

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF ROMULUS PLANNING  
COMMISSION HELD ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2018  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

1. **The meeting was called to order** by Chairperson Freitag at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Roll Call Showing:** Jerry Frederick, Cathy Freitag, Daniel McAnally, Dave Paul, Celeste Roscoe, Edna Talon-Jemison, Jessica Workman, and Melvin Zilka,

Excused: Mike Glotfelty

Also in attendance: Carol Maise, City Planner; Brad Strader and Ann Marie Kerby, Planning Consultants (MKSK); Jessica Katers, Engineering Consultant (OHM)

3. **Motion by Paul, support by Talon-Jemison,** to amend the agenda as follows: move 8A SPR-2018-023 Unit 34 Oakwood Industrial Park to follow item 6, in order to hear this item before the Vining Road Campus Overlay District presentation.

Roll Call Votes: Ayes – Paul, Talon-Jemison, Frederick, Workman, McAnally, Zilka, Roscoe, and Freitag. Nays – none. **Motion Carried.**

*SPR-2018-023 became Agenda Item 6a.*

*2018 Meeting Dates - Revised became Agenda Item 8A.*

Agenda

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes
5. Comments from Public on Non Agenda Items
6. Public Hearings

**6a. SPR-2018-023; Unit 34, Oakwood Industrial Park**

Applicant: Tom Crabill, Medora Building Co.  
Request: Construction of an 18,825-sq. ft. industrial warehouse building with 22 vehicular parking spaces, 2 truck wells and 1 overhead door  
Location: 15422 Pine Dr. DP#80-125-01-0034-000 west of I-275 and south of Eureka

(Action required: approve, approve with conditions, deny or postpone site plan)

7. Old Business

A. **TA-2018-001; Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – Vining Road Campus Overlay District**

(Action required: Schedule a public hearing or postpone action)

8. New Business

A. **2018 Meeting Dates – Revised**

(Action required: approve, approve with conditions, or deny revised meeting dates; forward to Clerk)

9. PC-Cases Involving Advice or Input from the Planning Commission

10. Reports

A. Chairperson

B. City Planner – Development of Status Report

11. Reports on Interest Designation

12. Communication

13. Adjournment

4. Approval of Minutes

**Motion by Zilka, supported by Workman**, to approve the minutes of the regular Planning Commission meetings held on June 18, 2018 and August 20, 2018.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Zilka, Workman, Frederick, Paul, Roscoe (abstained from August 20, 2018 minutes approval as she was not present), Talon-Jemison (abstained from August 20, 2018 minutes approval as she was not present), McAnally, Freitag. Nays – None. **Motion carried.**

5. Comments from Public on Non Agenda Items: None

6. Public Hearings: None

6a. **SPR-2018-023; Unit 34, Oakwood Industrial Park, requesting construction of an 18,825-sq. ft. industrial warehouse building with 22 vehicular parking spaces, 2 truck wells and 1 overhead door, located at 15422 Pine Dr, west of I-275 and south of Eureka. DP #80-125-01-0034-000.**

Tom Crabill, 19061 Sheldon Road, Northville, MI was present on behalf of this application. Jason Longhurst, Nowak & Fraus Engineers, 46777 Woodward Avenue, Pontiac MI was also present.

- Mr. Crabill said they had had a pre-planning meeting with staff, had worked through some issues, and asked for Commission approval for this request.
- Chair Freitag confirmed with Mr. Crabill that the building was speculative, and there was no tenant at this time. She asked if City Planner Maise had any comments.
- City Planner Maise explained that the Building Department had some concern about pedestrian access at the front of the proposed building where the barrier-free parking space was located. Everyone involved – the Building Department, engineering consultants OHM, as well as herself – thought this issue could be resolved administratively without affecting building layout, size, etc. Originally the plan had come in with two barrier-free parking spaces. She invited the applicant to explain the change.
- Mr. Longhurst explained that they were proposing 22 parking spaces; with 22 spaces one barrier-free space was required. The amended plan now showed a hatched area next to the barrier-free space adjacent to the sidewalk ramp as it came out of the main entry of the building. Someone who used the barrier-free space would be able to move directly from their car to the sidewalk.
- City Planner Maise said OHM had seen this configuration; she was still waiting to hear if the Building Department found the solution acceptable.
- City Planner Maise noted that the labels for the east and west elevations were reversed.
- Chair Freitag asked about the access to the site from the new driveway on Pine Drive, which would require a waiver. How would trucks access the property? Would a cross access agreement be provided?
- Mr. Crabill explained that since the properties had the same owner, a cross access agreement would not be a problem to obtain, and they would provide this. Their truck circulation plan showed access into the site, truck maneuverability in and out of the dock area, and egress through the adjacent property.
- City Planner Maise emphasized that it was important to get a formal, recorded access agreement in place, in case one of the properties was sold in future.

Seeing that discussion had ended, Chair Freitag indicated she was ready to entertain a motion.

**Motion by McAnally, supported by Zilka**, to approve SPR-2018-023, Unit 34, Oakwood Industrial Park, 15422 Pine Drive, subject to the recommendations made on page 5 of the September 10, 2018 City Planner's review letter, including the following condition:

- A cross access easement agreement between the property and the parcel to the south be submitted during engineering review and recorded prior to any certificates of occupancy being issued.

And with the following finding:

- A waiver from Section 14.06(d) to the driveway spacing requirements is approved.

Roll Call Votes: Ayes – McAnally, Zilka, Roscoe, Paul, Workman, Frederick, Talon-Jemison, Freitag. Nays – none. **Motion carried.**

## 7. Old Business

### A. TA-2018-001; Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment for the Vining Road Campus Overlay

### **District.**

Chair Freitag explained that this item would be heard as a regular agenda item this evening, and would be heard at public hearing at the next Commission meeting on October 29, 2018. She invited the Planning Consultants to make their presentation.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, and referring to the September 17, 2018 draft of the proposed Vining Road Campus Overlay District, Planning Consultant Strader made the following points:

- The draft ordinance was the result of input from City staff, City Council, Planning Commission, and property owners.
- The Vining Road Campus Overlay District included the area east and west of Vining Road, south of the Amazon Fulfillment Center and north of the Vining Road Interchange at I-94.
- Background and history of the area included:
  - The study area had historically been zoned for Regional Commercial (RC).
  - The City had envisioned development of major commercial centers and entertainment uses in this area – but a variety of factors had left this area largely vacant.
  - In 2016, Amazon purchased the property along Ecorse and Vining Road and was approved for a Conditional Rezoning to M-1 in order to construct their Fulfillment Center.
  - Seeing the success of the Amazon facility, nearby landowners requested that the City expand permitted uses in this area to capitalize on market demand.
  - In 2017, a market evaluation was prepared for TIFA (Tax Increment Finance Authority).
  - The City had drafted amendments to the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance to accommodate some lower intensity industrial uses in order to encourage development in this area.
- Proposed Master plan updates for the Vining Road Campus Overlay District included:
  - Define and encourage the Vining Road Sub-Area as a ‘campus’ district.
  - Encourage additional industrial land uses.
  - Include standards for lakefront properties.
  - Specify standards for building architecture and landscaping.
  - Include standards for pedestrian pathways.
  - Set expectations for site development standards through imagery.
  - Wayne Road frontage remain RC and residential.
- There were two separate Master Plan amendments under consideration, one for this area, and one for the downtown area. Those Master Plan amendments would likely be scheduled for public hearings in the fall.
- The Master Plan would support the zoning changes and offer a guide to developers; preparing the Master Plan changes and the Zoning Ordinance changes concurrently smoothed the process, and allowed Council’s and the Planning Commission’s vision to move forward in an orderly way.
- The underlying zoning for the area would remain RC. The Overlay District sought to open up the uses permitted in the RC District for about half the area; the other half would stay RC only.
- Purpose of the Overlay District:
  - Implement recommendations from the Master Plan that were specific to this area.
  - Recognize that demand for some commercial and entertainment uses that were originally contemplated by the City for the area had been reduced due to e-commerce and other factors.
  - Provide an opportunity for Regional Center uses in a more concentrated area.

- Accommodate some of the current market demand for certain manufacturing and warehousing uses to ensure compatibility with existing and planned uses.
- Provide higher standards for open space, landscaping, and building design than would typically be required for industrial uses.
- More intense industrial uses, especially those with higher truck volumes, would be directed to other manufacturing districts in the City.
- Planning Consultant Strader emphasized that they had sought to reflect the Commission's desire to open up the area to some lower-intensity industrial/warehouse uses, but not all warehouse uses, while in return requiring higher quality development and more of a campus-like setting, including internal roads, better landscaping, less pavement, better architecture, etc.
- Planning Consultant Strader closed this portion of his remarks by saying that the purpose of the Vining Road Campus Overlay District was to implement the City's long range vision for this area to be the jewel of the city, providing a town center with entertainment/commercial uses while still allowing some higher quality industrial and corporate uses.

