

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF NORTHVILLE  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
March 22, 2022**

**DATE:** March 22, 2022  
**TIME:** 7:00 PM  
**PLACE:** Township Hall

**APPROVED:** April 26, 2022

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Secretary Watson at 7:02 pm.

**ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Milan Gandhi (arrived 7:08 pm)  
Mindy Herrmann  
Edward McCall  
Jayne Watson  
Tim Zawodny

**Excused:** Matthew Wilk  
Gary Yang

**Staff:** Jennifer Frey, Township Planner

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Planning Commission – February 22, 2022

**MOTION by Herrmann, support by McCall,** to approve the February 22, 2022 Planning Commission meeting minutes as published.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

Correspondence regarding specific agenda items will be summarized when that agenda item is heard.

No other correspondence was received.

**BRIEF PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- Mary Lou Posa, 20560 Wintergreen Circle, requested that the Planning Commission include a copy of the draft meeting minutes from the prior meeting with the materials that are available to the public before each meeting.

Township Planner Frey explained that Township Policy was to post minutes on the website after they were approved.

- Linda Malec, 20557 Wintergreen Circle, said that the posted synopsis for the February 22, 2022 meeting was inaccurate regarding comments she made during extended public comment. She had not been asking for more meetings for the Planning

Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, but rather more transparency and availability of documents on the Township website.

**MOTION by Herrmann, support by McCall**, that the minutes for the February 22, 2022 meeting accurately reflect Ms. Malec's comments during Extended Public Comment.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

As all members of the applicant's team for PSLU22-0001 were not yet present, the following motion was offered:

**MOTION by Herrmann, support by McCall**, to reverse the order of the agenda items under NEW BUSINESS.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

<b>1. PSPR22-0001</b>	<b>Site Plan Review</b>
Representative:	Mason Brown
Owner:	Imagine Fam, LLC
Location:	19275 Gerald St.
Request:	Imagine Peace Park
Action:	Approve, Approve with Conditions, Postpone, Deny

Referencing her March 9, 2022 review letter, Township Planner Frey gave the background and review for this application for site plan approval for Imagine Fam, LLC, at 19275 Gerald Street, for the outdoor gathering and event space for Imagine Design Center.

The Planning Commission approved the special land use for this project on 12-07-2021, with conditions. The conditions were noted on sheet 3.

General

1. All site plan conditions must be completed prior to the Township accepting engineering and building plan submittals.
2. Review comments from the Fire Department do not require that updates be made to the plans, but shall be made conditions of approval.
3. For resubmittals, a transmittal detailing what is being submitted and a written response to each reviewer's comment is required.
4. Sheets 9-16 are not required for site plan and shall be removed from the site plan set.
5. The 20'x20' shed needs to be moved out of the setback on the north property line; this was a condition of the special land use. A review of past aerial photos reveal the shed was installed sometime after April 2019.

6. Wayne County approval is required for each curb cut and for the improvements made within the right-of-way. The approval shall be provided to the Township prior to engineering plan approval.
7. The sign was installed without a permit and does not comply with sign requirements. A permit is required and the sign will need to comply with applicable standards.

#### Parking & Site Circulation

1. The width of the new, small triangular landscape island on the west end of the new parking lot needs to be increased to 10'. It shall be expanded to include the adjacent parking space and align with the edge of the island to the south.
2. The treatment of the drive aisle located between the new landscape islands shall be differentiated from the rest of the parking lot to reduce the potential for people to use the drive aisle as a parking space.
3. Add a sidewalk connection on the east side of the handicapped parking space to connect the crosswalk to the sidewalk.

#### Landscape

1. Provide a tree in the new parking lot island next to the shipping container, this will match the other islands and better define the drive aisle.
2. The calculation for interior landscape area and required plantings is not correct, although the required plant material may be provided. The calculation shall be updated as follows and plant material added to the plan if required.
  1. The total area of the site is 2.02 acres (87,991.20 sq. ft.).
  2. The greenbelt area is not 60,995 sq. ft.
  3. One shrub is required per 250 sq. ft. of interior landscape area.

The traffic and light consultants did not have any additional comments that needed to be addressed. The Fire Department indicated that their comments could be addressed administratively. Planning items will need to be addressed administratively prior to submitting engineering drawings.

Township Planner Frey concluded her review and Secretary Watson asked the applicants to make their presentation.

Carly Kelly, 1092 Allen Drive, Northville, was present on behalf of this application for site plan approval. Her husband Jack Kelly was available remotely (FaceTime) to help answer questions. Site engineer Mason Brown, 2708 Bridle Road, Bloomfield Hills, was also present.

In response to questions from the Commission, the applicants made the following points:

- They had adjusted the site plan/landscape plan after receiving review comments, and the revised plans would be submitted.
- The drive aisle will be differentiated from the rest of the parking lot. Other items as listed in the review letter had been resolved.

- As pointed out, the landscape area was not 60,995 square feet; that total represented the area exclusive of the greenbelt area.
- The trees will be correctly listed on the tree list.
- Suppliers bringing materials to the rear of the site for the landscape business will be standard dump trucks and trucks with enclosed trailers, approximately 20' long. Site circulation and turning radii will be adequate for the supply trucks and fire vehicles.
- Sheet 4 showed impact of delivery vehicles on the street, and also called out the turning radii on the site.

Commissioner Zawodny pointed out that usually an overlay would be provided showing the sweep of trailers and other vehicles, and where front and rear wheels would clear the delivery access. The site looked very tight when he applied such an overlay, and the plan might lose a couple of parking spaces on the west end of the center aisle, in order for the turning radii to be sufficiently sized. Township Planner Frey noted that the traffic engineer had also called out this situation in his review.

Commissioner Zawodny further commented that the first bank of parking appeared to be configured so as to try and miss some of the existing trees. Perhaps this could be looked at further, because with the drive and parking configuration as shown, the first accessible parking space was placed at a sharp, acute angle, making it difficult to use. Adding the sidewalk connection would impact the area further.

Commissioner Zawodny said that items in the traffic consultant's review letter would need to be resolved. The 20'x20' shed would need to be removed, as noted. He asked the applicants to address the Fire Department's comments relative to the storage tank.

Ms. Kelly said that the Fire Department's listed items had been resolved, and a letter had been received from the State of Michigan stating the site was in compliance. The on-site fuel tanks were also brought into compliance, and were inspected today, with a letter received stating that they were de-tagged, certified and in compliance. This information would be part of the resubmittal package.

Ms. Kelly said that the plan had been updated to show that all structures had been labeled identifying their use. The evacuation plan was diagrammed with the safest emergency exit routes, and all exits and doors had been labeled. There were no known hazardous materials aside from the gas tank, which had been certified. They had made a note of the one fire hydrant on site and they would comply with any additional hydrants that would need to be added in the future. They would use a KNOX box 3200 for the building, and a KNOX padlock on the manual gate. These improvements should be complete by the end of the week.

Secretary Watson brought the matter back to the Commission for discussion and/or a motion.

**MOTION by McCall, support by Herrmann**, in the matter of PSPR22-0001, Imagine Fam, LLC, 19275 Gerald Street, that the Planning Commission approve the site plan, with the following conditions:

1. Administrative review and approval of resubmittal showing resolution of all issues listed in the March 3, 2022 Fire Department review letter, the February 21, 2022 Traffic Engineer review letter, and the March 9, 2022 Township Planner review letter.
2. Administrative review and approval of resubmittal showing resolution of issues discussed during tonight's meeting and reflected in these minutes, regarding turning radii for incoming trucks and trailers serving the landscape portion of the business, and for emergency vehicle use.

**Roll call vote:** Ayes: Gandhi, Herrmann, McCall, Watson, Zawodny

Nays: None

**Motion approved 5-0.**

**2. Public Hearing**

**PSLU22-0001**

**Site Plan Review**

Representative:	Thomas J. Ryan
Owner:	JS Beck Rd., LLC w/option, Hardies Family Trust
Location:	47500 Six Mile Rd. and Parcel ID# 77 032 99 0017 0005
Request:	New childcare facility
Action:	Approve, Approve with Conditions, Postpone, Deny

Referencing her March 14, 2022 letter, Township Planner Frey gave the background and review for this application for site plan approval for a new childcare facility at 47500 Six Mile Road, in a single family residential district, where a childcare facility is a special land use.

Special land uses are uses which because of their unique characteristics require specific locational consideration. The Planning Commission reviews the request against the subjective special land use criteria as outlined in the ordinance, relative to the proposed layout and the use, in order to make a decision regarding approving the use. The zoning classification would not change.

The proposal is for a 16,300 square foot building on 1.78 acres. There were three vacant lots on this northwest corner of Six Mile and Beck Roads; the two lots that were closest to the intersection were the subject of this proposal.

Criteria for special land use review include:

- Compatibility with adjacent uses. The proposed special land use shall be designed and constructed in a manner that is harmonious with the character of the adjacent property and the surrounding area. The special land use shall not create a significant detrimental impact, as compared to the impacts of permitted uses.
  - All of the property in the immediate area was developed as residential. The northeast and southwest corners were single family residential and the southeast corner of the intersection was attached multiple family residential.

- The proposed use will bring more activity to the location primarily in terms of people, traffic, and lighting, than if the site were to develop as single family.
  - The appearance of the intersection would have more of a non-residential or commercial character.
  - A one story childcare center was proposed. As designed, the site was higher than the developed residential along the north property line, being 11.41' to 13.68' higher than the ground elevations of the homes to the north, with the tallest portion being 53.41'-55.68' taller than neighboring residential.
  - 13 parking spaces were at elevation 845.6, approximately 9' higher than the ground elevation of the home to the north.
  - Headlight glare could be an issue, especially in winter.
  - Setback requirements would be met. The 50' required setback was provided along the west property line, and 70' – 85' were provided along the north property line.
- Compatibility with the Master Plan. The proposed special land use shall be compatible with and in accordance to the goals and objectives of the Township Master Plan, and any associated sub areas or corridor plans.
    - The property was not subject to any specific sub area and corridor plans.
    - In 2017 the Planning Commission reviewed the future land use map and confirmed the single family designation for the subject properties. It was further discussed in 2017 that future development of the parcels should be developed to be compatible with the density of the single family to the north.
    - When these properties had been listed for sale, the Township had received a number of inquiries about changing the land use designation to commercial, and the direction given in response was that commercial was inconsistent with the Master Plan. Land use goals and strategies identified in the Master Plan that support the single family residential future land use designation include:
      - o Provide a range of housing options; perhaps a cluster option would be considered.
      - o The Master Plan recognized the need for smaller commercial on the west side of the Township. In the 2007 Master Plan, it was concluded that intent was met in part by the limited commercial that was either planned or approved at the time, at the corner of Five Mile and Sheldon, Six mile and Ridge (including a day care), and the commercial at Seven Mile and Napier. Commercial had also been approved as part of the Village at Northville PUD. A day care on Beck Road was approved as a special land use, with the condition that the existing house be converted to the daycare, to maintain the residential character and keep the size of the business small.
      - o Accommodate additional commercial or regional commercial only at locations on the periphery of the Township where traffic can be accommodated, and not to have non-residential uses at every intersection. The Township has successfully adhered to minimizing non-residential land uses at intersections within residential areas.
      - o Comprehensive Master Plan update planned to begin in 2022. The Planning Commission may find it valuable to go through the master plan process

before committing to developing the subject parcels as a non-residential land use.

- Traffic Impact. The proposed special land use shall be located and designed in a manner that will minimize the impact on traffic, taking into consideration pedestrian access and safety, vehicle trip generation, types of traffic, access location and design, circulation and parking design, street capacity, and traffic operations at nearby intersections and access points.
  - Traffic Consultant LaMourie will discuss traffic impact.
- Impact on Public Services. The site can be served by essential public services.
- Compliance with zoning ordinance standards. The proposed special land use shall be designed, constructed, operated and maintained to meet the intent of the zoning districts and the site shall be able to comply with all applicable ordinance requirements.
  - Intent of the ordinance is to provide greater visual and physical buffer between higher intensity non-residential uses and residential uses, including a greater setback.
  - If 13 parking spaces facing the home to the north are retained, a decorative brick or stone wall could be used to eliminate headlight glare into the abutting neighborhood.
- Impact on the Environment. The proposed special land use shall not unreasonably impact the quality of the natural features and the environment in comparison to the impacts associated with typical permitted uses.
  - The impact on the environment and the natural features would be very similar, whether developed as detached residential or this proposed childcare facility.
- Specific Special Land Use Requirements required compliance with the use specific requirements for child care.
- The planning commission shall also consider the following factors when reviewing a special land use.
  - The nature and character of the activities, processes, materials, equipment or conditions of operation associated with the use.
  - Vehicular circulation and parking areas.
  - Hours of operation.
  - Outdoor activity, storage, and work areas.
  - Production of traffic, noise, vibration, smoke, fumes, dust, glare and light.

The Planning Commission's task tonight after hearing the reviews and reading review letters, taking public comment, and hearing the applicant's presentation, is to determine if a non-residential use is appropriate for this location, or if additional analysis is needed to take place on a broader scale as part of the future Master Plan update.

The Planning Commission should consider the conditions listed on page 4 of the review letter, if the Commission finds that the daycare meets the criteria and objectives for special land use approval:

1. Eliminate the parking facing the residential to the north or require a decorative screen wall to eliminate headlight glare, and provide the required number of parking spaces per the zoning ordinance.
2. Prohibit a ground sign or require the ground sign be unlit, to minimize the non-residential appearance at the intersection.
3. Compliance with all other applicable zoning ordinance requirements.
4. Provide the amount of setback from the north and west property lines, and ensure this would be maintained and not reduced as the plans went through site plan approval.

Township Planner Frey concluded her remarks.

Referencing his March 6, 2022 letter, Traffic Consultant Pete LaMourie made the following points:

- Regarding the proposed site access, there was a concern that the proposed placement of the access would result in a poor offset with Horseshoe Drive on the south side of Six Mile Road.
- All three vacant parcels should be considered as one access standpoint so the shared driveway could be aligned with Horseshoe Drive at the outset.
- If not done at the outset the Township should consider a condition requiring this proposed driveway be relocated to align with Horseshoe Drive as a shared driveway if/when the third/west parcel redevelops.
- Right-in, right-out driveways often lead to misuse and subsequent safety issues, and that type of driveway is not recommended for this site to and from Beck Road.
- Per the impact study findings, a westbound right-turn deceleration lane should be constructed on Six Mile Road at the site driveway.
- Regarding the traffic impact study:
  - Proposed use is projected to generate approximately 180 morning peak hour trips and 182 afternoon peak hour trips.
  - With adjustments to the signal operations all the movements at the Beck/Six Mile intersection will operate at an acceptable level even with background and site traffic added, except for the eastbound left turn movement that is expected to operate at a level of service E with site traffic added.
- The following suggestions should be considered:
  - Confirmation from Wayne County of acceptance of signal adjustments.
  - The Township should continue to work with Wayne County on long-term improvements to the Beck Road corridor.

#### Commission discussion and questions

- Commissioner McCall noted that the 6 Mile and Beck intersection was very busy with many traffic accidents. Putting a commercial enterprise at this corner would limit future solutions, such as a roundabout.



Traffic Consultant LaMourie commented that a roundabout at this intersection would need to be multi-lane, which would not be pedestrian-friendly. If that was a direction the Township wanted to go for this corner, some land might need to be reserved to preserve the option for that type of solution.

- Commissioner Herrmann asked if the same traffic issues would exist if a new residential use would go on the site.

Township Planner Frey said if all 3 parcels were redeveloped with a cluster option under the existing single-family zoning, potentially 6 residential units could be developed on the site. If through the Master Plan process low density multi-family use was considered, perhaps 4 units an acre might be developed, or 12 units total, again including the third vacant lot.

Traffic Consultant LaMourie said even at 15-20 residential units, peak hour traffic would still be 10% of the proposed use. For instance, low-level multi-family use would generate 15 trips during the morning peak hour, vs. 180 for the proposed day care.

- Secretary Watson asked how “peak hour” was defined.

Traffic Consultant LaMourie said this varied from intersection to intersection, with standard practice counting vehicle trips between 7am and 9am, and in the afternoon between 4pm and 6pm, and within that time period finding the peak 60 minutes. Available software further analyzed the peak 15 minutes within the peak hour; the goal was to analyze worst-case conditions. In tonight's case, the morning peak was 7am to 8am and the afternoon peak was 4:30pm to 5:30pm.

- Secretary Watson asked why the Traffic Consultant's review only mentioned impacting the traffic on the eastbound left turn when eastbound 6 Mile Road backs up from approximately 6:30am on, a situation that was worsened by high school traffic when school was in session.

Traffic Consultant LaMourie said that proposed mitigation included revising the signal timing to give more green light time to traffic on 6 Mile Road traveling from Beck Road. Beck Road would get slightly worse, but 6 Mile Road traffic could itself get slightly better. If the high school traffic was causing severe bottlenecks, perhaps that situation should be looked at separately. He noted that it was not usually incumbent upon a site to fix an issue that was occurring down the road.

Secretary Watson said that including the high school traffic was very important because it would likely be impossible for someone at the day care to turn left to get in the queue to go eastbound on 6 Mile.

- Commissioner McCall pointed out that traffic leaving this site would travel downhill going north and downhill going west. Traveling west might be particularly unsafe because of the way the lights were situated in that direction.

Traffic Consultant LaMourie explained that the installation of a westbound right turn lane would alleviate that situation.

Secretary Watson invited the applicants to make their presentation.

Members of the development team present this evening included:

- Jeff Klatt, Kreiger Klatt Architects, 2120 E. Eleven Mile Road, Royal Oak
- Jeff Schmitz, Premier Academy, owner and developer
- Angela Innaimo, Premier Academy, 155 Romeo Road, Rochester
- Thomas Ryan, PC, 2055 Orchard Lake Road, Sylvan Lake
- Mike Peterson, Civil Engineer, Novak & Fraus, 46777 Woodward Ave., Pontiac
- Hailey Savola, Rowe Professional Services, 27280 Haggerty Rd. Suite C-2, Farmington Hills

Mr. Klatt made the following points:

- They were requesting special land use approval for a proposed Premier Academy development.
- The proposed project was designed to meet or exceed all ordinance requirements.
- They were requesting consideration of a landscape screen around the property line, in order to provide a more natural screen.
- The development team reached out to surrounding property owners to get their input, including the immediate neighbor to the north.
- Updated site plans had been distributed this evening.

Ms. Innaimo gave an overview of Premier Academy's history and philosophy. Premier Academy had opened in 2009, and the proposed development would be Premier Academy's fifth location. Premier Academy offered both traditional and Montessori curriculum, and accepted children from six weeks to kindergarten level. A typical day started out with just a few teachers at 6:30am, for the before care program, and the Academy finished at 6:30pm. Academic instruction occurred between 9am to 3pm. Parents pick up their children throughout the day, with the busiest pick-up time around 3pm, and with the remainder of the children picked up on a scattered schedule until 6:30pm. With the current facilities, 80% of the children live within a 3 mile radius of the facility, and the Academy traffic would be the same traffic that was on the road already. Premier Academies blended in with their surrounding communities, and the schools were complementary to the surrounding neighborhoods. School activities were not disruptive to the neighborhood environment.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Klatt showed the project location and overall site design. They were showing 3.24 overall acres for the R-2 parcel. The surrounding neighbors were also zoned R-2, except for the neighbors to the north who were zoned RC residential cluster.

Regarding the site plan:

- The building was proposed to be 16,800 square feet and would be located in the center of the site.

- Access was shown on Six Mile, close to the western border and as far from Beck Road as possible.
- Parent drop off area would be at the front of the site near the front door, facing Six Mile.
- A natural vegetative screen was shown at the north and west side yards. They felt this was a better choice than a wall, because there were many existing trees that already straddle the property line. New trees would also be added.
- Outdoor play areas would be at the rear of the building.
- Circulation on the site would consist of a two way traffic loop around the building, with parking around the perimeter.
- The ordinance required 65 parking spaces; 67 were provided. They were proposing an evergreen shrub row to shield the 13 north spaces from the northern neighbors. They were open to providing a wall if the Commission felt that was a better choice, or possibly land banking those spaces.

#### Regarding the landscape plan

- Dense deciduous and coniferous vegetation was provided along north and west side yards.
- Includes several tree and shrub planting species.
- Renderings showed the landscaping as it would appear after 3-4 years of maturity.
- The site plan distributed this evening highlighted areas where new shrubs would screen the neighbors from headlight glare, including to the north of the 13 parking spaces, and at the northwest corner of the loop drive.

#### Overall site comments

- A section rendering showed that the height of the property is higher than its neighbors, and showed the location of the building in the middle of the site.

Ms. Savola reviewed the traffic impact study. The worst case scenario impact at Beck and 6 Mile Roads showed 180 trips in the am peak hours and 182 trips in the pm peak hours, as already described. Existing level of service was acceptable in the morning peak times. In the afternoon, the westbound approach operated at an "F" level of service.

The future level of service with the added trips, and improvements to the signal timing adjustments, showed the pm peak time improving, but the eastbound left turn movement would operate at a level of service "D."

Mr. Klatt showed a floor plan of the single-story building. The front door would be in the middle of the southern façade. A large gym area would be at the back of the building with views to the outside.

The exterior façade showed a traditional building style, designed to complement the surrounding single family homes. High end timeless materials such as brick and limestone would be used across the entire façade. The windows would be scaled and sized similar to single family homes. The building would have a hip roof. The rear

elevation showed the number of windows in that portion of the façade, as well as the play area.

Mr. Ryan reviewed the special land use process, which he described as similar to site plan approval, except with more formal requirements. The childcare/school use was recognized by the ordinance as a special land use appropriate in the R-2 zoning district, which could be approved at the discretion of the Planning Commission. Mr. Ryan made the following points regarding the ordinance standards for this special land use:

- Compatibility with the adjacent uses. Mr. Ryan disagreed with the Township Planner's comment in her review letter that Premier Academy would present a non-residential character at this corner. The applicant had taken care to ensure that the landscaping along the north side of Six Mile Road, and on Beck Road, would render the use unobtrusive. High-end building materials, landscaping, and the residential design of the building would provide a less visual impact than a normal non-residential building. Vehicle glare would be addressed by the landscape screen wall along the 13 parking spaces to the north and at the northwest corner of the loop drive.
- Compatibility with the Master Plan. A special land use approval was allowed for the proposed development if it met the special land use criteria. Since child care use was historically and customarily adjacent to a residential use, the proposed use was less non-residential than another use might be. The applicants did not believe that further master plan study was necessary, as the proposed use would comply with existing ordinances and met the criteria for a special land use.
- Traffic impact. The traffic situation at Beck and 6 Mile was not great but the proposed use would impact that situation only minimally, and the applicant was not responsible for the traffic down the road. Traffic impact was not a reason to turn down this request, because the traffic situation already exists.
- Impact on public services. There was no impact on public services.
- Compliance with Zoning Ordinance Standards. The proposal was compliant with zoning ordinance standards.
- Environment. There was no impact on the environment.
- Specific Special Land Use Requirements. All specific special land use requirements will be met, and the factors called out in the review letter regarding special land use had also been met.

Mr. Ryan concluded that they believed all requirements for a special land use had been met or exceeded. They would be happy to consider any reasonable conditions on the use.

#### Further Planning Commission discussion and questions

Commissioner McCall said that while he liked Premier Academy generally, he was concerned about this use on this corner, which had such heavy traffic.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gandhi, Ms. Innaimo said the Premier Academy on 7 Mile Road served people within 5-10 minutes of that location. The infant program was wait-listed, and the facility was enrolling students faster than anticipated.

Their other three facilities were located in Oakland Township, Rochester Hills, and Macomb.

Commissioner McCall expressed concern that with the height of the property and the new trees being planted, shadows would be cast on the residential homes in the winter, and would slow the snow melt.

Secretary Watson referred to the section rendering of the proposed building, regarding the compatibility with adjacent land use. While she also liked the Premier Academy business model, a commercial use such as this one dramatically leveled the site, creating a different grade than the surrounding area, affecting the ability of the building and parcel to blend in with the neighbors.

In response to questions from Secretary Watson, Ms. Savola explained that only the pm peak hours were shown for future level of service, because that was where level of service could worsen and therefore where the most concern was. The future am peak hours did not show any failing traffic movements; the future am level of service was very similar to the existing conditions.

Secretary Watson said that the façade shown as part of tonight's presentation showed more limestone than the façade in the packets.

Mr. Schmitz said they were proposing the limestone as shown tonight.

Secretary Watson noted that when the limestone was proposed for the facility on 7 Mile, the justification was given that the limestone fit in with the neighboring commercial buildings. The information in the packet showing more brick seemed to be more representative of a residential appearance. She did not feel the limestone offered a warm, residential feel to the façade.

Mr. Schmitz addressed the earlier question regarding the height of the site. He thought the raised elevation would allow the neighboring homeowners a view of the trees, and would place the building out of sight. There would be no light spreading to neighboring properties because of the elevation and added landscaping. They were proposing landscaping instead of the less expensive retaining wall to keep the residential feel.

Regarding the traffic impact study, Mr. Schmitz said that the 7 Mile Premier Academy facility was about 85% full, and there had been no impact on 7 Mile Road traffic. He said that 80% of the families using the proposed day care would live within a 3 mile radius, as demonstrated on the last slide of the PowerPoint presentation. Again, the parents were already on the roads, and would not add to the traffic burden. He had reached out to the neighbors and responded to their concerns. He felt this was the best and most viable use for the corner. He did not feel anyone would ever build single family homes on these lots.

Commissioner Herrmann said she loved the building that had been built on 7 Mile Road. Her biggest concern with the current proposal was the traffic, and she was concerned

regarding even a minimal impact on the existing traffic situation. This was the worst intersection in the Township, made worse by the high school being so close by. She also wondered how many people in the radius circles shown by the applicant actually had preschoolers. She asked if the applicants had the same radius data regarding the site on 7 Mile Road.

Ms. Innaimo said they had run the data for the 7 Mile site. They were not yet at full capacity, but data showed 86% of their student population came from within a five mile radius.

Secretary Watson said that Master Plans addressed traffic, and the role of the Master Plan and the Commission was planning. While Commissioners and residents might admire the Premier Academy business, the issues tonight were specific to this lot and whether the requested special land use application was appropriate to this location.

Secretary Watson opened the meeting to public comment at 8:46pm.

Dave Sherman, 17696 Lake View Circle, and President of the Hickory Creek Condominium Association, was concerned that the privately owned and maintained Association roads had the potential to be used as shortcuts by people accessing the day care facility and who wished to avoid the traffic light. Two thirds of the subject property would be paved, with a 9-foot elevation. Drainage was also a big concern, as was playground noise and car noise, that would carry further due to the greater height. Someone who looked out their windows right now and saw a distance would now look at the side of a banked elevation.

Dennis Pepino, 17555 Lakeview Circle, referenced the February 25, 2022 letter from the Hickory Creek Condominium Association that listed 12 concerns with this proposal. They had never been approached by Premier Academy and had never had conversations with them. Their biggest concern was volume and flow of traffic. People exiting from Premier Academy that wanted to go left would likely turn right and use the Hickory Creek subdivision street Arbor Trail to go through the subdivision to Beck Road. Again, this was a private road, privately maintained, and the incremental traffic increase from this use would hasten maintenance on the road, up to and including complete replacement. Regarding the green space, they did not want a barrier, but preferred trees and shrubs which would, however, need to be maintained. Another concern was drainage coming off the high elevation of the proposed development. Five residential properties abut the subject property, and improper drainage would flow into their basements, decks, and landscaping.

Township Planner Frey advised that the application was proposing underground detention, and the applicants had to meet Wayne County requirements that water cannot discharge off their site.

Rodney Hanna, 17500 Lake View Circle, said that the people who lived in the 90 units in Hickory Creek chose to live there because it was a tranquil area. Most of the residents were in their 50s or older; it was not a neighborhood of young families. They had worked

hard for years in order to be able to enjoy their surroundings, but this use would detract from the peace of their retirement years. He noted that the traffic from the high school was year round, due to summer activities. Traffic was already a problem. He asked the Commission to consider the existing residents. The proposed use did not belong at that corner.

Joe Stark, 17134 Lakeview Circle, echoed the concerns regarding traffic on 6 Mile Road, which he could see from his back yard. He did not think the idea that people were already on this part of the road was logical, based on the applicant's aerial view, which showed areas where people would access other high traffic roads to get where they needed to go. This use would add more traffic on 6 Mile.

Linda Malec, 20557 Wintergreen Circle, said the issues being discussed this evening related to the town hall meeting and other meetings that had addressed the traffic situation on Beck Road, and how the solution to that traffic would impact the Township. The issue tonight was whether the corner at 6 Mile and Beck should be commercial or should stay residential. She was also interested in whether the site was 1.78 acres or 3.24 acres. She noted that Public Services Director Belair had spoken about the dwindling amount of buildable residential lots in the Township; the Township should preserve as many of those as possible. She asked that the site stay residential; perhaps someone might want to construct large houses on these sites.

Hiroshi Kurumisawa, 47634 Arbor Trail, had 3 points: 1) Why here? There were other areas that could be used for this use. Commercial vehicles used Beck Road as a short cut between US-14 and I-696, and Beck Road was really busy. 2) This proposal represented a huge investment; if the business was not successful the property could be sold to another owner. Once this land was used for something other than residential, the Township would lose control. He asked that the financial status of the applicant be reviewed. 3) He was concerned about a decrease in property values.

Commissioner Herrmann advised that if the business were to fail, the property would have to be used as another day care or be returned to residential use. Township Planner Frey agreed. Any other use would require rezoning. The only other special land use that might be feasible on this property would be a church or house of worship.

Mary Lou Posq, 20560 Wintergreen Circle, was concerned that special land use applications and approvals were being used to force commercial activities into residential areas, as evidenced by issues on Wintergreen Circle. She felt the master plan process should be completed before allowing further significant commercial development in the Township. During the master plan process there would be opportunities for the public to speak.

Seeing that no other public indicated they wished to speak, Secretary Watson closed the public hearing at 9:07pm and brought the matter back to the Commission for discussion and/or a motion.

Commissioner Zawodny said that one of the most important issues being addressed by the Commission this evening was the concept of planning, as mentioned earlier by Secretary Watson. While the Premier Academy on 7 Mile Road was successful in scale and appropriate to that area, there was a difference between that site and the location being discussed this evening. The 7 Mile site was adjacent to property zoned for office use.

Commissioner Zawodny addressed the issues of traffic in this area, which were factual and accurate, and which he had personally experienced many times. However, the overall need to address planning for this area was perhaps greater than the traffic issue. Looking at this area long term, the Master Plan had established the area as residential, and there was no other commercial development within the immediate vicinity of this site. He believed the Commission should continue to look at this location as belonging to the R-2 residential district. That district allowed for approval of special land uses, but that approval should not be a result of a checklist response. Even if an applicant is able to check off the requirements, the request might not be granted. When he looked at the character of the site, and the character of what the residents had lived with for a long time, and seeing the openness of the land and rise and fall of the terrain that would remain if the property stayed residential, it was inevitable that there would be a significant difference with non-residential development.

Commissioner Zawodny noted that while comments had been made regarding elevating the site, the site plans showed good civil engineering. However, what the residents look at now on the south side of the Hickory Creek development would be significantly impacted by a development of this type. The Commission needed to decide whether the proposed use was appropriate in terms of planning for this location. Sometimes the decision was not whether something was the right thing, but rather if it was planned for the right spot. Perhaps there were other locations in the Township that could possibly better serve this excellent business. But at the present, as the Planning Commission was about to embark on a master plan study, Commissioner Zawodny felt it was more important for the Commission to maintain the spirit of the existing master plan in this area, and try to keep it residential. As a planner, he was not supportive of approving this special land use at this time.

Commissioner Gandhi agreed with the developer's point that much of the traffic coming to this site would already be on the road. He was more attuned to the issue of compatibility with adjacent properties and the fabric of the community. He liked the building on 7 Mile Road, but he did have concerns that the other corners of the 6 Mile and Beck Road intersection were almost all single-family, and adding a commercial use to the corner would change the look, feel and use of the property, even if it could be permitted as a special land use in the district.

Secretary Watson invited the applicant to respond to public and Commission comments.

Mr. Schmitz offered the following comments in response to resident concerns:



- Regarding traffic, the high school has a specific drop off time. Premier Academy's school day did not start until 9am and lasted until 3pm, with doors being open from 6:30am to 6:30pm, with staggered arrivals and departures.
- Regarding noise due to the elevation, the only noise would be from toddler noise in the playground area.
- The property was not a commercial piece of real estate. They were proposing a school for children. If the site was developed as a church it would likely have a school on site also.
- The limestone upgrades offer a richer look and feel as opposed to commercial real estate.
- It was true Beck Road was busy, but other day cares were located in similar areas, and parents would be dropping their children off somewhere, in any case.
- There were traffic issues with almost all the intersections in the Township.
- With the traffic issues, would anyone want to develop those parcels as single family residential?
- The \$350,000 landscape plan would help the site look residential. The project was in a residential development, and would blend with other residences in the area. Premier Academy was the best use for the corner. Traffic would be improved by the construction of acceleration/deceleration lanes. Overall the traffic was not under Township or applicant control, but was controlled by Wayne County.
- The applicants would do their best to make the site more residential, and to improve traffic as best they could.

Mr. Schmitz concluded his remarks.

Commissioner Herrmann said that in recent years people had built large, very expensive homes on corners of major intersections. Also, as mentioned a church could bring with it a school. However, traffic was still a concern.

Noting that only 5 Commissioners were present this evening, and that the public hearing was complete, Mr. Ryan requested that the Commission postpone action tonight, as the applicants would like to wait until more Commissioners were in attendance.

**MOTION by McCall, support by Herrmann**, that as requested by the applicant the Commission postpone action on PSLU22-0001, Special Land Use, 47500 Six Mile Rd. and Parcel ID#77 032 99 0017, to a future unspecified date.

Motion discussion

Township Planner Frey advised that there was never a guarantee that all Commissioners would be present for a meeting.

Mr. Ryan said that since there were only 5 commissioners present, and an approval would require 4 affirmative votes, they would like the opportunity to have more of the Commissioners present. The public hearing had been conducted pursuant to statute.

Township Planner Frey clarified that if the item was postponed, because the public hearing had been completed, the next time the request was heard it would be a public meeting, but not a formal public hearing, and there would be no individual notifications sent out. She encouraged the residents to sign up for the Township listserv in order to receive notification of agendas for meetings. The intent was for the matter to be heard at the April meeting, but residents should check the agenda to confirm the item was on the agenda.

Commissioners who were absent this evening would have the draft minutes to review. Even though the next meeting would not be public hearing, the Commission had a tradition of opening the podium for public comment for new comments. Everything said tonight would be on the record.

Commissioner McCall said his motion gave voice to the applicant's request. His understanding was that the motion to postpone could be denied, and the Commission could still act on the request this evening.

Commissioner Zawodny asked that since the applicants had formally presented their information this evening, what would be different at the next meeting?

Secretary Watson asked the applicant if the request for postponement was because there will be changes to the presentation at the next meeting.

Mr. Schmitz said he felt they needed to investigate traffic impacts further, and he also wanted to investigate the elevation concerns, and wanted to have clarity regarding satisfying some of the issues brought up, including stormwater runoff. He had not been prepared for the concern communicated this evening about the site being developed as a school for children.

Secretary Watson summarized some of the issues that had been raised, including traffic at the Beck and 6 Mile intersection, and compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. While she was opposed to the plan as presented, she felt that if all 3 vacant parcels were combined, there was a way to develop the parcel in a more residential manner. However, she was not recommending that purchase specifically.

Mr. Schmitz said he wanted to investigate why they could not have a curb cut off of 6 Mile Road, and he would look into their ability to purchase the 3<sup>rd</sup> property. He believed this was the right site for this use.

Secretary Watson thought it was important for the applicant to come back with some changes to the plan based on tonight's discussion.

Commissioner Herrmann said this was a tough decision. The Commission needed to make correct decisions on behalf of the Township, the developer, and the residents. The residents next to this site were not in favor of this development. She emphasized that she loved what Premier Academy did, and she loved the development on 7 Mile Road. Like the other commissioners, she was not sure the development was right for this

location. Whatever was built on this corner should feel like an amenity to the existing residents. She also pointed out that many of the people in the 5 mile radius as shown on the aerial would not be Northville residents. She cautioned the applicants against buying the third parcel thinking if they did that the project would be approved; it still might be denied.

Mr. Schmitz said he understood that.

Commissioner Zawodny added that just trying something slightly different did not mean automatic approval when the applicants came back to the Commission. He was still concerned regarding the bigger picture of planning in general and compatibility with the master plan. He had heard the residents this evening, and he knew what the character of the area was.

Commissioner Zawodny said he was concerned whether the request for postponement simply reflected that there 5 commissioners present this evening, and receiving 4 out of 5 affirmative votes was a low probability. He felt it important that the applicants try to meet with the residents, and those residents should be given the opportunity to speak at the next meeting.

Township Planner Frey said there was always the ability to offer public comment. She advised that if an additional parcel was acquired or a substantially different plan was brought to the Commission, that would be considered a new plan and the process would start over. In any event, there would be opportunity to offer public comment at the next meeting.

Commissioner Herrmann commented that the Commission wanted to serve the residents as best they could. It was easy for residents to sign up for notification of meetings and agendas. She suggested a little latitude be given to the public in allowing them to speak at the next meeting. If the intent was to have two extra commissioners present to hear one side of the story it was only fair to allow them to hear both sides.

Secretary Watson acknowledged Mr. Kurumisawa from the audience. Mr. Kurumisawa, speaking again, addressed the potential for developing the parcels as residential homes. He encouraged the applicant to find a different location for the school.

Commissioner McCall said his motion would allow a vote on the applicant's request to postpone. If the Commission wanted to address the issue tonight they should vote against the motion.

In response to a question from Township Planner Frey, Mr. Ryan said they would like to postpone to a future unspecified date, to allow time for the applicants to address the issues further. The motion maker and motion second agreed to this language.

At the request of Secretary Watson, Township Planner Frey explained that if the application included minor modifications of what was presented this evening, the

motion would allow the application to be placed on a future agenda as a continuation of tonight's meeting. If the plan had major changes in terms of, for example, floor plan, setbacks, etc., a new application would need to be submitted and the process would start over.

Secretary Watson acknowledged correspondence received regarding this application from:

- Feb. 25, 2022, Hickory Creek Condominium Board of Directors, listing 12 concerns.
- Mar. 21, 2022, JoAnne Evangelista, Stonewater Subdivision, requesting denial.
- Received Mar. 14, 2022, Robert Ghannam, 47435 Arbor Trail, listing some concerns.
- Mar. 22, 2022, Lisa Weeg-Styers, no address given, opposing the project.

Secretary Watson called the vote.

**Roll call vote:** Ayes: Gandhi, Herrmann, McCall, Watson

Nays: Zawodny

Commissioner Zawodny said he opposed the motion on the basis that it was for postponement of action on the plan as presented this evening, and would allow the plan to be heard again without substantial changes.

**Motion to postpone approved 4-1.**

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

None

### **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

Township Planner Frey:

- Master Plan Project – Consultant interviews April 7 & 8
- Pathway Subcommittee update – 2022 pathway priority projects

Mindy Herrman, Board of Trustees

- Master Plan Selection Committee
- Pathway Subcommittee update

Milan Gandhi, Zoning Board of Appeals

- March meeting update

### **EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Linda Malec, 20557 Wintergreen Circle:

- Commented regarding the March Zoning Board of Appeals meeting.
- Was disappointed that the Commission did not vote on the site plan for Premier Academy this evening.

- Gave an example of someone who was currently building a big house on a main road; she did not feel the applicant was correct in saying the corner of 6 Mile and Beck could not be developed as residential.

Commission Herrmann suggested, and the Commission discussed, the need for the Planning Commission to have an educational session regarding moving forward with the master plan update.

Commissioner Zawodny encouraged everyone to participate in Michigan State University's process to certify as a Citizen Planner.

Secretary Watson acknowledged Ms. Malec's comments, and spoke to the housing shortage not only in Northville, but throughout the country.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by Zawodny, support by McCall**, to adjourn the meeting at 10:12 pm.

**Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.**