

**CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
31555 W ELEVEN MILE ROAD
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN
NOVEMBER 20, 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, Stimson, Ware, Trafelet

Commissioners Absent: Mantey

Others Present: Staff Planner Mulville-Friel, Planning Consultant Tangari (Giffels Webster), Staff Engineer Dawkins, 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. AMEND PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT 12, 2014, INCLUDING SITE PLAN 60-7-2025

LOCATION:	12 Mile, west of Orchard Lake Road
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-10-476-067
PROPOSAL:	Construct new fast-food restaurant with drive-through on a vacant outlot within B-4, Planned General Business District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Recommend to City Council
APPLICANT:	Ronald J. Sesi
OWNER:	SSFHC Real Estate, LLC

Applicant presentation

Members of the development team present this evening included:

Allen Eizember, Novak & Fraus Engineers

Ronald Sesi, applicant

Luke Liu, AECOM

Mr. Eizember made the following points:

- This proposal was to construct a Culver's restaurant on the site located west of the existing Comerica Bank and the Burger King at the intersection of 12 Mile Road and Orchard Lake Road.
- They had incorporated some of the comments and suggestions made at the October planning commission meeting, including changes to landscaping, architecture, and drive-through stacking spaces.
- Regarding the front yard setback: The front yard setback requirement was for 120 feet on a 200' deep lot. The proposed Culver's would have a 44.7' setback. To provide context, Comerica Bank and Burger King were set back approximately 65'. In both instances there was parking in front of the buildings along 12 Mile Road. Culver's would not have any front yard parking, only drive-through stacking and the bypass lane. Starbucks, which is part of the same PUD, has a 45'

setback on Orchard Lake Road, and has parking within 5' of the right-of-way. In comparison, the proposed Culver's plan provides more buffer between the right-of-way and the drive aisle than Starbucks currently has.

- Regarding stacking and circulation near the driveway off 12 Mile Road: To prevent queued vehicles from blocking the entrance, they had added an island at the southwest corner of the building near the patio area. This design is intended to direct cars in the drive-through queue northward rather than westward, maintaining clear two-way access around the west side of the building.

Planning consultant review

Referencing the November 12, 2025 Giffels Webster memorandum, Planning Consultant Tangari highlighted the following points:

- The three key items being requested via PUD amendment are:
 1. 34-3.1.26 – Permit a drive-in restaurant that is not permitted in the B-4 district
 2. 34-4.27.2 – Permit fast-food in a stand-alone building
 3. 34-3.1.24.E – Setback relief for front setback (reduction from 120' to 44.7')
- Other outstanding issues include:
 - No pedestrian access from the 12 Mile sidewalk
 - In addition to the 120' general setback requirement for the district, an additional 60' setback is required for a drive-through use.
 - Order confirmation boards are located on the south side of the building directed toward 12 Mile Road, with the pickup window on the east side. Order boards are not permitted within the front yard.
 - Regarding stacking, the plan shows five stacking spaces before the confirmation board, with two of those partially located on Parcel A. Eight additional stacking or pull-ahead spaces are shown beyond the window. Any spaces to be used for waiting for order should be notated on the plans.
 - Regarding landscaping, because of the reduced setback, the Planning Commission could require additional landscaping along 12 Mile Road.
 - Regarding lighting, the photometric plan showed numerous values in excess of 0.3 footcandles at the property line interior to the site; this is appropriate. However, the 0.3 footcandles should be observed at the southern property line. Additionally, proposed lighting exceeds the required 4:1 uniformity ratio. Staff were unable to review whether the site meets the maximum illumination of 2.5 lumens per square feet of pavement area. Other lighting details needed to be provided as noted in the review.
 - EIFS is limited to an accent material (less than 40% of façade) located not less than 8 feet above grade; this standard is not met; multiple fields of this material are located below 8 feet; percentage not known. Separate from relief granted under a PUD, the planning commission may grant relief from building material requirements when it finds that the materials are consistent with surrounding development and the waiver will achieve a specific architectural objective.
 - Buildings facing a major thoroughfare are required to have 60% window coverage on the ground floor. This standard appears not to be met on the southern façade. Separate from relief granted under a PUD, the planning commission may grant relief from building material requirements when it finds that the materials are consistent with surrounding development

- and the waiver will achieve a specific architectural objective, and that compliance with the standard will result in a practical difficulty.
- Regarding parking, the applicant originally calculated a need for 110 parking spaces based on gross floor area. After staff reviewed the usable floor area, the requirement was closer to 53 spaces—less than half the applicant’s figure. Because this property is part of a larger center, and uses do not all peak at the same time, the City applied the shopping-center standard to evaluate parking availability. Adequate parking exists without requiring a PUD exception.

In response to questions, Planning Consultant Tangari gave the following further information:

- He did not know the future of the Comerica Bank site.
- The Starbucks is a standalone building within the PUD, showing precedent.
- The applicant is not adding a new curb cut.
- A traffic study had been submitted and had been reviewed by the Engineering Division. Staff Engineer Dawkins added that staff had a few comments regarding the traffic study and would return those to the applicant’s traffic consultant.
- There was an acknowledged low level of service at the 12 Mile Road/Orchard Lake Road intersection. Main concerns included how traffic backs up along 12 Mile Road in front of the site, and how traffic backs up within the site during peak exit times.

Mr. Liu said that findings in the traffic study showed:

- Morning peak hour: approximately 49 feet of additional queue (2-3 cars)
- Afternoon peak hour: approximately 34 feet of additional queue (about 2 cars)

Public hearing.

Chair Trafelet opened the public hearing.

Randy Carron, Scrambler’s Restaurant, expressed concern that the proposed Culver’s could significantly impact or potentially jeopardize their business. Parking in the center is already inadequate, particularly on weekends and during weekday lunch hours, and site circulation is often difficult. He believed the addition of a drive-through will worsen congestion, noting that vehicles already back up when entering and exiting onto 12 Mile Road. Mr. Carron also noted that tenants were not notified by the landlord about this proposal or tonight’s public hearing.

No other public indicated they wished to speak.

Commission deliberation and motion

Chair Trafelet explained that tonight’s action would be to make a recommendation to City Council, which would be the deciding body.

Commissioners Grant and Ware asked if other sites in Farmington Hills were considered. Commissioner Grant remained concerned about the tight site layout and current circulation challenges.

Mr. Sesi explained that Culver’s site-selection rules require Culver’s locations to be 5 miles from each other, limiting other options in the City. The subject site was an ideal location. Culver’s imposes specific site and building requirements, including minimum site size, building square footage, and

drive-through access/geometry. Even if another site appears ideal in theory, it may not meet Culver's requirements. The proposed 12 Mile site meets all of Culver's requirements, and they are now seeking to determine whether it meets the City's requirements also.

Commissioner Aspinall asked whether Culver's peak hours of operation would overlap with Scrambler's peak times.

Mr. Sesi explained that Culver's does not serve breakfast; typical opening is 10:00 or 10:30 a.m. Culver's peak hours are approximately 12:00pm–2:00pm. for lunch and 6:00pm–8:00pm for dinner. The introduction of DoorDash and Uber Eats has reduced drive-through sales, as more customers order delivery instead of driving to the restaurant. Dine-in business has remained steady.

Commissioner Brickner confirmed that the subject site is a separate outlot (Lot B), but part of the overall planned development. The outlot designation indicates it is intended for future building rather than permanent surface parking.

Commissioner Brickner referenced Giffels Webster's review indicating the use of EIFS (exterior insulation and finish system) on the building. The City has adopted restrictions on EIFS due to long-term durability problems (deterioration and susceptibility to damage). He asked whether the applicant would consider alternate materials consistent with City standards.

Mr. Sesi expressed willingness to modify the building materials to conform to city standards.

City Attorney Schultz advised that the Commission should require color renderings of the elevations – the submission had included black and white renderings only.

