

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NOVI  
MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2024 AT 7:00 P.M.**

**Mayor Fischer called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL:** Mayor Fischer, Mayor Pro Tem Casey, Council Members Gurumurthy, Heintz, Smith, Staudt, Thomas

**ALSO PRESENT:** Victor Cardenas, City Manager  
Tom Schultz, City Attorney

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**CM 24-04-41 Moved by Heintz, seconded by Casey; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0**

**To approve the agenda as amended.**

**Roll call vote on CM 24-04-41**                      **Yeas: Casey, Gurumurthy, Heintz, Smith,  
Staudt, Thomas, Fischer**  
**Nays: None**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS: None**

**PRESENTATIONS:**

Mayor Fischer gave the floor to Member Gurumurthy to introduce the Novi Robotics Team. There were three teams from Novi who qualified for the World competition. She said it was a big deal to have three teams advance to the World Championships in Houston, and they are so excited. The three teams are the Novi Robo Titans, Atomic Toads, and Rapid Robots. Each team would be given three minutes to present what they had been doing. After the presentations, all the team members would take a photo with City Council. Mayor Fischer thanked her for the introduction and welcomed the first team to the podium.

The Novi Titans thanked the Council for the opportunity. The team started in 2016 and would be representing Michigan at the Houston World Championships. They are strong supporters of Girls in STEM and have advocated for more support from the Governor and Congresswoman Debbie Dingle. In addition to their competitions, they have connected with the community, mentored other teams, and have given back through community service. They were super excited to show their robot styles. The team described the various parts and functions of their robot and how each piece was used during game play. A driver controls the movements of the chassis to collect pixels. The robot is designed with an intake that has bristles to collect pixels and a wheel and transfer sheet to bring the pixels into the cassette. A boot wheel makes sure that the pixels are in the correct position inside the cassette which is attached to a lift. The lift allows them to place one or two pixels at a desired height on the backdrop. There is a time during the game when they can score extra points. The robot is equipped with a

3D printed drone launcher and extension hooks. All of those together could earn up to 50 points and end game on it's own.

The next team was team 10477 Rapid Robots from Novi Middle School. This is their second consecutive year participating in the World Championships, which they are very proud of. One of the highlights of the season was their learnings, which helped them reach the championship again. They described some of the technical parts of their robot, including custom brackets, chassis, pixel intake mechanism, and their individual moving dual claws. The Rapid Robots have been able to connect with students around the globe to inspire other young minds and make the Novi School District proud. The team has completed a lot of community service, including raising money for hospitals, and donating toys and necessities to multiple programs. They have worked with many sponsors who have helped them learn about things they could implement into their robot. In addition to the awards they have received, they have been inspired by what they have learned through overcoming obstacles.

The third team to present was the Atomic Toads, the winner of Inspire Award at the Michigan Southeast State competition. They said they are very excited to be heading to Houston. They are passionate about robotics and encourage students to participate and involve girls in STEM. Most of this team were first time participants, and they worked very hard to build their robot, Toad. Using the core values of discovery and innovation, their robot evolved from a single claw to a dual claw. The robot also has five key innovations. The team has spent over 1500 hours in outreach. This year, they introduced the first program to fourth graders at a school in Brazil. The team also volunteered to modify toys for visually impaired children and collected clothes for needy families for the holidays.

Mayor Fischer said that it was an absolute honor to have the teams there to present. He said on behalf of his colleagues on City Council and himself, they were so proud to have these guys and girls as residents of the City of Novi. Thinking about what Council does and what is going on in the world, he gets a little less concerned about the future knowing how bright it is with all of them and what they have to bring. He said they have been through an amazing journey to get this far and they will do a great job in Houston. Best of luck and he hoped to have them back with some more awards. The students and Council members then lined up to take a group photo.

**CITY MANAGER REPORT:**

City Manager Cardenas said that staff had begun weekly operation meetings with People's Express on Monday mornings where planning and logistics were being worked out. As the transition continues, an info session had been set to orient Novi Transportation staff to employment with People's Express (PEX). After that meeting, they would have a better understanding of how many Novi staff members intend to move forward with PEX. Additionally, staff from PEX began shadowing Novi schedulers that morning. They have also had preliminary conversations, and People's Express have committed to running a satellite location in Novi for a trial period, most likely until the end of the year. They continue to work with PEX, the community relations team, OAS in Oakland County to coordinate messaging and communications for the timeline that has been stipulated.

Ten vehicles for this endeavor will be acquired in the next four weeks. They look forward to coming back to Council with more information at the next meeting.

**ATTORNEY REPORT: None**

**AUDIENCE COMMENTS:**

Cathy Kochanski, Assistant Superintendent for Walled Lake Consolidated Schools came to speak about the upcoming school bond on May 7<sup>th</sup>. The Bond 2024 will help the district build opportunity and ensure future success of students at no additional cost to the taxpayers. Due to increasing property values, new housing startups, and refinancing of previous bonds, they have the opportunity to invest \$250 million into their buildings while still providing taxpayers with a tax reduction. The program will include several major initiatives including building a new Wixom Elementary, significantly upgrading the districts fiber optic network, complete roofing and paving projects across the district, make important security and infrastructure updates across the district, and renovate the performing arts and athletics facilities at the high schools. A complete list of projects is available on the Walled Lake website [wlcsd.org/bond](http://wlcsd.org/bond).

Ronald Klein lives in the Willowbrook Estate subdivision. He said that they had been having an issue with a gate restricting access between their subdivision and Meadowbrook Road during the summertime. He was told that the gate was open during the winter to allow the snowplows access. He didn't understand how they could restrict access to a public street. He hoped that City Council could do something about keeping the gate open year-round.

Rida Salim told Council that Eid is coming up, it is a Muslim celebration of the end of Ramadan, similar to how Christians celebrate Christmas. She said it is sad that many Palestinians will be celebrating Eid with bombings and killings. She said that with this celebration coming on Wednesday, they should be happy, but instead she was begging for a ceasefire so that these people will stop dying. She expressed appreciation for members of Council who have shown support. She knows that a ceasefire will not end what is going on in Gaza, but it would show support to the residents.

The next speaker said that he had been curious about the trees discussed in the last meeting. He drove down 9 Mile and noticed the beautiful, seasoned trunks with ugly pink ribbons that identify them to be destroyed by upcoming development. He thought that the Council should have a stronger commitment to environmental stewardship. He then spoke about the destruction of olive trees in the West Bank. How does this affect Novi? He said that the price of olive oil has seen a significant increase in Novi since October 7, 2023. He called for a ceasefire, as the price of olive oil and the impact of the hike on healthy diets was directly relational to the olive trees being destroyed.

Mahjabeen Ahmed of 50750 Nine Mile Road said Salaam-Shalom, peace. That was what we are lacking right now. Peace, emotional peace, psychological peace, and mental peace. She said she was not there to tell Council anything that they had not already heard, read, or seen. She was there to appeal to them to find a way to pass a resolution

for ceasefire in Gaza. She asked when would it stop? When is it enough? Please find a way to pass the resolution to cease fire in Gaza and let's all be on the right side.

Virginia Nega, a resident of Meadowbrook Commons, said thank you for getting them the electronic bingo board. They didn't get the swimming pool, but they got the board. Second, she was concerned about senior transportation. How is it going to really affect them? She had questions about how similar the new service would be compared to the existing service. She also mentioned that there is no cost to use the service today, but according to the Novi papers, they would begin paying \$2 each way.

Rebecca Paone said she wanted to support the previous speaker in everything she had to say. She also wanted to support Ron Klein and the North Le Bost community in keeping the gate open.

Sara Mashkoo said she lived on 11 Mile Road. A lot had been stated and said about the genocide taking place in Palestine over the last several weeks. She used her time to make a prayer and implore Allah for his help to ease the pain and suffering of the people in Gaza. She asked for Council to pass a ceasefire resolution.

Tammy Spangler-Timm, an HOA board member in Ridgeview of Novi, wanted to speak to item number 4 in the matters for Council action. She shared that she was a retired educator, and while at university, specialized in environmental sciences. She had concerns about the proposed development for the property near Novi Road and 10 Mile. When she and her husband purchased a home in the Villas, they were misinformed. They were told that the wetlands along the Chapman Creek area down into the ravine would never be developed because they were protected wetlands. They liked being so close to nature right out their back door. They now feel disenchanting to learn about what is going to be developed and the very narrow band of green space that will remain. She said that she would like to see the ordinances protecting woodlands and wetlands be upheld.

The next speaker wanted to echo the last speaker and hoped to preserve the wetlands. She also said that her family was relatively new to Novi. She expressed her disappointment that many of the Council members had not taken a public stance on the situation in Gaza. She wanted reassurance that all Council members represent every Novi resident, not just certain groups. She encouraged Council to stand up and use their voices to make a difference.

Mark Alafita said that like Ms. Spangler-Timm, he lived in the Ridgeview of Novi area. He said that during the February planning commission meeting, they had around 17 written comments and 17 verbal comment made regarding the Toll Brothers proposal to rezone the 10 Mile area. He addressed some of the concerns these letters and speakers brought forth including flooding, concerns for the wetlands and wildlife, privacy issues. He spoke about the ecosystems and the animal communities that would be forced out, as well as those that would stay such as skunks and vermin. He recognized that something would

happen with that land, but he asked for a modified plan that would bring less harm to the wetlands, wildlife, and continued to offer a sustainable environment.

Kazi Afzal commented on the number of trees that had been cut down in the five years that he had lived in Novi. He asked that no more trees be removed. He then spoke about the situation in Gaza and how some people are taking a stand against the violence. He asked Council to find a way to stand up for what is right and call for ceasefire support.

Firdaus Maldar of Westminster Circle said that she and many other Novi residents had been there week after week trying to raise awareness of what is happening in Gaza. She said that she had thought that Council was unaware of the war, but now felt like she had chosen to ignore what was happening. She asked for justice, a ceasefire, and for peace.

Karyn Chopjian of 23991 Seminole Ct., said that as a resident in Ridgeview, she stood behind her neighbors who had spoken about the proposed Toll Brothers development.

The next speaker said that he hadn't planned on speaking, but wanted to say that it looked like City Council didn't care about what the people had been saying about Gaza. He knew that Council listened, but he thought it was selective. He didn't understand why the members couldn't make a statement about the situation in a personal capacity. He said that Council was the first door that residents could knock on, the next level up were not reachable.

