn't anticipate any issues with ZBA this time. The cul-de-sac setback should be a minor issue that we can get back. We have a hardship that we can somewhat prove to ZBA given the fact that the tenant has a 20-ton crane that traverses their existing building, and they want it to extend throughout and into the new addition. They wanted to run the full maximum length of the building, so with that said, we kind of had to push the building envelope onto the corner of the cul-de-sac.

Member Lynch relayed he thinks that is reasonable to keep the business here in Novi and certainly the expansion of the business is a good thing. He does not have any issue with this this project at all.

Member Becker relayed that it looks great and inquired to Mr. Jones as to the size of the addition which has only a few additional parking places, so this is not a big employee expansion, it's really just a building expansion. Mr. Jones responded there is a pretty sizable craneway in there that moves some large heavy laser machinery, so the expansion is overtaken by a lot of that, not so much employee base, but more operationally with equipment. Member Becker sees absolutely nothing wrong with this request.

Member Roney relayed that it is great to see a business in Novi expanding, it looks very good.

Member Verma relayed it is a beautiful building and inquired as to whether the crane is inside the building or if it is coming and going. Mr. Jones responded that it would exist inside the building. The tenant presently

has three 15-ton craneways and one 20-ton craneway.

Member Verma inquired if the roads can take the weight of the cranes. Mr. Jones responded that most of the machinery is broken down after it's been set up in the facility for training, demonstration, and sales. Once it is sold, it is broken down into manageable pieces, loaded onto trucks and delivered to the purchaser's facility.

Acting Chair Avdoulos relayed he appreciates the tenant being successful and expanding in Novi. He also appreciates the documents that were presented, especially the one site plan that shows the distance from residential, the number of woodland buffers. He appreciates the care that's being taken for a lot of these adjacent properties, with the industrial next to residential.

Motion to approve the Special Land Use permit for BLM Group Expansion JSP23-24 moved by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Becker.

**In the matter of BLM Group Expansion, JSP23-24, motion to approve the Special Land Use permit based on the following findings:**

**a. Relative to other feasible uses of the site:**

- **The proposed use will not cause any detrimental impact on existing thoroughfares (as indicated in the traffic review letter);**
- **Subject to satisfying the requirements in the Engineering and Fire Reviews the proposed use will not cause any detrimental impact on the capabilities of public services and facilities (because the plan adequately addresses and provides for water and sanitary sewer service and management of stormwater volumes;**
- **Based on the number of trees being removed relative to the size of the building area, the proposed use is compatible with the natural features and characteristics of the land;**
- **The proposed use is compatible with adjacent uses of land as it is an expansion of an existing business, which has not had a history of complaints and the residential buildings to the north are a significant distance away;**
- **The proposed use is consistent with the goals, objectives, and recommendations of the City's Master Plan for Land Use;**
- **The proposed use will promote the use of land in a socially and economically desirable manner because it is in an existing corporate park;**
- **The proposed use is (1) listed among the provision of uses requiring special land use review as set forth in the various zoning districts of this Ordinance, and (2) is in harmony with the purposes and conforms to the applicable site design regulations of the zoning district in which it is located.**

**This motion is made because the plan is otherwise in compliance with Article 3, Article 4, Article 5, and Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinance and all other applicable provisions of the Ordinance.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL LAND USE PERMIT FOR JSP23-24 BLM GROUP EXPANSION MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BECKER.**

***Motion carried 5-0 (Member Dismondy recused).***

Motion to approve the Preliminary Site Plan for BLM Group Expansion JSP23-24 moved by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Becker.

**In the matter of BLM Group Expansion, JSP23-24, motion to approve the Preliminary Site Plan based on and subject to the following:**

- a. The findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the staff and consultant review letters and the conditions and the items listed in those letters being addressed on the Final Site Plan;**
- b. The applicant has addressed the noise impact requirements;**
- c. Planning Commission waiver of the required berms on the north side because it would**

- result in additional woodland removals, and the residential buildings are buffered by existing woodlands, which is hereby granted;
- d. Planning Commission waiver for the deficiency in greenbelt width on the southeast side, which is hereby granted;
  - e. Zoning Board of Appeals variance for the building setback at the southeast side of the addition due to the curve of the cul-de-sac;
  - f. Zoning Board of Appeals variance for the building height as depicted which is supported by staff because the site is heavily buffered by existing regulated woodlands both on and off the site, it matches the height of the existing building, and because the closest residential building is located over 700 feet away.

This motion is made because the plan is otherwise in compliance with Article 3, Article 4, Article 5, and Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinance and all other applicable provisions of the Ordinance.

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE THE PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN FOR JSP23-24 BLM GROUP EXPANSION MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BECKER.**

*Motion carried 5-0 (Member Dismondy recused).*

Motion to approve the Woodland Permit for BLM Group Expansion JSP23-24 moved by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Becker.

