

**CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
31555 W ELEVEN MILE ROAD
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN
OCTOBER 16, 2025, 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, Countegan, Grant, Mantey, Stimson, Ware, Trafelet

Commissioners Absent: None

Others Present: Staff Planner Mulville-Friel, Planning Consultants Tangari and Upfal
(Giffels Webster), Staff Engineer Alexander, City Attorney Schultz

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. CLUSTER SITE PLAN 57-4-2025

LOCATION: 28000 West Nine Mile Rd.
PARCEL I.D.: 22-23-25-401-001
PROPOSAL: Construct fifty-two (52) single-family attached units (four per building) within RA-1, One Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED: Recommend to City Council
APPLICANT: Eureka Development Group
OWNER: Lutheran Child and Family Services of Michigan Inc.

Applicant presentation

Jim Butler – PEA Group, 1849 Pond Run, Auburn Hills
Erion Nicolla – Eureka Innovation Development, 5920 Livernois, Troy
Ren Nushaj – Troy Law Center, 5960 Livernois, Troy

Project Type:

- Cluster development (approved earlier in 2025 for cluster option)
- Current request: Site plan approval for Phase 1
- Location: Former Boys & Girls Republic site, south of the Rouge River
- Zoning: RA-1 (Single Family Residential)

Development Details:

- 13 buildings (4 ranch units per building) = 52 total units
- Phase 1 = south of Rouge River
- Phase 2 (future) = conceptual, approx. 88 additional units
- Access: From Nine Mile Road; existing bridge preserved
- Wetlands: Mostly avoided; minor impacts for culvert and detention pond

- Open Space: >11.7 acres, with 7+ acres dedicated to a nature conservation easement (potentially managed by Oakland County Parks)
- Design: All single-story ranch units with attached garages
- Pedestrian access: Sidewalk and observation area connections to Nine Mile Road

Planning Consultant review

Referencing his August 26, 2025 review memorandum, Planning Consultant Tangari gave the background and review for this request for cluster site plan approval.

Site context:

The project site encompasses approximately 79.81 acres and was formerly developed as a campus, portions of which are located both north and south of the Rouge River. The southern section of the property, where the proposed development will occur, currently contains existing campus buildings that are planned to be removed and replaced with new residential structures. The surrounding properties feature single-family residential zoning, with RA-1 districts to the north and east, RA-4 zoning to the south, and a mix of RA-1 and RA-3 districts to the west. This context establishes a predominantly residential character in the area surrounding the proposed development.

Density:

The cluster development option for the site was approved at a density of 1.8 units per acre. The proposed Phase 1, consisting of 52 residential units, represents a density of approximately 0.67 units per acre when calculated across the full 79.81-acre property. If the site were to be fully developed in the future with a total of about 140 units, the overall density would remain consistent with the approved cluster standard of 1.8 units per acre, maintaining compliance with the township's zoning requirements.

Dimensional and site standards are met.

A total of 353 replacement trees are required for the project, of which 316 are provided on-site. The applicant has proposed to pay into the township's tree fund for the remaining 37 trees. However, the consultant's review found that six additional trees appear to be missing from the calculations, and this discrepancy will need to be corrected.

The landscape plan includes 19 street trees, which meet the cluster development requirement. All trees shown on the plan are replacement trees, which cannot be double counted toward other landscape or buffering requirements.

The zoning ordinance requires a buffering transition between cluster developments and adjacent single-family residential districts. While the north side of the site is naturally buffered by the Rouge River and surrounding forest, the east and west sides directly abut other RA-zoned properties. The current plan relies solely on replacement trees for this transition and does not include additional buffer-specific landscaping.

The Planning Commission must therefore determine whether the proposed landscaping provides an adequate buffer—particularly near the east end of the site where a change in topography occurs—or if additional screening is needed. If the Commission requests more buffer trees, those trees

would not count toward replacement totals, and the applicant's contribution to the tree fund would need to be adjusted accordingly.

Planning Consultant Tangari concluded that the plan is compliant with zoning and cluster development standards, with the primary discussion point being the adequacy of the proposed landscape buffering.

In response to questions, Planning Consultant Tangari further explained that:

- The minimum lot size in the RA-1 district is 33,000 square feet—approximately three-quarters of an acre—which equates to a density of about 1.5 units per acre. The cluster option, which allows 1.8 units per acre, is only slightly higher in density.

Commissioner Brickner acknowledged that the request for cluster approval was reasonable given the topography of the site and the location of the Rouge River, noting that while the buildings are closer together in some areas, the overall density is comparable to that of a traditional subdivision.

