

FINAL
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, April 7, 2025
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

A. CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Parel called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

ROLL CALL: Present:

Brian Parel, Chairperson
Joe Loskill, Secretary
Bill McKeever
George Weber
Brady Phillips
Caitlin Bearer

Absent:

Brian Winkler, Vice Chairperson (excused)

Also Present:

Dave Campbell, Township Planning Director
Paula Lankford, Senior Planner
Debbie Watson, DDA Director
Mark Gall, Township Fire Marshal

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Parel – Tonight’s plan for the agenda is to start with Item PPU17-0001, Five & Main PUD Design & Sign Guidelines. Next on the docket, we will look at Dort Financial Credit Union. The third item will be Midtown on Haggerty.

Dave Campbell – I think discussing the signage and design guidelines for Five & Main then logically leads into the discussion for Dort Financial.

MOTION by Loskill, supported by Phillips, to approve the Planning Commission Regular Meeting Agenda of April 7, 2025, as modified. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Weber, supported by Loskill, to approve the Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2025, as written. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

D. UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES

Debbie Watson – Downtown Development Authority

- The last DDA meeting was held on March 18th. It was brief and fairly routine.
- We learned that Sgt. Matt Leggatt of the OCSO attended leadership training recently and he is pursuing the rank of Lieutenant.
- Randy Thomas delivered his Insite Commercial report, and he noted that Bruce Aikens will be attending the April meetings of both the Township Board and the DDA to provide updates.
- Dave Campbell updated the Board on Dort Financial, which we will see here again this evening. Dave explained the challenges and emphasized the need for design standards and guidelines for Five & Main.
- Supervisor Gray reported that a work group is looking into the Dark Store loophole which results in substantial reductions to property tax assessments for big box stores and other developments. I think George Weber may be able to elaborate further on that topic.
- Engineer, Jason Mayer, updated the Board on the progress with utilities at LaFontaine and Five & Main.

- Jose Mirkin of the Public Relations Committee reported that the Walled Lake Schools Art Exhibit will take place at the Township Library May 9th to May 18th this year, which is one week earlier than usual.
- Supervisor Gray reminded everyone to mark their calendars for Saturday, June 14th for the Bicentennial celebration in the Commerce Village.
- And that concludes my summary.

George Weber – Township Board of Trustees

- The last Trustees meeting was on March 11th.
- I might say it was the lightest agenda in my tenure. We were out within an hour.
- A couple of items to note.
- We approved to move forward with permits for Metro Net and Crown Castle, who are the owners of two of the cell phone towers within the Township.
- We have begun looking at an RFI for our banking needs. Presently the majority of our funds are held between the County and PNC bank. We're looking at what makes the most from a service and financial sense for the Township.
- Finally, we approved the purchase of a new ambulance. It's about \$450,000 to buy a fully equipped ambulance, so we had a little bit of sticker shock with that, but as we're moving to full advanced life support within all of the Township fire stations, this new rig was sorely needed.

Bill McKeever – Zoning Board of Appeals

- We actually did have a meeting.
- It was just to take care of some housekeeping issues.

Dave Campbell noted that the Commissioners had received the standard activity reports from the Building Department.

E. PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON MATTERS FOR WHICH THERE IS NO PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULED

Chairperson Parel opened to Public Discussion on matters for which there is no public hearing scheduled.

Abbie Burgess, Carey Road – Today, I'd like to speak about the potential PUD proposed for the property at Commerce and Carey Road. It has been shared at previous Commission meetings that the developer who owns this property may propose a potential rezoning.

I am aware that this proposal has not been presented to the Commission. However, I wanted to share proactively in order to ensure that our concerns are considered. I have a petition here, signed by myself and over 100 other residents who border the property, voicing our opposition of the PUD and to altering this property to anything other than an R-1A zoning, which it currently is.

Residents have shared several reasons as to why they are opposed to changing this property from its current R-1A zoning. These reasons include traffic. We are aware that we do not own our roads, and we do appreciate your advocacy on our part to the Road Commission. However, we are asking that you help us limit the amount of cars on our road. More houses lead to more cars. We already deal with heavy pass-through traffic, and we ask that you do not exacerbate this issue by building higher density housing.

We are also aware that the developer has proposed alterations to the intersection at Commerce and Carey as a potential public benefit to offset the PUD. However, this will do nothing to lessen the amount of cars, and the only public benefit that will actually benefit residents that are impacted by this development would be keeping it as an R-1A and lessening the amount of cars on our roads.

Another concern is rural aesthetic and wildlife. Many comments from the concerned residents state that they moved to Commerce for the rural aesthetics, the mature trees and the wildlife. R-1A is defined by Commerce Township as Rural Residential. Many stated that they would move if the rural area was interrupted by something other than an R-1A. Additional concerns about impact on wildlife include the destruction of habitat, which will lead wildlife into our roads, causing more traffic disturbances, as well as the removal of large areas of porous earth which will lead to further flooding and drainage issues.

An additional concern was property values. Residents have shared their concern about the negative impact that high density housing could have on their property values. We are aware that this potential PUD has not been proposed yet. However, we wanted to make it clear that residents impacted by this development are opposed to any changes to the current R-1A zoning. We do appreciate your efforts in previous years to maintain the properties rural aesthetic, and we are aware that we cannot stop the property from being developed. However, we are asking for the least disruption to the rural area, and that no additional cars are added to our roads. This can be achieved by keeping the property as an R-1A. Thank you.

Chairperson Parel – Dave, what do we know about that?

Dave Campbell – It is correct that a developer owns that property and has owned it for decades I believe, probably at least 20 years. It's a 40-acre parcel on the northeast corner of Commerce and Carey Roads. Abbie is correct that it is zoned R-1A. We have had a few meetings over the years with the developer to look at concepts for what they may want to do with the property. We did have a meeting within the last couple months. I mentioned it as part of my report at the end of one of our Planning Commission meetings. Nothing has been formally proposed yet. The developer is looking for their options, and what residential developers are always looking at is how many units are they going to be able to achieve with the development they propose.

A PUD has been something they have discussed. A Conditional Rezoning has been discussed. As the Planning Commission is aware, and as we're going to discuss here tonight, recognizable public benefit is always part of the PUD process, and the developer has looked at the potential for upgrading the intersection of Commerce and Carey, which has a goofy alignment right now. These are ideas at this point and again, nothing formal has been submitted and nothing has come before the Planning Commission.

If the developer were to formally apply for a PUD, a rezoning or a site plan, it would have to come before the Planning Commission. If it is a rezoning or PUD, there would have to be a public hearing, and it would also have to go to the Township Board. So, whatever the developer ultimately proposes, there is going to be a process to it, and I'm confident that the neighbors who live around that property are going to be keeping themselves informed of where we are in that process.

Chairperson Parel – Okay. We appreciate it and thank you for your comments. We will take them into consideration.

Chairperson Parel closed Public Discussion on matters for which there is no public hearing scheduled.

