

WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Sean O’Neil, AICP, Community Development Director
Justin Quagliata, Staff Planner

DATE: April 24, 2024

RE: 8285 Highland Road (Former General RV Site)
Concept Plan – Used Car Dealership

In March the Community Development Department received a Change of Use application from Michigan Automotive Group to establish a used car dealership at 8285 Highland Road. The 6.2-acre site, formerly occupied by General RV, is located on the south side of Highland Road, west of Pontiac Lake Road and zoned GB (General Business). New and used automobile sales require special land use approval from, and a public hearing at, the Planning Commission. Additionally, as part of the Change of Use process the Zoning Ordinance requires existing buildings/properties to be improved in order to bring it into reasonable compliance with the standards of the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance states those improvements shall be completed prior to issuance of a Change of Use permit.

Staff has identified several items which need to be evaluated and addressed on this site, including (but not limited to):

- Building facade – the northerly building looks unsightly and needs to be improved.
- Parking lot layout, design, and construction – the parking lot is in poor condition and will be required to be resurfaced with a minimum 2-inch overlay.
 - Removal of excess asphalt/impervious surface will be required. Part of the property was previously paved without permission from the Township. Certain areas of the site would benefit from pavement removal and installation of landscaping.
- Sidewalks – remove the paved shoulder along Highland Road and construct a frontage sidewalk in conformance with the Zoning Ordinance.

- Signage – removal of nonconforming pylon sign.
- Barrier-free accessibility – building and parking need to be compliant.
- Accessory building – staff believes improvements were made without permits from the Township. Additionally, based on the size and what would be stored in the building, fire suppression may be required. The Fire Department will review this matter during site plan review.
- Exterior lighting – existing outdoor lighting is nonconforming and must be replaced with new conforming outdoor lighting. This would be reviewed via a photometric plan and catalog details from lighting fixture specification sheets (cut sheets).
- Outdoor storage – vehicles for sale must be located in compliance with Section 4.34 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Landscape and screening – landscape improvements, such as, but not limited to: installation of a frontage greenbelt landscaped in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance; parking lot landscaping; interior landscaping.

The Township recently updated its Land Use Master Plan, and the plan contains the Pontiac Lake Gateway District focus area. This property is located within the focus area. The plan contains standards for built form and a description of appropriate land uses. A car dealership is not the type of use the Planning Commission envisioned for redevelopment of property in this area. Since the current zoning of the property allows a special land use to be requested for automobile sales, the Planning Commission should focus on the look and function of this property; this should drive high design standards and site improvements.

Planning Commission Options

No action is being requested. The Applicant is seeking feedback from the Planning Commission on the proposed use of the site.

Attachments:

1. Letter from Michigan Automotive Group requesting Planning Commission feedback.
2. Concept plan.

Dear White Lake Township Planning Commission,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to formally request an informal hearing at the upcoming May 2nd meeting to discuss a potential proposal for the use of a car dealership on a property at 8285 Highland rd. White Lake Township.

We believe it is essential to engage in open dialogue and transparent communication regarding any proposed developments that could impact the township. I respectfully request that the planning commission schedule an informal hearing at the May 2nd meeting to facilitate constructive discussion and ensure that all perspectives are heard and taken into account.

By holding an informal hearing, we can provide an opportunity for the planning commission, to voice their opinions, share insights, and address any questions or concerns they may have regarding the proposed car dealership.

Please let me know if there are any specific procedures or requirements, I need to follow to formalize this request further. I am committed to working collaboratively with the planning commission and fellow community members to ensure that any potential developments align with the best interests of White Lake Township.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue and contribute to the decision-making process regarding the proposed car dealership.

Sincerely,

Josh Tauriainen. President

Michigan Automotive Group