- The request before the Commission is for site plan approval of Phase 1 only. Phase 2 is included for informational purposes to illustrate potential future expansion, but it is not part of the current approval. The previously approved cluster option sets the allowable overall density, which will carry forward if future phases are proposed.
- All existing structures south of the Rouge River would be demolished.

Ren Nushaj, Troy Law Center, speaking on behalf of Wellspring, confirmed that the site previously housed children's programs following its operation as the Boys and Girls Republic. The facilities are now vacant and unoccupied. The site had a long history of institutional and residential use spanning more than a century.

In response to questions, Mr. Nikolla, Eureka Innovation Development, stated that asbestos surveys are currently being conducted, and testing results are expected next week. The applicant will follow all state-mandated procedures for removal. There were no plans to apply for brownfield funding for this portion of the project.

Public hearing.

Chair Trafelet opened the public hearing.

Carrie Cook, 23320 Glencreek Drive, thanked the applicant for preserving seven acres on the north end of the site. She asked whether residents would receive another notification letter when the developer returns with plans for Phase 2 and expressed concern about potential traffic impacts along Nine Mile Road if a traffic light is not added. Ms. Cook also inquired about the timing of construction and whether wildlife displacement, particularly deer, would be addressed. She thought the project looked good overall but wanted to make sure residents would be notified of future phases.

Brian Yaldoo, representing a client who owns adjacent property off Inkster Road, stated that the proposed development would be a positive improvement for the area. The site has contained vacant

buildings for many years, and he expressed support for redeveloping it to bring new activity and vitality to the community. Mr. Yaldoo encouraged the City to approve the project.

Derek Gasco, 28005 West Nine Mile Road, stated that while he initially intended to oppose the project, he now believes it represents an improvement to the area. He expressed concern about existing traffic and speeding issues along Nine Mile Road and suggested that additional traffic control measures be considered. Mr. Gasco also requested that the front units facing Nine Mile be set back farther to provide more privacy for nearby homeowners. He emphasized the scenic character of the site and encouraged greater preservation of natural areas beyond the proposed seven acres. He generally supported the plan, and hoped these concerns will be addressed during final planning.

As no other public indicated they wished to speak, Chair Trafelet closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the Commission.

Commission deliberation and motion

In response to public comments:

- Commissioner Brickner pointed out that the proposed setback is 76' from the right-of-way. Normally, in the RA-1 district, the front setback only has to be 40'.
- Planning Consultant Tangari noted that should there be a Phase 2, there will be a public hearing for the site plan for that phase.

In response to questions, Planning Consultant Tangari confirmed that the Commission must determine whether the proposed landscaping provides sufficient buffering, particularly along the west side of the site where buildings are closest to the property line.

Mr. Nikolla explained that the east side of the property is heavily wooded along the Rouge River and already benefits from a significant natural buffer. There will be a planned observation deck near the river that will include benches and a small ornamental retaining wall with a railing, intended as a community gathering space with access to scenic views of the river. Commissioner Trafelet asked about the design and safety features of the observation area, and Mr. Nikolla confirmed it would include a poured concrete pad, a four-foot wall, and a handrail for protection.

Returning to the landscape screening issue, Planning Consultant Tangari indicated that the west side buffer includes a row of replacement trees and is the only area where the Commission must determine adequacy. Commissioners discussed the need for additional conifer plantings (perhaps 4-5) to supplement the deciduous trees and provide year-round screening.

Mr. Nikolla responded that the landscape plan (Sheet L.1) currently includes seven trees along the closest portion of the western property line but that the applicant could add approximately five more coniferous trees without impacting the sanitary sewer line that runs north-south through that area. He agreed that someone on his staff would work with City staff to finalize the placement of additional screening trees to the satisfaction of the Planning Department.

Commissioner Mantey confirmed with the applicant that the voluntary seven-acre conservation easement on the north portion of the property would be formalized as part of Phase 1. Mr. Nikolla

noted that Oakland County Parks had expressed interest in the conservation area, which may eventually include public access, but details would be finalized in coordination with future phases.