**In the matter of BLM Group Expansion, JSP23-24, motion to approve the Woodland Permit based on and subject to the following:**

- a. The findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the staff and consultant review letters, and the conditions and items listed in those letters and in the Special Land Use approval being addressed on the Final Site Plan;
- b. Full replacement of the trees being removed in accordance with the ordinance; provided, however, that the applicant shall be permitted to replace the trees on other properties within the Beck North Corporate Park development, or on other properties owned/developed by the applicant.

This motion is made because the plan is otherwise in compliance with Chapter 37 of the Code of Ordinances and all other applicable provisions of the Ordinance.

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE THE WOODLAND PERMIT FOR JSP23-24 BLM GROUP EXPANSION MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BECKER.**

*Motion carried 5-0 (Member Dismondy recused).*

Motion to approve the Stormwater Management Plan for BLM Group Expansion JSP23-24 moved by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Becker.

**In the matter of BLM Group Expansion, JSP23-24, motion to approve the Stormwater Management Plan, subject to:**

- a. The findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the staff and consultant review letters and the conditions and the items listed in those letters being addressed on the Final Site Plan.

This motion is made because the plan is otherwise in compliance with Chapter 11 of the Code of Ordinances and all other applicable provisions of the Ordinance.

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE THE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR JSP23-24 BLM GROUP EXPANSION MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BECKER.**

*Motion carried 5-0 (Member Dismondy recused).*

Member Dismondy returned to the room following completion of the item.

## **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **1. COMMERCE TOWNSHIP DRAFT MASTER PLAN REVIEW**

Planner James Hill relayed on September 19<sup>th</sup> Commerce Township distributed their draft Master Plan for review by neighboring municipalities. Staff reviewed the draft and prepared the memo included in the Planning Commission packet. A couple highlights from the Master Plan include two focused area plans in the township, the first being the Commercial Center located in the southeastern portion of the township, which neighbors the northeastern corner of the City of Novi along Fourteen Mile Road. This focus area included three different opportunity sites, where the suggested future uses included research and development campuses of headquarters on the sites west of M-5, and residential and retail uses for the most northern site on the east side of M-5. The focus area also shows proposed paths that branch off the existing non-motorized infrastructure, which is encouraging to see as staff and our consultant prepare the final draft of the Active Mobility Plan.

The draft Master Plan for Commerce Township dedicated an entire section to its non-motorized infrastructure, which included maintaining collaboration efforts with nearby communities such as the City of Novi.

The future land use map experienced a handful of changes since it was last updated, including two changes to areas that directly abut the City of Novi. Firstly, along Pontiac Trail, east of the existing manufactured housing development, the future land use is changing from manufactured home community to neighborhood residential to reflect current development and to be consistent with zoning. Other areas along Pontiac Trail remain the same.

Along Fourteen Mile Road at the northeast corner of M-5 and Fourteen Mile Road, an area that was previously Community Commercial is changing to General Commercial to reflect the current development there and be consistent with zoning. A Shell gas station and a Wendy's currently reside within this area. Other future land use categories along Fourteen Mile are planned to remain the same.

Overall, staff is supportive of the draft Master Plan for Commerce Township and how it identified the specific opportunity sites that require greater care in how they are developed in the future. Staff also recognizes the need for categorizing the select parcels near the border between the two municipalities, given the current development situations for the respective areas and the desire to conform to the Township's existing zoning.

The Planning Commission is asked to authorize the Planning Commission Chair to sign and send a letter to the Commerce Township Planning Commission commending them on their proposed draft master plan and state that their proposed Plan supports the City of Novi's Master Plan for Land Use.

Acting Chair Avdoulos turned the matter over to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Member Lynch relayed that Planner Hill did a nice job of explaining it, but it looks like they're reducing the density adjacent to Novi. They went from manufactured housing to a less dense single family. A lot of municipalities used to put that kind of stuff next to the next city and Member Lynch appreciates Commerce Township making this change. It benefits Novi.

Motion to authorize the Planning Commission Chair to sign and send a letter to the Commerce Township Planning Commission moved by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Roney.

**In the matter of Commerce Township Draft Master Plan Review, motion to authorize the Planning Commission Chair to sign and send a letter to the Commerce Township Planning Commission.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO AUTHORIZE THE PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR TO SIGN AND SEND A MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY.**

***Motion carried 6-0.***

## **2. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 27, 2023 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

Motion to approve the September 27, 2023 Planning Commission minutes made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Becker.

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 27, 2023 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY.**

*Motion carried 6-0.*

### **CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS FOR COMMISSION ACTION**

There were no consent agenda items.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES/TRAINING UPDATES**

There were no supplemental issues/training updates.

### **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Acting Chair Avdoulos invited members of the audience who wished to address the Planning Commission during the final audience participation to come forward. Seeing no one, Acting Chair Avdoulos closed the final audience participation.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Member Becker and seconded by Member Lynch.

**VOICE VOTE ON MOTION TO ADJOURN THE OCTOBER 11, 2023 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MADE BY MEMBER BECKER AND SECONDED BY MEMBER LYNCH.**

*Motion carried 6-0.*

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 PM.

\*Actual language of the motion sheet subject to review.