

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF YPSILANTI
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, March 25, 2025
6:30 p.m.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Elizabeth El-Assadi
Bill Sinkule
Gloria Peterson
Larry Doe
Bianca Tyson
Amy Kehrer

STAFF AND CONSULTANTS

Sally Elmiger - Carlisle Wortman
Dennis McLain – Township Attorney

- **CALL TO ORDER/ESTABLISH QUORUM**

MOTION: Ms. El-Assadi called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

- **APPROVAL OF MARCH 11, 2025, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

MOTION: Mr. Doe **MOVED** to approve the March 11, 2025, regular meeting minutes. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Ms. Peterson and **PASSED** by unanimous consent.

- **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION: Mr. Sinkule **MOVED** to amend the agenda by moving the New Business item to Public Hearing as Item B (Special Land Use). The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Ms. Kehrer and **PASSED** by unanimous consent.

- **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- a. **SPECIAL LAND USE – TORTILLA TITA – 585 JOE HALL DRIVE – PARCEL K-11-17-363-029** – TO CONSIDER THE SPECIAL LAND USE REQUEST OF FRANCISCO ALVAREZ/MARTHA JARAMILLO TO PERMIT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 6,000 SQUARE FOOT TWO-STORY FOOD PROCESSING FACILITY ON A 1.093 – ACRE SITE ZONED I-T, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY.

Sally Elmiger (Planning Consultant-Carlisle Wortman) presented to the Commission the application from Francisco Alvarez and Martha Jaramillo representing Tortillas Tita requesting authorization for the construction of a 6,000 sq. ft. two-story tortilla manufacturing facility and the construction of the associated parking areas, driveways, utilities, stormwater management system, and landscaping.

Some trees would need to be removed from the site and the ordinance would require some trees to be replaced or the applicant may pay into the Township Tree Fund, based on the number of replacement trees determined by the Planning Commission.

Ms. Elmiger suggested that the Planning Commission speak to the applicant and discuss the preferences.

The Township Planning recommends Planning Commission condition any Preliminary Site Plan approval on the applicant providing a plan showing the location of the security cameras/alarms, and manufacturer information documenting that the equipment meets ordinance requirements, at the Final Site Plan review. Planning Commission to consider alternative landscaping around the bioretention area. The applicant notes that a “detention basin” is not proposed for this site, but stormwater will be handled by a “bioretention area” instead. The Planning Commission may waive or modify any landscaping requirements.

The Planning Commission would need to discuss with the applicant about the odor control from the facility.

Ms. Elmiger shared with the Commission that the facility is a manufacturing operation in the district. It is considered a special land use, and it was evaluated against the special land use standards in the ordinance. Carlisle Wortman's opinion is that the project will contribute to the economic growth, diversification, and innovation within the IT zoning district. The surrounding land uses are a mix of

logistics, warehousing and light industrial uses. This facility fits in with the surrounding land uses. The Township's Master Plan designates this location as township core and light industrial use that aligns with the vision in the master plan, and the site is adequately served by essential public services. The facility is a small operation and will not create any additional public costs.

Commissioner Sinkule requested Ms. Elmiger to elaborate on the statement in regard to the trees; If “planting on another site” is chosen, the Planning Commission to approve the chosen site. Ms. Elmiger stated that the Planning Commission can decide if the site would be considered a public site or for a specific use. The final site plan process would require the applicant to provide documentation on the agreement with whatever that public entity is.

Commissioner Sinkule inquired about the Planning Department’s recommendation in regard to rain garden versus bioretention area; Ms. Elmiger’s recommendation was to get input from Washtenaw County Water Resources Commission (WCWRC) since they have specific planting requirements.

Commissioner Peterson inquired about the number of replacement trees; Ms. Elmiger stated that 38 new replacement trees are required with a minimum of 2-inch caliper. The Commission is permitted to reduce the number of trees by 30% (27 trees).

Commissioner Sinkule inquired on the sidewalk; The Engineer representing Tortillas Tita informed the Planning Commission on the existing site adjacent to the property, and the existing concrete sidewalk that would be used.

The applicants Francisco Alvarez and Martha Jaramillo (co-owners of Tortillas Tita) shared with the Planning Commission that they have a letter from the adjacent property that states no complaints on the odor from the facility. The tortillas are made from scratch and are authentic and healthy (FDA compliance). Tortillas Tita supplies tortillas to Meijer in the area, and the goal is to increase the volume to be supplied to more stores. Francisco Alvarez stated that he is a mechanical engineer (recently retired).

Mr. Alvarez shared information on the ventilation at the facility; the process would require the use of 4 ovens/3 ventilators, and the exhaust fans in the building would

pull out the odor from the facility and the air would be circulated (like a baking facility). The facility is 2000 sq ft, and the hours of operation are 7 a.m. – 3 p.m. (currently with one shift). Tortillas Tita has been in business for 15 years; with six employees and Tortillas Tita does their own delivery (vans). A shipping dock (50x10 ft) is located at the rear of the building.

The engineer representing Tortillas Tita informed the Planning Commission of the plans for landscape; the drawings of the rain garden will be reviewed by the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner's Office. An agent would review the stormwater calculations and engage a registered landscape architect that would review the plans. The plan is to plant 11 river birches around the perimeter of the rain garden, along with 31 red twig dogwoods that would be interspaced with the river birches. Plans to plant a variety (170 flowers) within the rain garden.

Commissioner Peterson emphasized that she preferred the tree fund contribution, and she requested the applicant to submit options regarding it. The engineer stated that the applicant is open to the request of the Planning Commission.

Ms. Elmiger requested the Planning Commission their decision on the 30% reduction of replacement trees; the Board agreed.

The engineer informed the Planning Commission that he has provided a plan showing the location of the security cameras/alarms, and manufacturer information documenting that the equipment meets ordinance requirements. The applicant would be working along with the Sheriff's office and reports would be submitted at the final site plan.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED AT 7:02 P.M.

Hearing None.

PUBLIC HEARING ENDED AT 7:03 P.M.

MOTION: Ms. Kehrer **MOVED** to approve the Special Land Use Permit submitted by Francisco Alvarez and Martha Jaramillo, to permit the construction of a 6,000 sq. ft., two-story food processing facility located at 585 Joe Hall Drive, Ypsilanti,

MI 48197, Parcel K-11-17-363-029, as the proposal meets the criteria in Article 10, Special Land Use with the following conditions:

1. **Tree Replacement:** The Township reviews and approves the calculations for “payment in-lieu-of planting replacement trees” to determine the tree fund contribution amount, based on typical fees charged by a landscape contractor to purchase, deliver, and install a 2.0-inch caliper tree, at the Final Site Plan approval. The Planning Commission agrees to reduce the required number of trees to 27.
2. **Security Cameras:** Applicant provides a plan showing the location of the security cameras/alarms, and manufacturer information documenting that the equipment meets ordinance requirements, at Final Site Plan review.

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

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Doe (Yes); Ms. Tyson (Yes); Mr. Sinkule (Yes); Ms. El-Assadi (Yes); Ms. Peterson (Yes); Ms. Kehrer (Yes).

MOTION PASSED.

- b. **SPECIAL LAND USE – TORTILLA TITA – 585 JOE HALL DRIVE – PARCEL K-11-17-363-029 – TO CONSIDER THE PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN APPLICATION OF FRANCISCO ALVAREZ/MARTHA JARAMILLO TO PERMIT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 6,000 SQUARE FOOT TWO-STORY FOOD PROCESSING FACILITY ON A 1.093 – ACRE SITE ZONED I-T, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY.**

MOTION: Ms. Kehrer **MOVED** to approve the Preliminary Site Plan submitted by Francisco Alvarez and Martha Jaramillo, to permit the construction of a 6,000 sq. ft., two-story food processing facility located at 585 Joe Hall Drive, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, Parcel K-11-17-363-029, as the proposal meets the requirements and standards of the Zoning Ordinance with the following conditions:

1. **Tree Replacement:** The Township reviews and approves the calculations for “payment in-lieu-of planting replacement trees” to determine the tree fund

contribution amount, based on typical fees charged by a landscape contractor to purchase, deliver, and install a 2.0-inch caliper tree, at the Final Site Plan approval. The Planning Commission agrees to reduce the required number of trees to 27.

2. **Security Cameras:** Applicant provides a plan showing the location of the security cameras/alarms, and manufacturer information documenting that the equipment meets ordinance requirements, at Final Site Plan review.

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

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Doe (Yes); Ms. Tyson (Yes); Mr. Sinkule (Yes); Ms. El-Assadi (Yes); Ms. Peterson (Yes); Ms. Kehrer (Yes).

MOTION PASSED.

- **OLD BUSINESS**

PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN – HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS – 350 & 460 JOE HALL DRIVE – PARCEL K-11-38-363-029 & K-11-38-363-003 – TO CONSIDER THE PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN APPLICATION OF ANDY PATEL TO PERMIT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 101-ROOM, 4-STORY HOTEL FOR A 4.68-ACRE SITE ZONED I-T, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY.

Ms. Elmiger reminded the Planning Commission that the hotel application was previously considered by the Planning Commission last year, but since the PC review, the applicant has increased the number of rooms by 8 and parking by 8. There are no other changes to the site plan. In addition, on December 4, 2024, the applicant received a height variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

The site has a significant amount of woodland area with the exception of the northeastern corner of the lot; where tree relocation or replacement is not feasible within the woodland area, or on the property where the activity is to be conducted, or on other approved property within the township, the permit grantee shall pay into the township tree fund monies for tree replacement. The applicant shall convert one of their parking spaces to an additional barrier-free space. The total number of rooms would be 100.

Commissioner Sinkule inquired about the parcels; Ms. Elmiger stated that the applicants would have to combine the parcels, which would be completed during the final site plan process.

Dan Lewis (civil engineer; VK Civil) representing the applicant, Andy Patel who is absent from the meeting. The updates from the previous meeting are as follows: The FDC location was moved to the west side of the building. With a change in the driveway, the possibility of adding more rooms was accomplished. Dan Lewis informed the Planning Commission that there would be a total of 100 rooms. WCWRC has approved the permits for the driveways and the approval within the Joe Hall Drive ROW. The County Water Resource Commissioner has requested the move of the storm piping system by half an inch. OHM and YCUA for revised payments.

Commissioner Peterson inquired about the completion of the project; Dan Lewis stated that they would need to complete the final site plan and traffic lights. The goal is to have the project complete within a year.

MOTION: Mr. Sinkule **MOVED** to approve the Preliminary Site Plan submitted by Andy Patel, InterContinental Hotels Group, to permit the construction of a 100-room, four-story hotel located at 350 & 450 Joe Hall Drive, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, Parcel K-11-38-363-029, and Parcel K-11-38-363-003, as the proposal meets the requirements and standards in the Zoning ordinance with the following conditions:

- The applicant shall obtain the Final Site Plan and Detailed Engineering Approval; and shall obtain all outside agency permits and approvals for the construction of the hotel including, but not limited to, the property owner and/or developer entering into a Road Improvement Agreement with the WCWRC for the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Huron Street and Joe Hall Drive as part of this development.

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

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Doe (Yes); Ms. Tyson (Yes); Mr. Sinkule (Yes); Ms. El-Assadi (Yes); Ms. Peterson (Yes); Ms. Kehrer (Yes).

MOTION PASSED.

- **NEW BUSINESS**

None to Report

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

- **Correspondence Received**

None to Report

- **Planning Commission members**

None to Report

- **Members of the audience**

None to Report

- **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: Mr. Sinkule **MOVED** to adjourn at 7:21 pm. The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Mr. Doe and **PASSED** by unanimous consent.

Respectively Submitted by Minutes Services LLC