MOTION by Brickner, support by Aspinall, to recommend to City Council that the application for Cluster Site Plan Approval 57-4-2025, dated April 24, 2025, as revised July 30, 2025, submitted by Eureka Development Group, be approved, because the plans are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Master Plan and applicable provisions of the One Family Cluster Option of the Zoning Ordinance, subject to the following conditions:

- A. All outstanding issues identified in Giffels Webster's August 26, 2025 review shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Planner. The Planning Commission finds the proposed landscape buffer acceptable, with the understanding that the Planning Department shall determine whether additional trees are needed along the west property line and may require their addition as part of final site plan approval.**
- B. All outstanding issues identified in the City Engineer's August 22, 2025, interoffice correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Engineer; and**
- C. All outstanding issues identified in the Fire Marshal's August 7, 2025, interoffice correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Fire Marshal.**
- D. Phase 2 as presented this evening is a concept plan only, with no action required by the Planning Commission.**
- E. The applicant grant at least a seven acre conservation easement area in the northern portion of the property, also as presented this evening.**

Roll call vote:

Ayes – Stimson, Ware, Countegan, Aspinall, Grant, Brickner, Mantey, Trafelet

Nays – None

Motion passed 8-0.

REGULAR MEETING

A. AMEND PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT 12, 2014, INCLUDING SITE PLAN 60-7-2025

LOCATION:	12 Mile, west of Orchard Lake Road
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-10-476-067
PROPOSAL:	Construct new fast-food restaurant with drive-through on a vacant outlot within B-4, Planned General Business District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Set for Planning Commission Public Hearing
APPLICANT:	Ronald J. Sesì
OWNER:	SSFHC Real Estate, LLC

Planning Consultant Review

Referencing his October 6, 2025 memorandum, Planning Consultant Tangari gave the background and review for this request to set an amendment to PUD 12,2014, including Site Plan 60-7-2025, for public hearing. The site is located at the corner of Orchard Lake and 12 Mile Roads. The applicant proposes to construct a Culver's drive-through restaurant on a 0.5-acre outlot along the 12 Mile frontage, currently used for parking. The development would remove several parking spaces and affect internal circulation for the larger shopping center.

Under the current Planned Unit Development Agreement, a drive-through restaurant is permitted only on Parcel A, not on Parcel B, where the Culver's is proposed. Because the request introduces a new use and alters site circulation and parking, the amendment is considered a major modification to the PUD.

Planning Consultant Tangari outlined several site plan issues identified in the review memorandum, including noncompliance with the front setback, missing details such as building height and drive-through stacking spaces, and the need to show pedestrian connections and rooftop screening. He also noted that a parking study was submitted but not in time for staff review before this meeting; staff recommendations on that study will be provided when the case returns for public hearing.

Commissioner Aspinall inquired whether a previous modification to the PUD for another parcel in the development had been considered a major amendment, and Tangari confirmed that it had, noting this would be consistent treatment. Commissioner Brickner questioned the proposed building's setback relative to adjacent businesses along 12 Mile Road and was advised that the Culver's would be roughly in line with neighboring buildings, though the applicant is expected to request a setback waiver through the PUD amendment process.

Commissioners agreed that the proposal constitutes a major amendment given the scope of change to the PUD.

Further Commission discussion included:

- Based on the site plan, the proposed Culver's would sit approximately thirty feet closer to 12 Mile Road than the existing Comerica Bank, raising concern about the alignment of buildings along the corridor.
- Had a traffic study had been completed? There was concern about additional traffic generated by a high-volume drive-through restaurant and the difficulty of making left turns out of the shopping center; some traffic control – such as a signal or turning restrictions, might be necessary. Staff Engineer Alexander confirmed that both a traffic and parking study had been submitted but not yet reviewed.
- The immediate area already includes multiple drive-through operations, including a bank, Burger King, and Starbucks, and stacking and internal circulation should be carefully reviewed. Culver's locations typically experience long queues, particularly during peak hours, and stacking should be evaluated to prevent backups into drive aisles or entrances.
- On the other hand, Culver's would serve existing area traffic rather than generating significant new volume. The shopping center already attracts a high daily traffic count. Broader traffic impacts along 12 Mile or Orchard Lake were less of a concern than internal circulation and access management within the development.

Applicant presentation

Allen Eizember, Novak & Fraus Engineers
Ronald J. Sesi, applicant

Mr. Eizember provided the following information:

- The proposed setback is 44.7 feet, roughly two and a half feet closer to the road than the existing Starbucks but still consistent with that portion of the PUD. The lot's depth of 200 feet constrains building placement, making an east-west orientation impractical due to drive-through and fire access needs.
- A traffic study had been submitted with preliminary feedback received and no major issues identified. The drive-through stacking is designed to wrap around the north side of the building to avoid conflict with the main drive aisle along 12 Mile, and additional measures such as signage or a raised island could be used to ensure vehicles follow the intended circulation path.

