

MINUTES OF THE **PLANNING COMMISSION** MEETING OF THE CITY OF GROSSE POINTE WOODS HELD ON **JULY 22, 2025**, IN THE COUNCIL-COURT ROOM OF THE ROBERT E. NOVITKE MUNICIPAL CENTER, 20025 MACK PLAZA, GROSSE POINTE WOODS, MICHIGAN.

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. by Vice Chair Hamborsky.

Roll Call: Vice Chair Hamborsky
Commission Members: Fuller, Gilezan, Marx, O'Keefe
Absent: Fenton, Vitale

Also Present: City Planner John Jackson
City Planner Laura Haw
City Attorney Debra Walling
Recording Secretary Gretchen Miotto

Vice Chair Hamborsky recognized Council Member Granger.

The Planning Commission, staff, and the public, Pledged Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

MOTION by Gilezan, seconded by Fuller, to excuse Commission Members Fenton and Vitale from attendance at tonight's meeting.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, Marx, O'Keefe,
NO: None
ABSENT: Fenton, Vitale

MOTION by Gilezan, seconded by O'Keefe, to accept tonight's agenda as presented and place on file.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, Marx, O'Keefe,
NO: None
ABSENT: Fenton, Vitale

MOTION by O'Keefe, seconded by Marx, that the May 27, 2025, Planning Commission meeting minutes be approved as presented (the June meeting was cancelled).

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, Marx, O'Keefe,
NO: None
ABSENT: Fenton, Vitale

The first item, under **New Business**, was to **Consider the Site Plan for 19483 Mack Avenue (My Nails Salon)**.

Chip Berschback, representing the applicants, requested that this topic be tabled until all Planning Commission members are present.

MOTION by Marx, seconded by O'Keefe, that the, Planning Commission postpone the Consideration of the Site Plan for 19483 Mack Avenue (My Nails Salon) until the August 2025 meeting.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, Marx, O'Keefe,

NO: None

ABSENT: Fenton, Vitale

The next item, under **New Business**, was to **Consider the Site Plan for 20778 Mack Avenue (Verus Development)**.

Planner Haw introduced herself and provided an overview of the project which is to renovate and expand the existing building to create a 7,200 sq. ft. single-story retail building. The applicant must clarify the loading needs of the site; the screening wall along 1875 Hawthorne is an outstanding item; the lighting intensity and placement is an outstanding item.

Discussion ensued around the lighting and the impact on neighbors, as well as the material and height of the screening wall along 1875 Hawthorne. There was discussion to clarify that the eastern property line is at the alley edge, and not at the neighbor's property line. A variance might be required if the applicant and neighbor agree to screening at the neighbor's property line, since the wall/solid fence would not be built on the applicant's property. It was also noted that the depth of the building would likely need to be reduced if a wall is built at the property line, in order to maintain parking and sidewalk dimensions.

Frank Arcori, Verus Development Group, 950 S. Old Woodward, Birmingham, MI, presented samples of the building materials. Regarding tenants, Mr. Arcori stated they're working with Schummer's, an existing tenant, to remain in one of the new spaces. The remaining spaces do not have identified tenants. Overall, the building will be reduced by about 1000 sq. ft. The majority of the building will be demolished.

The commission agreed the building materials are quality and acceptable; Verus will work with the neighbor on a preferred type and height of the screening which is now a chain link fence. The ordinance gives the Planning Commission discretion on the acceptable type of screening.

MOTION by O’Keefe, seconded by Marx, that the, Planning Commission postpone the Consideration of the Site Plan for 20778 Mack Avenue until the August 2025 meeting giving the applicant time to submit a revised lighting plan and resolve the neighbor fencing issue.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, Marx, O’Keefe,

NO: None

ABSENT: Fenton, Vitale

The next item, under **New Business**, was a **to Consider the Rezoning of 20160 Mack Avenue (Rezoning from RO-1 to C)**.

Commissioner Hamborsky provided the history of this topic and the commission’s original recommendation to Council who subsequently requested that the Commission revisit the recommendation. The Master Plan was discussed along with the lack of demand for RO-1 properties.

Planner Jackson provided an overview of the objectives and plans to implement the Master Plan and apply the approved mixed-use corridor so all residents and occupants can enjoy a vibrant corridor. A single purpose district is not economically resilient and that is why the Master Plan encourages a Corridor Mixed Use district. Of the 4 non-resident zoning districts within the city, the Commercial district most closely aligns with the concepts spelled out in the Master Plan. The Commercial district allows for office usage, retail usage, service usage, and allows on a restrictive basis, restaurants. Restaurants have to go through a Special Land Use process. This particular property, due to its location, width and depth, makes it appropriate for commercial use.

Bruce Nichols and Justin Buccellato, representing the applicant, stated that they’ve revised the site plan, have attempted mediation with the residents, have adhered to the guidance within the Master Plan, and it appears, by the number of lawn signs, that there is a general opposition to rezoning of any type. Mr. Buccellato is very interested in creating a beautiful property, in harmony with the city, to replace the existing dilapidated building.

Commissioner Hamborsky reiterated the Master Plan’s description of the Corridor Mixed Use and the vision statement that was the result of the 10-to-20-year plan for the city. The Commercial district allows for the greatest usage, while RO-1 zoned properties will remain stagnant. Other cities have mechanisms called PUDs (Planned Unit Development) and contract-based zoning which are tied to a specific site plan. PUDs allow negotiation between the applicant and the city, while contract-based zoning is a type of usage proposed by the applicant and the city agrees or disagrees (yes/no). There is no negotiation. These mechanisms may be something the city should consider

Commissioner O’Keefe spoke from a realtor and a resident perspective and addressed some of the things she’s heard or read about resident commentary about this project. Facts on improved real estate values, positive neighborhood revitalizations, and the desire of potential residents for walkability were provided. Existing buildings in the city are very old and very

expensive to renovate, and are sitting empty due to that and high rent costs. As a resident living next to the Bucharest parking lot, she has not experienced any higher traffic, rodent issues, trash, or noise and have found the owners to be very responsive to any issue.

Commissioner Fuller provided data from GPW Public Safety & the Building Dept. related to the Bucharest/Crispelli's location, and there have been minimal complaints about traffic, rodents, trash, noise, or altercations. He also stated that most concerns from residents centered around the site plan and that the applicant has made numerous changes to the site plan that seem to resolve all those issues, and their input has made a tremendous number of changes to the plans.

MOTION by Marx, seconded by O'Keefe, that the Planning Commission reaffirm their prior recommendation to City Council to rezone 20160 Mack Avenue from RO-1 to C.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, Marx, O'Keefe,
NO: None
ABSENT: Fenton, Vitale

City Council to schedule a Public Hearing on August 18, and if approved, it will go to a Second Reading possibly in September 2025.

The next item, under **New Business**, was to **Consider the Site Plan for 20160 Mack Avenue**.

Planner Jackson provided a summary of the revised site plan and recommends this topic be postponed until the August 2025 meeting in order for the GPW Public Safety traffic study be completed.

MOTION by Gilezan, seconded by Fuller, that the, Planning Commission postpone the 20160 Site Plan Review to a meeting to be held after City Council considers the rezoning.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, Marx, O'Keefe,
NO: None
ABSENT: Fenton, Vitale

Discussion was had around when the next meeting that the applicant would be before the Planning Commission, noting that a Commercial Site Plan cannot be considered unless Council approves the rezoning.

The next item, under **New Business**, was to **Consider an Amendment to the Planning Commission By-Laws**.

Planner Haw provided an overview of the proposed amendment to add parameters around Public Comments at the meetings.

MOTION by O’Keefe, seconded by Gilezan, that the Planning Commission amend the By-Laws with the proposed language around Public Comments.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, Marx, O’Keefe,
NO: None
ABSENT: Fenton, Vitale

The next item was the **Building Official’s Reports, May 2025 to June 2025, June 2025 to July 2025**.

Planner Jackson provided an overview of current projects and permits.

The next item was the **City Council Reports for June and July, 2025**.

Commissioner McNelis, who has since resigned, was to attend the June meetings. No report.

Commissioner O’Keefe attended the July 14 meeting and reported the recommended lot split was approved. Vitale attended the July 21 meeting.

Commissioner O’Keefe will attend the August meetings instead of Vitale.

The next item was Information Only – New McKenna Staffing of PC/Council Meetings.

Laura Haw, McKenna VP, will be attending Council and Planning Commission meetings and she and Ashley Jankowski will still work as a team.

Under **Public Comment**, the following were heard:

1. Laura McEnery, 1451 Oxford, requested that the city paint pedestrian zones where side streets meet Mack Avenue (from sidewalk to sidewalk). This is a safety issue due to limited visibility when buildings are built right up to the sidewalk.
2. Gary Felts, 1680 Oxford, appreciates the traffic study at 20160 Mack, and spoke in opposition of the proposed architecture style at that site.
3. Christina Pitts, 1501 Oxford, stated there is a failure of due process within the city administration, the planning commission, the building department, and code enforcement.

She read aloud from a prepared statement.

4. Rob Szabo, 1620 Fairholme, spoke in opposition to the rezoning of 20160 Mack.
5. Patrick Turnbull, 1485 Fairholme, spoke in opposition to the proposed architectural style for 20160 Mack.
6. Jane Frahm, 1350 N. Oxford, read a prepared statement in opposition of the rezoning of 20160 Mack.
7. Jon Dougherty, 1665 S. Renaud, disagreed with the Planning Commission's decision on the rezoning of 20160 Mack and rezoning to Commercial in general.
8. Patricia Dougherty, 1665 S. Renaud, expressed disappointment with the Planning Commission's decision on 20160 Mack.
9. Lynn Aldrich, 1501 Oxford, believes serious mistakes have been made by the city departments in the rezoning and building process. She read aloud from a prepared statement. She opposes the rezoning of 20160 Mack.

MOTION by Gilezan, seconded by O'Keefe, to adjourn at 9:24 p.m.

Motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Fuller, Gilezan, Hamborsky, Marx, O'Keefe,
NO: None
ABSENT: Fenton, Vitale

Respectfully Submitted,
Gretchen Miotto
Clerk's Confidential Administrative Assistant & Recording Secretary