

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

CITY OF NOVI Regular Meeting August 30, 2023 7:00 PM

Council Chambers | Novi Civic Center 45175 Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI 48375 (248) 347-0475

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Member Becker, Member Lynch, Chair Pehrson, Member Roney

Absent Excused: Member Avdoulos, Member Dismondy, Member Verma

Staff: Barbara McBeth, City Planner; Beth Saarela, City Attorney; James Hill, Planner;

Rick Meader, Landscape Architect; Adam Yako, Plan Review Engineer

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Becker to approve the agenda.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 30, 2023 PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BECKER.

Motion carried 4-0.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Chair Pehrson invited members of the audience who wished to address the Planning Commission during the first audience participation to come forward. Seeing no one, Chair Pehrson closed the first public participation.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was not any correspondence.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee Reports.

CITY PLANNER REPORT

There was no City Planner Report.

CONSENT AGENDA - REMOVALS AND APPROVALS

There were no Consent Agenda items.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. JSP23-35 MEDSTAR SPECIAL LAND USE

Public hearing at the request of Medstar, Inc. for consideration of a Special Land Use Permit at 22515 Heslip Drive. The property is located north of Nine Mile Road and east of Novi Road in section

26 of the City. The applicant is proposing to use the existing building and site as an ambulance service, staging, and dispatch business. Medstar is currently under contract with the City to provide its services.

Planner James Hill relayed the public hearing at the request of Medstar, Inc. is for a Special Land Use permit to operate their ambulance service and dispatch business in the City of Novi at 22515 Heslip Drive. The applicant is requesting the Special Land Use permit without going through the formal site plan process because they intend to use the site as is, with some improvements to the parking lot and interior that will be reviewed upon submittal by the applicant at a future date. Currently, Medstar, Inc. is under contract with the City to provide its ambulance services. In the past, an ambulance use was determined to be an unlisted use and had to be approved by City Council subject to Planning Commission's approval of the Special Land Use request. Since this particular use has already been determined to be permissible in the I-1 Light Industrial Zoning District, it does not need to go before the City Council, however it still must be granted Special Land Use approval.

The subject site is located north of Nine Mile Road, east of Novi Road in Section 26 of the City, and consists of approximately 1.19 acres.

The site is zoned I-1 Light Industrial, with surrounding zoning all consisting of I-1 Light Industrial except for the portion of the parcel to the west which is bordered by RM-1 Low-Density Multiple Family.

Likewise, the Future Land Use Map contemplates the site and much of the surrounding properties for Industrial, Research, Development and Technology, with the exception of the Multiple Family Residential parcel abutting the northwest corner of the site.

There are some woodlands in the corner of the site that abuts the residential district, meant to serve as a buffer between the industrial uses and the apartments. As part of its review, staff visited the site to evaluate the condition of the trees at the parcel borders. Staff recommends additional screening be provided in the form of a line of densely planted evergreens. The applicant has stated in their response letter that they wish to comply with any screening requirements and recommendations. A plan showing the landscaping will be required if Planning Commission requires the additional screening.

As part of its submittal and in lieu of a formal site plan, the applicant has submitted a narrative along with images and aerials of the site. The applicant plans to paint the existing parking spaces and use them to stage ambulances and crew member's vehicles. The applicant also intends to reinstitute a garage door that has been blocked off by bricks. This will enable ambulances to drive through the garage for cleaning and stocking. The applicant has indicated that sirens or alarms will not be used on the property when ambulances are deployed. A noise impact statement has not yet been performed, but the applicant has stated in their response letter that they are obtaining a professional to conduct the noise impact statement, and the provided motion sheet includes the requirement to complete a noise impact statement that is in compliance with the Ordinance.

As part of the Special Land Use approval, the Planning Commission is asked to hold the public hearing for Medstar and approve or deny the Special Land Use Permit subject to the conditions laid out in the Zoning Ordinance. Those conditions include the following:

- 1. Not causing detrimental impact on existing thoroughfares
- 2. Not causing detrimental impact on the capabilities of public services and facilities
- 3. Compatibility with natural features
- 4. Compatibility with adjacent uses of land
- 5. Consistency with goals, objectives, and recommendations of the City's Master Plan for Land Use
- 6. Promotion of the use of land in a socially and economically desirable manner

Planning Commission is asked to determine if the use meets the conditions relative to other feasible uses of the site. Other conditions include providing landscaping screening as mentioned earlier and following through with a noise impact statement, as recommended by staff.

A representative for Medstar is here tonight and is available to answer any questions the Planning

Commission may have. Staff is also available to answer any questions.

Kevin Wilkinson, Vice President, Clinical and Education Services at Medstar, relayed Planner Hill conveyed the plans and outline for the building well. He does not have anything to add but is happy to answer any questions.

Chair Pehrson opened the Public Hearing and invited members of the audience who wished to participate to approach the podium. Seeing no one, Chair Pehrson asked Member Lynch to read the correspondence.

Member Lynch relayed there was one correspondence in support, but with concerns about sirens going off on site.

Chair Pehrson closed the Public Hearing and turned the matter over to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Member Roney relayed he drove by the site. The building looks perfect for the intended use, and he has no issues with it.

Member Lynch inquired about the protocol for ambulances when they leave the site.

Mr. Wilkinson relayed that the intent of this building is for storage and deployment. Three healthcare systems are owners - Ascension, Novi and Henry Ford West Bloomfield. The ambulances that are deploying from this site are meant to serve those populations and are staged throughout the communities, so they will be far away from this building when they get dispatched to an emergency call. Lights and sirens are turned on when an emergency call is received.

Member Becker relayed that he hopes Novi Road construction is complete soon to not impede ambulance deployment from the site as he lives in the area.

Chair Pehrson relayed relative to the Special Land Use permit he is in agreement that it meets the criteria for approval for Special Land Use at this point in time, that it is compatible with the adjacent uses, that it is within the goals of the Master Plan for land use, and that it will not cause any detrimental impact on surrounding properties. Knowing a little bit about how the ambulance service and fire department work, Chair Pehrson believes Medstar will be a good community member.

Motion to approve the Medstar JSP23-35 Special Land Use permit made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Roney.

In the matter of Medstar, JSP23-35, motion to approve the Special Land Use Permit based on and subject to the following:

- a. Relative to other feasible uses of the site:
 - i. The proposed use will not cause any detrimental impact on existing thoroughfares in terms of overall volumes, capacity, safety, vehicular turning patterns, intersections, view obstructions, line of sight, ingress and egress, acceleration/deceleration lanes, off street parking, off-street loading/unloading, travel times, and thoroughfare level of service as it does not generate additional traffic.
 - ii. The proposed use will not cause any detrimental impact on the capabilities of public services and facilities, including water service, sanitary sewer service, storm water disposal, and police and fire protection to serve existing and planned uses in the area (no impacts to utilities are anticipated).
 - iii. The proposed use is compatible with the natural features and characteristics of the land, including existing woodlands, wetlands, watercourses, and wildlife habitats (no impacts to existing natural features are proposed).
 - iv. The proposed use is compatible with adjacent uses of land in terms of location, size, character, and impact on adjacent property or the surrounding neighborhood (as noted in the intended plan for the Heslip Drive location selection of the July 17 letter

- from Medstar, and subject to a noise impact statement being provided, and demonstrating compliance with the requirements of the landscape review letter).
- v. The proposed use is consistent with the goals, objectives, and recommendations of the City's Master Plan or Land Use (as it fulfills one of the Master plan objectives to attract new businesses to the City of Novi).
- vi. The proposed use will promote the use of land in a socially and economically desirable manner (as it fulfills one of the Master plan objectives to attract new businesses to the City of Novi).
- vii. The proposed use 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.
- b. The applicant has currently provided aerial and on-the-ground images of the site in lieu of a required site plan drawing.
- c. A noise impact statement being performed and shown to be in compliance with Section 5.14.10.B.
- d. Additional landscape screening is required along the rear property line adjacent to butting Saddle Creek Apartments as recommended by the City's Landscape Architect, with details of the type and placement of the landscaping following Special Land Use approval and to be installed and inspected prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy.
- e. The findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the staff and consultant review letters, and the conditions and items listed in those letters being addressed on the Electronic Stamping Set submittal.

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.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEDSTAR JSP23-35 SPECIAL LAND USE PERMIT MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY.

Motion carried 4-0.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. JSP23-20 NOVI PET RESORT

Consideration of Novi Pet Resort for Preliminary Site Plan and Stormwater Management Plan approval. The subject property contains 2.31 acres and is located on Gen Mar, north of Ten Mile Road and west of Novi Road in section 22 of the City. The applicant is proposing to construct a 9,350 square foot pet boarding facility along with a 2,509 square foot outdoor animal play area with artificial turf.

Planner Hill relayed the Preliminary Site Plan and Stormwater Management Plan presented is for Novi Pet Resort, a 9,350 square foot pet boarding facility with a 2,509 square foot outdoor play area and a parking lot consisting of 20 spaces.

The site is located at the intersection of Novi Road and Gen Mar, on the west side of Novi Road, north of Ten Mile Road, in section 22 of the City.

The site is currently zoned for I-1 Light Industrial, with other I-1 zoned properties to the west and north, I-2 General Industrial located across Novi Road to the east, and OS-1 Office Service located to the south. Pet boarding facilities are a principal permitted use in the I-1 Light Industrial zoning district.

The Future Land Use map contemplates industrial, research, development, and technology for the site and all the adjacent properties, with the exception being the parcel to the south categorized as public.

The natural features map suggests City-regulated woodlands on a good portion of the site, but in reality, there are only four trees, and they are not proposed to be impacted by construction.

The site itself poses some difficulties given that it has four frontages, which requires that the applicant apply both building and parking setback requirements as if every yard were the front yard. In addition, the construction of Novi Road over the railroad tracks has resulted in a steep grade on the eastern side of the property abutting Novi Road. There are also existing utility easements that limit the buildable area of the parcel.

The applicant is requesting a parking setback waiver of 15 feet along the western property line, which is supported by staff due to the difficult site, in addition to a number of landscape waivers which are supported by staff. The landscape waivers include a lack of a berm along the Novi Road frontage due to the existing steep grade and along the western Gen Mar frontage due to the small buildable area. The second landscape waiver is for a lack of subcanopy trees along all of Novi Road and the third landscape waiver is for the lack of street trees provided along Novi Road.

Approval of the Preliminary Site Plan will be subject to the variances that the applicant is seeking from the Zoning Board of Appeals. Those variances include a building setback variance of 35 feet along the western property line, an outdoor facilities setback of 30 feet along the western property line, a variance for the location of the dumpster in the front yard, and a variance for the lack of a loading zone.

The applicant's stormwater management plan consists of two storm water basins in the north end of the site.

Architectural design includes flat metal panels and split face CMU, in addition to paw prints on the eastern façade facing Novi Road. The plans received a recommendation for approval from our façade consultant in their letter dated June 20, 2023.

The Planning Commission is asked to consider approval or denial of the Preliminary Site Plan, along with any applicable waivers, in addition to the Stormwater Management Plan. The applicant is in attendance tonight for any questions, and staff are available as well.

Chair Pehrson invited the applicant to address the Planning Commission.

Eric Williams, with Stonefield Engineering and Design in Detroit, relayed he appreciates Planner Hill's presentation as it highlighted the challenges with the site. There are four front yards, and the developable area is very limited. On top of the four frontages, they are also dealing with utility easements throughout the site. The building, parking, facilities, outdoor dog run have been located in a way that obviously fits on the site but isn't going to necessarily impact the public view from Novi Road.

The proposed development is a nice transition use from Novi Road frontage to the distribution center and automotive repair shop in the rear of the site. It is not landscaped today; but it will be heavily landscaped if approved. The team works very closely with Rick Meader and appreciates all the staff support to date.

Mike Blanek, with Stucky Vitale Architects, relayed that the building exterior is going to be integral color split face masonry units, mostly beige in color with a little accent band around the building. The flat face metal panel system will be prefinished baked into the enamel.

He looks forward to working with this site, though it's a tough site. Effort was made to place the building in the best position, landscape it, and the staff has been great to work with.

Christopher Aulepp, attorney, relayed he is available to answer any questions.

Chair Pehrson turned the matter over to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Member Roney relayed he thinks it's a really good project. It's a difficult place to develop due to the four front yards but this is actually it's a really good spot to put this. With 152 kennels there, and dogs barking outside, Member Roney can't imagine a better place in the city for this business and is in full support.

Member Lynch relayed he drove out to the site to understand the variances requested. The variances requested are reasonable based on the topography of the site and the easements. This will be a nice fit

in Novi. The applicant did the best they could fitting it on the site, it will be landscaped appropriately, and Member Lynch has no issues.

Member Becker inquired regarding the Master Plan for Land Use designation as "Public" of the property to the south. City Planner McBeth responded that the property to the south is owned by the City of Novi. It is an open space with wetlands.

Member Becker relayed he also visited the site and agrees it is a difficult site. This is a great fit and will be an improvement for the residents of Novi to have a place this big.

Chair Pehrson agreed that it is a perfect location for the business on a difficult site.

Motion to approve the JSP23-20 Novi Pet Resort Preliminary Site Plan made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Roney.