Commission questions and deliberation

In response to questions from the Commission, the applicants provided the following further information:

- The design includes a single drive-through lane with double-sided ordering stations to accommodate stacking on both sides, consistent with Culver's operational model. Five stacking spaces will be provided behind the pickup window, with eight additional spaces extending around the north and east sides of the building.
- The existing shopping center's detention basin is integrated into the parking lot, and the new Culvers development would include an underground stormwater system beneath the eastern drive-through lanes to handle runoff on-site. This design will allow gravity-fed drainage into the city's sewer system, improving existing flooding conditions.
- The Culver's site does not include front parking between the building and 12 Mile Road, minimizing visual and functional conflicts. The plan exceeds ordinance requirements with 13 stacking spaces, where only 8 are required.
- The traffic study included Saturday morning observations, accounting for Scramblers Restaurant operations.
- An updated plan showing stacking, loading, and refuse details had been submitted earlier in the week and would appear in the next packet.

MOTION by Countegan, support by Ware, that the Commission finds that the proposed Amendment to PUD 12, 2014, and revised Site Plan 60-7-2025, submitted by Ronald J. Sesi, is a major amendment to the PUD, and that this request for amendment and revised site plan be set for public hearing for the Planning Commission's next available regular meeting agenda.

Roll call vote:

Ayes – Mantey, Brickner, Grant, Aspinall, Countegan, Ware, Stimson, Trafelet

Nays – None

Motion passed 8-0.

B. SITE PLAN 62-12-2024 – MARATHON GAS STATION

LOCATION:	29450 Nine Mile Road
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-26-486-014
PROPOSAL:	Propose to renovate and expand existing Marathon Gas Station within B-3, General Business District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Site Plan approval
APPLICANT:	Riham Sarout
OWNER:	Smart Petrol 1, LLC

Commissioner Brickner disclosed he had a professional conflict of interest with the applicant.

MOTION by Mantey, support by Stimson, to recuse Commissioner Brickner from participation on this item due to the stated conflict of interest.

Motion passed by voice vote, 7-0-1 (Brickner abstained).

Commissioner Brickner left the dais.

Planning Consultant review

Referencing her October 9, 2025 memorandum, Planning Consultant Upfal presented the review for this request for site plan approval to expand and renovate the existing Marathon gas station at Nine Mile and Middlebelt Roads. The proposal includes an expansion of the convenience store and the addition of new fuel pump islands beneath existing canopies. The western canopy would be expanded from two to six fueling positions, creating a new setback nonconformity that would require a variance.

The B-3 site at 19,435 square feet is a little less than one-half acre in size and currently contains multiple existing nonconformities, including deficient front setbacks relative to both canopies, lack of internal landscaping, and no front yard open space within the property lines. Access to the site is provided through three driveways—one on Middlebelt and two on Nine Mile—with the proposal including the closure of the westernmost Nine Mile entrance.

A gas station is a permitted use in the B-3 district provided that the site is used as a gas station as of December 31st, 2024 and subject to several use specific standards.

The site meets parking requirements with 14 spaces provided, although one space adjacent to the dumpster will be reserved for employee use due to limited maneuvering room. The applicant indicated the rear portion of the site could not be used for dumpster placement because of a sewer easement. Staff requested that any outdoor mechanical equipment be identified and properly screened.

Planning Consultant Upfal outlined compliance issues and key considerations for the Commission. The expanded western canopy will require a front setback variance, and the east driveway on Middlebelt remains noncompliant with intersection clearance requirements. The site lacks required 10-foot perimeter setbacks and front yard landscaping within the property boundary. Lighting exceeds ordinance limits, with a 5.95:1 average-to-minimum illumination ratio and light levels beyond the permitted maximum at several property lines. Fixture lumens and canopy lighting must be reduced to meet requirements and shielded to prevent glare onto residential properties. No internal pedestrian connections to Nine Mile or Middlebelt sidewalks were provided, which staff recommended be added. Building materials do not meet updated architectural standards due to the use of EIFS at ground level, but relief may be granted by the Commission if justified architecturally.

While the plan reflects many improvements, the Commission should determine whether the number and degree of remaining nonconformities are acceptable. This application was initially

submitted prior to adoption of the city's updated design standards, but the current review is subject to those standards.

Commissioner Mantey expressed concern over the number of existing nonconformities on the site, noting that the applicant is nearly doubling the size of the retail building while bringing few, if any, elements into compliance. Planning Consultant Tangari responded that the main improvements are the relocation and enclosure of the dumpster, and closing one of the two Nine Mile curb cuts. Commissioner Mantey acknowledged those improvements but reiterated that additional efforts toward conformance should be expected with such an expansion.

