

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF YPSILANTI
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, September 10, 2024
6:30 pm**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Elizabeth El-Assadi
Gloria Peterson
Larry Doe
Daryl Kirby
Caleb Copeland
Bianca Tyson

STAFF AND CONSULTANTS

Fletcher Reyher, Planning and Development Coordinator
Sally Elmiger - Carlisle Wortman
Dennis McLain – Township Attorney

- **CALL TO ORDER/ESTABLISH QUORUM**

MOTION: Ms. El-Assadi called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

- **APPROVAL OF AUGUST 27, 2024, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

The minutes for the August 27, 2024, meeting is still in preparation. It will be included in the next Planning Commission packet for your review and approval

- **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION: Ms. Peterson **MOVED** to approve the agenda. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Mr. Doe and **PASSED** by unanimous consent.

- **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

SITE TYPE CHANGE – WHITE WATER CAR WASH – 2675 WASHTENAW AVENUE – PARCEL K-11-06-304-004 – TO CONSIDER A SITE TYPE CHANGE FROM “A” TO “C” WITHIN THE RC, REGIONAL CORRIDOR ZONING CLASSIFICATION.

Mr. Fletcher Reyher, Planning and Development Coordinator, presented to the Commission the Preliminary Site Plan, Special Land Use Application and a site type change request from the applicant (White-Water representative, EROP, LLC). The subject site is zoned RC, Regional Corridor with a Site Type A Designation. The applicant is seeking a change in site types from A to C to allow for a car wash with a special land use approval.

The proposed 6,820 sq. Ft. Is for a Tunnel car wash with two pay stations and 18 vacuum stations / parking spaces. The parking lot will also offer five (5) employee parking spaces.

The applicant attended the September 4, 2024, Zoning Board of Appeals meeting to seek a variance for the transparency requirements on the Washtenaw Avenue facade of the building. The ZBA postponed that request, and the applicant has decided to adhere to the transparency requirements that provided new renderings and plans.

A Public Hearing to consider the Special Land Use application was conducted on July 23, 2024; the applicant needed to seek a variance and a motion to approve the preliminary site plan. The Special land use applications were postponed. The applicant has revised their plans to reflect some comments addressed by the planning consultant, Sally Elmiger (Carlisle Wortman), as well as the Planning Commissioners.

Recommendations made by Carlisle Wortman:

- **Add 13 more shrubs to plans along Boston Ave. frontage; or Planning Commission to consider waiving/modifying this standard due to site constraints:** Stonefield has added 13 additional shrubs along Boston Avenue to the landscaping plan.

- **Carlisle Wortman recommended that the applicant replace a tree at the rear of the property with a native species;** Stonefield has completed the request.
- The applicant did confirm that there's going to be a 36-inch knee wall that's opaque added to the final site plan as recommended by Carlisle Wortman.

Reviews of different departments:

- **OHM:** The comments remain the same as their last letter dated June 25, 2024.
- **Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority (YCUA):** YCUA will have an approval letter at the stage of review.
- **Ypsilanti Township Fire Department:** YTFD will have an approval letter at the stage of review.
- **Washtenaw County Water Resources Commission:** 22 comments proposed. These comments will be addressed during the final site plan and detailed engineering phase.
- **Washtenaw County Road Commission:** Will have an approval letter at the stage of review.

Sally Elmiger (Planning Consultant - Carlisle Wortman) informed the Commission on the request for a change in site types from A to C. The form-based codes have a regulating plan, and the regulating plan identifies the site type as A, B, C or D, and that site type is based typically on the size of the property.

The regulating plan for this site has considered the northern half of the property, (half an acre). The entire parcel is an acre and a half, and that is more in line with a site type C designation. Site type C designation would allow the applicant to install a car wash if it is approved as a special land use.

The Planning Commission must consider the five criteria's when considering the request: Ms. Elmiger informed the Commission that she has stated her opinion in the review letter.

- a. **The applicant's property cannot be used for the purpose permitted in the form-based district (In this case, Regional Corridor):** Carlisle Wortman can't confirm that all of the permitted uses allowed on Site Type A are

unfeasible on the subject site, the frontage on Washtenaw Ave. makes a vehicle-oriented commercial use logical. The relatively small lot size and frontage along Washtenaw Ave. makes it unlikely that a residential use would occupy this site.

- b. **Area has been added to or deleted from the subject property in question, requiring the modification: The Regulating Plan only identifies the small portion of this site along Washtenaw Ave.** as a Site Type “A.” The remaining portion (to the south) is not designated any site type on the Regulating Plan. The proposed project site is 1.55 acres in size, which is consistent with the size range in Site Type C.
- c. **The proposed modification and resulting development will not alter the essential character of the area:** The corridor is under a form-based code, which is relatively new. The properties that were developed to the east and west of this site were developed under previous zoning requirements and do not reflect the new vision for this Washtenaw Avenue corridor, which is much more pedestrian friendly. The Form Based Code design standards bring buildings closer to the road and sidewalk and eliminate parking in front to give more emphasis to pedestrian facilities and comfort. This layout of this site will alter the existing character of the area, but in a positive way by helping to establish the character envisioned by the Form Based Code.
- d. **The proposed modification meets the intent of the district:** The intent of the Regional Corridor District is described as follows: Regional Mixed-Use Corridors areas are located along the busiest corridors, which supports a high volume of both local and regional traffic. This area may include large national chains, regional retailers, and auto oriented users that draw customers both regionally and locally. This site is located along one of the larger corridors in the Township. The vehicle wash is an auto oriented use that would draw both local and regional customers.
- e. **Existing streets have been improved and/or new streets constructed that may result in the modification of a specific site type:** As part of this project, Boston Ave. will be improved. Any improvements to this road will be made to the Road Commission’s standards.
- f. **Modification to the Regulating Plan is in conformance to the Master Plan and Placemaking Plan:** The Master Plan states Regional Mixed-Use Corridors

areas are located along the busiest corridors, which supports a high volume of both local and regional traffic. This area may include large national chains, regional retailers, and auto oriented users that draw customers both regionally and locally. The Master Plan language is very similar to the intent of the zoning district language. Ms. Elmiger stated that the proposal meets the criteria for a modification in the regulating plan from site type A to site type C.

Erin McMachen (Stonefield Engineering and Design) shared with the Commission that the site was previously used as a put-put golf course (40 years), the proposed car wash will require demolition of the entire site, just except for the south end of the site; 25 feet there that's going to remain completely undisturbed. Ms. McMachen shared pictures with the Commission on vegetation/ evergreens.

A 26-foot grade change was made with the north lawn being on the low side and Washtenaw being the high side. The engineering team has looked at the existing grades, the proposed grades and the light pole heights; the existing light pole is at 800 feet elevation. And the proposed pole, which is another 40 feet into the car wash site, resulting at 75 feet from the property line.

Proposal to install six (6) single-luminaire pole-mounted fixtures, and one, double luminaire pole-mounted fixture as site lighting. The building will be illuminated with two types of building mounted fixtures. There is a zero-foot candle level at the property. The existing pole is about 200 feet from the property line; far north end of the rear parking lot, there is an elevation of 820 and the tallest pole would be at 818. There would be a masonry enclosure that would house the motor and the producer; the enclosure would dampen the sounds. A noise meter has been installed in the enclosure; the highest noise level would be at 88 decibels. The applicant has proposed to repave Boston Avenue which is shared by about eight parcels. The applicant is proposing two curb cuts on Boston Ave, for full movement. The northernmost curb cut will be used for the customer entrance, who will proceed to one of the two pay stations. A lot of White-Water customers are monthly members; one lane will be dedicated to those monthly members. The other lane will be available to both monthly members and one-time customers. The rendering of a second overhead door after the awning to serve the purpose for a bypass lane that can be utilized if someone forgets their wallet or doesn't want to proceed through the tunnel, there is option to bypass the wash lane. There are 18 vacuums spaces; mat washing station; detailing carts all available and free for customers.

The concern with bringing the windows down to grade was the lawn mower perhaps chipping a window. The engineering team has brought the windows down to grade, over the 50% transparency requirement and the windows were made wider.

Mr. Kirby inquired about the water source and the effect on the residents; Ms. McMachen stated that some of the water lines are old, and they are being upgraded. There weren't any concerns about service availability from the utilities department. A flow testing will be obtained during the final site plan to ensure that they have adequate pressure to service the car wash.

Ms. Peterson inquired about the plan in case of a spillover from the lanes and the effect on Washtenaw Avenue; Ms. McMachen stated that she doesn't see that happening due to the availability on Boston Avenue. The two stacking lanes provide adequate stacking for the tenant and the ordinance requirements, and one lane being dedicated to monthly members (80% of the customers are monthly members), allowing them to speed right through the lane without having to input any payment into the pay station.

Ms. Erin McMachen stated the operations are from 7:30 am until 8:00 pm (Lighting will be turned off an hour after closing hours at 9 pm).

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED AT 7:05 PM

- Nathan Frick, residing at 2635 North Lawn Avenue stated that the light poles are outdated (LED lights) and the concern of high beams that would hit his house. The sound from 18 vacuum stations is a concern during the evenings, since he has two small children. The other concern is the water pressure to homes once the car wash is in operation. The traffic that can take place on Washtenaw if there is a delay in the car wash.
- Diane Peters, residing at 491 Boston Street stated her concern for her access to Washtenaw Avenue, if they make changes to Boston Avenue. Another concern is the noise spill over; and the recommendation of a wall that would be a sound barrier.
- Matt Hanson residing at 2644 East lawn shared his concern about the exhaust fumes that are going to drift down the hill from the car wash into the neighborhood creating air pollution. The other concerns were the sound/ light pollution from vacuum stations and stereos.

- Kate Bruno, residing at 2645 North Lawn Avenue stated that she opposes the motion of rezoning the lot at 2675 Washtenaw Avenue, from site A to site type C and that the current zoning is appropriate, and should not be changed. Site zone type A are to consider the frontage and the back of the property in order to maintain the compatibility within the adjacent residential properties. Site C makes no mention of how the property sits in relation to residential neighborhoods. Switching the zoning would allow the car wash company to use the land in ways that will not maintain compatibility with the neighborhood. The mission of the master plan is to proactively preserve and build great neighborhoods, jobs and community places, making Ypsilanti township one of the healthiest communities in Michigan. The seven main goals of this plan that this zone change, and car wash will violate; reinvesting in neighborhoods; making neighborhoods beautiful; increasing health and safety of our community; fostering housing stability and promoting reinvestment in traditional neighborhoods. On the master plan, there's a future land use map, the neighborhood is specifically noted as a neighborhood preservation area. If the plan to change zoning is allowed the car wash would bring a constant flow of traffic into the front yards regardless of any requirements posed on this business to block sound and sight from their equipment, it will be impossible to prevent noise from their customers honking, playing loud music, revving engines. There is a significant increase in air pollution due to cars airborne soaps and chemicals, as well as litter blowing into the neighborhood from the cars that are being cleaned out. The traffic from this type of business constantly coming and going will create increased risks for drivers in an already congested and dangerous stretch of road. Tapping into the water mains will cause issues to the neighborhood. The car wash is a very automated business and will not create ample jobs for our citizens. A car wash is not a daily need for our residents. The median income of our community is approximately \$54,600; the community does not have ample income to pay for unnecessary luxuries. The zoning requirements were modified to meet the standards of the mission in the master plan. The Planning Commission can decide whether to honor the master plan for the community and maintain the integrity of Zone A to benefit the residents of our community or change the zoning in order to benefit state corporation. The community consists of teachers, nurses, dental hygienists, social workers, who serve the community on a daily basis. Ms. Bruno requested the Planning Commission to consider the saving of the neighborhood and not change the zoning for the proposed site.

- Peter Bruno, residing at 2645 North Lawn Avenue shared his concern on the water line and the effect on the water pressure and the possibility of runoffs due to the historic flooding in the area.

PUBLIC HEARING ENDED AT 7:30 PM

Ms. Peterson inquired about Washtenaw County Water Resources Commission addressing comments at the final site plan; Mr. Fletcher stated that one of the conditions that was suggested for the preliminary site plan is for the applicant to address all outstanding comments from every reviewing agency prior to final approval. The presented plan sets are really focused on the site layout; function, landscaping, elevations, lighting and sound. The detailed engineering parts get addressed at the second phase of review, which is called final site plan and detailed engineering. If the current plan gets approved, the applicant will have to file a second application for the final site plan and detailed engineering. The applicant will have to pay a separate review fee, and it will be reviewed by the Road Commission, Ypsilanti Community, Utility authority, Planning Department, Fire Department, Washtenaw County Water Resources Commission and the Township Engineer. The final site plan for this type of project would be approved administratively. It will not be returned to the Board for further consideration.

Ms. Elmiger shared with the Commission that there is one Zoning Ordinance provision (Article 13); site design standards, and screening between land uses. The applicant is proposing a landscape screen of a certain depth and number of trees. The ordinance requires a solid wall or fence where a land use activity creates noise, light, dust or other similar nuisance that cannot be effectively screened by a landscape buffer. The Planning Commission may approve the installation of a solid wall or fence. Such wall or fence shall be a minimum of four feet and a maximum of eight feet in height, as measured on the side of the proposed wall. having the higher grade. A required wall shall be located on the lot line, except alternate locations may be approved. The lot line is a lot closer to the road than where they're proposing their vegetated screen (This is to be discussed with the applicant). This will be reviewed at the final engineering stage, making sure it works with the grading and storm water detention basin.

Ms. Elmiger recommended that the Planning Commission to consider adding to the motion; in case there is an occurrence of disturbance (light/sound) to the neighbors in the future.

MOTION: Ms. Kirby **MOVED** to approve the Site Type change from “A” to “C” at the property located at 2675 Washtenaw Avenue, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, Parcel K-11-06-304-004,” as the proposal meets the criteria in Article 5, Form Based Districts, of the Zoning Ordinance. This approval only applies to the current development proposal associated with the request for a Site Type Change.

The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Mr. Doe.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Doe (Yes); Ms. Peterson (Yes); Mr. Kirby (Yes); Ms. El-Assadi (Yes); Mr. Copeland (No); Ms. Tyson (Yes).

MOTION PASSED.

- **OLD BUSINESS**

None to Report.

- **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **SPECIAL LAND USE – WHITE WATER CAR WASH – 2675 WASHTENAW AVENUE – PARCEL K-11-06-304-004 – TO CONSIDER THE SPECIAL CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION OF EROP, LLC TO PERMIT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 6,820 SQ. FT. CAR WASH FOR A 1.55-ACRE SITE ZONED RC, REGIONAL CORRIDOR, WITH A PROPOSED SITE TYPE C DESIGNATION.**

Mr. Fletcher Reyher, Planning and Development Coordinator, suggested some possible conditions for the Planning Commissioners to consider when making their motion on the special law:

- The vacuums located on the site would be turned off by 8 pm when the applicant proposes the site to close.

- The decibel levels are to meet ordinance standards at property lines; Zoning ordinance requirement from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm is 65 decibels; 7:00 pm – 7:00 am is 50 decibels.
- The Planning Commissioners consider whether or not to condition a new screening wall to the rear of the site; a four- to eight-foot-tall screening wall.
- The applicant has proposed 13 evergreen trees towards the rear of the property, as well as a natural green buffer at the North Lawn property line. The Planning Department does not want to impede any of the existing screening; the applicant would have to find a spot that would keep the existing screening and also allows the proposed planting of the evergreen trees.
- The applicant to work with Ypsilanti township to dedicate an easement for future right of way at Washtenaw Avenue (The MDOT is currently working towards redesigning Washtenaw Avenue; bus lanes/ pedestrian amenities and extending sidewalks).

Commissioners Doe and Peterson shared their opinion that a masonry wall would help in sound reduction.

MOTION: Mr. Doe **MOVED** to approve the Special Land Use Permit submitted by EROP, LLC to permit the construction of a 6,820 sq. ft. tunnel carwash with two pay stations and 18 vacuum stations at the property located at 2675 Washtenaw Avenue, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, Parcel K-11-06-304-004, as the proposal meets the criteria in Article 10, Special Land Use with the following conditions:

- The applicant shall address all outstanding comments from reviewing agencies prior to Final Site Plan Approval.
- The applicant shall obtain all applicable internal and outside agency permits prior to construction.
- Any other conditions based upon Planning Commission discussion: The vacuums are to be off at 8 pm; the decibel levels to meet the standards of the ordinance of the township; to add a screening four-to-eight-foot masonry wall at the back and a traffic study.

The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Ms. Peterson.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Doe (Yes); Ms. Peterson (Yes); Mr. Kirby (Yes); Ms. El-Assadi (Yes); Mr. Copeland (No); Ms. Tyson (Yes).

MOTION PASSED.

- b. **PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN – WHITE WATER CAR WASH – 2675 WASHTENAW AVENUE – PARCEL K-11-06-304-004 – TO CONSIDER THE PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN APPLICATION OF EROP, LLC TO PERMIT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 6,820 SQ. FT. CAR WASH FOR A 1.55-ACRE SITE ZONED RC, REGIONAL CORRIDOR, WITH A PROPOSED SITE TYPE C DESIGNATION.**

Mr. Fletcher Reyher, Planning and Development Coordinator informed the Commission that the applicant has met the conditions of the Township Zoning Ordinance for a project of this type. The applicant will address the added conditions made to the special land use motion during the final site plan process.

Commissioner Ms. El-Assadi inquired if the applicant is amenable to the request for a wall; Erin McMachen (Stonefield Engineering and Design) agreed to providing the wall; a location will need to be decided to provide a maximum screening and will not conflict with the stormwater infrastructure. The agreement to the meeting the decibels standards, the vacuums to be turned off at 8:00 pm and conducting of a traffic study.

MOTION: Ms. Peterson **MOVED** to approve the Preliminary Site Plan submitted by EROP, LLC to permit the construction of a 6,820 sq. ft. tunnel carwash with two pay stations and 18 vacuum stations at the property located at 2675 Washtenaw Avenue, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, Parcel K-11-06-304-004, with the following conditions:

- The applicant shall address all outstanding comments from reviewing agencies prior to Final Site Plan Approval.
- The applicant shall obtain all applicable internal and outside agency permits prior to construction.
- Any other conditions based upon Planning Commission discussion.

The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Mr. Doe.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Doe (Yes); Ms. Peterson (Yes); Mr. Kirby (Yes); Ms. El-Assadi (Yes); Mr. Copeland (No); Ms. Tyson (Yes).

MOTION PASSED.

- **OPEN DISCUSSIONS FOR ISSUES NOT ON AGENDA**

- **Correspondence Received**

Mr. Fletcher stated that the Planning commissioners have received an email from a North Lawn resident.

Sheetz would be coming back to the Zoning Board of Appeals seeking a transparency variance for their South UF facade, East Michigan facade, and east facade (September 18, 2024).

- **Planning Commission members**

None to Report

- **Members of the audience**

Kate Bruno residing at 2645, North Lawn Avenue shared her concern that the Planning Commission should have taken more into consideration the disturbance to the lives by allowing the car wash to be opened from 7:30am till 8pm every single day and the consideration of reducing of hours during the weekends.

Nathan Frick, residing at 2635 North Lawn Avenue stated that he was unhappy with the decision made by the Planning Commission.

- **TOWNSHIP BOARD REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

None to Report

- **ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

None to Report

- **TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY REPORT**

None to Report

- **PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORT**

None to Report

- **OTHER BUSINESS**

None to Report

- **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: Ms. Peterson **MOVED** to adjourn at 7:56 pm. The **MOTION** was **PASSED** by unanimous consent.

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Respectively Submitted by Minutes Services