



# Planning Commission Agenda

Tuesday, November 19, 2024 at 7:00 PM  
27400 Southfield Road, Lathrup Village, Michigan 48076

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## MINUTES

### 1. Call to Order at 7:17pm

### 2. Roll Call

Present: Chair Stansbery, Commissioner Scussel, Commissioner Hillman, Commissioner Nordmoe

Others Present: DDA Director Austin Colson, Community and Economic Development Intern Thomas Kennedy, Planning Consultant Eric Pietsch, Giffels Webster

Absent: Vice Chair Fobbs, Commissioner Hammond, Commissioner Dizik

Motion by Commissioner Scussel, Seconded by Commissioner Hillman, to excuse the commissioners that were not present. Motion carried.

### 3. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Scussel, Seconded by Nordmoe, to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

### 4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A. August 2024 - Planning Commission Minutes

Motioned by Commissioner Hillman, Seconded by Commissioner Nordmoe, Motion carried.

### 5. Public Comment

Diane Anderson, friends of Annie Lathrup School, said that her family built the first house in Lathrup Village after the war in 1951, and is working on the history of Lathrup Village, and she is appalled at what is going on in Lathrup Village. She explained that Lathrup Village, was no longer considered a bedroom community, which is defined as a small community that has no major industries, and is lived in by people who go to another town or city to work, and when Lathrup Village was founded it was always supposed to be a bedroom community where quiet enjoyment, was what you had, and businesses closed down at night. She mentioned trashing one of the heritage buildings, having businesses that were appropriate to a neighborhood like this one, and referenced a restaurant where a murder happened at night. Ms. Anderson said she believes there is a two tier system, in Lathrup Village, where the inner streets: Saratoga, San Jose, San Quentin, San Diego, Bungalow, and Cambridge, enjoy quiet amenity, but if you live along Southfield Road,

and in the outer edges, you are treated like a second class citizens, because there are inappropriate businesses creating noise, congestion, and bringing in outside elements, and that even drug businesses have been attempted in Lathrup Village. Ms. Anderson, said that The Historical Society, has failed to live up to its guidelines of getting the school back, preserving historic buildings, making sure the architecture reflected architecture of the neighborhoods, and that the businesses were neighborhood appropriate. She said that she believes that property values have gone down in Lathrup Village, and that the business district looks like a working class strip mall, and the value of the properties near the businesses are in a downward spiral, and that it is disgusting that we have a Council that believes in two tiered citizenry, where property values go down and you don't have the same quiet and peace unless you live tucked inside of the City. She believes that mixed use zoning on twelve mile, will deflate the value of the homes on Roseland, and that there is no excuse for this type of malfeasance, and poor planning.

6. **Old Business and Tabled Items** None

7. **New Business**

A. 28317 Southfield Road - Site Plan Review

Planning Consultant Eric Pietsch of Giffels Webster, explained proposed reuse of an existing tenant space, the proposed plan is a golf simulator business, which when reviewed against the ordinances is a permitted use by right, that has a slightly higher impact for parking and would require two additional parking places, than the use that was there before, the Planning Commission, has ability to consider a reduction of parking, up to 25% of the required parking, (between 5 – 9 parking spaces), and he said the applicant turned in a letter with reasons and a comparison chart, as to why they felt the reduction in parking is appropriate.

Commissioners asked about

Commissioner Nordmoe, asked, if they compared when the neighboring businesses were open and closed, and if the use is harmonized with the neighboring businesses. Consultant Pietsch, said the analysis did take this into consideration, and because this business would be by appointment only, this could restrict the amount of parking spaces in demand for the proposed use, overlapping other businesses.

Commissioner Hillman, likes the idea, and business that are quiet, that don't stink, and that don't have drunk people coming out of them, his primary concern, is the parking consideration. He asked how they came up with the analysis of the Bartending school and the Insurance company to determine their peak hours.

Lantei Takona, owner of Mara Greens, LLC., a golf simulator business, and his Brother and business partner, Sala Takona, explained that they conducted a standard engineering time study, by going there everyday over the past two and a half months, and meeting with the business owners, of the three adjacent businesses. Mr. Takona, said insurance company doesn't utilize a lot of spaces, the medical supply closed on weekends, and the bartending school, has approximately seven students at a time, who come 4:00pm, and they have consulted with the Property owner, who let them know that he is on board with the parking reduction.

Commissioner Nordmoe, referenced a dumpster in the alley, that the Planning Consultant, said was not in compliance because it is in the alley, which is not free and clear of the right of way. Chair Stansbery, said it was put there a long time ago, and if they were following the same guidelines, they would have had to say, where they agreed to place it, and there may already be an agreement with the City regarding the dumpster.

Chair Stansbery, recommended the proposed business owner, talk with the business owner next door, about possibly using their parking lot, since there is only one person who works there and one vehicle parked, that they may consider a shared parking agreement.

Commissioner Hillman, asked about their operating hours ending at 10:30pm, and DDA Director Colson, said it is okay to be open until 11pm. Commissioner Hillman, asked the business owners, to review our sign ordinances, when considering submitting their plans for a sign.

Chair Stansbery, inquired of the business format, and the Mr. Takona said it is a digital format, but you bring your golf clubs.

Commissioner Nordmoe, wanted to know how we were going to wrap up the non-compliant dumpster, and DDA Director Colson, said he would follow up.

Chair Stansbery, asked if it was like the golf simulator, in Beverly Hills, and the business owner said the difference is that the one in Lathrup Village, will be by appointment only.

