

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF NORTHVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION
December 6, 2022**

DATE: December 6, 2022
TIME: 7:00 PM
PLACE: Township Hall

APPROVED: January 31, 2023

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chair Wilk at 7:00 pm.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Milan Gandhi
Mindy Herrmann
Edward McCall
Jayne Watson
Matthew Wilk
Tim Zawodny

Excused: Gary Yang

Staff: Jennifer Frey, Township Planner

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Planning Commission – October 25, 2022

MOTION by Herrmann, support by McCall, to approve the October 25, 2022 Planning Commission meeting minutes as published.

Motion approved unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

BRIEF PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

Chair Wilk announced that Agenda items 2 and 3 would be reversed.

- 1. Public Hearing**
PPUDA22-0001 **HPUD Amendment – Ward Church/Willow Pines**
Representative: Bob Lewis – Cameron General Contractors
Owner: Willow Pines Retirement Community

Location: Cross Rd. at 6 Mile Rd. and Cross Rd. at Haggerty Rd.
Request: Amend HPUD to allow off-site signage for Willow Pines and modify existing ground signs
Action: Recommend to Board of Trustees

Referencing her November 9, 2022 written comments, Township Planner Frey gave the background and review for this request to amend HPUD to allow off-site signage for Willow Pines and modify existing ground signs at Cross Road and 6 Mile and Cross Road at Haggerty Road intersections.

Via the HPUD amendment request, Willow Pines was requesting consideration to allow them to have offsite signage, with new signs replacing both of the existing Ward Church signs. The signs will be a little larger, with more square footage to add both the Ward Church and the Willow Pines names, and the brick base will be upgraded to be a solid brick base; this will comply with ordinance requirements.

Landscape (low level ornamental grasses and/or flowers) was required at the base of each sign.

If the signs were illuminated, indirect illumination was required.

The existing Ward Church signs are 8.38 sq. ft per side/16.76 sq. ft. total and approximately 3.5' tall. The proposed signs are 22.43 sq. ft. per side/44.43 sq. ft. total and 5.38' tall. Both proposed signs were smaller than permitted by ordinance.

The Haggerty Road sign was located very close to the road right-of-way; a minimum 10' was required. Also, while the current sign was located within the required clear vision triangle, the larger, solid sign base of the proposed sign obstructs visibility more than the current sign. The location of the sign should be adjusted to be outside the clear vision triangle, or moved to be in a location that obstructs vision less than the current location.

In summary, the two main issues were relative to whether to allow off-site signage, and consideration for getting the Haggerty Road sign outside of the clear vision triangle.

Members of the development team present tonight included Richard Tranter, Dinsmore & Shohl, LLP, Cincinnati, Bob Lewis, Director of Development for Cameron General Contractors, and Matt Boone, Ward Church facilities manager.

The applicants made the following points:

- They were proposing to replace the existing signs on Haggerty Rd/Cross Rd and Six Mile/Cross Rd in order to add the Willow Pines name to the signs.
- The signs would act as a wayfinding mechanism so that people will be able to find Willow Pines as well as the Church.
- The signs will be illuminated by indirect lighting and the applicants will add landscape (ornamental grasses and/or flowers) as required.

- They would like to keep the Haggerty Road sign in its present location but will follow the direction of Public Safety in this matter.
- The revisions will be the Seventh Amendment to the Haggerty Road Planned Unit Development Agreement.

Commission questions and discussion

- The Haggerty Road sign would actually be 82" tall, including the base. This was still less height than the ordinance allowed.
- The Commission agreed that Public Safety would make the final decision regarding the sign placement on Haggerty Road, as locating any sign in the clear vision triangle was a safety issue and as such was out of the Planning Commission's area of expertise.
- The brick base will be similar to the brick on the building.

Public hearing

Chair Wilk opened the public hearing at 7:25pm. Seeing that no public indicated they wished to speak, Chair Wilk closed the public hearing at 7:25pm, and brought the matter back to the Commission.

MOTION by Herrmann, support by McCall, in the matter of PPUDA22-0001, HPUD Amendment – Ward Church/Willow Pines, a request to amend HPUD to allow off-site signage for Willow Pines and modify existing Ward Church ground signs, the Planning Commission recommends approval for the requested sign modification and recommends approval for off-site signage. However, regarding the location of the signs, the Planning Commission recommends that the proposed location on Haggerty Road be reviewed and meet any requirements of the Public Safety Department.

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

Motion carried 6-0.

2. Public Hearing

PREZ22-0002

Rezoning – Five North LLC

Representative:	Michael Hamame – Cambridge Real Estate
Owner:	Five North, LLC
Location:	Northeast corner of Beck & Five Mile Rds.
Request:	Rezone 6.53 acres from ORT (Office, Research & Technology) to OS (Office Service)
Action:	Recommend to Board of Trustees

Referencing her November 10, 2022 written comments, Township Planner Frey gave the background and review for this request for rezoning of 6.53 acres at the northeast corner of Beck & Five Mile Rds from ORT (Office, Research & Technology) to OS (Office Services).

The Planner's written comments listed the criteria for rezoning found in Section 43.5, and reviewed this zoning request against that criteria.

The primary proposed use has been identified as Trinity Health (formerly IHA). Medical use is not a permitted use in the ORT zoning district, but the uses in both districts are similar in terms of compatibility.

Also, the Township was in the process of reviewing the future land use map and all indications were that the future land use designation for this corner was going to include some zoning for office uses. From this standpoint, the proposed use (medical) was within the intent of the future land use plan and was compatible with the direction of the Township going forward.

Considering all of the rezoning factors in totality, office is the most appropriate zoning designation for this parcel.

Commissioner Zawodny noted that at the last Master Plan meeting the conversation had focused on character being predominant in terms of land use. Was there anything that could be done relative to the character of this area of the Township when a rezoning was approved, for instance requiring landscaping, green spaces, etc.?

Township Planner Frey said that rezoning approvals did not allow conditions, but those types of things would be reviewed during site plan approval.

Applicant presentation

Members of the development team present this evening included Jim Capo, Capo Design Group architects; Mike Hamame, Cambridge Real Estate; and Frank Jonna, Jonna Construction. The applicants made the following points:

- Access will be from Five Mile to the east portion of the site, and from Beck Road for the north portion of the site, with an interior circulation loop.
- Uses will include medical office, daycare, and one other facility.
- Landscaping and buffering will be provided.
- The proposed uses will be consistent with the surrounding area and complementary to what is there.

Commission questions and comments

- If the zoning change was approved, it would be important to maintain the consistency of the look of the surrounding area and not create a sea of asphalt.
- In response to a question, the applicants said they could adjust the site to have pedestrian pathways through the site from Five Mile to Beck. There would be internal pedestrian circulation as well as perimeter circulation.
- Commissioner Herrmann suggested a public amenity/community benefit could be added to the site, such as a tennis court or something similar, although this could not be mandated.
- Commissioner Zawodny thought the idea of different structures instead of one large building was an appropriate approach to development at this site.

Chair Wilk opened the public hearing at 7:50pm.

Linda Malec, 20557 Wintergreen Circle, had no objection to this rezoning request. However, she did question whether this rezoning should wait until the Master Plan review was complete and better definitions were in place.

Seeing that no other public indicated they wished to speak, Chair Wilk closed the public hearing at 7:52 pm, and brought the matter back to the Commission for discussion and/or a motion.

MOTION by McCall, support by Herrmann, in the matter of PREZ22-0002, Rezoning – Five North LLC, that the Planning Commission recommend to the Board of Trustees to rezone the 6.53 acres at the northeast corner of Beck and Five Mile Roads from ORT Office, Research, and Technology to OS Office Service.

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

Motion carried 6-0.

3. Public Hearing

PSLU22-0004

Representative:

Owner:

Location:

Request:

Action:

Special Land Use – Northville Lumber

Matt Vetter – Schafer Construction, Inc.

Charter Township of Northville – State Land Bank Authority

Northeast corner of Napier & Five Mile Rds.

Develop lumberyard with outdoor storage

Approve, Approve with Conditions, Postpone, Deny

Referencing her November 21 written comments, Township Planner Frey gave the background and review for this request for a special land use, in order to develop an outdoor lumber supply yard on the northeast corner of 5 Mile and Napier Roads. The project will include an indoor office and retail building, which are not subject to special land use approval.

The Planner's written comments reviewed the request under the requirements for a special land use review, including compatibility with adjacent uses, compatibility with the master plan, traffic impact, impact on public services, compliance with zoning ordinance standards, impact on the environment, specific special land use requirements, as well as additional factors that must be considered when reviewing a special land use request, such as nature and character of the activities, vehicular circulation and parking areas, outdoor activity, storage and work areas, hours of operation, and production of traffic, noise, vibration, smoke, fumes, dust, glare and light.

The property on the west side of the site was a landfill, and the outdoor component of the lumber yard will not impact the landfill in any way. A significant amount of vegetation is proposed on the east property line to provide a visual separation for 5 Mile and future development on the vacant parcel to the east.

The 2007 future land use plan designated the subject property as industrial. In 2017 the Planning Commission discussed the future land use plan and recommended ORT (Office, Research and Technology) in order to be consistent with the MITC initiative. The land use designations discussed by the Planning Commission in 2017 did not go through a formal approval process. In September of this year, the Township-initiated the rezoning for the 110-acre parcel, of which Northville Lumber will take the westernmost 25 acres. The rezoning was initiated by the Township based on the types of inquires the township has received for potential development and as a transitional land use from ORT to the landfill.

The Township Traffic Engineer did find that the traffic met the threshold for a traffic impact study, based on traffic during peak times on Saturdays. Per ordinance, the traffic impact study will need to be provided.

A fence was proposed around the perimeter of the outdoor lumber yard. A fence detail was not provided. There was a significant amount of vegetation provided along the east property line. Additional plant materials shall be provided along the south side of the lumber yard to effectively screen from 5 Mile.

The Fire Department had a number of comments in their review, which would be addressed at different stages in the review process.

Applicant presentation

Dan LeClair, GreenTech Engineering, was present on behalf of this application for special land use, as was Matt Vetter, Schafer Construction, and Stuart Oldford Jr., Northville Lumber Co.

The applicants made the following points:

- Their traffic consultant was working with the Township's Traffic Engineer.
- They would provide additional buffering landscaping along the south and east side of the property.
- They were proposing an entrance off of Napier Road for delivery vehicles. The entrance to the showroom and the offices will be off of Five Mile Road.
- Northville Lumber was going to consolidate their 4 locations in this site.
- Northville lumber will run approximately 8 forklifts on a daily basis, 6 delivery trucks making 3 trips a day each, and take between 6-12 incoming deliveries.
- Northville Lumber was not a sawmill, and would not produce sawdust except on a very small scale – perhaps one trash can full per month.
- They would have no impact of nearby residential homes.

Public Hearing

Chair Wilk opened the public hearing at 8:13pm. Seeing that no public indicated they wished to speak, Chair Wilk closed the public hearing at 8:13pm and brought the matter back to the Commission.

MOTION by Zawodny, support by McCall, in the matter of PSLU22-0004, Special Land Use – Northville Lumber, that the Planning Commission approve the Special Land Use, with the following conditions:

1. The landscaping undergo further study and improvements, with additional landscaping on the south and east boundary lines relative to screening the outdoor lumber yard area.
2. The successful conclusion of a traffic impact study be presented to staff, with confirmation of any traffic impacts on ingress and egress to the site.

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

Motion carried 6-0.

4. PSPR22-0010	Site Plan Review – Northville Lumber
Representative:	Matt Vetter – Schafer Construction, Inc.
Owner:	Charter Township of Northville – State Land Bank Authority
Location:	Northeast corner of Napier & Five Mile Rds.
Request:	Construct 71,855 sq. ft. design center (office, retail, showroom, warehouse) and outdoor lumberyard
Action:	Approve, Approve with Conditions, Postpone, Deny

Referencing her November 22, 2022 written comments, Township Planner Frey gave the background and review for this request for site plan approval for a 71,855 sf design center (office, retail, showroom, warehouse) and outdoor lumber yard.

Outstanding issues included:

- A portion of the storage yard is proposed as gravel; this would require a variance, and the variance request was on the December ZBA agenda. If the request was denied, the site plan will need to show a paved surface.
- There were a number of issues relative to identifying things on the plans.
- Additional plant material was needed along the southern edge.
- The Planning Commission should consider and give guidance relative to the request to modify the building materials for the building. The primary building material was identified as a smooth cement block with some split faced block accent bands; the front elevation includes a small portion of stone at the base.
- The building design and material standards require buildings to be primarily (80%) full dimension brick. While the ordinance does allow the Planning Commission to grant some modifications, a smooth concrete block building does not meet the intent of the ordinance. The Planning Commission has approved a combination of brick and stone to meet the intent of 80% brick requirement on other sites. This is the first building in this area of MITC, and approving a smooth concrete block building

will establish it as the standard and make it difficult to require future buildings to comply with the ordinance's 80% brick requirement. The only other building constructed along the MITC corridor is the Zhongding building, over a mile to the east. Brick and split-faced block are the primary materials used on the south and east facades of the Zhongding building, the other two sides of the building, which are much less visible to the public, are entirely split-faced block. Approving a building that deviates so much from the ordinance requirements and intent will set a precedence for future buildings within MITC.

- Full-dimensional stone was also required. Color selections must be specified and approved by the Planning Commission.
- A note shall be added that all rooftop equipment will be screened from view.
- A materials sample board shall be presented to the Planning Commission.

Regarding other staff reviews:

- Items listed in the engineering review can be resolved during construction plan review.
- Fire department items can be addressed as site plan or construction review items.
- Lighting review listed several items that will have to be revised in order to be in compliance.
- The Traffic Engineer noted that the proposed western driveway to Five Mile Road barely meets the Northville Charter Township driveway spacing standard of 220-feet from the adjacent public street intersection. As this area grows in the future this minimal spacing may result in eastbound left-turn conflicts/issues. Therefore, the recommendation is that the western driveway to Five Mile Road be shifted eastward at least 30-feet to meet longer-term standards.

In response to questions, Township Planner Frey explained that:

- The design standards remained consistent across all zoning districts.
- The rationale for gravel use was based on the type and frequency of equipment use in the graveled areas.

Applicant presentation

Matt Vetter, Schafer Construction; Brian Liming, FA Studio; Dan LeClair, GreenTech Engineering; and Stuart Oldford Jr., Northville Lumber Co., were present on behalf of this application for site plan approval. The applicants gave the following information:

- They were proposing an integrally colored smooth face block with split face block accents on the high bay portion of the warehouse.
- The low bay portion which represents the office, showroom and retail areas will be a combination of horizontal siding with some stone accents, with some areas of the colored split face block pulled in to match the rear.
- They were striving for a nostalgic appearance relative to the original Northville Lumber building.
- This building was located in an industrial-zoned district, with the landfill to the west, the railroad to the north, and with a corner shared with a DTE substation. To the south across 5 Mile is a very large distribution facility. What they proposed was complimentary to the area.

- A berm will be provided along 5 Mile Road.
- There were issues on the site that precluded them from removing the dirt, so the excess dirt will be used to create berms.
- The applicants provided the Commission with a materials sample board.

Commission questions and discussion:

In response to questions, the applicants gave the following information:

- The gravel area, if allowed, will be maintained with fresh gravel as needed.
- Dirt from the gravel area would not leave the site, because the gravel area would mostly be used by forklifts going in and out of the building.
- The siding was similar to Hardy Board siding.

In general the Commission supported the gravel parking area, as gravel would provide a pervious surface.

The Commission discussed the ordinance-required design standards, including the requirement for 80% masonry, at length.

- Was the 80% masonry ordinance requirement appropriate in the Industrial zoning district?
- Brick masonry is a natural earth, clay product, as opposed to concrete block. Brick is part of the character of Northville design. Brick masonry is distinctly different than concrete masonry, as per the intent of the original ordinance that was clarified again later.
- The Commission had approved a mostly concrete block building (Hella) in the past, but regretted it afterward, as the appearance was not what anyone had wanted or expected.
- The proposed building had 3 public sides, which some Commissioners felt should present according to Northville design standards and Zoning Ordinance requirements.

Commissioner Watson could not support the building as proposed, as she felt it deviated too much from the ordinance requirement. The requirement applied to all the parcels in the MITC corridor, as well as the rest of Northville.

Chair Wilk presented the opposing view, that perhaps the building design standards should not be adhered to across the different zoning classifications, and specifically not in the Industrial district. From the road, the different materials – block or brick – would not appear dissimilar.

Commissioner Zawodny pointed out that in this case there was office and retail showroom use, as well as industrial use.

Commissioner Herrmann liked the building and would support it as proposed. However, as others did not agree, she suggested as a compromise changing some of the materials on the front of the building.

Mr. Oldford gave some of the history of Northville Lumber, and some of the history of this project. He made the following points:

- The need for a traffic impact study was based on Saturday afternoon peak hour trips, as generally stated for big box lumber yards such as Home Depot or Lowe's. However, Northville Lumber has limited hours on Saturday.
- They had done their best at this location and gone beyond what he felt was needed for an industrial site adjacent to a landfill, an electric substation, and a railroad grade.
- They were a true local lumber yard, and did not sell barbecues, appliances, Christmas trees, and so on.

Discussion relative to the design standards as they applied to this site and building continued. Every area of the Township was important in terms of design consistency. The design should blend and have longevity for the future. The Commission had an obligation to honor the ordinances, and to respect other development, including residential development, in the area.

The ordinance stated that the primary building materials shall be a minimum of 80% full dimensional brick, excluding roof and windows. The primary building material on the front façade shall be the same and integrated into each of the building facades.

The applicants felt they could get to 80% masonry, and figure out a way to interject some brick elements into the building.

After further discussion regarding approving the site plan, conditioned on later approval of building materials, the following motion was offered:

MOTION by Watson, support by McCall, that in the matter of PSPR22-0010, Site Plan Review – Northville Lumber, the Planning Commission approve the site plan request to construct a 71,855 square foot design center (office, retail, showroom, warehouse) and outdoor lumber yard, with the following conditions:

- Issues called out in staff review letters be resolved administratively, including Fire Marshal, Lighting, Engineering, and Traffic.
- Applicants return to the Planning Commission for review and approval of all building materials.

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

Motion carried 6-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Jennifer Frey, Township Planner

- Next meeting January 31
- Update on Master Plan project. Distributed and discussed the following documents:
1) *Vision, Guiding Principles and Goals*, and 2) *Community Character Framework for Land Use Planning*.

Mindy Herrmann, Board of Trustees

- No report

Milan Gandhi, Zoning Board of Appeals

Summarized November meeting

EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENTS

Linda Malec, 20557 Wintergreen Circle, made positive comments relative to Northville Lumber, and commented on the good work the Planning Commission did. She commented on the need for greater community involvement in the planning process.

Hima Kolanagireddy, 18152 Shagbark Drive, spoke regarding the number of power outages in her area, and DTE's unresponsiveness to neighborhood concerns.

Ms. Malec, speaking again, spoke of the power outages in her neighborhood also, and also her dissatisfaction with Consumers Power relative to connections in her neighborhood.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by McCall, support by Herrman, to adjourn the meeting at 10:05pm.

Motion carried by voice vote.