



# PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

CITY OF NOVI

Regular Meeting

**September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 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: Acting Chair Avdoulos, Member Becker, Member Dismondy,  
Member Lynch, Member Roney, Member Verma

Absent (excused): Chair Pehrson

Staff: Barbara McBeth, City Planner; Elizabeth Saarela, City Attorney;  
Lindsay Bell, Senior Planner; Rick Meader, Landscape Architect;  
Victor Boron, Plan Review Engineer; Christian Carroll, Planner; Ben  
Peacock, Planning Assistant

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Verma.

## VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 22, 2021 PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER VERMA.

***Motion to approve the September 22, 2021 Planning Commission Agenda. Motion carried 6-0.***

## AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

No one in the audience wished to speak.

## CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee Reports.

## **CITY PLANNER REPORT**

The City Planner had nothing to report.

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

### **1. SRI VENKATESWARA TEMPLE AND CULTURAL CENTER, JSP18-32**

Approval of the request of Sri Venkateswara Temple and Cultural Center for a one-year Preliminary Site Plan extension. The subject property is located at 26233 Taft Road, on the west side of Taft Road, south of Grand River Avenue in Section 16 of the City. The site plan proposes phase 2 of the project: a 24,136 square foot, 2-story Cultural Center on the eastern portion of the site.

### **2. MERCEDES-BENZ SPRINTER SERVICE SHOP JSP21-20**

Approval of Mercedes-Benz Sprinter Service Shop Preliminary Site Plan at the request of Mercedes-Benz of Novi. The subject property contains 2.31 acres and is located in Section 24, on the west side of Haggerty Road, north of Grand River Avenue. The applicant is proposing to remodel a former body and service facility for the servicing of Mercedes-Benz Sprinter Service Vans.

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Roney.

## **ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE BOTH CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY.**

**Motion to approve the Preliminary Site Plan extension for JSP18-32 and the Preliminary Site Plan for JSP21-20. Motion carried 6-0.**

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **1. PAVILION SHORE VILLAGE TEXT AMENDMENT 18.291 WITH REZONING 18.735**

Public hearing of the staff initiated request for Planning Commission's recommendation to City Council Text Amendment 18.291 in order to create a new zoning district, Pavilion Shore Village, and rezoning of property in Section 3, 10 and 11, located south of Thirteen Mile Road along both sides of Old Novi Road from B-3 (General Business) to PSV (Pavilion Shore Village). The subject properties total approximately 1.61 acres.

Senior Planner Bell said the Pavilion Shore Village District was called out in the 2016 Master Plan update as an area for redevelopment. The area is located south of 13 Mile Road and extends southward along Old Nov Road, and it is approximately 6.02 acres. We introduced draft text to the Commission in August of 2019. At that time, the Planning Commission recommended the proposed district be forwarded to the Implementation Committee for further review.

Based on compelling comments by community members at that meeting and during the Lakeview PRO, staff prepared an Option B for the text amendment for the Implementation Committee to consider. With 3.15 acres of the area currently under development as Lakeview Homes, the six remaining residential parcels either have existing homes or can be developed under the requirements of the R-4 district as they are currently zoned and configured. The Option B text amendment would therefore remove all the residential parcels under the proposed district and limit the rezoning to the 1.61

acres of commercial properties which are currently zoned B-3. Members of the Implementation Committee preferred this option and suggested off-street parking be included as a standalone use given the area lacks enough parking to support nearby businesses and the park. The proposed text amendment included in your packet reflects those recommendations from the Committee.

Senior Planner Bell continued by explaining staff has recently reached out to the effected property owners within the proposed district: first with a letter explaining the intent of the rezoning and a copy of the draft text amendment. We then followed up with phone calls, and we were able to talk to four of the five property owners. Each was supportive of the change and was happy that the existing businesses would be allowed to continue operating. We did not receive any written correspondence from them. The proposed text allows all the existing businesses to continue. They were also hopeful the changes would encourage new development and additional parking on the underutilized parcels.

