

**CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
31555 W ELEVEN MILE ROAD
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN
AUGUST 20, 2026 7:30 P.M.**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The Planning Commission Meeting was called to order by Chair Lindquist at 7:32 pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Banks, Brickner, Grant, Lindquist, Mantey, Stimson, Trafelet

Commissioners Absent: Countegan, Ware

Others Present: City Planner Mulville-Friel, City Attorney Saarela, Planning Consultant Auerbach

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Brickner, supported by Stimson, to approve the agenda as published.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. SPECIAL APPROVAL SITE PLAN 56-7-2026

LOCATION:	29375 W. 10 Mile Road
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-25-101-018
PROPOSAL:	Construct a new specialty veterinary clinic within the B-3, General Business District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Planning Commission Public Hearing (Special Approval Use)
APPLICANT:	Katherine Podsiad
OWNER:	Bhlachandra Sata

Planning Consultant review

Referencing the August 11, 2026 Carlisle Wortman review memorandum, Planning Consultant Auerbach provided the background and review for this request to hold a Public Hearing on a request for Special Approval Use, as well as to approve the site plan for the project, and provided the site plan review.

Planning Consultant Auerbach highlighted the following:

- This special approval use and site plan proposal is for the property located at 29375 W. 10 Mile Road, to the southeast of the West 10 Mile and Middle Belt Road intersection. The applicants are proposing to establish a veterinary clinic on this property, which is located in the B-3 General Business Zoning District.
- Per Section 34-3.1.25.C.v of the Zoning Ordinance, veterinary hospitals and clinics are a Special Approval Use in the B-3 district. The Special Approval Use category adds an additional set of discretionary standards to the review to ensure that a given proposal doesn't pose negative impacts on adjacent properties, such as traffic generation, noise, glare, odor, etc.

- The subject property is just under a half-acre in area, currently approved with an approximately 2,700sf single-story commercial building. The areas north and east of the building are paved and include 15 parking spaces.
- A dumpster enclosure to the southeast of the building is slightly obscured by trees in the provided aerial photo. The site is accessible via one full-movement driveway from West 10 Mile Road. The zoning to the north is also B-3. Across 10 Mile Road is a multi-tenant retail building. To the south, there is a sliver of property with natural vegetation that is also zoned B-3, but just farther south of that, the zoning is RC-2, Multiple Family Residential. The property to the west is also B-3 and is an automotive service establishment. The property to the east is OS-1, currently in use as medical offices.
- The applicants are proposing to occupy the existing building and are not going to be changing the existing site configuration and means of access. They propose to renovate the interior of the existing building and also renovate the 10 Mile Road-facing façade. The only site changes they are proposing is to add what's labeled as a dog relief area on the south side of the building that will be enclosed with a chain-link fence.
- The Zoning Ordinance contains use-specific standards for veterinary hospitals, clinics, or kennels. The first of those standards is that all treatment rooms, cages, pens, and runways shall be located within a completely enclosed building so that sound will be kept within the building. The cyclone fence and dog relief area do not meet this standard. One of the considerations for the Planning Commission tonight is whether the outdoor area can be permitted. The applicants should give more information about how the area will be used and maintained.
- Per the specific use standards, the building has to have central air so that no windows will be open. The site plan didn't specify what HVAC the building will be using; this detail can be provided by applicants during the final approval stage.
- Per the specific use standards, the use shall be operated in such a way as to produce no objectionable odors or noise outside its walls. Information regarding this standard will need to be provided by the applicant.
- Other relevant questions might include whether the veterinary clinic will accept drop-in patients or only scheduled appointments. The applicant did provide in an email a narrative confirming there will be no overnight boarding.
- The Planning Commission will need to determine whether a marginal access drive needs to be provided. Given the location and the configuration of the existing site, it doesn't appear that a marginal access drive would provide any benefit, and may not be practical in this particular case.
- The parking and loading standards are met.
- A pedestrian connection from the right-of-way must be provided unless this requirement is waived by the Planning Commission as impractical or unlikely to be used.
- Four canopy trees are required. The site plan indicates there are four trees on site, but in reality, only three trees appear to be present. Only two of the trees appear to be canopy trees.
- Regarding the requirement to screen the parking lot from the public thoroughfare, this standard is not met. The curbed area separating the parking lot from the front lot line must be planted with a hedge of small shrubs, or separated by a masonry wall or berm a minimum of two feet high.
- Regarding lighting, there are three light poles on the property. However, illumination levels don't show that the parking lot will be illuminated in its entirety; this standard needs to be met. The applicants will also need to demonstrate that the lights are fully shielded.

