

**CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
31555 W ELEVEN MILE ROAD
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN
APRIL 17, 2025, 7:30 P.M.**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The Planning Commission Regular Meeting was called to order by Chair Trafelet at 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Aspinall, Brickner, Countegan, Grant, Mantey, Trafelet

Commissioners Absent: Varga, Stimson, Ware

Others Present: City Planner Perdonik, Staff Engineer Dawkins, Planning Consultant Tangari (Giffels Webster), City Attorney Schultz

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION by Aspinall, support by Grant, to approve the agenda as published.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT 3, 2024

CHAPTER OF CODE: 34, Zoning Ordinance

PROPOSED AMENDMENT: Amend Zoning Ordinance to add new definitions and add, remove, and revise several OS-4 Office Research District, use standards, and off-street parking requirements

ACTION REQUESTED: Recommendation to City Council

SECTIONS: 34-2.2, 34-3.1.22, 34-3.5.2, 34-3.9, 34-4.61, and 34-5.2

Planning Consultant Tangari introduced Zoning Text Amendment 3, 2024, which includes two primary components:

1. Revisions to the OS-4 Office Research District Standards

The proposed changes are intended to implement the goals of the City's Master Plan by transitioning the OS-4 district from a single-use, large-scale office model to a more flexible, mixed-use area. Amendments would revise permitted and special land uses, as well as height, area, and bulk requirements. These changes would promote development that creates a sense of place and increased activity within the corridor located between 12 Mile Road and I-696. OS-4 zoning is concentrated almost entirely in this corridor, with very limited application elsewhere in the City.

2. Updates to Off-Street Parking Requirements

Several current parking standards are outdated and result in excessive impervious surfaces. The amendments would reduce required parking for certain uses to better reflect actual demand. The amendment introduces standards for bicycle parking, which is currently unaddressed in the zoning ordinance.

New provisions are proposed for electric vehicle (EV) readiness in residential developments, specifically:

- Developers of new multifamily projects will be required to install underground conduit to accommodate future EV charging stations.
- The intent is not to mandate installation of chargers immediately but to ensure infrastructure is in place for future retrofits without extensive construction.

Public Hearing

Chair Trafelet opened the meeting to public comment. As no public indicated they wished to speak, Chair Trafelet closed public comment and brought the matter back to the Commission.

MOTION by Brickner, support by Countegan, to recommend to City Council that draft Zoning Text Amendment 3, 2024, be approved.

Motion discussion:

- Commissioner Mantey pointed out that the version of the proposed zoning text amendment distributed by mail had since been revised, and the updated version had been provided this evening. He further commented that while the amendment represents progress with respect to updated parking standards, additional reductions could still be made.
- Commissioner Countegan added that the proposed amendment aligns with the recently approved Master Plan. The revisions supported redevelopment efforts along 12 Mile Road and serve as a useful planning tool to enhance flexibility in land use.

Roll call vote:

Ayes - Aspinall, Brickner, Countegan, Grant, Mantey, Trafelet

Nays – None

Motion passed 6-0.

B. ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT 4, 2024

CHAPTER OF CODE: 34, Zoning Ordinance

PROPOSED AMENDMENT: Amend Zoning Ordinance to revise definition of restaurant, drive-in; add definition of commercial outdoor recreation space; and delete reference to automobile service center and replace with automobile repair

ACTION REQUESTED: Recommendation to City Council

SECTIONS: 34-2.2 and 34-3.1.24

City Planner Perdonik introduced Zoning Text Amendment 4, 2024, which proposes targeted revisions to Chapter 34 of the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed amendment updates and clarifies definitions related to drive-in restaurants, commercial outdoor recreation space, and automobile repair. These modifications are consistent with recent changes that reclassified certain permitted uses as special uses within the B-3 District. The goal is to create consistency across the ordinance and eliminate ambiguity in interpretation.

MOTION by Brickner, support by Countegan, to recommend to City Council that draft Zoning Text Amendment 4, 2024, to revise definition of restaurant, drive-in; add definition of commercial outdoor recreation space; and delete reference to automobile service center and replace with automobile repair, be approved.

Roll call vote:

Ayes - Aspinall, Brickner, Countegan, Grant, Mantey, Trafelet

Nays – None

Motion passed 6-0.

REGULAR MEETING

A. SITE PLAN 52-3-2025

LOCATION:	31539 Thirteen Mile Road
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-10-227-019
PROPOSAL:	Construction of building addition to rear of existing building within B-3 General Business District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Site plan approval
APPLICANT:	Jerry Che
OWNER:	Chu Ying Che

Referencing his March 20, 2025 review memorandum, Planning Consultant Tangari explained that the proposal involves the renovation of an existing restaurant within a B-3 zoned district, including the construction of a 246-square-foot walk-in cooler addition to the rear of the 2,942-square-foot building. The site is located within a uniquely configured area that resembles a shopping center but is subdivided into individual lots similar to a downtown layout, with a shared parking lot surrounded by multiple independently owned structures.

The site contains several existing non-conformities. While full redevelopment typically presents an opportunity to eliminate such conditions, this proposal represents a partial site modification. As such, the Planning Commission must consider whether it is reasonable to allow some of the existing non-conformities to remain or whether any can be reduced.

Three primary issues were identified in the review:

1. Due to the proximity of the back of the existing building to the rear property line, there will be a variance needed to add on to the back of the building as proposed. The addition decreases an already non-conforming rear setback. The area behind the property is not residential but a parking lot, which may be relevant in evaluating the impact.
2. Rooftop equipment is required to be screened.
3. Although the plan includes notes indicating new lighting on the back of the building, detailed lighting specifications will need to be submitted.

Commission questions:

In response to questions from Commissioner Brickner, Planning Consultant Tangari explained that the cooler would be located just east of the existing rear door.

Applicant presentation:

Jerry Che, applicant, explained that his father opened the restaurant in 1982. There had been a fire 6 months ago, and they were asking as part of the renovation to add an outdoor cooler as explained.

MOTION by Countegan, support by Aspinall, that Site Plan 52-3-2025, dated March 3, 2025, submitted by Jerry Che, BE APPROVED, because it appears to meet all applicable requirements of the Zoning Chapter, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITONS:

- 1) All outstanding issues identified in Giffels Webster's March 20, 2025, review shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Planner;
- 2) All outstanding issues identified in the City Engineer's March 20, 2025, interoffice correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Engineer; and
- 3) All outstanding issues identified in the Fire Marshal's March 20, 2025, interoffice correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Fire Marshal.
- 4) The applicant must secure variance for rear yard setback.

Motion discussion:

Since the request was to allow a nonconforming situation to increase, Commissioner Mantey asked if this was an opportunity to require any other improvements with the property.

City Attorney Schultz explained that when reviewing a non-conforming site, there is occasionally an opportunity to request upgrades that bring certain elements into conformity. However, such requests must be directly related to the scope of the proposed improvements. In this case, the modifications are occurring at the rear of the property, not the front, which limits the Commission's ability to require broader site changes. The ZBA could consider the issue, however.

Commissioner Brickner reviewed some of the history of the site and stated he was in favor of approving the site plan, conditioned on the applicant being granted a variance.

Roll call vote:

Ayes - Aspinall, Brickner, Countegan, Grant, Mantey, Trafelet

Nays – None

Motion passed 6-0.

B. PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN 1, 2025

LOCATION:	29150 Twelve Mile Road
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-12-376-035
PROPOSAL:	Construction of multiple-family dwellings units within RA-1A One Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Set for public hearing
APPLICANT:	Steven Schafer
OWNER:	Mike H. Yousif

Referencing his April 1, 2025 memorandum, Planning Consultant Tangari gave the review and background for this request to set Planned Unit Development (PUD) Plan 1, 2025 for public hearing.

The project was qualified for a PUD on October 17, 2024. The applicants are seeking a final determination, which decision can be made after the public hearing is held.

The applicant proposes 28 units of two-story attached townhouses in eight buildings, four of which include four units, and two of which include two units. All units have two-car garages. The access street is a t-shaped road stubbed to both side property lines; Engineering and Fire have expressed concerns about the concept design, and if this site is qualified for a PUD, discussions should be held with these departments prior to submitting a final site plan.

The proposed density is consistent with the RC-1 district. Under RA-1A zoning, the maximum number of units available is 6. If all units were built with three bedrooms, the number of rooms would be 112, in line with the RC-2 district. The applicants are not seeking concurrent site plan approval, and floor plans have not been provided, so the unit mix cannot be verified.

A public sidewalk is shown along 12 Mile Road but there are no sidewalks within the development. Council favors sidewalks, and this should be discussed at the Planning Commission level.

In response to a question from Commissioner Brickner, Planning Consultant Tangari said that there were a couple of landlocked lots in the area to the north. Presently those lots were under common ownership.

MOTION by Aspinall, support by Grant, that PUD Plan 1, 2025, dated March 7, 2025, submitted by Steven Schafer, be set for public hearing for the Planning Commission's next available regular meeting agenda.

Motion discussion:

Commissioner Mantey pointed out that construction is prohibited within the floodway, which was shown on p. 11 of the staff report. The applicant was including this land the portion of the land that they were saying would be preserved. However, in terms of PUD benefit, preserved land was land that would otherwise be considered for development. He requested that staff provide an approximate calculation of the size of the preserved area that was being considered a benefit under this PUD proposal.

Applicant comments:

Aaron Schafer, applicant, provided the following information:

- **Clarification on Adjacent Property Ownership**
The property immediately east of the subject parcel is under the same ownership as the northern adjoining lot.
- **Open Space and Environmental Considerations**
The development will provide approximately 62.8% open space, which creates a substantial buffer along the northern property line, adjacent to the declining grade and Pebble Creek. In coordination with the Engineering Division, the Schafers intend to further investigate long-standing erosion issues along Pebble Creek. Although design specifics are not yet determined, they plan to implement a permanent erosion control solution—potentially a wall or similar structure—after receiving approval and moving forward to City Council.

- **Density and Unit Composition**

The project consists of 28 townhouse units:

- End units are 28 feet wide and include three bedrooms as a standard.
- Interior units are 24 feet wide and offer two bedrooms and two bathrooms with a flex space that may serve as an office or den. Buyers may opt to convert the flex space into a third bedroom for an additional cost.
- Based on national trends for the builder M/I's townhouse product, approximately 50% of buyers select the standard two-bedroom option, while the remaining 50% choose the three-bedroom option. This results in a projected range of 96 to 112 total bedrooms. Under maximum build-out, this project would exceed the RC-1 district density by eight bedrooms but would generally fall below the maximum when balanced across unit types.

- **Building Height**

The proposed building height is 26 feet, 6 inches—below the 30-foot zoning maximum—and consistent with similar recent projects, including Mulberry Park at 13 Mile Road.

- **Circulation and Sidewalks**

Interior sidewalks are not proposed within the site in order to maximize setbacks, particularly along the eastern edge near Mr. Levy's property and the western boundary adjacent to AIM Academy. Given the relatively low density of 28 units, the Schafers did not believe internal sidewalks were necessary. However, sidewalks are proposed along 12 Mile Road, and they are open to further discussion on this issue.

- **Waste management**

Waste collection will be handled through individual curbside service.

- **Lighting**

Lighting will follow the same approach used in the 13 Mile project: photocell-operated, dusk-to-dawn lights mounted above each garage.

- **Architectural Plans and Elevations**

Elevations and floor plans were included in the applicant's presentation and were sent in advance to planning staff. These materials will be forwarded to the City's consultants (Giffels Webster) for inclusion in the next review cycle.

- **Landscaping and Screening**

A 10-foot-wide maintenance path is planned between the two northernmost units abutting Pebble Creek. The Schafers are exploring the potential for incorporating a seating area or pathway with views of the basin and creek. However, the steep 1:6 grade presents ADA accessibility challenges, which may limit implementation.

- **Tree Removal and Updated Plans**

They had responded to comments from the review letter and updated the plans to reflect current tree removal data. Tree locations and preserved open space areas are now clearly identified on the site plan and included in the appendix of the presentation.

- **Access to AIM Academy**

They had refined the design of the emergency connection to AIM Academy. The connection remains consistent with earlier versions and will be gated with a KnoxBox, allowing access only for fire and emergency services. Title research revealed a recorded agreement from 2007—signed by Mr. Yousif, Echo Park (the use prior to AIM Academy), and the City of Farmington Hills—requiring secondary emergency access for both properties. The proposed plan complies with this recorded obligation.

In response to questions from Chair Trafelet, Mr. Schafer noted that, according to the Fire Department's review letter, the presence of a secondary access may eliminate the need for a 50-foot turnaround on site. Plans had already been shared with both Fire and Engineering. He expressed a willingness to continue working with both departments to resolve any remaining issues and indicated that a clear resolution would be presented at the May meeting.

In response to a question about an easement, Mr. Schafer clarified that a recorded easement from 2007 already exists. This document establishes joint access for fire and life safety purposes between the subject property and the adjacent site, formerly known as Echo Park.

Commissioner Mantey expressed support for preserving the natural conditions near Pebble Creek rather than constructing erosion control structures. He emphasized that the site's existing trees and their root systems provide natural erosion protection and recommended that the applicant leave the area undisturbed. He acknowledged that the buffer area already shows no planned tree removal and that the nearest proposed building is over 100 feet from the creek.

Mr. Schafer confirmed that additional landscaping would be added around the stormwater basin and agreed in concept with Commissioner Mantey's comments.

Roll call vote:

Ayes - Aspinall, Brickner, Countegan, Grant, Mantey, Trafelet

Nays – None

Motion passed 6-0.

C. AMEND PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2, 2021, INCLUDING REVISED SITE PLAN 59-5-2022

LOCATION:	27400 Twelve Mile Road
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-12-476-008
PROPOSAL:	Construction of site-built one-family detached dwelling units within RA-1B One Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Set for public hearing
APPLICANT:	Robertson Brothers Homes
OWNER:	Evangelical Homes of Michigan

Consultant Review

Referencing his April 9, 2025 memorandum, Planning Consultant Tangari explained that the Commission reviewed the plan last fall, after which it was approved by City Council. The only modification since that approval is the addition of one unit near the northern portion of the site along Inkster Road.

Previously, a driveway in that location—near units 65 or 66—had been removed, and the area was left open. The applicant has now utilized that space to add an additional unit, increasing the total number of units from 75 to 76. This was the only change to the approved plan.

Applicant presentation

Tim Loughrin, Robertson Brothers Homes, stated that the request is straightforward and would likely have raised no concerns if it had been included in the original submittal. He noted that a

higher density was previously approved for the site, so the current proposal does not exceed prior limits. He emphasized that the change would have minimal impact on traffic, is unlikely to face neighborhood opposition, and provides additional housing options within the community, resulting in a net positive outcome.

MOTION by Grant, support by Bruckner, that the application to amend PUD Plan 2, 2021, including revised Site Plan 59-5-2022, dated March 10, 2025, submitted by Robertson Brothers Homes, be set for public hearing for the Planning Commission's next available regular meeting agenda.

Roll call vote:

Ayes - Aspinall, Brickner, Countegan, Grant, Mantey, Trafelet

Nays – None

Motion passed 6-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of March 20, 2025, Regular and Special Meeting minutes.

MOTION by Brickner, support by Aspinall, to approve the March 20, 2025 Regular and Special Meeting minutes as submitted.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

COMMISSIONER/STAFF COMMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Grant, support by Countegan, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen Aspinall,
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem