



# PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

CITY OF NOVI

Regular Meeting

**March 23, 2022 7:00 PM**

Council Chambers | Novi Civic Center  
45175 W. Ten Mile (248) 347-0475

## CALL TO ORDER

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

## ROLL CALL

Present: Member Avdoulos, Member Becker, Member Dismondy, Member Lynch, Chair Pehrson, Member Roney, Member Verna

Staff: Barbara McBeth, City Planner; Beth Saarela, City Attorney; Christian Carroll, Planner; Rick Meader, Landscape Architect; Ben Peacock, Planning Assistant

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Roney.

## VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE MARCH 23, 2022 PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY.

**Motion to approve the March 23, 2022 Planning Commission Agenda. Motion carried 7-0.**

## AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Chair Pehrson invited members of the audience who wished to address the Planning Commission during the first audience participation to come forward. Seeing that nobody wished to participate, Chair Pehrson closed the first public participation.

## CORRESPONDENCE

There was not any correspondence.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were not any committee reports.

## CITY PLANNER REPORT

City Planner McBeth had nothing to report.

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

There were not any consent agenda items.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **1. SELF-STORAGE FACILITIES TEXT AMENDMENT 18.299**

Public hearing at request of the applicant, GHK Development, for Planning Commission's recommendation to City Council of Text Amendment 18.299 in order to amend Section 4.51 of the Zoning Ordinance, Self-Storage Facilities. This would allow for climate-controlled self-storage facilities.

Planner Carroll said before you tonight is a proposed text amendment to Section 4.51 of the Zoning Ordinance, which regulates the use standards for Self-Storage Facilities. The applicant is GHK Development, who is looking to potentially develop a self-storage facility on the current Novi Bowl site. Self-Storage facilities are permitted by right in the I-2 Zoning District and as a Special Land Use in the I-1 Zoning District. Just as a reminder, the current self-storage ordinance does not allow for climate-controlled buildings, so the proposed project would not be feasible without an amendment to the ordinance. The current ordinance standards are more directly related to drive-up self-storage uses of single-story, fenced-in lots with an office. The applicant has submitted two proposed text amendments that were discussed previously. They are listed as option #1 and option #2 in your packet. Both would allow for the development of multi-story self-storage facilities, but option #1 maintains the traditional self-storage facility standards as a separate section and adds an additional section that regulates climate-controlled self-storage facilities. Meanwhile, option #2 integrates the standards together without splitting them apart.

Planner Carroll continued to say since the February 9, 2022, Planning Commission meeting, staff has made several changes to the proposed ordinance amendment based on Planning Commission feedback, comments received from another developer, and through additional research. These changes include clarifying the definition of self-storage facilities. There are two definitions now, one for drive up facilities and one for climate-controlled facilities, with access and humidity control being defining features. The climate-controlled facilities are primarily accessed from the interior and have humidity control, whereas the drive-up facilities are typically accessed from the exterior and do not have humidity control. In addition, the screening requirements were clarified. There is still a requirement to screen near residential and have a certain setback from residential buildings. Another change was the lowering of the site acreage requirement to 2 acres but only when the site abuts an industrial zoning district. It is still 3 acres when it abuts any zoning district that is not I-1 or I-2. The development of drive-up and multi-story, climate-controlled facilities on the same site would be allowable as long as the site is a minimum of 5 acres. They would each be subject to their respective section in the ordinance, but the 5-acre requirement would override the 3-acre requirement.

Planner Carroll concluded by saying in your packet there are three proposed text amendments, two applicant options and one staff option. Staff is suggesting that the staff option be considered for review and approval by the City Council as it takes elements of the applicant's request and combines it with some of the typical standards seen within the City and surrounding communities that help protect the health and wellbeing of Novi residents. The map displayed shows the current self-storage facilities in Novi: there are 2 at Haggerty and Grand River, one near Meadowbrook and Grand River, and one at Novi Road and Nine Mile which is fairly close to the Novi Bowl site. This next map displays where the current I-1 and I-2 districts are, for context of allowable lots for this use; if a self-storage facility were located adjacent to residential, it would be considered a special land use. Ultimately, the Planning Commission is asked tonight to hold the Public Hearing and make recommendation to the City Council regarding Text Amendment 18.299. The applicant's representative, David Landry, is here representing the

proposal, and staff is available to answer any questions.

David Landry said the applicant has an option to purchase what is now the Novi Bowl building to develop a single building, multi-story, climate control self-storage facility. The current ordinance does not allow for that. We approached the city last fall and had a concept meeting with the administration. We anticipated that we would need to seek variances for this use. The current ordinance states that an applicant must have 5 acres; we have 4.3. It also says you must have no more than 40 percent lot coverage; our proposed coverage is 44 percent. When we approached the city, they recommended we seek a text amendment since the city has been approached by several folks interested in climate-controlled storage facilities. That is where the industry is going, so that is what we did. I drafted two proposals: one separates the definition of climate controlled from non-climate controlled and the other lumps them together. The city prefers the separation, and they have made a few tweaks to that option, which we are fine with. We think the city did a good job incorporating the possibility of an applicant looking to do both types of facilities on one site, as Member Becker inquired at the last meeting we were on the agenda. Climate controlled facilities are the future of the industry; oblong, single story structures are still allowed, but they are not the focus of the industry any longer. Vehicles pull into the building to load and unload, which provides more security. We are in full support of the city's recommendation to City Council, and we hope the Planning Commission will support it as well.

Brandon Buetter, 21875 Novi Road, said I am one of the residents adjacent to the Novi Bowl property. We also own Estate Storage at 21650 Novi Road. We've owned it for about 40 years now; my grandfather built it in 1986. I have been there for about 14 years now, and we are still family owned. The proposed ordinance amendment is opening a box that cannot be closed. Self-storage is a booming business that is trying to get in anywhere it can by any means necessary. We own the acreage surrounding the Novi Bowl property. There are industrial pockets in Novi where multi-level storage can comply with the master land use plan as it stands. The Novi Bowl property is not in compliance for three reasons: it does not meet the 5-acre requirement, it does not allow for development of multi-story structures, and it is adjacent to residential. Novi Road is a heavily residential corridor, so it makes this an improper fit for that piece of land. The developers have two options. One option is to find another suitable piece of land for their development. Their other option is to try to change our city structure to accommodate their business plan while also securing a competitive edge over existing businesses who have worked to align with the current city ordinance. I think we owe it to our residents and businessowner to proceed with extreme caution on this. We shouldn't change our community to accommodate their business plan; they should change their business plan to accommodate our community.

Mike Storm, 22126 Beck Road, said I take issue with this proposal because I had a 5-acre parcel on Grand River, and I went through the site plan review process to have a storage facility there. I met the 5-acre requirement, but I backed up to residential. Therefore, the planning division did not want to support a storage facility at that site.

Seeing no correspondence and that nobody else wished to participate in the public hearing, Chair Pehrson closed the public hearing and turned it over to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Member Verma said I noticed that Novi's height limit is 15 feet. However, some surrounding cities have 40 to 60 foot limits. Why does Novi have such a low height limit?

Planner Carroll said that is the current standard for single-story drive-up self-storage structures. In I-1, Novi's height limit is 40 feet, and in I-2 the height limit is 60 feet.

Member Verma asked what is the current height of the Novi Bowl building?

Planner Carroll said I don't know the height of the building off hand, but I can look into it.

Member Verma asked then are they renovating the existing building and then building an additional structure next to that?

Planner Carroll said correct. The drive-up lane will be on the back portion of the site, and it will connect the new structure and the renovated portion.

Member Roney said, I believe I brought this up back in February, but this public hearing is not about the Novi Bowl Property. It is about an ordinance change within the city to allow for climate-controlled storage facilities. When the Novi Bowl property comes to us, that would be reviewed under this ordinance. So, the question here is whether we want to expand the ordinance to allow these types of facilities in the city at any level; we need to separate that from the Novi Bowl property.

Member Lynch said Commissioner Dismondy mentioned that this is where the industry is headed at the last meeting during which this item was discussed. We want to do what is best for the city, and I think the smaller the footprint we can enforce and being able to control the climate in these types of facilities probably is a good thing for the city. I don't think it precludes any current property owner from abiding by the new ordinance and expanding their business. I was disappointed to hear someone was turned down, but that was based upon the ordinance at that time. That still bothers me, but this amendment to the ordinance would then allow the same individual to get that use approved.

Member Becker said philosophically, I am all for making the text of an amendment or ordinance very specific, rather than making it general and having to give out several variances down the line. I think this is the right way to go; we should make the ordinance the way we want it and amend it later if need be. Of the existing self-storage facilities in the city, how many of them are climate controlled versus drive-up, not climate controlled?

Planner Carroll said all of them are drive-up from what I can tell from aerial photos. They do not have full climate control capability; they may have some form of temperature control, and some single-story facilities do have that in other places.

Member Becker asked would this text amendment change the ordinance so we could approve a single-story, climate-controlled storage facility?

Planner Carroll said correct.

Member Dismondy said in my opinion, this is not where the industry is heading – it is already there. There is evidence around metro-Detroit and all over the country as well. To be clear, this is a text amendment for general purposes, not just in favor for one developer. The developer, from what I've gathered, is a national self-storage developer that brought it to our staff's attention that our ordinance might be a little bit outdated in this area.

Member Avdoulos said I agree with my fellow Commissioners. This is a focus on an amendment and not a piece of property, even though it stems from the desire to develop a particular lot.

Motion made by Member Avdoulos and seconded by Member Lynch.

**In the matter of Text Amendment 18.299, motion to recommend approval to City Council to amend the Zoning Ordinance at Section 2.2, Definitions; at Section 4.51, Self-Storage**

**Facilities; and at Section 5.2.12, Off-Street Parking Requirements as shown in the staff option draft amendment.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF TEXT AMENDMENT 18.299 TO CITY COUNCIL MOVED BY MEMBER AVDOULOS AND SECONDED BY MEMBER LYNCH.**

**Motion to recommend approval of Text Amendment 18.299 to City Council. Motion carried 7-0.**

## **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **1. O'REILLY AUTO PARTS DRAINAGE AND PAVEMENT IMPROVEMENTS JSP21-35**

Consideration of O'Reilly Auto Parts Drainage and Pavement Improvements at the request of Oston A. Service Company for approval of the Preliminary Site Plan and Stormwater Management Plan. The subject site contains 2.03 acres and is located at 43131 Grand River Avenue, east of Novi Road, and south of Grand River Avenue, in Section 23. The applicant is proposing exterior site improvements that include the resurfacing of a large majority of the parking lot, the addition of curbing, the addition of a drainage basin, and overall improvements to the site design.

Planner Carroll said this is a 2.03-acre site is located at 43131 Grand River Avenue, east of Novi Road and south of Grand River Avenue. The site is home to O'Reilly Auto Shop, an Auto Repair Shop, and a Print & Copy store. It is zoned TC-1, and the surrounding area is zoned either TC Town Center or TC-1 Town Center 1. The Future Land Use map indicates TC Commercial for the property and the surrounding area. Other existing uses in the area include Chase Bank and Novi Pavilion Shopping Center. The subject property does not contain any regulated wetlands or woodlands, and there are not any nearby. Looking at the site plan, this applicant is proposing to make a number of improvements to the site. These include resurfacing a large majority of the parking lot, the addition of curbing, the addition of a drainage basin, and some additional landscaping. This existing site is currently split into two parcels, and staff has strongly suggested to the applicant to combine the parcels to help mitigate any need for potential variances. The applicant has indicated that O'Reilly is not opposed to combining the parcels if site plan approval is received. The applicant is seeking two landscape waivers, both of which are supported by staff. The applicant is seeking one landscape waiver for lack of sufficient parking lot interior landscaping area and trees. The other landscape waiver is for a parking bay with 19 contiguous spaces without an end island, near the drainage basin. Both are supported by the City's Landscape Architect because the applicant is proposing significant improvements to the site. All other items identified in the review letters are to be addressed with the next submittal if this plan were to be approved tonight by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is asked tonight to consider this matter and approve or deny the Preliminary Site Plan and Stormwater Management Plan. The applicant is here tonight to represent the project, and staff is available for any questions.

David LeClair, Livingston Engineering, said unfortunately, nobody from O'Reilly could be here tonight. We have worked very hard on this site plan to bring it before the Planning Commission, and your staff has done a nice job of outlining it. O'Reilly is planning significant improvements to the site, and they are very much looking forward to getting started. If you have any specific questions, I will do my best to answer them on their behalf.

Member Avdoulos said I have no issues. I think the site needs some repair, and it is much appreciated when an applicant brings these types of improvements before us.

Member Dismondy agreed with Member Avdoulos and said it would be a good investment into the city.

Member Lynch thanked the applicant for improving the site and for choosing Novi as their location over the years.

Member Becker agreed with everything said but had nothing further to add.

Member Roney said the property has been in poor condition for quite some time now, so it's nice to see a change.

Member Verma asked if the current parking lot was gravel.

Planner Carroll said no, it is paved, and they are going to repave it.

Motion made by member Avdoulos and seconded by Member Lynch

**In the matter of O'Reilly Auto Parts Drainage & Pavement Improvements, JSP21-35, motion to approve the Preliminary Site Plan based on and subject to the following:**

- a. The applicant shall combine the two parcels prior to the approval of the Final Stamping Set because the lack of a combined parcel could lead to noncompliance of parking setbacks and standards;
- b. Landscape waiver for a deficiency in parking lot interior landscaping area and trees because the applicant is proposing significant improvements to the existing site, which is hereby granted;
- c. Landscape waiver for a parking bay with 19 contiguous spaces because the applicant is proposing significant improvements to the existing site, which is hereby granted;
- d. The findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the staff and consultant review letters and the conditions and the items listed in those being addressed on the Final Site Plan.

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE THE PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN FOR JSP21-35 O'REILLY AUTO PARTS DRAINAGE & PAVEMENT IMPROVEMENTS MOVED BY MEMBER AVDOULOS AND SECONDED BY MEMBER LYNCH.**

**Motion to approve the Preliminary Site Plan for JSP21-35 O'Reilly Drainage and Pavement Improvements. *Motion carried 7-0.***

Motion made by Member Avdoulos and seconded by Member Lynch.

**In the matter of O'Reilly Auto Parts Drainage & Pavement Improvements, JSP21-35, motion to approve the Stormwater Management Plan subject to the findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the staff and consultant review letters and the conditions and the items listed in those being addressed on the Final Site Plan. This motion is made because the plan is otherwise in compliance with Chapter 11 of the Code of Ordinances and all other applicable provisions of the Ordinance.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE THE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR JSP21-35 O'REILLY AUTO PARTS DRAINAGE & PAVEMENT IMPROVEMENTS MOVED BY MEMBER AVDOULOS AND SECONDED BY MEMBER LYNCH.**

**Motion to approve the Stormwater Management Plan for JSP21-35 O'Reilly Drainage and Pavement Improvements. *Motion carried 7-0.***

## **2. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 26, 2022 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Roney.

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 26, 2022 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY.**

**Motion to approve the January 26, 2022 Planning Commission Minutes. Motion carried 7-0**

**3. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 9, 2022 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Verma.

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 9, 2022 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER VERMA.**

**Motion to approve the February 9, 2022 Planning Commission Minutes. Motion carried 7-0**

**4. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 23, 2022 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Verma.

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 23, 2022 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER VERMA.**

**Motion to approve the February 23, 2022 Planning Commission Minutes. Motion carried 7-0.**

**CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS FOR COMMISSION ACTION**

There were not any consent agenda removals for Commission action.

**SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES/TRAINING UPDATES**

City Planner McBeth said a week from tonight is the kick-off meeting for the Master Plan Steering Committee. We have three Planning Commissioners who have agreed to attend the meeting next week: Avdoulos, Dismondy, and Verma.

Chair Pehrson asked if the meeting was open to the public

City Planner McBeth said it is open to the public. However, we ask that only the three Planning Commissioners be there so that we are not violating any meeting notice requirements.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Chair Pehrson invited members of the audience who wished to address the Planning Commission during the final audience participation to come forward. Seeing that nobody wished to participate, Chair Pehrson closed the floor for public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn made by Member Lynch.

**VOICE VOTE ON THE MOTION TO ADJOURN MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH.**

**Motion to adjourn the March 23, 2022 Planning Commission meeting. Motion carried 7-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:29 PM.