In the matter of Novi Pet Resort, JSP23-20, motion to approve the Preliminary Site Plan based on and subject to the following:

- a. Zoning Board of Appeals Variance for building setback of 35 feet (40 feet required, 5 feet proposed) along the west property line.
- b. Zoning Board of Appeals Variance for outdoor facilities setback of 30 feet (40 feet required, 10 feet proposed) along the west property line.
- c. Zoning Board of Appeals Variance for location of dumpster in the front yard since all yards must comply with front yard standards.
- d. Zoning Board of appeals variance for the lack of a loading zone.
- e. Planning Commission approval of the modification of parking lot setback since adequate overall area is provided per the ordinance standards (39,963 square feet required, 39,996 provided), which is hereby granted because it is found that such modification may result in improved use of the site and/or in improved landscaping.
- f. Landscape waiver for the lack of a berm along Novi Road frontage, due to the existing topography and the existing wall, which is hereby granted.
- g. Landscape waiver for deficiency of subcanopy trees along Gen Mar, which is hereby granted subject to ZBA granting the variance for building setback along Gen Mar.
- f. Landscape waiver for lack of canopy and subcanopy trees along Novi Road, which is hereby granted.
- i. Landscape waiver for the lack of street trees provided along Novi Road, which is hereby granted.
- j. The findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the staff and consultant review letters, and the conditions and items listed in those letters being addressed on the Final Site Plan and Electronic Stamping Set submittals.

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.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE JSP23-20 PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY.

Motion carried 4-0.

Motion to approve the JSP23-20 Novi Pet Resort Stormwater Management Plan made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Roney.

In the matter of Novi Pet Resort, JSP23-20, motion to approve the Stormwater Management Plan based on and subject to the findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the staff and consultant review letters, and the conditions and items listed in those letters being addressed on the Final Site Plan.

This motion is made because the plan is otherwise in compliance with Chapter 11 of the Code of Ordinances and all other applicable provisions of the Ordinance.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE JSP23-20 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER RONEY.

Motion carried 4-0.

2. JSP23-28 BRIGHT LORITOS NOVI OUTDOOR PLAY AREA

Consideration of Bright Loritos Novi for Preliminary Site Plan approval. The subject property contains 4.54 acres and is a part of the Pine Ridge Shopping Center on the west side of Novi Road, north of Ten Mile Road in section 22 of the City. The applicant is proposing a 1,200 square foot play area at the northwest corner of the site, replacing some parking spaces.

Planner Hill relayed the Preliminary Site Plan for Bright Loritos Novi Outdoor Play area, a 1,200 square foot play area in the Pine Ridge Shopping Center to accommodate the children at Bright Loritos, an educational and daycare center. Along with the outdoor play area, the applicant is proposing a method of walking the children from the rear of Bright Loritos to the play area through the use of cones, staff members, and painting the pavement to include a crosswalk.

The site is located north of Ten Mile Road on the west side of Novi Road, in Section 22 of the City. The play area itself is proposed to be located at the northwest corner of the property and is intended to remove eight parking spaces.

The site is currently zoned for B-3 General Business, with the surrounding properties also zoned for B-3, with the exception of two parcels located across Novi Road to the east zoned I-1 Light Industrial.

The Future Land Use map contemplates local commercial for the site and the surrounding properties, again with the exception of the two parcels to the east planned for industrial, research, development, and technology.

The natural features map shows no wetlands or woodlands on site, and the applicant does not intend to impact any trees in constructing the play area.

The play area will have a four-foot high fence with two self-closing gates with alarms to signal when the gates are opened. The play area surface will be a rubber material, and the applicant has brought an example to the meeting tonight.

Text Amendment 18.301, which was approved for its second reading by the City Council on August 14, 2023 and came into effect August 29, 2023 contains an amendment to Section 4.12 Group Day Care Homes, Day Care Centers, and Adult Day Care Centers. Previously, any deficiency in play area size compared to the Zoning Ordinance requirements had to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals. With the change, as noted in the Planning Commission packets, the play area size requirement can be "modified by the Planning Commission based on justification provided by the applicant." The Zoning Ordinance requires play areas to be at least 150 square feet per child and a minimum of 3,500 square feet in size. The applicant is proposing 1,200 square feet. Their justification cites the requirements for Child Care Centers as regulated by the State of Michigan, which states "A center operating with children in attendance for 3 or more continuous hours a day shall have an outdoor play area that has at least 1,200 square feet." The applicant has stated that they are currently licensed for 14 students and that the 1,200 square foot play area is enough to accommodate the children. The applicant, therefore, is asking that Planning Commission modify the play area size requirement as part of the Preliminary Site Plan Approval.

Planning Commission is asked to consider approval or denial of the Preliminary Site Plan, along with the modification to the play area size. The applicant, Ernesto Chavez, and his architect, Tim Nichols are in attendance and available to answer any questions. Staff is also available and ready to answer any questions.

Ernesto Chavez relayed his thanks to Planner James and he is available to answer any questions.

Chair Pehrson turned the matter over to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Member Roney relayed he is fine with the play area itself as far as the size. He inquired as to the walking path for the students to access the play area along the building and expressed concern with potential doors opening outward from the building and traffic from employee parking and delivery trucks. Member Roney would like to get the opinion and recommendations of the City Public Safety Department to ensure safety for the students.

Member Lynch relayed when he first looked at the project, he reviewed previous daycare play areas to be consistent. The ones rejected were those that didn't have a fence. He also shares the concern regarding safety but understands the plan for walking students to the play area. Member Lynch does not have a problem with what has been proposed, and would like to support an existing business, but would like to get the blessing of Public Safety.

Member Becker inquired to Mr. Chavez as to how many students are in daycare and how many are in language school. Mr. Chavez responded they are licensed for 14 students for daycare and the language school is restricted by building capacity. The language school capacity does not relate to the play area as those students do not use the play area.

Member Becker inquired as to what would be the requirement from the State of Michigan licensing if the business were to expand in the future. Mr. Chavez responded that currently Bright Loritos has three classrooms, only two are licensed, which accounts for the 14 students. The total building capacity would allow up to 20 students. Students would not all go outside to the play area at the same time.

Mr. Chavez relayed Bright Loritos has two other locations in Troy and Rochester that are licensed as well, so they are fully aware of regulations and safety. The Rochester location also has a play area in a parking lot. He also has concern about the path the students would use to access the play area which is why cones would be used as well as ensuring no traffic is coming through, as safety is a top priority.

Member Becker inquired as to how many times a day students walk back and forth to the play area. Mr. Chavez responded at least twice, weather permitting. Member Becker really liked the response that was submitted regarding the plan for walking students to the play area, including use of cones which are put out for walking then removed as to not block delivery trucks, and is satisfied with it as it will only be a couple of times a day.

Member Becker relayed that is does not seem to be an impact in terms of losing parking spaces for other businesses there. He looked at the other two learning centers in Pine Ridge, Sundai and Best Brains, and does not have a concern with traffic. As Member Lynch relayed, he would like to support an existing business and increase the advantages it has to offer and thinks this should be approved.

Chair Pehrson relayed that whether cones or an expandable type of safety gate is used when students are walking to the play area, safety is going to be paramount. He does not mind getting other input from any other organization entity within the City, but there's nothing that is going to be more than Bright Loritos responsibility to protect the students to make that crossing. Whether it's traffic devices to slow down, whether it's traffic turtles that say "Kids playing in the area", whether notification is sent to the businesses in that complex to let them know that this is now part of the operation to please notify their drivers, there are a number of things that can be done to safeguard the kids. Chair Pehrson is in support relative to the size and fencing off of the area.

Motion to approve the Preliminary Site Plan for Bright Loritos Outdoor Play Area moved by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Becker.

In the matter of Bright Loritos Outdoor Play Area, JSP23-28, motion to approve the Preliminary Site Plan based on and subject to the following:

a. Planning Commission approval to modify play area size requirement based on applicant justification through Section 4.12.2.i.a – applicant is seeking waiver of 2,300 square feet (at least 3,500 square feet required, 1,200 square feet proposed) supported because the applicant has shown that the proposed number of children playing outside at one time in the proposed play area size is permitted by the state standards and regulations.

- b. The findings of compliance with Ordinance standards in the staff and consultant review letters, and the conditions and items listed in those letters being addressed on the Electronic Stamping Set submittal; and
- c. Request input from public safety before final approval.

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.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE JSP23-28 BRIGHT LORITOS OUTDOOR PLAY AREA MOVED BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BEKCER.

Motion carried 4-0.

1. APPROVAL OF THE JULY 26, 2023 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Motion made by Member Lynch and seconded by Member Becker to approve the July 26, 2023 Planning Commission Minutes.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE JULY 26, 2023 PLANNING COMMISION MINUTES WAS MADE BY MEMBER LYNCH AND SECONDED BY MEMBER BECKER.

Motion carried 4-0.

CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS FOR COMMISSION ACTION

There were no consent agenda items.

SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES/TRAINING UPDATES

There were no Supplemental Issues/Training Updates.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Chair Pehrson invited members of the audience who wished to address the Planning Commission during the final audience participation to come forward. Seeing no one, Chair Pehrson closed the final audience participation.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Member Becker and seconded by Member Lynch.

VOICE VOTE ON MOTION TO ADJOURN MADE BY MEMBER BECKER AND SECONDED BY MEMBER LYNCH.

Motion carried 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.