

CITY OF NORTHVILLE  
Planning Commission  
September 15, 2015  
Northville City Hall – Council Chambers

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Wendt called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

Present: Steve Kirk  
Carol Maise  
Dave Mielock  
Christopher Miller  
Matthew Mowers  
Mark Russell  
Anne Smith  
Jeff Snyder  
Jay Wendt

Absent: None

Also present: Patrick Sullivan, City Manager  
Sally Elmiger, Planning Consultant  
James Gallogly, Public Works Director  
Craig Strong, Chief Building Official

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**MOTION by Mielock, support Russell, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**

**4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: July 21, 2015**

The minutes were amended to include the following corrections:

- Page 12, paragraph 2: Mr. Andrus acknowledged ~~there~~ the list of questions . . .
- Page 21, paragraph 4: Commissioner Snyder asked how the property . . .
- Page 21, paragraph 5: Discussion was ~~had regarding including~~ followed regarding the requirement to demolish . . .

**Motion by Kirk, support Smith, to approve the July 21, 2015 minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.**

**5. AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None**

**6. REPORTS:**

**A. CITY ADMINISTRATION:**

City Manager Sullivan reported that the City Council had approved the text amendment regarding front yard setback averaging.

**B. CITY COUNCIL:**

**C. PLANNING COMMISSION:**

Commissioner Maise asked about permissions/enforcement for a growing mulch pile on Caldwell Street north of Main Street. Chief Building Official Strong said he would follow up on this.

**D. OTHER COMMUNITY/GOVERNMENTAL LIAISONS: None**

**7. FINAL SITE PLAN REVIEW: THE KROGER COMPANY – 425 N. CENTER**

Referencing the Carlisle/Wortman review letter of July 13, 2015, revised September 8, 2015, Planning Consultant Elmiger gave the background for this application, which was for final site plan approval for renovations at 425 N. Center Street. At the July 21, 2015 meeting the Planning Commission granted preliminary approval and also granted final approval for the pharmacy walk up window.

Remaining issues included:

- At the preliminary stage, the outdoor sales area next to the front door had raised concern. Now Kroger had reconfigured this area so that there was 3.5 feet between the canopy post and the closest sales display area, providing enough room for someone to walk through with a shopping cart.
- The Clicklist area was no longer a canopy, but was now an arch. Also, it was no longer a drive-thru but instead had four designated parking spaces. This was a better configuration but questions remained: if the Clicklist spaces were all full, where would cars waiting to get to those spaces go? If and how would that be managed?
- Regarding traffic flow in the north lot, pavement markings had been added to help customers understand that it was a one-way lot in that area. Would signage also be added to designate or direct traffic in the right direction when they first came in that area?
- Regarding the landscaping, two trees had been added to the north end of the greenbelt along North Center and the plans indicated that the existing plants and mulch, etc., would be refreshed to Kroger standards.
- The Planning Commission had asked for information regarding the HVAC screening on the roof of the building. This still needed to be provided.

Planning Consultant Elmiger concluded her review.

Matt Andrus of Jeffery A. Scott Architects p.c., 32316 Grand River Ave., Farmington, MI was present on behalf of this site plan approval request.

Mr. Andrus said that after the July Planning Commission meeting they had met with Kroger and re-examined the site and the online canopy process, as well as what made sense for maneuvering traffic within the parking lot. They had decided to eliminate the pull-thru spaces and instead offer the dedicated parking spaces as Planning Consultant Elmiger had described. Instead of a canopy they had then decided to create a metal arch with signage indicating the spaces dedicated for the Clicklist service. However,

since that submittal, Kroger had revised this again, and had eliminated the metal arch. They were now proposing adding typical parking signs indicating that they were dedicated parking spaces for the Clicklist ordering program. They would still have the call boxes at each of the spaces and they were still proposing one ground indicator sign to let customers know that this was the area for online order pickup.

Mr. Andrus further explained that they had tried to improve the maneuvering through the parking lot and reduce the scope of what they were looking to do. They were hoping to get final site plan approval tonight based on the new concept just described.

In response to a question from Chair Wendt, Mr. Andrus said they were aware that they needed to have their signage approved by the Sign Committee.

Commissioner Snyder noted that the area for the Clicklist parking had been excavated. Mr. Andrus explained that they were prepping to put in the conduits to the call boxes in hopeful anticipation of approval.

In response to further questions from Commissioner Snyder, Mr. Andrus said the speakers would be oriented toward the driver side window, and would be oriented away from residential neighbors. No new lighting would be necessary.

Commissioner Mielock confirmed that the parking count included the four Clicklist dedicated spaces. Planning Consultant Elmiger said with 10 excess spaces, they had sufficient parking to dedicate the four spaces for this use.

In response to a question from Mr. Mielock, Mr. Andrus said that Kroger was anticipating having 15-20 Clicklist programs in place within the first half of 2016. This was a new program.

Commissioner Kirk wondered what would happen should the Clicklist program be hugely successful. Mr. Andrus said the Clicklist program was limited by the amount of space dedicated to it inside the store. Adding any more dedicated Clicklist spaces would require Planning Commission approval.

Planning Commissioner Maise asked if there was anything the City needed to do to further protect itself in an agreement regarding this untried Clicklist program. Planning Consultant Elmiger said that the Planning Commission could ask the applicant to come back with additional ways of monitoring Clicklist traffic. Mr. Andrus said they would monitor the situation and also there was a natural limitation in that only so many people would be allowed to sign up for the program each day, utilizing a timed format.

In response to a comment from Commissioner Mielock, Mr. Andrus said that employees were required to park in the back parking lot.

Commissioner Mowers said that as a fall-back, 2-4 spaces could be reserved for waiting for the Clicklist service. Mr. Andrus said they were hesitant to do this as this particular parking lot needed all its parking spaces.

Commissioner Mowers noted that the City was encouraging shared parking in this area (Central Business District - Overlay). Mr. Andrus said there was shared parking with “What’s Stirring” to the north. There were no plans for other future shared parking. Planning Consultant Elmiger explained that any future shared parking would depend on types of businesses involved; a full site analysis would be required.

In response to a question from Commissioner Maise, Public Works Director Gallogly said that he suggested striping the main entrance to create three lanes: one lane in and two out, with the middle lane being for a left turn exit. Mr. Andrus said this could be accomplished during restriping of the parking lot.

In response to a question from Commissioner Mielock, Mr. Andrus said rooftop equipment would be screened; the building permit required this screening.

In response to a further question from Commissioner Kirk, Mr. Andrus said a noise study had not been done but the new HVAC equipment would most likely be quieter than the older equipment. They would meet the requirements of the noise ordinance.

Commissioner Miller said the four spaces dedicated to the Checklist service were actually controlled spaces and would likely be less chaotic than other activity within the parking lot.

Commissioner Russell asked about the comments on page 7 of the Carlisle/Wortman review letter regarding *Pedestrian Circulation*. What was Kroger's position about developing pedestrian amenities along the streetscape? Mr. Andrus said that they were not proposing to do anything along that area except keep the existing configuration. They were looking to add pedestrian striping along the south side near the parking lot near Center Street in order to identify a pedestrian walkway for people coming into the site. No pedestrian plaza, etc., was proposed.

Commissioner Russell spoke to the existing "tired" landscape. Mr. Andrus said the revised landscape plan had added in a note that existing landscaping would be cleaned up. Dead material would be removed and everything would be freshened to Kroger standards.

Commissioner Maise wondered if improved landscaping should be a condition of approval. Planning Consultant Elmiger said that the landscaping met ordinance standards as far as numbers were concerned. However, the landscape plantings needed to be in good shape. Mr. Andrus affirmed that the landscaping would be cleaned up.

Commissioner Snyder said that retaining walls along the sidewalk were beginning to bow out. Mr. Andrus said they would take a look at those retaining walls and if the situation called for it, they would note the repair of the walls on the drawings.

Commissioner Maise reviewed outstanding recommendations on page 10 the Carlisle/Wortman review letter:

Regarding item A.1.: *Provide number and type of delivery trucks visiting the site*, Mr. Andrus said that they would have approximately 2 semi-delivery trucks a day, and 6-7 smaller direct vendor delivery trucks per day.

Regarding item A.2.: *DPW Director review of proposed changes to stormwater system*, DPW Director Gallogly said the parking lot was not being expanded and the stormwater system was sufficient.

Regarding B.3: *Status of existing bike rack*, Mr. Andrus said the bike rack would remain or be moved slightly east.

Seeing that there was no more discussion, Chair Wendt asked for a motion.

**Motion by Mowers, support Miller, to grant final site plan approval for the property at 425 N. Center Street, based on the September 8, 2015 Carlisle/Wortman review letter and the plans submitted by Kroger on September 15, 2015.**

Chair Wendt asked for a roll call vote.

<b>Russell</b>	yes
<b>Snyder</b>	yes
<b>Smith</b>	yes
<b>Miller</b>	yes
<b>Kirk</b>	yes
<b>Mielock</b>	yes
<b>Maise</b>	yes
<b>Mowers</b>	yes
<b>Wendt</b>	yes

**Therefore, the motion carried unanimously.**

**8. DISCUSSION**

Chair Wendt welcomed two audience members to the meeting.

GARDEN ORNAMENTS

Planning Consultant Elmiger explained that the proposed language had been modified based on the determination made at the last Planning Commission meeting that pergolas, trellises and arbors were not garden ornaments. Garden ornaments were in the general provisions section, and arbors, pergolas and trellises were in the accessory structure section.