The new standards for the PSV district are also more flexible given the configuration of the currently vacant parcels, which will hopefully encourage development. Tonight, the Planning Commission is asked to hold the public hearing for this proposed ordinance text amendment and rezoning and to make a recommendation to City Council.

Acting Chair Avdoulos invited any members in the audience to approach the podium to participate in the public hearing.

Dorothy Duchesneau, 1191 South Lake Drive, said Member Becker said it best at a previous meeting, with his comments of the need for more public parking near the park for parkgoers and businesses. The 30 years I've driven past that corner, I have often wished for a small donut shop, sandwich shop, or even a carry out pizza place; someplace I could do a quick run for a meal or a beverage. Learning more about these properties, I think it may have just been wishful thinking. I understand that there may be some potential remediation issues. However, paving over the contaminated soils would solve a lot of expensive problems. Now, I'd like to propose an outside-the-box suggestion that might be worth adding to the allowed uses at this unique corner of the properties.

Ms. Duchesneau continued saying the postcard displayed on the screen shows the heyday of the amusement park and the casino, including the little building in the upper right which is currently the Lakeview Bar and Grill. With the history of the amusement park at this location, my suggestion would both fit in and give a nod to the good times of the area, yet it would not involve permanent buildings. Instead of trying to only build fixed commercial buildings on these miserably shaped, small lots, imagine what else could be added to this zoning district if several of the vacant lots could be turned into parking lots with several other allowed uses. What could the Planning Commission add to this text amendment that could allow a small portion of those lots to be used by food trucks? At least, you could allow them during the weekends and summer months. Food trucks are self-contained, they're portable, and they come in many flavors. Over the past year and a half, many Novi subdivisions have held rotating food truck nights during the last 18 months of the COVID-19 pandemic. The library fundraiser, Pour on the Shore, uses them at their event. Food trucks belong at fairs and parks. In a walkable district, they make sense for both the parkgoers and the local residents; let's make use of all the sidewalks we put in. The Lakeview Bar and Grill is great for adults, but I bet kids would rather have some popcorn or ice cream before they race back to the park playground.

Rachel Sines said I live at 2219 Austin Drive, and I back up to the Pavilion Shore Village Concept. The first thing I would like to mention is the concept was added to the 2016 Master Plan by city officials without any input from residents. It wasn't until Robertson Brothers requested to build 74 three-story apartment-style homes per the PRO that the residents found out about the concept in the Master Plan. There was such an uproar that the city backtracked and hired a consultant for a very substantial amount of money to gather residents' visions for the area. Overwhelmingly, the residents responded that they wanted one-story buildings that would blend in with our quaint area. The proposal for rezoning before you today is reminiscent of what Robertson Brothers attempted to do. While I am all for the existing businesses getting relief from the current zoning restrictions, this proposal goes a little too far. It is requesting live-work units, a building height of 30 feet, and parking that would accommodate three-story apartments. It has been made very clear that we do not want three-story buildings, so I ask you today to take these changes into consideration: eliminate the 30-foot height requirement, get rid of the live-work use, and make this proposal truly for the businesses and not the developers.

Seeing that no other audience members wished to speak, and no written responses were received, Acting Chair Avdoulos closed the public hearing and turned it over to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Member Lynch said concerning Ms. Duchesneau's idea for a food truck use within this text amendment, are there any prohibitions from the city ordinance that would not allow food trucks to be used on vacant lots? My understanding is that if the vendor has permission from the property owner, then it is fine.

City Planner McBeth responded by saying typically the food trucks could be allowed if they are on private property and have the property owner's permission. Outside uses often come in with a temporary use permit because it is not located in a permanent building, so sometimes we have a provision for that. However, if the Planning Commission wanted to include something like that, we could certainly add it in.

Member Lynch said I don't want to add anything else to it. The temporary use is already in our ordinance, so we don't really have to add anything to this proposal to allow what Ms. Duchesneau was getting at conceptually.

City Planner McBeth said I think you are right. If someone wanted to make that application, they would come into our department and talk about what they are going to do and where the food truck would be located. It is typically not an every weekend event but more for special events.

Acting Chair Avdoulos asked would we put something in the amendment that something like a 'food truck park' would be allowed in the district just so people know that it is okay to have them there?

City Planner McBeth said that makes sense to me. The terms of that would be something we would want to consider, so you might say subject to the city standards for temporary special events.

Member Becker said although parking is mentioned in here as a potential use, there are only a few lots. I personally think those northern most two or three lots should be

parking for many reasons. My question is who owns those lots, and who maintains them? Would that become a city parking lot, or would it somehow be owned by the businesses in the district?

City Planner McBeth said at this time, those parcels are in private ownership. If those owners wanted to sell to either the adjacent property owners or the city, they could. I don't know if the city wants to do buy those properties for a parking lot. That would be up to our City Manager's office and the City Council to make that decision.

Member Becker said I think that if we have a city-maintained park, then a city-maintained parking lot might be a natural thing to do. Again, for some of the other uses, there are only a couple of other lots that are vacant in the proposed zoning district. We won't have a flood of 30-foot high live-work buildings because it is such a small area. I think it is right to establish the area as its own designation.

Member Dismondy said I think the spirit is to make the potential for redevelopment more flexible. Unfortunately, I think the lots are so small that you are restricted as to what they could actually become. I think that's why everyone is so focused on parking because being there on the weekends it obvious there is a lack of parking, and the residents that way are frustrated with it. I applaud the efforts of making it more flexible, and perhaps in the future it evolves into what everybody is envisioning. For the time being, I think people who own them privately will continue to use the lots in the same manner they have been. With this flexibility in the future, maybe down the line we would be able to get a city parking lot with the opportunity for food truck uses. I think it is a step in the right direction.

Member Roney said I agree that it is a step in the right direction. I just want to be clear though: the proposal is to recommend to the City Council to make this area the Pavilion Shore Village District which gives us the flexibility?

City Planner McBeth replied yes. Technically, you are considering two things tonight. They are the rezoning of the lots Senior Planner Bell showed on the previous slide and approval of the text amendment that provides the standards for those lots.

Member Roney said then I think it is a good idea.

Member Verma had no comments.

Acting Chair Avdoulos said I think allowing some flexibility for this area is the right direction. When Ms. Duchesneau indicated food trucks, I thought of how inventive people were over the past 18 months of the COVID pandemic. As I would walk my dog, I would see the signs for the food trucks in different neighborhoods, and the neighbors were supporting it. I have also been to other cities where they have parking lots that they've converted into food truck parks, or they call them "box-car parks". They'll land old box cars in an empty parking lot to create a year-round destination that is more pedestrian friendly. Looking at what we have in our zoning ordinance, we could allow food trucks as a temporary special use. Then, as things grow organically over the years, the city might figure it would be a use that makes sense to exist permanently. I think if we do this step-by-step and work with residents in the area to help create an outcome we all want to see then we are heading in the right direction. Do we have a motion?

Member Lynch said before I make a motion, I do want to acknowledge Rachel Sines. I was on the commission when we went through the project you've mentioned, and I thank you very much for your input. To the Duchesneaus, thank you for working with city staff and the Commission. We have taken an interesting group of lots, and it has some potential now. With that, I would like to make a motion on the text amendment.

**In the matter of Text Amendment 18.291, motion to recommend approval to City Council to adopt the Pavilion Shore Village District into the Zoning Ordinance as shown in the draft amendment, with the addition of permitting temporary special event uses in accordance with City requirements.**

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Roney.

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF TEXT AMENDMENT 18.291 TO CITY COUNCIL MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY. Motion carried 6-0.**

**In the matter of Zoning Map Amendment 18.735, motion to recommend approval to City Council to rezone the subject property from B-3 (General Business) to PSV (Pavilion Shore Village) for the following reasons:**

- 1. The 2016 Master Plan for Land Use recommended the creation and adoption of a new zoning district for this area of the city to foster redevelopment of underutilized parcels,**
- 2. The Master Plan for Land Use objective to foster a favorable business climate is fulfilled by allowing more flexible development standards for a unique area of the City,**
- 3. The Master Plan for Land Use objective to support and strengthen existing businesses is fulfilled by allowing an existing business to expand and develop a vacant parcel,**
- 4. There is no negative impact expected on public utilities or traffic as the permitted uses are generally the same or less intense than those permitted under B-3 zoning, and**
- 5. It provides an opportunity for a long-standing businesses to remain at their current location.**

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Roney.

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF ZONING MAP AMENDMENT 18.735 TO CITY COUNCIL MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY. Motion carried 6-0.**

Acting Chair Avdoulos said I would like to echo Member Lynch's comments to the residents of that area for participating. When we started meeting in this area many years ago, we were encouraging and asking the residents to not be disheartened but rather to work with the Planning Commission, the Master Plan and Zoning Committee, and the staff to work things out. Many times, there are ideas that are put forward that are not ours. We are just here to make sure they meet the requirements. Without the citizens' input, we sometimes fly blind, so we appreciate your participation.

**2. HOLIDAY INN JZ19-24 WITH REZONING 18.730**

Public hearing at the request of Grand River Show, LLC for initial submittal and

eligibility discussion for a Zoning Map amendment from Light Industrial (I-1) to Town Center (TC) with a Planned Rezoning Overlay. The subject property is approximately 5.5 acres and is located on the south side of Grand River Avenue, east of Beck Road (Section 16). The applicant is proposing to develop a 4-story, 117-room hotel with sit-down restaurant, and a 16,413 square foot commercial building, with associated parking and site improvements.

Senior Planner Bell said as mentioned, the applicant is proposing to rezone a 5.5-acre area on the south side of Grand River, east of Beck Road, utilizing the Planned Rezoning Overlay option. The current zoning of the property is I-1 light industrial, as are other properties to the east and south. North of Grand River is zoned OST office service technology. The future land use map identifies this property and those surrounding it as City West, which is called out as a redevelopment site in the Master Plan. To quote that plan, regarding City West, "This area offers the potential for the creation of a prominent new district combining entertainment, convention, commercial, office, and residential uses in a cohesive, high-density, walkable pattern."

Senior Planner Bell continued by elaborating that the development standards for the new City West district are being written by city staff, and they are anticipated to go through the approval process within the coming year. As that new district has not been completed and the current I-1 zoning does not permit hotel use, the applicant wants to move forward with choosing an existing zoning district and the use of the PRO zoning option. The Town Center district was chosen as the proposed zoning district as it seems to most closely match the vibrant, mixed-use, walkable, and higher-density vision described for City West. The vacant properties and the industrial business uses surrounding the site reflect the historical use of the area. According to the applicant, the proposed development represents what the future development of the area could bring under the proposed City West zoning district that is currently under development.

Senior Planner Bell continued saying there are no natural features, woodlands, or wetlands, on the subject property. The PRO concept plan proposes a four-story Holiday Inn hotel with 117 guest rooms and a 40-seat full-service restaurant. A 16,413 square foot retail restaurant building is also indicated along Grand River Avenue on the concept plan as a future phase two. A public gathering area is proposed to north of the commercial along Grand River Avenue. Storm water detention ponds are shown just east of Hine Drive and at the south end of the property. Access to the site would be from Heyn Drive, an off-site private road with access easements shared by surrounding properties off Grand River, and another driveway on the east of the site onto Grand River. Rezoning to the Town Center category requested by the applicant would permit the mixed-use hotel and commercial development proposed. Some of the conditions proposed by staff based on the PRO plan include:

- limiting the maximum building height to 58 feet
- reducing parking based on the shared parking study provided by the applicant's consultant
- constructing a landscaped pedestrian plaza along Grand River
- containing open space exceeding the 15 percent requirement of the Town Center district; the applicant has proposed 30 percent

Senior Planner Bell continued to say the façade elevations provided exceed the requirement for 50 percent brick and stone material of the TC district. They have

sustainability strategies, including 8 electric vehicle charging stations available to the public. They also have proposed solar lighting where possible, and they are exceeding the native plant species used. Permitted uses of the site would be for an up to 117 room hotel and an approximately 16,000 square foot commercial building with retail and restaurant uses. The applicant could also further clarify the list of uses to be permitted in that commercial building to be more limiting than the TC district allows. The layout of the site will generally be as shown in the PRO plan with respect to setbacks, building location, parking areas, open space, and amenities proposed.

Senior Planner Bell asserted that staff and their consultants are recommending approval of the concept plan. There are three deviations from the ordinance that have been identified. The first is a for a reduction in the required parking, which is supported by the applicant shared parking analysis. The second is for the size of the loading area for the commercial building, which staff supports because the area proposed is sufficient to accommodate a standard sized delivery truck. The third is a landscaping deviation to allow a portion of the foundation landscaping to be located further away from the commercial building than the ordinance requires. This is also supported by staff since the total amount is still provided and it still serves the purpose of screening the building from Grand River. I also have the elevations for the building, which show the materials that were proposed. The applicant has also provided some illustrated renderings. These do not exactly match what we reviewed in the elevations, but they give an idea of the overall colors and materials to be used. There would be more brick in the actual elevations.

Senior Planner Bell explained that City Council recently adopted revisions to the Planned Rezoning Overlay Ordinance, and this is the first project that will fall under the updated process and requirements. Therefore, I would like to review the new process for everyone's benefit. Under the terms of the new ordinance, the Planning Commission will not make a formal recommendation to City Council at this meeting. Instead, the first public hearing is an opportunity for the members of the Planning Commission to hear public comment and to review and comment on whether the project meets the requirements of eligibility for the PRO proposal. That portion of the ordinance states that to be eligible for the proposal and review of rezoning PRO, an applicant must propose a rezoning of property to a new zoning district classification, and must, as part of such proposal, propose clearly identified site specific conditions relating to the proposed improvements that:

1. are in material respects, stricter or more limiting than the regulation that would apply to the land under the proposed new zoning district; in this case, it would be the TC district.
2. constitute an overall benefit to the public that outweighs any material detriments or that could not otherwise be accomplished without the proposed rezoning.

Following this Planning Commission public hearing, the project would then go to City Council for its review and comment on the eligibility. After the initial round of comments by the public bodies, the applicant may choose to make changes, additions, or deletions to the proposal based upon the feedback received. If any changes are made, they would be reviewed by city staff and consultants, and the project would then be scheduled for a second public hearing before the Planning Commission. Following this second public hearing, the Planning Commission would make the recommendation to City Council which would then consider the rezoning with a PRO. If City Council determines that it can approve the rezoning, it would direct the City Attorney to work with the applicant on the PRO agreement. Once completed, that final PRO agreement would go back to City Council for final determination.



Senior Planner Bell concluded her remarks by summarizing that tonight the Planning Commission is asked to hold the public hearing and to review and comment on whether the applicant's proposed site-specific conditions are more strict or limiting than those of the TC district they are rezoning to. The Planning Commission should also review and comment on whether the proposed site-specific conditions constitute an overall benefit to the public that outweighs any material detriments. The applicant, Mike Shammami, is here tonight with his engineer and planner who are representing this project. Staff and city consultants are also available to answer any questions you may have.

Brian Biskner from Powell Engineering said I am here with the applicants, Mike and Carmen. We appreciate all your questions and comments on this project. There are only a couple small items I would like to add. We did add some design elements to match up with the Grand River Master Plan. That includes the artful sign and the decorative wall. Then, we added landscaping along the front because the Master Plan had shown a stretch of trees that were meant to be put on just this property to protect from the surrounding industrial uses. We look forward to your questions and comments.

Acting Chair Avdoulos invited any members in the audience to approach the podium to participate in the public hearing.

Mike Duchesneau, 1191 South Lake Drive, said this proposal looks like the proposal that came before this Committee and the Master Plan and Zoning Committee about a year ago. It is consistent with the 2016 Master Plan. I supported it then, and I support it still. I think that there is a need for a hotel there due to events at the Suburban Showplace and during the State Fair. I do not think that I-1 serves as an appropriate zoning for that portion of Grand River going forward.

Blair Bowman, representing properties along the Grand River corridor, said that I do not disagree, in the grand scheme of everything, that we need more hotels in the area, but they must happen at the right time and in the right space. I know Mr. Shammami well, and we originally met so he could show me his plans. It seems to me that the timing of this rezoning is premature since it would only be one lot rezoned to TC in the middle of a block of I-1 zoned properties. As of now there is only a potential for further redevelopment in the surrounding industrial lots. Another timing aspect that is of concern is the downturn in the market. The pandemic has created a significant impact on the hospitality industry, especially hotels. There have been many hotels that began construction or were planned for construction prior to the pandemic that have never come to fruition. I know that this is only the first step in the process. I mentioned to Mr. Shammami that if he is successful that we will continue to be good neighbors; we also share an easement together. Nevertheless, I really want to implore the Commission to consider the placement and approach of this rezoning and its impact on the market.

Acting Chair Avdoulos acknowledged the public hearing response form submitted by Amit Soman who noted their support.

Seeing that no other audience members wished to speak, Acting Chair Avdoulos closed the public hearing and turned it over to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Member Becker asked the staff if City West is a concept that has yet to be finalized?

Senior Planner Bell replied yes.

Member Becker it may make sense for a PRO to be used in this situation to account for the future zoning concept, but there might be many issues if the City West district does not get approved. If that were the case, then there would be a hotel in the middle of several industrial buildings.

Member Becker transitioned by saying I wanted to acknowledge the visual impact of a four-story hotel on the residents of Asbury Park to the south, particularly those along Mandalay Circle nearest the subject property. That stretch of Mandalay Circle is a wonderful example of how the city worked with a developer to use all natural screening techniques. There is a very tall earthen berm and very large conifers and hardwoods to effectively screen residents from the commercial buildings to the north. The addition of a MDEQ wetlands preserve on the south side also mitigated visual impact since there will be no residences built directly across. There is a commercial building that is barely visible from the south side of the subject property, but that does not seem to be affected by the PRO or building of the hotel. Could staff tell me what the height of that existing structure is?

Senior Planner Bell replied our records indicated 32 feet.

Member Becker said so I believe then that the existing structure, along with the large berm and trees, will be plenty of items to screen residents from the proposed 40-foot hotel building. I also noticed that on the north side of Mandalay Circle there is an emergency use access cut-out in the curb, but there was no actual emergency access. Lindsay has mentioned to me that will not be affected by this PRO; that is just a legacy from when Asbury Park was built.

Member Becker the proposition of this PRO would provide the city with an enhancement that would be unlikely to be achieved in the absence of the PRO. In a letter dated September 8<sup>th</sup> from Community Image Builders, one proposition calls out walkability of the area. They suggest creating a high-density walkable pattern for the area. While there are many attractive aspects of this PRO, walkability is not one of them. The hotel is 6/10 of a mile walk to the Ascension Providence building. As it is now, there are no safe means to cross the five lanes of traffic on Grand River from the subject property to access the Suburban Showplace and other attractions. When considering this PRO, we should not use walkability as a justification for its necessity. In addition, solely because one hotel is constructed on the south side of Grand River does not necessitate the attraction of other similar uses to adjacent empty lots. It could happen, but it is not assured to happen. I think we need to think carefully about this.

Member Dismondy asked if there was any chance that the City West proposal is approved before the PRO at hand would be approved?

Senior Planner Bell said I think it is hard to say at this point. It would depend on how long it would take the applicant to receive feedback, go to city council, get additional feedback, revise plans, and resubmit. There are so many variables. I do not imagine City West will be adopted within the next 6 months.

Member Dismondy said I understand the concern of allowing this PRO, but then City West doesn't come to fruition, then there is a hotel in the middle of an industrial setting. Figuring out the timing for that is certainly worth considering. I also don't think it is the Commission's

place to determine whether it is a viable business because they will have market studies and other processes to figure that out. Timing-wise, I don't think I understand enough to know how it fits in at this point. Overall, the project itself looks great assuming the development of the surrounding areas takes place shortly thereafter.

Member Lynch said we are basically an advisory panel for City Council, and they have several items they need to strongly consider. We just approved a hotel at the Adell property, and we were challenged with coming up with ideas for the mall. The City West concept is still a concept. I think City Council will have to look at the city strategically: what are they going to do about it? I have always been a proponent of reducing these industrial sites. Originally, Grand River was full of cement factories, but that is not the case today. If City West gets approved, then it may very well fit there. However, I have the same concern as my colleagues about possibly having a hotel in the middle of industrial buildings. I think we may just be getting ahead of ourselves with this. I don't know if there is enough stability to approve a hotel right now. My advice to Council is to look strategically at what has already been approved, where other hotels exist, and what makes sense. We also want to support other businesses and restaurants that depend on customer patterns at the mall, which is on the decline.

Member Roney said as a frequent business traveler who stays in hotels often, this project itself is very attractive. Having a place to walk, some restaurants, and a retail area nearby is very attractive to me. However, I share the same concerns that this would be an island development by itself with light industrial properties on either side of it. Also, there is no guarantee that City West will happen. I really wonder about the overall benefit to the public from adding one hotel in an industrial public. Ideally, the place to start is getting City West approved, and then City Council would have a plan for what should happen in that complete area.

Member Verma said the façade of the building looks beautiful and it has been designed very nicely. The location of the hotel does not seem right being between two industrial spaces. Having a 117-room hotel in this location does not seem to match the feel of the rest of the space. Also, the timing for creating a new hotel is bad due to the pandemic, and I think we should also be considering the issues existing similar businesses are having.

Acting Chair Avdoulos said often I look at projects and I see the applicants are doing their homework and know what they are talking about, so I am not going to make any comments on whether it is the right time. That is the risk that everybody takes, but we also want to make sure that whoever comes in is going to be successful. When I was looking at this particular project, I was thinking whether this project could be a catalyst for future development. Right now, I am looking at site plan and a colored block on the city map, but I would like to see how this will tie in with the activity going on at the Suburban Showplace and other business. Perhaps distance measures from this property to businesses on the corner of Grand River and Beck and then to the hospital could be included to visualize how many properties it is away from a given activity. Granted, this is not a bad location since it is not very far by car from businesses. However, it is more of a concern as to how this development fits in with the rest of the industrially zoned area with essentially a 5-lane highway in front of it. Again, I do not think any of my colleagues are opposed to a project like this, but we are more concerned with how it will fit in with the rest of the area.

Acting Chair Avdoulos said that no motion is needed at this time and thanked the applicants.

## **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **1. SOMNIO GLOBAL PARKING EXPANSION JSP21-26**

Consideration at the request of Somnio Global for approval of revised Preliminary Site Plan. The subject property is in Section 15 south of Twelve Mile Road, west of Taft Road, and is zoned OST, Office Service Technology. The applicant is proposing to provide 17 striped parking spaces in a portion of the loading area to the north of the existing building in order to accommodate a tenant on a temporary basis.

Senior Planner Bell said this is a fairly minor project that might normally be able to be approved administratively. However, they need a waiver from the Planning Commission. This project is located south of 12 Mile, and it is zoned OST. They have enough parking for their building, but they will have a tenant for a period of several years. Therefore, they want to provide a separate parking area for the tenant. They are going to use a portion of their existing loading zone to provide those parking spaces, and they have ended up with 17 spaces. They would just stripe the existing loading area. Instead of constructing the raised end islands as the end islands, they would just use painted islands which requires a waiver from the Planning Commission.

George Kachadoorian, architect with Nova Consulting, said the project is exactly as senior Planner Bell described: temporary parking for this tenant. If you have any questions, I would be glad to answer them.

Member Verma had no comments or questions.

Member Roney had no comments or questions, other than stating it is good to support local businesses.

Member Dismondy asked how temporary are these tenants?

Senior Planner Bell said the applicant had indicated that their lease term will be for three years.

Member Becker said I see two different slides on the screen. One shows the entire loading zone, and the other looks like it is a little bit less than the entire loading zone. Does staff have a percentage of the existing loading dock that will be converted?

Senior Planner Bell said probably about two thirds. They will have two truck docks remaining, and they aren't using the other portion of it.