Commissioner Mantey also raised questions about the undeveloped land to the north, which includes a vacated alley. While the area is currently overgrown and provides natural screening, its long-term use or ownership is unclear, and he questioned whether the lack of a required fence would remain appropriate in the future. He also emphasized the importance of addressing lighting impacts, suggesting that excessive illumination could constitute a nuisance under general health and safety enforcement provisions.

Commissioner Countegan commented that redevelopment of long-standing nonconforming sites often involves balancing ordinance requirements with the value of private reinvestment. While the Commission should expect compliance where feasible—particularly for lighting standards—it may also consider site enhancement and modernization as part of the overall public benefit. Commissioner Countegan asked whether there were additional site improvements that could be incorporated to offset nonconforming conditions.

Commissioner Mantey added that applicants should clearly explain which nonconformities cannot be corrected and why. The Commission should expect compliance with current ordinances unless technical or practical limitations prevent it.

Commissioner Stimson clarified that at least one item—the canopy setback variance—will require Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) approval.

Planning Consultant Upfal confirmed that the provided draft motion addresses the need for a ZBA variance. Commissioner Mantey noted that in some cases, the Commission may request that applicants obtain variances prior to site plan approval and stated that he would prefer that approach here due to the number of existing and proposed nonconformities.

Applicant presentation

Architect: Riham Alsarout

Owner: Aoun Aoun

Ms. Alsarout stated that the building's exterior material is limestone rather than EIFS and that the plans will be corrected to reflect that. The owner has also agreed to increase landscaping along the southeast portion of the site and to install a six-foot wall along the north property line if the Commission determines it is preferable to the existing vegetative buffer.

Ms. Alsarout further explained that the design team has revised the photometric plan to comply with city lighting standards and that the updated plan will address the previously identified illumination issues. She requested that the Planning Commission grant site plan approval conditioned upon ZBA variance approval, noting that project delays earlier in the year have already negatively impacted the owner's construction schedule.

Commissioner Mantey clarified that he was not necessarily advocating for a wall along the north property line, but he wanted to ensure that the long-term uncertainty surrounding the adjacent vacated alley was addressed. Planning Consultant Tangari explained that the future of the vacated alley could not be determined at this time.

Planning Consultant Upfal clarified that the alley lies adjacent to the B-1 zoned parcel to the north and that the existing vinyl fence runs along that boundary. There is currently no wall adjacent to the residential portion of the property.

Commissioner Countegan asked for clarification on the specific variances that would be required. City Attorney Schultz confirmed that the only variance necessary was for the canopy setback, but the ZBA has discretion to impose conditions related to other site features, such as fencing, if deemed appropriate. Commissioner Mantey asked that this understanding should be reflected in the meeting minutes.

Chair Trafelet asked the applicant about site operations. Mr. Aoun, property owner, stated that tow truck operations had ceased and that the neighboring building to the west operates solely as a mechanic shop. He also confirmed that the proposed renovation would not reduce available parking and that the site exceeds minimum parking requirements, with 14 spaces provided where 12 to 13 are required.

Ms. Alsarout confirmed that the dumpster is positioned between parking spaces due to a sanitary sewer easement that prevents placement in the rear. The adjacent parking spaces will be reserved for employees to avoid potential conflicts. The project team is working with a civil engineer to develop an underground stormwater retention system consistent with city engineering standards.

MOTION by Stimson, support by Aspinall, that the application for Site Plan Approval 62-12-2024, dated November 4th, 2024, as revised September 10th, 2025, submitted by Riham Sarout, be approved, because it appears to meet all applicable requirements of the Zoning Chapter, subject to the following conditions and determinations:

- 1) All outstanding issues identified in the Giffels Webster's October 9th, 2025 review shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Planner.**
- 2) All outstanding issues identified in the City Engineer's September 30th, 2025, inter-office correspondence be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Engineer.**
- 3) All outstanding issues identified in the Fire Marshal's October 3rd, 2025, inter-office correspondence be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Fire Marshal.**

CONDITIONS AND DETERMINATIONS:

- 1) The pump canopy within the front setback is not permitted without a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- 2) The total amount of front yard open space is an existing condition and may be less than 50%, as shown on the plans.
- 3) The landscaped area along Middlebelt Road is shown on the plans to be less than 10' deep and is permitted if additional landscaping is provided.
- 4) Rooftop mechanical equipment must be screened as required.
- 5) The 2-foot high knee wall shown on the plans along Nine Mile is permitted to be located entirely within the right-of-way, subject to obtaining all necessary right-of-way permits.
- 6) If left as open space with no doors open to it, the proposed greenbelt and the existing six-foot high vinyl screening fence, both situated along the northern lot line, may be used instead of the six-foot high wall required when commercial sites abut a residential district.
- 7) The illumination levels must be brought into compliance.
- 8) Pedestrian connections to the Nine Mile or Middlebelt Road sidewalks must be provided.
- 9) The proposed building materials shall comply with the commercial design standards adopted in the zoning ordinance as amended 9/22/2025.

Roll call vote:

Ayes – Mantey, Grant, Aspinall, Countegan, Ware, Stimson, Trafelet

Nays – None

Motion passed 7-0 (Brickner recused).

Commissioner Brickner rejoined the Commission on the dais.

C. SITE PLAN 62-8-2025

LOCATION:	29820 Nine Mile Rd.
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-26-482-001
PROPOSAL:	Renovate existing building as Warehouse within LI-1, Light Industrial District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Site plan approval
APPLICANT:	Joseph S. Novitsky
OWNER:	Ilan Hazan

Planning Consultant Review

Referencing his September 8, 2025 memorandum, Planning Consultant Tangari gave the background and review for this request for site plan approval. The applicant proposed to use the existing 2,400-square-foot building on the 0.32-acre site as a warehouse and to remove a smaller 720-square-foot structure near the corner of Nine Mile and Shiawassee. The property, formerly occupied by Randolph Fence Company, is zoned LI-1 Light Industrial and is located at a triangular intersection with numerous dimensional and historic nonconformities.

The site, located at 29820 Nine Mile Road, is bordered by OS-1 zoning to the north, LI-1 to the east, B-3 commercial to the south, and RA-4 single-family residential to the west. The existing drive from Nine Mile would remain, with a proposed gate at the entrance. Due to its configuration, the site lacks several required elements, including a labeled loading space, a compliant dumpster enclosure,

and one required parking space. While three spaces are labeled, a fourth is available, and space exists for a fifth, though its location would require a front yard variance.

No mechanical equipment was shown on the plan, and any proposed equipment would require screening. A new six-foot wood privacy fence is proposed along both street frontages to replace the existing chain-link fence, but that configuration would require a variance for fence location. The applicant also has not provided a photometric plan or pedestrian connection to the public sidewalk.

Planning Consultant Tangari emphasized that, given the site's constraints, multiple variances will likely be necessary to achieve compliance, including for dumpster location, loading space, and/or parking configuration. There were no issues with materials as proposed.

Commissioners noted that the building likely predates city zoning regulations.

Applicant presentation

Joseph Novitsky, JSN Architecture, Berkley MI
Ilan Hazan, Owner

Mr. Novitsky explained that Mr. Hazan operates a long-established kitchen and bath remodeling business and intends to use the property solely for small-scale material storage. The owner works independently with no employees, machinery, or on-site refuse. Deliveries would be limited to small trucks. Materials would be stored within the building and delivered directly to customers' job sites.

Mr. Novitsky described the project as an opportunity to revitalize a long-challenged site with minimal neighborhood impact. He stated that the property, formerly in poor condition, has been improved and maintained by the owner over the past four seasons, including cleanup and regular upkeep. To manage drainage, the team proposes installing percolating pavers to improve stormwater infiltration, with engineering department support pending documentation of the site's percolation capacity.

The applicant plans to demolish the smaller 720-square-foot building near the corner and retain the rear 2,400-square-foot structure, which was solidly built and structurally sound. Mr. Novitsky noted coordination with the adjacent residential neighbor regarding the existing fence line, which sits approximately four feet inside the neighboring property. Both parties have agreed that the applicant will replace the chain-link fence with a precast masonry wall with individual piers that will preserve the existing mature trees. Novitsky emphasized the goal of maintaining a clean, attractive, and low-impact site consistent with the neighborhood's character.

Mr. Hazan, owner, confirmed that he has obtained a demolition permit for the smaller front building. He explained that after many years of operating his remodeling business from Northwestern Highway, he purchased this site to consolidate his storage and remain in Farmington Hills. Mr. Hazan reiterated that he works alone, visits the property infrequently, and performs no noisy or hazardous operations. Deliveries would involve only small trucks or vans. He currently maintains the site's landscaping and cleanliness regularly.

Mr. Hazan expressed his commitment to beautifying the property and contributing positively to the area's appearance. He noted that removing the front building would improve traffic visibility at the intersection and create a more attractive streetscape through new landscaping and fencing improvements.

In response to questions, the applicant gave the following further information:

- There was a garage overhead door on the east side of the building.
- Mr. Hazan closed on the property in December 2024, and has not yet obtained a certificate of occupancy or begun operating his business from the site.
- The masonry wall was proposed only along the west side of the property adjacent to the residential lot. They will use a non-continuous footing system with isolated piers, allowing precast masonry panels to be placed between posts to preserve tree roots. This construction method will comply with city standards while protecting existing vegetation.
- Mr. Hazan needed a full perimeter privacy fence to provide both security and privacy due to the site's exposure to both Shiawassee and Nine Mile traffic. The privacy fence will be stained wood, with the finished side facing outward.
- Mr. Hazan intended to install a sign labeled "Kitchen and Bath Outlet" as shown on the plans, subject to obtaining a separate sign permit from the City.

In response to questions, Planning Consultant Tangari explained that although the building itself remained, the proposal required site plan approval because there was currently no formal parking area, and other site elements such as screening and loading areas must be addressed. The Planning Commission does not yet have authority under the pending ordinance amendment to waive parking requirements.

Mr. Novitsky noted that the building exterior will be repainted, and the existing low-wattage gooseneck light fixtures on each corner will remain in place. The lighting is subtle, the building has been re-roofed, and the improvements result in a clean, well-maintained appearance.

Commissioners generally supported the applicant's efforts to upgrade and improve the property.

It came out in conversation that this project required Planning Commission approval because the proposal included paving a new parking lot, changing fencing along a residential boundary, and adding landscaping, thereby constituting a site modification subject to Planning Commission review. Specific issues requiring Zoning Board of Appeals action included the loading space, dumpster location, and one parking space deficiency.

Commissioner Mantey raised a concern regarding the applicant's plan to install a solid fence around the property. He noted that three sides of the solid fencing would face neighboring properties and expressed a preference for a chain-link fence, which would maintain visibility and openness. He could not support a request for a variance for a solid fence.

MOTION by Countegan, support by Brickner, that the Planning Commission approve Site Plan 62-8-2025, dated June 12, 2025, submitted by Joseph S. Novitsky, because it appears to meet all applicable requirements of the Zoning Chapter, subject to the following conditions and determinations:

- 1) All outstanding issues identified in Giffels Webster's September 8, 2025 review shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Planner.**
- 2) All outstanding issues identified in the City Engineer's August 29, 2025 interoffice correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Engineer.**
- 3) All outstanding issues identified in the Fire Marshal's August 28, 2025 interoffice correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Fire Marshal.**

Conditions and Determinations:

- 1) The existing building setbacks are existing non-conformities, and as the building is not proposed to be structurally altered in this site plan, the Planning Commission permits these non-conformities to persist.**
- 2) Designate a loading space on the site plan; this is required to be in a rear or interior side yard. The loading space may be designated in the maneuvering lane if deliveries are scheduled when they do not conflict with customer or on-site vehicle movements. This condition shall be noted on the plan. Otherwise, a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals is required if the loading zone cannot be accommodated.**
- 3) A dumpster and associated enclosure are required in the LI-1 District. If a dumpster enclosure cannot be accommodated on the site, a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals is required to omit the enclosure.**
- 4) Based on parking requirements for a warehouse, the site is deficient by one parking space. The Planning Commission may not approve parking reductions for sites with fewer than ten spaces. If parking requirements cannot be met, a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals is required to address this deficiency.**
- 5) Any rooftop mechanical equipment must be screened in accordance with ordinance requirements; this note shall be added to the plan.**
- 6) The new six-foot wood privacy fence shown on the site plan is not compliant and requires a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals to be installed in the proposed location. This condition excludes the masonry fence along the west property line, which is compliant.**

Motion discussion:

Mr. Novitsky pointed out that there would be no rooftop equipment or need for mechanical screening on the site, as the building uses only a gas-fired appliance and does not require air conditioning. He also explained that the loading area would not accommodate large trucks due to the site's limited space and would instead serve only small delivery vans. City Attorney Schultz advised that those arguments would need to be made before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

The Chair recognized Andrew Buck, 29845 Shiawasee. Mr. Buck said he lived adjacent to this site, and spoke in support of the proposal. The site had long been underutilized and in poor condition, and the proposed improvements would enhance the appearance and vitality of this highly visible area. He also confirmed agreement regarding the existing fence line and affirmed that the redevelopment represents a clear benefit for both the city and local residents.

Commissioner Mantey stated that he would vote against the motion, because he felt the site plan should have allowed for the option of a six-foot chain link fence rather than requiring a solid wood privacy fence, both of which would need a variance. He continued to support a chain link fence in this location.

Roll call vote:

Ayes – Stimson, Ware, Countegan, Aspinall, Grant, Brickner, Trafelet

Nays – Mantey

Motion passed 7-1.

D. LOT SPLIT 3 AND 4, 2025 (FINAL)

LOCATION: 28500 Oak Crest Dr. and 0 Rockridge Lane
PARCEL I.D.: 22-23-01-177-025 & 027
PROPOSAL: Combining two parcels then split into four parcels within RA-1,
One Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED: Lot split approval (final)
APPLICANT: Jason M. and Lauryn M. Curis
OWNER: Jason M. and Lauryn M. Curis

Referencing her September 23, 2025 memorandum, Planning Consultant Upfal gave the background and review for this lot split request.

The property is part of the Franklin Oaks Subdivision, originally platted in 1945 and later amended in 1966 to require site access from Oakcrest Drive and prohibit access from Rockridge Lane when a school was built there. After the school's demolition in 2012, the site has remained vacant. In 2018, the current owners purchased the property and obtained a court-approved consent judgment with the Franklin Oaks Subdivision, allowing the two parcels to be split into four residential lots subject to various conditions.

The consent judgment, not yet recorded, includes restrictions governing lot configuration, minimum home size, tree preservation on Lot 4, construction access, architectural compatibility, and limits on future access from Oakcrest Drive. The proposed split would create four residential lots at the bulb end of Rockridge Lane, maintaining a future easement between Parcels 2 and 3 for road access.

The combined property area is 12.52 acres and zoned RA-1, Single-Family Residential. Three of the proposed lot widths, as shown on the updated survey, do not meet the 100-foot minimum width requirement for the zoning district. Because of this, the lots would require variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals before the Planning Commission could grant final approval. Under the city's subdivision ordinance, if any parcel fails to meet zoning requirements, the Planning Commission must deny the split until variances are obtained.

Further, the proposed lots exceed the allowable three-to-one depth-to-width ratio, though this requirement can be waived by the Planning Commission. The irregular lot shapes are a result of the cul-de-sac location and are not inconsistent with other large lots in the neighborhood, which range from 2.65 to 11 acres.

Other considerations included potential driveway placement conflicts, preservation of woodlands on Lot 4, and confirmation that the site is not impacted by wetlands.

Commissioner Mantey asked about an existing pedestrian easement shown on the plans, questioning whether it was being considered as part of the current application. Planning Consultant Upfal responded that the easement would remain on Parcel 4 and was not being altered by the proposed lot split.

Commissioner Mantey noted that from a planning perspective, it would be beneficial for the city to consider maintaining or reconfiguring the pedestrian connection between the cul-de-sacs in this area to enhance walkability. He observed that the existing long pedestrian path likely originated as access to the former school site and suggested that a more direct pedestrian link between Parcels 3 and 4 could provide neighborhood connectivity. While acknowledging that the Commission was not voting on this issue, he emphasized that pedestrian access between neighborhoods is generally regarded as a best planning practice.

Attorney Donald Rump, representing the applicants, introduced himself and noted that he had represented the property owners during the Circuit Court and Court of Appeals proceedings that resulted in the consent judgment referenced in the staff report.

MOTION by Stimson, support by Grant, that Lot Split 3 and 4, 2025 (Final) dated October 24, 2024, submitted by Jason M. and Lauryn M. Curis be denied because it appears that the applicable provisions of Chapter 34-3.1.4.E of the Zoning Ordinance are not met. Proposed parcels 1, 2, and 3 do not meet the lot width requirements.

Roll call vote:

Ayes – Stimson, Ware, Countegan, Aspinall, Grant, Mantey, Trafelet

Nays – Brickner

Motion passed 7-1.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES **September 18, 2025, Regular Meeting**

MOTION by Ware, support by Countegan, to approve the September 18, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes as submitted.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

COMMISSIONER/STAFF COMMENTS

Commissioners welcomed Erik Lindquist as the new Planning Commissioner. Mr. Lindquist introduced himself, noting that he had served on the Zoning Board of Appeals for 18 years and was excited to make this transition.

City Planner Mulville-Friel noted there was correspondence regarding a master plan update from the Village of Franklin.

Commissioner Brickner expressed concern about the city's current ordinance restricting new gas stations and car washes. He referenced a previously approved car wash project on Drake Road that was never constructed, leaving the site vacant. The developer instead purchased and relocated to an existing

station at Grand River and Orchard Lake Road in Farmington, resulting in continued underuse of the original property. Commissioner Brickner suggested the Planning Commission consider revising the ordinance to allow gas stations or car washes as special land uses in limited zoning districts, rather than maintaining a total ban on new facilities unless they replace existing ones.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Stimson, support by Countegan, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting ended at 10:28pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen Aspinall,
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem