



Tim Greimel, Mayor
Khalfani Stephens, Deputy Mayor

CITY OF PONTIAC, MI

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 – 6:00 P.M.

City of Pontiac City Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER: (6:06 PM)

Planning Commissioners Present: Tim Shepard, Acting Chair
Sue Sinclair
Michael McGuinness
Christopher Jackson
Christopher Northcross

Staff Present: Mark Yandrick, Planning Manager
Paul Harang, Planner II

2. ROLL CALL

Five members were present at the time of the roll call and there was a quorum (Commissioners, Sinclair, Shepard, McGuinness, Jackson, and Northcross)

3. OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

Planning Manager Yandrick noted that Commissioner Henley is absent, and Commissioner Duvall was running late. No other communications.

4. AMENDMENTS TO & APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was changed to add agenda item 10A behind 7A and add agenda item 7C behind 10B so both cases can be heard in order.

The motion to amend the agenda was made by Commissioner McGuinness, seconded by Commissioner Northcross.

Yes: 5

No: 0

Motion Passed.

5. MEETING MINUTES FOR REVIEW

No changes to the April 2nd minutes.

The motion was made by Commissioner McGuinness, seconded by Commissioner Northcross, to adopt the April 2nd meeting agenda as presented.

Yes: 4

No: 0

Abstain: 1

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Application #: PSEP 25-002

Applicant: Pastor Cornelius Berry

Application: Special Exception

Address: 156 University

Request: Childcare Center

Planner Harang briefly explained why the application is being presented to the Commission. He explained that the applicant is requesting the commission to approve the establishment of a childcare center within an existing church. Two (2) conditions are being sought. The first condition states that two canopy trees must be planted in the front yard to increase the

aesthetic appeal of the University Corridor. The second condition states that all conditions of approval provided in the site plan review (SPR 25-010) must be completed.

The applicant provided further details on the proposed childcare center. The center will be open to church members and to the general community.

The commission asked questions regarding the conditions of approval to establish trees on the site.

The applicant explained that the church building contains a food pantry for the community, but no living space has been developed on site.

Staff indicated that the church and childcare center are both principal uses within the zoning district, and the food pantry is a function of the church use. No retail store is established at the site.

The public hearing was opened at 6:38 pm.

Pastor Casandra Berry spoke in support of the project. She is connected to the church and will work within the childcare center. She states the center will be run by trained employees. She also reiterated that the church has a not-for-profit food pantry on site. A food pantry is on site for the community at no charge.

Evaline Grace spoke in support of the project. She is a church member and feels the childcare center is needed within the community.

Dennis Thomas spoke in support of the project. He feels the pastor of the church is an upstanding person and feels the center will be an asset.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jackson to approve the request with two conditions and seconded by Commissioner McGuinness

Vote

Yes: 5

No: 0

Motion approved.

Applicant: **Pastor Cornelius Berry**
Application: **SPR 25-010**
Address: **156 University Dr.**
Request: **Childcare Center**

Planner Harang presented the site plan to the commission. The planner stated that no additions will be made to the building to accommodate the childcare center. An outdoor play area will be developed, a bicycle parking area is required, and parking lot dimensions shall be added to the site plan. Staff provided five (5) conditions to add a dumpster enclosure, bike rack, playground area, dimension the parking lot, and the applicant must comply with the special exception approval.

The applicant, Pastor Berry, stated that the site plan does show a playground area, which will be to the rear of the church building.

The commission asked questions regarding the parking lot configuration and whether arrows are needed for traffic flow.

Staff indicated that the revised site plan will show vehicle arrows on the parking lot to indicate traffic flow.

A motion was made by Commissioner McGuinness with the five (5) conditions to approve the site plan, and seconded by Commissioner Sinclair.

Vote:

Yes: **5**

No: **0**

Motion passed.

Presentation: **Master Plan**
Presenters: **John Jackson and Ashley Cross**
Address: **Citywide.**

John Jackson and Ashley Cross of McKenna Consulting provided an update on the revisions for the draft Master Plan since the commission last reviewed the plan. Mr. Jackson explained that the new amendments to the last revision concentrated on goals, focus areas, future land use, historic preservation, downtown/ commercial corridors, future transportation, and workforce development. They stated that there was a 63-day comment period for review. They explained

what changes have occurred from the past revision. Lastly, it was explained that the next step in the process is a further review at the city council with a vote to adopt the plan.

Public hearing was open at 7:20

No public comments were presented.

A letter of opposition was sent to the Planning Division from the owners of 225 Columbia, stating opposition to the draft Master Plan due to a reduction in industrial land uses in the draft.

The commission provided comments on the color of certain designations in the future land use map, posed questions on the graphics in the plan, spoke of the mixed-use neighborhood plan, and targeted vacant areas. Commissioner McGuinness stated that the document is a high-level, broad document that covers important topics and impacts the community as a whole.

A motion by Commissioner Northcross to amend the draft master plan to require developments to demonstrate compliance with zoning performance standards was seconded by Commissioner Jackson.

Vote

Yes: 5

No: 0

Motion passed.

A motion was made by Commissioner McGuinness for the city to undertake a comprehensive zoning update process for Pontiac based on the principles of the new Master Plan, and was seconded by Commissioner Northcross.

Vote

Yes: 5

No: 0

Motion passed.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Northcross to approve the draft Master Plan and seconded by Commissioner Jackson

Vote

Yes: 5

No: 0

Application #: PSEP 25-001

Applicant: Reevan Yaldo

Application: Special Exception

Address: 784 Cesar E. Chavez Ave.

Request: Retail Sales – Unlimited Outdoor (used car sales)

Planner Harang briefly explained the applicant requests to establish a used vehicle sales lot in a C-3 zoning district. A structure exists on site comprising an office area and an indoor detailing bay. The site will be developed with landscaping, vehicle display areas, and residential buffering. There are three (3) conditions associated with the special exception request.

The applicant Reevan Yaldo stated that he is requesting approval to locate a used vehicle sales lot at the site. Mr. Yaldo explained he is leasing the property.

Open public comment 8:08.

No public comment.

The commission asked the applicant what type of upgrades will be completed at the site, what type of work will occur on the vehicles at the site, and what type of building improvements will occur.

The applicant stated all work on vehicles will be within the building, the building will be painted, and the parking lot will be upgraded.

Commissioner Sinclair made a motion to approve the retail sales – used vehicle lot at the site with three (3) conditions, and it was seconded by Commissioner Northcross.

Vote

Yes: 5

No: 0

Motion passed.

Applicant: Reevan Yaldo
Application: SPR 25-003
Address: 784 Cesar E. Chavez Ave.
Request: Retail Sales – Unlimited Outdoor (Car Sales Lot)

Planner Harang presented the site plan to the commission, explaining the layout of the site plan, the required landscape setback, vehicle display setbacks, pedestrian sidewalk, and curb cut via Cesar E. Chavez. The Planner stated the curb cut is located on the adjacent parcel per the site plan, but mostly on the subject parcel. The curb cut will be required to be repositioned on the subject site or obtain approval from the adjacent parcel to utilize a portion of their parcel for vehicle access onto 784 Cesar E Chavez. Staff recommends approval with nine (9) conditions.

The applicant addressed the commission and stated that the building will be painted, the parking lot will be restriped, new lighting will be added to the subject site.

The commission had various questions, focused on lighting, width of vehicle lanes on site, location of parking spaces and sizes, the condition of the building structure, required landscaping on site, and the condition/ location of the curb cut. The commission voiced support for either obtaining approval from the VFW Post to utilize a portion of the curb cut on their property via an easement agreement or contacting MDOT to inquire about relocating the curb cut. The commissioners discussed the required setback requirements of the ordinance for vehicle display areas.

Commissioner Sinclair made a motion to postpone the request to establish a retail sales-use car lot and was seconded by Commissioner Northcross.

Vote

Yes: 5

No 0

Motion passed.

Presentation: Zoning Text Amendment
Applicant: City Wide
Request: Planned Unit Residential Development (PURD) Presentation

Planning Manager Yandrick provided a presentation on the Planned Unit Residential Development zoning text amendment. A PURD is similar to a rezoning but provides a creative and flexible way to redevelop a site. It provides flexibility on setbacks, landscaping, height, and aesthetics. The process will be similar to a rezoning.

The commission asked various questions on what constitutes a PURD. The commission asked for examples from similar communities in the area that have PURD. The commission stressed interest in the PURD and how the new process would assist in redevelopment within the city.

Public Meeting was open at 9:13

No Public comment

A motion was made by Commissioner Northcross to approve the zoning text amendment as presented, seconded by Commissioner Sinclair

Vote

Yes: 5

No: 0

Motion passed.

Presentation:	Small Box Retail Stores
Applicant:	City Wide
Request:	Zoning Text Amendment small box retailers

Planning Manager Yandrick provided a presentation on the small box discount store text amendment and stated that a moratorium was passed by the City Council on July 9, 2025 for any new uses. The presentation focused on the number of dollar stores in the city and ways to regulate any future requests. The proposed text amendment provided a definition of a small box discount store. A small box store would only be allowed in C-3 and C-4 Districts. Staff recommends approval of the zoning text amendment.

Commissioners reviewed the text amendment and asked various questions on proposed lighting plans, the definition of a small box retailer, and the number of existing retailers in the city.

Commissioner Jackson made a motion to approve the text amendment and seconded by Commissioner Sinclair.

Vote

Yes : 5

No : 0

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment is open at 9:31.

No Public comment.

8. OLD BUSINESS

No old business

9. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Planning Manager Yandrick gave an update on the staffing level in the Planning Division.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Sinclair, seconded by Commissioner Jackson, motioned to adjourn. All Commissioners were in favor.

The meeting ended at 9:38 pm