



PLANNING COMMISSION

Approved

CITY OF NOVI
Regular Meeting

Wednesday, September 24, 2008 | 7 PM
Council Chambers | Novi Civic Center | 45175 W. Ten Mile
(248) 347-0475

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Brian Burke, Victor Cassis, Andrew Gutman, Michael Lynch, Michael Meyer, Mark Pehrson, Wayne Wrobel

Absent: Member David Greco (excused), Brian Larson (excused)

Also Present: Barbara McBeth, Deputy Director of Community Development; Mark Spencer, Planner; Kristen Kapelanski, Planner; Karen Reinowski, Planner; David Beschke, Landscape Architect; Lindon Ivezaj, Civil Engineer; Steve Dearing, Traffic Consultant; Doug Necci, Façade Consultant; Martha Holzheuer, Woodland Consultant; Kristin Kolb, City Attorney

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Member Wrobel, seconded by Member Gutman:

VOICE VOTE ON AGENDA APPROVAL MOTION MADE BY MEMBER WROBEL AND SECONDED BY MEMBER GUTMAN:

Motion to approve the September 24, 2008 Planning Commission Agenda. Motion carried 7-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. LITTLE FRIENDS CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL, SP08-37

The Public Hearing was opened on the request of Little Friends Christian Preschool for Special Land Use approval. The subject property is located in Section 21, west of Taft Road, east of Beck Road in the R-4, One Family Residential District. The subject property is approximately 3.6 acres and the Applicant is proposing to occupy an approximately 2,890 square foot space inside the existing Layman's Evangelical Fellowship church at 46200 Ten Mile.

Planner Kristen Kapelanski described the request. This Applicant will move into an existing 2,890 square-foot classroom space in the church located between Taft and Beck roads. This subject property is zoned R-4 and master planned for Single Family Residential. Surrounding properties are zoned for Single Family Residential use.

The use of a preschool/daycare requires Special Land Use approval in the R-4 District. The Planning Commission is asked to make Findings in accordance with Section 2516.2.c of the Ordinance. Staff has not found any major concerns regarding this request and therefore recommends approval. There are various standards the Applicant must meet in order to achieve approval for this use. The Applicant must provide a fenced-in outdoor play area and operate only within the permitted hours of operation. The Applicant has met these standards. The Applicant is required to submit a Noise Impact Statement; the Applicant has requested a Planning Commission Waiver of this requirement as the proposed use will not add any noise-generating equipment to the existing church, nor any other measurable noises that would exceed the Noise Ordinance levels as a result of the Special Land Use permit. There is substantial buffer between the play area, classroom space and building and the adjacent homes. Staff supports the request.

Marilee Dechart addressed the Planning Commission. She said this Christian preschool will be housed in the existing church building. This is not a daycare center but a part-time Christian preschool program. The hours of operation would be from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM or 12:00 PM, depending on the age of the children and the day of the week. If the program grows in size, an afternoon session might run from 12:30 PM to 3:00 PM. She is seeking approval

through the State licensing board to have a maximum of twenty children in the building at any one time. The parent-child ratio for children ages 2½ - 5 is recommended as 1:8 for the younger children and 1:10 for the older children. Likely, Ms. Dechart would only have sixteen students in the building at one time based on her staffing levels. Hours of operation would be held Monday through Friday. A student drop-off area will be at the main church entrance. The playground will be on the west end of the building and is not near any of the adjacent homes. She is not required pursuant to the State licensing board to provide an outside play area unless the children are enrolled for more than five hours per day. As a preschool educator with fifteen years' experience, she said it is difficult to provide outside playtime in a 2½-3 hour session, especially in the winter.

Ms. Dechart said the classroom area is about 1,100 square feet. It is an open area that allows her to provide gross motor play within the building. She said that when the weather is nice, she will take the children outdoors, but she has no resources with which to build a play structure. Currently, there are no Christian preschools in Novi and that is the motivation behind her decision to open this preschool. She was formally the director at Faith Preschool and she was routinely asked whether she was a faith-based preschool, which she was not. She said there is a need for this in the community.

Chair Pehrson opened the floor for public comment. The comments from the Audience Participation held earlier in the meeting have also been provided in this space:

- Debra Kitka: Lives directly west of the church and is strongly opposed to the Little Friends Christian Preschool because it will affect her privacy in her own back yard. She is also concerned about traffic.
- Ramona Stearns, West Ten Mile: Opposed to traffic and noise in the area of the proposed Little Friends Christian Preschool.
- Robin Hamilton: Opposed to the Little Friends Christian Preschool.

Member Gutman read the Public Hearing responses into the record:

- Alphonse and Lottie Koznicki: Object for reasons of traffic and playground noise.
- Elaine Leifer, White Plains Drive: Objects for noise reasons.
- Gerry Agunizo, White Plains Drive: Approves of the request.
- Raymond Souters, Jr., Weathervane Ct: Approves of the request.

Chair Pehrson closed the Public Hearing.

Member Lynch said everyone is concerned about traffic in Novi. He asked when the peak traffic on Ten Mile occurs. Ms. Kapelanski said that Member Lynch's suggestion that it is between 7:00 AM and 8:30 AM is a fair assumption. Member Lynch added that 4:30 PM through 6:00 PM is likely the afternoon peak time. Based on the preschool's hours ranging between 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM, it doesn't appear that traffic should be an issue. Ms. Kapelanski added that the Planning Commission can make the 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM hours a condition of approval, if they so choose.

Member Lynch assumed that the number of vehicles that would be generated for a pick-up or drop-off would be about 24 trips. He wondered what percentage of increase to the traffic this represented; Ms. Kapelanski responded that this amount of traffic would not have a measurable amount of impact to Ten Mile. This number of trips outside of the peak traffic times would not have a great impact to the operation of the road in general.

Member Lynch confirmed that the church is in operation at this time. He confirmed that the children would have a fenced-in play area outside; Ms. Kapelanski responded that there is an existing fenced-in area on the site, and she located its position on an aerial map for the Planning Commission to review. It is in the center of the property, west of the ell-shaped portion of the building. Member Lynch surmised that is quite a distance from the adjacent residential; Ms. Kapelanski responded that the building is 167 feet from the property line.

Member Lynch confirmed that the Staff approves of the Noise Impact Study Waiver; Ms. Kapelanski responded yes, that the noise at the property noise is not expected to exceed the standards of the Ordinance.

Member Wrobel confirmed that the Applicant would use the existing fenced-in area, if Ms. Dechart chose to take the children outside. She said yes; they may plant a garden out there or toss balls around. She said it was very

expensive to follow the safety rules associated with actual play structures. She said she would keep the children in the fenced-in area.

Member Wrobel asked whether it was appropriate for the Planning Commission to require screening material, such as arbor vitae, around the play area; Ms. Kapelanski said that was in their discretion to do so. Ms. Dechart said that certainly she would consider doing something along that line to alleviate the neighbors' concerns. She said that the building is brick and concrete cinder block and the playground is open on the other three sides.

Moved by Member Meyer, seconded by Member Gutman:

In the matter of the request of Little Friends Christian Preschool, SP08-37, motion to approve the Special Land Use Permit subject to: 1) A Planning Commission finding under Section 2516.2.c for the Special Land Use Permit that relative to other feasible uses of the site, the proposed use: A) Will not cause any detrimental impact on existing thoroughfares; B) Will not cause any detrimental impact on the capabilities of public services and facilities; C) Is compatible with the natural features and characteristics of the land; D) Is compatible with adjacent uses of land in terms of locations, size, character, and impact on adjacent uses of land in terms of location, size, character and impact on adjacent property or the surrounding neighborhood; E) Is consistent with the goals, objectives and recommendations of the City's Master Plan for Land Use; F) Will promote the use of the land in a socially and economically desirable manner; G) Is listed among the provision of uses requiring Special Land Use review as set forth in the various zoning districts of this Ordinance and is in harmony with the purposes and conforms to the applicable site design regulations of the zoning district in which it is located; 2) A Planning Commission Waiver of the required Noise Impact Statement since there are no external changes to the tenant space; and 3) Compliance with all conditions and requirements listed in the Staff and Consultant review letters; for the reasons that the request is otherwise in compliance with Article 4, Article 24 and Article 25 and all other applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

DISCUSSION

Member Wrobel asked the motion maker to consider adding, "**Vegetative screening being planted around the play area.**" Member Meyer needed clarification. Ms. Dechart that the fence is a four-foot chainlink fence. Member Meyer didn't wish to have the screening material take away from the natural beauty of the site. Ms. Dechart understood the request to mean that the Planning Commission wished to see hedges or some kind of vegetation as an additional buffer. **Member Meyer accepted the change to his motion as did Member Gutman.**

Member Lynch asked whether the motion maker would consider including, "**The hours of operation being limited to 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.**" Ms. Dechart said those are the hours for which she is seeking licensure from the State. **Member Meyer and Member Gutman agreed to the change, as the Applicant seemed willing to collaborate on this stipulation.**

Member Cassis thought the discussion had been good on this consideration, and he supported the request. Ten Mile is a busy artery that is designed to handle a lot of traffic. He did not think this use would generate a great deal of traffic.

