



CITY OF MADISON HEIGHTS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

08/19/25

Council Chambers – City Hall

300 W. 13 Mile, Madison Heights, MI 48071

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Champagne called the meeting of the Madison Heights Planning Commission to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Josh Champagne
Mayor Pro Tem Mark Bliss
Commissioner Ryan Fox
Commissioner Eric Graettinger
Commissioner Grant Sylvester

Also Present: City Planner Matt Lonnerstater
Assistant City Attorney Tim Burns
Business Services Coordinator Mary Daley

Absent: Mayor Roslyn Grafstein, City Manager Melissa Marsh, Commissioner Cliff Oglesby,
Commissioner Colton Smith

3. EXCUSE ABSENT MEMBERS

Motion by Commissioner Sylvester, seconded by Commissioner Fox to excuse Commissioner Grafstein, Commissioner Marsh and Commissioner Oglesby

Voting Yea: Commissioner Bliss, Commissioner Fox, Commissioner Graettinger, and
Commissioner Sylvester, Chair Champagne

Motion carries unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Graettinger, seconded by Commissioner Fox to approve the minutes of the regular Planning Commission meeting of July 15, 2025.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Bliss, Commissioner Fox, Commissioner Graettinger, and
Commissioner Sylvester, Chair Champagne

Motion carries.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. Special Land Use Request PSP #25-04 - 510 W. Girard Ave. - Private K-8 School

Planner Lonnerstater introduced the Special Land Use request from Mt. Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church to operate a private K-8 school at 510 W. Girard Avenue, zoned R-2, One-Family Residential. The school is proposed to operate out of a wing of the existing church building; Mt. Zion will also use the building for religious services. The property is located at the northwest corner of W. Girard Avenue and Barrington Street/Northeastern Highway. The applicant proposes to operate a small K-8 school out of the western wing of the building. Per the project narrative, the school will initially have a small enrollment (approximately 5 students), with plans to grow up to an enrollment of approximately 25 students. No major site modifications are proposed currently. The existing parking lot has approximately fifty (50) spaces. Per the applicant, parents can either park for student drop-off/pick-up or use the lane that passes under the overhang at the main entrance.

To note, the Zoning Ordinance does not contain any use-specific standards for K-12 public or private schools.

Chair Champagne opened the meeting up for public comments on this agenda item only at 5:36 pm.

Speakers:

Alice McKeage – resident on W. Girard – resides immediately to the West of the applicant

Shares her concerns about possible expansion, noise from the playground, property value and 280 foot fence line shared with the Church

Christina W. – resident on W. Girard – Expressed concerns about noise.

Seeing no further speakers, the public comment portion of this item was closed by the Chair at 5:44 pm.

The Chair invited the applicant, Dave Tryon of Mt. Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, to speak to the Commission. He recapped much of what the Planner said. He did reinforce that they are not planning on expanding. The applicant wishes to enroll 5 students, who attend church currently.

Motion by Fox, seconded by Sylvester to that, following the required public hearing, the planning commission hereby recommends that city council approve special land use request number PSP 25-04 for a private k-8 school at 510 w. Girard based upon the following findings:

- 1. The applicant requests Special Land Use approval for a private K-8 school at 510 W. Girard Avenue as permitted by Section 3.08 of the Zoning Ordinance.**
- 2. The Planning Commission held a public hearing for PSP 25-04 at their August 19th, 2025 meeting.**
- 3. With several minor conditions required as part of special land use approval, the proposed private school use is consistent with the special land use review standards and criteria set forth in Section 15.05.3. In particular:**
 - a. The use is designed, located, and proposed to be operated in a way that protects the public health, safety and welfare.**
 - b. The use will not involve activities that will be detrimental to adjacent residential land uses.**

- c. The use is designed and located so that it is compatible with the principal uses permitted in the R-2 district and is consistent with the historical use of the property for religious purposes.
- d. The special land use will not involve uses, activities, processes, materials, and equipment or conditions of operation that will be detrimental to any person, property, or the general welfare by reason of excessive production of traffic, noise, smoke, fumes, glare or odors.
- e. The use is designed and located so that it is compatible with the Madison Heights Master Plan.
- f. Ingress/egress to the use shall be controlled to assure maximum vehicular, pedestrian and non-motorized safety, convenience and minimum traffic impact on adjacent streets.

