

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF NORTHVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION
May 16, 2022**

DATE: May 16, 2022
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: Township Hall

APPROVED: July 26, 2022

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chair Wilk at 6:04pm.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Milan Gandhi
Mindy Herrmann
Edward McCall
Jayne Watson
Gary Yang
Mathew Wilk
Tim Zawodny

Excused: None.

Staff: Public Works Director Robert Belair
Township Attorney Ernest Essad

CORRESPONDENCE:

May 16, 2022 letter from Cindy Victor, Kus, Ryan & Associates, PLLC, Attorneys at Law.

BRIEF PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

1. Public Hearing:

PSPR21-0006

Representative:

Owner:

Location:

Request:

Action:

Site Plan Review

Michael Rossen, General Manager

Meadowbrook Country Club

40941 Eight Mile Rd.

New Maintenance Facility - Review Conditions of Approval from
4-26-2022 Meeting

Approve, Approve with Conditions, Postpone, Deny

Referencing Township Planner Frey's April 28, 2022 review letter, Public Works Director Belair and Chair Wilk gave the background and review for this application for Site Plan Review, for a new maintenance facility at 40941 Eight Mile Rd. The Planning Commission reviewed the Site Plan at their 4-26-2021 meeting and approved the Site Plan with four

conditions, which needed to be addressed and resubmitted to the Planning Commission for final approval.

Additionally, at the 4-26-2022 meeting the Commission acknowledged the special land use conditions of approval had been satisfied.

The four conditions for final approval were:

1. Eliminate the building lights on the west side of the building, if not required by building code.
2. Enhance screening of the parking lot areas on the north and south sides of the building from the west, via methods beyond landscaping; such as a wall or fence.
3. Present an option(s) to consider alternative design details to enhance the west side of the building.
4. Modify landscaping treatment on the west side of the building to utilize a variety of plant material size to better replicate a natural environment at time of planting, placement of plant material east to west to minimize/deflect views of west building wall and provide mix of plant material to create four season interest.

Todd Callaway, 45426 Pebble Beach, Northville, MI, and Ross Hoekstra, McIntosh Poris Associates, 36801 Woodward Ste. 200, Birmingham MI, were present on behalf of this application for a Site Plan Review.

Mr. Callaway made the following points:

- They put a lot of thought into how to address the four conditions.
- Their primary drivers were to keep the solutions as natural as possible and to provide as many day-one solutions as possible.
- They wanted to offer multiple options for consideration.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Hoekstra made the following points.

- In response to Condition One: Eliminate the building lights on the west side of the building, if not required by building code.
 - The wall lighting on the west side of the building has been eliminated.
 - The lights are not required by code since there are no means of egress on the west side of the building.
- In response to Condition Two: Enhance screening of the parking lot areas on the north and south sides of the building, from the west, via methods beyond landscaping; such as a wall or fence.
 - A four-foot tall masonry screen has been added to the northwest and southwest corner of the building to block the drive aisles.
 - At the northwest corner, this wall will tie into the parking screen wall along the north parking spaces.
 - At this height, the proposed wall would block the headlights of vehicles including trucks in the drive aisles.

- In response to Condition Three: Present an option(s) to consider alternative design details to enhance the west side of the building. Three options were presented. Each option matched the existing character of the clubhouse and met the zoning ordinance for a minimum of 80% of facade to be full dimensional brick.
 1. Paint the west wall to resemble half-timbering consistent with the clubhouse. This would be fully implemented at completion of construction, and give time for the proposed landscaping element to fill in and screen the building.
 2. Install a vinyl forest graphic.
 - UV stable for up to five years.
 - Would blend in with proposed new landscaping, making the wall look further away from Wintergreen Circle.
 - They have used the material as a temporary cover before, and the material is commonly used for large scale graphics on buildings.
 - This would be fully implemented at completion of construction, and give time for the proposed landscaping element to fill in and screen the building.
 3. Grow ivy on the wall.
 - The most natural, landscape-forward solution.
 - The closest to the existing condition of the tree-line at the rear of the Wintergreen property.
 - The ivy would take time to mature, and would not fully screen the wall at the time construction is complete.

- In response to Condition Four: Modify landscaping treatment on the west side of the building to utilize a variety of plant material size to better replicate a natural environment at time of planting, placement of plant material east to west to minimize/deflect views of west building wall and provide mix of plant material to create four season interest.
 - The landscape plan has been revised to include a variety of plant material size to replicate a more natural setting.
 - 10' and 14' trees have been substituted for previously scheduled 8' trees.
 - Previously open areas close to Wintergreen Circle have been filled in with additional landscaping, raising the replacement trees amount from 202" to 247".
 - The addition of more irregularly spaced trees in the Wintergreen front yard makes the west wall more difficult to see.

Commission questions and discussion:

Commissioner Herrmann:

- Was looking for greater architectural detail.
- Was not a fan of the Tudor columns, citing the plain building being overwhelmed by the Tudor elements, lack of uniformity and lack of symmetry.
- She was not a fan of the murals.
- The ivy was fine, but she was concerned about the immediate need, which would not be met by the ivy.
- Expressed support for the removal of the lighting and the screening wall.

- She suggested the screening wall could be raised to 6' at both ends.
- Would like to see some larger evergreens added.
- Suggested leaving some trees to be removed in place until other trees could grow.
- Her preference for Condition Three was the original brick, with more front and back definition of the building.

Commissioner McCall's preference for Condition Three was option two. He liked the forest mural, but was concerned about bird strikes. Could the ivy be planted to grow over the mural?

Mr. Ross said that the vinyl graphic would not make a good substrate for ivy. If the ivy was on furring strips the ivy could potentially grow behind the vinyl, and that might be an option.

Commissioner Watson:

- Like the attempt at bringing some elements of the club into the building with the Tudor style, but didn't think it was executed well.
- The maintenance facility at Northville Hills looks like a residential building. She was concerned about the industrial look of this building, and suggested alternating brick colors as a possible solution. The long expanse of brick was visually harsh.
- Her preference for Condition Three was option one.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gandhi, Mr. Ross made the following points.

- The vinyl option would be temporary, and the vinyl would UV degrade after about five years.
- The vinyl could be replaced after five years, or removed if the tree line had grown enough, leaving the brick wall.
- The ivy is hearty, and wouldn't have an issue surviving the winter.
- The ivy would probably need grommets or wire to help get started on the new building.
- Maintenance would be required to prevent the ivy from getting into the facade of the building.

Commissioner Gandhi stated that his preference for Condition Three was option two.

Commissioner Zawodny thanked the applicant for providing three options, and made the following points:

- He thought the brick screen walls should be taller to prevent headlight glare.
- He suggested extending the walls past the facade to create a layering effect, relative to the heights there, and repositioning some of the trees and creating ground cover in front of the wall.
- He called attention to the grade of the property, noting where it could be adjusted to create a base for the wall.
- AT 18' the building did take on an industrial character.
- The options needed more finesse and detailing relative to the homes on Wintergreen.

- He was not in favor of vinyl graphics because of UV failure and maintenance.
- He did not prefer any of the options for Condition Three.

Commissioner Zawodny distributed sketches showing an alternative treatment to the building's west side design and landscaping.

In response to questions from Commissioner Yang, Mr. Ross gave the following information:

- They projected that the ivy would grow halfway up the wall (7'-8') in five years and two-thirds up the wall in seven to eight years.
- The vinyl panels would be inset in relief panels.
- 25 trees are being preserved on the west side.
- They had not yet sought feedback from the neighbors regarding the three options.

Commissioner Yang commented on the importance of neighbor feedback. He suggested combining options two and three, i.e. vinyl and ivy. His preference for Condition Three was option two.

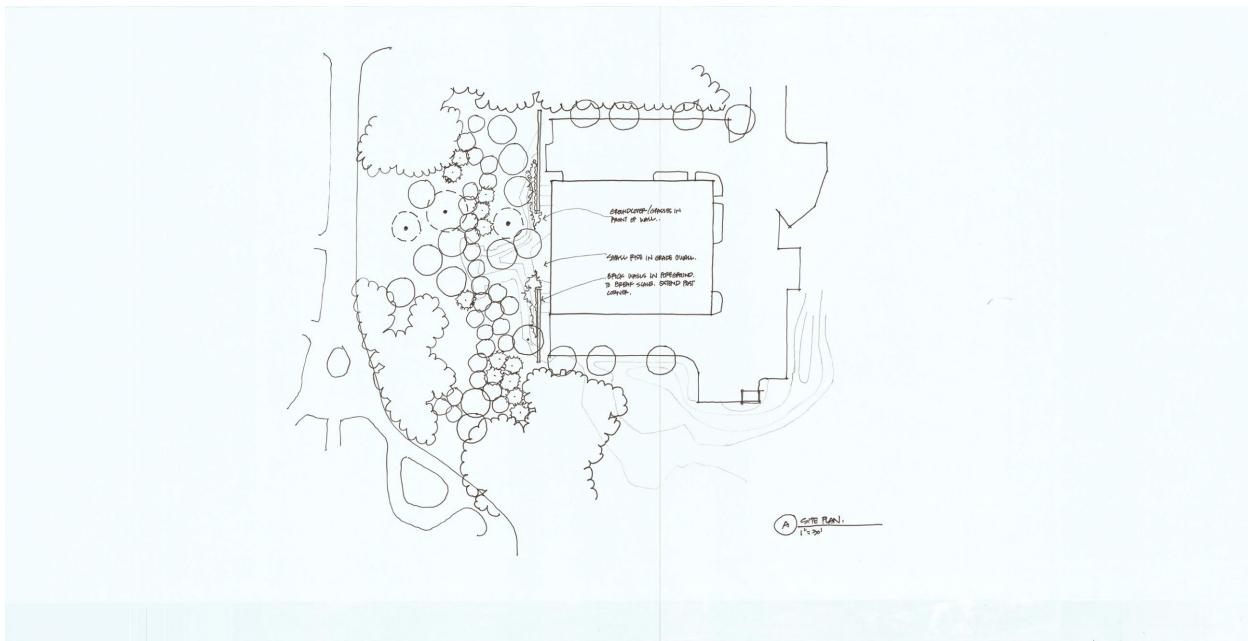
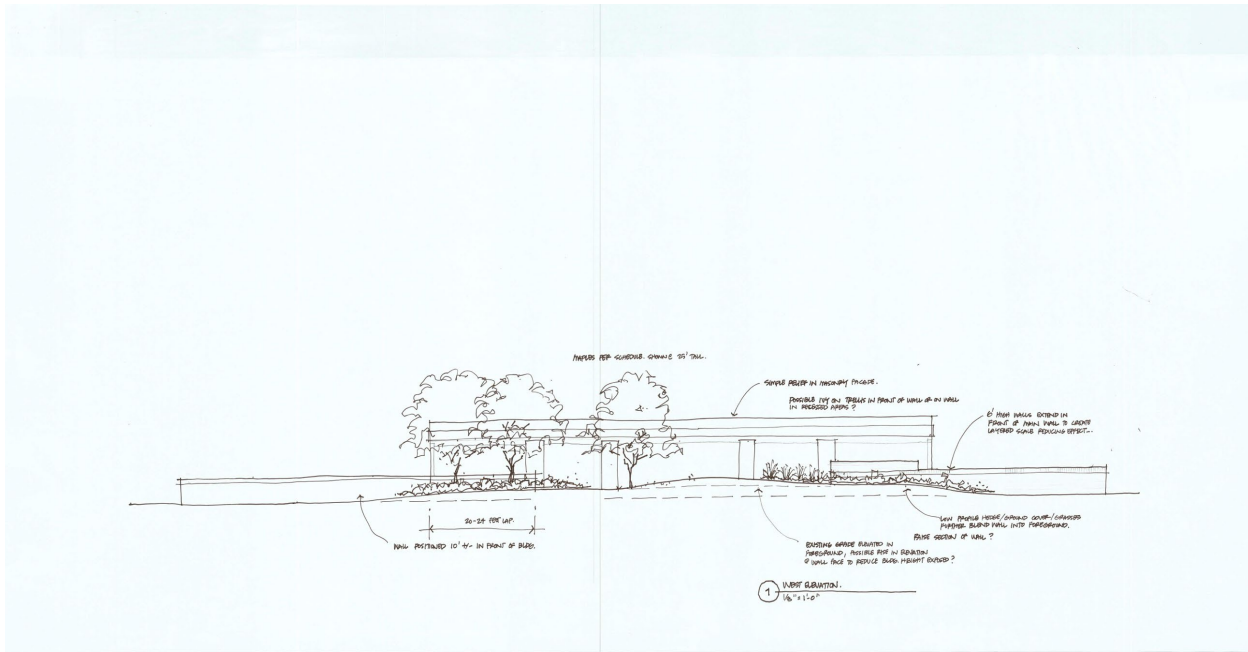
Chair Wilk noted that the consensus appeared to be to cover the building vs. beautifying the building. Commissioner Zawodny had distributed sketches which demonstrated camouflaging the building rather than covering it. Chair Wilk asked the Applicant if they would consider extending the walls past the facade with a layered affect as suggested by Commissioner Zawodny.

Commissioner Zawodny noted that extending the walls past the building would break up the façade of the long wall by creating a layered effect, thereby meeting the requirement of the zoning ordinance. The Commission had previously discussed whether the proposed corbels and pilasters addressed the zoning requirement for breaking up the long wall as well as its height; the brick relief/corbel approach could have emphasis on wider (24" or so) horizontal bands along the top of the wall and top of the screen walls, to reduce the vertical impact of the wall. Ivy could be added to mitigate how much brick was seen, and could be on a wire frame lattice 8" in front of the wall face so as not to degrade the masonry over time.

Also, the existing grade in front of the building had a 2'-3' rise with a shallow mound in the foreground. Perhaps the base of the wall could be unexposed concrete, and the grade be allowed to rise along the wall in the center, to visually shorten the wall.

Commissioner Herrmann expressed support for extending the walls as shown on Commissioner Zawodny's sketch.

Chair Wilk called a ten-minute recess at 6:44pm to allow the Applicants to study the drawing provided by Commissioner Zawodny:



Chair Wilk re-called the meeting to order at 6:54pm and asked the Applicants to comment on the plan for extending the walls and other suggestions as presented in the sketches provided by Commissioner Zawodny ("Zawodny option").

Mr. Ross stated that the Zawodny option constituted an acceptable proposal. He agreed that extending the walls gave a layered affect that would break up the wall, and would give them an opportunity for the additional grading as shown on the sketches.

Chair Wilk asked the Commission if there were any questions or comments in response to the Zawodny option.

Commissioner Herrmann expressed support for the Zawodny option, with its extended walls, with landscaping and possibly ivy. She supported not including vinyl panels or Tudor overlays.

Commissioner McCall also expressed support for the Zawodny option.

Commissioner Watson expressed support for the Zawodny option, and appreciated the use of grading, extending the walls and adding ivy in some of the insets.

Commissioner Gandhi expressed support for the grade change and ground cover on the Zawodny option.

Commissioner Yang expressed support for the Zawodny option, perhaps combined with ivy.

In response to a question from Commissioner Herrmann, Commissioner Zawodny said his drawing showed a six-foot design, and noted it could have an architectural detail band running across the top. However, the decision about height would be made at final design.

Chair Wilk also expressed support for extending the walls, as shown in the Zawodny option.

Chair Wilk opened the meeting to public comment at 7:00pm.

Linda Malec, 20557 Wintergreen Circle, Northville Township, stated concerns about the industrial look of the building, visible operations, and noise, air, and smell issues. She appreciated Commissioner Zawodny's sketches, but design solutions did not address operational issues. She was concerned about 25-foot maple trees, which would not provide shielding in the winter. She would like to see a lot of big trees put in at the onset. The Clubhouse had 2-3 rows of evergreens as a shield for the parking lot and roads. She thought all of the options were tacky; she didn't want to wait five years for a solution that might not be working, with no enforceability.

Mary Lou Posq, 20560 Wintergreen Circle, echoed Mrs. Malec's comments. She thanked Public Works Director Belair for communicating with the neighbors regarding this meeting, and providing them with a copy of the plans. She continued to be disappointed that the Commission gave special land use approval to this use. She asked the Commission to consider the letter from their counsel. She also expressed disappointment that Meadowbrook had not asked them for input. Wintergreen neighbors were also disappointed in Meadowbrook's lack of communication, regarding demolition, installation of a temporary construction fence, and so on, all of which was going on now. Meadowbrook should be communicating with the people their construction was most impacting.

Ms. Posa asked the Commission to hold off on the project until the Master Plan update was complete, and asked the Commission to pay attention to the letter received from their Counsel.

Robert Pado, 20631 Wintergreen Circle, Northville Township, advocated for requiring the applicant to plant 20' Spruce trees to hide the neighborhood's view of the building, and suggested faster growing ivy.

Tanya Pado, 20631 Wintergreen Circle, asked how the graphic would adhere to a brick building. She thought a 4' wall was too short; 6' – 8' would be ideal. She was concerned about noise and debris. She spoke in favor of taller trees to muffle the sound of operating machinery. She asked if the Zawodny option included moving the building.

Seeing that no other public indicated that they wanted to speak, Chair Wilk closed the public hearing at 7:15pm.

Chair Wilk summarized that the Zawodny option represented a 4th option that appeared to be acceptable to the applicants and favored by the Commission, and he indicated he was ready to entertain a motion.

MOTION by McCall, support by Herrmann, in the matter of PSPR21-006, Site Plan Review, Meadowbrook Country Club, 40941 Eight Mile Road, New Maintenance Facility, that the Planning Commission, having determined that conditions one through four listed in the April 26, 2022 motion are met, approves the site plan, subject to the following further conditions, which reference the sketches provided by Commissioner Zawodny and accepted by the applicants and the Planning Commission this evening, which conditions are subject to administrative review and approval:

1. Two 6' high masonry screening walls extend in front of and approximately 10' to the west of the maintenance building.
2. Screening walls overlap the building 20' to 24' to break up the west wall.
3. Simple relief – such as projections, corbels, etc. – be provided in the masonry at the top of building.
4. Ivy to grow on trellis in front of west building wall or at the building wall in recessed areas.
5. Existing grade to be elevated in the foreground, to the west of the six-foot walls, with a possible rise in elevation and wall facade to reduce exposed building height.
6. Landmark trees to remain in plan and in actuality.
7. Administrative review of the tree plan for variability of height and location, where possible.
8. Regarding the additional trees, the tree range go up a maximum of 18' for a minimum of 3 trees.

Motion discussion:

The sketches by Commissioner Zawodny, described by this list of conditions, will be included in the record of this meeting.

Commissioner Zawodny asked Meadowbrook to communicate better with the Wintergreen residents regarding the construction schedule.

Roll call vote: Ayes: Gandhi, Herrmann, McCall, Watson, Yang, Zawodny, Wilk
Nays: None.

Motion passed 7-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

None.

EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Linda Malec, 20557 Wintergreen Circle, was concerned about ivy spreading and damaging trees. She supported the use of staggered trees similar to the 8 Mile berm rather than ivy. She asked that elevation changes be kept to a minimum to prevent water flow changes.

Robert Pado, 20631 Wintergreen Circle, suggested Green Giant Arborvitae as a fast growing landscaping option.

Mary Lou Posg, 20560 Wintergreen Circle, thanked the Planning Commission for their efforts, noting the impact the Commission decision would have on the life of Wintergreen residents.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by McCall, support by Gandhi, to adjourn the meeting at 7:45pm.

Motion approved unanimously.