Chair Pehrson confirmed with Deputy Director of Community Development Barbara McBeth that she had no prior knowledge of noise issues associated with this church. She also added that the Planning Division did not seek this information. Ms. Dechart added that other preschools/daycares have operated in this church year ago.

Chair Pehrson thought the Applicant was doing what she could to make this Special Land Use compatible with the surrounding area. He took the residents' comments to heart, and reminded them that there are remedies available to them if, for instance, the noise levels exceeded the standards found in the Ordinance. Chair Pehrson believed this was a well-suited location for this use. He called for the vote.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON LITTLE FRIENDS CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL, SP08-37, SPECIAL LAND USE MOTION MADE BY MEMBER MEYER ND SECONDED BY MEMBER GUTMAN:

In the matter of the request of Little Friends Christian Preschool, SP08-37, motion to approve the Special Land Use Permit subject to: 1) A Planning Commission finding under Section 2516.2.c for the Special Land Use Permit that relative to other feasible uses of the site, the proposed use: A) Will not cause any detrimental impact on existing thoroughfares; B) Will not cause any detrimental impact on the capabilities of public services and facilities; C) Is compatible with the natural features and characteristics of the land; D) Is compatible with adjacent uses of land in terms of locations, size, character, and impact on adjacent uses of land in terms of location, size, character and impact on adjacent property or the surrounding neighborhood; E) Is consistent with the goals, objectives and recommendations of the City's Master Plan for Land Use; F) Will promote the use of the land in a socially and economically desirable manner; G) Is listed among the provision of uses requiring Special Land Use review as set forth in the various zoning districts of this Ordinance and is in harmony with the purposes and conforms to the applicable site design regulations of the zoning district in which it is located; 2) A Planning Commission Waiver of the required Noise Impact Statement since there are no external changes to the tenant space; 3) Compliance with all conditions and requirements listed in the Staff and Consultant review letters; 4) Vegetative screening being planted around the play area; and 5) The hours of operation being limited to 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM; for the reasons that the request is otherwise in compliance with Article 4, Article 24 and Article 25 and all other applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. *Motion carried 7-0.*

2. SRI VENKATESWARA TEMPLE AND CULTURAL CENTER, SP08-08A

The Public Hearing was opened on the request of Manyam Group, LLC, for Preliminary Site Plan, Special Land Use, Wetland Permit, Woodland Permit and Storm Water Management Plan approval. The subject property is located in Section 16, west of Taft Road between Grand River Avenue and Eleven Mile in the RA, Residential Acreage District. The subject property is approximately 10.11 acres and the Applicant is proposing a three-phase project:

Planner Karen Reinowski described the three-phased project: A 6,693 square-foot Temporary Temple/Priest Residence (the temporary Temple area will later revert to a meditation area), a 22,693 square-foot Temple, and a 31,833 square-foot Cultural Center. The subject property is zoned RA and master planned for Single Family Residential. The westerly property is zoned RA and master planned for Single Family Residential. To the north is land zoned OST and Single Family Residential, and master planned for Light Industrial and Single Family Residential. To the south is land zoned Single Family Residential. To the east is land zoned Light Industrial and Single Family Residential. There are wetlands in the front and rear of the property. There are dense woodlands on the rear half of the site.

The RA District permits churches and accessory uses as a Special Land Use. The Temple meets this criterion and the priest's residence and Cultural Center are considered accessory uses to the Temple.

The Planning Review recommends approval, with minor items to be addressed at the time of Final Site Plan submittal; there are variances that must first be sought from the ZBA. The Applicant must explain the timing of the project; the Temple and Cultural Center construction are perhaps being proposed on a long-term time frame. The Applicant intended to prepare the entire site for all phases during Phase 1. Staff recommends that the Applicant prepare the site on a phase by phase basis, in order to maintain the natural features as long as feasible and reduce the likelihood of erosion or other environmental concerns. The Applicant now intends to clear the site on an as-needed basis; the Planning Commission could add to any approving motion they might make, that any clearing of the site be done on an as-needed basis as each Phase comes forward.

The Staff noted fourteen variances that are necessary. The Temple itself meets the height standard of 35 feet, but seven decorative elements require variances and the mechanical equipment screening requires a variance. The decorative element variances are:

- the Maha Rajagopuram in front of the building entrance that is 37'4.5" in height;
- two decorative elements at the front of the building that are 36.5' and 40.5' in height;
- two identical decorative ornaments near the rear of the building that are 50' in height each; and

- the brass pole in the courtyard and the tower at the rear of the building that are each 55'1" in height.

The Zoning Ordinance states that church spires do not need to meet the height standard and these decorative elements could be considered the equivalent of a spire on a church. However, Special Land Use requests, which include the Temple and therefore these spires, may be subject to a height limitation by the ZBA.

The final height variance the proposed 42 feet of building height that is requested for the mechanical equipment screening.

The Cultural Center and its dumpster are located nearer to Taft Road and require two variances to address their placement in the Temple's front yard.

There are square footage variances required to address the sizes of the Cultural Center and residence, the total of which are limited by the Ordinance to 1,500 square feet. Accessory building square footages are also prohibited by Ordinance to exceed the ground floor square footage of the main structure – 12,750 square feet in this instance. The two accessory buildings area combined 38,526 square feet.

Variances are required for front yard parking and potentially for a deviation from the parking standard. The Planning Commission needs to make a determination. This plan proposes 287 parking spaces on site; the Zoning Ordinance requires one space is required for every three seats, or persons permitted to capacity, as regulated by local, county or state building or fire codes, or in the main unit of worship, whichever is greater, plus parking for accessory uses, if determined necessary by the City.

If the parking requirement is based on one floor of the Temple, the parking requires 275 spaces based on the building code. If the parking is required on the entire Temple area, 975 parking spaces are required. This includes the main unit of worship, the multi-purpose hall and remaining building uses. Staff understands that the multi-purpose hall will be used by the devotees until such time as the Cultural Center is built, and then this area will be used as a general activity area.

There are no fixed seats in the Temple, therefore the occupancy is based on one person per five square feet. This calculates into a very large parking requirement. The prayer hall and Temple would not be occupied simultaneously when other non-worship activities are occurring in the Temple or Cultural Center. The Applicant does not believe that parking would need to be required for all uses simultaneously.

The Planning Commission can find that parking should be based on the entire Temple building and accordingly, the ZBA variance would be for 677 parking spaces. This variance request is not supported by Staff unless a plan is provided for review and approval regarding how potential overflow parking will be accommodated offsite and devotees would be shuttled to the site, in the event large activities result in greater parking demand.

The Building Code calculations for the Cultural Center, assuming full occupancy of all its rooms, result in 1,027 parking spaces required. A total then, of 2002 parking spaces would be required. Once the entire site is built, parking for the Temple residence would resume to a private use, and there would be private parking in that building's garage.

The noise impact statement indicates that there are no outdoor activities or loudspeakers. The study was found to be acceptable. However, Staff would like an explanation of the terrace use on the Temple and Cultural Center.

The Wetland Review recommends approval, and notes that the plan requires a City of Novi Non-Minor Use Permit, a Natural Features Setback Authorization and an MDEQ Wetland Permit. The Woodland Review does not recommend approval, although with additional information and clarification, it appears the issues can be addressed to meet the standards. The Applicant has agreed to place a conservation easement on the remaining natural features.

The Landscape Review recommends approval; however, based on the current plan, a Planning Commission Waiver is requested for the berm along the north, south and western lot lines. The berm would compromise the existing native vegetation, slopes and wetlands.

The Traffic Review recommends approval of the Preliminary Site Plan, traffic study and shared parking study, with minor items to be addressed at the time of Final Site Plan submittal.

The Engineering Review recommends approval contingent on the Applicant extending the watermain north to Grand River in order to loop the system to provide appropriate fire flow. There are also minor items to be addressed at the time of Final Site Plan submittal.

The Façade Review on the residence meets the material requirement, but the color and articulation do not meet the intent of the standards. The Applicant and Consultant have discussed the issue, and they are nearing a consensus on how it can be addressed. The Temple requires two Section Nine Waivers for the materials (glass fiber reinforced concrete and pre-glazed block), and are recommended by the Consultant. In order to provide a traditional Temple, the glass fiber reinforced concrete is the only material suitable to Michigan's environment and it provides the ability for carving, while being practical from a cost perspective. The pre-glazed block is consistent with the other proposed materials and colors. The Temple is deficient on brick, but if the background walls are provided in brick, it would then meet the standard. Otherwise, a third Section Nine Waiver would be required and is not recommended by the Consultant at this time. The Cultural Center meets the Façade Ordinance standards.

The Fire Department Review did not indicate any outstanding issues related to the site.

