

To: Commerce Township Board of Trustees

From: Commerce Township Planning Department
David Campbell, AICP – Planning Director
Paula Lankford – Senior Planner

Date: April 3, 2024

RE: April 2024 Monthly Planning Department Report
(covering March 6, 2024 through April 3, 2024)



Development updates

- **Chase Bank (NW corner of Haggerty and Crumb)** – The design team for Chase Bank has been in discussion with the Planning Department on a potential new Chase Bank branch to be constructed within a newly-created outlot just south of the existing Meijer gas station at 1443 Haggerty Road. The proposed branch is envisioned to offer services only inside the building with no drive-through banking (other than a drive-up ATM), such that the branch would be a principal permitted use in the property's B-3 (General Commercial) zoning and would not require approval of a special land use (with a public hearing) for a drive-through. Chase is scheduled for the Planning Commission's April 8, 2024 meeting for site plan review.
- **Lowe's (2745 E. West Maple)** – Comparable to the process the Haggerty Rd. Home Depot went through in 2023, Lowe's is seeking the Planning Commission's approval of an amendment to their original 2003 site plan to allow for outdoor storage & display. Lowe's is targeting the Planning Commission's meeting on May 6, 2024 for review and consideration of approval. In the meantime, Lowe's has presented an "interim plan" to the Township Supervisor to determine what they can be permitted without facing Code Enforcement action until such time as the Planning Commission has an opportunity to take action on an updated site plan. Of particular concern to the Township is the view of Lowe's and its outdoor storage/display areas along that very prominent stretch of northbound M-5.
- **Taco Bell (South side of Pontiac Trail west of Haggerty)** – PEA Group has submitted a concept plan on behalf of their client (Black River Bells LLC, Taco Bell franchise owner) for a drive-through Taco Bell on the south side of Pontiac Trail just west of Haggerty, between the existing Sonic Drive-In and the Michigan School & Government Credit Union (MSGCU). The site is currently comprised of two houses that would both be demolished and the properties combined. Both properties are zoned B-2 (Community Business), a zoning district that allows restaurants as a principal permitted use but would only allow the proposed drive-through as a special land use. The Planning Commission gave their informal and non-binding comments to the petitioner at their January 8, 2024 meeting. Taco Bell has submitted their formal site plan and special land use and is scheduled for the Planning Commission's April 8, 2024 meeting for consideration. One of the key considerations for Taco Bell will be site access, as the Road Commission for Oakland County's (RCOC's) preliminary review anticipates a restriction of outbound left turns onto westbound Pontiac Trail from Taco Bell's driveway, a restriction also imposed on Sonic's driveway. Township Clerk Melissa Creech was heard to

say “They can impose all the turn restrictions they want; they’re not keeping me from getting my Cheesy Gordita Crunch with a large Baja Blast.”

- **Unit 19, Homestead Industrial Park** – Premier Building Solutions representing property owner Dr. Suzan Syed has submitted a request for site plan approval for a new 13-space parking lot located on the southwest corner of Pioneer and Richardson Road for off-site employee parking for the medical office building located across the street at 4057 Pioneer. The site plan is intended to be the first phase of a 2-phased development with the future phase to include a medical office building on the west end of the site and an expansion of the parking lot that would be constructed in the first phase. The site plan for the off-site parking lot (aka Phase 1 of a 2-phase project) is scheduled for the Planning Commission’s April 8, 2024 meeting.
- **1992 N. Pontiac Trail** – Wisam Brikho has submitted a request for retroactive approval of an oversized accessory structure of 1,040 square feet to remain that was built without applying for or receiving building permits located at 1992 N. Pontiac Trail. Accessory structures on 2 or more acres are allowed to exceed the maximum 900 square feet with approval from the Planning & Building Departments, who have the discretion to defer the approval authority to the Planning Commission. The Planning & Building Departments take the position to always defer to the Planning Commission in cases where the structure was already built without a building permit. The petition for retroactive approval is scheduled for a public hearing at the Planning Commission’s May 6, 2024 meeting.
- **Costco (3000 Commerce Crossing)** – The design team for Costco tells the Planning Department they will be applying in early May for site plan w/ special land use approval to expand the existing store, and to relocate and expand the fuel center. A relocated & expanded Costco fuel center east of the existing fuel center was approved by the Planning Commission in 2023, but Costco is now pursuing a different location for an even larger fuel center on the south side of the Costco site that would replace what is currently a restaurant building (Ghost Taco). Costco is targeting the June 3, 2024 Planning Commission meeting for the PC’s consideration of site plan w/ special land use approval.

Zoning Map & Zoning Ordinance Amendments –

- **8168 Mario Drive** – A petition has been filed by a potential purchaser of the property at 8168 Mario Drive to rezone the parcel consisting of combined Lots 170 & 171 of the Peninsular Park Subdivision from O (Office) to R-1D (One Family Neighborhood Residential). The property has never been developed and is located just east of the medical building on the northeast corner of Union Lake Road and Mario Drive. One single-family home is being considered for the site. A public hearing is being scheduled for the April 8 Planning Commission meeting. If the PC makes their formal recommendation on April 8, the Zoning Map amendment could potentially proceed to the Township Board for adoption the following night on April 9.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

There were no petitioners for the March 21, 2024 regular meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals, so the meeting was canceled. The ZBA's next regular meeting is scheduled for May 16, 2024, with a submittal deadline of April 18, 2024. One petitioner is already scheduled for the meeting seeking a retroactive variance for a deck already constructed that encroaches into the minimum required waterfront yard setback. The Planning Department is aware of two other potential cases for the May meeting.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission's regular meeting on April 8, 2024 will include the following (in no particular order):

- A public hearing for a rezoning of a vacant parcel located at 8168 Mario Drive from O (Office) to R-1D (One Family Neighborhood Residential) as discussed above.
- A public hearing for a special land use and review of a corresponding site plan for a proposed Taco Bell w/ drive-through to be located on the south side of Pontiac Trail just west of Haggerty (as discussed above).
- Site plan review of a proposed Chase Bank branch (no drive-through proposed; drive-up ATM only) to be located in a proposed new outlot south of the Meijer gas station (as discussed above).
- Tubthumping.
- Site Plan review for a proposed off-site 13-space parking lot located on the southwest corner of Pioneer and Richardson Road for employee parking for an existing medical office located at 4057 Pioneer (as discussed above).

The Planning Commission's regular meeting on May 6, 2024 may include the following:

- Site plan for the existing Lowe's store located at 2745 E. West Maple for outside storage and display areas (as discussed above).
- A public hearing for retroactive approval of an oversized accessory structure built without a building permit located at 1992 N. Pontiac Trail (as discussed above).