- Regarding the façade improvements, the applicant is proposing to renovate the building exterior to correspond with the interior clinic layout. The existing floor-to-ceiling windows will be removed and replaced with wood plank architectural cladding. Four windows that mirror the existing windows on the east and west ends of the façade will be added. The existing parapet will also be re-finished with wood plank architectural cladding.
- There are a number of requirements for primary facade materials, accent materials, and colors. In general, the site plan doesn't specify the material products and colors of the materials that are being proposed, but it appears likely that those requirements will be met. The applicants need to submit the product specifications and colors.
- There are also requirements that façades facing the right-of-way have a certain number of architectural treatments to create visual interest. The intent is to incorporate elements like recessed or projected façades, detailing around windows and doors, cornices, and to provide visual elements that give depth and variety to the façade itself. The material details will need to be provided to demonstrate that the façade design requirements are met, or the Commission could determine that the applicant needs to provide some of the additional elements to add more visual variety to the façade facing the street.
- The ordinance also has requirements for fenestration. There's a minimum percentage requirement that windows need to provide on any street-facing elevation. While the applicants have not provided the percentage calculations, the façade doesn't appear to meet the percentage requirement. However, given the use, it seems that meeting the requirement would not provide the privacy that's warranted for a veterinary clinic. This is a requirement the Commission can waive, after more information is given.
- Two motions will be needed for this application: one for the Special Approval Use and one for the Site Plan.

Commissioner Mantey observed that the plan appeared to show adequate illumination only within three small, circled areas and suggested that the applicant may need a better lighting study rather than numerous additional fixtures.

Planning Consultant Auerbach explained that the submitted plan reports illumination levels of approximately zero beyond the circled areas. The accuracy of those readings could be addressed by the applicant, but the issue would need to be resolved.

Commissioner Brickner asked whether the applicant had requested a fence around the dog area. Planning Consultant Auerbach confirmed that the plan included a fence and reiterated that the ordinance contains specific use standards requiring all operations to occur within a building.

Applicant Presentation

Dr. Katie Podsiad was present on behalf of this application, as were Architect Antonio Craparotta, Pegasus Group, Clarkston, and contractor Steve Tomlinson, Loose Screws Woodworking, New Hudson.

Dr. Podsiad introduced herself and related some of her background. She was originally from Livonia, attended Michigan State University for eight years, completed an internship in Florida, worked for three years at a predominantly exotic animal clinic in Connecticut, and has worked at her current

practice for four years, serving as Medical Director for nearly that entire period. Her goal is to open her own clinic closer to home.

The proposed veterinary clinic would operate by appointment only. Initially, Dr. Podsiad would be the sole veterinarian with approximately three or four additional employees. The clinic would initially operate four days per week, with the goal of expanding to five weekdays and a half day on Saturday. Typical hours would be approximately 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 or 6:00 p.m., with no overnight operations.

The clinic would treat dogs, cats, and companion exotic animals such as chinchillas, guinea pigs, and birds. It would not treat zoo or farm animals. Appointments would generally be 30 minutes to one hour, reflecting a lower-volume practice focused on high-quality medicine rather than emergency or urgent care volume.

Regarding the outdoor animal area, Dr. Podsiad explained that it was intended only for surgical patients to be taken outside on leash briefly to relieve themselves and then immediately return indoors. It was not intended as an outdoor treatment or client use area. The purpose of the fencing was safety, to reduce the risk of an animal escaping toward the road.

Dr. Podsiad offered to revise the fencing concept if the enclosed area raised concerns. As an alternative, she proposed a single fence line extending from the storage area toward the retaining wall, parallel to Middlebelt Road, to provide a safety barrier while avoiding the appearance of a separate outdoor use area. Waste would be picked up immediately, and dog waste bag stations would be maintained for clients using other portions of the property.

Dr. Podsiad confirmed that the pine tree identified on the plans is no longer present and stated that the landscaping plan would be revised as needed. She noted existing trees at the rear of the property that overhang the paved area and asked whether one of those trees could count toward the required tree total. If necessary, another tree could be added near the front of the property.

For front yard landscaping, Dr. Podsiad proposed a hedge of yew bushes to coordinate with nearby properties, including the gas station and oil change business.

Dr. Podsiad explained that the building elevations previously submitted were preliminary and that the team had since discussed additional architectural details. Proposed improvements include painting the brick, adding wood treatment along the upper portion of the building, and using cement board or a board-and-batten appearance in the area currently occupied by large windows. Updated elevations and colors would be provided, with natural tones anticipated.

