

To: Commerce Township Board of Trustees

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

Date: November 6, 2024

RE: November 2024 Monthly Planning Department Report
(covering October 2, 2024 through November 5, 2024)



Development updates

- **SW corner of Pontiac Trail & Welch Road** – Bradley Thomasma with the ERT Group is proposing to redevelop two adjacent properties at the southwest corner of Pontiac Trail and Welch Road with a multi-tenant retail building with a drive-through tenant (likely a coffee shop), and a second floor that would be either office or residential. The two subject properties would have to be rezoned from R-1B to (likely) B-2, and the existing home (which historically has housed an adult foster care group home) would be demolished. A concept plan was presented at the Planning Commission meeting on October 7 for their non-binding and informal comments. The Planning Commission had concerns with the drive-through component adjacent to residential homes including hours of operation, noise, headlights and the close proximity to residential uses. A subsequent meeting was held with the Planning Department, the Township Supervisor, and two members of the Planning Commission on Oct. 14 to discuss ways of minimizing the PC's concerns.
- **Commerce Business Center** – Dennis Park of Sierra Ventures LLC continues to communicate with the Township, the Fire Department, and Walled Lake Consolidated Schools regarding his proposal to develop five vacant parcels located along the south side of W. West Maple Road east of Beck Road with 80 for-sale light industrial condominium suites within a collection of four & six-unit buildings. The assemblage of properties has a unique narrow & tapered configuration due in large part to the right-of-way of the former Coe Railroad, now the awesome Michigan Airline Trail, with limited road frontage along Maple. The properties are bounded by the campus/sports fields of Walled Lake Western High School & the Walled Lake Schools operation center (aka bus garage) to the south, and the Michigan Airline Trail, Shearwater Apartments, & a handful of homes to the north. A new driveway is proposed along the south side of Maple east of the Trail's crossing of Maple. Secondary emergency access would be required given the buildings are not proposed to be fire suppressed, and the site's unique configuration may make finding a suitable location for secondary emergency access challenging.
- **Midtown on Haggerty (Kroger w/ fuel center)** – Schafer Development continues their efforts to amend the approved planned unit development (PUD) for Midtown on Haggerty, effectively replacing the 187 apartments approved on the westerly two-thirds of the site with a 100,000 sq ft Kroger with fuel center. The existing Kroger (formerly Hillers) at the northwest corner of 14 Mile and Haggerty would be repurposed. A revised traffic study was conducted given the differences in volume and peak times of traffic for a Kroger rather than for 187

apartments. The Schafer's hope to be in front of the Planning Commission with their amended PUD at the PC's Dec. 2 meeting, which they have been told might be an overly-optimistic timeline given that their full PUD submittal has not yet been received by the Planning Department as of the date of this fantastic report.

- **Prospective development sites** – In addition to prominent sites that various developers have been looking at for decades (Beaumont property, Bay Pointe golf course, Union Lake golf course, Commerce Drive-In, etc.), the Planning Department fields semi-regular inquiries for prospective development/redevelopment upon several notable sites, including (but not necessarily limited to):
 - Northeast corner of S. Commerce and S. Commerce (in Commerce, approx. 10 acres)
 - United Artists / Regal Theater site (approx. 12.5 acres)
 - Northeast corner of Commerce & Carey Roads (two adjacent 40 acre properties, 80 acres combined)
 - 40 acres on north side of Commerce Road just west of Long Family Farm

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

There were no petitioners for the ZBA's regular meeting scheduled for November 21, 2024, so the meeting was cancelled and all tickets were fully refunded (less Ticketmaster's non-refundable service fees). The ZBA's next regular meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 23, 2025, subject to Township Board approval of the ZBA's 2025 calendar at the Board's December 10 meeting.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission's regular meeting on October 7, 2024 included the following:

- A concept plan for a new commercial development on the southwest corner of Pontiac Trail and Welch Road (described above).
- A concept plan for a new for-sale industrial condominium development on the south side of W. West Maple, east of Beck Road (described above).
- A concept plan for the redevelopment/expansion of the Commerce Lake Market at 1740 Glengary (not described above, but described with great eloquence in the Planning Department's October report).
- A public hearing was held and a recommendation of approval to the Township Board for a text amendment to the Commerce Township Zoning Ordinance, Article 26 (Use Standards), Section 26.316 Off-Premises Alcohol Sales Outlets (see parenthetical comment above, with a particular emphasis on "eloquence").

The Planning Commission's regular meeting scheduled for November 4, 2024 included only annual housekeeping items listed below:

- Review and approval of the Planning Commission's Bylaws, with one revision.
- 2025 Election of Officers, where Chairperson Brian Parel, Vice-Chair Brian Winkler, and Secretary Joe Loskill were retained in a Mondale-esque landslide.

- Review and recommendation of approval to the Township Board of the proposed 2025 Planning Commission meeting schedule.

The Planning Commission's regular meeting scheduled for December 2, 2024 could potentially include the following:

- Midtown on Haggerty amended PUD