APPROVAL IS GRANTED WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- 1. Operation of the proposed school, including enrollment, hours of operation, etc., shall be in substantial compliance with the project narrative provided with this Special Land Use application. Modifications to the Special Land Use (e.g. hours of operation, student enrollment, grade levels offered, site circulation, etc.) shall be reviewed in accordance with Section 15.05.5 for a determination regarding the need for new Special Land Use review.
- 2. Install a "One Way/ Do Not Enter" sign at the southern Barrington Street driveway to ensure one way circulation.
- 3. Ancillary site improvements such as, but not limited to, playground equipment, sports fields, etc., shall be reviewed through the Technical Review Committee (TRC) via the Minor Site Plan process.
- 4. Add transitional landscaping to be installed as required along the western and northern property line

Voting Yea: Commissioner Bliss, Commissioner Fox, Commissioner Graettinger, and Commissioner Sylvester, Chair Champagne

Motion carries.

B. Special Land Use Request PSP #25-05 - 28767 Dartmouth St. - Parking as a Principal Use of a Residential Parcel

Planner Lonnerstater introduced the special land use request PSP 25-05. The subject property is located at 28767 Dartmouth Street and owned by Najor Companies. The applicant hopes to develop a parking lot and drive aisle as a principal use of a residential parcel; the parking lot and drive aisle are intended to serve a proposed restaurant development on the adjacent site to the west. The subject property is zoned R-3, One-Family Residential. Because the subject parcel is zoned One-Family Residential, it cannot be combined with the commercially zoned parcels to the west; this arises from Section 3.05 of the Zoning Ordinance which prohibits the creation of new split-zoned parcels.

Planner Lonnerstater gave a summary of the history and description of the subject property as detailed in the packet.

The proposed drive aisle is 24.5 to 25 feet wide, with the curb cut being 23.5 feet from the southern residential property line. Twelve parking spaces are proposed as overflow parking for the restaurant. They are also proposing a six-foot-tall masonry screen wall along the South property line adjacent to

the property spaces.

MDOT will likely prohibit a left-hand turn out of the parcel onto 12 Mile Road. The applicant has proposed signage requiring a left turn only onto Dartmouth to prevent vehicles from turning into the residential neighborhood. A cross-access easement will need to be recorded to allow for vehicle access to/from the restaurant site.

Prior to construction of the drive aisle and parking, if approved, the applicant will need to petition City Council to vacate the existing public alley along the north side of the site. City Council will be required to hold a public hearing to hear this request.

Planner Lonnerstater reviewed the use-specific standards for parking as a principal use as detailed in the packet. Staff had the following recommendations to the Planning Commission.

- 1) Remove the three (3) eastern-most parking spaces to satisfy the 80-foot maximum parking setback of Section 10.06.F. Alternatively, apply for a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).
- 2) Extend the screen wall closer to the Dartmouth Street right of way, dropping to a height of 30 inches (30") at a distance of ten feet (10') from the right of way line to comply with clear vision corner standards. Alternatively, place evergreen landscaping between the eastern edge of the screen wall and the right-of-way line, accounting for clear vision corner standards.
- 3) Provide additional right-of-way screening between the eastern-most parking space and the Dartmouth Street right-of-way. This can be achieved via a low (30") masonry knee wall, landscaping, or a combination of both in accordance with Section 11.06.2
- 4) Install a minimum five foot (5') wide sidewalk along the northern edge of the drive aisle to allow residents in the surrounding neighborhood to safely walk to the restaurant.

Per City Attorney Tim Burns, Under the zoning ordinance, when a special land use request involves converting a residential property into a principal use for parking, the applicant must bear the burden of demonstrating the following:

- The reasonable need for the additional parking because it cannot be accommodated on the adjoining parcel
- The conversion to parking as a principal use is not a detriment to the residential neighborhood and will not impact the character of the neighborhood

Planner Lonnerstater summarized the applicant's request for parking. The applicant proposes a total of 169 spaces directly on the restaurant site, which is nearly 200% of the maximum permitted parking and 250% of the minimum. The additional 12 spaces proposed on this subject parcel bring the total to 181 spaces. Section 10.03 of the Zoning Ordinance sets a minimum parking rate of 1 space per each 100 square feet of usable floor area for restaurant uses, while Section 10.04 sets a maximum parking rate of 130% of the minimum. With approximately 6,700 square feet of usable floor area, the minimum parking count for the proposed restaurant is set at 67 spaces while the maximum is set at 88 spaces. The applicant claims that the parking counts are necessary to account for peak demand and an anticipated wait time of up to one hour, as well as parking for employees.

Chair Champagne opened the meeting up for public comments on this agenda item only at 6:15 pm.

Speakers:

Cathy Sapia - resident on Dartmouth – spoke in opposition to the special land use request PSP 25-05.
Linda Dewitte - resident on Dartmouth – spoke in opposition to the special land use request PSP 25-05.
Robert Hoff - resident on Karam Drive – spoke in opposition to the special land use request PSP 25-05.
Timothy Ginster - resident on Dartmouth – spoke in opposition to the special land use request PSP 25-05.
Dale Kohler – resident on Karam Drive - spoke in opposition to the special land use request PSP 25-05
Mary Kay Beauregard – resident on Karam Drive - spoke in opposition to the special land use request PSP 25-05
Patty Webster – resident on Dartmouth - spoke in opposition to the special land use request PSP 25-05

Seeing no further speakers, the public comment portion of this item was closed by the Chair at 6:36 pm.

The Planning Commission next heard from the applicant, Brian Najor on behalf of Najor Companies who summarized his application request to the commission. He reinforced that they would work cooperatively with the City to ensure all ordinances are met and they satisfy any requirements in place. He mentioned he would arrange a time to meet with residents at a nearby venue to hear their concerns and suggestions.

Motion by Fox, seconded by Sylvester that, following the required public hearing, the planning commission POSTPONES action on special land use request number PSP 25-05 for parking as a principal use on a residentially-zoned parcel at 28767 Dartmouth Street until the September 16, 2025 meeting. This postponement is made in accordance with section 15.05 of the zoning ordinance to allow the applicant to respond to the following items:

- A. Information from the tenant justifying the need for the additional parking on the site**
- B. Would like applicant to explore a combined drive aisle with the gas station to have joint access**
- C. Would like them to be in compliance with landscape ordinance**

Voting Yea: Commissioner Fox

Voting Nay: Commissioner Bliss, Commissioner Graettinger, Commissioner Sylvester, Chair Champagne

Motion Fails.

Discussion continued on this item to include concerns about the following: masonry wall, landscaping, drive aisle, additional traffic at the light, necessity for the additional parking. The Planning Commission would like further justification from the prospective tenant explaining the need for the additional parking spaces related to the special land use request. A traffic study was also suggested about possibly adding a left turn light or a right turn only sign at the Dartmouth/12 Mile intersection.

Councilman Bliss referred to a news article pertaining to the prospective tenant at a different location, in which they require 180 vehicles. He used a comparison to other restaurant bars such as Madhouse Grill which utilizes 116 parking spaces. He said the applicant hasn't fully explained the need for the additional parking. Commissioner Fox would like clearer details on the landscaping plans, and a detailed stormwater plan. He has concerns about fire access and the additional need for parking. Attorney Tim Burns felt it would

be wise to get input from the Fire Department regarding accessibility to the site. Chair Champagne thanked the speakers and the applicant. He stated his concerns with this special land use request pertaining to the flow of traffic coming onto Dartmouth and turning onto 12 Mile. Consensus among the Commission is that a recommendation should be made to Council rather than postponing.