Dr. Podsiad also indicated a willingness to add more windows so that each exam room could have two windows, provided the windows do not extend to floor level where animals could look outside and react to other animals. The project team had also discussed adding columns, planters, flowers, and benches along the concrete frontage to create a more welcoming entrance.

Dr. Podsiad concluded that she is interested in improving the appearance of the building, creating a welcoming veterinary practice, and providing companion exotic animal care that is not widely available in the area.

Commissioner Mantey discussed the fenestration requirement, indicating that the applicant had provided a reasonable basis for flexibility regarding the amount and placement of windows.

Regarding the dog relief area, he suggested that staff should have flexibility to work with the applicant on an appropriate fencing solution. The primary concern with the proposed outdoor area was preventing dogs from being left loose outside where barking could affect the nearby apartments. Commissioner Mantey thought that a shorter or modified fence could be acceptable if it provided safety without creating an outdoor exercise or holding area.

Chair Lindquist summarized that the outdoor area would be used only briefly for dogs receiving care during the day and would not be used for recreation, fresh air periods, or leaving animals outdoors. Dr. Podsiad confirmed this understanding.

Commissioner Grant confirmed that there would be no overnight boarding. Dr. Podsiad stated that patients would remain only during business hours, typically for procedures or testing, and would return home the same day. A patient undergoing surgery would be dropped off in the morning, housed in the interior kennel area, receive the procedure, recover, and then go home. Hospitalized patients could use the side door to access the relief area rather than being taken through the front entrance. This would also help separate recovering animals, including those that may be groggy from anesthesia, from animals arriving for appointments.

Commissioner Banks confirmed that the clinic would operate by appointment only. Dr. Podsiad affirmed that appointments would be required.

Commissioner Brickner noted that the building was formerly a 7-Eleven and asked about the masonry wall behind the property. Mr. Craparotta said that the block wall separates the commercial property from the green space and multifamily residential area to the rear and extends from property line to property line.

Commissioner Brickner also confirmed the applicant's preference for a fenced animal relief area behind the building. Dr. Podsiad stated that she would forgo the fence if it became an obstacle to approval. Mr. Craparotta emphasized that all animals would remain on leash and that the fence was proposed only as a precaution in case an animal escaped its handler, particularly given the property's proximity to Middlebelt Road and Ten Mile Road. The applicant was willing to modify the fence height, material, or size as directed, with animal safety being the principal concern.

Commissioner Grant again confirmed that the clinic would not offer routine walk-in service. Dr. Podsiad stated that the clinic would be advertised as appointment-only, although an occasional unscheduled person seeking help might appear. Depending on the situation, the clinic could either assist or refer the person to a nearby emergency facility. She reiterated that appointment scheduling is intended to ensure adequate time and quality of care for each patient.

Dr. Podsiad confirmed that the clinic would treat birds, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and other companion exotic species. In response to a question from Chair Lindquist, she stated that wildlife rehabilitation is not planned at this location, particularly because of concerns such as highly pathogenic avian influenza. If a wild animal were brought to the clinic, she would arrange transfer to an appropriate wildlife organization, such as Howell Nature Center.

Public Comment

Chair Lindquist opened the meeting to public comment. Commissioner Grant confirmed that no written communication had been received regarding this case, and as no public indicated they wished to speak, Chair Lindquist closed public comment and brought the matter back to the Commission.

Commission discussion and action

Planning Consultant Auerbach advised the Commission that the ordinance requires all treatment rooms, cages, pens, and runways to be located within a completely enclosed building. If the Commission determined, based on the applicant's explanation, that the proposed outdoor relief area was not part of the fundamental operations of the veterinary clinic, the motion should expressly reflect that finding.

Motion by Stimson, supported by Trafelet, to grant special approval use approval for the SA 56-7-2026 - Fur and Feathers Veterinary Clinic proposal based on the information provided by the applicants, public hearing comments, the August 11, 2026 Carlisle/Wortman review letter, the July 27, 2026 City Engineer review letter, and the July 24, 2026 Fire Marshal review letter.

Approval is subject to the following conditions to ensure compliance with the Section 34-6.3 standards of review and other applicable standards of the City of Farmington Hills Zoning Ordinance:

- The proposed outdoor relief area is not a core element of the business and is allowed.
- Prior to final site plan approval, the applicant must submit building and mechanical plans that confirm the building will have central air conditioning as required by Section 34-4.26.2.B.
- Items identified in the August 11, 2026 Carlisle/Wortman review letter, the July 27, 2026 City Engineer review letter, and the July 24, 2026 Fire Marshal review letter must be addressed.
- The proposed use will not unreasonably impact upon surrounding property in terms of noise, dust, fumes, smoke, air, water, odor, light and/or vibration.
- The existing building is adequately separated from adjacent uses, and no overnight boarding is proposed.
- No interior acoustic insulation is required.

Subject to these conditions, approval is based on the following findings:

1. The size, location, and character of the proposed land use will be compatible with the surrounding commercial uses:
 - The land use impacts of this proposal are comparable to those of adjacent commercial uses.
 - The configuration of the existing site and building will help minimize potential negative impacts on adjacent uses.
 - The applicant has sufficiently demonstrated that the proposed dog relief area is not a core facility operation.

2. The proposal will not make vehicular and pedestrian traffic more hazardous than is normal for the district involved:
 - The proposal will generate fewer vehicle trips than the site's previous use.
 - No structural additions are proposed, and the existing sight lines for drivers exiting onto West 10 Mile Road remain unobstructed.
3. The proposed use will not unreasonably impact upon surrounding property in terms of noise, dust, fumes, smoke, air, water, odor, light and/or vibration.
4. The location and height of the building will not interfere with the development of adjacent properties or unreasonably affect their value.
5. The proposed use shall relate harmoniously with the physical and economic aspects of adjacent land uses.
6. The proposed use is designed, located, planned, and operated so that the public health, safety, and welfare will be protected.
7. The proposed use shall not cause substantial injury to the value of other property and will not be detrimental to existing and/or other permitted land uses.
8. The proposed use shall not result in an impairment, pollution and/or destruction of the air, water, natural resources and/or public trust therein.
9. The City's Engineering and Fire departments have found that the proposed use will not unreasonably burden the capacity of public services and/or facilities.
10. The proposed use has appropriate design and architectural elements that relate harmoniously to the design characteristics of the area.

Motion discussion:

Commissioner Mantey called attention to the City Engineer's letter concerning the existing sidewalk, noting that the letter implies that the existing sidewalk is on private property and not within the City right-of-way. The motion includes the requirement that the applicant provide either the necessary right-of-way or, if additional right-of-way is not dedicated, provide a sidewalk easement as required by the Engineering Department.

Commissioner Grant asked that the motion include the condition that there be no overnight boarding. Commissioner Stimson agreed to add the condition that "the existing building is adequately separated from adjacent uses, and no overnight boarding is proposed." Commissioner Trafelet concurred.

Commissioner Mantey commented that the proposed veterinary clinic is the type of business the City welcomed. He noted that the property has been vacant for a long period of time.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Motion by Stimson, support by Trafelet, to grant preliminary site plan approval for the SA 56-7-2026 - Fur and Feathers Veterinary Clinic proposal based on the information provided by the applicants, public hearing comments, the August 11, 2026 Carlisle/Wortman review letter, the July 27, 2026 City Engineer review letter, the July 24, 2026 Fire Marshal review letter and the findings that the proposal meets the requirements of Section 34-6.1 of the City of Farmington Hills Zoning Ordinance and applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements, subject to the following:

1. *Marginal Access Drive:* A marginal access drive is not required. The proposal does not create excessive ingress/egress points onto W. 10 Mile Road.

2. *Pedestrian connection:* The required pedestrian connection is waived because a pedestrian connection is impractical due to the existing site configuration.
3. *Façade design:* The applicant must submit façade material product specifications to demonstrate that the minimum of two architectural elements required by Section 34-5.20.5 have been provided.
4. *Fenestration:* The fenestration requirements are waived because additional privacy is necessary for the vet clinic's indoor operations.

Approval is also subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant must include the legal description and parcel identification number on the site plan.
2. Setback dimensions shown on the site plan need to be corrected to match those shown on the topographic survey. Front setbacks are to be measured from the proposed future right-of-way.
3. The Site Data table shown on Sheet SP-1 must be corrected to reflect the B-3 District development standards (Section 34-3.1.25.E) as well as all existing and proposed dimensions.
4. The applicant must confirm the extent of the proposed parapet renovations, if the existing mechanical equipment will remain, and if new roof-mounted equipment is proposed.
5. The applicant must submit building and mechanical plans that confirm the building will have central air conditioning.
6. The dumpster enclosure location must be specified on the plan.
7. Dumpster enclosure details must be provided.
8. The applicant must correct the parking space requirement listed on the plan.
9. The applicant must confirm the number of existing and proposed trees, and replace the tree that was shown on the plan but is actually missing.
10. Required canopy (deciduous) plantings must be provided.
11. The curbed area separating the parking lot from the front lot line must be planted with a hedge of small shrubs as defined in subsection 34-5.14.3.F.v.
12. The hours of operation specified in Section 34-5.16.3.B.v must be noted on the site plan.
13. The applicant must confirm if they intend to utilize the three (3) existing light poles on site and confirm the height.
14. The photometric plan shows that the existing lighting will not illuminate the majority of the parking lot. Either a corrected plan or additional fixtures must be provided to ensure the parking lot is adequately illuminated.
15. The applicant must provide details of the proposed exterior light fixtures to confirm that they will be shielded.
16. The illumination ratio shown on the plan must be corrected
17. Maximum illumination level in lumens must be provided.
18. The applicant must provide product specifications of the wood plank architectural cladding.
19. Existing and proposed accent materials must be specified on the plan.
20. At minimum, exterior material color specifications must be provided to demonstrate that the minimum number of design elements listed in Section 34-5.20.5 are present.
21. Building entrance lighting and design elements required by 34-5.20.8 must be provided.
22. The items identified in the August 11, 2026 Carlisle/Wortman review letter must be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Planner.

23. The items identified in the July 27, 2026 City Engineer review letter must be satisfied to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Engineer.
24. The items identified in the July 24, 2026 Fire Marshal review letter must be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Fire Marshal.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

REGULAR MEETING

A. LOT SPLIT 2, 2026 (FINAL)

LOCATION:	34037 Nine Mile Road
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-33-202-043
PROPOSAL:	Split one (1) parcel into three (3) parcels within the RA-3 One-Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Lot Split Approval (Final)
APPLICANT:	Terry Sever
OWNER:	Arlint Berber

Commissioner Brickner disclosed that he had previously represented applicant Terry Sever as an attorney but had not performed legal work for him for several years. He stated that the prior representation was unrelated to the present request and would not affect his impartiality.

City Attorney Saarela advised that if the Commission was satisfied that Commissioner Brickner could remain impartial, no motion to require recusal was necessary. Commissioner Mantey stated that he appreciated the disclosure and had no objection. No Commissioner objected, and Chair Lindquist determined that Commissioner Brickner could remain and participate in consideration of this request.

Planning Consultant Review

Referencing the August 11, 2026 Carlisle Wortman memorandum, Planning Consultant Auerbach gave the background and reviewed this request for Lot Split Approval.

Planning Consultant Auerbach highlighted the following points:

- The approximately 1.5-acre vacant property is located on the south side of West Nine Mile Road, east of Cass Street. The site is zoned RA-3, One-Family Residential, contains trees and natural vegetation, includes a drainage ditch along Nine Mile Road, and slopes approximately eight feet from northwest to southeast. Property to the south, east, and west is also zoned RA-3 and developed with single-family residential uses. Property across Nine Mile Road is within the City of Farmington and is currently used for industrial purposes.
- The applicant proposes to divide the property into three parcels identified as Parcels A, B, and C. Parcels A and B would comprise the two principal residential lots, while the narrower Parcel C along Nine Mile Road generally corresponds to the planned City right-of-way. No site improvements are proposed as part of the lot split request.
- Planning Consultant Auerbach reviewed the City lot split procedure. The Planning Commission first evaluates the proposal under the Subdivision Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance. The Commission may grant preliminary approval with conditions, grant preliminary approval upon finding that all applicable requirements are met, or deny the request. Following preliminary

approval, the Planning Department and other applicable City departments conduct a final review to confirm that all conditions and departmental requirements have been satisfied.

- Proposed Parcels A and B meet the RA-3 minimum lot area requirement of 10,000 square feet, with each containing approximately 30,000 square feet. Parcel C does not meet the minimum lot area requirement if treated as a separate parcel. Because the submitted materials did not establish that Parcel C would be dedicated as public right-of-way, documentation of the dedication is required.
- Both the Subdivision Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance require each parcel to abut a public street or have access by a private street. Since no private street is proposed, Parcel C must be dedicated as public right-of-way so that Parcels A and B have compliant access. The Subdivision Ordinance also requires land within a planned right-of-way to be dedicated at the time of a split. The applicant therefore must submit the necessary deed or other documentation verifying the dedication.
- Parcels A and B may exceed the Subdivision Ordinance maximum 3:1 width-to-depth ratio because their dimensions appear consistent with surrounding properties. Subject to dedication of Parcel C, the resulting parcels could function comparably to other residential properties in the area.
- Information required for a final land division map that was not shown on the submitted plan included any onsite wetlands, floodplains or water bodies, topography, and a preliminary grading plan prepared by a licensed surveyor or engineer. The Engineering Department may determine that some of these items are unnecessary, but Planning Consultant Auerbach recommended that they be identified as conditions to be addressed if required by staff.
- The Planning Commission could grant preliminary approval conditioned upon the applicant satisfying the outstanding planning and engineering requirements, including right-of-way dedication and access, or deny the proposal based on the identified ordinance deficiencies.

Applicant presentation

Applicant Terry Sever, White Lake, Michigan, distributed handouts to the Commission titled “Two Applications.” He explained that he had been frustrated because of what he believed were inconsistencies and misunderstandings in the lot split application process. The application provided to him at the counter did not include an option to identify the request as a final review, which had been his intent. He also questioned a request that his purchase agreement be notarized, stating that purchase agreements are generally not notarized and that a document executed months earlier could not subsequently be notarized as though it had been signed at a later time.

Mr. Sever stated that he later located a different application on the City's website that included an option for final review. He suggested that the proof of ownership requirements on that form should also recognize documents other than a warranty deed, such as a title commitment or purchase agreement, because a person purchasing property under a land contract may have a legal ownership interest without yet holding a warranty deed.

Sever discussed provisions of the City's ordinance and Michigan law governing land divisions, pointing out inconsistencies between the two regulations. He cited MCL 560.108 and 560.109 and stated that a municipality must approve or disapprove a proposed division within 45 days after a complete application is filed with the designated municipal official. In Farmington Hills, the Planning

Commission is the body designated to act on the application, and an application should be considered completed when it contains the information necessary to determine compliance with the applicable statutory requirements.

Proposed Lot Configuration

Mr. Sever explained that a lot split for the property had been approved approximately 18 months earlier using an 80-foot lot and a 100-foot lot configuration, creating an undesirable flag lot. After he became involved with the property, he proposed two 90-foot lots because that configuration would provide better development options, including the ability to construct a side-entry home rather than being limited to a front-entry design.

Mr. Sever questioned the Engineering Department requirement that 27 feet of the property be dedicated as right-of-way before approval of the lot split, stating that the City could not require a property owner to dedicate land. He acknowledged, however, that some reduction in the parent parcel depth was necessary for the proposed configuration and stated that he was willing to work with the City regarding dedication of the full 27 feet.

Mr. Sever discussed the possibility of using or expanding an existing utility easement for sidewalk purposes, but stated that dedication of the right-of-way may be the better option. He also discussed the City's planned Nine Mile Road sidewalk improvements and expressed concern that constructing a sidewalk with this individual home development before the City's overall sidewalk design is completed could result in misalignment or later reconstruction. He suggested coordinating the sidewalk location with the City's planned improvements.

Commission Scope Clarified

Chair Lindquist asked City Attorney Saarela whether the Planning Commission was required to decide the applicant's concerns regarding City application procedures and administrative compliance. City Attorney Saarela advised that those concerns are administrative matters for the Planning Department and are not within the Planning Commission's authority to change. The Commission should focus on the proposed lot split.

City Attorney Saarela confirmed that Parcel C does not meet the minimum lot requirements if it remains a separate parcel. She agreed that the City cannot compel dedication of right-of-way, but for this proposal to be approved as presented, Parcel C must be dedicated; otherwise, it would remain a noncompliant parcel. She further clarified that the Commission was not being asked to determine sidewalk details as part of the lot split decision.

Chair Lindquist asked Mr. Sever to move past further discussion of the City's Ordinance and procedures and focus on the proposed lot split.

Parcel C and Proposed Dedication

Mr. Sever explained that Parcel C was created because he anticipated that the City would require additional right-of-way. Other lot split configurations could be pursued if the current proposal was not approved, including transferring a remainder to an adjoining parcel, but he preferred the proposal presented.

The applicant was willing to dedicate Parcel C to the City and had already provided a sample warranty deed to the Engineering Department for review. Mr. Sever discussed the wording to be used in the deed and requested that the final language be determined in coordination with the Engineering Department. He accepted the Consultant's recommendation to make the approval subject to resolving the appropriate deed language and right-of-way dedication requirements.

Chair Lindquist again asked Mr. Sever to focus on the affirmative presentation supporting the requested lot split rather than further discussion of City procedures.

Mr. Sever requested approval of the lot split conditioned upon agreement regarding the description or identification of Parcel C and confirmed that the 27-foot area would be dedicated to the City as part of the plan.

Chair Lindquist confirmed that Mr. Sever was not amending the proposed lot split and remained in support of the plan as submitted, including dedication of the 27-foot Parcel C area. Mr. Sever stated that the dedication would be conveyed to the City for one dollar.

Commissioner Brickner asked whether Mr. Sever understood that the proposed division would use available land divisions. Mr. Sever responded that no additional division was planned and that the proposal was intended to create the two residential lots.

