

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 26, 2022

RE: VCA Animal Hospital
Amended final site plan and special land use approval – Review #1

VCA Animal Hospitals, Inc. (VCA) has requested special land use approval to operate an animal hospital at 7755 Highland Road (Parcel Number 12-21-276-023), located on the north side of Highland Road, west of Elizabeth Lake Road. The approximately 1.27-acre subject site is zoned LB (Local Business) and currently occupied by an 11,400 square foot untenanted commercial building known as Centerpointe Plaza. The proposed animal hospital would occupy 5,533 square feet of the existing building. Preliminary site plan approval for development of the site was granted by the Township Board on March 12, 2019 and the final site plan was approved by the Planning Commission on July 18, 2019. Since that time the building shell was constructed and site work completed; the interior build-out is pending tenant leasing.

At its meeting on January 18, 2022 the Township Board adopted amendments to the zoning ordinance (Amendment 22-01). Animal Care Facilities (Veterinary Clinics and Hospitals) were added as a special land use in the LB zoning district. This particular zoning amendment was precipitated by a request from the owner of Centerpointe Plaza and VCA to operate an animal hospital on the subject site. As animal hospitals are allowed with special land use approval in the RB (Restricted Business) and GB (General Business) zoning districts, it was appropriate to add the use as eligible for consideration in the LB district.

Master Plan

The Future Land Use Map from the Master Plan designates the subject site in the Planned Neighborhood category, which is envisioned as a primarily residential land use of mixed densities and multiple product types, in a setting that may occasionally include a limited number of neighborhood retail, office, and personal service clusters. Connections to and segments of the Township community-wide pathway system are required as an integral part of all developments.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP



Zoning

Animal Care Facilities (Veterinary Clinics and Hospitals) are permitted with special land use approval in the LB zoning district, which requires a minimum lot area of one acre and 120 feet of lot width. The subject site contains 165 feet of frontage along Highland Road and approximately 1.27 acres of lot area.

Access

The site fronts on Highland Road, which along the subject property is a five-lane (center turn lane) public road with curb and gutter designated as a principal arterial by the National Functional Classification System (NFCS) utilized by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). An eight-foot-wide concrete sidewalk is installed along the property frontage. No improvements to site access are required to serve the animal hospital.

Utilities

Municipal water and sanitary sewer serve the site.

Staff Analysis

Special land uses for Animal Care Facilities (Veterinary Clinics and Hospitals) are evaluated using the general standards for all special land uses listed in Article 6, Section 10 of the zoning ordinance and the following specific standards for Animal Care Facilities (Veterinary Clinics and Hospitals) found in Article 4, Section 6 of the zoning ordinance:

- *The site shall abut at least a major arterial as designated on the Township's adopted Master Plan.* The site fronts on Highland Road, which is designated a Principal Arterial by MDOT.

- *All breeding areas shall be within a completely enclosed building.* The applicant indicated no breeding is proposed at the animal hospital.
- *All animals shall be adequately housed, fenced and maintained so as not to be or become a public or private nuisance. The premises shall be maintained in such a manner so as not to be harmful to surrounding properties, or create any hazard or detriment to public health, safety or general welfare.* Two fenced outdoor “pet yards” are proposed on the east side of the building. The northerly pet yard (turf) is 20 feet by 8 feet (160 square feet) and the southerly pet yard (iso turf) is 10 feet by 8 feet (80 square feet). Six-foot-tall white vinyl fencing is proposed around the pet yards; the upper two-feet of the fencing incorporates a lattice design. The site plan notes various protocols for turf yard use and maintenance, including:
 1. Only one pet allowed in each yard at a time.
 2. Any pet utilizing the yard is to be leashed.
 3. No unattended pets at any time.
 4. Attendant to appropriately dispose of any pet waste immediately.
 5. Each yard to be kept from of pet waste and any debris, and cleaned on a daily basis. **(The word “from” shall be replaced with the word “free”).**
 6. Each yard to be watered daily to flush any fluid wastes through the natural substrate (turf-based yards).
- *In addition to the screening and landscaping requirements specified in Section 5.19, the Planning Commission may require additional screening where the Planning Commission determines such screening is necessary to reduce the impact of the proposed facility on adjacent properties or rights of way.* The site currently has adequate screening, and the proposed pet yards would be fenced as previously described.
- *The building shall be adequately soundproofed and constructed so that there will be no emission of odor or noise detrimental to surrounding properties.* The interior build-out of the tenant space shall be completed in accordance with this requirement.
- *Boarding of small animals shall be permitted as an accessory use, except all boarding shall be conducted within a wholly enclosed building and incidental to such care of an animal.* VCA has acknowledged in its application any boarding services or overnight care shall be incidental to the clinical work of the hospital.
- *Any use permitted by the Township under this section shall terminate immediately when the lot area requirements herein set forth are decreased in any manner or the provisions of this ordinance violated.* The subject site exceeds the minimum lot area requirement of the LB zoning district. Furthermore, VCA will comply with the provisions of the zoning ordinance.

Planning Commission Options

The Planning Commission may approve, approve with conditions, or deny the special land use (to allow the animal hospital) and amended final site plan (to allow the outdoor “pet yards”).

Staff recommends approval of the amended final site plan and special land use, subject to the following hours of operation proposed by the applicant being adhered to by the animal hospital:

- **Monday through Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**
- **Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**
- **Sunday: Closed**