Motion by Fox, seconded by Sylvester, that, following the required public hearing, the Planning Commission hereby recommends that City Council DENY special land use request number PSP 25-05 for parking as a principal use on a residentially zoned parcel at 28767 Dartmouth Street based upon the following findings:

1. The applicant requests Special Land Use approval for a drive aisle and parking spaces on a residential parcel at 28767 Dartmouth Street as permitted by Section 10.06 of the Zoning Ordinance.
2. The Planning Commission held a public hearing for PSP 25-05 at their August 19th, 2025 meeting
3. The proposed Parking as a Principal Use is not consistent with the use-specific standards set forth in Section 10.06 and/or the Special Land Use review standards and criteria set forth in Section 15.05.3.

In particular:

- 1) The applicant has not demonstrated the need for excess parking on the proposed site.
- 2) The applicant has not demonstrated that the site will be in compliance with the landscaping ordinance.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Bliss, Commissioner Fox, Commissioner Graettinger, and Commissioner Sylvester, Chair Champagne

Motion carries unanimously.

Chair Champagne called a three-minute recess of the meeting at 7:45 pm and called the meeting back to order at 7:48 pm.

C. Rezoning Requests PRZN #25-01 through 25-06 – City-Initiated Rezoning of Certain Qualified Properties:

PRZN 25-01 – 555 E. 13 Mile Road [R-1 to R-MN]
PRZN 25-02 – 1434 E. 13 Mile Road [R-2 to R-MF]
PRZN 25-03 – 30801 Dequindre Road [R-2 to MUI-2]
PRZN 25-04 – 1042 E. 12 Mile Road [R-3 to R-MN]
PRZN 25-05 – 500 W. Gardenia Avenue [R-3 to R-MN]
PRZN 25-06 – Eastern 130 ft. of 30728 John R Road [R-2 to B-1]

Planner Lonnerstater introduced the rezoning request. The City of Madison Heights initiated a proactive rezoning of certain qualified properties. If approved, these rezonings, will better align the zoning of these properties with existing land use patterns, the City's Master Plan, and adjacent street networks. The zoning ordinance was updated in 2024. Prior to that, it had not been updated in nearly fifty years and was outdated. Prior to 2024, religious institutions were only permitted in the one family residential and office zoning districts. Further, this rezoning process will have the effect of increasing building expansion and development potential while simultaneously ensuring that all existing uses are permitted to continue. Properties included

in this proactive rezoning process share the following characteristics:

- b. Currently zoned One-Family Residential (R-1, R-2, or R-3).
- c. Located on a moderate to high-traffic street identified as either an “arterial” or “collector” street in the Madison Heights Master Plan.
- d. Currently improved with a religious institution, private club, or lodge.

Staff sent out information letters to each of the property owners and established office hours to meet with them. Planner went through the six properties individually to state their current zoning and what zoning is being proposed as detailed in the packet.

Chair Champagne opened the meeting to public comment at 8:03 pm.

Speakers:

Timothy Keller – Gospel Life Church – 1042 E. 12 Mile

Asking for more detail about the master plan and the bigger picture of this rezoning request. Asks if there is a housing crisis.

Catherine Moran – resident on Diesing Drive – speaking on behalf of several of her neighbors on Diesing. Speaking in opposition to the rezoning request for 500 W. Gardenia. Sited multiple concerns. Argues this is not an arterial road but rather a residential road.

John Choy – pastor from Korean Central Church – speaks in favor of the rezoning request for 500 W. Gardenia. He states their membership at the Church has declined rapidly in recent years. The parking lot is in poor condition and the general maintenance costs are increasing beyond their budget.

Tyler VanSteenburg – Madison Church of the Nazarene – 555 E. 13 Mile Road – Had questions regarding daycares in churches. Question on impact on trash pickup.

Dale Kohler – resident on Karam – spoke about parks in the neighborhoods

Brett Wark – resident on Diesing – spoke in opposition to the rezoning of Korean Central Church

Gail Dewitt – resident on Diesing – spoke in opposition to the rezoning of Korean Central Church

Kim – from Korean Central Church – spoke in favor of the rezoning request for 500 W. Gardenia – asked about subdividing the lot

Discussion from the Planning Commission members continued. The Commission shared a consensus when discussing the rezoning requests. Commissioners feel that the Korean Central Church located at 500 W. Gardenia should be evaluated further to discuss the possibility of split zoning the property.

Motion by Commissioner Fox, seconded by Graettinger, that the Planning Commission hereby recommends that City Council approve the following city-initiated rezoning requests:

- 1. PRZN 25-01 – 555 E. 13 Mile Road (TM# 44-25-01-376-010) from R-1 to R-MN, Residential Mixed-Neighborhood.**

2. **PRZN 25-02 – 1434 E. 13 Mile Road (TM# 44-25-12-204-038) from R-2 to R-MF, Multi-Family Residential.**
3. **PRZN 25-03 – 30801 Dequindre Road (TM# 44-25-12-204-038) from R-2 to MUI-2, Mixed-Use Innovation 2.**
4. **PRZN 25-04 – 1042 E. 12 Mile Road (TM# 44-25-13-130-024) from R-3 to R-MN, Residential Mixed-Neighborhood.**
5. **PRZN 25-06 – the eastern 130 feet of 30728 John R Road (TM# 44-25-12-101-057) from R-2 to B-1, Neighborhood Business.**

This recommendation of approval is made after the required public hearing based upon the finding that the city-initiated rezonings satisfactorily address the rezoning review standards contained in Section 15.06 of the Zoning Ordinance, as follows:

1. **The city-initiated rezonings allow for zoning districts, their respective permitted uses and site development regulations that are more compatible with surrounding uses and zoning than the current zoning designations.**
2. **The city-initiated rezonings are consistent with the goals, policies, and objectives of the Master Plan pertaining to housing and commercial & industrial development.**
3. **The boundaries of the proposed zoning districts are reasonable in relation to surrounding zoning districts, and construction on site will be able to meet dimensional regulations for the pertinent zoning districts.**
4. **The rezonings will not create isolated or incompatible zoning districts within their respective neighborhoods and will not result in exclusionary zoning.**
5. **The rezonings result in zoning designations that are more compatible with adjacent street systems than the current designations.**

It is further recommended that city-initiated request PRZN 25-05– to rezone 500 W. Gardenia Avenue (TM# 44-25-14-276-005) from R-3 to R-MN, Residential Mixed-Neighborhood - be withdrawn so that the future land use designation can be further evaluated as part of the 5-year Master Plan update.

Voting Yea: Pro Tem Bliss, Commissioner Fox, Vice Chair Graettinger, Commissioner Sylvester, Chair Champagne.

Motion carries

7. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Items not listed on the agenda

Chair Champagne opened the meeting for comments at 9:07 pm. Seeing none, public comment was closed at 9:07 pm.

8. NEW BUSINESS - Introductory Discussion of Potential Text Amendment(s) related to Non-Conforming Residential Driveways

Planner Lonnerstater introduced the next item. Based on Zoning Ordinance requirements, staff has recently denied several concrete permits related to the like-for-like replacement of non-conforming residential driveways. To avoid an abundance of cases in front of the Zoning Board of Appeals, staff recommends that the Planning Commission consider zoning text amendments which would allow certain non-conforming residential driveways to be replaced in-kind. If the Planning Commission determines that a zoning ordinance text amendment is warranted, a public hearing will be set for the next meeting.

There are many cases of legally non-conforming driveway conditions throughout the city that were constructed prior to the zoning ordinance adoption. Staff has had to deny many applications for the replacement of non-conforming driveways in the last several months. The Planner outlined the changes requested as described in the packet.

Chair Champagne opened the meeting up for public comment at 9:19 pm.

Speakers:

Mel Shimoon – spoke about her particular driveway situation at her mother's home

After discussion, the Planning Commission agreed this should move forward to a public hearing. Staff will plan on scheduling a public hearing for the September 16th meeting and will post public notice as required.

9. MEMBER UPDATES

Commissioner Fox shares the planning Michigan Conference 2025 will take place in Kalamazoo October 22-24, 2025.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Champagne adjourned the meeting at 9:50 pm.