Planning Consultant Kerby continued the presentation. She made the following points:

- The goal of the Overlay District was to strategically allow for uses that might not otherwise be permitted in the RC District, while ensuring that those uses were compatible with surrounding land uses.
- Referring to the Overlay District map shown on the screen, Planning Consultant Kerby pointed out the Sub-Districts: (1) Mixed-Use campus west of Vining Road and north of the lake, (2) Light Industrial Campus north and south of Smith Road and east of Vining Road.
- The purpose of the Mixed-Use Campus was to expand upon the RC uses in order to permit some lighter industrial use types, designed in a campus setting with additional greenspace and buffering. Lots adjacent to the lake would meet RC setback and other standards to retain aesthetic appeal. Less intensive industrial uses that still generated moderate to high volumes of truck traffic were not permitted.
- The Light Industrial Campus would permit many of the M-1 uses, but require higher architectural and design standards in order to promote a campus-like setting. Any dock doors must be in the side or rear yard and not facing the RC District. Truck trailer storage was not permitted along a public street or adjacent to the RC District.
- The Mixed-Use Campus would permit all the uses of the underlying RC District, with some uses changed to uses by right, instead of being special land uses, including such uses as arcades, saunas, car washes, etc. *The Planning Commission should give feedback on this change.*
- Additionally, certain industrial, manufacturing, transportation, and warehousing uses would be permitted in the Mixed-Use District, including publishing and printing, and research and testing labs.
- *What did the Commission think about including certain distribution and warehousing facilities that were less than 100,000 square feet in the Mixed-Use Campus?*
- The Mixed-Use Campus Sub-District was a little more flexible than the RC District, while restricting the more intense, industrial uses, in order to be compatible with adjacent RC uses and the lake and residential land uses that were nearby.
- The Light Industrial Campus Sub-District permitted many of the M-1 Industrial uses, including institutional, medical, vehicle repair and office uses. Light Industrial did not permit as many

- commercial uses as the Mixed-Use Campus District. The focus of this District was light industrial.
- Light Industrial also permitted manufacturing of prepared material, publishing and printing establishments, research and testing labs, transportation terminals and distribution facilities up to 350,000 square feet.
  - *The 350,000 square foot maximum size facility in the Light Industrial Sub-District should also be discussed by the Commission, and perhaps receive public comment.*
  - An applicant who elected to use the Overlay District would be required to submit a preliminary site plan to the Planning Department, which would have to comply with several conditions:
    - Minimum area of at least 80 contiguous areas.
    - Each building on the site could be no larger than 100,000 square feet west of Vining Road for the Mixed-Use Campus and 350,000 square feet east of Vining Road for the Light Industrial Campus.
    - More than one building would be permitted on the site.
    - At least 10% of open space must be dedicated for public amenities.
    - The site plan, if applicable, would be required to display how the preservation of prime woodlots or other natural features would be accomplished.
    - The site plan must contain internal roads that connected to primary roads.
    - Where dock doors were permitted, they must be located in the rear or side yards. They could not face the RC district. Cross docking was not permitted.
    - No unreasonable increase of current capacity of public utilities would be permitted.
  - Regarding dimensional standards for industrial and warehouse uses:
    - Uses that were permitted in the RC District would follow the standards of the RC District.
    - Industrial and warehouse uses must comply with ordinance standards, with a maximum building height of 35 feet. An increase up to 55 feet was permitted, assuming an appropriate increase in setbacks and landscaping.
    - The maximum lot coverage would be 30% for buildings, and 60% for total impermeable surface.
    - For industrial uses along the lakefront in the Mixed-Use Campus District, lake front properties required a minimum 50-foot setback for open space. Parking and paved areas must have a minimum 75-foot setback from the lake.
    - Lake front docking standards were in place to encourage docking, but also the preservation of the lake, as required by the MDEQ permitting process.
  - General Development Standards: Building Design
    - Building Design Standards enforced higher quality design.
    - The standards emphasized the importance of facade plane and material delineation, applied both horizontally and vertically.
    - High quality building materials were required.
    - Color schemes should be neutral in tone.
    - Sightline requirements included proper screening for mechanical equipment and any storage areas.
  - General Development Standards: Relationship between Built and Open Space
    - Open space and green space were emphasized in the draft ordinance. Open space should be preserved on the site to protect the natural environment and also to serve as public space for employees and residents. At least 10% of open space should be reserved for public use.
    - Landscaping should be used to visually break up paved areas and include native vegetation.

- Buildings should be oriented to enhance natural views of the lakes and woodlands.
- The preservation of prime woodlots was encouraged through an incentive of allowing the pervious surface on a site to be increased by up to 50% if equal or greater area of prime woodlot was preserved (at least 2 acres).
- General Development Standards: Pedestrian Pathways and Shared Use Paths
  - Parking areas should be connected with building entrances with minimum 5-foot wide sidewalks.
  - Shared use paths that were a minimum of 8 feet wide were required along the lakefront and public streets.
- General Development Standards: Landscaping
  - Landscaping standards included requirements for landscaping along the street frontage. For industrial uses, the requirements were doubled as compared to office and commercial uses. The greenbelt depth for industrial uses was 60 feet, rather than 30 feet, and the 60-foot requirement would be increased to 80 feet for buildings that were over 35 feet in height. The goal was to ensure that the overall appearance was enhanced, and to reduce stormwater runoff in the area.
  - In addition to landscaping along the frontage of the property, internal greenbelts and buffer zones between land uses were also required.
  - The minimum size of landscape plant materials for the overlay district also mandated larger landscaping – about 50% larger than what was currently required in the Zoning Ordinance.
  - Planning Consultant Kerby showed a rendering of a development that could be inspired by the proposed development standards. Any development should look less like a big box development and more like the campus setting being encouraged by the Overlay District. Development should draw inspiration from the surrounding environment and activate the public space on the site.
- The Review and Approval Process essentially followed the procedures in Article 17, Site Plan Review, as follows:
  - Preliminary site plan review would first have technical reviews by the Administrative Review Committee (ARC). The applicant would then make changes based on the ARC review, before submitting a revised preliminary site plan for Planning Commission comment.
  - Final site plan review and approval by the Planning Commission.
  - Regarding standards for review and approval, the Planning Commission should consider:
    - Whether the site plan would diminish the general public's health, safety and welfare.
    - Whether the site plan met the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.
    - Whether the site plan was consistent with the Master Plan and compatible with surrounding land uses.
    - Whether the site plan described the benefits of selecting the Overlay District and how the site would enhance the surrounding community.

Planning Consultant Kerby concluded her presentation.

Chair Freitag asked City Planner Maise to explain the timing of Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance updates.

- City Planner Maise explained that the updates for the Master Plan, along with the proposed Vining Road Campus Overlay District Ordinance and the Downtown Sub-Area Plan were being

accomplished concurrently. The Downtown Development Plan was being heard at public hearing before City Council next week. After that public hearing, the Planning Department would make changes in the Downtown Sub-Area plan which would then be before the Commission on the October 29 or November Planning Commission meeting.

- Chair Freitag noted that by moving forward in this way, the changes in the Master Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, and the Sub-Area Plans would be consistent with each other.
- In response to a comment from Commissioner McAnally, City Planner Maise explained that site plan review under the Overlay District was a two-step process. Normally, site plan submissions were reviewed administratively by ARC, and often plans were revised two or three times and most issues were worked out before they appeared on a Planning Commission agenda. Under the Overlay District, the Commission would see the plans twice: first in their concept form at preliminary site plan approval, with some detail included that would verify whether qualifying conditions were met, and secondly during final site plan submission, when all necessary detail such as lighting, specific landscaping, etc., would be included.
- Commissioner McAnally thought it important to make sure there was a definite delineation between the two submission levels, so the Commission did not have to question whether or not they had enough information for the submission before them.
- Planning Consultant Strader further explained that the two-step process gave the applicants a chance to come in for the first step with architectural renderings for Commission review and response. The Commission could at this point have conversation with and give direction to the applicant, especially regarding the overall layout, the concepts presented, etc., so that when the applicants came back for final site plan review, there shouldn't be any surprises and that meeting should go a little more smoothly.
- Commissioner Paul said that bath house was a permitted use under Recreation, Leisure and Entertainment. What was a bath house?
- Planning Consultant Strader explained a bath house would be a spa or something similar. After consideration, staff felt that the bath house use should be removed from the Mixed-Use Campus District altogether. The bath use could be kept as a special use in RC, but be removed from permitted uses in the Overlay District. If someone wanted to have a bath house/spa as accessory to a hotel, it would be considered, but a stand-alone use would not be permitted.
- Planning Consultant Strader further explained that some of the uses in the list of uses were actually archaic; the list of uses was copied from the current RC ordinance.
- Planning Consultant Strader asked for discussion and direction regarding capping the size of buildings as drafted: 100,000 square feet on the west side of Vining, and 350,000 square feet on the east. Some industrial developers had suggested raising the 100,000 square foot maximum on the west to 125,000 square feet. Also, did the Commissioners support the 350,000 square foot maximum on the east side?
- Commissioner McAnally did not have a problem with increasing building size on the west to 125,000 square feet, but did not want to go larger than that. He was also comfortable with 350,000 square feet on the east side of Vining.
- Planning Consultant Strader gave some further background to the sizes being discussed. At the Commission's direction, they had spoken with other communities that had airports, including Grand Rapids regarding the area around the Grand Rapids airport, and Genoa Township between Brighton and Howell. Allowing buildings in the 125,000 square foot range seemed to be the norm in some communities. Other communities also allowed the 350,000 square foot range.



Some communities were trying to decide where to allow 500,000 – 800,000 square foot buildings; Romulus was already accommodating that size in other areas.

- Commissioner McAnally said he was not excited about allowing 350,000 square foot buildings, though if the other Commissioners wanted that he would not dissent. It did seem to him that buildings of that size would allow a lot of trucking companies.
- Chair Freitag thought that allowing 125,000 square foot buildings on the west side was fine, and agreed with the maximum of no more than 350,000 square foot buildings on the east side.
- Commissioner Frederick pointed out that the rendering shown as the last slide of the presentation portrayed a development very similar in direction to what Ford Motor Company was currently doing in Dearborn.
- Commissioner Talon-Jemison asked that when renderings of proposed developments were presented, landscaping should also be shown. She was concerned with landscape overcrowding. She referred to a current situation in the City that looked attractive when the proposal came in, but now that the landscaping was grown, some had to be removed.
- Planning Consultant Strader said that when the landscape architects drew up the proposed landscape standards for the Overlay District, they had received some comments from one council member that plantings seemed to be spaced too far apart. However, they did want to avoid the problem of overcrowding. Therefore they had added additional quantity requirements at the third tier, but had included wider spacing requirements for trees while requiring larger trees than the ordinance normally listed. Instead of 2-1/2" – 3" caliper trees, the Overlay Ordinance required 3"- 4" caliper trees. Instead of 8'- 10' evergreens, 10' – 12' or 14' evergreens were required. As a result the immediate plantings would be larger for more immediate effect, yet when the plantings matured overcrowding would be avoided.
- Planning Consultant Strader suggested adding language so that that when applicants first came in with a concept plan, it was clear the applicants needed to pay attention to the building architecture and materials, and also the landscaping. Applicants had some flexibility with those things, and landscaping was probably one of the things the Commission and staff would always want to comment on before final site plan submission.
- Planning Consultant Strader said there was a difference between screening and landscaping. The proposed ordinance had requirements for greenbelt landscaping along the street, which was more aesthetic in emphasis, and separate requirements for buffering from other RC uses or residential uses, which was where more dense materials were needed.
- Chair Freitag noted that Amazon had most of their landscaping in and it was beautiful, and did allow for future growth without overcrowding.
- Planning Consultant Strader addressed the planning process for the Amazon landscaping, which involved cooperation between the City and Amazon. Amazon had also emphasized ease of maintenance in their landscape plan. The City had experience with developers putting in beautiful landscaping that was, over time and multiple owners, not maintained because the landscaping was high maintenance. The City was interested in having attractive, lower maintenance landscaping that involved more natural types of materials.

Seeing the discussion had ended, Chair Freitag opened the meeting for public comment.

Chad Meyer, Northpoint Development, 4825 Northwest 41<sup>st</sup> Street, Riverside MO came forward to speak.

- Northpoint Development had one of the properties in the proposed overlay district under contract. He was present tonight in order to get a feel for what the Commission wanted in the area. They

had begun the submission process over a year ago by meeting with Economic Development Director Keyes, and had been before the Commission.

- Since their last hearing, Northpoint Development had revised their plan, and they would like to present it if the Commission was open to that. They had brought pictures and elevations of buildings that were in other developments, some of which had buildings under 350,000 square feet, some over that limit.
- Ford Motor Company had approached Northpoint Development regarding property in this area. They were doing other projects for Ford around the country, and Mr. Meyer had brought Ford representatives in about 2-1/2 weeks ago to meet with City staff. Ford was looking at an approximately \$80 million investment to put in a new facility to support their regional plant. It sounded like Ford's use was not a fit for the area as described this evening, so he wanted to see if there would be any special circumstance where a company like Ford, or GM, would be considered when they wanted a facility greater than 350,000 square feet. Such a facility would come with 250-300 new high-scale jobs and a massive dollar investment. Was there a vehicle or any opportunity for that to locate in the Light Industrial Campus?
- Chair Freitag said there were other areas in the City, such as off Eureka Road, that was specifically designed for 350,000 and larger square foot buildings. That area was near the railroad track and I-275.
- Mr. Meyer said Ford was not particularly interested in that area. Regarding the Light Industrial Sub-District being discussed this evening, there was a challenge to try to limit truck traffic to the northern part of the Light Industrial area, while trying to direct truck traffic to the interstate. If the effort was to limit lighter truck use to the northern area, the result was to add exponentially more truck miles on the infrastructure. 100 trucks a day that had to go 3 miles north from the Interstate and back again resulted in an additional 600 truck miles per day. However, if the trucks had to only travel ¼ mile off the interchange, use of the infrastructure was greatly reduced.
- If Northpoint were able to move forward with their proposal, they would be able to preserve a lot of the infrastructure if the City would not disallow a more truck intensive user along the south in the Light Industrial Campus.
- Mr. Meyer asked for feedback regarding the term being used: *cross dock facility*. In the industry a true cross dock was a long narrow building with docks on each side. That configuration served trucks coming in, loading or unloading, and then leaving just a few minutes later on the other side, such as a UPS or FEDEX facility. A building with docks on two sides was not necessarily a cross dock facility. For example, half of Northpoint's buildings were split down the middle, with tenants facing either side who used docks next to their office frontage, resulting in docks on both sides. He wondered if a building with two sides would be allowed, and not be considered a cross dock facility.
- Chair Freitag said that based on the proposed overlay ordinance before them, the City would not entertain docks on both sides of a building. There was property throughout the City that would accommodate that type of layout. The purpose of the Vining Overlay District was to provide a pristine, safe, healthy, beautiful environment for their residents and for people working there. The area had been studied for a long time. She did not foresee making any significant changes to the Overlay District as now proposed.
- Commissioner Paul agreed, noting that he supported the decisions that had been made over time regarding this area.
- Mr. Meyer suggested putting a larger than 350,000 square foot Ford facility in the middle of 200 acres with nothing else around it. That would triple the green space, and landscaping would

screen the facility so that the facility would not be visible from any street. The actual density and total square footage of buildings would be reduced from that permitted in the draft ordinance. Would the Commission be open to such a plan?

- Chair Freitag opposed making exceptions for a single user. Again, there was plenty of property throughout the City that would accommodate the type of development Mr. Meyer was describing, and specifically Eureka Road offered access within a mile of I-275, and was also close to the railroad tracks. The Commission had worked hard on the Overlay District and she was proud of what was being proposed.
- Planning Consultant Strader added that the cap of 350,000 square feet on the east side of the Overlay District did not include an option for a developer to ask for a larger building. The cap was non-negotiable.
- Mr. Meyer said he would relay the Commission's answer to Ford.

Tony Antone, Kojaian Company, came forward to speak.

- One of the qualifying conditions for use of the Overlay District was that a parcel had to be 80 acres. Their property south of the Amazon Fulfillment Center was only 60 acres. Was this exclusion intentional?
- Planning Consultant Strader said there was no intent to exclude that parcel. He would check with Economic Development Director Keyes, and make sure that no existing parcel was being excluded by the requirements of the District.
- Regarding cross docks, Mr. Antone pointed out that in the Light Industrial Campus, if a building were built perpendicular to Smith Road, a building could have cross docks that weren't visible from the main road.
- Chair Freitag reiterated that no cross docks were allowed.
- Mr. Antone said he didn't understand why that mattered. He understood that the Commission did not want docks facing Smith or Vining, but if a company wanted to develop an internal docking system and it didn't affect the main road, and wasn't seen from the main road, why would that matter?
- City Planner Maise explained that the question was one of use. The goal was a campus feel/environment with more employees, and uses that needed cross docks often did not encourage that result. The Commission had looked at what types of uses/buildings generated workers and people, as opposed to uses that generated trucks and storage.
- Mr. Antone said he did not think that conclusion was accurate in terms of the actual warehouse/industrial market. Cross docks did not result in more trucks; rather cross docks were a function of how a company used their building.
- City Planner Maise asked about the number of employees such companies utilized. Mr. Antone said in his experience, companies with cross docks often had more employees than less.
- Planning Consultant Strader explained that in a previous draft cross docks had been allowed as long as it was configured as described by Mr. Antone, so that no docks were visible from a main street. However, the Commission had given direction to eliminate all cross docks for the reasons stated. Could Mr. Antone give some examples of how cross docks were or weren't related to more intensive truck traffic?
- Chair Freitag said that one reason the Commission didn't want to have cross docks was not simply the number of trucks a business would have but also the appearance of the building. There was no way to make docks attractive.

- City Planner Maise remembered that the issue came up with Consultant Katers' (OHM) pictures of ways to minimize the doors. When doors were on both sides, it was likely they would be seen.
- Chair Freitag asked Mr. Antone how he would design a building to have cross docks where they would not face Vining or Smith.
- Mr. Antone gave the example of developing two buildings on Kojaian's 60 acre parcel. The building closest to Vining and Smith would have a facade similar to Amazon's facility on Ecorse Road, with docks on the east only. There would be a facade on Smith and one on Vining, and the docks would be in the back. Similarly, another building oriented north/south, a little further to the east, might have cross docks from the east and west. Such cross docks would be internal to the site, and would back up to Amazon at the north. Smith Road would have a facade of no docks, and the east/west docks would not be visible.
- Chair Freitag asked about the docks facing Vining Road. Mr. Antone explained that those docks would not be visible because they would be screened by another building. Additionally, the Kojaian property did not have any residential neighbors.
- Commissioner Paul said he did not want to encourage trucks – cross docks or otherwise – in that area. He wanted a campus feel and appearance.
- Mr. Antone emphasized that they were discussing warehouse buildings and there would be trucks, though he did understand the Commission was trying to lessen truck volume. He argued that a cross dock configuration would not encourage more trucks. He could provide data to support his argument.
- Planning Consultant Strader said the Commission's options were to simply say they didn't want to allow cross docks, or allow cross docks with certain conditions, such as screening and other conditions. The cross docks could be shown during the conceptual presentation, and the Commission could say yes or no at that time, thus allowing the Commission some discretion in making this decision. If the Commission wanted to look at providing that option, Mr. Antone could present some data for the public hearing.
- Commissioner McAnally said that if the size of the buildings was limited, that would limit the size of the operation, and if a plan came in where one side of the dock doors was not adjacent to a road and was not visible, and the other side was totally screened by another building, so the public would only see building facades from the road, that could be considered.
- Commissioner Paul agreed that the Commission could look at information Mr. Antone might provide.
- Following the consensus of the Commission, Chair Freitag directed that Mr. Antone provide information regarding cross docks as it related to truck volume to Planning Consultant Strader. He also should provide information including elevation renderings regarding building configurations that would provide cross docks without the cross docks being seen from a street or road. Planning Consultant Strader would then pass that information for the Commission to review prior to the public hearing.
- Commissioner Frederick noted that not every parcel could provide such a configuration as described by Mr. Antone; in the case of Mr. Antone's property it seemed that allowing cross docks might be a reasonable accommodation.
- Planning Consultant Strader commented that allowing the accommodation as described might allow some variation of uses, thus resulting in more sustainable overall development throughout the overlay area.
- Commissioner Talon-Jemison asked to see data from multiple points of view. A single information source could skew the data. It was important not to encourage increased truck traffic;

this was especially important to neighboring residents, who had chosen their neighborhood without anticipating increased truck traffic.

Michael Yamada, Commercial Real Estate Broker, Colliers International, came forward to speak.

- Mr. Yamada had come to the meeting tonight after hearing about it earlier today. He was expecting an aerotropolis concept, including mass transit, which was needed for young people who preferred not to drive. He would like to hear how the Overlay District plans connected to the airport. I-94 created heavy traffic, and he was confused as to how the Mixed-Use Campus and the Light Industrial Zone in the Overlay District related to that.
- Planning Consultant Strader gave a history of the effort to have mass transit in this area. The City actively participated in all discussions regarding mass transit, including those with the Regional Transit Authority, discussions regarding connecting the airport to Michigan Avenue and to Ann Arbor, as well as downtown Detroit. This was a regional issue and Romulus could not construct mass transit independently.
- He explained the City's efforts to plan with the airport in mind, leaving the area south of Wick Road as RC, to include uses supporting the airport, such as entertainment, retail, hotels, restaurants, services, etc.
- Planning regarding airport support included the freight airport in Ypsilanti Township, as well as the Detroit Metropolitan Airport.
- Mr. Yamada referred to the mass transit systems at Japanese airports that provided transportation from the airport to downtown areas. In Japan such mass transit was profitable.
- Planning Consultant Strader explained that a regional transit plan that had included a rail line from the airport to downtown Detroit had been scheduled for the November vote, but had been pulled due to lack of support from Macomb and Oakland Counties. Still, those discussions were ongoing.

Seeing that no one else came forward to speak, Chair Freitag brought the matter back to the Commission for further discussion. Seeing that there was none, and noting that this item would be on the public hearing agenda in October, Chair Freitag closed the discussion.

## 8. New Business

### A. 2018 Meeting Dates – Revised

Planning Consultant Maise explained that due to scheduling conflicts in October, the Planning Department was requesting the October meeting date be changed from Monday, October 15 to Monday, October 29.

**MOTION by McAnally, support by Paul,** to move the October 15, 2018 Regular Planning Commission Meeting to October 29, 2018.

Roll Call Votes: Ayes – McAnally, Paul, Workman, Frederick, Talon-Jemison, Zilka, Roscoe, Freitag. Nays – none. **Motion carried.**

## 9. PC-Cases Involving Advice or Input from the Planning Commission – None.

## 10. Reports

### A. Chairperson

- Chair Freitag reminded everyone that this weekend was the City's Parade of Lights and Pumpkin Festival.

### B. City Planner – Development of Status Report

- In response to a question from Commissioner Paul, City Planner Maise said that the Michigan Components project was complete.

## 11. Reports on Interest Designation

Commissioner Roscoe gave the following calendar announcements:

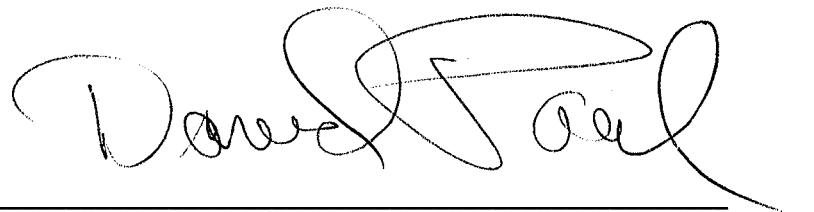
- Town Hall meetings had been scheduled for the upcoming Fire and Police Public Safety Millage. Meetings were scheduled for 6:00 Wednesday, September 19, at Barth School; 6:00 Wednesday, October 3, Wick School; and 6:00 Wednesday October 24, Romulus Elementary School. She encouraged everyone to attend one of the Town Halls.
- The Pumpkin Festival was this weekend, as mentioned by Chair Freitag. The Parade of Lights would be 8:00 Friday night, starting at City Hall. There would be many activities throughout the weekend, including live music, Saturday and Sunday pancake breakfast by Boy Scout Troop No. 872, pumpkin painting, St. Aloysius White Elephant Sale, etc.
- The citywide free yard sale would be September 27 – September 30. Anyone who wanted to be listed could register in the Clerk's Office.
- October would feature many Trunk or Treats, including at the Blue Sky Restaurant on October 13, Saturday afternoon, from 4:00 – 9:00 p.m.
- The VFW fund-raiser spaghetti dinner was scheduled for Friday, October 5.

Chair Freitag noted that Blue Sky was always looking for more trunks. Last year Blue Sky hosted approximately 450 kids. The event included costume contests, games, etc.

## 12. Communication – None.

## 13. Adjournment

**MOTION by Zilka, support by Roscoe**, to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m. Ayes – Zilka, Roscoe, McAnally, Paul, Workman, Frederick, Talon-Jemison, Freitag. Nays – None. **Motion carried.**



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David Paul, Secretary  
City of Romulus Planning Commission