

**WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
APRIL 17, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Carlock called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. She then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present:

T. Joseph Seward
Pete Meagher
Mona Sevic
Robert Seeley, Vice Chair
Debby Dehart

Absent:

Merrie Carlock, Chairperson
Scott Ruggles, Township Board Liaison

Others:

Sean O'Neil, Community Development Director
Andrew Littman, Staff Planner
Matteo Passalacqua, Carlisle Wortman
Mike Leuffgen, DLZ
Hannah Kennedy-Galley, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Commissioner Seward, seconded by Commissioner Meagher, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried with a voice vote: (5 yes votes).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 6, 2025

MOTION by Commissioner Seward, seconded by Commissioner Sevic, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion carried with a voice vote: (5 yes votes).

CALL TO THE PUBLIC (FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)

Ethan Klein, 225 Oxbow Lake Road, spoke in favor of amending the ordinance to allow smaller class two animals in single-family residential zoning districts.

Mary Earley, 5925 Pine Ridge Court, spoke against farm animals in single-family residential zoning districts.

The call to the public was closed at 6:35 P.M.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. White Lake Motors

located on the south side of Highland Road, west of Pontiac Lake Road. Identified as 12-13-455-024 (8285 Highland Road). Consisting of approximately 6.1 acres

Requests: **Preliminary site plan approval recommendation, special land use approval, final site plan approval**

Matteo Passalacqua reviewed his letter.

Commissioner Sevic asked Mr. Passalacqua if the parking lot islands would have landscaping. Mr. Passalacqua confirmed.

Commissioner Dehart asked Mr. Passalacqua why the number of trees is reduced on the plan. Mr. Passalacqua said that due to the size of the site, there may not be room for more tree plantings.

Commissioner Dehart asked Mr. Passalacqua if the existing buildings would remain in the rear of the site. Mr. Passalacqua confirmed.

Commissioner Seeley asked staff how many variances are being requested. Staff Planner Littman said the applicant requested three, but a fourth variance may be required for the parking lot landscape trees.

Mr. Leuffgen reviewed his report.

Commissioner Meagher asked about cross-access to the site to the west. Director O'Neil said the cross-access would pose a safety issue; the cross-access between the two sites would be in the rear.

Commissioner Seeley asked if there would be green space between the sidewalk and M-59. Mr. Leuffgen said yes, the majority will have 8' of green space, there is a bump out area that will reduce a smaller area to 5'.

Director O'Neil said the site currently is an eyesore, and while the proposed use isn't ideal, it's sometimes necessary to look at economic development as well. He stated other than the applicant, he has not received any calls with interest in the property.

Commissioner Sevic asked where a gateway sign would potentially go. Mr. Passalacqua said an easement could be developed into the northeast area of the site for a gateway sign. There is no current discussion between the Township and the applicant for a gateway sign on the property.

Bob Emerine, Seiber Keast Lehner, design engineer, said the tree number was reduced due to site constraints. The curbing is omitted due to the condition of the pavement on the site. The site will be milled with a new 2" asphalt laid down. There are low spots on the site, and a significant amount of storm sewer drains would need to be added for curbing. He said there are not a lot of places for the shrubs, and shrubs will be planted around the perimeter of the building. He acknowledged the pathway setback along M-59, the greenbelt will be 8'. He suggested narrowing the sidewalk in the bump out area

to allow for more green space. There is a pump on the rear side of Building one that provides sanitary sewer services for both Buildings 1 and 2. The abandoned septic tank will be inspected as well.

Commissioner Dehart asked Mr. Emerine what type of roof would be used. Mr. Emerine said it will be a fake façade in front of the peaked roof.

Commissioner Seeley asked if the lighting would be off after hours. Mark Shamoun, owner, said some of the lighting will be on for safety purposes, but it will not be bright lights on at night.

Commissioner Seward asked if the rear facades would be improved. Mr. Shamoun said they will be painted, but not as improved as the front facades.

Commissioner Seward asked Mr. Shamoun how many cars would be on the property. Mr. Shamoun said, depending on the time of year, there will be around 180 cars for sale on the lot.

Commissioner Seward asked Mr. Emerine could more trees could be placed in the parking lot since it was going to be reconstructed. Mr. Emerine said the parking lot will be covered in new asphalt, and the pavement will be reduced with a 20' greenspace buffer around the edges of the property.

Commissioner Seward asked the applicant about the timber aesthetic for the building. Mr. Shamoun said the front façade will have a wood-grain metal, the material will be easy to maintain, and still feel contemporary.

Commissioner Meagher said the side building facades and the front façade of building two need more improvement visually.

Commissioner Sevic asked if the only façade with windows would be on the front of building one. Mr. Shamoun confirmed.

Commissioner Dehart asked Mr. Shamoun if building two would remain as is. Mr. Shamoun confirmed.

Commissioner Dehart said she is impressed with Carter Lumber's care of their site. She said she would like to see more greenery on the site. Mr. Shamoun said that once the front lawn area is installed, it will hide a lot of the building facades.

Commissioner Seeley opened the public hearing at 7:29 P.M.

Salvador Pena, 1861 Carla Hills, expressed concerns about the driveway location from a safety standpoint.

Mr. Emerine said he has received comments from MDOT about the width of the drive and handicap parking. The two comments were the only two MDOT gave.

Commissioner Seeley closed the public hearing at 7:32 P.M.

MOTION by Commissioner Seward, seconded by Commissioner Dehart, to recommend denial of the preliminary site plan as requested by White Lake Motors, identified as 12-13-455-024 (8285 Highland Road), due to the inconsistencies with the Master Plan, the plan is significantly different than what was proposed a year ago. The motion carried with a voice vote: (4 yes votes). (Seward/yes, Dehart/yes, Sevic/yes, Seeley/yes, Meagher/no).

MOTION by Commissioner Meagher, seconded by Commissioner Dehart, to postpone the special land use requested by White Lake Motors, identified as 12-13-455-024 (8285 Highland Road). The motion carried with a voice vote: (5 yes votes). (Meagher/yes, Dehart/yes, Seeley/yes, Seward/yes, Sevic/yes)

MOTION by Commission Meagher, seconded by Commissioner Seward, to postpone approval of the final site plan requested by White Lake Motors, identified as 12-13-455-024 (8285 Highland Road). The motion carried with a voice vote: (5 yes votes). (Sevic/yes, Seward/yes, Seeley/yes, Dehart/yes, Meagher/yes).

CONTINUING BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Walmart

located on the north side of Highland Road, east of Fisk Road. Identified as 12-14-476-015 (9190 Highland Road). Consisting of approximately 13.11 acres

Requests: **Amended final site plan approval and approval recommendation of the amended PBD agreement**

MOTION by Commissioner Seward, seconded by Commissioner Dehart, to excuse Commissioner Sevic due to her employment with the applicant. The motion carried with a voice vote: (5 yes votes). (Seward/yes, Dehart/yes, Seeley/yes, Meagher/yes, Sevic/yes)

Staff Planner Littman reviewed his letter.

Commissioner Meagher asked staff for clarification regarding parking. Staff Planner Littman said the applicant is requesting a total of 630 parking spaces. Director O'Neil said the parking issue is procedural, and there is a development agreement that will reflect the parking changes.

Commissioner Dehart asked staff for clarification on the size of the expansion. Staff Planner Littman said the expansion will be about 4,000 sq. ft. Director O'Neil said the materials used for the expansion will be consistent with the materials used on the building currently.

Mr. Leuffgen said stormwater runoff will not be increased, and there is nothing major that will hold up the project from an engineering standpoint. Staff Planner Littman added that the dumpsters will be located from the north garden center to the west building wall.

Kim Cooper, CESO, was present. She said the dumpsters are currently located in the rear of the garden center and will be relocated to the very rear of the building. The dumpsters will be put to the east of the palette storage, and will be in a screened enclosure. She added that the total parking on the site currently is 626 spaces, and after the expansion, there will be a proposed 670 spaces. The original site plan approved a higher number of parking spaces than what currently exists. Asphalt areas will not be increased, and restriping will be on areas that were originally approved with the site plan.

Director O'Neil noted that improvements should be made to the stucco on the exterior side of the garden center.

MOTION by Commissioner Meagher, seconded by Commissioner Dehart, to approve the amended final site for Walmart, identified as 12-14-476-015 (9190 Highland Road), subject to staff comments being addressed, and for the brick façade to be updated on the exterior garden center, and for larger size elevations to be submitted. The motion carried with a voice vote: (4 yes votes). (Meagher/yes, Seeley/yes, Dehart/yes, Seward/yes).

MOTION by Commission Meagher, seconded by Commissioner Dehart, to recommend the Township Board approve the amended PBD agreement for Walmart, identified as 12-14-476-015 (9190 Highland Road). The motion carried with a voice vote: (4 yes votes). (Seward/yes, Seeley/yes, Dehart/yes, Meagher/yes).

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

LIAISON'S REPORT

Staff Planner Littman stated the ZBA met last month; one residential case was approved, and one commercial case was postponed.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director O'Neil said the grant portion of the Stanley Park Phase 1 construction is underway now. The park is currently closed. Foundations will be done at the Civic Center site by the end of the month. The bond funding has officially been secured. The Civic Center completion date is looking more like September 2026. The Elizabeth Lake turnabout light poles have been replaced. 9101 Highland will most likely be before the Planning Commission in May 2025.

COMMUNICATIONS

NEXT MEETING DATE: May 1, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Commissioner Sevic, seconded by Commissioner Seward to adjourn at 8:16 P.M. The motion carried with a voice vote: (5 yes votes).