Chair Stansbery, gave the options that the Planning Commission has, of approving the request, or coming up with something else as a requirement.

Commissioner Hillman, said the letter from the business owner's requesting the variance, is available on the City's website and it is thoughtful and detailed, but he is concerned and wants more formal testimony that the property owner, and neighboring businesses are okay with reducing the number of parking spaces.

Chair Stansbery, said they could approve the rezoning, with a caveat showing support from other businesses, but that gives the business owners, the ability to do what they need to get done, knowing that they would have to resolve the parking issue.

Commissioner Nordmoe, wanted to know the timeline, of the project, and Mr. Takona, said February.

Commissioner Scussel, addressing inconsistencies, in Planning Commission meetings, said if we ask them to bring things back, that we should have all of our scheduled meetings and not make them wait. Chair Stansbery, confirmed that we will have meetings in December and January. Attorney Kimberlin, said they should formally hold off on approval, until the requested, written information is brought back to the Commission.

Moved by Commissioner Nordmoe, seconded by Commissioner Scussel, to table this site plan review item until the applicant brings back the requested written documents to the December 17, 2024 meeting. Motion carried.

## B. Rezoning of Twelve Mile Road

DDA Director Austin Colson, explained the two zones, commercial vehicular district, and office district, on Twelve Mile road, and on the Southfield side, there are mixed use properties. He said the demand for office space is not as high as it was, and he is coming before the Planning Commission to ask for a hearing for mixed use zoning, which would bring in a larger pool of developers and investors, because of the additional uses by right, and he wants a public hearing next month. DDA Director Colson, pointed out that Lathrup Village already has mixed use zoning on Southfield Road.

Chair Stansbery, asked about specific parcels on twelve mile, that the mixed use classification would be given to, and if any projects have been presented to the DDA that would require the mixed use classification. DDA Director Colson, said there is no project with submitted site plans, but there have been questions from property owners related to mixed use.

Chair Stansbery, did not think the proposed area on Twelve Mile had enough space to be mixed use. Commissioner Nordmoe, is familiar with the demand for housing above store fronts, but wanted to know if fast food and liquor stores would be acceptable in this revised plan?

DDA Director Colson, said classifications would be reviewed and special uses would require coming before the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Nordmoe, thought that a row of town houses, middle level of housings, could be very appropriate to the business strip, but that the public wants to know we are not bringing in more fast food restaurants.

Commissioner Scussel, wanted to make sure it was written, specifically for Twelve Mile only, but he is open to seeing plans.

DDA Director Colson, said he wants to know what residents would like and what to stay away from, when it comes to approving a property for mixed use.

Commissioner Hillman, pointed out the variance between the Southfield and Lathrup Village sides of Twelve Mile, and that there is a longer stretch on Lathrup Village, and it is a quiet, dark, and calm place, and he would imagine many residents, would having strong feelings against this idea. He said a row of beautiful condos sound great, but a row of fast food restaurants, does not, so we need to be careful how we construct what the mixed use zone will allow.

DDA Director Colson, said there would be no drive throughs permitted, and there would have to be harmony with the use the mixed used zoning and no use that would disrupt residents sleep.

DDA Director Colson, said the next step is getting feedback from residents and property owners as well.

Commissioner Hillman, said the demand for office space has decreased, and he doesn't want a row of empty office buildings, but doesn't want a row of restaurants, the City should take a careful approach to this first step, and that the City has an obligation to directly engage residents, who are directly impacted by this, to be engaged in this hearing process.

DDA Director Colson, said part of the hearing process, residents are notified in advance.

Commissioner Nordmoe, thought the housing could be used for seniors, and young couples, with quality housing that is affordable, to attract the residents, and to reinforce the social fabric of our community.

DDA Director Colson agreed, that the quality "Middle Housing" is missing in the whole state, and is in demand, and it would be a good use of the mixed use zoning properties.

Chair Stansbery, who lives on Roseland, knows that we can work with property and business owners, or they can leave their properties vacant, and thinks a visual aid, would help residents understand, the conceptual idea of the mixed use zoning, and asked DDA Director Colson, to request the visuals from the interested property owners.

DDA Colson, said he will reach out to the property owners, and appreciated the feedback, this is what he was looking for, from the Commission.

Commissioner Hillman, agreed with Chair Stansbery that visuals, will help residents understand the proposed ideas.

Attorney Kimberlin, asked about work live accommodations, storefronts underneath, and Chair Stansbery, thinks the office space beneath, doesn't get leased and has seen this in Royal Oak.

Commissioner Hillman, had lived in a unit in Ferndale, where the store below, did not work out, and it became part of his living unit.

Chair Stansbery, said to let the property owners, show us what they want to do.

Attorney Kimberlin, said the requirement for zoning changes, are to notify by mail all residences within 300 feet of the proposed property, not just having a hearing notice published.

## **8. Other Matters for Discussion**

### **A. Development Project Update**

DDA Director Colson, gave updates on the status of the five projects, that are currently in the PZE process.

DDA Director Colson, introduced Thomas Kennedy, Community Development and Downtown Development Authority intern.

Mr. Kennedy, passed out thumb drives, containing the best practices of serving on a Planning Commission, and Director Colson, asked the members to review the materials, and this information is part of getting Lathrup Village, back in good standing with the Redevelopment Ready Community Certification.

**10. Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Commissioner Nordmoe, seconded by Commissioner Scussel.  
Meeting adjourned at 8:36pm