

CITY OF WARREN
PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING

Regular Meeting held on December 2nd, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.,

A Regular Meeting of the Warren Planning Commission was called for Monday, December 2nd, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., in the Warren Community Center Auditorium, 5460 Arden, Warren, Michigan 48092.

Commissioners Present:

Delwar Ansar
Andrey Duzyj
Michael Holowaty
Syed Hoque
Sultana Chowdhury, Assistant Secretary
Mahmuda Mouri, Secretary
Merle Boniecki, Vice Chair
Warren Smith, Chair
Henry Newnan, Ex-Officio
Melody Magee, Ex-Officio

Also present:

Michelle Katopodes – Planner III
David Crabtree – Assistant Planner
Amanda Mika – Assistant Planner
Melissa Maisano – Administrative Secretary
Mary Michaels – Assistant City Attorney
Patrick Conlin - Communications Department

1. CALL TO ORDER:
Chair Smith - Calls the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:
3. ROLL CALL:
All Commissioners present
4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

MOTION:

A motion was made by Assistant Secretary Chowdhury, supported by Commissioner Holowaty. A voice vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES NOVEMBER 18TH, 2024:

MOTION:

A motion was made by Commissioner Duzyj to approve, supported by Vice Chair Boniecki. A voice vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

6. **PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:**

Members of the audience who wish to address the Planning Commission this evening for a public hearing item may do so by first checking in with the court reporter at the right of the stage and will have three (3) minutes to speak.

A. **SITE PLAN FOR OPEN STORAGE OF PETROLEUM EQUIPMENT, CONTAINERS, AND MATERIALS;** located between Ryan Road and Sunset Avenue, approximately 731.90 ft. south of Toepfer Road; 21350 Ryan Road; Section 32; Fawzi Algahim/IBB Petroleum Services (Hatem Hannawa/BD & E Group); PSP240027.

Mr. Fawzi Algahim – Good evening. We have a petroleum contractor that services gas stations throughout the area of the counties. We do not store any petroleum products, no liquid, no fuel, nothing at all, just equipment, some gas pumps, new and used, but they are empty from liquid, and some company service trucks that we use on a daily basis. That's all.

Secretary Mouri reads the following correspondence:

TAXES: Current.

ENGINEERING: Preliminary review of this site yielded the following comments from the Engineering Division:

1. The legal description provided does not match City of Warren and Macomb County records. Provide a complete and accurate legal description of the parcel.
2. Site plan shall show the location of all existing/proposed underground utilities including their size, material type, and discharge point in the vicinity of the project.
3. All parking and open storage shall be on hard surface (Concrete or HMA) except with variance.
4. Open storage shall require a variance.
5. The outside perimeter of all paved/parking spaces shall be minimum 6" concrete curb and gutter. Storm water discharge onto adjacent properties is not permitted.

COMCAST: In response to your utility request for the above project, please refer to the attached map for the location of Comcast CATV/FIBER facilities. Aerial cables are highlighted in orange for

fiber and yellow for coax cable. Underground is highlighted in blue for fiber and green for coax cable. If we can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact us by email at cccutilityrequests@teamsigma.com.

Ms. Michelle Katopodes reads the recommendation of the Staff:

PUBLIC HEARING:

Mr. Joe Hunt – I live in Section 9 of the City, District 5. I listened to the recommendations by the Planning Staff and the information provided and I'm all for this recommendation. I didn't really look at the backup material, but I did look up IBB Petroleum Services, they have a website and it told me everything that I need to know. Thank you.

Ms. Kathleen Oliver – We live close to the site, we own two homes, my husband grew up there. The family has been there since the 1930's. I'm opposed to these petroleum containers; they didn't state what kind of materials. I have allergies and asthma, my son does also, so I'm against having it there. That's all I want to say.

MOTION:

A motion made by Commissioner Holowaty to approve, supported by Commissioner Duzyj.

COMMISSIONERS PORTION:

Commissioner Holowaty – What type of containers are these going to be?

Mr. Fawzi Algahim – Empty plastic containers. We take them to our site to fill them with underground water, we don't fill them with fuel, we bring them back to our place empty. We don't store any liquid whatsoever, no fuel or fumes. We use them in emergency issues, let's say a tank is getting water to the tank, we go to the site and we have to bring our containers to fill them with underground water so we can perform the work in the station, after that we call a company to come get the water because it's contaminated water that we cannot dispose in the drain. That's the only reason we have empty containers.

Commissioner Holowaty – I did see from some of the pictures that there is some miscellaneous debris along the sides of the building, is there any way you could clean that up and make it a little more presentable to the neighborhood?

Mr. Fawzi Algahim – Yes, we will, that's no problem.

Assistant Secretary Chowdhury – Are they reuseable or new containers?

Mr. Fawzi Algahim – The containers are reuseable.

Commissioner Duzyj – I think you mentioned old pumps, do you have fire equipment there also that is required?

Mr. Fawzi Algahim – Like a fire suppression system?

Commissioner Duzyj – Yes.

Mr. Fawzi Algahim – No, we don't deal with fire suppression systems.

Commissioner Duzyj – You just deal with gasoline and that's it?

Mr. Fawzi Algahim – Yes, just with gasoline.

Commissioner Duzyj – I also agree with the Commissioner that you really need to clean this whole thing up. Nobody mentioned increasing the bond, I would support getting the bond up to \$1,050.00 as suggested by the Staff.

Commissioner Holowaty – I second raising the bond.

Secretary Mouri – This is your company right; do you have any employees on the site?

Mr. Fawzi Algahim – The max we have is 2 people at the site, mostly service technicians that go out. Sometime in the morning we just meet at the office for a ½ hour and then everybody leaves to go do their work. We have trucks that employees take home, and we have some that stay at the shop overnight. We have maybe 3 or 4 trucks that stay at the shop during the night, but the next morning they go to the job site.

Chair Smith – Good evening, sir. I stopped by the site today and I see you're storing the pumps for the gasoline, and you store some other containers which I saw. I agree with the other Commissioners, if you're going to have open storage, anything that you put outside has to be in those areas. You can't have it along the building. Did you get a chance to go over all the recommendations?

Mr. Fawzi Algahim – Yes.

Chair Smith – Do you agree with them?

Mr. Fawzi Algahim – Yes, I agree.

Chair Smith – Do you agree with raising the bond?

Mr. Fawzi Algahim – No, that’s no problem. Most of the work we do ourselves, we have contractors we are not going to hire any outsiders to do the work.

ROLL ALL:

The motion carried as follows:

Commissioner Holowaty.....	Yes
Commissioner Duzyj.....	Yes
Commissioner Ansar.....	Yes
Commissioner Hoque.....	Yes
Assistant Secretary Chowdhury.....	Yes
Secretary Mouri.....	Yes
Vice Chair Boniecki.....	Yes
Chair Smith.....	Yes

- B. SITE PLAN FOR GAS STATION AND CONVENIENCE STORE WITH DRIVE-THRU; located on the east side of Groesbeck, approximately 1,109 ft. from Frazho Road; 26260 Groesbeck Highway; Section 24; Zeerco Investments Corp. (Christopher Zeer); PSP240029. **Petitioner requests that this item be postponed to December 16, 2024.**

MOTION:

A motion was made by Commissioner Duzyj to postpone until December 16, 2024, supported by Assistant Commissioner Chowdhury.

ROLL CALL:

The motion carried as follows:

Commissioner Duzyj.....	Yes
Assistant Secretary Chowdhury.....	Yes
Commissioner Ansar.....	Yes
Commissioner Holowaty.....	Yes
Commissioner Hoque.....	Yes
Vice Chair Boniecki.....	Yes
Secretary Mouri.....	Yes

Chair Smith..... Yes

7. CORRESPONDENCE:
None at this time.

8. OLD BUSINESS:
None at this time.

9. BOND RELEASE:

A. MINOR AMENDMENT TO SITE PLAN FOR CANOPY ADDITION TO EXISTING DRIVE THROUGH FOR THE BANK; located on the south side on Twelve Mile Road, approximately 200 ft. east of Dequindre Road; 2000 Twelve Mile Road; Section 18; Public Service Credit Union/Donna Follbaum (G.J. Perelli/Gary Perelli); PMA230002. The Minor Amendment would be for a building addition for a new conference room. **Approved on February 6, 2023. Cash bond posted in the amount of \$5,200. Project complete. Release the bond.**

MOTION:

A motion was made by Commissioner Holowaty to release the bond, supported by Vice Chair Boniecki.

ROLL CALL:

The motion carried as follows:

Commissioner Holowaty.....	Yes
Vice Chair Boniecki.....	Yes
Commissioner Ansar.....	Yes
Commissioner Duzyj.....	Yes
Commissioner Hoque.....	Yes
Assistant Secretary Chowdhury.....	Yes
Secretary Mouri.....	Yes
Chair Smith.....	Yes

B. SITE PLAN FOR NEW PUBLIC STORAGE BUILDING; located 354 ft. south of Ten Mile Road; approximately 604 ft. west of Warner Avenue; Section 30; 2396 Ten Mile Road; Jared Yates (Justin Muller); PSP200021. **Approved on August 24, 2020. Surety bond posted in the amount of \$60,000. Project complete. Release the bond.**

MOTION:

A motion was made by Assistant Secretary Chowdhury to release the bond, supported by Commissioner Hoque.

ROLL CALL:

The motion carried as follows:

Assistant Secretary Chowdhury.....	Yes
Commissioner Hoque.....	Yes
Commissioner Ansar.....	Yes
Commissioner Duzyj.....	Yes
Commissioner Holowaty.....	Yes
Vice Chair Boniecki.....	Yes
Secretary Mouri.....	Yes
Chair Smith.....	Yes

10. NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion and review of 2025-2026 Planning Department Budget.

Ms. Michelle Katopodes – Good evening, everyone received the copy of the draft budget in this packet. For those of you that were on the Commission last year, it's going to look similar. It has a table of contents that explains each of the different sections in the budget. So what you have is the draft Planning Commission and Department of Planning proposed fiscal budget and that goes from July 1st, of 2025 to June 30th, of 2026.

I can touch on the key changes when you look at the different projects that we have budgeted in the past and ones that we have proposed. We provided a listing of all the different budget line items from those different projects and how we are looking to forgo some of the past ones that were approved and instead do the Climate Action Plan that we've been discussing from time to time here at the meeting.

When it comes down to items that are new that we didn't ask for last year, one is office equipment, a new envelope stuffer, which will also stuff the notices and fold them. That's a new item listed on page 8 where we talk about the different equipment and even contractual services, those types of items. That's something we are looking to replace because the current one is not functioning well. On that page, as well, there's the new line item for request for potentially a vehicle for the department to use, so that's listed in here.

Actually, at the top of the page is where it discusses contractual services, where it goes over in more detail the different projects, the ones that were approved in the past like the Housing Study, the Neighborhood Plan, and the Multi-Modal Plan. Those were plans that were approved in previous budgets that at the time we wanted

to do, but with the current desire by Administration and Council looking at the Climate Action Plan a lot of those funds would be reallocated and used for a Climate Action Plan. So that's what we are looking to do, the funds were already in our past budgets.

One other key thing from contractual services is ESRI/ArcGIS Software, we have a City-wide enterprise program in the Engineering Department and there is a GIS Coordinator who runs that overall program for the different departments. What they would like is departments that are using that to add to their own upcoming budget. The credits to maintain training and to have access to services directly with the staff basically. So that is a key thing that we added here on that same page under the contractual services and that's listed as \$17,100.00 as their advantage program, so as more staff plans to learn this and do training.

On the following page 9, it has a good chart with all those different plans and projects I was talking about. The current two that are on here that we are working on are the Greenspace Conservation Plan and Active Mobility Plan, that's shown here. It shows what was budgeted and some additional funds we pulled from the housing study that we didn't do.

In terms of staffing, we have seven employees now and we plan to have seven in the next fiscal year as well. The chart does show there are some promotions that are shown here for the Administrative Secretary, Office Assistant, also the Assistant Planning Director position is still technically to be filled. So these are positions that are on the proposed chart. We are still looking for seven staff members to remain. If there's any questions, those are the key things, a lot of other things are staying I think the same.

Secretary Mouri – I don't have any questions for Michelle, but I do have a quick discussion I'd like to do with the team, is that something we would do after the motion?

Chair Smith – Go ahead.

Secretary Mouri – This is my opinion, and I definitely want to throw it out there with everyone, especially with the conference that just took place. And Michelle please correct me if I'm wrong, I think it's \$70.00 per night that we get refunded for hotels. I know the budget is getting approved again and we are going to have a conference coming again. You can never get a hotel for \$70.00. All these times we have it in Mackinac, all these great cities which does not offer rooms at that low price. So can we increase that, with everyone's

discussion and what everyone thinks, I would like to propose to see if there's a way to increase that amount to at least accommodate for the hotel. At the end of the day, I'm taking off work, I'm talking about me no one else, and I'm paying extra to go to a conference that is going to end up supporting this city with my knowledge that I'm bringing back to the city. So I'd definitely like to throw that out there for everyone.

Ms. Michelle Katopodes – The fee for the conference, that's covered, they cover that in full, but the amount that they'll pay per diem is based on the GSA, the government rates, that are established. So, depending on the zip code where we are traveling to, they will pay a maximum of whatever is listed and a maximum per diem for food and other incidentals. I would have to ask the Controller's. Every time we go to conferences, whatever is in excess of that per diem amount, you do pay out of pocket. I don't know if Mary is aware if we added something for reimbursement, I'm not sure if we are permitted to do that, I don't know.

Secretary Mouri – I'm sorry, I was more focused on the hotel that they cover per night, I think that's different than the per diem?

Ms. Michelle Katopodes – It's coming from the same place, it's from the GSA. For example, when we went to the last location it was \$117.00 per night, that was the max for that area code of Grand Rapids. I don't know about having reimbursement beyond that.

Ms. Mary Michaels – This is a recommendation to the Mayor, and obviously the Controller would have input with the Mayor, so if the Commission wants to make a recommendation, by all means, present it.

Chair Smith – So would everybody like us to forward that recommendation to the Mayor? We don't have to have an answer right now, we are just discussing it. We are going to take this home, review it, and make our decision at the next meeting and vote on it.

Commissioner Duzyj – It changes with every area. Grand Rapids is going to be different than Mackinaw Island, which is different than Traverse City, which would be different than Flint. It's all dependent on what it is and where it is. The numbers that they come up with are from the same people doing the numbers for the mileage as far as gas and use of car. So making a motion to increase future expenditures is dubious at best, we know it's going to go up, but to know how much more it's going to go up, we don't know. It's a nice idea but I don't think it's practical. We can make a request to the

Controllers Office or the Mayor's Office, but I think they have to tie it down to the Federal rates that apply for each different area.

Chair Smith – I agree with you there, this is a standardized rate that they use for the different areas, so it's not just us paying extra, everybody that's going to the conference is paying the same.

Commissioner Duzyj – I agree with you, I wish they'd cover the whole thing, but that's not going to happen. We do the best we can with what we have and some of the information that you get at some of these conferences far outweighs the cost. Thank you.

Chair Smith – I need a motion to receive for review---

Commissioner Duzyj – Mr. Chairman, do you want a motion to receive and file?

Chair Smith – I thought about that, but if you receive and file then you put it away.

MOTION:

A motion was made by Commissioner Duzyj that we review the department fiscal budget for the next meeting, supported by Commissioner Holowaty. A voice vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

11. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

Mr. Joe Hunt – Good evening once again, Joe Hunt from 8306 Stanley at Twelve and Van Dyke. I moved into the City about 22 years ago because of the prospect of the thriving downtown that never existed. Now that I'm in my third administration of coming to different public meetings, I guess I can ask the question on whether or not the Planning Commission, in conjunction with the Planning Department, has any intention of working with the DDA to sell that property in front of the Civic Center area so that it can become a thriving downtown area. I live near the Walmart, which was vacant for a long time and then it became thriving, which I'm happy about. But, like I say, I'm in my 22 years as a resident of the City of Warren waiting for that thriving downtown and I don't see anything thriving about it.

I'll conclude by looking at the BS&A Online Data Base which is really a good insight into the various areas of the city, and I noticed that the City of Warren Planning owns 45 properties in the City, mostly in the south end, or I should say south of 696. And I guess my question would be, why is it that the City of Warren Planning owns

these properties and what can be done to sell them to any prospective buyers perhaps even for \$1.00 just to offload them from the books? Like I say, I'm celebrating my 22nd year here in the City of Warren as a taxpayer waiting for that thriving downtown area that doesn't seem like it's going to happen. Thank you so much.

Chair Smith – We want to thank you for supporting us for 22 years, good seeing you again.

12. PLANNING COMMISSION BUSINESS:

A) Planning Director's Report:

Ms. Michelle Katopodes – This will be brief, so, since the last meeting, I attended a meeting on November 20th, it was the subcommittee meeting for murals in the TIFA District. The first mural is located on the north wall of the Battery Warehouse at 23838 Van Dyke, the corner of Van Dyke and Stephens. They are looking to do another one, maybe in the spring, we are starting talks of the next location.

Today we had a meeting with members of the Environmental Review Committee and the Administration discussed the potential list of items to include in the RFP for the Climate Action Plan that I discussed. It's still in the early stages, but as I indicated, in our budget there were projects that were previously approved that would be eliminated and the funds allocated to that climate action plan.

Also, I want to remind everyone that on December 11th there will be an open house at the Burnette Library to review the preliminary plan for the Active Mobility Plan. That will take place Wednesday, December 11th, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm and that's located at 23345 Van Dyke. You can stop by anytime between 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm to provide your input on the preliminary plan. There will be a brief presentation at 6 pm and at 7 pm, there is more information that you can get on the website for this project and that's walkbike.info/warren.

This is not one of our projects but there is a Town Center Community Planning Session for the downtown, that's December 18th, there's some flyers around City Hall, and it went in the water bill. There's going to be two sessions that day through the Economic Development Department. There will be one on the 1st floor conference room at 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at City Hall, and later that evening from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Burnette Library at 23345

Van Dyke, both on December 18th for the people interested. That ends my report.

Commissioner Holowaty – The meeting on the 18th, is that the meeting that Mr. Hunt might be interested in?

Ms. Michelle Katopodes – I'm not sure, he mentioned the downtown, so I recalled there was the flyer that they had sent out, so I know that's coming up.

Commissioner Holowaty – Maybe the two can be tied together because he mentioned the downtown that's been debated for the past few years.

Ms. Michelle Katopodes – Yes, that's regarding the town center.

Commissioner Holowaty – Thank you.

B) Planning Commission Discussion and Concerns:

None at this time.

13. CALENDAR OF PENDING MATTERS:

None at this time.

14. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION:

A motion was made by Commissioner Duzyj to adjourn, supported by Commissioner Holowaty. A voice vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Warren Smith, Chair

Mahmuda Mouri, Secretary

Meeting recorded and transcribed by
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APPROVED