Commissioner Grant asked whether Parcel C was required to be labeled "future right-of-way". City Attorney Saarela clarified that the deed did not need to use that terminology and could simply dedicate the 27-foot area to the City for road purposes.

Chair Lindquist indicated he was ready for Commission deliberation and action.

Motion by Brickner, supported by Mantey, to grant preliminary lot split approval for the Lot Split 2, 2026 proposal based on the information provided by the applicants, the August 11, 2026 Carlisle/Wortman review letter, the August 12, 2026 City Engineer review letter, and the July 31, 2026 Fire Marshal review letter.

Approval is subject to the following conditions, which must be addressed prior to final approval:

1. The applicant must submit the necessary documentation to dedicate the planned right-of-way area corresponding to Parcel C on the provided survey so that the requirements Section. 27 110(2)(b) and (c) are met.
2. The applicant must submit all of the information required by Section 27-120(5) for final land division maps that City staff determine necessary to verify compliance with the Subdivision Ordinance.
3. Items identified in the August 11, 2026 Carlisle/Wortman review letter must be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Planner.
4. Items identified in the August 12, 2026 City Engineer review letter must be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Engineer.
5. Items identified in the July 31, 2026 Fire Marshal review letter must be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Fire Marshal.

Subject to these conditions, approval is based on the following findings:

1. The proposed split will comply with the Subdivision Ordinance Sections 27-110(2)(a) through (d).
2. Parcels A and B will meet the applicable Zoning Ordinance dimensional and access requirements if Parcel C is dedicated as right-of-way.
3. If Parcel C is dedicated as right-of-way, Parcels A and B will be generally consistent with the configuration of surrounding residential properties.
4. Parcels A and B meet the standards of the ordinance for width and width-to-depth ratio.
5. The orientation of the yards for proposed Parcels A and B will be compatible with other parcels in the immediate area if Parcel C were dedicated as right-of-way.
6. Based on the information available, the proposed split does not appear to pose any impact on any existing floodplains, wetlands, topography, or other natural features and physical conditions on the resulting parcels. The applicant must submit all information required by Section 27-120(5) that City staff determine necessary to verify that is the case.
7. The probable orientation of buildings on Parcels A and B would be comparable to other parcels in the immediate area if Parcel C were dedicated as right-of-way.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

B. ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT 1, 2026

CHAPTER OF CODE: 34, Zoning Ordinance

PROPOSED AMENDMENT: Amend Zoning Ordinance to replace in its entirety Section 34-6.1 "Site Plan Review" to revise, consolidate, and restate the procedures, standards, and requirements relating to the submission, review, processing, consideration, decision-making, and duration of site plans in the city.

ACTION REQUESTED: Set for Planning Commission Public Hearing

SECTION: Amend Section 34-6.1

City Planner Mulville-Friel reviewed the proposed amendment to Section 34 6.1, which the Planning Commission had previously considered at a study session. The amendment is intended to create a fair, predictable, and efficient site plan review process. Following adoption, the Planning Office would update its application forms and development review manual to conform to the new procedures.

The amendment would establish a two-phase process consisting of preliminary site plan approval followed by final site plan approval. The Planning Commission would review the preliminary plan and impose conditions. Final approval would generally be handled administratively after staff confirms that Commission conditions and departmental review requirements have been satisfied.

The amendment would also remove conflicting site plan provisions from Chapter 21 of the General Code so that the review process is contained solely in the Zoning Ordinance. It would require a mandatory preapplication meeting and expand staff authority to administratively approve certain site plans that do not exceed established thresholds or require Planning Commission consideration of waivers or other discretionary matters.

Approval Periods and Extensions

City Planner Mulville-Friel noted that the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act does not establish an expiration period for site plan approvals, leaving municipalities to establish their own. Staff reviewed neighboring communities and found substantial variation, including preliminary approval periods ranging from six months in the City of Northville to three years in the City of Ann Arbor.

Under the proposed amendment, an applicant would have two years after preliminary approval to submit for final site plan approval, one additional year to obtain final approval through administrative review, and two years after final approval to obtain required permits and commence construction.

The proposal would also permit up to three one-year extensions for both preliminary and final approvals. Staff was proposing administrative review of extension requests.

Requested Commission Action

City Planner Mulville-Friel advised that the City Attorney had reviewed the draft language and placed it into ordinance format. Staff requested that the Commission set the amendment for public hearing at the next available meeting, September 17. City Planner Mulville-Friel invited discussion regarding the proposed approval periods, extensions, whether extensions should be reviewed administratively or by the Planning Commission, and any other revisions.

Commissioner Grant asked for clarification regarding how other communities handle site plan extensions. City Planner Mulville Friel reported that some communities require applicants to return to the Planning Commission to request an extension.

Commissioner Grant asked about the proposed reduction in the site plan approval period. City Planner Mulville Friel explained that the current ordinance allows three years after final site plan approval, while the proposed amendment creates a more defined preliminary and final approval process intended to prevent inactive or dormant projects from remaining open indefinitely.

Commissioner Grant favored a shorter approval period because extended timeframes can leave properties vacant for long periods.

Commissioner Stimson supported the proposed two-year approval period and up to three one-year extensions. He also supported allowing staff to approve extensions administratively rather than requiring applicants to return to the Planning Commission.

Chair Lindquist asked what circumstances might lead staff to deny an extension. City Planner Mulville Friel stated that maintenance issues such as trash, overgrowth, or property deterioration would generally be handled through zoning enforcement rather than through the extension process. A good faith effort to advance the project could be considered; the draft does not contain detailed extension criteria.

Planning Consultant Auerbach said that extensions would generally be based on whether conditions on the site or surrounding property had changed and whether the applicant provided a reasonable explanation for the delay. He noted that the threshold for granting an extension would likely be relatively low and that staff had intentionally left the criteria somewhat open-ended.

City Attorney Saarela clarified that, as drafted, an extension would generally be granted if no changes had been made to the approved plan and the plan continued to comply with applicable Ordinance requirements. A material change to the plan or a change in the Ordinance that caused the plan to become noncompliant would be the principal reasons an extension might not be approved.

Planning Consultant Auerbach noted that if the Commission wanted greater control over how long projects could remain active, it could reduce the number of extensions allowed. Chair Lindquist observed that if the purpose were to encourage applicants to move projects forward, Planning Commission review might provide more leverage than administrative review. Planning Consultant Auerbach noted that there is considerable variation among communities and that the Commission could still revise the amendment at the public hearing or later.

Chair Lindquist asked whether an adjacent property owner or other member of the public could object to an extension. City Attorney Saarela stated that under the proposed language, extensions are not discretionary based on public comment. If the approved plan remains unchanged and continues to comply with the Ordinance, public opposition alone would not provide a basis to deny an extension.

Commissioner Stimson reiterated that requiring applicants to request extensions would demonstrate that a project remains active and could prevent viable projects from expiring because of legitimate delays such as environmental, brownfield, financial, or permitting issues. Making extensions unnecessarily difficult could discourage projects on properties that have already remained vacant for extended periods.

Commissioner Grant asked whether there is a fee for extensions and whether the draft provides for staff or Planning Commission approval. City Planner Mulville-Friel noted that there is currently no fee for an extension, although fees apply when approved plans are revised. The proposed amendment gives staff authority to approve extensions administratively.

City Planner Mulville-Friel and City Attorney Saarela emphasized that the Commission was not required to make changes to the draft tonight. The requested action was only to set the amendment for public hearing. City Attorney Saarela noted that the Commission could consider public comments and make revisions when the amendment returns for the public hearing.

Commissioner Brickner expressed concern that shortening site plan approval periods could increase costs for developers if approvals expire and plans must be resubmitted. He cited prior projects that experienced delays because of financing, interest rates, and other circumstances, and stated that overly restrictive time limits could discourage investment and redevelopment in the City.

Commissioner Stimson pointed out that the proposed structure effectively allows a project to remain active for up to five years through the initial two-year period and three one-year extensions. He viewed the extension process as a reasonable safeguard because it allows staff to confirm that the plan remains compliant while giving applicants additional time when legitimate delays occur.

MOTION by Grant, supported by Stimson, set a public hearing for draft Zoning Text Amendment 1, 2026 for the Planning Commission's next available regular meeting:

The next available regular meeting date was September 17, 2026.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES July 16, 2026

MOTION by Brickner, supported by Grant, to approve the July 16, 2026 regular meeting minutes as submitted.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

COMMISSIONER/STAFF COMMENTS

Commissioner Mantey asked that going forward, the Planning Commission packet be consolidated so that the materials do not overwhelm.

Acknowledging the Public Tree Planting Fund report in tonight's packets, Commissioner Mantey suggested that the Planning Commission, perhaps during CIP discussions, have a discussion as to how the City plans on spending the money in the fund.

Commissioner Brickner asked the City to follow up on the traffic lights in the area of 12 Mile and Orchard Lake Roads, where the walk signals and green turn arrows did not appear to be working.

City Planner Mulville-Friel noted that two Planning Commission training sessions are scheduled: one in October and one in November, immediately before the regular meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting ended at 9:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Tanji Grant
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem