

Commission Approved October 24, 2023

PLANNING COMMISSION

09-26-23 - 19

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF THE CITY OF GROSSE POINTE WOODS HELD ON SEPTEMBER 26, 2023, IN THE COUNCIL-COURT ROOM OF THE ROBERT E. NOVITKE MUNICIPAL CENTER, 20025 MACK PLAZA, GROSSE POINTE WOODS, MICHIGAN.**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Acting Chair Fuller.

Roll Call: Acting Chair Fuller  
Commission Members: Bailey, Gilezan, McNelis, O'Keefe, Vitale  
Absent: Fenton, Gerhart, Hamborsky  
Also Present: City Planner, Brigitte Smith  
Recording Secretary Miotto  
Council Member Vaughn

**MOTION** by Gilezan, seconded by O'Keefe, to excuse Commission Members Fuller, Gerhart, and Hamborsky from attendance at tonight's meeting.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Bailey, Fuller, Gilezan, McNelis, O'Keefe, Vitale  
NO: None  
ABSENT: Fenton, Gerhart, Hamborsky

Acting Chair Fuller recognized Commission member and Council Representative in attendance:

- Catherine Dumke, Senior Citizens' Commission
- Council Member Vaughn

The Planning Commission, staff, and the public, Pledged Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**MOTION** by Bailey, seconded by Vitale, that tonight's agenda be amended to move item 13, **New Business of 19700 Mack Avenue (Bank of America) Proposed EV Charger Site Plan Review**, to after item 6, **Receipt of Final Approved Minutes of August 22, 2023**.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Bailey, Fuller, Gilezan, McNelis, O'Keefe, Vitale  
NO: None  
ABSENT: Fenton, Gerhart, Hamborsky

Commission Member Hamborsky arrived at 7:07 p.m.

**MOTION** by Gilezan, seconded by Vitale, that the August 22, 2023, Planning Commission meeting minutes be approved as presented.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Bailey, Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, McNelis, O'Keefe, Vitale  
NO: None  
ABSENT: Fenton, Gerhart

The amended agenda item was discussed. **Under New Business**, was the **19700 Mack Avenue (Bank of America) Proposed EV Charger Site Plan Review**. Joel Ravitz, 57535 Blossom Valley Trail, New Hudson, MI 48165, of Block & Veatch appeared on behalf of this topic. Discussion ensued around illumination and shielding from residential surroundings. City Planner Smith provided an overview of the Building Department's memo and recommendations. Parking spaces will be reduced to account for the electrical vehicle spaces and transformer. Topics of discussion for the Planning Commission are: a) the landscaping around the transformer and any recommendation on additional screening, and b) required Zoning Board of Appeal for variance on the parking reduction as the proposal would make the parking and waiting spaces for the drive-throughs non-compliant per the ordinance. Additional information on signage was requested (height, size, font, logo), wattage of the light poles, and traffic lane movement markings to bring the entire site into compliance.

**MOTION** by Vitale, seconded by Bailey, that the Planning Commission approve the site plan for the Bank of America addition of electrical chargers with the additional conditions of providing shading of the light poles details, and adding a minimum of seven (7) additional arborvitae to the current plan, spaced around the transformer for screening, and all McKenna recommendations. In addition, the Planning Commission recommends that Council approve the recommended variances of off street parking requirements to reduce parking spaces from 42 to 38, and City Council Zoning Board of Appeals grant the reduction of the number of off street waiting spaces for the bank drive-through from 48 to 14.



Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Bailey, Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, McNelis, O'Keefe, Vitale  
NO: None  
ABSENT: Fenton, Gerhart

The next item on the agenda was the **Sign Ordinance Review Discussion**. City Planner Smith provided an overview of the edits and the new clean version. The only outstanding item for discussion is temporary signs, including quantity, size, time or duration. Comparisons to neighboring and similar communities were provided. Regulations around real estate signs need to be clarified. Consensus was reached that the illumination of buildings, including signs, color options, wattage, lumens, foot-candles, exterior light fixtures on buildings, internally illuminated signs, halo signs, and photometrics, needs to be regulated and added into an ordinance.

**MOTION** by Bailey, seconded by McNelis, that the Planning Commission table this discussion until the next commission meeting.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Bailey, Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, McNelis, O’Keefe, Vitale  
NO: None  
ABSENT: Fenton, Gerhart

The next item on the agenda was **Front Yard Structures (8-336)**. City Planner Smith provided an overview of the front yard structure ordinance, including what is currently exempt, and prepared a recommendation on mini-libraries and raised flower/garden beds. The proposed amendment to Article XI Section 8-335 was reviewed. Discussion ensued around the regulation of the size of structures as well as the construction and maintenance of front yard structures. Today, mini-libraries and raised bed structures are not permitted. City Planner Smith will request City Attorney Tomlinson to provide clarification on the definition of “structure”.

**MOTION** by Gilezan, seconded by Bailey, that the Planning Commission recommends that the ordinance restricting front yard structures include in the exemptions a free mini-library, and no more than one per property, that is less than 5 feet in height and no more than 4 square feet in total area. Subject to Building Department permit.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Bailey, Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, McNelis, O’Keefe, Vitale  
NO: None  
ABSENT: Fenton, Gerhart

**MOTION** by Gilezan, seconded by McNelis, that it is the recommendation of the Planning Commission that the current ordinance restricting front yard structures not be expanded to include within its exemptions raised planters.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Bailey, Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, McNelis, Vitale  
NO: None  
ABSENT: Fenton, Gerhart  
ABSTAIN: O’Keefe

The next item on the agenda was **Off-Street Parking Requirements (50-5.3)**. City Planner Smith provided an overview of the topic and the suggestion of allowing greater flexibility by allowing greater administrative power to accept new commercial business types based on the amount of parking that is needed. Comparisons of parking in adjacent communities was presented. The two means of providing flexibility are, a) Formalizing Shared Parking Agreements that the city provides, and b) allow City Administration and/or the Planning Commission to waive required parking standards for 10% or less. Diligent consideration would be required before granting a waiver. City Administration is open to considering this with Planning Commission input. Discussion was had around the proposed 10% limit and perhaps there should be more flexibility. Another suggestion was to factor in “across the street” available parking. Crosswalk access would have to be considered for “across the street parking”.



**MOTION** by Bailey, seconded by O’Keefe, that the Planning Commission support McKenna’s recommendation and to have City Planner Smith request City Attorney Tomlinson draft an ordinance amendment to review at the next Planning Commission meeting.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Bailey, Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, McNelis, O’Keefe, Vitale  
NO: None  
ABSENT: Fenton, Gerhart

The next item on the agenda were the **Building Official’s Monthly Report for September 2023**.

The next item on the agenda were the **Council Reports for September 11 and September 18**. Commissioner Fuller attended the September Council meetings and there were no issues of interest to the Planning Commission. Commission Chair Gerhart will attend October Council meetings.

The next item, for information purposes only, was the **Master Plan Open House Event, October 23, 6pm – 8 pm, 2023, at City Hall**. Rose Kim, of Giffels Webster, provided an overview of the provided information. Discussion was had around the mechanics of the open house, and the expectation of the Planning Commission’s participation. The publicizing of the event was discussed to maximize resident participation.

Under **New Business**, the Bank of America EV Charging Stations was discussed earlier. There was no other new business.

There was no **Old Business**.

Under **Public Comment**, the following were heard:

- Christal Lint, 727 N. Renaud, spoke in opposition to the new construction at 707 N. Renaud, and expressed a desire for a stop work order be issued.
- Mark Willamowski, 742 N. Renaud, spoke in opposition to the 707 N. Renaud construction.
- Robert Evangelista, 843 N. Renaud, spoke in support of the 707 N. Renaud construction.
- Rob Musial, 806 N. Renaud, spoke in opposition to 707 N. Renaud.
- Andrea Willamowski, 742 N. Renaud, spoke to grading issues and water damage to residents near 707 N. Renaud. Requested that permits be enforced.
- Wilson Moin, 1956 Allard, thanked the commission for their consideration on front yard structures.
- Council Member Vaughn recognized City Planner Brigitte Smith for earning her AICP certification.

**MOTION** by Gilezan, seconded by Bailey, to adjourn at 9:57 p.m.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Bailey, Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, McNelis, O'Keefe, Vitale

NO: None

ABSENT: Fenton, Gerhart

Respectfully Submitted,  
Gretchen Miotto  
Clerk's Confidential Administrative Assistant & Recording Secretary