Annette Primo-Mac of 42787 Cardinal Way in Ridgeview said she strongly opposed the rezoning by Toll Brothers. She appreciated that modifications had been made since the planning commission meeting but felt that the development was too high density. She opposed the placement of restaurants next to residential areas due to rodents, trash, and air pollution. She thought that the addition of pickleball courts was a carrot dangling to the City to push this development through. She thought that while it is fun to play, no one wanted these courts in their backyard. Her last comment was regarding the addition of lookout areas, which she felt would cause more mess and work for residents to clean up the litter.

Ken Mac, also of 42787 Cardinal Way echoed the concerns of his neighbors in Ridgeview. He asked Council to review the packet materials that stated that the rezoning did not align with the City's future land use plan. He felt that Toll Brothers was waffling on their plans, changing the number of units and not providing certain data points for those concerned parties.

**CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS AND APPROVALS:**

Member Heintz asked to remove item E.

Member Smith asked to remove item G.

**CM 24-04-42                      Moved by Casey, seconded by Smith; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0**

**To approve the Consent Agenda as amended.**

- A. Approve Minutes of:  
March 18, 2024 - Regular Meeting
- B. Approval of employee contract between the City of Novi and Jan Ziozios as the City Assessor of the City of Novi, Michigan.
- C. Approval of request for Pyrotechnics Display Permit by Brightmoor Christian Church to be operated by James Herr, on Thursday, April 18th and Friday, April 19th, 2024.
- D. Approval of a Resolution to close Meadowbrook Road from 25075 Meadowbrook to Ten Mile and close 10 Mile Road from Meadowbrook to the Civic Center at 45175 Ten Mile Road for the 2024 Memorial Day Parade from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM on Monday, May 27, 2024.
- E. Approval of the adoption of a resolution designating the City of Novi as a Bee City USA affiliate and affirming commitments to conserve native pollinators.  
**Removed, later passed.**
- F. Approval of the 2024 Summer Maintenance Agreement between the City of Novi and the Road Commission for Oakland County for street sweeping selected County Roads in Novi; and adoption of resolution authorizing Novi to provide summer maintenance on selected County roads.
- G. Approval of the 2024 Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) Municipal Credit Fund Contract and Resolution for the Older Adult Transportation Program in the amount of \$62,149. **Removed, later passed.**
- H. Consideration of approval to purchase and install sound dampening panels for the Lakeshore Park community building from Takeform, through the General Services Administration (GSA) cooperative purchasing contract, in the amount of \$69,346.15.
- I. Approval of a Storm Drainage Facility Maintenance Easement Agreement and acceptance of a Warranty Deed for additional right-of-way along Garfield Road as part of the Parc Vista Development located on the north side of Eight Mile Road and west of Garfield Road (parcel 50-22-31-402-045).
- J. Enter Executive Session immediately following the regular meeting of April 8, 2024 in the Council Annex to discuss pending litigation (*Novi v Malles, et al*) and confidential written communication for legal counsel.
- K. Approval of claims and warrants – Warrant 1153

**Roll call vote on CM 24-04-42**

**Yeas: Gurumurthy, Heintz, Smith, Staudt,  
Thomas, Fischer, Casey**

**Nays: None**

**MATTERS FOR COUNCIL ACTION:**

- 1. Adoption of a resolution authorizing approval of a contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation to agree to the rights and obligations associated with the reconstruction of Fountain Walk Avenue between Novi Road and the westbound I-96 entrance ramp, with the City of Novi's estimated responsibility for construction in the amount of \$348,000.**

City Manager Cardenas said that this was an unwelcome fine. When the I-96 Flex Route construction project started to take shape, staff learned that a portion of the Westbound on-ramp from Novi Road was given to the City sometime around 1985. For the last few years, the engineering division went back and forth regarding ownership with MDOT and RCOC. It was determined that the City did have responsibility. In order to meet the construction schedule of MDOT for I-96, he was before Council for approval of the proposed rehab of this portion of the road. It was not included in the approved budget, however, the savings of around \$575,000 from the Industrial Street Rehab program in this year's budget was proposed to be used. They were moving money from one line item in the major street fund in the initial amount of \$575,000, which was not being increased. They would just move \$348,000 to the new line item for this work.

Member Gurumurthy said that this was an odd piece of road with MDOT, how would the City prevent this in the future? Maybe we don't have such roads. She would have thought if MDOT was already preparing and had their budget last year, they should have alerted or informed so that Novi could have put it in its budget. City Manager Cardenas said that it had been a back-and-forth conversation because of Act 51 dollars, reports, and maps that the City must submit. Some of them showed the ramp wasn't Novi's, some showed it was the States. They have been trying to identify and rectify that issue for quite some time leading up to the construction of the project. For 96 and M-5, they have identified that there was nothing else, no other roads like that. Back in the 80's, MDOT was trying to get rid of these, and City Council at the time accepted it. They are in the process of trying to give it back to them.

Mayor Fischer had questions regarding the motion sheet. He said that there had been a little confusion that day about the motion sheet. They had originally been told that the project was not in the budget. He asked for clarification on the newest packet item that had been received earlier that day. City Manager Cardenas confirmed that the appropriation that was in the previous version was incorrect. Since this project was not in the budget, the funds were being moved from one line item to the next, so it didn't have to be appropriated. It was just moving between funds, hence the coming before Council for approval. Mayor Fischer asked which fund it was coming out of? The motion sheet did not specifically say. What fund is this item being appropriated from? City Manager Cardenas said it was coming from the major street fund. Mayor Fischer asked what the

fund balance policy was for that fund. City Manager Cardenas replied that the fund balance for streets is 10%. Mayor Fischer asked if they were moving funds from other underruns in order to keep the fund balance at 10%? City Manager Cardenas confirmed yes. He said that since the initial project is not moving up at all, there are fund balances available to go back into the fund balance or be used for other projects that might have overrun. Mayor Fischer asked what the fund balance was currently for that account. City Manager Cardenas and Finance Director Johnson said that the projection was to be at 10% at the end of the year. Mayor Fischer asked that if this project did not have to be done, the fund would be above that? This was affirmed yes. The Mayor then asked what project was being underrun to fund this project? City Manager Cardenas said that it was the industrial road program which would include Venture Dr, Heslip Drive, and other industrial road programs throughout the City. Mayor Fischer said what kind of confused him about the industrial rehab project was that the original recommended budget for fiscal year 23/24 had about \$1.9 million in it. In the first budget amendment, they transferred in \$900,000 while also taking that industrial rehab project up to \$2.8 million. Now they were saying it was going back to \$1.8 million, creating the funds for that. Why did they transfer the 900 back in amendment number one rollover budget? The rollover budget was \$4 million underrun from the prior year that was rolled in prior to that, he believed. Then \$4.5 million of additional expenses were rolled in the amendment. He was still confused as to why they would have transferred in \$900,000. City Manager Cardenas said that he wasn't prepared to answer, he didn't have the exact accounting for what happened. Mayor Fischer said that maybe it's because it was budget season, but he continued to be confused by the motion sheets. They had an expenditure that was originally said to be taken from fund balance. Now they were being told it was actually reusing funds from another project. They couldn't get information on why money was transferred in at budget amendment number one. He couldn't tell what fund it was being funded from or how it would impact the fund balance in general from the motion sheet. He said he understood that the work needed to be done for the project, but he thought it was an example of items that need more clarity. At the very least, he thought they should know which fund is actually paying for this on the motion sheet. He said he would support the motion, but it called into question some of the display of how they are trying to be transparent with Council as well as the residents.

**CM 24-04-43 Moved by Thomas, seconded by Casey: MOTION CARRIED: 7-0**

**Adoption of a resolution authorizing approval of a contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation to agree to the rights and obligations associated with the reconstruction of Fountain Walk Avenue between Novi Road and the westbound I-96 entrance ramp, with the City of Novi's estimated responsibility for construction in the amount of \$348,000.**

**Roll call vote on CM 24-04-43**

**Yeas: Heintz, Smith, Staudt, Thomas, Fischer,  
Casey, Gorumurthy  
Nays: None**



**2. Approval to award a contract for annual audit services for a three-year term ending with the June 30, 2026 fiscal year with two one-year renewal options and adoption of associated fees effective April 8, 2024.**

City Manager Cardenas said that every year the City gets an audit from an external firm. Every year they get an unmodified opinion, which is a glowing endorsement of our practices. The City has had three different auditors going back to 2010. They came with a choice of two qualified firms to serve the City for the next three years and maybe beyond. Either firm would be a good choice. However, Rehmann does charge \$40,000 more over the life of the contract. Either firm will be on-site to perform the audit. The staff was ready for any questions they might have. Member Staudt said that Rehmann had done a fine job for the City. Members of the consultant review committee didn't see a need to dig into it any deeper. He made a motion to approve the contract.

In further discussion, Member Heintz said that he understood that we currently work with Rehmann, but with the \$40,000 difference, what was the justification to use them over the other option? Just because of the previous service? Or did they think service would be different? City Manager Cardenas said that either one was a good firm and there were pros and cons to either one. Rehmann was a known commodity and had been auditing the books for quite some time. The \$40,000 could be said to be for efficiencies because they are already known. Yeo & Yeo was a new firm and would need more onboarding for the staff. But again, they would save \$40,000 in the long term. It was completely up to the discretion of City Council and how to move forward.

Member Thomas said she had looked at it, and it seemed that they had two well qualified firms. She said it sounded like there was no preference from the City of one over the other. Would that be accurate? City Manager Cardenas said that there was no preference, it was up to City Council in terms of it really being the Council's auditor. It was a complete decision on their part. Member Thomas said that it would make more sense with two qualified firms to go with the low bidder. She would not support paying more for the service.

Member Gurumurthy asked about the reasons for looking at another auditor as an option instead of going continuously with Rehmann? City Manager Cardenas said that it was a process for then the contract was up. This was a regular end of contract. The practice was to rebid the services to see what came back at that time. It wasn't for any kind of reasoning other than it was the end of their contract with the City, so it was natural to go back to bid to consider other vendors. Member Gurumurthy asked if there had been negative feedback about the service provided by the current auditor? City Manager Cardenas said no, the only negative feedback was that they were charging more money than they had in the past. Member Gurumurthy said that her thought was, when thinking about auditing, she saw the lower bid and a change in perspective from a different auditing firm would be better. She understood that onboarding would be very hard in terms of taking time, but she felt the change and perspective from a totally different auditing firm might help to find different things that they had become accustomed to. She said that she would vote for Yeo & Yeo.

Mayor Fischer wanted to put his comments on the record. He said he had been there for 14 years and had been on the consultant review committee a couple times. He was also in the finance profession and knew the efforts that went into changing firms. In fact, they did that a few years back when they got rid of Plante and went with a firm up in Saginaw. The cost of changing firms couldn't be understated from his perspective. The finance staff went through painstaking efforts to have procedures and explain them to the auditors. There are relationships that are built when auditors start to understand the processes, understand the procedures, and it didn't take as much time for staff to get through an audit. They had also had multiple presentations from Rehmann and he had been thoroughly impressed with what they provided. He personally thought that the cost of switching would actually be higher than the \$40,000 differential in the contract. He would be supporting continuing with Rehmann. He thought both firms may be okay, but Rehmann is a well-known entity within the industry. He said that as the City Manager mentioned, the firm really reports to the Council, and it was important that they get an opinion that they were comfortable with. Rehmann is that known entity. When it came to the hundreds of millions of dollars that was spent in this city and the controls that they were asking questions about during the budget process, it was exactly why he wanted to know who the auditor was. He would certainly be supporting continuation with Rehmann.

Member Smith said as far as the time it took to bring people on board, he would rather have the staff doing the work for the residents of the City rather than doing the work to bring auditors up to speed. He would prefer to stay with a known entity that had worked with them before.

Member Staudt said that he was surprised to hear from staff that it was such an even decision considering that he fully took their recommendation that the current auditor was somebody that they would want to continue to do business with. As the person up there who was an accountant, who got audits done multiple times a year, the cost of services is relatively inconsequential to him. What was really important was that an organization who is doing the audit fully understood who they were dealing with and who they were doing business with. Several years ago, they interviewed both of these firms and dug into both firms. At that time, they determined that Rehmann was the superior company. The fact that theirs was several thousand dollars higher than the competitor is typical in that someone who is new wanted to come in at a lower bid that didn't best serve the City. This professional service was extremely important part of what the community got. In this case, there was a head and shoulders difference between Rehmann and Yao & Yao. He hadn't heard from Director Johnson, and wouldn't bring him up then, but there was a major difference between the scope and size of the two firms. He said he was kind of dumbfounded by the lukewarm support for the current auditor from the staff. He couldn't imagine why they would want to change at this point. It was not fiscally responsible.

Member Thomas said that in her reading, there was no preference. She wanted to get feedback from staff on how much more difficult would it be and what type of time would be expected for a switch to be made? Finance Director Johnson said that whenever there was a change, one of the auditor's responsibilities was to gain an understanding of

the internal controls. That would be the biggest piece that required time. They would have to do their own documentation of the internal controls that exist. They would have to test them, to understand them as part of the audit process. If they were an existing firm, they understood the internal controls. A new firm would come in and have to gain that understanding. That was the biggest piece. Besides knowing where the bathrooms were and knowing the staff and who to ask questions of, that was the biggest difference and the biggest time commitment in the first year. After they had been through it once, gained that understanding, the subsequent years, they would already have that understanding. The biggest change would be in year one, and it would be substantial. Member Thomas asked for some idea of how substantial it would be. Would the dollar amount be more than the savings would be by changing? Director Johnson said it would be hard to put a dollar value on that. The time commitment would be there in the first year. He couldn't give an exact time commitment. They hate to change because of it, but once the change was made, they get through the first year and then they were fine after that. Member Thomas asked how often they had changed? City Manager Cardenas said that they have done three changes since 2010. They had Andrews, Hooper, Pavlik for four years, then Plante Moran for three years. After that in 2018 they made the switch to Rehmann, they performed that audit in 2019. Member Thomas said okay, this wasn't something that they normally do, it was just a course of business. She commented on one of Member Gurumurthy's comments about having a different set of eyes on the same set of books that would look at things in a different way could be beneficial. She thanked them for answering their questions and for their time.

Mayor Fischer had a couple more comments to add. He said that he appreciated the comments about switching and having new eyes. In fact, that was the driving force back in 2018 when they got rid of Plante Moran. There was an issue with a spreadsheet, a misstatement that was made and they decided it was time for someone else to come in. There had been nothing in the last 4 years that he had been on Council between speaking with Mr. Johnson or the auditors that gave him cause for needing new eyes on things. He also said that they needed to put into context that it was not \$40,000 difference in one year, it was over the course of a five-year contract. He said that they were talking about staying with the current auditor for \$66,000 or switching to a new one for \$60, so what they're really talking about was \$6,000 in the first year. It was a cumulative 40 over the course of a five-year contract, not 40 per year by any sense of the imagination. He said he had to imagine those switching costs would be much higher than \$6,000 a year.

Member Gurumurthy asked if they had any experience from the new auditor? She knew that they had not hired them, but had they received any good customer reports from other clients? Any good feedback? What was the criteria to end up choosing Yao & Yao as the second option? City Manager Cardenas said that he believed Mr. Johnson had worked with them in the past and other municipalities had used them in the past. They are an up-and-coming auditing firm. The City had not worked with them, they hadn't been around. They were smaller than what is bid out usually. They used the same criteria that were put out for all the RFP's in terms of meeting the standards and the size. They looked at their recommendations from other communities and they all gave glowing reviews just like Rehmann did when they submitted their proposal. Member Gurumurthy

said that it looked like the \$40,000 over the three plus two made it, she didn't want to say small amount, but compared to what she heard in the discussion about the substantial effort in terms of onboarding. Thank you for the discussion.

**CM 24-04-44 Moved by Staudt, seconded by Thomas: MOTION CARRIED: 6-1**

**Approval to award a contract for annual audit services to Rehmann Robson for a three-year term ending with the June 30, 2026 fiscal year with two one-year renewal options and adoption of associated fees effective April 8, 2024.**

**Roll call vote on CM 24-04-44**

**Yeas: Smith, Staudt, Fischer, Casey,  
Gurumurthy, Heintz  
Nays: Thomas**

- 3. Consideration to refer the recommendation of the Public Safety Building Needs Committee that the City Council explore construction of a new Police Station and three new Fire Stations to the Consultant Review Committee to formulate a Request for Proposals to secure the services of a professional project management company to evaluate the viability of that recommendations and propose next steps for further City Council consideration.**

City Manager Cardenas said that the Building Needs Committee met on March 20<sup>th</sup> and received reports from staff regarding facility location and response times per their meeting prior to that. Staff came back and the specific recommendations the committee considered were threefold: proceed with the planning and proposal to construct a new fire station in conjunction with a new police administration building on Lee BeGole Drive North of 11 Mile; 2. Proceed with the proposed construction of a new fire station number three on City owned property on Venture Drive North of Nine Mile. The third one was to identify a possible location or locations and properties near station number two, which is on the north side of the City, in order to construct a new facility replacing the current building at a later date. These are all on the basis of prior analysis of the inadequate facilities in both our police and fire departments for the growing diverse workforce. Hearing those recommendations, the committee voted unanimously to send this matter to the Consultant Review Committee via Council to formulate an RFP to secure the services of a professional project management company that will formulate the next step for City Council's consideration. The Director of Public Safety was there to answer any questions regarding the report and recommendations brought forth to the committee. Members of the committee were there as well. He wasn't sure if it would take place of the committee report at the end of the meeting, but they stood ready for any questions Council might have.

Mayor Fischer said as someone who was on the committee for the full time and ended up being the chair for the last meeting, as Mayor, he would go ahead and put his thoughts on how they got there. They created the Public Safety Committee at the

beginning of last year to start to dive into this. He said they had a specific scope to start to study some of the options to rebuild or renovate the current facilities. They talked about identifying obstacles and issues, that was part of the scope as well. Lastly, to investigate the projected costs of doing some of the different activities. What he really considered the main goal was to do a gut check. He said that there had been a lot of things kicked around about the police station, the fire stations. The staff always give their best opinions, but anyone who works in any building always wants a nicer office, better building, and better facilities. He considered this kind of a gut check to put a group of residents, people with building experience, prior police chiefs, prior mayors, prior council members together and kind of kick the tires. They went through a lot of different information, some of the old reports that the architect had put together on the police and fire stations. Many from the group went on several different tours of the police station and fire stations to see firsthand what they were talking about. He said that overall, the committee said, the gut check said, these facilities are rather old. They are inadequate. They have a changing workforce that needs different types of facilities. The female facilities are inadequate. The locker rooms, the showers, the sleeping areas for the firefighters, they are not the greatest places in the world. He took that and compared it to something else. He had been around the City of Novi since the early eighties, and these buildings preceded him. He said he didn't say that to sound younger, it showed how old the buildings were. They were 45, 50 years old in some cases. The City had gotten it's money's worth from these things. They have made some small alterations to the police and fire stations, one or two of them they've added a couple hundred or a thousand square feet to the fire stations. They added a training center to the police station. What he actually did was to compare that to what the school districts had done. He thought back to the school district in Novi back in 1980, Village Oaks and Orchard Hills were about half to two-thirds the size they are because they have expanded so much. The high school was probably about half the size it is now. Novi Middle School and Novi Meadows were actually two separate buildings on Taft Road which they combined with the ITC. Now that is just grades five and six. They built a whole new middle school, they built Deerfield, they built Parkview. They have probably doubled the footprint of the school district all while they have added like a weight room to one fire station. That's all the modernization they had done. He compared those, but they always have more money. He sometimes wished he had run for school board because they have all the money in the world. But they had done their best with what they had. But that really illustrates how little they've done to modernize some of these things. The committee took all that into consideration and hired the same firm that had done some of the prior studies to investigate some of the things they were scoped with. What are the chances they could rebuild these things? Where could they look at building new ones, and what would the costs be? He said that all of that information was in the packet. They found things like the current fire stations would be very hard to rebuild on those sites because it is recommended that two acres is the minimum size that a fire station could be on. Most of them are on three quarters of an acre. It's pretty impossible to rebuild those. Given the partnerships that they have with federal agencies in the public Safety department, they have really outgrown that building. To build onto that, add on to make the accommodations for cars and vehicles and things would be too costly and probably not structurally sound. Not to mention what those neighbors to the East, how would they feel about them greatly expanding the

police station. He understood that they already do receive complaints about siren testing and other things. The committee looked at all those. They investigated just as they were scoped out to do. This now comes back to Council to put the rubber to the road. They have the recommendation on a framework to look at maybe doing a combined police station and fire station up by the DPW department. There is some land off of Nine Mile that they could redo fire station 3 where they already own that land. Fire station 2, the committee said they need to do something, but they don't have any land or ideas up there. They know that the current site probably wouldn't be great. They appreciated the help of everybody on the committee, the staff, and the architect that helped guide through those questions. It really gets to a point where the Council is responsible to City residents. He said that they also need to take it to a further step to a professional firm that could not just scope out projected costs and tell them how big size sites need to be, but they would be the professional firm. He was thinking about the firm that the school district used to do their multi-million, multi-building types of projects. He thought it was time to step up to that professional level, hire someone like that to report to Council and help flush through the rest of the questions so they could decide if they wanted to take 1, 2, 3, or all of this to the voters. He said that he appreciated the Chief and all the staff for their recommendations and stepping up in providing their expertise and guiding them to that point. He said he would take their recommendation wholeheartedly and support should there be a motion to send the Chief's recommendation to consultant review with the idea of hiring a professional service to scope that out and help make the next step decisions as a Council.

Member Gorumurthy said that when she went through the tour of the police station and fire station, it was very clear that this was a much-needed thing to do. She was very glad to be part of the committee. She knew it was one of the last meetings but was very glad to see and talk about the framework. More importantly, this should be discussed in terms of a phased approach. That is why they were going back to the need for a consultant to walk them through the right approach, the right money approach, et cetera. She said she was in favor of this and they wanted to do this. She made a motion, but wanted to change a little bit of the wording to read "consideration to refer to the recommendation of the Public Safety Building Needs Committee and the Public Safety Director that the City Council explore the construction of the new public safety buildings that include new police station and three new fire stations to the Consultant Review Committee to formulate a Request for Proposals to secure the services of a professional project management company to evaluate the viability of those recommendations and propose next steps for further City Council consideration."

Member Thomas said that was a lot that just went out there. She wanted to mention her concerns. Anyone who had been following would know that from the creation of the committee, she had concerns. She said the way the recommendation was written said "proceed with planning a proposal to construct a new fire station in conjunction with new police administration on Lee BeGole North of 11 Mile Road." She did not want to spend a lot of time going into a lot of detail, but she wanted to mention what her concerns were and if they needed to go into why, she could dig into that. There was a lot of background that she wanted to make sure people understood. She fully believed

that the City, the police and fire had done some tours. She hadn't been able to tour everything, but she knew they needed new facilities. They need to make sure that they are taking care of police and fire. She completely understood that. The way that it was worded, it said that the new fire station in conjunction with the administration on Lee BeGole North of 11 Mile Road, concerned her because she didn't feel that they had done the work to say that was the right place for it. The reason she said that was because when the committee was brought up, it was a very clear set of what was wanted, what the then-mayor wanted exactly outlined. It felt like the committee said this is what we want, now go put it together and make it happen for me. It was brought out as a study, but it didn't feel like it was a study. She wanted to see evidence and would support if she saw good evidence. She said it seemed like immediately after the committee was created, next thing you knew, they were buying land but they hadn't done any work to say where these things should go, at least from her perspective. She did vote to buy the land because of the ring road that they need to place there. There is value to the land, but she wasn't sure that was the right place. She didn't have expertise, but it didn't seem to make sense to put it there because one couldn't drive North, only East and West. It felt like they wouldn't be able to quickly get to the residences from that location if it was a fire station. When she read the data, it said the runtime analysis did show that there would be an increase in response times for stations 1 and 3. Station 1 would be the one at 11 Mile if they were relocated. They believed, based on location, that it would be a few seconds, not minutes. She wanted to support it and make sure that they were doing what needed to be done. If there were increases in runtimes, or if it appeared that there would be increases, by choosing that location, she had concerns that it was the right place. She understood using a professional, but she wanted to see evidence that they were putting things in the places where they belong. She wanted to go through a couple of the reasons why she had concerns based on the history. She referenced previous minutes saying that he said his dream and vision for public safety administration headquarters was to see the police on one side, fire on the other, with a museum that houses Novi's history, pictures, and mementos. It also started that the current building would be converted to a senior center. She said if one were to read through it, it was very specific about what had been requested. In the minutes, it was said that after hiring someone to study the project, their proposal did not match what had been asked for. The original proposal, based on the notes, had been two buildings, one for fire, one for police. The plans were very well done, very professional, however, it was sent back to modify the way it had been presented because the fire and police were separate buildings. The committee wanted a big, beautiful building with a little museum in the middle. She said it felt more like they had an idea of what they wanted, but when they came back with the proposal, the committee said no, that wasn't what they wanted. Her concern was that they build what is needed and not what someone wanted somewhere along the line. She was all for solving the problem, but she didn't feel convinced that they had picked the right places yet. The runtime analysis showed an increase in run time bothered her. That spot had never made sense to her, but if they could prove to her that it made sense, she would support it. She wanted to make sure that they were doing the right thing for the police, fire, and the community.

Member Staudt said that he had served on the committee from its inception. He sat next to the mayor while he conceived it over a term of four or five years. They had a committee that included a former police chief, the current chief, the current fire chief, and a number of professionals in the community who were involved in law enforcement. It had been a unanimous recommendation by experienced long-term folks. They were not going to jeopardize the public safety of Novi to appease somebody. They were doing what they thought was absolutely the right thing to do for the community. He said he didn't know what more they could provide other than having the current and prior public safety people support this type of plan. That being said, he wanted to start with a couple things. One was that they were looking at 80 to \$110 million. The voters of Novi may not even want to do that, but they had to put it forward. They have 40-year-old buildings. They were planning for the next 40 years. They weren't planning for next week or next month or six months from then. Did they have a complete and total plan? Absolutely not. That is why they wanted to hire a professional to push them in the right direction. The committee was advisory at that point. Now they were at the point where City Council was involved and they had to actually start making decisions. He said he wasn't sure about the rest of the folks up there, but he had complete and total confidence in former public safety director Dave Molloy to tell him when he was wrong and to tell everybody else in the room when they were wrong. Public safety director Zinser was the same. Going down the list, they had a lot of experience in that room. Nobody was just rolling over to give former Mayor Gatt some kind of Taj Mahal. He had a vision. He articulated it. Whether that was what they ended up with at the end or not, it was irrelevant at that point. What was relevant was that they prepare for the next 40 years of public safety. They have a spectacularly good police force, a great fire department, and low-end buildings that frankly had served a very good purpose for a long time but had run their course. One of the things they discussed during the committee meeting was that they keep all the snowplows in a really beautiful building, and the snowplow operators got to go in and they were nice and warm and they got into their warm vehicles. The police officers had a very small area where they had to walk out of the police station, get into their vehicles. He said it may be unimportant to some people, but to him, they needed to treat police officers and fire department as well or better than our snowplow operators. He didn't think there was anyone sitting up that that evening that didn't run on the fact that public safety was the most important thing that they do in the community. To say that they think it was far more important to make sure that the snowplow operators had a really good environment was ridiculous to him. He was there to support a plan that he didn't know if they were even close to the final plan. There would be so much community input, there would be Council input, there would be professional input. Part of the reason that they were looking to hire an outside firm was to bring an outside perspective, a company who had done that in the past, to give them some things and tell them some things that perhaps they weren't looking at the right way. At that point, they hadn't decided to do anything. They didn't have the money to do anything. The only thing they were doing was going out to bid to find a company to help them walk down the path towards the right decision. Nobody there knew what the right decision was. They didn't know whether they needed three fire stations, four fire stations, five fire stations. They didn't know that yet but they needed to move in that direction because they were not planning for 67,000 people then. What about when they had 85,000? Did they have



enough fire stations to serve the community? Can they keep their times? They had seen some interesting call times and they needed to figure out what was best for the community. They were not there. He was extremely confident that the current administration, the current leadership in the public safety department would provide them with information that would allow City Council. They were not professionals on police and fire, but they had to take input from somebody, and frankly, he trusted them. He trusted outside consultants. He trusted people who knew that stuff. He didn't trust people who had an opinion. He cared about the community being safe. He thought it was very important that they take the first step. The first step was for the Consultant Review Committee to go out, find a very good consultant and start moving in the process. It was a year long process. It wouldn't go on a ballot in November of this year. They were probably looking at next year sometime. They had a long time to work through it. They had a long time to look at all the options. He said, frankly, it was a good time to start. They had a responsibility to do it. They had been waiting for the right projects to have debt. They have virtually no debt as a city. This was going to cost a lot of money. He couldn't see money spent any better than the police and fire department. He was a strong supporter of that. He was the chairman of the consultant review committee. He had worked with a lot of the different folks that they had talked about perhaps providing them services. At the end of the day, it was all going to end up back there. They were going to have to make a decision and then put it in the hands of the voters to decide whether or not they believed that their objectives equaled what they ultimately had to do which was pay the bill.

Member Smith said that he agreed that it was a good time to bring in a professional consulting service. It was a very large project with a lot of moving pieces. The timetable could vary depending on how they did the funding. One thing he hoped for was that it was 2024, in 50 years it would be 2074. He hoped that part of the consulting process was to look at what the city would look like in 2074, make sure that they had things in the right place. It was hard to find land now. In 2074 he imagined that it would be almost impossible to find open land to build a fire station on. They needed to make sure they put these things in the right place. He said he was very much in favor of this. The thought it was a good process to go through and part of it was, and people there had alluded to, that they decided, but also had to sell it to the voters. The more information they had that they could bring to the voters to tell them what they want to do, that is why they want to do it, that is how much it would cost. The timetable was absolutely critical to the process. He thought they needed to bring on some people that could help them get there.

Member Heintz said safety was obviously something that was incredibly important to everyone up there, it went without saying. He thought it was important as well and as was just mentioned for the long-term planning of what things would look like. Not only that, but they were also not wanting to think of it in a vacuum. They were voting on that item alone, but to be aware and cognizant that there might be interest next year or in future years based on the long-term goals of assessing if they wanted to have a community center as well or other funds needed for a variety of other items that might be put in front of the voters. He thought it was important to have a tiered approach with

flexibility and understanding. As mentioned, they were not the experts, they wanted to make sure that they were going into it with an open mind as to what the best location might be according to the experts and consultants. If all that was said and done, he thought it would be a great plan to move on to the next phase with that better understanding of what can be done with the voters in mind.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said that she would be extremely brief. It was very similar in process and use of an outside firm to help with project management to how the new library was built. It was a process that the City had followed in the past when it came to understanding and really getting a group on what it would take to build a building. They weren't just talking about one, but about multiple. Having that recommendation go to the consultant review committee to identify a consultant who would guide them through the process, she was all in favor.

Mayor Fischer opened up round two for discussion. Member Thomas said she wanted to be clear that nobody said it was more important for snowplow drivers to have a better working environment than police officers. It was tiresome when someone tried to say something in a very nice way to try to get their point across, to then have their words mixed. She wanted to be very clear about that. As they talked about the committee that had been put together and the professionals that were put together, she said it was the biggest project that they had done in decades and they hadn't given any opportunity for community members to apply to be part of the job. They said that they were just going to pick these few guys, and they were going to be the ones who made all the decisions. There were no women on it until Member Gorumurthy joined the committee recently. When she looked on the City website, there was no documentation that had been produced other than what was in the packets. Since the committee started, there were three meetings that were held, that is what she had seen. She was not against it, her concern was that they were already saying that they know where these things go. If they were saying that part of what the consultants were going to do was make sure they are putting them in the right places, she would support that. Her concern was to say that they already know, because they were not certain that they did know. Her brain kept going to the increased response times for stations 1 and 3. The only point that she was making, the only thing she was focused on right then was that as they move forward, whoever was doing the work would make sure that the facilities were going in the right place.

Mayor Fischer asked Police Chief Zinser to approach the podium. He said that some of the questions that had been asked about location were well founded. He thought they should all be thinking and making sure that they were doing the right thing was obviously what they wanted to do. To Member Smith's point, there was less and less land now. He said that they are not building Sim City. They don't get to pick exactly what they want. They have to deal with what they have a little bit. One thing he wanted to say was that if this project was zero to one hundred, he considered it to be at about 10% at the moment. To think that it was well baked was a bit of a fallacy. He said to Chief Zinser about the last couple of weeks since the last meeting, he was careful to call his recommendation a framework. He respected the Chief's opinion and thought that he did an excellent job with his staff putting together the recommendation. He wanted to

go on record to say that if they hired the consultant and they had different ideas, he was very willing to listen to them. Could the Chief give a little context on how he came to his recommendation? Second question was along the lines of himself, if they hire a firm and they have different ideas for where police stations or fire stations should go, how open was he to listening to the professionals from a real estate and commercial perspective? Chief Zinser said good evening everyone. It was always a pleasure to have some time with the Council. To Member Thomas's point, she was correct. They have to make sure that these buildings go in the right places. He was very open to recommendations from an outside firm that may say they should put a building in a different location. With all that being said, property is limited. They bought the property on Venture Drive in 2020 with the intention of putting fire station 3 there. That was about half a mile from the current location. To build a public safety complex, there were benefits to that. One of the drawbacks or cons to building a building that large to house the police and fire department was the size of the land that was needed. That was even more limited in what was available. If they have a firm or anyone else who had a better location, he was absolutely open to it. He said he wanted what was best for the community to provide the best possible public safety services that they could. The buildings are old, they had gone through that and nobody disagreed that they should have new buildings. It did come down to where should they put them? For the City, one of the only viable spots for the size of the lot they would need was where they purchased the property at Lee BeGole and 11 Mile. Mayor Fischer said that he appreciated that response. He wanted to reiterate that it was why he thought they did a phenomenal job pulling together all the information that, based on the data they had and the Redstone reports, based on prior reports, and based on their fire and strategic plans. He spent countless hours going through the information, not only for the committee, but also the prep work that he did for the goal setting session a couple months ago. Now it was time to take it to the next level of professionalism to go through and bring all the ideas and data points together and answer to Council on those next steps. He thought that a lot of the things that had been brought up would be addressed by the professional firm, and that was why they wanted to go in that direction. That was why he would continue to support the motion.

Member Staudt asked about proximity to the DPW building. What was the benefit of a location close to that building? Chief Zinser said that in a perfect world for him, all their buildings would be on one complex, whether that's the Civic Center, Library, Police Department, fire department, at least one station of the fire department, DPW building, the firearms training center is over there. He thought there was a lot of benefits to having everything on one campus. Member Staudt added that that scenario, the area had the gas pumps, a large DPW facility, the gun range, the public safety building in that general proximity and a fire station. Based on what he had seen, did he have any concerns that they would have reductions in response times, especially as it pertained to fire at that location? Chief Zinser said that without a doubt, based on the runtime studies, they would see an increase in response times. The problem or the challenge with that study was that the study could not narrow it down beyond minutes. He was very confident that they were talking about seconds and not minutes. They were very confident that they would not see any significant increase in response. They had reports on paper, but they wouldn't realize that until they were actually responding from that location. Member Staudt asked

if the vast majority of fire calls in the City of Novi came from fire stations or if they came from remote locations by paramedics that were part of a separate organization? They were spread out throughout the city, they were not sitting at a fire station waiting for an EMT call or paramedic call. Chief Zinser said that was correct. Much like they do with their data driven analysis and decision making, MedStar used the same concept and placed their ambulances in different locations, strategic locations in the city based on the data where they were going to be running to. All of the medical runs, MedStar runs from wherever locations they were staged at based on their strategic data. The City still responded from the fire stations as well. Member Staudt asked if there were a lot of calls that came from the police station for immediate calls? Or are those squad cars spread throughout the whole city all the time? Chief Zinser said he didn't have the exact number or percentage, but a majority of the police runs were responded to by cars out in the city and not from the police station itself. Member Staudt asked if in his professional opinion, would they be looking at a severe degradation in service times at a new location at 11 Mile and Lee BeGole Drive? Chief Zinser responded with absolutely not.

Member Heintz wanted to confirm that they were not voting on location that night, the vote was just on a consultant to move forward and identify a proposal and assess what that best location should be, whether that was 11 Mile and Lee BeGole Drive or anywhere else throughout the city? Mayor Fischer said Correct. Member Heintz said that if that was all that was being done, then all the additional conversation might be more detailed than was needed in his perspective. He liked the motion and the proposal in itself made sense to him.

Member Thomas asked to hear the motion again. Member Gurumurthy read: Consideration to refer the recommendation of the Public Safety Building Needs Committee and the Public Safety Director that the City Council explore construction of a new Police Station and three new Fire Stations to the Consultant Review Committee to formulate a Request for Proposals to secure the services of a professional project management company to evaluate the viability of those recommendations and propose next steps for further City Council consideration. Member Thomas said that as long as there was nothing in the motion that said that was where the items were going. She was really hoping that as it moved forward that they made sure that they were putting all of the buildings in the correct place. She knew that was the intention. They were looking hopefully 50 years in the future. She wanted to make sure that they were taking all necessary steps to ensure the buildings were going in the right places.

Member Staudt said that they needed to be perfectly clear. They were hiring an owner's representative. The owner's representative was somebody who would assist them in the process of making a lot of determinations about property, sites, construction, architects. The firm was not coming to evaluate the fire department and locations based on calls. That was the fire department's responsibility. They had a report from somebody who did a lot of that work. The firm did not come to Council to say Chief Zinser, you're wrong. You need to put this somewhere else because they thought that their times would be better. That was staff's responsibility. If they wanted to go outside and find another consultant to assist with that, that was a whole different issue. This firm was an owner representative,

somebody to help them get a bond passed, get architects, get things built, to be their consultant on that. They were not a public safety consulting company. That was not their specialty. He wanted to be clear that they were not trying to hire somebody to replace the police department, the fire department, or the public safety staff. They needed to depend on them to make the final determination.

Member Thomas said that when they said that there was an item that said to identify possible locations, properties near station 2, was that not something this consultant would take on as part of the job that they would be going? Who would identify the possible locations? She read the line identify possible locations or properties near station 2 in order to construct a new facility, replacing the current building. City Manager Cardenas answered through the Mayor that staff had already been on that and identifying possible locations and working with current consultants in terms of a possible available location up there. Member Thomas said her big concern, she would stop after that because she didn't want to keep going round and round, but she asked how would they know that they were going in the right places? City Manager Cardenas said that as the Chief articulated, they need to identify where they could do and what available property existed. Unfortunately, it was cost prohibitive and staff's viewpoint to rebuild in their current locations were that it would take a million plus to rebuild in the small footprint and also accommodate temporary locations while they were being constructed. He believed it was their viewpoint that the sites they had preliminarily identified as replacement locations were very near to where other facilities already were. In terms of those response times, they were only looking at an additional few seconds on the investigation. Going forward, they believed that the efficiencies would be realized as the station had been created and the crews had normalized the whole area to be responding more quickly. Those times would then go back to what they were previously. The Chief hit the nail on the head in terms of lack of property available. They made a concerted effort to locate where existing properties were located. Member Thomas said again, she would stop after this, but it seemed like a location where one couldn't drive South or North and get anywhere, that didn't make any sense. It would seem that without any knowledge it just didn't viscerally make any sense. It seemed like a main road would be a place where you would put a facility like this. How many roads would have to be built to make this work? They had to finish the ring road, then they would have to build another stretch of road. Is that considered, building all the extra? She believed the plan that was there had an extra curvy road. They would need to remove the road that existed to build yet another road to be able to put the facility in that location. That was her concern. Police need the space. She said she knew she had been talking too much, but it was very important that they do get this done for the police officers. She had big concerns that the most important thing was to make sure they were putting them in the right place.

**CM 24-04-45 Moved by Gurumurthy, seconded by Staudt: MOTION CARRIED: 7-0**

**Refer the recommendation of the Public Safety Building Needs Committee and the Public Safety Director that the City Council explore construction of a new Police Station and three new Fire Stations to the Consultant Review**

**Committee to formulate a Request for Proposals to secure the services of a professional project management company to evaluate the viability of those recommendations and propose next steps for further City Council consideration.**

**Roll call vote on CM 24-04-45**

**Yeas: Staudt, Thomas, Fischer, Casey,  
Gurumurthy, Heintz, Smith  
Nays: None**

**Mayor Fischer called for a brief break to reconvene at 9:30 pm.**

- 4. Initial review of Planned Rezoning Overlay (PRO) eligibility of the request of Novi-Ten Associates, for JZ23-09 Novi Ten PRO for a Zoning Map Amendment from Light Industrial (I-1) and Office Service (OS-1) to Low Density Multiple Family (RM-1) and General Business (B-3) with a Planned Rezoning Overlay. The subject site is approximately 34-acres and is located east of Novi Road, south of Ten Mile Road (Section 26). The applicant is proposing to develop a 71-unit multiple-family townhome development on the RM-1 portion, and approximately 35,900 square feet of commercial space on the B-3 portion. Under the PRO Ordinance, this initial review by City Council is an opportunity to review and comment on the eligibility of the proposal and offer feedback.**

City Manager Cardenas said the proposed housing for this proposal were 71 attached single-family owner-occupied units accompanying four buildings of commercial, close to 36,000 square feet. The developer at that point had included pickleball courts, public trails, and wetland overlooks as their public benefit, much like similar proposed developments. That was the initial input for council to weigh in. Staff from planning and engineering divisions were there to answer any questions. He believed the developer was also there to address City Council. The developer approached the podium to make a presentation.

Lonnie Zimmerman of Siegal/Tuomaala Associates Architects said that he was there with representatives from Toll Brothers, Scott Hanson, Jason Iko and from SKL engineers Jason Rickers. Dan Weiss, the owner of Novi 10 was called out of town on emergency, so Mr. Zimmerman would be representing him. Novi 10 and Toll Brothers had used the master plan goals for the project. As they could see on the screen, the left-hand side was the existing zoning with the OS-1 in light blue and the large purple area representing the I-1. It was 34 acres of land. What generated the whole change that they were proposing was that there had been a change to lifestyle, the master plan, and the existing zoning. They felt they didn't match up with what was happening in the City of Novi. Changing lifestyles, COVID, less office space, demand for industry in Novi. CoStar Realty Information Service in 2023 showed a 35% drop in industrial leasing. Conversely, their market study showed a demand for an additional 344,000 square feet of commercial space within the next three years. That established the nature of the zoning change that they were requesting. He said they could see in the right-hand picture that it had the commercial use B-3 in the dark orange and the RM-1 multiple family was the beige color on the right

had side. The overall site plan and more detail of some of the surrounding was shown. The 71 units of new townhouses proposed on a dark green background. The orange, again, were the four buildings of commercial and to the right-hand side and wrapping around the new residential was the lighter green area. That represented all areas to be zoned R-1 and to receive a conservation easement. No development now or ever in that area. The red areas, the trail areas, a lot of that was existing sidewalk, but they intended on adding to the trail network. It was mentioned earlier by one of the residents that they were proposing, if they looked opposite in the lower area, they would see two lookout areas over the wetland areas that were being preserved. They wanted to add those areas to it. He showed an enlargement of the B-3 area. What they had done with the B-3 area was written into the agreement that there would be a limitation on the uses there. They would not permit auto repair uses or car wash, pawn shop, check cashing. The goal was to make it a local commercial area. It would be restaurants, local retail. They would only allow one drive through. If they could see the left-hand side, the furthest from the residential, that would be where a potential drive through restaurant would occur. He then showed a typical elevation of one of the retail buildings, it was primarily brick. It had been reviewed by the façade reviewer and it complied totally with the Novi ordinance. He next showed an enlargement of the residential site plan with yellow or ochre color buildings, the 71 buildings and the trail that they were proposing along the south wrapping around to a little park on the left-hand side. Towards the right-hand side as it went up, they would be donating land to either be a pocket park or pickleball courts. They had already been told that the Parks department prefers probably a pocket park rather than pickleball courts, but it would be donated by the developer and they were open to whatever the city preferred at that point. He also wanted to mention, because it had been brought up earlier and was brought up by the planning staff, the fact that there was industrial across the street, across 10 Mile Road. From the closest building of the townhouses to the industrial building was over 300 feet. Between the residential and 10 Mile Road were six- to ten-foot-high berms, heavily landscaped. He didn't want to say that it isolated, but it separated from not only the industrial but more from the hustle bustle of 10 Mile Road as much as possible. They could also see wrapping around the townhouses heavy landscaping separating it from the proposed new commercial. He showed some rendering views of the new proposed townhouses by Toll Brothers. The next slide dealt with some of the traffic that had been discussed. They knew that there was a lot of traffic on 10 Mile Road, and they had been working with aecom, the traffic consultant for Novi, and would be working with the Oakland County Road Commission. As of then, what they were proposing at the developer's expense was adding a center left turn lane and adding an eastbound and westbound additional lane, which were all indicated with arrows on the drawing. That would help the traffic situation along that stretch of 10 Mile Road. He then spoke briefly about the green area. He had mentioned that they had a conservation easement that they were proposing. On the screen, they could see in the center of the image along the railroad tracks and then wrapping around, that was their property. There was additional property also owned by the same owner to the left that had wetlands. Then it also connected on the lower right to Orchard Hills West Park. They had a continuous green belt that connected all the way across the entire area. He then spoke about removing trees. He understood that any development would have to have trees removed. The next slide showed a picture of the existing zoning

and the potential development within that zoning. What they could see was the large industrial building on the right-hand side could potentially, by zoning ordinance, could be 40 feet high. The office on the left-hand side could be 30 feet high. In theory, if it were developed per existing zoning ordinance, have a mass of building that was along 10 Mile Road and just north of the existing Ridgeview Villa Condos. He said he would ask the existing Ridgeview residents, who were rightly concerned about the surrounding property, to think about if the existing zoning persisted, what the potential for development was there. Likewise, he wanted to talk about trees. They knew that there would be trees removed there, there were no two ways about. What they were adding though, with their development, they were adding over 600 new trees and on top of that, they were adding over 500 trees to the tree fund. They were doing their best to emphasize replacing as many trees as possible. Moving back to the proposed development, the yellow arrows showed the existing sidewalk system and the new proposed trail. The new trail connected on the upper right to either a pocket park or pickleball courts donated by Novi 10 and wrapped around to the North of the existing wetland that would be retained and attached to a proposed pocket park on the left side of the U there. A lot of what they could see was existing sidewalk system, but they wanted to augment that with the proposed lookouts. He showed arrows on the right-hand side with the lookouts to add to the existing system so people could enjoy the wetland. Again, to emphasize again, that wetland would be a conservation easement so it would never be developed as anything other than wetland. Another thing that had been mentioned at the planning commission meeting was drainage issues. He thought with the development, they could deal with any drainage issues that would impact them better than if it were just left undeveloped. There would be planned catch basins. In the new development they had the detention pond going in the upper right-hand corner just to the left of the trail. That would help with the drainage situation there. In conclusion, he said they were going to incorporate as much of what the planning commission and, of course, what City Council asked them to do as far as putting into the plan or taking out of the plan as much as they could. The idea was that they wanted to do a development that added to the City of Novi. The owner of Novi 10, Dan Weiss, had a lot of development in Novi. He had been a resident of the city and he recognized it was in his best interest because he knew it would not be the last time he would be in front of City Council. He wanted to do a development that everyone could be proud of, it would satisfy them, satisfy the residents, and serve the community. With that being said, that was all he had to say. He didn't know if Toll Brothers had anything to add, but they were willing to answer any questions. They did not have anything to add, but would standby for questions.

Mayor Fischer reminded everyone that they were not making specific motions that evening. It was an opportunity for them to comment on the proposal, ask questions of the petitioner. After that meeting, it would go through the typical planning process. He asked City Attorney Schultz to highlight the next steps after they provided their comments so everyone was aware. Mr. Schultz said that after their comments, questions, and indications to the developer, it would start the typical process. It would go to the Planning Commission, they would hold a public hearing and get more information. There might be changes to the plan, but it would be the more recognizable development recommended by the planning commission. Ultimately it would be approved by the City



Council in the two-step PRO process, they would decide whether or not they were interested in what the planning commission had reviewed and recommended. Maybe there would be an agreement drafted, but the new part of the process where they got early input is what they were doing that evening. Mayor Fischer then turned it over to City Council for questions.

Member Staudt wanted to start out with their friends at Toll Brothers. He asked if there was a representative there. Scott Hanson approached the podium. Member Staudt said they had received numerous emails saying that Toll Brothers charged a premium for lots and promised landowners that the property would never be developed. They had heard from enough people to where it caused some concern. What was Toll Brothers response to this? Mr. Hanson said that ultimately on the sales floor, they could only speak to the property that they owned. When Ridgeview was sold, they had the ability to say that the property that Ridgeview owned was part of the conservation easement. Part of the wetland could never be developed. They did not have the ability to project future unassociated land. They were not associated with the Novi 10 land at that time. He did not know what had been said on the sales floor at that time when those units were sold. The clear direction, and it was typical to not comment on parcels that were not part of the property they controlled. Member Staudt asked if they sold properties with a premium for views of the woodlands and wetlands behind. Mr. Hanson said yes, that was typical. Any house that backed up to woodlands or wetlands were higher premium units. Member Staudt said that looking at the design there, they had homes backing up to those Ridgeview homes now. He wouldn't call that premium if he had set it up. He said they could talk about all the berms, take it work what it was worth, it was his opinion at that point. He was not making any value judgements to anything, but they had some residents who felt that they had been misled. He was asking questions that they had posed to Council, and they wanted to know. He wanted to ask why they didn't build this whole development at one time? Here they were coming back 01 years later and now they wanted to finish this off. It would have been so much easier if they had done the whole thing at one time and integrated the whole thing together because then nobody could complain about them building back up because it would already be there. Mr. Hanson said that he totally agreed. He wasn't involved at the time, but he didn't think it had been an opportunity to do the whole project at once. He said obviously they worked with Dan on the first one, it just wasn't in his plan to sell this parcel at that time. Member Staudt said he was incredibly disappointed Dan wasn't there because as the property owner, he had been in front of Council in the past and he had been in front of Council for that piece of property at least twice in the past. One of the reasons they declined it while he was on was that they wanted to build a Kroger there, which would have not been very favorable to the first development, but it wasn't there yet, so it wouldn't have mattered. It would have been built after the Kroger was built. But Council turned it down and they turned it down primarily because of the designated B-3 commercial that he was asking for at that time. It was extremely similar to what was being asked for right there. They had 3-B buildings that were being asked for with no idea of what would go into any of them. When he declined it the first time, he thought the Kroger was great. He thought that was too big an ask. In that situation, he wasn't sure that its not too big of an ask for the second time. He said that it was not a four-lane road where 10 Mile Road was.

It was a road that had very limited ability to get in and out. If one went to the Speedway gas station there, it was very difficult to turn to go back towards the East. He wanted to give them a few things that he personally didn't love. One was the pickleball courts. Wrong place, not this part of the community. Secondly, pathways through one development into another, even though they developed both of them, those folks didn't want pathways. They had already gotten that message for years in the community. They didn't want pathways built from new developments into existing developments. It might be a really nice conceptual thing, but it wasn't something that folks there had really liked. He was really supportive of the amount of space they were talking about making permanent conservation easement. But to him, the only way he would ever support it personally would be those homes that were on the South side of the property that were backing up to a sidewalk that they were proposing which was right next to a stream. It was too much density in that area. He said they should have bought it and built it then because they wouldn't be dealing with people that had already built there. He said they deal with a lot of developments built next to existing developments, but seldom do they get to have developments build next to developments by the same builder knowing that they sold these properties and now they are putting new homes right next to them. Those were his big factors. He said all of that was fixable. Less units was fixable. Getting rid of the sidewalk was fixable. Pocket parks, he liked the idea. Trailways along the railroad tracks, that was fine as long as they were not going into the backyards of current residents. As he stood then, he would be hard pressed, but he didn't know what they were going to do about the 3-B businesses. No chance that he would support a drive through there. Not ever going to happen. They faced residents all the time who had restaurants behind their houses and it was not a good thing. It wasn't an acceptable use. If they agreed to those three, he didn't want spec buildings. He wanted to know that would go there. The multi-use stuff that was being thrown out there was the way architects and planners wanted to do things. It wasn't something he liked. He said they had his opinion and the great thing about it was they had the opportunity to go back, rethink it out, listening to them and the residents and come back with an alternative. He said they couldn't tell them to change things. They couldn't tell them to come back, not come back. It was completely up to them. They could just tell them what they thought was acceptable in the long haul. Those were his comments.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said she would give the gentlemen a breather for a minute if they wanted. She said that when they had developments that came in front of them, she wanted to take the opportunity as often as she could to make general comments. They were not specific to them at all which is why she gave them a chance to take a seat. She wanted to make a couple comments about how she was looking at developments that were starting to come into the City. The first she was looking for developments that were for owners, not for rentals. She was keeping an eye on the percentage of rental units that they were starting to see some into the city. She wanted to put that out there while she had the microphone for a minute, not on their development at all, just to make that point. Secondly, for any developers who were watching at 10 o'clock at night. She was definitely looking for more opportunities to get first floor living in unit coming into the city. They had heard from the Older Adult Needs Committee multiple times that they have people in the city who want to downsize. They don't want to leave Novi; they were

not ready to live in senior living facilities yet. They don't have a lot of places that have first floor living. With all that being said, stealing the floor for just that moment to make those comments. She would come back to the gentlemen now and talk specifically about what they were seeing. The previous speaker said a lot of what she was going to comment on, but she would still comment on much of it. Some of the big issues there were the traffic on 10 Mile. What she would want to see, as part of the development plan, she would like to see construction timing for the changes on 10 Mile correspond to the construction timing of the buildings going on. What she would not be happy with was if they had the development finish and then the road work on 10 Mile was three to five years down the road. That didn't help them if they were adding 71 units and about 134 residents according to the proposal. Not quite a full two residents per unit math there. She would want to see the timing of improvements on 10 mile. She drove down 10 mile that day at five o'clock. It was painful. She did that purposely because she wanted to see what the road traffic was at that time. It was painful. She would be very interested in seeing the timing of that road construction. She knew that they were partnering with RCOC and that was a lot of work, but it was on her mind as something that was critical. She was also concerned, she loved the idea of an extended center lane, but then she was worried about getting bottlenecked towards the railroad. She just wanted to put those thoughts on the record. As the previous speaker said, she was not telling them what to do, just sharing her thoughts with them. She had significant concerns, she wasn't an ecologist or anybody who knew a whole lot about floodplains, but they had experts on staff. She knew there would be permits required, but she had real concerns about a development going in on wetland that would then have a lot of impermeable surface and butting that up against wetlands. She was concerned about the amount of water and how that runoff was going to work. She wanted them to understand that she would be asking a lot of questions when it came back to Council about how that would be managed and what level of confidence they had in making sure they were protecting the residents in Ridgeview. Whatever that looked like, they were the experts. She trusted staff to help make those determinations, but she wanted them to know that she had her eye on a couple other things as well. She mentioned the feedback from residents about the woods behind, but she wouldn't address that because the previous speaker had. She would say that if they had seen some of the other developments that had come in front of them, the points that she always kept an eye on were the amount of screening between new residences going in and abutting existing residences. She had looked for things and put requirements into previous developments several years ago that required 18-foot-tall trees. Her point was to make sure that they were putting as much screening between residents as they possibly could. She was not telling them to put in 18-foot-tall trees, that was an example, but understand that would be a critical focus of hers to make sure that they were buffering with as much space as possible between the new units going in which were two story. She said that they were not going super tall, but between the new units and the existing units, they would have to beat their ordinance requirements for screening and opacity. She looked to City Planner McBeth to keep her honest on if it was 80% opacity in winter and 90% in the summer. They had to meet that already, but she would be looking for density on top of opacity. She said she had concerns about the screening going in on 10 Mile. She understood that they had underground utilities they were concerned about. She didn't know how those would

change if the road got extended or widened, but she would be interested to see what they do additionally on 10 Mile to do some screening. She said that she agreed that pickleball was probably not the best choice for there. They had a Council goal for a pocket park, that was more passive. She understood that they had a playground in the west side of the development. She wanted to know what was driving the request for the zooming to be B-3 instead of B-2? Was it the drive through? Mr. Zimmerman said one of the reasons they went to it, although it would probably have to be reconsidered now, was because B-3 permitted a drive through and B-2 did not. If the drive-thru was eliminated, in all likelihood they could go to the B-2, but they wouldn't be able to start with B-2 and then ask for a drive-thru that was not permitted in the ordinance. Member Casey thanked him for the clarification. Mr. Zimmerman asked to make one other clarification on the whole thing with B-3. They had eliminated some potential uses that would have otherwise been permitted in a B-3 to really kind of focus on local commercial. It was sort of incongruous when he said B-3 and local commercial, he understood that. But that was the thought process in the whole thing. Member Casey thanked him for the clarification. She asked if the project were to remain B-3, she agreed with the previous speaker in that she wasn't open or interested in a drive-thru and would have a handful of other exclusions including fueling stations, mini lubes, hotels, nurseries, no drive-thru tattoo parlors. There was a longer list of principal uses in B-3 that she would also expect to see excluded there. Her last question was if the lookouts in the project proceed, whose responsibility would it become to maintain those lookouts? She heard feedback about trash being in that space, and it had been a bit since she had been behind the Novi Athletic Club and into that space. Who would have the responsibility once the development was in, should the lookout still exist, to maintain that area? City Manager Cardenas said that it would be the property owners if it were not part of the pocket park dedicated to the City. SO that would be the property owner's responsibility and the property owners being the HOA or whatever would come in from Toll Brothers.

Member Smith said that he would not repeat any of the previous comments. He agreed with most of them. He thought there were some definite benefits. The maintenance of a conservation easement was a very good thing, especially for that are of the Rouge headwaters that they needed to preserve. There was talk about more efficient construction, about EV charging. Those were good things that he would like to see. He had more of a general comment for developers listening at that time of night, including a provision for solar panels to give the owners options for that or geothermal heat pumps. Anything they could do to increase efficiency. He thought the mention of good windows and good insulation, at this point he thought was assumed. He said he disagreed with not connecting the trails up, especially if the business commercial area gave people something to walk to, he thought people would appreciate that. He said he hadn't been on Council very long, but that was one of the things he had walkways watched. Initially when a new path went in, there was a lot of resistance to it because it was different. It will bring more people in, but then a few years later, he would see a lot of people using it and it seemed to be well accepted. One of the questions that planning commission had for staff was if there was an increase of crime or anything with a trail going through. Their example was ITC trail which cut behind a lot of houses and didn't seem to have any increase. He liked the idea of the greenway going all the way through to Meadowbrook.

He mentioned the wetland to the west of it that went to Novi Road, He asked what would happen to that if it was owned by the same owner? There was no plan on that.

Member Thomas said that Member Smith had mentioned the idea of connecting the paths. She thought that although there could be some resistance, connecting the paths was a good thing. It looked like that would give the ability for them to get down to the overpass. She wasn't sure how they would walk down to the overpass without connected areas. To be able to walk past that green space, she loved all of the green space in it. That bothered her, and what really made her crazy, was the idea of charging lot premiums to people to buy homes on other property that they were going to rip out what they paid the premium for. She didn't see how they could sell lot premiums for lots that they didn't own and had no guarantee that they would stay in whatever condition it was in when the person bought the home. She recognized that currently there was a housing shortage, a housing crisis. Novi was fairly expensive. She said that she knew that they need places where people can move, but they needed to respect the neighbors who are there. She loved the green spaces, she loved the pocket parks. She would be concerned about traffic potentially, maybe the number of units. She would also not be in favor of a drive-thru in that area. She liked the idea of being able to walk to a store or being able to walk to a restaurant, not a fast-food restaurant, but having that walkability without having to get in a car and drive everywhere. Her most important part was the residents who lived in the other property. She thought it was very important that they listen to the concerns of the people who were there. They make sure that they are protecting them and their ability to maintain nice homes that they live in. She did love the fact that it would give them some extra ability to have the pathway and the surety at least on the one side with the easement that it would not be developed. That would be a place where it made sense to have a lot premium because it could not be developed because there was an easement. She would want to make sure that they had that buffer area between the different residents. She would continue to listen to resident feedback on the matter as it moved forward. She hoped that they were spending as much time as they could listening to the feedback of the people who already lived there. It baffled her how they could charge a lot premium and then tear out what they had paid the premium for to build new houses. She agreed with a lot of the stuff Member Casey spoke about, she said she was always on top of it and always did her homework. She loved that she mentioned first floor living because they were hearing so much about that from the seniors from the senior committee and she wanted to make sure that there was enough buffer space and screening between residents and developments.

Member Heintz wanted to start out with the positives. He wouldn't restate everything that had been said already, but he liked the general comments about energy efficiency, having EV outlets or different things that could be done with the houses. To piggyback on the premiums to have a connection with nature, he asked them to consider if that was something that would be important for those prospective individuals who might want to buy a home in the proposed development areas. If nature was truly a premium to all those individuals whether it be current or future owners. He thought it might take further assessment to look at the proposed plan to see if moving things around or reducing the number of houses could be a wonderful concept. Simply listening to the residents that

had spoken about how awesome it was to have that connection to nature and to have that balance of how many houses and how much nature they could have squeezed into one spot. He was not an expert in development at all and would be interested to learn more about the negative impact development had on drainage. He understood there were ways they could construct retention ponds, but in his mind, nature did a great job at doing what it did and if they removed too much of it, then add impermeable surfaces or other things that have the likelihood of causing problems, because that water had to go somewhere. Lastly, to connect everything together, he thought it was important for them all to think of themselves as stewards of the area and being on the upper end of the Rouge River that connected to all the different waterways. They want to make sure that they were not just there to develop the land, but to care for it. Being mindful of how that land would be developed and how it could impact not only those individuals living there, but everyone and all things downstream of that too. One last note. It had been mentioned that there were 600 trees that were going to be replaced, that was in relation to the number of trees that were going to be replacement credits. From what he saw, it said there were 277 planned site replacement plantings. He wasn't sure if the numbers had changed at all. Mr. Zimmerman said that if they added up all the replacement trees, it would come to about 500 trees. They were not all in the same area on the pages, they could be seen at different spots.

Member Gurumurthy said that she dropped her kid to the athletic club and went walking through the tails and discovered the dog park. She had never been there before, She shared it with her friends who never knew about it, too. She could totally relate to what residents had said in terms of nature. She would request that instead of the 71 units, if there was an opportunity to look at lesser density and keep that space between Ridgeview and the newer development as much as possible in terms of woods. She wanted to make that request. She said in terms of traffic, she used 10 Mile almost every day. She saw that there was only one entrance to the complex and a secondary emergency access. Everything was related to traffic there, and it would only increase. If there was an opportunity to consider another entrance to reduce the traffic. She agreed with Member Casey on the timing. She wanted to ask if they had already started some discussions with RCOC, because the timing never aligned and that was a key thing they would want to see. Mr. Hanson said that they had met with the road commissions already, very preliminarily, but ultimately it would be the City engineering department and their process for getting building permits and starting development would boil down to having all those permits in place before they even put a shovel to the ground to clear trees. All of those road improvement would be concurrent with the development of the site whether it was commercial or residential. That was a city requirement. Member Gurumurthy also had flooding as a concern. It was not at all clear to her how flooding would be taken care of. They should see those details very clearly, at least when it came back. She also looked at the sidewalks and was questioning if it aligned with the active mobility plan. Was there some relation or alignment? She would request that they looked at that to see how it all integrated.

Mayor Fischer had a couple comments to add. First question, as far as phasing the commercial versus the residential, what did they anticipate? Mr., Hanson said he could

speaking to the residential. They would want to start as soon as possible. As soon as they were through the process, through the engineering and permitting process, they would want to start immediately. They sell and then build, so that process ran a little bit slower typically. That would be their timeframe. It would be one phase of development. Mr. Zimmerman said that, according to Mr. Weiss, it would all be one phase, including both residential and commercial. Mayor Fischer said that he would want to see all of that done concurrently. He wanted to mention a couple of things. He knew it was redundant, but the whole point of this was to get an idea of how each of them were on a couple of those items. He was very concerned about the B-3 use as well. The drive-thru was a non-starter for him as well. He liked some of the other ideas to restrict those uses. He thought that there needed to be a pretty good effort in making sure that any of those uses had a local kind of feel to them. Local shopping experience if you will. He agreed to the pickleball moving to more of a pocket park. He said that he would continue to watch the traffic and RCOC discussions. The thought that would be very telling and important. If they were to go forward, he thought there were some comments about lowering density and removing some of the units to the south of the project. He thought that would be kind of an interesting concept. A lot of what he talked about when fitting in developments near other ones was the similar kind of units as well. He would continue to watch whether it was the façade, the size, the density. If it varied very much from what was already there in Ridgeview, he would not be in support of that. So if the density went higher than Ridgeview or if the units were much higher. A couple of things that he was happy with, impressed with. One was the conservation easement. He said they had been looking at that property for many years wondering what would end up going in there and what would happen to a lot of it. They were looking at conserving about half of the property. He wouldn't talk to the promise of lot premiums because that was an issue between two private enterprises that had nothing to do with the City, so he wouldn't comment on that. He would say that the efforts to create that conservation easement was a good thing in his mind. The more that could be done with that, the better. The last thing he wanted to say about the sidewalks was that he liked the idea of connecting. He didn't know it that was the right connection. He thought that it was one of those things that if they got down the road too far and it was developed, that they might regret that they didn't do something. There were concerns about how it traversed right through another development that they had built. If they had just been one big development, it would have been a heck of a lot smarter. He thought that they had received a lot of feedback from the seven of them on the likes and dislikes and hopefully they could take that and so with it what they would.

Member Staudt said he had one more question because he listened to all the great ideas. One thing that he looked at in the drawings was the concrete pad from one side of the property to the other on the residential or on the commercial. It was all concrete along 10 Mile Road. It was parking lots. He said come on. They knew, couldn't they think of something more than contiguous parking lots all the way down? Just giving some input on it as there was a lot of concrete there.

Member Smith said one thing he forgot to mention was that it would be useful to see a rendering of what it would look like from the backyards of the people that lived in

Ridgeview now. It was hard for him to visualize what that would look like. Yardages and tree heights were hard to see, but a picture would be great.

**CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS:**

**E. Approval of the adoption of a resolution designating the City of Novi as a Bee City USA affiliate and affirming commitments to conserve native pollinators.**

Member Heintz said that overall, he thought it was a great idea, but he wanted to see if there was any more specificity for the different resolution pieces that were in there, he thought it was very vague as to what they were doing with that. Was it a plan looking at increasing habitat space for bees or reducing pesticide usage or anything like that? With the Bee City applications, it was a yearly thing and they would look to see if they wanted to do it again, what had they done the previous year to renew it if they were interested in doing that. He asked if there was more specificity that could be given either now or in the coming times as to what resources or what actions would be taken to promote this Bee City status? City Manager Cardenas said that this was an initiative from the Beautification Commission. They were looking to get more involved and this was an endeavor that they had been looking at for a couple of years. In terms of the actual specific activities, they were looking at and evaluating a bunch of activities. Oddly enough, they had a very excited and experienced beekeeper that was on the fire department staff, and he had met with them. He had spoken to the beautification in terms of creating some hives in buildings and on rooftops. It was looking at the habitats they had in their gardens and properties and some other possible hives they could install around the facilities. That was why it was a little more broad right now as they dig into it. These are volunteers that will be looking at getting more involved and proposing some ideas with the staff's assistance in terms of how they can meet the demands of the Bee City program. Member Heintz said that it overall seemed like a great concept. If it passed, he would be looking to get updates to see what happened.

**CM 24-04-46 Moved by Heintz, seconded by Smith: MOTION CARRIED: 7-0**

**Approval of the adoption of a resolution designating the City of Novi as a Bee City USA affiliate and affirming commitments to conserve native pollinators.**

**Roll call vote on CM 24-04-46**

**Yeas: Thomas, Fischer, Casey, Gurumurthy,  
Heintz, Smith, Staudt**

**Nays: None**

**G. Approval of the 2024 Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) Municipal Credit Fund Contract and Resolution for the Older Adult Transportation Program in the amount of \$62,149.**

Member Smith said he was just looking for clarification. He said that they were applying to receive \$62,149 from SMART used to support the Older Adult Services Transportation. There was mention of transferring money to People's Express (PEX). The money that they



were applying for would come to the City to offset the current costs? City Manager Cardenas said that was correct. It was for the current fiscal year that ran until June 30<sup>th</sup>. Any future allotments or applications to SMART for those municipal credit funds would go through the County. Was that something we applied for? Was that something that Oakland County applied for? For Peoples Express? That is what they were looking for clarification on, but it was just for this fiscal year.

**CM 24-04-47 Moved by Smith, seconded by Thomas: MOTION CARRIED: 7-0**

**Approval of the 2024 Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) Municipal Credit Fund Contract and Resolution for the Older Adult Transportation Program in the amount of \$62,149.**

**Roll call vote on CM 24-04-47**

**Yeas: Fischer, Casey, Gurumurthy, Heintz,  
Smith, Staudt, Thomas**  
**Nays: None**

**AUDIENCE COMMENT: None**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

1. Older Adult Needs Committee

Member Casey said that they met last week had had a great robust conversation on what advocacy for the older adult residents looked like in the City of Novi. They had more conversation to be had. They had two meetings that month, one on the 15<sup>th</sup>, the other on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Please check the City calendar for location.

2. Public Safety Building Needs Committee

Update was not required given the action that evening.

3. Rules Committee

Mayor Fischer said that the Rules Committee had met that day. It was primarily rules changes to change and adopt a lot of the committees that they had done a lot of great work. They appreciated Mr. Schultz and his efforts in doing that. They should be on a future agenda, hopefully the next meeting.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL ISSUES: None**

**COMMUNICATIONS: None**

**City Council adjourned into executive session at 10:30 pm.**

**The meeting was called back to order at 10:39 pm.**

**CM 24-04-48 Moved by Staudt, seconded by Casey: MOTION CARRIED: 7-0**

**Direct the City Attorney to do as discussed in closed session.**

**Roll call vote on CM 24-04-48**

**Yeas: Casey, Gurumurthy, Heintz, Smith, Staudt,  
Thomas, Fischer**

**Nays: None**

**ADJOURNMENT** – There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 P.M.

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Cortney Hanson, City Clerk

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Justin Fischer, Mayor

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Transcribed by Melissa Morris,  
Deputy City Clerk

Date approved: April 22, 2024