Planning Consultant Elmiger directed the Commission's attention to the proposed language change shown in Section 26.02 *Definitions* and Section 18.11.12 *Garden Ornaments*.

Changes from the previous proposed language included the deletion of arbors, pergolas and trellises from the definition of garden ornaments and the increase to 9 feet for the allowed height from the existing grade of a garden ornament. A further suggestion was to add *pond* as something that was not a garden ornament.

Planning Consultant Elmiger asked that the Planning Commission make a decision regarding whether the 32 square foot limitation for front yard garden ornaments was for a single ornament or whether this was cumulative for all garden ornaments.

After discussion noting that the dimensional requirements had originally applied to trellises, arbors and pergolas, it was the consensus of the Commission that all dimensional requirements should be removed from the sections pertaining to garden ornaments.

Chief Building Inspector noted that setbacks and building code requirements for clear distances from walls were not in the code just for aesthetic reasons but also for effective fire suppression, should that need arise. He added that the proposed ordinance language gave reasonable guidance for enforcement and enforcement interpretation.

In response to a question from Commissioner Maise, Planning Consultant Elmiger said that the ordinance language applied to both residential and commercial properties. She noted that setback requirements were different in commercial areas.

Commissioner Miller commented that he felt the proposed change gave common sense guidelines.

**MOTION by Maise, support Mowers, to schedule Garden Ornaments at the first available public hearing, noting that the word *ponds* will be added to the examples of items not considered garden ornaments, and all dimensional language will be removed. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### ARBORS, PERGOLAS AND TRELLISES

Planning Consultant Elmiger directed the Commission’s attention to the proposed language changes shown in Section 26.02 *Definitions* and 18.04 *Accessory Buildings and Structures* of the Ordinance. She explained that she had added definitions and illustrations for each of the three items. All the garden ornament language had been deleted from the accessory structure section. The one accessory someone could have in the front yard was one (1) arbor, trellis, or pergola.

Planning Consultant Elmiger had also responded to a request to modernize the definition of *building*. She had provided examples of definitions of *building* from other communities. She had begun to draft language based on this information.

After brief discussion, Chair Wendt suggested that the Planning Commission schedule discussion regarding the definition of *building* at a later meeting.

**MOTION by Mowers, support Maise, to hold a public hearing on the proposed changes to Article 26.02 and 18.04 of the Northville City Zoning Ordinances as presented.**

Chair Wendt asked for a roll call vote.

<b>Russell</b>	<b>yes</b>
<b>Snyder</b>	<b>yes</b>
<b>Smith</b>	<b>yes</b>
<b>Miller</b>	<b>yes</b>
<b>Kirk</b>	<b>yes</b>
<b>Mielock</b>	<b>yes</b>
<b>Maise</b>	<b>yes</b>
<b>Mowers</b>	<b>yes</b>
<b>Wendt</b>	<b>yes</b>

**Therefore, the motion carried unanimously.**

#### BUILDING HEIGHTS

The Planning Commission discussed building heights, especially as they related to front yard setbacks. For instance, in some communities, adding an upper story created a greater setback requirement. This

type of planning tool controlled “bigfoot” construction, and resulted in a more pleasing and consistent massing of architectural lines and forms.

Building height should also be measured from existing grade. Allowing grade to be built up resulted in out-of-proportion constructions. Also drainage problems could and sometimes did result from the artificial building up of the grade.

Using the table entitled *Single Family Building Height and Lot Coverage Standards, Comparison of other Communities*, Planning Consultant Elmiger said that except for Plymouth, no other communities had a variable front yard setback (setback averaging) like Northville used. She pointed out that Birmingham had a regulation that a smaller lot meant a shorter house. Royal Oak appeared to limit the size of all footprints to 3,500 square feet regardless of lot size.

Planning Consultant Elmiger directed the Commission’s attention to the handout *Single Family Residential, Maximum Building Height*, which showed 9 and 10-foot 1<sup>st</sup> floor ceiling heights with various maximum building heights.

An audience member participated in this discussion, describing how they had built their home so that it would fit in with the homes in the existing neighborhood and be a positive addition to the neighborhood.

Discussion included:

- Lot size, the footprint of new homes, setbacks and massing, especially controlling upper floors, were all variables that needed to be considered when talking about building heights.
- Perhaps the Ordinance could include suggested design guidelines for building within Northville.
- Grade plans were now required for new construction and demolitions.
- Current ordinance language allowed builders to build up the grade; this needed to be changed.

It was the consensus of the Commission to continue discussion of Building Heights at a later meeting.

## **9. ADJOURN**

As there was no further discussion, Chair Wendt asked for a motion to adjourn.

**MOTION Mowers, support Kirk, to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 9:06 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Cheryl McGuire  
Recording Secretary

Approved as published 10/20/2015