Member Becker said since there are two truck docks that are still functional and safe to use, then I have no further questions.

Member Lynch asked City Attorney Saarela if there was specific language that should be included in the motion limiting the tenancy to three years to prevent the temporary parking space from continuing to exist after the tenants are gone or even if they are still there. Certainly, Member Dismondy and I are concerned about the timeline of this, and then they could come back to us to get an extension if need be. Is the language good enough to assert that? We can approve 3 years, but if it is only 2 years that is fine. However, if it goes

past 3 years then they will need an extension.

City Attorney Saarela the motion says the anticipated lease will come to end after three years. Since it says anticipated, if the lease itself was only for 2 years instead of three, the applicant would then need to come back after 2 years for an extension. I don't know how exactly we could know that at this point though.

Member Lynch said I don't want temporary approval to turn into a decade. I do not mind approving temporary parking at all if there is a firm time limit for how long it can be considered temporary. If the City Attorney is comfortable with the way the motion is worded gives the City the authority to enforce the timeline, then I am fine with it.

City Attorney Saarela said I think it could be modified by just taking out 'after the anticipated 3-year lease' and replace it with language that says 'at the end of three years' the applicant must get an extension.

**In the matter of Somnio Global Temporary Parking Expansion, JSP21-26, motion to approve the revised Preliminary Site Plan based on and subject to the following:**

- a. **At the end of 2024, the temporary parking lot striping and other improvements shall be removed and the loading areas shall be restored to the previously approved configuration, unless Planning Commission approval is granted to extend the approval;**
- b. **A waiver to allow the proposed painted end islands in lieu of raised islands, as traffic circulation at this location is anticipated to be low and the painted islands will meet the dimensional requirements of the Ordinance as shown in the applicant's response letter, which is hereby granted; and**
- c. **The findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the staff and consultant review letters and the conditions and the items listed in those letters being addressed on the Final Site Plan**

**This motion is made because the plan is otherwise in compliance with Article 3, Article 4, and Article 5 of the Zoning Ordinance and all other applicable provisions of the Ordinance. Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Becker.

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE THE REVISED PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN FOR JSP21-26 SOMNIO GLOBAL PARKING EXPANSION MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BECKER.**

**Motion to approve the Preliminary Site Plan for JSP21-26 Somnio Global Parking Expansion. Motion carried 6-0.**

## **2. APPROVAL OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING CALENDAR FOR 2022**

City Planner McBeth said this is an annual event that we do. The Community Relations division asks all the departments and those who represent the various Boards and Commissions to come forward with some important dates for the next calendar years so that those may be incorporated into the City's calendar. We did provide some draft meeting dates for the Planning Commission's consideration, primarily on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month with exceptions for holidays and other events. We plan

two meetings per month other than November and December, as we have done in the past. We have also included some potential committee meeting dates; many of those are as needed, and we appreciate your flexibility with those. If you think that this is suitable, then we can send it to the Community Relations division.

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Roney.

**VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE PLANNING COMMISSION CALENDAR FOR 2022 MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY.**

***Motion to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Calendar for 2022. Motion carried 6-0.***

**3. APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 25, 2021 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Verma.

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE THE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES FOR AUGUST 25, 2021 MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER VERMA.**

***Motion to approve the Planning Commission minutes from August 25, 2021. Motion carried 6-0.***

**CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS FOR COMMISSION ACTION**

There were no removal items on the Consent Agenda

**SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES/TRAINING UPDATES**

City Planner McBeth said I don't have any further updates other than what I provided at the last meeting. I would remind everyone that the fall Michigan Planners conference is coming up quickly. It is a virtual conference, and it does have the Planning Commissioner training that we recommend. Please let me know if you would still like to register. I believe I sent the webpage around to everybody, and it has probably been populated with more interesting items since the last time I mentioned the conference.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

No one in the audience wished to speak

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Verma.

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE MOTION TO ADJOURN MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER VERMA.**

***Motion to adjourn the September 22, 2021 Planning Commission meeting. Motion carried 6-0.***

The meeting adjourned at 8:14 PM.