Mr. Anand Gangadharan of Novi and Vice President of the Board of Trustees addressed the Planning Commission. A lot of work has gone into the plan thus far to enable its review by the Planning Commission. There are 150 professionals, both locally and regionally, that comprise this SV Temple Committee. This is an authentic Hindu Temple, central to their religious practice. There are not too many temples in the area. Generally, this Temple is for quiet enjoyment and religious practice of each member. Unlike some religions, there is not a call to prayer. Members pray individually or they may seek assistance from a priest. There is no set time; there is a constant flow based on the convenient timing of its members. There are no set days, though generally there will be more visitation on the weekends and in the evenings. Members will come to the Temple in their free time.

Phases 1 and 2 would begin concurrently. Phase 1 completion will allow room for an interim prayer hall. It will probably be completed in one year. The Temple could take two years or so. Phase 3 would be expected to begin a couple of years later.

Praveen Manyam addressed the Planning Commission. Parking is also a concern to them. The design of the building is specialized; it is not meant to be converted into something else. It is designed for a specific programmed use, in terms of how the members enter the building, the program that the members participate in until they reach the prayer hall. Upon entrance to the building members will find a coat room for shoes and coats. Then there is a stairway that takes members up to the prayer hall. This is a systematic approach; it is not one that is designed for members to occupy various parts of the building at any time. When people come to the prayer hall, they will progress to the prayer space, and then they will leave in the same manner. He asked the Planning Commission to consider the issue of parking based on the specialized nature of the program as opposed to the sheer size of the buildings.

There are no programs for the terrace space; it is more of a residual space that the Committee chose not to enclose as an indoor area. The terrace area of the Temple is used as an egress means and there is enough hallway width to get the members out of the building.

Matt Diffen, Civil Engineer, addressed the Planning Commission. Parking numbers suggested by the reviews are far different than what has been suggested by the Applicant. This project should be viewed as different uses and none of these uses will occur at the same time. The prayer hall has a maximum seating, according to the Applicant's architect, of 600 people, which requires 200 parking spaces. The event room can hold 300 people, requiring another 100 parking spaces. Both of these will not be full at the same time. The parking calculations are based on the Troy Temple which has the similar sized buildings. They have never come close to filling up their parking lot.

The site, from north to south, with the wetlands in the north, has an embankment. The Applicant has provided a wall along the site which has evergreens. The wetland area does not provide for much aside from the vegetative state that currently exists. The area of the woodlands cannot be disturbed. The north side is all wetlands. Along the side of the entry drive there is another embankment, and evergreens will buffer that area as well.

Chair Pehrson opened the floor for public comment:

- Doug Moore, Andes Hills Representative: He spoke on behalf of fifteen families in the area who are concerned. They met with the Applicant and said they are very nice. They are concerned that their use of the site does not fit

the size of the property. The Troy Temple sits on eighteen acres. The Applicant's website states they will serve over 3,000 neighbors of their faith in the local area. The Cultural Center can hold 1,000 people. As neighbors, they are concerned. The trees planned for the upper area will be planted on a three-foot berm because they cannot enter the wetland area. There are other trees besides small firs that can be used to mitigate the noise. The residents are concerned about the stormwater runoff. The Family Fun Center and the software company on Grand River create a runoff that literally floods out the people in the back of Andes. They are concerned about the number of parking spaces, though they will take a leap of faith with the Applicant and work with them on this issue. They want the Applicant to work with them to mitigate their concerns. There are issues with Andes residents being on a well that is drying up. Some people in the area lost their wells entirely when nearby properties were built. If the Applicant's water will come from Grand River, Andes would like to work with them on some mitigation for their area as well, getting onto City water as soon as possible. This concern includes Janet Ban, Ken Berressa, Rob Ledbetter and a number of other residents who live up and down the street.

- Ray Kaczor, Andes Hills: Was concerned about the wetlands, which always seem to be in a state of change. There are wetlands as shown on the website, and the design provided by the Applicant is different. The Applicant only has 8.5 acres to build on; the other 1.5 acres are wetlands. He wondered how the Applicant would work with this issue with respect to watershed. The back houses in Andes are getting water within five feet of their homes because of the Grand River entities. The Applicant states they will divert their water, but he wondered which way the water would go. If the water is diverted to the wetlands, he hopes the water doesn't come up to his back yard. He said the Applicant's website states they will service 3,000+ families. This is a lot of people. This Temple will draw from other cities like Dearborn, and this location may be easier to get to than the Troy location. This is a lot of traffic for Taft Road. He asked what guarantees there are that the Applicant won't use the Temple and the Cultural Center at the same time. Is there any recourse if they do? Once the site is built, then what happens? He stated that 2,000 showed up to an event at the Ford Auditorium a month or so ago, and this number of 150 members for this Temple seems a bit low. He thought that 270 parking spaces, when the Applicant should have 1,000, seem to be less than what is necessary and the property is a bit too small. He thought the Applicant should consider someplace else; they are disrupting traffic and noise here, and he wanted the Planning Commission to take that into consideration, or least look into it a little deeper. The property is three-fifths the size of the Troy property, and this Temple is twice as large.
- Matt Roczak, westerly neighbor: His lot will be directly impacted by this site. He is not supposed to be impacted per the Special Land Use Ordinance. He is within 300 feet, and he does not want this site to affect his quality of life. He asked how the City is going to protect long-term residents of the area. These residents built their RA homes on sites with woodlands. They purchased their homes based on the location, quietness and seclusion. They are used to looking outside and seeing trees and wildlife – deer, fox and coyote. This project can potentially affect the surrounding residents in a negative manner. He did not want this project to adversely affect the area. He asked how the City would address the noise from the activities – weddings, graduations, birthdays, increased car activity, the garbage pick-up, etc. The indirect lights off the white buildings – the lights are aimed downward but the white buildings will reflect. He did not think there were plans for a berm or trees in the southwest corner of the site. Existing trees in this corner will provide minimum blockage between December and April when the leaves are gone. Something needs to be done in this location. Lost woodlands and animal habitats will impact him. The City's website states that, "Native woodlands are considered one of the most valuable natural resources within the City of Novi. An entire section of the City's Ordinance is dedicated to the protection, conservation and management of these wooded areas." He wondered if the City stood behind this statement. He located his property on a map; he said his home would be within 500 of the Temple when it is built. The subject property is more than one-half regulated woodlands. It is in the middle of a habitat corridor. He sees deer almost daily. The Applicant plans to remove 152 regulated trees, while saving 112. Twenty of the saved trees are questionable due to their root zone being in the construction area. This removes 58-67% of the wooded areas, assuming the regulated trees are dispersed throughout the regulated woodlands. This impacts him, as he expects the woodlands to be a buffer for any development that is to occur on this site. The proposed plan removes this buffer. If this were a residence rather than a Special Land Use, he did not think the woodlands could be destroyed to this degree. The City would require the Applicant to build the home in the area where woodlands do not exist. This project will impact the animal habitat by dividing the larger wooded area in two. The existing residents' view will change, but why will they have to look out at two white, ornate two-story buildings, when they invested into residential woodlands? The residents were here first. The traffic for the Temple and Cultural Center will impact

Taft Road. The center is available for rent, and will be booked for most Fridays and Saturdays. The Cultural Center falls outside of the Special Land Use classification, and should be removed from this plan. It is a money-making banquet hall for rent. It will host birthdays, graduations, weddings and other similar uses. A business does not fall under Special Land Uses zoned RA. He said accessory buildings should not exceed 1,500 square feet; this building is more than 25 times over the accessory limit. They are not to exceed the ground floor size of the primary building; this use is three times greater in size. Parking is an issue. Who will monitor that the center will not be used at the same time as the Temple? The Applicant said that people can enter the Temple anytime they want. Even if both buildings are not used at the same time, the parking for the larger building should be provided; this plan provides one space per 3.5 necessary. Front yard parking will bring overflow parking to Taft Road. When soccer games are taking place on Taft Road, parking on both shoulders of the road becomes a serious safety issue. Four to five annual festival activities will exceed the parking provisions. He wondered why the City was allowing this project to move forward since he thought the Applicant was overbuilding the site. He wondered if the Applicant would expand in the future by purchasing the southerly parcel and clear those woodlands too.