In response to a question from Member Lindquist, Mr. Sesi confirmed he would be the franchisee at this location.

MOTION by Countegan, support by Aspinall, to recommend to City Council that the application to amend PUD 12, 2014 and revised Site Plan 60-7-2025, dated October 28, 2025, submitted by Ronald J. Sesi, be approved because the plans are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Master Plan and applicable provisions of the Planned Unit Development Option in Section 34-3.20 of the Zoning Ordinance, subject to the following findings and conditions.

Finding:

The Commission has no objections to the proposed relief from the following zoning ordinance standards, which will be addressed in conjunction with the final PUD plan and the PUD agreement.

- A. 34-3.1.26 – Permit a drive-in restaurant that is not permitted in the B-4 district.**
- B. 34-4.27.2 – Permit fast food in a standalone building.**
- C. 34-3.1.24.E – Setback relief for front setback (reduction from 120 feet to 44.7 feet).**
- D. 34-5.20 – Relief from the design standards for building materials as outlined in Giffels Webster's November 12, 2025 review.**

- E. 34-5.20 – Relief from the design standards for percentage of window coverage on ground floor as outlined in Giffels Webster's November 12, 2025 review.**

Conditions:

- A. All outstanding issues identified in Giffels Webster's November 12, 2025 review shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Planner.**
- B. All outstanding issues identified in the City Engineer's November 6, 2025, interoffice correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Engineer; and**
- C. All outstanding issues identified in the Fire Marshal's October 31, 2025, interoffice correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Fire Marshal.**
- D. The applicant shall meet with planning staff regarding landscaping along 12 Mile Road to provide sufficient buffering and screening for the proposed development.**

Motion discussion:

In response to discussion, Commissioner Countegan said he did not object to EIFS, but would be flexible if the Commission reached a different consensus.

Commissioner Stimson stated he would vote against the motion. While he supported Culver's locating in Farmington Hills, the subject site was too tight. He remained concerned about stacking located in front of the building and insufficient stacking space generally. He believed the site will become unnavigable and traffic flow will be negatively impacted.

Commissioner Grant said she would also oppose the motion, for similar reasons.

Roll call vote:

Stimson	no
Ware	yes
Countegan	yes
Aspinall	yes
Lindquist	no
Grant	no
Brickner	yes
Trafelet	yes

Motion passed 5-3.

REGULAR MEETING

A. SITE PLAN – 65-10-2025 (PUD 1, 2025)

LOCATION:	29150 West Twelve Mile Rd.
	PARCEL I.D.: 22-23-00-376-035
PROPOSAL:	Construct of multiple-family dwellings units within RA-1A, One Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Site Plan approval
APPLICANT:	Schafer Development, LLC
OWNER:	Mike Yousif

Applicant presentation

Members of the development team present this evening included:

Aaron and Steven Schafer, Schafer Development

Frank Lucido and Brandon Guest, M/I Homes

Aaron Schafer provided the following information:

- Building height for the townhouse units measures approximately 26'6", and complies with the ordinance.
- The site is located on the northeast corner of Twelve Mile and Middlebelt, east of the former Echo Park (now AIM Academy). The parcel is 4.55 acres and has been through multiple Planning Commission and City Council reviews:
 - October 2024: Qualified for PUD option
 - April 2025: Site plan review
 - May 2025: Site plan public hearing
 - July 2025: City Council unanimous approval
- No changes have been made to the site plan since May, except for relocating a small seating/bench area originally located near the eastern building to the Twelve Mile frontage.
- The development maintains nearly 63% open space, largely due to the steep topography and natural features along the northern portion of the site adjacent to Pebble Creek. No disturbance is proposed beyond necessary grading.
- A stormwater basin will outlet into Pebble Creek at an agricultural rate.

The July 2025 City Council approval carried 5 conditions regarding:

- 1) *That the proponent discuss the possibility of a fence on the eastern property line next to Mr. Levy's property, and that a decision be made about the fence that satisfies Mr. Levy as to whether he wants a fence or not. The decision is up to Mr. Levy.*
 - After meeting with the Levy family multiple times, applicant agreed to provide fencing along the eastern and northern property lines.
 - Applicant will adjust landscaping, including added evergreens, to provide four-season buffering.
2. *That the pocket park not be on the eastern property line next to Mr. Levy's property.*
 - Amenity/pocket park moved from the eastern property line to a more visible location along Twelve Mile Road.
3. *That an easement be placed next to the stub road extending to the eastern property line for utilities and road in case Mr. Levy decides to develop his property in the future.*
 - Easement provided for future utility and roadway connection should adjacent property develop.
 - Road will stop short of the property line to allow landscaping to mature. Utilities will extend to the boundary.
4. *That the proponent meet with the Engineering Department to review the traffic report and accommodate any of the Engineering Department's recommendation regarding traffic – whether any sort of decel lane is needed.*
 - Applicant met with fire, engineering, and traffic officials.

- A revised traffic impact study was submitted; city departments confirmed no additional improvements needed due to upgraded Twelve Mile left-turn lane.

5. *That the proponent meet with Fire and Engineering regarding the Fire Department's and Engineering's letter advising the need for a cul-de-sac to better understand where they are referencing the need for a cul-de-sac; and if they want the cul-de-sac to be placed at the end of the stub road on the eastern side of the property, that at that point, this PUD is negated and has to come back to Council for further potential revisions.*

- City departments confirmed support for T-street layout.
- Shared access agreement from 2001 supports the emergency connection to AIM Academy.

Building renderings and material samples showed:

- Updated elevations presented with brick first floor and lap/board-and-batten siding.
- Rear elevation examples and floor plans shown for fourplex, five-plex, and six-plex configurations.
- Materials board included brick, siding, and roofing details.
- Relocated 12 Mile amenity with bench and pedestrian space.

In response to questions, City Attorney Schultz explained that the agenda referenced site plan approval, but the presentation also included materials and design elements tied to the PUD. The PUD agreement had been completed and approved by City Council. The Planning Commission was acting only on the site plan following PUD approval, and staff would verify internally that the elevations and facades presented were consistent with the written PUD agreement.

Planning consultant review

Referencing the November 12, 2025 Giffels Webster memorandum, Planning Consultant Tangari said that staff had reviewed the site plan for consistency with the approved PUD and found that it met all conditions established by City Council, including relocation of the amenity area and required easements. The plans were fully consistent with the PUD approval and therefore suitable for site plan approval.

Planning Commission deliberation and/or motion

MOTION by Brickner, support by Countegan, that Site Plan 65-10-2025, as revised October 14, 2025, submitted by Schafer Development, LLC, be approved because it appears to meet all applicable requirements of the zoning chapter subject to the following conditions and determinations.

Conditions

- 1. All outstanding issues identified in the Giffels Webster's November 10, 2025 review shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Planner.**
- 2. All outstanding issues identified in the City Engineer's November 11, 2025 inter-office correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Engineer.**
- 3. All outstanding issues identified in the Fire Marshal's October 30, 2025 inter-office correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Fire Marshal.**

Determinations.

- 1. The applicant has submitted a revised site plan that addresses conditions of City Council's July 14, 2025 approval of PUD 1-2025.**
- 2. That the four-foot high vinyl-coated black chain-link fence proposed on the eastern property line next to Mr. Levy's property is desired and appears to satisfy Mr. Levy.**
- 3. A total of 195 trees are required to be replaced, and 118 trees may be counted towards replacement, which leaves 77 trees to be paid into the fund at \$400 per tree.**

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES **October 16, 2025, Regular Meeting**

MOTION by Brickner, support by Stimson, to approve the October 16, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes as submitted.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

COMMISSIONER/STAFF COMMENTS

Commissioner Brickner asked staff to follow up regarding an outdated Road Commission sign on Drake Road just north of Old Homestead.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting ended at 8:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen Aspinall,
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem