

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF NORTHVILLE  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
September 27, 2022**

**DATE:** September 27, 2022  
**TIME:** 7:00 PM  
**PLACE:** Township Hall

**APPROVED:** October 25, 2022

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

**ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Milan Gandhi  
Mindy Herrmann  
Edward McCall  
Jayne Watson  
Matthew Wilk  
Gary Yang

**Excused:** Tim Zawodny

**Staff:** Jennifer Frey, Township Planner

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Planning Commission – August 30, 2022

**MOTION by Hermann, support by Yang,** to approve the August 30, 2022 Planning Commission meeting minutes as published.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

None

**BRIEF PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Mary Lou Posa, 20560 Wintergreen Circle, made comments relative to the recent Master Plan Open House. She found the event extremely informative, and the consultants very helpful.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **PREZ22-0001**                      **Rezoning**  
Representative:                      Bob Belair, Northville Township, Director of Public Services

Owner: State Land Bank Authority  
Location: Parcel 77 071 99 0002 701 (north side of 5 Mile, between railroad track and Napier Rd.)  
Request: Rezoning parcel from ORT Office, Research & Technology to I-1 Industrial  
Action: Approve, Approve with Conditions, Postpone, Deny

Gary Roberts, Township Economic Development Consultant and MITC Planner, was present this evening. MITC (Michigan International Technology Center) is a shared initiative with Plymouth Township.

Referencing a map of the MITC Corridor, Consultant Roberts gave an update on development in the Corridor and the background for this request to rezone a parcel from ORT Office, Research & Technology to I-1 Industrial. The 85-acre subject parcel was bounded by the train tracks on the north and east, Napier Road on the west, and 5 Mile to the South.

The MITC Redevelopment Authority was a joint venture between Northville Township and Plymouth Township to create a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) capture district. The original zoning had been Industrial.

In 2018 the Township asked to rezone this and other parcels to ORT, in order to market to high profile office and research and technology users. However, the abutting landfill to the west in Salem Township was not attractive to those users, and the marketing effort had not been successful, except for the Zhongding Development, located on the eastern boundary of the Corridor.

In the meantime, Parcel 10, just south of Parcel 9 and located in Plymouth Township, was currently owned by the City of Detroit and was under contract with a Kansas City developer, who was proposing large buildings geared to the light assembly and distribution market. The Ridge 5 Corporate Park also had a user geared toward light assembly/light industrial uses. Parcel 14, to the east of Ridge 5 Corporate Park, was currently being developed by a company who had site plan approval for a 250,000sf building paralleling Ridge Road, with multiple buildings planned as future phases behind the 250,000 sf building.

Northville Lumber was proposing to locate on Parcel 9, tonight's subject site. Northville Lumber had a positive corporate profile, and the landfill will not impact their image. Other inquiries have come in for the remaining approximate 50 acres on parcel 9, for mixed-uses appropriate to industrial zoning.

The MITC Redevelopment Authority had received ~\$2.6M in grants, which has been put toward engineering and bringing utilities to the Corridor. Future TIF capture will fund road improvement and construction.

From a land use standpoint, the Township was requesting that Parcel 9 be zoned light industrial in its entirety.

In response to questions, Consultant Roberts provided the following information:

- Rezoning to I-1 would not reduce the price per acre, and might increase the price. Right now the properties were marketed at \$150K per acre.
- The intersection at 5 Mile and Ridge will be completely rebuilt.

Referencing her September 22, 2022 review letter, Township Planner Frey reviewed the request for rezoning 81.6 acres of vacant land on the northeast corner of 5 Mile and Napier from ORT Office, Research & Technology, to I(Industrial) against the criteria in the Zoning Ordinance (Section 170-43.5). The rezoning request had been initiated by the Township.

1. *Consistency with the goals, policies and future land use map of the Charter Township of Northville Master Plan, including any subarea or corridor studies. If conditions have changed since the Master Plan was adopted, the rezoning may be found to be consistent with recent development trends in the area.*

Even though the future land use map identifies the property as research and development, the landfill is located immediately west of the proposed rezoning, in Salem Township. The land south of Five Mile, in Plymouth Township, is zoned industrial and is under contract with a large scale distribution developer. The property immediately to the north is approved for a DTE substation.

The Township has entered into a purchase agreement with Northville Lumber to purchase the westernmost 25 acres, at the intersection of 5 Mile & Napier, for a new lumber yard and design center. The rezoning is a requirement of the purchase agreement and will allow the lumber use. In response to rezoning the balance of the parcel to industrial, the majority of inquiries the Township has received for development of this property are uses that are more industrial in nature. Physically, it makes sense because the property is separated from adjacent township property to by an elevated railroad grade, creating a natural separation to future abutting uses.

2. *Compatibility of the site's physical, geological, hydrological and other environmental features with all uses permitted in the proposed zoning district compared to uses permitted under current zoning.*

The property is equally suitable and compatible for uses in the industrial district and ORT. Additionally, as the landowner, the township has control over future land uses.

3. *Evidence that if the current zoning is enforced, the consequent restriction will preclude the use of the property for any purpose to which it is reasonably adapted and that the application of the current classification amounts to confiscation of the plaintiff's property.*

The current zoning would preclude use of the property for Northville Lumber and other industrial uses. Five Mile Road traffic has a lot of loud, fast moving truck traffic which is much less conducive for high tech uses and companies looking to construct office headquarter facilities.

4. *Compatibility of all uses permitted in the proposed zoning district with the surrounding uses and zoning in terms of land suitability, impacts on the environment, density, nature of the use, traffic impacts, aesthetics, infrastructure and potential influence on property values compared to uses permitted under current zoning.*

As previously noted, existing, planned and future land uses to the north, west and south are industrial. Township property to the west is physically separated by an elevated railroad grade. Uses in the industrial zoning district are compatible with the surrounding uses and zoning.

5. *Capacity of the township utilities and services sufficient to accommodate all of the uses permitted in the requested district.*

The required utilities will be extended to serve the Northville Lumber site and they are not anticipated to need atypical services. With the Township owning the balance of the property, they can limit sales to uses that could not be adequately served by utilities or services.

6. *Capacity of the street system to safely and efficiently accommodate the expected traffic generated by uses permitted in the requested zoning district.*

Now, and in the future, one traffic lane in each direction is deemed sufficient. MITCRA (MITC Redevelopment Authority) is set to authorize the second phase engineering at its October meeting which will provide that Five Mile be a three-lane road, adding a center turn lane, from Beck to Napier. A traffic study was completed supporting the design for future land use in this area. Multiple funding initiatives are in process.

7. *Apparent demand for the types of uses permitted in the requested zoning district in the township, and surrounding area, in relation to the amount of land in the township, and surrounding area, currently zoned and available to accommodate the demand.*

There is little industrial zoned property in the Township. The other location of industrial zoning is on Northville Road and it is primarily developed with smaller parcels. Inquiries for uses of the subject property have been more industrial in nature given the location and character of the surrounding area than the uses permitted in the current ORT zoning.

8. *Whether the boundaries of the requested zoning district are sufficient to meet the dimensional regulations for the zoning district.*

The parcel size(s) are sufficient to meet dimensional requirements of the district.

9. *If a rezoning is appropriate, the requested zoning district shall be more appropriate from the township's perspective than another zoning district.*

Based on all the reasons identified in the responses above, industrial zoning is the most appropriate district to consider.

In response to questions, Township Planner Frey and Consultant Roberts provided the following:

- Lumber yards with associated outdoor storage are not permitted in the ORT zoning district, and were a special land use in the Industrial District. Once the property is rezoned, Northville Lumber will come to the Planning Commission for special land use and site plan approval.
- There is a small parcel that has a DTE substation at the northwest tip of the property.
- Northville Lumber will not need variances under Industrial Zoning.
- Everyone within 300' had been notified of tonight's proposed rezoning, and signs were posted on the property. No correspondence had been received.
- The Township notified surrounding property owners per State notification requirements, as did every community in the State. To expand the notification boundaries would create other challenges.
- The posted signs on the property also followed State requirements, which were very specific.
- The goal was that both the water main extension and the sanitary sewer extension, and all of the roadwork in its entirety, will become TIF eligible through the State Land Bank Act. Reimbursement will take 15-20 years.
- Parcels 6, 7, and 8 had a purchase agreement in place with respect to a potential residential development. If that moves forward, it will also require rezoning. Parcels 6, 7, and 8 were separated quite distinctly from Parcel 9 due to the change in elevation between them.
- Northville Lumber was planning to construct at least a 75,000sf building, which would contain some woodworking shop areas inside, but will not generate noise outside. Northville Lumber was primarily a wholesaler.

Chair Wilk opened the public hearing at 7:41pm.

Linda Malec, 20557 Wintergreen Circle, asked questions relative to how this potential rezoning would impact the current work on the Master Plan. Was the MITC Corridor exempt from the Master Plan? If this property is rezoned, could GFL potentially outbid others and buy the property to expand the landfill?

The Commission explained that the Township owns the land; they would not sell to GFL.

Mary Lou Posa, 20560 Wintergreen Circle, supported rezoning the 25 acres for Northville Lumber. Could the approval be specific to that 25 acres only, and hold off rezoning the rest of the parcel until the Master Plan update was complete? There was residential development directly to the north of the rest of parcel 9, and it was important not to move too quickly without looking at what is best for the Township.

Chair Wilk closed the public hearing at 7:47pm.

Township Planner Frey and Consultant Roberts responded to further questions from the Commission:

- Regarding protecting Johnson Creek, the Township would not approve any use that would disburse chemicals into the creek. Regardless of the zoning district, there was a 50 foot setback from Johnson Creek.
- Tonight's rezoning request was only for parcel 9. Northville Lumber's purchase of 25 acres provided the impetus behind the request. DTE has approximately 3 acres on Parcel 9, which together with Northville Lumber equated to about a third of the overall parcel.
- In general, non-industrial users were not interested in the site; some ORT uses would be permitted in the Industrial District.
- There could potentially be a deed restriction on the property prohibiting certain uses, such as a landfill, into perpetuity. This suggestion and concern would be taken back to the Board of Trustees.

Noting that Commissioner Zawodny could not be here this evening, and had provided comments on the cases being heard, Chair Wilk read Commissioner Zawodny's comments regarding this rezoning request into the record:

- Ask status of potential uses for balance of the parcel beyond 25 acres for Northville Lumber.
- Should the Planning Commission limit the recommendation on rezoning only to the proposed Northville lumber parcel right now and defer the balance of the site (keep it ORT)?

Both topics had been discussed by the Commission.

Township Planner Frey said that Commissioner Zawodny had communicated he could go either way in terms of rezoning the entire parcel.

After careful discussion regarding whether to recommend rezoning the entirety of Parcel 9, including a discussion regarding when higher intensity industrial uses would come before the Commission as special land use requests, and taking into consideration the fact that the Township owned the land and was under no obligation to sell to the highest bidder, the following motion was offered:

**MOTION by Herrmann, support by Yang, in the matter of PREZ22-0001**, a request by Bob Belair, Northville Township, Director of Public Services, to rezone 81.6 acres of vacant land on the northeast corner of 5 Mile and Napier (Parcel 9 in the MITC) from ORT

Office, Research & Technology to I-1 Industrial, the Planning Commission recommends approval to the Township Board of Trustees.

Motion discussion

Commissioner Watson said her preference would be to recommend rezoning the 25 acres only, but would support the motion as stated.

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

**Motion carried 6-0.**

**2. PSPR22-0007 Site Plan Review**

Representative: Jon Hutto  
Owner: JDS Old Building, LLC  
Location: 807 Doheny Dr.  
Request: Self storage facility  
Action: Approve, Approve with Conditions, Postpone, Deny

Referencing her September 21, 2022 review letter, Township Planner Frey gave the background and review for this request for site plan review.

A special land use for self storage was approved for this site located at 807 Doheny at the 7-26-2022 meeting. The project will convert the west half of the existing building to self storage. Proposed improvements include building facade updates, creation of a greenbelt to better define site access, and introduction of some landscape and a sidewalk along Doheny.

Site Layout

1. The plan identified a proposed cross access easement abutting the northern property line, on the property to the north. The purpose of the easement should be provided. If the easement is not needed for the benefit of the existing site, it should be removed from the drawing.
2. How will waste removal occur? If there will be a new dumpster, it must meet the requirements of Article 3.2(T) and the screen details must be provided in the site plan set.
3. The use of the driveway on the west side of the building should be clarified. If it is not needed, it would be good to remove the paved surface and replace it with lawn area.

Landscape

1. The boxwood shrubs, proposed within the greenbelt along Doheny, should be replaced with a more salt tolerant upright shrub.
2. The new greenbelt is not considered parking lot islands; parking lot islands are internal to the parking lot. The parking lot islands in the landscape and buffer table shall be updated to reflect 0 islands.

Building elevations. The existing building has a variety of building materials: red and brown brick, painted siding and block, different colors of EIFS and a variety of roof lines and windows. A combination of painted brick and block along with new EIFS will unify the building appearance. New large windows with steel canopies at the top will provide additional dimension to the building.

1. The color selections must be identified on the elevation sheet.
2. A small material sample board is required and shall be presented at the meeting.
3. A note shall be added to the elevation sheet indicating any rooftop equipment will be screened.

The Fire Department did not have any review comments that needed to be addressed tonight. The review comments from the lighting engineer are provided separately. At the discretion of the Planning Commission, completion of the outstanding review comments may be subject to an administrative staff review.

John Hutto, 58000 W. 8 Mile Road, Northville, was present on behalf of this application for site plan approval. Eric Williams, Stonefield Engineering, was also present.

Mr. Hutton made the following points:

- They needed the easement on the west side of the building to access the north side. The building was actually overlapping the property line. As part of the purchase agreement, there was an easement being drawn up from the seller who also owns the property to the north, to allow Gaslight Storage a permanent easement. The easement was for access, not for cross-access.
- They had added arbor vitae on the west side of the easement where the pavement was, to shield R&R Fire Truck Repair.
- They were not providing a dumpster. The rule for their customers was: what you bring in you take it out. They will have a cart for office garbage.
- Colors of the building will be primarily two gray shades with black windows.

Township Planner Frey said the applicants would need to provide color samples to put on the drawings.

- Building materials were not changing, other than adding glass and some additional EIFS. Rooftop equipment will be minimal, and will be screened. Lighting will meet Township standards.

Commission discussion:

- The site plan was consistent with what had been previously presented.
- The Commission could approve the plans contingent on the colors coming back to the Commission, or alternatively, contingent on staff approval of the color choices.

**MOTION by Watson, support by Hermann,** to approve PSPR22-0007 Site Plan Review, owner JDS Old Building, LLC, 807 Doheny Drive, with the following conditions:



- Fire Department and lighting review to be reviewed and approved administratively.
- Paint colors to be reviewed and approved administratively.

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

**Motion carried 6-0.**

**3. PSKPR22-0004 Sketch Plan Review**  
 Representative: Robert Sweet – McBride Dale Clarion  
 Owner: Huntington National Bank  
 Location: 39725 Six Mile Rd.  
 Request: Exterior Modifications  
 Action: Approve, Approve with Conditions, Postpone, Deny

Referencing her September 21, 2022 review letter, Township Planner Frey gave the background and review for this application for exterior modification approval at 39725 Six Mile Road, directly adjacent to the Art & Jakes site that had been before the Commission last month.

Huntington Bank was opening at the former TCF Bank location on the south side of 6 Mile, west of Haggerty, and requesting approval for revisions to the building elevations. The building modifications were reviewed for compliance with Article 33.6(A), Building Design Requirements. The Planning Commission may consider design alternatives on a project by project basis, provided it is determined the application of these alternatives was consistent with the intent and purpose of this section. Pictures of nearby businesses were provided for reference. One picture identified the poor asphalt conditions behind the Huntington building.

Project overview. The following building modifications were proposed.

West elevation (Facing Springwater Road)

1. Remove white columns and replace with brick
2. Paint brick dark grey
3. Add bright green metal panel accents
4. Replace door

North elevation (facing 6 Mile)

1. Install bright green awnings over 2 of the 5 windows

East elevation (facing new Art & Jake's restaurant)

1. Replace drive up teller window
2. Paint drive-thru canopy columns dark grey
3. Install bright green metal soffit on drive-thru canopy

Building elevations

1. The ordinance required color accents for awnings, entrance, and drive-thru canopy to be "complementary colors," and specifically "darker colors" for

awnings and canopies. Bright green accents were proposed. The cover letter referenced "branding" colors used on the nearby McDonald's and Mobil gas station but the amount, intensity and visibility of the branding on those buildings was much less. Additionally, the existing bank between McDonald's and Mobile did not have branding on their drive-thru canopy. When Art & Jake's came to the Commission last month to get feedback on their proposed building elevations, the Commission was generally favorable to some subtle branding.

2. Removing all green on the drive-thru canopy was recommended. The green soffit on the underside of the canopy distinctly changed the profile of the canopy.

Site conditions. The site has not been maintained. Much of the landscape was dead, damaged, or in poor condition. The asphalt was cracked and there were potholes. Non-compliant site conditions will need to be addressed. These same site improvements were being required for the Art & Jake's renovation next door.

1. The landscape must be brought up to current standards. Dead, damaged and poor landscape shall be removed and replaced.
2. All lawn area shall be restored.
3. A landscape plan, prepared by a landscape architect, and meeting the requirements of Article 24, Landscape Standards, was required.
4. The asphalt and curbs within the parking lot and driveway behind the building shall be repaired and replaced.

Laura Trendler, McBride Dale Clarion, Cincinnati, was present on behalf of this request for exterior modification approval. Erin Hogle and Joshua Gonsalves, Vocon Architecture, were also present.

The development team made the following points:

- Huntington Bank merged with TCF Bank in June 2021, and Huntington proposed to reoccupy the former TCF Bank.
- There were no additions proposed to the building footprint. The vehicular use area and site layout will function as they were originally designed.
- The parking lot and landscaping will be brought to approved site plan standards.
- In order to have Huntington's brand presence be a part of this new occupation, they were proposing some improvements to the main entryway, essentially removing the front columns and replacing them with dark gray brick and green metal panel accents. They would replace the front doors and install awnings on four of the six windows. On the drive up canopy, the drive-up teller window would be replaced, and the drive-up canopy columns would be painted dark gray to match the entrance, with green ACM soffit metal added on all sides of the drive-up canopy, using Huntington's brand color. On the northern elevation which faces 6 Mile Road, the main center of the building was proposed to be painted the gray color. They would install two green awnings.
- To support the request, they had looked at the surrounding area. As this was a commercial site, brand color was important, and other businesses in the area had some of their brand color present on their buildings.

- There was a slight grade change from the site to 6 Mile. With landscaping, the proposed changes would not be too bold for automobiles traveling along 6 Mile Road. The improvements will bring life back to an underutilized property.

Township Planner Frey explained that the ordinance specifically speaks to colors, and requires accent colors to be complimentary colors, specifically darker tones or darker colors for the awnings and canopies. The intent of the ordinance was to be more subtle and complimentary in earth tone elements.

The material on the inside of the entryway was a metal product in the brand color; the Planning Commission could approve a modification to allow the metal but typically it would be more of a gray or muted accent.

Relative to the accent materials, the ordinance (170-33.6(d)) stated that accent materials shall be natural stone (limestone, granite, marble, or other similar stone products), precast stone, integral colored split-face block, smooth or textured architectural metal panels, cement board siding or the equivalent as determined by the Planning Commission.

#### Commission discussion

- Huntington had more understated designs on some of their buildings that would be more welcome at this location.

The applicants explained that Huntington's current prototype was what was proposed tonight. Huntington was one of the more forward thinking financial institutions, and they were trying to push the design aesthetic of their built environment.

- Northville Township did not support branded buildings; prototypes change. Bright neon colors were discouraged. Northville tried to make everything as consistent as possible, resulting in a timeless appearance.
- Commissioner Zawodny had provided comments regarding this application as follows:
  - A lot less neon green
  - No neon on drive-thru canopy and no drop down soffit (keep roofline the same)
  - Consider dark gray awnings to match dark gray accent
  - Generally, the incremental changes are changing the "character" of the building – looks stuck on, like added on attachments – rather than integrally designed from the onset.
- Chair Wilk preferred a design such as the Huntington building on 5 Mile, which was consistent in design and materials with other buildings in the vicinity.
- Commissioner Herrmann suggested the applicants return with options for the Planning Commission to consider.

The applicants said they would need to go back to Huntington and see how they wanted to proceed.

**MOTION by McCall, support by Yang**, to postpone PSKPR22-0004, Sketch Plan Review, 39725 Six Mile Rd., Huntington National Bank, to the next Planning Commission meeting or such time as the clients return with a revised submission.

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

**Motion carried 6-0.**

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

None

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

Jennifer Frey, Township Planner

- The Township has purchased software (CivicClerk) to provide electronic packets.
- Master Plan Update – Everyone is encouraged to take the survey, which is open through October 5.

Mindy Herrmann, Board of Trustees

- Made comments complimentary of the Master Plan process and KKC team
- SAD project – Special Assessment Districts as available again as a funding option for capital improvements

Milan Gandhi – Zoning Board of Appeals

- Summarized September 21st ZBA meeting
- No October meeting

**EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mary Lou Posa, 20560 Wintergreen Circle, said that issues brought forward by Wintergreen residents were legitimate, and they continued to pursue those issues.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by Herrmann, support by McCall, to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 pm.**

**Motion carried by voice vote.**