

**WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
DECEMBER 5, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Seward called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present:

T. Joseph Seward, Chairperson
Merrie Carlock, Vice Chairperson
Mona Sevic
Pete Meagher
Matt Slicker
Robert Seeley
Debby Dehart
Scott Ruggles, Township Board Liaison

Others:

Sean O'Neil, Community Development Director
Andrew Littman, Staff Planner
Matteo Passalacqua, Carlisle and Wortman
Michael Leuffgen, DLZ
Hannah Kennedy-Galley, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION by Commissioner Carlock, seconded by Commissioner Seeley to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried with a voice vote: (8 yes votes).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 7, 2024

Commissioner Meagher pointed out a clerical error on page 2. The sentence should read "reducing to 7 members".

MOTION by Commissioner Seeley, seconded by Commissioner Ruggles to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried with a voice vote: (8 yes votes).

CALL TO THE PUBLIC (FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)

None.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. **9101 Highland Development**

Location: Property described as 9101 Highland Road, identified as parcel number 12-23227-003, located south of Highland Road, west of Sunnybeach Boulevard, consisting

of approximately 5.02 acres.

Request: **Preliminary site plan approval recommendation and special land use approval**

Applicant: Affinity 10 Investments, LLC

Mr. Passalacqua summarized his review letter.

Commissioner Ruggles suggested the trees be on the outside of the 8' fence, so the neighbors who surround it see them instead of the wall.

Commissioner Slicker asked Mr. Passalacqua if a bypass lane was required. Mr. Passalacqua said he believes one needs to be provided.

Commissioner Carlock asked what the special land use approval is for. Director O'Neil said it was for the drive-thru and outdoor seating.

Commissioner Carlock asked if the applicant met the parking standards. Director O'Neil confirmed.

Mr. Leuffgen reviewed his letter.

Commissioner Seeley stated if the sewer is to be extended, the applicant could make the sewer connection with the adjacent property owner, and potentially share parking spaces. There could also be the potential to have reciprocal access.

Commissioner Seward asked Mr. Leuffgen about the traffic flow and the property to the west. If a driver turns onto M-59 too early, there is no way to reorient. He expressed concern about the parking lot in the rear of the buildings.

Commissioner Slicker asked Mr. Leuffgen if the applicant would be required to maintain the retention basin. Mr. Leuffgen confirmed, there is an agreement the applicant signs between themselves and the Township that outlines the maintenance requirements.

Erin McMachen, Stonefield Engineering, was present to speak on behalf of the applicant. The goal of the property was to maintain respect for the surrounding residential properties while maintaining the aesthetic with the rest of the M-59 commercial corridor. The pickup window will be for the Chipotle restaurant, and there will be additional waiting spaces as well. The buffer at the corner of the site was increased to 30' with dense landscaping and the 8' fence. The trash enclosures, loading, and drive-thru users will be over 100' from the closest residential property. The applicant has formally submitted to MDOT, and a right-turn taper lane will be added. There were no comments on the pedestrian pathway. Sidewalk easements are proposed for the portions of the sidewalk that encroach on the subject site. The applicant is happy to provide more separation if the Township wants it. She was in favor of working with the neighboring commercial property to share access and improvements. 116 spaces are provided, but one will be removed to create access to the retention basin. There will be no truck idling allowed on site. There will be zero lighting spillover on the eastern side of the property onto the residential

properties. Landscaping will be planted in abundance. The applicant agrees with the conditions outlined in the consultant's letter. There is no intention for any of the users to serve alcohol.

Commissioner Seward asked Ms. McMachen about getting in line for the eastern building, and the drive-thru bypass on the western side of the site. Ms. McMachen said there will be directional signage throughout the site. A customer would have to loop around if they miss the Chipotle pick-up window. She added that the employees would most likely utilize the spaces in the rear of the building.

Commissioner Ruggles asked Ms. McMachen about the hours of operation for the users. Ms. McMachen said around 10 am -10 pm, but they aren't set in stone and would be amiable to set hours as a condition of special land use approval. Site lighting will be shut off an hour from close.

Chairperson Seward opened the public hearing at 7:22 P.M.

Dan Gottschall, 891 Sunnybeach Blvd, spoke in opposition to the applicant's request.

Elizabeth Herrod, 868 Sunnybeach Blvd, spoke in opposition to the proposed tenants and the potential traffic.

Megan Schultz, 987 Sunnybeach Blvd, spoke in opposition to the proposed tenants. She thanked Commissioner Ruggles for his comments.

Aaron Hyder, 953 Sunnybeach Blvd, said the plan is busy and clustered. He recommended denying the restaurant tenants.

Stephanie Smith, 8990 Twin Lakes Dr, expressed concerns about the increase in traffic to the area. She said a traffic light needed to be installed.

Giuseppa Heiski, 573 Deer Run, wanted to know why she didn't receive a letter. Director O'Neil said state law requires property owners within 300' of the property to be notified.

Chairperson Seward closed the public hearing at 7:34 P.M.

Director O'Neil clarified that the tenant is seeking preliminary site plan and special land use approval. The applicant still needs to receive final site plan approval. The plans will change between now and final site plan approval.

Commissioner Slicker voiced concerns about shared outdoor seating. Ms. McMachen said the outdoor seating is dedicated to one user each.

Commissioner Ruggles said he will bring up the issue of the fence placement again at the Township Board meeting later this month.

Ms. McMachen added over 50% of the property is dedicated green space. Starbucks and Chipotle are not interested in signing leases without drive-thrus.

Commissioner Dehart took issue with two buildings and the traffic lanes. She suggested one building with the drive-thru and pick-up window on the ends of the building. Ms. McMachen said there wouldn't be anywhere to wrap the stacking lane if there is only one building.

Commissioner Dehart said she appreciated all the conditions of the special land use.

MOTION by Commissioner, seconded by Commissioner Meagher, to approve the special land use for 9101 Highland, identified as parcel number 12-23-227-003, accepting all the concessions made by the applicant concerning lighting, sidewalk, hours of operations, idling trucks, and the sewer stub and all comments from staff and consultants, including the two outdoor seating areas and the drive through and pick up windows. The motion failed with a voice vote: (5 no votes). (Meagher/yes, Seeley/yes, Dehart/yes, Carlock/no, Seward/no, Ruggles/no, Sevic/no, Slicker/no).

MOTION by Commissioner Carlock, seconded by Commissioner Seward, to approve the special land use for 9101 Highland, identified as parcel number 12-23-227-003, accepting all the concessions made by the applicant concerning lighting, sidewalk, hours of operations, idling trucks, and the sewer stub and all comments from staff and consultants, including the two outdoor seating areas and one drive-thru. The motion carried with a roll call vote: (8 yes votes). (Slicker/yes, Sevic/yes, Ruggles/yes, Seward/yes, Carlock/yes, Dehart/yes, Seeley/yes, Meagher/yes).

MOTION by Commissioner Meagher, seconded by Commissioner Seeley to recommend the Township Board approve the preliminary site plan for 9101 Highland, identified as parcel number 12-23-227-003 subject to the specifications outlined in the special land use approval. The motion failed with a roll call vote: (5 no votes). (Meagher/yes, Seeley/yes, Dehart/no, Carlock/yes, Seward/no, Ruggles/no, Sevic/no, Slick/no).

B. 9451 Elizabeth Lake - Rezoning Request

Location: property identified as Parcel Number 12-26-204-002 (9451 Elizabeth Lake Road), located on the south side of Elizabeth Lake Road, east of Marina Court, consisting of approximately 1.33 acres.

Request: **The applicant requests to rezone the property from GB (General Business) to RM-1 (Attached Single-Family) or any other appropriate zoning district.**

Applicant: Shirin Raimifar

Mr. Passalaqua summarized his review letter.

Commissioner Dehart asked staff if there was sewer in the area. Director O'Neil confirmed.

David Ramifar, 9451 Elizabeth Lake, spoke on behalf of his request. He said he believed the Township would need more affordable housing in this area. He said the units would be somewhere from 1,000-1,500 square feet.

Commissioner Dehart asked the applicant if the units would be for sale. Mr. Raimfar confirmed.

Commissioner Seeley stated that the concept plan looked dated. He said he would prefer a product that looked more modern. Mr. Raimifar presented his updated concept plan in front of the Planning Commission.

Chairperson Seward opened the public hearing at 8:16 P.M. Seeing none, he closed the public hearing at 8:16 P.M.

MOTION by Commissioner Ruggles, seconded by Commissioner Sevic to recommend the Township Board approve the rezoning requested by Sharin Ramifar 9451 Elizabeth Lake Road, property identified as parcel number 12-26-204-002. The motion carried with a voice vote: (8 yes votes).

CONTINUING BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Conceptual Presentation - Mark DeGroff

Mr. DeGroff presented his concept for the property at 8300 Pontiac Lake Road. His concept was a multi-venue entertainment and hospitality complex, including a BBQ restaurant, a high-end cocktail lounge, and a banquet facility. He said the design would take advantage of the sunset views of Pontiac Lake. There will not be a need for variances. There will be alcohol served and entertainment. Entertainment and decibel levels will be limited. There will be lakeside docking. The building is proposed to be two stories.

LIAISON'S REPORT

The Township was the victim of a cyber-attack related to the closing of infrastructure bonds for the Civic Center project. The site work will continue for three weeks or so, but after that, the Board will need to decide moving forward. The Township Tree lighting is at Fisk Farm this Friday, December 6. Stanley Park will be open to rebid on December 23, 2024. The opening is scheduled for January 2025 and the anticipated bid award will be February 2025.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Streetlights will be installed along Elizabeth Lake Road within the next week. Culver's, West Valley, and Lakepointe all had their pre-construction meetings. Gateway Crossing and Ginko Storage will be holding pre-construction meetings soon.

NEXT MEETING DATE: January 16, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Commissioner Carlock, seconded by Commissioner Seeley to adjourn at 8:43 P.M. The motion carried with a voice vote: (8 yes votes).

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