- Jane Gardner, neighbor: Was not sure about the exact usage of the buildings. Their project summary states the multi-purpose Temple room will host gatherings. That area is 4,000 square feet and includes a stage area. She asked what kind of activities would take place there. She understood that most religions and churches have their festivals; she didn't have issues with the Temple but she was concerned about the building's usage. She wondered about the traffic it would generate. The Planning Commission needs to do their due diligence on exactly what the uses of this building will be. She contacted the Canton and Troy Temples and she said their Cultural Centers are booked for the next four months. She said that Special Land Uses of RA have to be private, noncommercial recreation area. The Troy Temple seeks donations for the rental of their facility, but they are required donations. This is akin to providing a mini Rock Financial right on Taft Road. She thought this building would be used constantly and would bring a lot of traffic to the area. Eleven Mile is posted at 30 MPH, and people already speed on it. She believed Grand River and Eleven Mile would be used frequently for access to this site since Taft Road does not have an expressway entrance. She asked that the Applicant qualify the use of the 4,000 square foot multi-purpose room, because she did not think it was adequately addressed in the traffic study. The prayer hall is two-thirds of the second hall, but the multi-purpose room is a majority of the first floor. This is in addition to the Cultural Center which exceeds the Ordinance standards by a great deal. She didn't think the City had a good understanding of the Temple's multi-purpose room's use. She said that the schools are heavily used on the weekends, bringing a lot of traffic and overflow parking; she was concerned about this use will add to the traffic issues. She did not think this was accurately addressed by the Applicant. She was concerned about objects exceeding the height standards. She can nearly read in her back yard at night because of the lights at the Beck Road interchange. She was concerned about whether these spires will be lit and their reflection off the white building. She didn't want to disturb the peace in the woodland area. She said both buildings have basements and she said that hasn't been addressed either. She wondered if there would be a written agreement that would prohibit these areas from hosting public events. She is concerned about the volume of people that this site will service; more research into other Temples is necessary so that the City understands the complexity of this use. The Taft Road/Eleven Mile intersection is a four-way stop and currently works, even with the schoolbus traffic; this project is a serious issue because it will add more traffic to the current pattern.
- Mike Wing, Eleven Mile: He thought the Temple encroached into the woodlands fairly significantly; he wanted to ensure that the City recovers from this in some fashion – either through replantings or other manner. He was concerned about the parking lot near the wetlands. There will be runoff with oil in it. The height variances, along with the other variances, seemed excessive to him. There is a 425-foot setback between the Temple and some of the homes; there is no discussion regarding the homes to the west. He wondered if the setback is an issue – noise or otherwise – that needs to be addressed. He asked the Planning Commission to consider limiting construction hours. He wouldn't want weekend construction to begin before 8 AM or 9 AM, nor continue into the evening hours.
- Rob Ledbetter, Taft Road: He thought this was the wrong site for this use. He suggested the Twelve Mile and M-5 area, where there is enough land and easy access to the freeways. Andes Hills is too close to this site. The traffic is one his biggest concerns; and the parking issue should not be sugarcoated. The area will be congested. The Applicant should consider building elsewhere where there aren't a lot of houses and the impact will be less.

He was concerned about the home values along Eleven Mile. This road will take on a lot of traffic. He calls this type of development the "Westland effect," meaning that development toggles between housing and buildings. He did not think this was necessary in Novi. He is the landscape/snow removal contractor for about ten businesses in the immediate area; there will not be parking available at these sites for this Temple's use. When the snow comes, there needs to be a place for the Temple to move its snow.

- Shri Dahl, Island Lake: He was excited to see this project because it gives him a close place to pray. From his home to City Hall, he counted seven churches. He said that there are a number of Hindus in the area who want a place of their own. He again expressed his support for the Temple, and said that the Applicant would likely work on the issues with these neighbors.
- Janet Ban, southerly neighbor: Her objections were the same as the others already raised. Her home is very near the end of her northerly lot line. The brick wall proposed by the Applicant will be ten feet away from the end of her property. She had a problem with a brick wall as opposed to a berm with shrubbery and trees.
- Ken Berressa, Taft Road: He just purchased his home and would not have done so had he known about this proposal. The traffic and lights will affect his home. He did not want to lose his well. His concerns were the same as the others already expressed.
- Shenuesse Cornell, Novi: He was delighted to welcome a Temple complex to Novi. This parcel offers the serene environment that he would like to have. The Cultural Center will provide them with a children's library and a place to attend other cultural events, like a music or Indian dance class. He wishes to integrate his children into American culture, but he also wants to save some of his heritage – and the Cultural Center offers the necessary infrastructure for this to occur. There are hundreds of thousands of Indians in the Novi area who will be delighted to have this Temple.

Chair Pehrson asked Member Gutman to read the Public Hearing correspondence:

- Samuel and Mary Butala, Andes Hills: Concerned about privacy, noise, water pressure, wetland and construction window issues.
- Steven Babinchak, Eleven Mile: Concerned about parking lot and Temple lighting, insufficient parking, dumpster location, insufficient information regarding noise attenuation of the rooftop units, wetland remediation and woodland displacement.
- Penny Hamblin, Andes Hills: Objected for noise, lighting, berm size, wetlands. water table effects on the well, traffic, parking and overbuilding issues.
- Petitioned letter from Ray Kaczor, Doug Moore, Nicholas Rigney, Kevin Woodward, Linda Siebert, Gladys Broxie, Ravi Guntara, Penny Hamblin, Felix Valbuena, Janet Ban, Ken Berressa, and two illegible names: Concerned about the number of variances requested, the size of the Temple, the noise impact, the number of parking spaces, wetlands, proposed berm and stormwater management in the wetlands.
- Gladys Broxie, Andes Hills: Objected for concerns relating to the well water, undersized berms, the number of people expected to use this Temple, the height of the lighting and how it will affect her, and the effect on the water supply.
- Felix Valbuena, Andes Hills: Objected because the loss of property value, stormwater discharge, increase in noise, the number of cars and lack of parking, and the impact on the water table and the supply for the well.
- Raymond Kaczor, Andes Hills: Objected because the project was too big for the site. He was concerned about the lighting, the berm size, ground water concerns, noise levels, traffic control and wetland disruption.
- Janet Ban, Taft Road: Objected because of water displacement, wetland and woodland disruption, the brick wall proposal, the size of the buildings, and the number of parking spaces.

- Linda Siebert, Andes Hills: Objected because of elevation, berm size, water displacement and effect on well, lighting, noise and traffic. She wanted a commitment from the City that their well won't be affected. She was concerned about area property values.
- Doug Moore, Andes Hills: Concerned about undersized berm, ground water runoff, effect on the well, lighting, noise, and lack of adequate parking.
- Brady Soube: Objected because of undersized berms, water runoff, effect on well, lighting problems and size of congregation.
- Kenneth Bissinger, Taft Road: Objected for reasons of traffic, noise and effect on the well.
- Ravi Guntaka, Andes Hills: Objected because of stormwater discharge, noise, and parking issues, and impact to well.

Chair Pehrson closed the floor for public comment.

Member Cassis said this was a beautiful project. He had the same objections as the residents though. He asked Mr. Anand if there were any way to modify the plans. His church recently scaled down the size of their project so that it better fit the area. He thought the plan could be accommodated if certain parts of the plan changed.

Member Cassis asked the Applicant if the Planning Commission expressed their concerns and postponed this request, would he go back to the drawing board and work with the planners to make changes to the plan. Mr. Anand said that fundamentally, the architect drew this plan based on common sense Temple designing. In the Hindu approach to life there are cultural considerations such as feng shui. Scriptures handed down over hundreds of years were taken into consideration. A religious architect determines what dimensions are necessary, how the free space should be designed (this is an important part of the cultural elements of prayer) and other elements of the plan. He was trying to support a certain community and so this design is meant to last a long while and be functional. There are design elements that can be fixed provided they are not cost-prohibitive. This Applicant wants to fit into the area and not be a nuisance of any kind. This congregation generally conducts itself very respectfully. Things are kept quiet and focused.

This Temple brings a balance to each person's life. Mr. Anand asked Member Cassis what he was proposing. Member Cassis responded that the City does not want to prevent the worshipper from practicing his religion. Even an agnostic would turn his head to heaven in view of this beautiful Temple. Member Cassis wondered if the Temple was too big. The Applicant may have 1,000 people who want to come here, but is this the proper place for it? Maybe Grand River is a better place. The Applicant is proposing three uses on this small parcel. This is a huge project surrounded by residential. He asked whether this huge project fits on a parcel of this size. The diversity of the buildings – does that fit the site? Member Cassis did not think so. He thought the proposal was too huge for this small lot. He suggested that the Applicant combine certain functions – does it have to be three separate buildings? Do they have to be so huge? He suggested that the spire didn't have to be 65 feet high. The land elevation is already high in that area.

Member Cassis said that changes to the plan will call upon the architect's imagination and skill. He thought the Applicant had a good architect. He asked the Applicant to work with the City. Mr. Anand appreciated Member Cassis's comments. He wondered if the same comments would come from Member Cassis if a church were proposed with a very tall spire and provided inspiring architecture. He said that the design should not be looked at as anything else. The spire is a small element of the design and is going to be architecturally beautiful. It will be part of the Novi landscape. This is a cosmopolitan area with a cosmopolitan crowd. The communities are rich with heritage and all this Applicant is trying to do is bring the best of its culture to Novi. A lot of attention to detail has been made to make sure that this is not a building that will fall into the Westland example. There is tremendous detail provided by a group of professionals. Every walk of life is represented in this community. There is a tremendous amount of participation; this is not something that has just popped up in the last six months. This community is growing and the fact that this Applicant is proposing this ambitious plan is proof that the community is maturing. The Applicant represents people who want to be part of this community. They want to be proud of this plan, and they want the extended community to be proud of it too.

Mr. Anand is keen to get the project moving. They are pressed to get the process going. They want to break ground as soon as possible. He asked the Planning Commission whether it would consider approving Phases 1 and 2. He offered to engage with the City about the planning of Phase 3. The size and any other implications of that building can continue to be discussed. He asked the Planning Commission to consider that the priests will live in the residence. That is not a diverse use. He said he could bring further evidence of how this campus is one coherent use. The Cultural Center is not a commercial venture. There are cultural offerings such as dance class that will be provided. At this time this group of people has been renting other churches and basements for their events. They would love to have their own place.

Member Cassis said the problem is procedural whereby if the Planning Commission approves the project it has to be all three buildings. Once the Planning Commission approves the plan, it cannot tell the Applicant to just proceed with Phase 1 and the others will be negotiated at a later date. It does not happen that way. Member Cassis said the only way the Planning Commission can review this plan is to review all three phases.

Mr. Anand wondered if all the Planning Commission members were of the same opinion as Member Cassis.

Member Cassis said he would make the motion and find out if the others felt the same. Mr. Anand said that there is great enthusiasm and hard work moving this project. Member Cassis agreed, and said he was enthused for them and he wanted to do what is best for them. Mr. Anand said he believed that. Member Cassis said he is not trying to hinder their efforts. He was doing it to help them.

Moved by Member Cassis, seconded by Member Wrobel:

In the matter of the Sri Venkateswara Temple and Cultural Center, SP08-08a, motion to postpone the request until the earliest upcoming meeting to provide the Applicant with time to work with the City and the planners on modifying the plan.

DISCUSSION

Member Lynch agreed with the postponement but did not think enough information had been provided to the Applicant. Chair Pehrson said that the discussion would continue.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON SRI VENKATESWARA TEMPLE, SP08-08, POSTPONEMENT MOTION MADE BY MEMBER CASSIS AND SECONDED BY MEMBER WROBEL:

In the matter of the Sri Venkateswara Temple and Cultural Center, SP08-08a, motion to postpone the request until the earliest upcoming meeting to provide the Applicant with time to work with the City and the planners on modifying the plan. Motion carried 5-2 (Yes: Cassis, Gutman, Lynch, Wrobel, Pehrson; No: Burke, Meyer).

Chair Pehrson asked Planning Commission members to give the Applicant recommendations for the project.

Member Lynch said he didn't understand certain items contained in this review. He said there are so many different calculations suggested for the parking space requirement. He thought that the neighbors didn't understand it either. He thought that the fear was that overflow parking would occur all over the place. He was quite impressed with the architecture but he was concerned about the parking.

Mr. Anand responded that the prayer hall is the main purpose of the development. There are ancillary rooms that members may visit to mentally prepare, but the intent is to reach the prayer hall. It is a process – cleaning one's hands, feet, checking one's appearance, reaching a level of calmness, etc. Fundamentally, the whole purpose is how many people fit into the prayer hall. It is a specialized use building. There is a variety of peripheral spaces – terraces and corridors. The Temple does not use chairs – people can sit, stand or amble around; they do whatever they want to do. It is a freestyle session. There is a certain level of membership that will increase. There are 3,000 families in the region, and in this specific area, the Temple would expect its congregation to grow just like any other church or organization. They believe there is adequate parking for most days of the year. There could be one or two times annually when simultaneous events occur. Arrangements will be made for off-site parking with shuttle service if

needed. This wouldn't happen too often. In general it is the same group of people using the Temple who would use the Cultural Center. The hall is big because some events will attract a larger number of people. In most sessions, it is a smaller type of gathering that will take place, all of which have a cultural or religious basis. That is how the parking is conceived. Mr. Anand believes the parking is adequate. When compared to other Temples, this is adequate.

Member Lynch thought Mr. Anand gave a brilliant explanation. He asked Ms. Reinowski whether the City is satisfied with the parking. Ms. Reinowski responded that the City just wanted to nail down the use so that it could be understood how business was going to be conducted, in order to ensure that there was enough parking. With multiple uses, the City has to look at the potential for simultaneous events. The Applicant has indicated in his response that Temple uses wouldn't occur at the same time the Cultural Center is in use. For the sake of calculating and coming up with a number, all buildings had to be considered. The Planning Commission is given the option pursuant to the Ordinance of excluding the accessory uses, which are the Cultural Center and residence. The multi-use building in the Temple can also be considered an accessory use, given that the main use is the prayer hall. Therefore, the parking could be based strictly on the prayer hall (275 spaces), or on the principal building (975 spaces).

Chair Pehrson asked the Applicant to provide information on typical annual events, their descriptions, and what type of arrangements they might make with another locale for overflow parking.

Ms. Reinowski added that one of the Building Division employees has offered to meet with the Applicant to discuss how the building may be used to see whether the parking calculation could be further reduced through an analysis of building function. Chair Pehrson asked that this meeting be arranged.

Member Lynch felt that the parking issue could be better determined upon the conclusion of these steps being taken.

Member Lynch asked whether Taft Road, in its current state, could handle the traffic anticipated with this use. Mr. Steve Dearing, Traffic Consultant, approached the impacts of this site by drawing on his experience of reviewing churches, synagogues, mosques, cathedrals, kingdom halls, etc. This was the first Hindu Temple he has reviewed. With a use as specialized and unique as this, the review moved forward as a comparative study. He asked the Applicant for information on the Troy Temple. The size is relatively similar. It has priest housing and a Cultural Center as well.

Mr. Dearing looked at real numbers based on an existing use, in an area that is demographically similar to Novi. The Applicant's traffic consultant did a real nice job making sure that he hit all of the hot points that Mr. Dearing was going to review. What he found was that during the "peak use" time, i.e., AM and PM commuter rush times, this facility would not pose any problems. This proposal has some aspects similar to Christian and other religions, when the potential does exist for a weekend or evening special event (not related to worship) creating traffic. Again, comparable information was provided by the Troy Temple. Generally, there should not be any traffic impacts that would be felt by Taft or the surrounding roads for those weekends because again, the roads are not nearly as congested on the weekends as they are during the week. It might be a much different situation if this site were near to some retail hubs, but that is not the case here.

Mr. Dearing has a relationship with Troy so he called their city staff. The city has never been notified of any significant or fundamental problems resulting from that Temple. They do not have spillback issues associated with parking demands. There isn't an overflow parking situation affecting the neighborhoods. Mr. Dearing reached his conclusion to approve this plan built upon the experience of others, trip generation studies, and other routine impact studies. Again, the information was provided by a consultant who does good work, with numbers that were supported by Troy's city staff. The Troy traffic as presented suggested seems to represent the reality of the Troy Temple. Based on that, Mr. Dearing did not think this proposal would provide significant traffic impacts for Novi. It appears as though with the exception of a handful of days annually, the parking proposed is adequate.

Mr. Dearing explained that using a fire marshal's view of the world, i.e., how many people can be packed into a building, the maximum parking requirement would number in the hundreds, if not a thousand. If one drives through the normal zoning methodology of building occupancy – how many vehicles transport members to the structure – the number of parking stalls required is staggering. Mr. Dearing took the Applicant's comment at face value that, based on their cultural and religious practices, there is a lot of space that surrounds the core of the prayer area. Mr. Dearing

compared this proposal to Troy's Temple, as he assumed there was no fundamental disconnect between the two communities. He believed that the proposal should work.

Member Lynch said then, that he would not ask for additional traffic analysis from the applicant. Member Pehrson said he would still like to see additional data. Mr. Anand asked Member Pehrson why he would need more information, in light of the expert testimony provided by Mr. Dearing. This Applicant has already invested months of work and money into this proposal.

Member Pehrson said that, as one of the residents suggested, the Planning Commission is tackling a very complex request. He wished for the Planning Commission to see as much data as possible, because he knew that at some point in time a special event will bring overflow parking onto Taft Road. He wished to see a list of events, to the extent that the Applicant can provide, so the Planning Commission can know in advance and this occurrence is nothing that will surprise the City. The more information provided, the better the Planning Commission can make its decision. This is nothing more than what is asked of any other Applicant, whenever there is enough doubt about the type of use permit in a zoning classification. Mr. Anand will submit these documents; he kindly requested that this proposal not be treated any differently than a church or any other organization. Mr. Anand did not know that Mr. Dearing would speak about this traffic study. His group has put in a tremendous amount of effort; so much so that this proposal has been delayed from previous Planning Commission agendas. It seemed a bit onerous to him that he is being asked to go back to the drawing board, simply to readdress things that have already been addressed.

Member Pehrson said this request has nothing to do with this being a Temple, a church, a mosque; this is based on the use for the residential area in which it will be located.

Member Lynch asked for clarification on the well system, and whether this project would affect the water table. City Engineer Lindon Ivezaj responded that Andes Hills is still on a well system. Problems can happen when over-excavating a deep sanitary sewer. These sewers are no more than twelve feet in depth. It may affect irrigation wells, which are shallow. For the main water supply, this shouldn't affect it too much. There are no guarantees. In the Ordinance there is a disclaimer stating that the contractor and the developer are responsible in case any nearby wells go dry. Potable water must be provided to the residents and the developer will have to make sure that he fixes a problem if he causes one.

Member Lynch asked about the landscaping. It seemed to be full enough based on his review of the plan. Landscape Architect David Beschke responded that the Applicant has met or exceeded the Ordinance requirements. Their plant selection has diversity. A berm is required on three sides. The Applicant has the right to request a waiver, and the Planning Commission has the right to consider this option. The Planning Commission can eliminate the berm, reduce its size or approve the use of a wall instead of a berm to save natural features such as a slope, existing vegetation, wetlands, etc. All of these conditions exist on this site. The Applicant is proposing rain gardens and bioswales as well. The Applicant is mitigating wetlands in some areas. Many of these landscape tools are contradicted by a berm. Given that the Applicant is trying to save some existing features and install new natural features, the Planning Commission may wish to consider this waiver request.

Member Lynch thought the topography shown on the plan indicated that the water would run away from the houses in the area. Mr. Ivezaj said that there is a natural water course running through the site to the Grand River Regional Detention Basin. He thought that the watercourse has been steered across Taft Road to get to the basin. A large rain event could flood or cause drainage issues, but the development of the site would detain a bankful before discharging into the wetland. Member Lynch asked Mr. Ivezaj whether this plan might actually improve the stormwater management. He responded that it could; a 100-year event would have to drain to the basin; this plan is designed to manage most all events onsite.

Member Wrobel was pleased to see the Temple proposal. He was not yet sold on whether the Cultural Center fits on this site. Mr. Anand told Member Wrobel that the Temple will have set hours. His general rule was that they would be open on weekdays from 9 AM to noon, and from 5 PM to 9 PM. Weekends the Temple would be open from 9 AM to 10 PM.

Member Wrobel said that it would be easier for him to approve this project if a shuttle plan was submitted with the

next round of traffic review. Mr. Anand responded that the Troy Temple has been in existence for a long time and it is just now reaching its parking capacity. Given that this Temple only has 150 families at this time, and there will be 280+ spots, it would be quite a while before the point comes that a parking arrangement is necessary. He asked if Member Wrobel was just looking for an expression of interest from the nearby commercial uses that they would entertain some type of parking overflow arrangement. Member Wrobel said that would be acceptable.

Member Wrobel asked about the number of families listed on the website. Mr. Anand said that the 3,000 number represents the number of Hindu families in the area. Member Wrobel said the number is so vague he would like to better understand the number. City Attorney Kristin Kolb thought the Applicant was about to say that this number would be very difficult to quantify. This is not an item under the Special Land Use purview. Member Wrobel withdrew the request.

Member Wrobel supported the Temple and residence. He was not sold on the Cultural Center being placed on this site. He would not be able to support all three buildings on this site at this time. Mr. Anand said a Cultural Center is a place for the children to perform for their parents and the general community. It could be a dance recital or a marriage ritual, which is very different from the marriages common to Novi. Mr. Anand commented that a 15-second marriage ceremony is not uncommon. This building provides for this congregation to have available to it all of the accoutrements and a level of style and class. This plan has taken a decade to bring forward; in their view, they believe the Cultural Center completely complements the Temple use. Mr. Anand respectfully submitted that the Troy Temple is able to accommodate the use on their site, and this site was no different. He offered to take anyone who would like to visit the existing Temple out to Troy.

Member Pehrson said that he has experienced a Hindu prayer hall in India and it was a wonderfully beautiful thing. He thanked Mr. Anand for the offer.

Member Meyer teaches world religions and has attended the Troy Temple. He appreciated the collaborative effort the Applicant has made with the residents. He said the Planning Division has given their recommendation for approval on all the disciplines except woodlands. Mr. Beschke said that the Landscape Ordinance was separate from the Woodland Ordinance. Mr. Beschke said that the Woodland Consultant looks for a natural setting re-recreation, while he looks for a more manicured site.

Martha Holzheuer, Woodland Consultant, addressed the Planning Commission. She did not approve the plan for two reasons. On a broad landscape scale, she was concerned that 60%-67% of the regulated trees are proposed for removal. The property embodies much of the core habitat of the larger woodland patch. There is a good age structure of large trees and understory. There is also a diverse species – hickories, oaks, maples, ironwood. There is a vernal pool area shown on the plan as Wetland H. This provides good amphibian habitat for most of the year. It can't support fish so it's a good place for amphibians. The connectivity between the forested wetland and the upland is important to be kept in tact for ecological functioning. Second, she had issues with specific trees and woodland fence placement. There may be another twenty trees that aren't being protected. The fence needs to be at the dripline or the edge of the crown of the tree. It's unclear whether there is room to provide this type of protection. She also said the mitigation trees are spaced too close together to allow for full maturity of the plant material so they will compete with one another. They are also spaced too close to underground utilities, buildings and other structures. This will require long term maintenance and could disturb both the above and below ground portions of those replacement trees. Member Meyer asked the Applicant to take this information under consideration.

Member Meyer asked about the lighting. Mr. Anand said that the building would not be lit beyond its open hours. The Applicant said that he is looking at low level lighting to highlight salient portions of the building. The building is very decorative and some aspects should be highlighted. This is nothing like an airport beacon. The carvings on the building are significant within the religious aspect of the building itself. They have significance similar to a church spire. The lighting is meant to enhance the devotee's entry into the building.

Member Burke said that he felt the Planning Commission fundamentally supported phases 1 and 2. There are questions pertaining to Phase 3. He understands now how this is an integral part of the proposal. Mr. Anand told him the Cultural Center's hours would not be too dissimilar from the Temple. There may be a dance event that extended to 10:30 PM. He said it was accurate to say that the space would be utilized – he didn't know if "rent" is the right

word. He has not gotten into the details of the interior of the Cultural Center design, but there will be a central room with a stage. There may be the ability to divide the area into classrooms for vernacular languages or religious scripture readings. The partitions would not be meant to provide for different events.

Member Burke said he understood there to be concern over parking and simultaneous events. He asked how Mr. Anand would ensure that Temple devotees and cultural event attendees could both be accommodated on the site simultaneously. He replied that the congregation is a finite group of people who would use the facilities. The Troy Temple is very mature and has grown over the last 24 years. Their facility's use has stabilized over the years within the community. Mr. Anand has been at that Temple at the invitation of one its congregants. Again, he said it is a finite pool of people who would use this Temple and Cultural Center.

Member Burke sits on the ZBA and while he won't be able to vote on their variance requests, he is expected to share information with the other members. He asked about their religious architect who designed the site and whether the heights of the towers are based on religious significance. Mr. Anand said there was a scriptural significance; certain things have to be in proportion to each other. The heights have to be different. Certain elements of the architectural concepts have to be in direct contact with the earth. There are areas under which walking is not permitted. There are certain corridors that must be cut off. There are specific elements that have been factored into the design.

Member Burke considered the variance requests to be opportunities that would expand the Ordinance and assist the Applicant getting things built. In essence, Member Burke felt the Temple was supported and the Applicant has a big job with taking these requests for variances before the ZBA.

Member Gutman thought the project was beautiful and would be a great addition to the community. Member Gutman's concern rests with the woodlands. He thought the Applicant has done a good job of removing people's concerns about the project. The traffic and the parking information from the City's Traffic Consultant should remove those concerns. He hoped that Mr. Anand would return to the Planning Commission soon with his revised plan.

Mr. Anand said there are 152 trees to be cut and 450 will be replanted. Not all of these will be planted on site. Just as all of the neighbors, this Applicant has the same passion for woodlands, privacy, and trees; he does not want to take out one tree that can be saved. About thirty percent of the property is proposed to be a conservation easement. Member Gutman said that was very admirable. Mr. Anand said he shared in Member Gutman's concern about removing the mature trees, but planned to maximize the remaining trees as much as possible.

Member Cassis asked Mr. Dearing whether he'd been to the Troy Temple. He responded that he'd been by it but not inside. His discussions have been with Troy City staff. Member Cassis thought that the Troy campus was designed as one building. Mr. Dearing responded that the most striking difference is that the Troy Temple sits on a larger parcel which means it is physically more separated from the neighboring properties. Member Cassis asked what road it was on. Mr. Dearing said it is off of Coolidge Road -- it was determined it was off of Adams. Member Cassis said that Mr. Dearing should have visited the site and therefore because he didn't he wondered how he could accept the recommendations Mr. Dearing had offered.

Member Cassis said the issue is traffic, not parking. Member Cassis said that it was Mr. Dearing's opinion he needed, not the Applicant's consultant. Mr. Dearing responded that the Applicant's traffic consultant studied the other site. They prepared a complete week's worth of traffic counts (Monday through a Monday). It showed, as expected, some peaks of traffic. Most of the traffic flow in and out of the site was very moderate. As expected, the peaks were on the weekends. Even the weekend peaks were not necessarily during the times associated with Saturday retail peaks.

Member Cassis asked whether Mr. Dearing was guaranteeing that the Temple would only be used on a Saturday. Mr. Dearing said no. He added that he did not have comparable Hindu Temple experience. He sought the traffic information on the Troy Temple and the Applicant provided an extensive study. Member Cassis sympathized, but he needed a comparison of Adams Road to Taft Road which is a small two-lane artery with two stops within a block. Mr. Dearing was reviewing the traffic generated by a comparable site -- size of building, intended use, etc. He was trying to determine what the traffic of this proposal would generate, and this number is then put into the context of Taft Road. A generality is used to determine the traffic, and if the trip generation is believable from the Troy Temple, its

application to this site on Taft Road concludes that there are no significant impacts. The Applicant's traffic consultant suggests this and Mr. Dearing agreed.

Member Cassis' concern is that this site has three buildings. He didn't know how many congregants attended the Troy Temple. He didn't know how many activities are held on that site. These are his concerns and he didn't understand why his line of questioning concerned Chair Pehrson. Chair Pehrson asked that if Member Cassis was trying to glean the answer to a specific question he should ask the specific question.

Member Cassis told Mr. Anand he was asking the same questions he would ask of a Baptist, a Greek Orthodox or anyone, even those not of a religious background. Mr. Anand responded that he has to answer to 150 families who wanted to break ground within the next few weeks. He said there is sensitivity in the situation of collecting money in tough economic times to move something ahead that is spiritual and focuses the mind on something positive. He understood that reviewing this plan is a huge commitment as is making the right judgment. He understood by the looks on the Planning Commission members' faces that they were not postponing this review for other reasons not mentioned. Mr. Anand wished there would have been another forum available to the Planning Commission that could have educated them on a Hindu Temple prior to this meeting. Mr. Anand was serious in his earlier offer to take any of the members to visit a different Hindu Temple. He would be happy to escort them. He appreciated the Planning Commission's hard work and he hoped that he could return quickly with his next plan so that they could still break ground this year.

Member Cassis said the Cultural Center is 38,526 square feet which he felt was huge. He said a huge restaurant is about 10,000 square feet and holds 300 people. This is three times that size and is in addition to the Temple, which is 12,750 square feet. If Mr. Anand is only hosting small dances in the Cultural Center, he wondered why the building had to be 38,000 square feet. Mr. Anand responded that fundamentally, there is one room where such activities are conducted. The Indian community also has young people such as himself who've come here to school and have decided to make the United States their home. They've brought their parents here, who are lonely at home so another element of this building is a comfort room with a large fireplace and sofas for the elderly to come visit amongst themselves. This area is not meant to be claustrophobic. It will be elegant in its design with glass features that offer light. The elderly can mingle, enjoy fellowship and prayers while the family is off at work. This is their attempt at setting something up – defining something new – but is not meant to increase the density of the site. In the first attempt at the architectural design a certain size was proposed for this room. Mr. Anand said it would go through a lot of detail and refinement. At the present time, only the footprint is defined and the simultaneous use of both buildings has hopefully been adequately described. He hoped the relevance of the three buildings has been explained.

Member Cassis said his church makes a lot of money off of its Cultural Center by renting it. He asked how Mr. Anand could guarantee that this center is not going to be rented out for lunches, dinners, etc. Churches are always looking for more money. Ms. Kolb interjected that the comment is off-topic and does not pertain to the Special Land Use review required of the Planning Commission. Member Cassis said he was only asking whether the center would be rented out. Ms. Kolb responded that when the matter comes back before the Planning Commission the members have to evaluate the Special Land Use criteria; this is not one of the criteria that will be under their purview. Member Cassis asked whether traffic generation was under consideration; Ms. Kolb said she was referring to whether the Applicant would be making money on the rental of the center. Member Cassis said that renting the hall speaks to the traffic generation. Ms. Kolb reiterated that only the Special Land Use criteria should be weighed in this consideration. Questions relating to the rental of the building are outside the Special Land Use realm.

Member Cassis said the postponing of this consideration was meant to give the Planning Commission members an opportunity to express their concerns to the Applicant. If the members don't express their concerns, the Applicant would not know what to do. Mr. Anand said there was no issue on that front. Mr. Anand understood Member Cassis' question to represent his concern for additional traffic. Mr. Anand said that a 24-year old Temple in Troy has not brought problems to that community or complaints from its citizens. This Temple is trying to model its use from that Temple in Troy. His intention is to be friendly with the neighbors, preserve the space, and make this site a tranquil location. The Planning Commission can only relate this proposal to others in existence, and this Applicant has prepared documentation to that end. Beyond that, it is very difficult for Mr. Anand to project what will happen in ten years. He expected to achieve the kinds of things that the Troy Temple has achieved. He expects to be a good

citizen and a good neighbor. That is most he can offer to the Planning Commission.

Chair Pehrson said the Applicant has done a wonderful job and he thanked him for reaching out to the community to allay their concerns. All too often this does not happen. He commended the Applicant for helping the Planning Commission members learn more about the Temple itself and the way Hindus practice their religion. Chair Pehrson said that he has been reading over the Special Land Use language describing the criteria under which this proposal must be reviewed. The Planning Commission has to ensure that this is the right application for this particular site. There are six bullets to consider. He challenged the Applicant to review those standards. He said it is not the intent of the Planning Commission to block development in the City. It is their intent to ensure that the correct use is placed in the correct location. The Planning Commission takes their charge very seriously. Chair Pehrson would have likely had to vote no on the current proposal because he thought perhaps the proportion of this use is inconsistent with the area. The proposal has to be compatible with the adjacent uses in terms of location, size, character, impact on adjacent property and surrounding neighborhood. These criteria are used with all Special Land Use requests. Within those same criteria the number of accessory buildings and their sizes, and their proportion relative to the size of the land must be considered. A location at M-5 and Twelve Mile or Grand River might make a lot more sense in terms of proportionality and location.

It is not a question of use; in this case, Chair Pehrson has to be convinced that the Applicant has the right size, proportion and character to fit this site. Chair Pehrson did not think so at this time. He thought the Applicant was trying to shoehorn a bit too much on this site. He understood the Applicant's intent however, he thought the Applicant still had to convince the Planning Commission members. He encouraged Mr. Anand to look at the Special Land Use criteria and ensure that he can return to Planning Commission to answer all of the questions affirmatively, that this proposal meets the intent of that section of the Ordinance. Proportion and size are relevant. The height and scale of the buildings must be considered; perhaps the design, if proportionately smaller, and the Cultural Center was removed, the plan might make a bit more sense.

Chair Pehrson keyed into the wetland concerns as well. There is a finite number of wetland and woodland acres within the City. There are Ordinances with which the Applicant can take advantage of, such as the tree fund Ordinance. Certainly, Chair Pehrson asked the Applicant to consider what the connector is for this particular wetland, and how it is affected by the building. Relative to the character of this land, the Applicant must ensure that this is the best fit for this building on the site. The area may be a bit grey, but there is relevance to the overall proportionality. He encouraged the Applicant to reconsider the wetlands and woodlands on the site.

Chair Pehrson hoped the Applicant took these suggestions to heart. The project was postponed at this meeting because enough uncertainty existed and enough questions were asked by the neighbors that Chair Pehrson did not think a reasonable understanding of the Applicant's request could be ascertained at this meeting. He didn't think a truly righteous verdict could have been made at this meeting. Chair Pehrson said the Planning Commission is not trying to stonewall or delay the Applicant and he understood that they were on a time table. Chair Pehrson wanted to see the Applicant succeed and he wanted this development process to be a pleasant experience for him. At the same time, the Planning Commission must do its due diligence associated with the duties they have been asked to do.

Deputy Director of Community Development Barbara McBeth said the City will be happy to meet and work with the Applicant. She understood that timing was crucial for them. Ms. McBeth said that the ZBA Agenda was prescheduled with this project and the review would obviously have to be postponed. That action of postponement will occur at the meeting of October 14th.

Mr. Anand said the Temple plan has taken a tremendous amount of work; it has been under design since November of last year. Access to scriptural architects is very difficult. Getting scheduled and getting to this point has been a task in itself. Going back to resize the Temple is too onerous a task and shouldn't be taken lightly. This is a challenging opportunity that will likely stall this project if the Planning Commission requests or requires the resizing of the Temple. Mr. Anand wanted the Planning Commission to understand that it is not a light task. It has taken a lot of resources and time, with multiple people flying to India to accomplish what has been submitted. Mr. Anand agreed to review the size of the Cultural Center.

Mr. Manyam added that from a design perspective with regard to the Temple, this building must accommodate

Michigan weather conditions. In India itself, a Temple could be smaller. There aren't winter storms with which to contend. He has had to design the building with space for the devotees to remove their shoes prior to their walking up the stairs and passing the brass pole and entering the Temple. It is a specific process. He has extruded this process out from the bottom of the building. The Temple after which this proposal is modeled exists in the hills in Southern India. It is an ascension process in which the devotees gain access to that Temple. That is what is being emulated with this design. His design really takes the box and pulls things out – molding the dough a bit – and he is looking for an understanding of the use as opposed to soliciting fear because of the size of the Temple on paper. He described a chest of drawers as a chest of drawers whether the bottom drawer was pulled out or pushed in; he compared this analogy to his Temple design: the footprint may seem large but it's still the same Temple.

Chair Pehrson thanked the Applicant and said he looked forward to reviewing the next plan. Chair Pehrson called for a ten minute break.

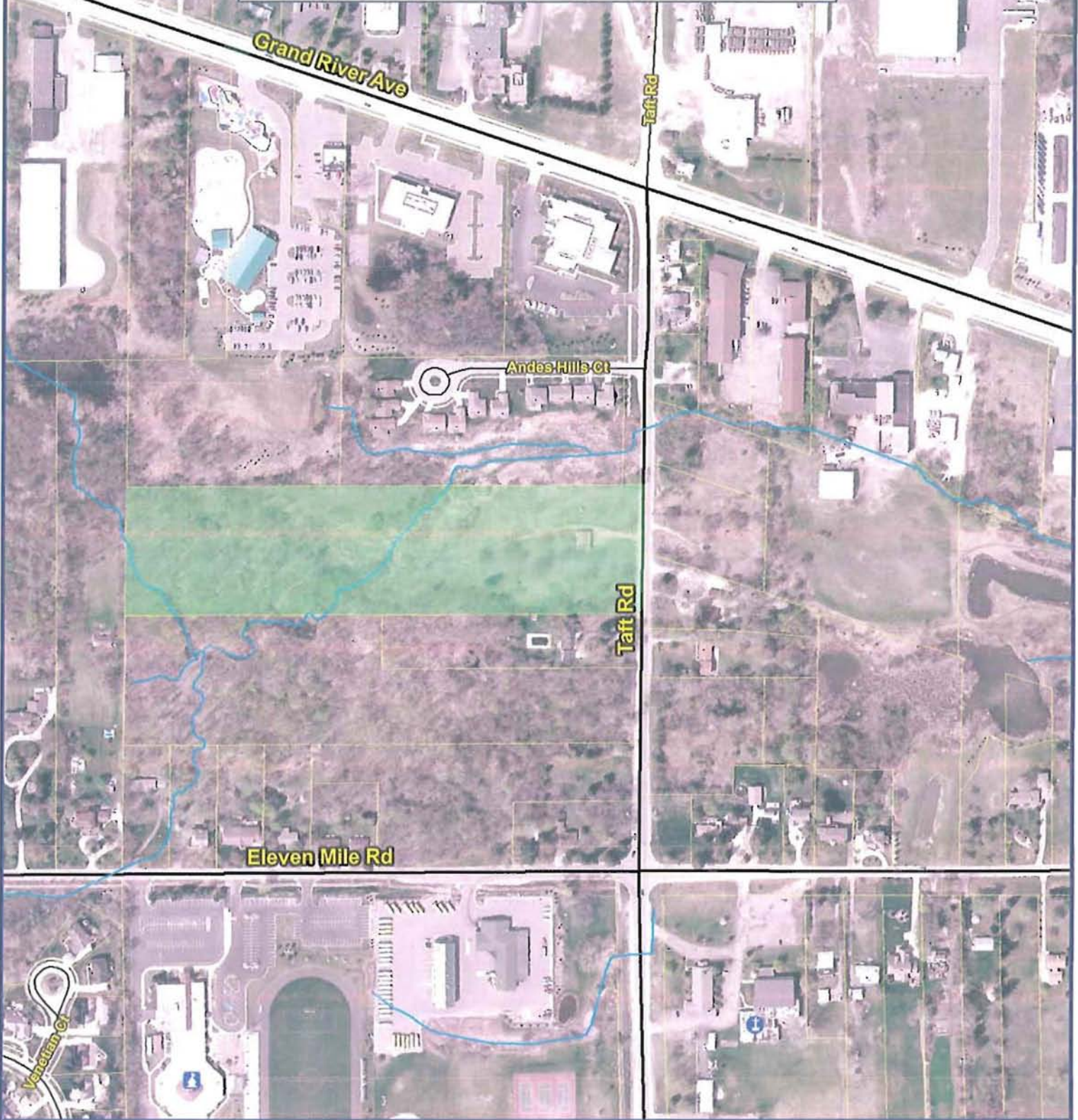
REDUCED PHASED SITE PLAN

MAPS

**Location/Air Photo
Zoning**


SP10-18 Sri Venkateswara Temple

Location



Map Author: Kristen Kapelanski
Date: 05/04/10
Project: SP10-18 Sri Venkateswara Temple
Version #: 1.0

Map Legend

 Subject Property

MAP INTERPRETATION NOTICE

Map information depicted is not intended to replace or substitute for any official or primary source. This map was intended to meet National Map Accuracy Standards and use the most recent, accurate sources available to the people of the City of Novi. Boundary measurements and area calculations are approximate and should not be construed as survey measurements performed by a licensed Michigan Surveyor as defined in Michigan Public Act 132 of 1970 as amended. Please contact the City GIS Manager to confirm source and accuracy information related to this map.



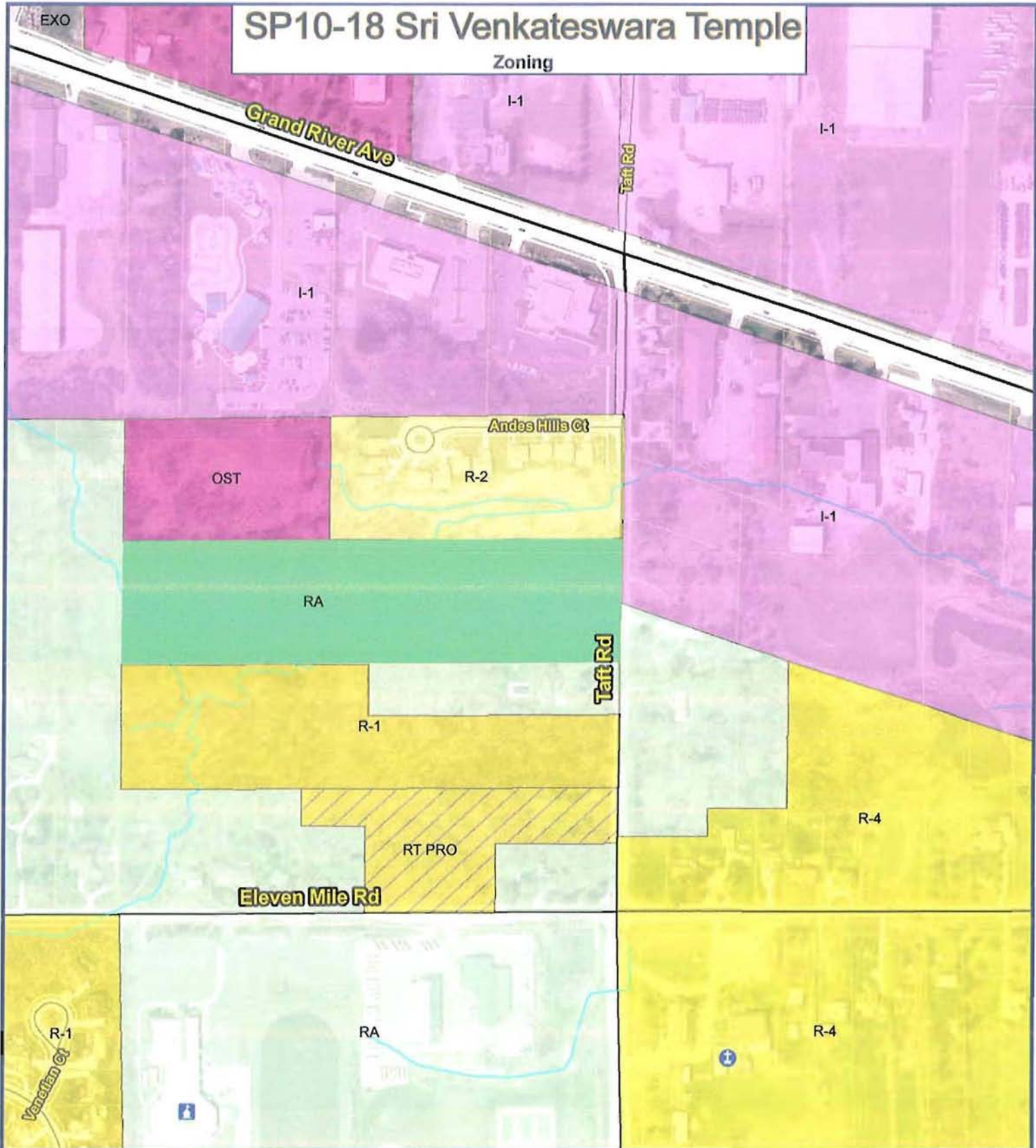
City of Novi
Department Division
Department Name
45175 W Ten Mile Rd
Novi, MI 48375
cityofnovi.org



1 inch = 346 feet

SP10-18 Sri Venkateswara Temple

Zoning



Map Author: Kristen Kapelanski
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Subject Property Zoning		Map Legend	
	Subject Property		R-A: Residential Acreage
	R-1		R-1: One-Family Residential District
	R-2		R-2: One-Family Residential District
	R-4		R-4: One-Family Residential District
	RT PRO		RT PRO: Two-Family Residential District With PRO
	I-1		I-1: Light Industrial District
	OST		OST: Office Service Technology



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0 65 130 260 390 520
Feet

1 inch = 346 feet