Chairperson Parel – With that, we will move onto our new first item on the agenda, which is PPU17-0001.

ITEM I.1. PPU17-0001 – FIVE & MAIN PUD DESIGN & SIGN GUIDELINES

Dave Campbell – I appreciate that the Planning Commission adjusted the agenda to have this item go first. As I mentioned earlier, I think it is a proper lead-in for the Dort Financial Credit Union site plan within the Five & Main development.

The Planning Commission remembers the March meeting where Dort proposed a site plan on Unit 1 within Five & Main, but the Commissioners were struggling to determine how to best review that plan in the absence of the design and sign guidelines for Five & Main. The Five & Main development team most recently amended the PUD for the development in 2023, and when the Planning Commission and the Township Board approved that amendment back in 2023, it was approved conditional upon receipt of these design and sign guidelines.

So, the Planning Commission did not take any action on Dort Financial at the March 3rd Planning Commission meeting. What has happened between that meeting and this evening is that the Five & Main team provided to the Township a preliminary draft of the sign guidelines and the design guidelines.

The sign guidelines I would say are much further along and more fully developed, and we can talk more about those. What I think is key within those sign guidelines is there is a signage plan that shows which sites within the Five & Main development would be allowed to have freestanding signs, and for the wall signs, how many wall signs the various buildings would be permitted. It is based primarily on the road exposure that those buildings are going to have. I can pull up that signage plan in a moment.

With the design guidelines for now, it was limited to the shared amenities; the benches, the light poles, parking lot lights, pedestrian lights, trash receptacles, bike racks, etc.

That was relevant to Dort because Dort is going to have pedestrian scale lighting and parking lot lighting, along with a bench and bike rack. So, prior to the Planning Commission being in a position to take action on Dort, it makes sense first for the Planning Commission to agree on the amenities plan for all of Five & Main, so that then the Planning Commission could take the logical step of looking at Dort, knowing that we have agreed upon what the amenities plan is for all of Five & Main.

With the sign guidelines, I'm going to pull up the aforementioned signage plan and zoom in. We'll look at it overall first, and then we can look at it more in the context of Dort Financial. There is a color coding system with this signage plan, and this would be an exhibit to the overall sign guidelines.

What is shown here is where wall signs are permitted for the various buildings within Five & Main. As the Planning Commission is well aware, the Dort site is down here toward the southeast corner. So, this shows where wall signs are permitted, who is allowed to have freestanding signs, how many of them, and where they will be. And these are what we call the landmark signs for the overall development, which are already approved as part of the PUD process.

With freestanding signs, the signage plan for all Five & Main proposals, that includes Dort Financial, the hotel located at the roundabout of Martin Parkway and Library Drive, and for this 12,000 square foot user which is potentially a restaurant. Also, out here along Pontiac Trail, at the one of the boulevard driveways, there would be an anchor tenant sign, so this would be for a larger anchor tenant that would want to have their presence out onto Pontiac Trail. And then the two landmark signs; one is located at the signalized intersection of Pontiac Trail, Walnut Lake Road and Pinewood Avenue, and the other would be at the northeast corner of the big roundabout at Martin Parkway and Pontiac Trail.

Within the interior, these dashed red lines are meant to indicate where wall signs would be permitted. What the signage plan speaks to is one sign, per tenant, per façade. So, if you are a tenant at a corner, or for example, if you can see this tenant at the end cap of the multi-tenant building down here, they would be allowed to have two, or as many as three signs because they have three facades. That's spoken to in the sign guidelines. Then if you look at some of these out-parcel tenants, of which Dort Financial is one, they're showing the signs that they would be permitted, and where on the building's façade they would be permitted.

If we zoom in on Dort, which we will talk about more later in the meeting, what's proposed is for Dort to be permitted a wall sign on the south, north and west sides of their building. If you were to zoom in on this building for example, same thing, south, east and the north side of the building.

Within the design guidelines themselves, there's some pretty specific language about the types of signs that are permitted. They are meant to be high-quality signs. There are outright prohibitions of some of the lower quality signs like box signs, panel signs and raceway signs. There's also a sliding scale for the size of the signs, and I'll zoom in on that sliding scale. It's based on the gross leasable area of each tenant space. So, depending on how big your space is, that dictates how large your sign can be. With respect to freestanding signs, there are dimensional requirements for how tall and how big. When we do get to the Dort Financial site plan, you'll see that they're freestanding monument sign complies with those dimensional standards that would apply to all of the free standing signs within Five & Main. There's some specificity in terms of the types of signs that are permitted, which as I mentioned are meant to be high-quality signs befitting of the expectations for the quality of all of Five & Main. I also mentioned the prohibition on certain types of signs which would be on this page in the sign guidelines.

I think there's a recognition by both the Township and the Five & Main development team that the sign guidelines will very likely evolve as the project evolves, so the intent here was to get some sign guidelines in place for the purpose of being able to take action on Dort. I think what's in the sign guidelines that you have this evening is sufficient for the Planning Commission to be in a position to take action on Dort, and particularly the wall signs and the freestanding sign that are proposed for Dort.

If we look at the amenities plan, as I mentioned, there's some detail of the pedestrian scale lights, the parking lot lights, bike racks, benches, and all of them are meant to be matching material and matching color. In the case of Dort's site plan, they're proposing that bench, that bike rack and those lights. So, if the Planning Commission is agreeable to this amenities plan, then they would be in a position to better consider Dort's site plan, knowing that these are the light fixtures, and the bike rack proposed for the Dort site plan that you'll see here in a moment.

From a procedural standpoint, what I think makes sense for both the Five & Main team, the Dort team and the Township is, if the Planning Commission is prepared to do so, to take action on the signage plan, and take action on this amenities plan. Then, if that is the Planning Commission's option, then lead into consideration of the revisions to the site plan for Dort Financial. There is a good bit of information contained in here and particularly in the signage plan. I will do my best to answer any question the Planning Commission might have. I know the Five & Main team is here to speak on their own behalf if there's any questions for them.

Bruce Aikens, Robert B. Aikens & Associates, LLC, 350 North Old Woodward Ave, Ste. 300, Birmingham, MI, was present along with the Five & Main team; Jim Fielder, Director of Operations, Paul DeSchepper, Director of Construction; and Sue Neumann of JPRA Architects.

Chairperson Parel – I know we've gone back and forth. Do you want to speak on this?

Jim Fielder – We don't really have anything to add. If you have any questions, we're happy to answer them. Just understand that we hope that this will evolve as time goes on, only because we hope that the architects and designers will improve the signage and those types of things that they submit to us, and we'd like to be able to have the flexibility to be able to deal with that going forward, because it will give us a better project for all of us.

Chairperson Parel – That's makes perfect sense.

Dave Campbell – Mr. Fielder, while you're there, do we agree that the intent is when the next commercial site plan emerges, which we think is going to be the shoppette, is that going to be the trigger point for having design guidelines that apply to building materials, architecture and those ...

Jim Fielder – Absolutely, because that is actually going to be one of the more difficult ones to design. It's close to the road and you've got a lot of moving parts, and a lot of visibility in terms of the facades of the building.

Chairperson Parel – Dave, from a perspective of cadence here, we are looking for potentially two approvals on this one; one for the amenities, and one for the signs?

Dave Campbell – That's correct, and if the Planning Commission chooses to take advantage of them, the Planning Department offered recommended motion language for both; one motion for signs, one motion for the design guidelines, which for the moment are focused on the amenities.

Commission Comments:

McKeever – I have no issues.

Weber – No issues. I like it.

Loskill – My only comment is that I noticed there are some small tenants who could have a maximum of three sides and they're probably looking at having three signs. I think we should take a look at some of the smaller tenants and try to limit the amount of signage that is there so we don't get a proliferation of signs that are duplicates.

Chairperson Parel – I know we talked about it last time. You're referring to some of the buildings that have three signs, for instance Dort.

Loskill – Well, on the left hand side of the shoppette; the smallest tenant at the end potentially has signs on the north, west and south sides.

Jim Fielder – Excuse me, that was changed. It's a much larger tenant now.

Loskill – I'm just saying, for small tenants I don't want to have them with a ton of signs on a small space.

Jim Fielder – I know, you're absolutely right.

Chairperson Parel – Right, we don't want to set that precedent. I understand and agree.

Loskill – Because if the small guys get three signs, then everybody is going to want four signs.

Chairperson Parel – I think we got through what we needed to with Dort's signage.

Weber – I think Jim has handled it. It doesn't speak to the number, but it speaks to the square footage that would be allowed.

Chairperson Parel – And on that chart, Dave, I didn't dive into the numbers, the sliding scale that you referred to. Does that align with our signage codes for the Township? Are you happy with this and does it seem reasonable from a building perspective?

Dave Campbell – I think those are reasonable numbers, yes.

Loskill – Are those gross square footages or individual sign square footages?

Dave Campbell – It's based on leasable area.

Loskill – For example, if the 10,000 square foot plus tenant comes in, he gets 65 square feet. If he has three sides, is that three 65-square foot signs, or three signs that total up to 65 square feet?

Dave Campbell – I think I posed that question to Mr. Fielder and he replied in his email today. So, what would be the intent? If you had three frontages and 10,000 square feet, do you get three 65-square foot signs?

Jim Fielder – It would be three 65-square foot signs.

Dave Campbell – It's also notable that there is a cap in this paragraph; *no more than 10% of the total storefront, and no more than 33% of the width of your storefront.*

Jim Fielder – So even though you have those signs, we would require them to be smaller.

Chairperson Parel – Do we still agree that this is within reasonable expectations for the Township?

Dave Campbell – My opinion is that these are reasonable.

Chairperson Parel – I appreciate it.

Phillips – No comments.

Bearer – No comments.

Chairperson Parel – I'm good, if somebody would be so kind to make the motions. I'm assuming the petitioner and developer are okay with the recommended language as proposed here. You got this?

Jim Fielder – Yes.

Chairperson Parel – Okay.

MOTION by Weber, supported by McKeever, to approve Item PPU17-0001, the Sign Guidelines, as submitted. Move to approve the preliminary Tenant Sign Criteria developed by Robert B. Aikens & Associates for the Five & Main mixed-use planned unit development (PPU #23-01), consistent with the conditions of approval of the 2nd Amended & Restated Five & Main PUD approved by the Commerce Township Planning Commission and Board of Trustees during their respective meetings of July 10, 2023 and August 8, 2023 whereby the Township required “highly-developed Sign Guidelines” for Five & Main.

The Planning Commission bases their approval on the following findings:

1. The Tenant Sign Criteria are designed to be flexible to allow for advancements in style and creativity, with an expectation that the Sign Criteria may be updated over the life of Five & Main in an effort to create & maintain a “high quality, best-of-class destination lifestyle center” as described in the development agreement;
2. The Tenant Sign Criteria are consistent with the signage proposed for Dort Financial Credit Union, relative to both their three proposed wall signs and one freestanding sign, recognizing that Dort Financial would be the first commercial/non-residential site developed within Five & Main;
3. The Tenant Sign Criteria purposefully provide different standards for the freestanding buildings and/or standalone sites (aka outlots) within Five & Main in comparison to the in-line buildings within the development's interior core, while maintaining a consistent high-quality vision for signage throughout the entire Five & Main development;
4. The Tenant Sign Criteria are consistent with the goals and intent of the Commerce Township Master Plan and the Commerce Township Zoning Ordinance, recognizing that they purposefully deviate from the standards within Article 30 (Signs) of the Zoning Ordinance.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION by Weber, supported by Loskill, to approve Item PPU17-0001, the preliminary Design Guidelines, aka Amenities Plan, as submitted.

Move to approve the Amenities Plan developed by Robert B. Aikens & Associates for the Five & Main mixed-use planned unit development (PPU #23-01), consistent with the conditions of approval of the 2nd Amended & Restated Five & Main PUD approved by the Commerce Township Planning Commission and Board of Trustees during their respective meetings of July 10, 2023 and August 8, 2023 whereby the Township required “highly-developed Design Guidelines” for Five & Main.

The Planning Commission bases their approval on the following findings:

1. The Amenities Plan shall serve temporarily as a preliminary version of the overall Design Guidelines for Five & Main in an effort to facilitate Planning Commission action on the PUD site plan for Dort Financial Credit Union;
2. The amenities proposed in the Amenities Plan are of a style and quality befitting the expectations for Five & Main;
3. The Five & Main development team has committed to submitting highly-developed Design Guidelines prior to submittal of the next PUD site plan, which is presumed to be the shoppette just west of the Dort Financial site;
4. The Five & Main development team would be well-advised to work with the Township’s Planning Department and members of the Planning Commission as the Design Guidelines evolve in an effort to ensure that the Planning Commission’s approval of future PUD site plans within Five & Main (including the shoppette) will be a smooth and efficient process;
5. Every reasonable effort should be made by the Five & Main development team in their development of the Design Guidelines to address the Township’s concerns with the use of EIFS in commercial applications.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Jim Fielder – Thank you.

Chairperson Parel – Thank you guys. Thank you for your patience and working with us. I think we got a good result with that.

F. TABLED ITEMS

ITEM F1. PSP25-01 – DORT FINANCIAL CREDIT UNION – TABLED FROM MARCH 3, 2025

Dort Financial Credit Union of Grand Blanc MI is requesting PUD site plan approval to construct a new credit union located on the northwest corner of Pinewood Avenue and Pontiac Trail upon Unit 1 of Phase 1 of the Five & Main PUD. PIN# 17-24-402-001

MOTION by Loskill, supported by Phillips, to remove item PSP25-01 from the table.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Dave Campbell – So in terms of the overall site plan for Dort Financial Credit Union that the Planning Commission spent a lot of time discussing at our March 3rd meeting, not a lot from the site plan itself has changed. The changes that have been made are things that the Planning Commission was seeking as part of that discussion. The placement of the building, the placement of the drive-through, the circulation and parking remains mostly unchanged. One of the key revisions that we discussed at the last meeting was with the frontage sidewalk along Pontiac Trail, providing this connection point from that frontage sidewalk into the proposed Dort Financial site and having it align with the

sidewalk along the west side of the building. And then, also having this sidewalk stub along the west property line which would eventually lead pedestrians westward into what we think will soon be proposed as the shoppette. So, providing some better internal circulation for nonmotorized within the Dort site, and to the neighboring properties. Otherwise, the overall layout and circulation plan remains unchanged. The key revision, and the basis for a lot of this discussion back in March, is the building elevations. What's before you are the revised building elevations from Dort Financial which were intended to address most if not all of the concerns that were brought up from the Planning Commission back in March. You'll note that the revised elevations have removed all of the EIFS material from all sides of the building, including along the drive-through canopy. This is the front of the building, and this is the rear of the building, although it is the side that will be most prominent from Pontiac Trail. All of the EIFS has been removed from this upper portion of the building from the drive-through canopy, and perhaps most prominently from what we're calling the tower over Dort's primary entrance. The EIFS has been replaced with a combination of brick or decorative block, the metal panels and the wood material that I'm going to guess is a composite material rather than natural wood. Shannon, the architect, will correct me if I'm wrong. I know Shannon has a presentation that she would like to make on her own behalf as well.

The Planning Commission, during that meeting in March and in some meetings since, had plenty of discussions with the Dort team and with the Five & Main team, and I think the revisions that you have before you have done a pretty terrific job in addressing those concerns.

We talked a lot at the March meeting about signage and having signs on three of the four sides of the proposed Dort building. This sign here on the south side, these signs on the north and on the west side of the building over the entrance. Based on the Planning Commission's acceptance of the signage plan that we just saw a moment ago, this Dort site plan would be consistent with that signage plan.

The concern that came up in March that I don't think needs to be a concern tonight is that because we have that signage plan, we don't have to assume that Dort would set a precedent for every other future commercial user within Five & Main, that every user is then entitled to three wall signs, every user is entitled to a freestanding sign. That was part of the Planning Commission's concern back in March. Now that we have the signage plan that establishes where wall signs are permitted, where freestanding signs are permitted, then the concern of setting a precedent no longer needs to be a concern. Otherwise, as I mentioned, the landscape plan is relatively unchanged. I think they had to move a couple of trees and shrubs around to make space for those sidewalk connections that I mentioned earlier, but otherwise the plan is very comparable to what the Planning Commission saw last month. They have provided, as we have up on the screen now, the lighting fixtures which are consistent with the amenities plan that the Planning Commission just saw.

So, I think given the submittal and the approval of the signage plan and of the amenities plan, the Planning Commission should be in a better position now to take action on Dort Financial if you're prepared to do so. With that, I'll see if there are any questions for me. Otherwise, as I mentioned, I know Shannon, the architect for Dort Financial, has a presentation she'd like to go through.

Shannon White, Architect of Funchitecture, 111 East Court St, Ste 3D, Flint, MI, was present, along with Andy Adrianse, DFCU Director of Facilities, 9048 Holly Road, Grand Blanc, MI. And, as mentioned above, the Five & Main team was also present.

Shannon White – Good evening. Thanks for having us back. I don't have a ton to cover, other than what Dave has just highlighted. The site orientation obviously has changed from this original plan, but that's the site location that we're talking about. The key topics again are this new connection of sidewalk to the Pontiac Trail connector, and then this little piece that is connecting over to the shoppette that is proposed next.

We did modify a little bit of the landscape and trees to accommodate this area. I think we went through dumpster locations, drive-through aisles, tiered landscaping, and so on and so forth. I won't go through that again, but yellow indicates the pathways and pedestrian areas.

This is the internal floor plan, the external renderings which Dave just covered, the exterior elevations calling out all of the materials which should have been in your packet, and then these were the material pallets. The only things that are new and different are the composite materials, and then the metal panels, which are the replacement for any areas that were EIFS, per your request.

Then again, you've seen some of this in the signage and amenities guidelines, but again, we're using the same bike rack that the rest of the development will use. We have modified the monument sign to meet the signage guidelines that you have just approved. We also had to shrink all of these signs that are now located on the wood in order to meet the new signage guidelines, and that has all been calculated in terms of square footage or to meet the sliding scale that Dave has already walked us through. So that was it.

Chairperson Parel – Thank you.

Shannon White – A lot of it you have already seen. The light fixtures are the same. The parking lot lights are the same as what have now been approved for the development guidelines. We appreciate your consideration.

Dave Campbell – I should mention, in the context of sidewalks, one of the things that is still very much in flux is this new intersection of Walnut Lake, Pontiac Trail and Pinewood Avenue. So, the Road Commission as we speak is working on the design for the traffic signal at that intersection, which is sorely needed and probably has been since they opened Walmart.

It is more complicated than any of us would wish for a new traffic signal to be installed at an existing intersection, because of all the potential conflicts for that signal, particularly at this northwest corner. The Road Commission is going to have to put a pole at the corner to support this new traffic signal. That pole is going to have a foundation that goes however many feet into the ground, and the conflicts there include a Commerce Township water main, but also a big conduit for DTE. As I said in my review letter, the Road Commission is having to thread the needle between what DTE, and the Township has underground for the foundation for the traffic signal. Why that's relevant is that it dictates where this sidewalk crossing is going to be for Dort Financial; the sidewalk that will go across Pinewood Avenue. And once this side on the east side of Pinewood develops, then this sidewalk will connect with the existing sidewalk in front of Walmart.

So, the actual landing spot of this sidewalk is still to be determined based on what the Road Commission comes back with, which depends on what DTE will and won't allow. Because that is still in flux, there is some discussion in our letter about possible extension of the sidewalk up the west side of Pinewood. Given that there are still so many unknowns here, I think it's fair to defer on that discussion to another day. Within

the Planning Department's review letter, one of the potential conditions of allowances for potential future sidewalk across Dort Financial's frontages of Pinewood and Main Street; Pinewood being north to south road, and Main Street being the east to west. My suggestion is that we defer on those for now until we have a better sense from the Road Commission of the alignment of this new traffic signal that we hope is up and running by the fall of this year. And in lieu of those, as mentioned, we do have the connections from the frontage sidewalk into Dort, and across Dort into what we think is going to be the shoppette site.

Chairperson Parel – Perfect, thank you.

Commission Comments:

Bearer – No questions, but I like this look a lot better than the original, and I commend you for how quickly that all came together. Thank you.

Phillips – No comments other than I appreciate that you took our input into consideration,

Loskill – I had one question and I was looking for it in our packet. What you just showed us with the sign section shows a can letter with a plastic face, which is prohibited in the sign design guidelines for Five & Main. What is your proposed sign going to be?

Dave Campbell – Is the question for the freestanding sign, the wall sign, or both?

Loskill – The wall signs. The sign details on the left hand side of that look like a channel letter.

Andy Adrianse – Yes, that is an illuminated remote channel letter.

Loskill – Face illuminated channel letter?

Andy Adrianse – Yes.

Loskill – Which again is specifically prohibited by the design guidelines.

Dave Campbell – I know the panel sign is prohibited. We can look at that. One of the conditions that the Planning Department is recommending, if the Planning Commission is prepared to take action on the site plan for Dort Financial, is that both the Planning Department and the landlord have an opportunity to look at the final signage plan and ensure that it complies with the sign guidelines and some of these finer details.

Loskill – Yes, it's in the sign guidelines, under prohibited signage, and it says; *standard trim cap retainers on individual sign letters*, which is exactly what this would be.

Dave Campbell – I'll get to that.

Weber – Is it individual sign letters?

Loskill – Yes.

Dave Campbell – Jim, you need page numbers on this.

Loskill – I didn't see that sign section until just now.

Dave Campbell – If the Planning Commission is willing, I think this is something that we can look at administratively, both with Dort and the Five & Main team, to ensure that the signs being proposed for Dort are compliant with these sign guidelines, that the Planning Commission just approved.

Chairperson Parel – Are you good with that?

Loskill – Yes.

Dave Campbell – That is already provided for in the recommended motion language.

Chairperson Parel – Thanks. George?

Weber – Same as everybody else. I think it's a great looking building and I appreciate all the work you put into it.

McKeever – I agree.

Chairperson Parel – Thank you, sir. Dave, I just have one quick question. The dumpster enclosure on the southwest corner of the site; what does the screening look like there?

Dave Campbell – On the landscape plan, they have a pretty significant screening plan around that dumpster. I mentioned earlier, when they had to include the sidewalk connection, I think that tree had to get moved over. The other thing to keep in mind, if you look at the elevations, is this dumpster sits down in a valley relative to Pontiac Trail.

Chairperson Parel – So we feel pretty confident that it's going to be well screened?

Dave Campbell – Given that this site has exposure from three roads, it would be challenging to find a location that's not somehow along a roadway. With the lower elevation and the landscaping around it, I think it's as well screened as you could ask.

Shannon White – It's also the smallest size commercial dumpster you can get, which is much shorter than an average dumpster.

Chairperson Parel – That makes sense for a credit union. Does anyone care to make a motion, assuming there are no other questions or comments?

Dave Campbell – If someone is prepared to do so, my recommendation would be, within the Planning Department's motion language, you may want to eliminate condition #2.c., because that speaks to the sidewalks. As I said, I think we're still at the mercy of the Road Commission with what we can do there.

Chairperson Parel – Do we have any issue with just doing the abbreviated version of the motion? The petitioners have already read this and should be comfortable with it.

Shannon White – Yes.

MOTION by Phillips, supported by McKeever, to approve Item PSP25-01, the request by Dort Financial Credit Union for PUD site plan approval to construct a new credit union located on the northwest corner of Pinewood Avenue and Pontiac Trail upon Unit 1 of Phase 1 of the Five & Main PUD. PIN# 17-24-402-001

Move to approve PSP#25-01, a PUD site plan for Dort Financial Credit Union, a 3,200 sq ft credit union with drive-through to be located at 3227 Main Street, upon Unit 1 of Phase 1 of the Five & Main Planned Unit Development, the second amendment to which was approved by the Commerce Township Board on August 8, 2023.

The Planning Commission's approval is based upon the following findings:

1. The PUD site plan for Dort Financial Credit Union is consistent with the development plan approved as part of the second amended PUD agreement for Five & Main;
2. The sequencing plan submitted as part of the PUD site plan confirms for The Springs at Five & Main continues to represent a commitment of shared improvements (private roads, infrastructure, traffic signal, etc.) necessary for Dort Financial to operate safely and successfully without the need for any additional shared improvements or extensions thereof;
3. The building materials proposed are of a quality and an aesthetic consistent with the best-in-class expectations for Five & Main;
4. The PUD site plan demonstrates consistency with the Five & Main sign guidelines and design guidelines/amenities plan approved by the Planning Commission;
5. The PUD site plan complies with the applicable standards of Articles 35 and 38 of the Commerce Township Zoning Ordinance;

The Planning Commission's PUD site plan approval of Dort Financial Credit Union is subject to the following conditions:

1. Review and approval of engineered construction plans by the Township Engineer, Fire Marshal, Building Department, and the applicable departments of Oakland County and the State of Michigan;
2. Administrative review and approval of a revised PUD site plan that addresses the comments of the Planning Commission, including:
 - a. A Sign Permit for Dort Financials sign plan to be reviewed and approved by the Planning & Building Departments to confirm consistency with the approved sign guidelines for Five & Main, subsequent to approval by Aikens & Associates;
 - b. The final location and design of the frontage sidewalk along Pontiac Trail to be consistent with the design of the traffic signal at Pontiac Trail, Walnut Lake Road, and Pinewood Avenue;
 - c. *(strike #2.c. as discussed herein)*
 - d. Revisions to the landscape plan as directed by the Planning Commission;
3. Continental Properties and Robert B. Aikens & Associates to meet all necessary requirements of the RCOC relative to the Participation Agreement and its design and installation schedule for the new Pontiac Trail traffic signal, as well as the design of the private approach to what would become a four-legged signalized intersection.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

G. OLD BUSINESS

None.

H. SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

I. NEW BUSINESS

>> Note: Item I.1. was moved up on the agenda

ITEM I.2. PPU20-02 – MIDTOWN ON HAGGERTY – PUD AMENDMENT

Schafer Development of Farmington Hills MI is requesting approval for a first amendment to the approved “Midtown on Haggerty” Planned Unit Development (PUD) to eliminate the residential apartment component of the development and replace it with a new Kroger store and fuel center located at 155, 255, 279, & 297 Haggerty Road. PIN#’s 17-36-400-035, 17-36-400-036, 17-36-400-037, & 17-36-400-038

Dave Campbell – So, this is another one where the Planning Commission has gone through this in quite a lot of detail in prior meetings. In this case, all the way back to the January meeting when we had a public hearing for the amendment to Midtown on Haggerty, and even in meetings prior to that when it was presented as a concept. Just as a quick reminder, this is near the northwest corner of Haggerty and 14 Mile Road. What had been approved as a PUD back in 2020 was three commercial buildings out along the Haggerty Road frontage. Those buildings have since been built and are mostly occupied.

What was proposed on the back half of the property was residential apartments. I think the total was 187 apartments across either seven or nine buildings. That was what got approved back in 2020. The apartments never came to fruition and what has since been proposed in lieu of those apartments is a new Kroger store with a fuel center. To bring that to fruition, the PUD had to be amended. And, as we’ve been discussing since at least January, when you propose a PUD, or an amendment to a PUD, what has to be offered by the developer is an offer of recognizable public benefits in proportion to the deviations from the zoning ordinance being sought.

This Planning Commission has had three or four meetings worth of conversations with the development team over what those recognizable public benefits could be and should be. The Planning Commission actually took action on the prior iteration of this PUD amendment at your meeting on March 3rd, and unanimously recommended denial of the amendment to the Midtown on Haggerty PUD. That recommendation of denial was based in large part on the offer of recognizable public benefits.

So, what the developer then had an option to do was proceed to the Township Board for the Board’s consideration with a recommendation to deny from the Planning Commission. The development team did not want to proceed to the Board with a recommendation to deny from the Planning Commission, and instead wanted to take the rest of the month of March to reevaluate, reassess and revise their PUD amendment, and particularly the offer of recognizable public benefits, and get it back in front of the Planning Commission at this meeting this evening.

So, that is where we are. I’ll pull up the aerial as it is probably the easiest way to tell some of the story. The crux of the offer of recognizable public benefits was physical improvements, and then also had to do with the tax assessment and the potential to appeal the tax assessment, both for the proposed store and for the existing Kroger store

at 14 Mile and Haggerty that would be vacated and repurposed with another user. The sidewalks that had been proposed back in March were; a connection across the frontage of the Newberry Square Shopping Center, which is the L-shaped one, and this Community Choice Credit Union right at the hard corner; 600 and something feet of sidewalk along the west side of Haggerty, and another 600 and something feet of sidewalk along the north side of 14 Mile to get the sidewalk just west of the existing driveway into Newberry Square; and then a third section of sidewalk from the east side of M-5, as far eastward as the west side of Loop Rd.

The revised PUD offer takes away the offer of the sidewalk along the west side of Haggerty Road. What's being proposed is the two sections along the north side of 14 Mile, again from Haggerty to just west of the driveway, and from M-5 to just west of Loop Road. But what's then being offered in lieu of that sidewalk segment is what generated a whole lot of conversations with the Township, which is the potential to appeal the valuation and the tax assessment for the proposed new Kroger store. So, what Kroger has agreed to is that within the first five years of the store's existence, they will only have the option to appeal the store's assessment within the first window, from when they receive their initial assessment from the Oakland County Equalization Department, until May 31st of that calendar year. After that, they would not appeal their tax assessment for the first five years of the store's existence, and they had put a floor on what the appeal would be as low as.

Back in March, that floor was \$3 million. They have since raised that floor to \$4.64 million, and that number is based on the pre-assessment that the Township got from Oakland County Equalization, who said, based on the information we have, this Kroger store will be worth \$9.28 million, which means the taxable value will be \$4.64 million. Kroger said, we will not appeal our assessment below that floor of \$4.64 million for the first five years of the store's existence. That is considered part of the totality of the offer of recognizable public benefits; the Township knowing that for at least the first five years of the store's existence, that it can only be appealed as low as that floor, and only within the first window of receipt of their initial assessment from the County.

The other language that the Planning Commission saw in March and in February with respect to the potential to appeal the existing store, and the potential users within the existing store that would be vacated, that language is all unchanged, so I'm not going to go through that in any detail unless there are questions. The significant changes are the changes to the offer relative to sidewalks, and to the offer relative to the potential to appeal the assessment of the proposed store.

I know Spencer Schafer, who is leading the Schafer development team on this one, would like to make a presentation to the Planning Commission on his own behalf. He will hopefully focus on just what's changed since the March meeting. So, unless there are any questions for me, I would invite Spencer to come up and give that presentation.

Chairperson Parel – Thank you, Dave. Welcome again, Spencer.

Spencer Schafer, of Schafer Development, 31400 Northwestern Hwy, Suite H, Farmington Hills, MI 48334, was present to address the request, along with his team.

Spencer Schafer – Thank you. So, here again for Midtown on Haggerty, the fourth iteration. Dave did a good job offering an encyclopedic summary of where we stand today. I'm really just going to highlight the two changes again, very briefly, and answer any questions that you may have.

So, by now, everybody is familiar with what the four recognizable public benefits are. I'm going to skip the restrictions on the existing store. A lot of these changes occurred back in February, and I know we had a chance to explain them then, and in March. And then we look at our second public benefit which is the sidewalk extension. The only thing that has changed is that we've removed that Haggerty Road extension in exchange for the more robust public benefit on the tax item. And you know, we are working with-

Dave Campbell – Spencer? I'm sorry. Since I forgot to, can you speak a little bit within the context of sidewalks of the easements?

Spencer Schafer – Yes.

Dave Campbell – Okay, thank you.

Spencer Schafer – As Dave stated, Option #2 and Option #5 of the sidewalk extensions; that's from the intersection of Haggerty Road and 14 Mile to the west side of the Kroger entrance, and then from the intersection of M-5 and Haggerty Road to the west side of Loop Road. Actually, more specifically, if Dave zooms in ... We're actually terminating the sidewalk right there, which is the most logical area because it does have pedestrian signaling that would allow people to move through. We don't think it makes sense to bring this up to Loop Road without having that future sidewalk infrastructure and such in place.

So, what we are providing to the Township is an easement. The area that's highlighted here, where the wooded area is predominantly, that's where we are not extending the sidewalk. We are going to draft an easement, and we have worked on some general parameters with Dave that have been included in the PUD agreement. But we will provide easements across this area; it's technically three properties. It's a small portion of the Kroger property, the Fetter properties right now, which will be purchased by Kroger, and then there's actually a super small area that's owned by Haggerty Development, Mickey Shapiro and James Galbraith, and we do a lot with the folks over there. They've said that they'd work with us on any easement language we would need to create.

Also too, just to recap and rehash again, we have spoken with Community Choice Credit Union and, if we do receive approval from the Planning Commission and Township Board, we already have the easement drafted and we're going to share it with them for formal signature. And one other thing; because we're no longer proposing that frontage sidewalk along Haggerty Road, Kroger's frontage, I believe it's 150 or 200 feet, we're going to be proposing an easement. So, the Township will have easements for future construction to make it a little easier and feasible in the future.

Again, the tax commitment for the existing store, there's been no change here. A big change was made on our February proposal where we increased that from one year to three years to give the Township more certainty in tax revenues. Again, this is for the existing store.

The most substantial change, as Dave spoke about, we essentially raised the floor on the appeal, so it is equivalent with the estimate provided by Oakland County Equalization. We went from \$3 million to \$4.64 million. And with that, I think this is my shortest presentation to date. I'm more than happy to answer any questions and look forward to hitting the ground running on this and completing Midtown. I've mentioned it a couple of times before, but all of the retail tenants are spoken for; 2941 and what was Hartland Dental, which is now going in as Dental Cre at Midtown. Both of those users

are coming, and they are at the finishing ends of their buildout. There is also an eyecare user that is a little bit further behind. We are hopeful that all of those tenants will be open by late summer or early fall of this year.

Dave Campbell – I'll mention too, from a procedural standpoint, if the Planning Commission is prepared to make a new formal recommendation on Midtown this evening, new relative to the recommendation you made back in March, if the Planning Commission is prepared to do that tonight, then this package is set to go to the Township Board for their meeting tomorrow night where they could potentially take final action on the PUD. If the Board does so, then the Planning Commission still gets another bite at this apple in the sense that the PUD site plan, with all the details on the building materials, landscaping, lighting, et cetera, would still need to come back to the Planning Commission for final PUD site plan approval. So that's where we are from a procedural standpoint.

Chairperson Parel – That makes sense. It would be nice if we could get you there tomorrow. Dave, I have a question. There was some talk, which you and I were involved in, regarding the two options for sidewalks. It kind of went back and forth about which sidewalk would be more beneficial to the public, whether it was the 14 Mile side or the Haggerty side. My understanding was that we were going to go back to the developer and propose the Haggerty side. Am I mistaken?

Dave Campbell – My understanding was that we were going to have the developer be prepared to discuss why they chose the 14 Mile side versus the Haggerty Road side. As we discussed internally, in my opinion, there's good arguments for either segment. One of the arguments for the 14 Mile segment is it has a greater potential to serve the residents of Commerce Township, which is what a PUD is meant to do. If we can fill this very challenging gap in between, along the pond, where there are some steep banks and the ITC corridor, along with a guardrail; there are some challenges through here, but if we can bridge that gap, literally, then we've got a continuous sidewalk from the parking lot of Long Park. This aerial is too old to show the segment that the Township already did through here to get it to the M-5 Metro Trail. The M-5 Metro Trail then gets you northward to the Michigan Airline Trail. So, to get across M-5, there's already pedestrian crossings and ramps. If we can get all the way from Long Park to the west, all the way across to Haggerty Road, then that segment of sidewalk has more potential for the benefit of Commerce than maybe the segment along Haggerty. As the Planning Commission is well aware, 14 and Haggerty is kind of a four corners dynamic; you've got Commerce to the northwest, West Bloomfield to the northeast, Novi to the southwest, and Farmington to the southeast. So, one of the arguments for the 14 Mile segment is that it is in Commerce and has the potential to draw in and benefit residents of Commerce, potentially more than the Haggerty Road segment would.

Spencer Schafer – And, if I may elaborate on that, it's really about the continuous network. What infrastructure is in place right now and what we feel is ultimately going to get from the nearest residence to traverse onto this corner and the retail developments. Dave and I had some conversations online. I thought that was the preference coming out of the meeting. But if I'm mistaken or you want to talk about it-

Chairperson Parel – No, and I think it's close. We had some internal talks about it. I don't think we're going to hold you up based on that. One of the things I want to share is that if this goes to the Trustees tomorrow night, let's say we approve it as-is, is there a possibility that some of the Trustees have a different thought on the sidewalks. Can it be modified at that time if they want it?

Dave Campbell – It could be. I don't have a crystal ball, but I would be surprised.

Chairperson Parel – I just don't want it coming back here just for that.

Dave Campbell – Well, if the Trustees did opt to make that change, and maybe I'll let Mr. Weber chime in too. I think it might be a long shot that they would want to make that change, but if they did, that's not the level of change that would then kick it back to the Planning Commission.

Commission Comments:

McKeever – I prefer 14 Mile.

Weber – I do as well.

Chairperson Parel – Are you guys good with everything else? No other issues?

Weber – For the record, since hopefully this is the last time, the recognizable public benefits to residents of Commerce centered on three key elements; the first being the pathway system, the second being how the old store would be treated and safeguards in place so that it is the right type of store, and it won't be kept empty. That has been addressed. The final piece was the dark store tax piece, while not perfect, is close enough to what we asked for.

Chairperson Parel – Bill, you're good with everything else?

McKeever – Yes.

Chairperson Parel – Joseph, do you have a preference on the sidewalk?

Loskill – No.

Chairperson Parel – Okay. Brady?

Phillips – My preference was the Haggerty roadside, but I'm okay with that. And I'm pleased that you've addressed the tax situation for the new building.

Bearer – I think 14 Mile makes sense. No other questions.

Chairperson Parel – Thank you. Even if I said Haggerty, I would be out voted. I have no other comments. Thank you guys for your time. We have been through this enough.

Dave Campbell – If you are prepared to make a motion, there is some recommended language made available in the Planning Department's report.

Chairperson Parel – Mr. Schafer, are you good with this language if we do an abbreviated motion?

Spencer Schafer – Yes, we looked through it.

MOTION by Loskill, supported by Phillips, to recommend approval of Item PPU20-02, Midtown on Haggerty, PUD Amendment, the request by Schafer Development of Farmington Hills MI for approval for a first amendment to the approved “Midtown on Haggerty” Planned Unit Development (PUD) to eliminate the residential apartment component of the development and replace it with a new Kroger store and fuel center located at 155, 255, 279, & 297 Haggerty Road.

PIN#’s 17-36-400-035, 17-36-400-036, 17-36-400-037, & 17-36-400-038

Move to RECOMMEND APPROVAL of an amendment to PPU#20-02, a PUD application for a first amendment to Midtown on Haggerty, a commercial development by Midtown on Haggerty LLC (Steve and Spencer Schafer of Schafer Development) consisting of approx. 20,000 sq ft of retail within three existing/constructed commercial buildings, an approx. 103,000 sq ft commercial building expected to be occupied by Kroger, and a Kroger fuel center including canopy, 7 pumps, and staffed service kiosk, upon approx. 25 acres on the west side of Haggerty Road north of 14 Mile Road. The Planning Commission’s recommendation of approval is based on a finding that the amended PUD application satisfies the requirements outlined in Article 38 of the Commerce Township Zoning Ordinance; that the proposed development is consistent with the goals of the Commerce Township Master Plan; that the project will offer recognizable and substantial public benefits proportionate to the deviations from the Zoning Ordinance being requested by the developer, most notably the inclusion of the Kroger fuel center; that the PUD development agreement achieves the goals of both the Township and the developer to create a high quality commercial development that the Planning Commission is confident can be approved in a future PUD site plan; and that Steve & Spencer Schafer in partnership with Kroger and with Neil Fetter and his family will capably serve as the master developer with unified control over the entire Midtown on Haggerty project.

This recommendation of PUD approval is conditional upon the following:

1. Approval by the Commerce Township Board of Trustees of the PUD’s development agreement and development plan;
2. A fully-formed development agreement to be reviewed by both the Planning Department and Township Attorney prior to consideration by the Township Board. Said development agreement to incorporate the direction of the Planning Commission, particularly as it relates to commitment of recognizable public benefits;
3. A detailed PUD site plan to be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission subsequent to Township Board approval of the PUD, with the PUD site plan to include (but not be limited to):
 - a. A detailed signage plan for all proposed wall signs, fuel center canopy signs, and freestanding signs both new and existing, with the preliminary details provided as exhibits to the development agreement;
 - b. Detailed building elevations for the Kroger building including upgrades as directed by the Planning Commission, with the preliminary details provided as exhibits to the development agreement;

- c. An outdoor storage/sales/display plan clearly defining the location, duration, and material type;
 - d. Inclusion of the proposed sidewalks described within the PUD agreement
- 4. Approval by the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) for all public road improvements within their Haggerty Road right-of-way, most notably the new traffic signal at Haggerty Road & Midtown Avenue recommended by the Township's Traffic Engineer;
- 5. Adherence to the findings & recommendations of the revised/updated traffic study by the Traffic Engineer, including those recommendations upon private property specifically the recommendation of a dedicated right-turn lane along Spring Vale at Haggerty;
- 6. Significant changes to the layout proposed in the development plan may require approval by the Township Board of an amended development plan.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Chairperson Parel – Thank you for all the hard work. I think the retail looks great and the tenant mix is coming out good. We could go back and forth between apartments or this, but in my opinion, if we get a beautiful new Kroger, and we've got the great retail, I prefer this over apartments.

McKeever – I do too.

Chairperson Parel – And if we can backfill that with Kroger quickly and have something nice, it would be great for the community.

Spencer Schafer – Thank you, everybody. I appreciate it. I have to throw it on the record, today is my father's birthday, so it's a good birthday present for him.

ITEM I.3. PLANNING COMMISSION'S 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Dave Campbell – Unless anyone wants to discuss anything in detail, this is something of a housekeeping item. The State of Michigan and the Planning Enabling Act requires that a Planning Commission deliver a report, on an annual basis, to the executive body, which in our case is the Township Board, summarizing what the Planning Commission accomplished in the prior year and what the goals are for the coming year. So, what we usually do is have the Planning Commission make a motion that this report is to be submitted to the Township Board, and it would be included in the Board's package of communication materials for tomorrow night's Board meeting.

MOTION by McKeever, supported by Weber; move to approve the Planning Commission's 2024 Annual Report and present it to the Commerce Township Board of Trustees during their meeting on April 8, 2025. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

J: OTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION:

None.

K: PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE: MONDAY, MAY 5, 2025, AT 7:00PM.

Dave Campbell – The one item we might see in May is the LaFontaine dealership at Haggerty and Walnut Lake Road.

- It is now a shared dealership between LaFontaine pre-owned cars and Acura new cars, and it is also a service center that will service the Hyundai/Genesis dealership which is under construction further north.
- The latest proposal from LaFontaine is to demo a portion of the existing building, what used to be the Dick Morris used car sales office, and rebuild it with a new Mitsubishi dealership.
- They have given us preliminary renderings. They know they will need site plan approval to make that happen.
- They understand that there will be questions about how it will operate on its own, but also how it will interplay with the Hyundai/Genesis dealerships up the street. They are preparing to address those questions.
- If you have been by there in the last year or so, I hope you'll agree they made a lot of improvements. Lots of new landscaping, sidewalks and landscape islands in the parking lot.
- We have not seen their submittal yet. We did have some early conversations, and they are targeting the May 5th meeting for that.

Weber – Dave, I have some concerns with that. If we go back to what we originally approved, and what our ordinances were trying to protect against. We did not want the negative things that can frequently come with car dealerships, including a sea of used cars or cars all along the frontages. We got there when we approved Hyundai/Genesis, the two boutique stores, with service and body shop at the old Dick Morris, and their used vehicles, with some restrictions as I recall on the number of vehicles that could just be parked along the frontage.

Dave Campbell – Yes.

Weber – I don't recall a discussion on them getting approval to put an Acura store in there, and I don't know if they needed it. That's part of my question. Because Acura is going to come with more demand from the manufacturer to have vehicles prominent and visible. Their used car inventory, particularly when times get tougher, dealers start flipping their emphasis from new vehicles to used vehicles for margins, et cetera. There's an opportunity to see more asphalt and more cars parked along that. If we throw a fourth fledgling manufacturer on there, Mitsubishi is a very low volume franchise, now we're creating some density concerns for service. We already had some challenges getting vehicles from the Hyundai/Genesis stores over to the service center. Now, we're going to possibly be exacerbating that and just clogging up a facility with more franchises, whether it's warranty work, et cetera. I think they are going to struggle with the square footage that they have there for parts, service and body shop. My bigger concern is that we don't want Haggerty Road to turn into what Highland has turned into, where it is just a sea of automobiles. I don't know how we protect against that, but having two additional franchises was never part of our original discussion. It was just Hyundai/Genesis and their used vehicle store. Acura came ... I'm not sure when that came.

Chairperson Parel – Was it always going to be a used vehicle store?

Weber – A service center with used cars.

Dave Campbell – As far as Acura, I will acknowledge that that was an administrative decision by the Planning Department, based on the fact that it was always proposed to be pre-owned sales, and from a zoning standpoint, the decision was whether it is pre-owned or whether it's new Acura sales, the use stays the same.

Now with the addition of Mitsubishi, they're talking about scraping and rebuilding a building, and that becomes more of a site plan issue rather than just a zoning and land use issue. That's where the trigger is to come to the Planning Commission. I've told LaFontaine there are going to be questions about the relationship between Hyundai/Genesis and this site. As far as there being more asphalt, I guess I'm going to stick up for myself a little bit. If you look at the site as of this time last year, April 2024, literally the entire site is paved. So, you couldn't put more asphalt on there if you wanted to. And in fact, they've actually reduced it. Here is the site today. By putting in these landscape islands, they've slightly reduced the amount of impervious surface onsite.

Weber – My point wasn't so much the asphalt. It's the pressure that they're going to have to start putting lots of vehicles for sale along Haggerty Road. I think that's just a concern and a discussion we can have with them.

Dave Campbell – And I have told them to be prepared for these discussions, as to how these relationships are going to play out, with Hyundai/Genesis, Acura and Mitsubishi.

Chairperson Parel – And Dave, from what you understand about their plan to demolish part of the building and reconstruct, are they looking to add more street parking to showcase cars?

Dave Campbell – I don't know if they have gotten that far yet. They are looking to demo this part of the building and replace it. I think they are looking to fill that gap there with a new overhead door for the service bay. This is all based on the preliminary concept plan that they showed us.

Chairperson Parel – I think it's a good idea to give them the advice going into it.

Dave Campbell – I certainly don't dismiss any concerns about volume, activity, and intensity, but I think it's worth pointing out, it is continuing investment into a property that was quite neglected for far too long. I hope that is taken into perspective as well.

Chairperson Parel – I think it is.

Chairperson Parel briefly discussed outdoor storage and screening requirements with Dave Campbell.

L: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Loskill, supported by Philips, to adjourn the meeting at 8:16pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY