

Planning Commission
Regular Meeting

May 15, 2024
6:30PM

Big Rapids City Hall
226 N Michigan Ave

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Approval of Minutes
 - a. April 17, 2024
5. Public Comment Unrelated to Items on the Agenda
6. Public Hearing
 - a. Baldwin Family Health Care Site Plan Review – 730 Water Tower Road (17-15-300-003), Commercial Site Plan Review for an expansion of an existing use, building, and parking on the property.
7. General Business
 - a. Update on previously approved projects
 - b. City Commission actions related to PC Recommendations – None
 - c. Master Plan Update
8. Unscheduled Business
9. Adjourn

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
April 17, 2024
*Unapproved***

Chair Montgomery called the April 17, 2024, Meeting of the Planning Commission, to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT Sarah Montgomery, Rory Ruddick, Sam Majchrowski, Tim Vogel and Jacob Buse

EXCUSED Kate McLeod

ABSENT None.

ALSO PRESENT Michelle Stenger, Community Development Director
Joseph Walker, Planning & Zoning Technician

There were 3 members of the public in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Vogel and seconded by Buse to approve the minutes of the March 20, 2024, regular meeting of the Planning Commission with one correction:

Motion was passed with all in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None heard.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

120 N DeKraft Ave - Site Plan Review, Mecosta County Road Commission

The public hearing opened at 6:33.

Staff Comments:

Director Stenger gave a brief summary of the proposed project, which included a new storage facility located on the industrially zoned property at 120 N DeKraft. Stenger

noted the plans had been reviewed by the Engineering Department as well as the Zoning Administrator and was found to meet standards.

Those Who Spoke in Favor of the Request:

John Stadtfeld from JBS Contracting was in attendance and stated he could answer any commissioner's questions regarding the project.

Those Who Spoke in Opposition of the Request: None

Telephonic or Written Correspondence Received by Staff: None

Chair Montgomery closed the public comment at 6:38 and the board entered into fact finding. The following discussion was had:

Buse stated with the reviewed stormwater plan, he no longer had issues with the proposal.

Vogel asked if special screening was needed for an adjacent commercial property.

Stenger stated that it was her opinion the landscaping standards had been met but that this was up to the board's discretion.

The location of the adjacent property and location of trees on the property in question was clarified to the commissioners.

Motion was made by Buse and seconded by Vogel that the Site Plan Review Application for 120 N DEKRAFFT AVE (PIN 17-11-400-004) for an accessory storage building, be approved.

The motion passed with all in favor.

1100 Maple St – Site Plan Review, Pro-Turf

The public hearing opened at 6:43.

Staff Comments:

Director Stenger gave a brief summary of the application. Stenger noted that the property was zoned industrial, and that staff considered the property's current use by-right. Stenger stated that the reason for the site plan review was for the changes made to the site's use and parking layout, which is what triggered the need for a review. Part of the proposal included adding bins for the storage of landscaping refuse and materials

which were currently being stored in the parking area, which did not meet the requirements for screening of outdoor storage per the zoning ordinance.

Those Who Spoke in Favor of the Request:

Marty Shaffer, the owner of Pro Turf, stated he did not have information to add but was there to answer the commissioner's questions.

Philip Neitzel, of 115 S DeKraft, stated he was unhappy with the current state of the site which he said looked like a dumping ground.

Those Who Spoke in Opposition of the Request: None

Telephonic or Written Correspondence Received by Staff: None

Chair Montgomery closed the public comment at 6:50 and the board entered into fact finding. The following discussion was had:

Buse asked if Shaffer was opposed to changing the fencing on site. Shaffer stated he was not.

Ruddick stated he would be upset if he lived in the immediate area at the state of the site. He stated the fencing needed repair and overall, the site needed to look nicer to fit the area.

Vogel asked about the differences between the storage of material for sale versus the storage of refuse of debris.

Stenger stated the storage of debris or yard refuse was not allowed in the industrial district.

The applicant noted that the debris would be stored and processed into compost or mulch for sale, and that the new storage facilities would properly screen the materials.

Stenger asked how long debris would sit before being processed.

The applicant stated that with proper storage, ideally it would be immediately processed.

Buse asked where slats in the fencing would be required to meet screening.

Stenger stated it would just be for the area used for outdoor storage. Which would be along the length of DeKraft. She also stated it was the board's discretion to require more along Maple if they wanted the storage bins entirely screened from view.

Montgomery stated the site had caught her eye before and was in need of improvement, and that she was happy with the proposed improvements.

Open discussion was had over whether slated chain link fencing would meet the screening requirements for outdoor storage and whether other options would be an improvement. The commissioners ultimately agreed that the slats in addition to the proposed storage in bins would be adequate.

Motion was made by Vogel and seconded by Buse that the Site Plan Review Application for landscape business at 1100 Maple Ave (PIN 17-11-454-001), be approved with conditions since the Criteria for Review set in Section 9.6 of the Zoning Ordinance, but conditions were required to ensure compatibility with adjacent uses of land. The conditions were as follows:

- 1. Existing fencing be repaired to good order and extension of fence along Maple from the driveway to the existing fence.**
- 2. All fencing (new and existing) have vinyl slats inserted and be 6 feet in height.**

The motion passed with all in favor.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- a. Update on previously approved projects – Big Rapids Products Expansion

Director Stenger stated that work looked to be almost complete, and that fencing had not been installed.

- b. City Commission actions related to PC Recommendations – Capital Improvements Program

Stenger stated that the CIP had been approved by the City Commission with minor changes including the addition of updates to the administrative office in the Department of Public Safety and the paving of a city alley located behind Pennzoil.

- c. Master Plan Update

Stenger stated the draft land use chapter of the master plan was received by staff and under review.

UNSCHEDULED BUSINESS - None

There being no further business, Chair Montgomery adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m. with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joey Walker
Planning & Zoning Technician and Planning Commission Secretary



Application to Planning Commission
Special Land Use Application

Application Date: _____

Applicant Information:

Name: Baldwin Family Health Care
Address: 1615 Michigan Avenue, Baldwin, Michigan 49304
Phone Number: 231-745-5044 Email: TVanias@familyhealthcare.org

Property Information:

Property Address: 730 Water Tower Road, Big Rapids

Explanation of Request:

Construct an addition to the building. Building footprint will be 11,231 sft., basement area will be 3,872 sft.
The parking area will be reconstructed to allow for 59 parking spaces.
This will require 2 new water leads and a new sanitary sewer connection.

Criteria for Review:

Below is information the Planning Commission and City Commission use to determine if the request is consistent with various City documents. Please answer the questions to provide the board more insight on the request.

(1) That there is a proper relationship between the existing streets and highways within the vicinity and proposed deceleration lanes, service drives, entrance and exit driveways and parking areas to insure the safety and convenience of pedestrian and vehicular movement.

Only the existing drive entrance will be used.



Application to Planning Commission
Special Land Use Application

(2) All elements of the site plan shall be harmoniously and efficiently organized in relations to the topography, the size and type of the lot, the character of adjoining property, and the type and size of buildings.

The building will still be one story as are the other structures in the area.

(3) That as many natural features of the landscape shall be retained as possible where they furnish a barrier or buffer between the project and adjoining properties used for dissimilar purposes and where they assist in preserving the general appearance of the neighborhood. The landscape shall be preserved in its natural state, insofar as practical, by minimizing tree and soil removal, and by topographic modifications which will result in maximum harmony with adjacent areas.

All existing trees will remain along the east and north property lines, new bushes will be planted on the island in the parking area. Trees will also be planted on the north property line on the west side of the building.

(4) That any adverse effects of the proposed development and activities emanating there from which affect adjoining residents or owners shall be minimized by appropriate screening, fencing, landscaping, setback and location of buildings, structures and entryways.

Existing trees and bushes will remain along the property lines wherever possible.

(5) That the layout of buildings and improvements will minimize any harmful or adverse effect which the development might otherwise have upon the surrounding neighborhood.

The addition is placed around the existing building to prevent it from being pushed against any existing property lines to infringe on adjacent neighbors.

(6) That all provisions of all local ordinances, including the City Zoning Ordinance, are complied with unless an appropriate variance therefrom has been granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

All ordinances have been complied with.



Application to Planning Commission
Special Land Use Application

(7) Any other information you feel is necessary for the Board to decide on the request. Please attach additional documents if needed.

This site with the addition was approved in 2022 with the same layout.

Kyle S. (Agent)

Signature of applicant or property owner

4/26/2024

(Date)

BY APPLYING YOU GIVE CONSENT TO CITY STAFF PHOTOGRAPHING OR ACCESSING THE SITE/PROJECT IN QUESTION.

STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Michelle Stenger, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Site Plan Review for Baldwin Family Health Care expansion at 730 WATER TOWER RD

DATE: 5/9/2024

Introduction

Applicant, Baldwin Family Health Care, is applying for a Site Plan Review for an expansion of the existing facility at 730 WATER TOWER RD (PIN 17-15-300-003). The property is currently zoned R-2. A health care facility is considered a special use in the R-2 District. Applicants applied and received approval for the special use in May 2019. The applicant has also previously been approved for the site plan in 2022 but did not move forward with the construction of the facility at that time. Under the ordinance the approval of the site plan has since expired and the applicant is required to file and go through the site plan review process again.

This property is on the west side of the City and is located on the corner of Water Tower Road and Fuller Ave. See the attachments for maps and images of the property. The property is 2.36 acres and is already developed with a medical center, parking lot, and some landscaping.

Site Plan Review Process and Procedure

The Site Plan Review Application was received by the Community Development Department on April 22, 2024, and was deemed in compliance with Section 9.4. of the Zoning Ordinance which stipulates required Site Plan Review application materials. As required by Ordinance, Site Plan Reviews must go through a public hearing process. Notice was posted in the Big Rapids Pioneer on April 30, 2024, and sent to all property owners within 300 feet of the site.

The Site Plans were shared with the Fire Marshal, the Public Works Department's Engineering staff, and the Zoning Administrator for their review.

Public Works - No drainage concerns with request

Staff did not hear back from the Fire Marshal and the zoning administrators comments can be found throughout the report.

Criteria for Review of Site Plan Review Applications

Section 9.6 of the Zoning Ordinance sets criteria for reviewing Site Plan Review applications:

- 9.6:1 That there is a proper relationship between the existing streets and highways within the vicinity and proposed deceleration lanes, service drives, entrance and exit driveways and parking areas to ensure the safety and convenience of pedestrian and vehicular movement. With respect to vehicular and pedestrian circulation, including walkways, interior drives, and parking, the site

shall be developed so that access points, general interior traffic circulation, pedestrian circulation, and parking areas are safe and convenient and, insofar as practicable, do not detract from the design of the proposed buildings and existing structures on neighboring properties.

Staff Response: The new drive location should not have an impact on neighboring properties or traffic. There is not currently a sidewalk provided in the southern parking lot to gain access to the center aisle without utilizing the parking lot drive or other parking spots. The applicant has provided a break in the parking lot island to provide a safe entrance into the front of the building.

- 9.6:2 All elements of the site plan shall be harmoniously and efficiently organized in relation to the topography, the size and type of the lot, the character of adjoining property, and the type and size of buildings. The site shall be developed so as not to impede the normal and orderly development or improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in this Ordinance.

Staff Response: The neighboring properties to the south are similar in intensity and may at times have a larger impact than the proposed expansion. The houses to the direct east and west will likely be impacted the most from the development, however, the applicant intends to keep existing screening and provide more to decrease the impact on the residential use.

- 9.6:3 That as many natural features of the landscape shall be retained as possible where they furnish a barrier or buffer between the project and adjoining properties used for dissimilar purposes and where they assist in preserving the general appearance of the neighborhood. The landscape shall be preserved in its natural state, insofar as practical, by minimizing tree and soil removal, and by topographic modifications which will result in maximum harmony with adjacent areas.

Staff Response: The applicant is seeking to move a significant amount of soil in order to flatten the parking area and create acceptable drainage of the site. The applicant will be maintaining the existing trees to the south and those protecting the view of the house to the east of the facility. The change in topography should not have a significant impact on neighboring properties, as the site now be capturing water that likely ran towards neighboring properties in the past.

- 9.6:4 That any adverse effects of the proposed development and activities emanating there from which affect adjoining residents or owners shall be minimized by appropriate screening, fencing, landscaping, setback and location of buildings, structures and entryways. All loading and unloading areas and outside storage areas, including areas for the storage of refuse, which face or are visible from residential districts or public thoroughfares, shall be screened by a vertical screen consisting of structural or plant materials no less than six (6) feet in height.

Staff Response: The applicant is placing and maintaining trees strategically along the areas that will abut neighboring properties to decrease the impact. Since the property is zoned R-2, which is a Level 1 use in the landscaping plan, no buffering is technically required between other properties; however the applicant has provided and maintained existing landscaping around the parking area meeting the requirement for commercial zoning. The applicant has also provided landscaping within the right of way in accordance with Section 8.6 of the Zoning Ordinance. The dumpster is fenced and buffered by landscaping from the neighboring residential uses.

- 9.6:5 That the layout of buildings and improvements will minimize any harmful or adverse effect which the development might otherwise have upon the surrounding neighborhood. Physical improvements including sidewalks, drives and parking areas shall be built to adequate standards to minimize premature deterioration. Sites at which hazardous substances are stored, used or

generated shall be designed to prevent spill or discharges to the air, surface of the ground, groundwater, streams, drains or wetlands. Secondary containment for above ground storage of hazardous material shall be provided.

Staff Response: The applicant has expanded towards the residential structure to the east. The applicant is constructing a basement and main floor addition to the existing building, which will minimize the impact on the house as the structure shall maintain its single story appearance and height. The sidewalk and front entrance, which could arguably be considered more of an impact on neighboring properties is to the south where more natural tree cover occurs and is multi-family residential apartments.

- 9.6:6 That all provisions of all local ordinances, including the City Zoning Ordinance, are complied with unless an appropriate variance therefrom has been granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Staff Response: The applicant has met all the ordinance requirements. The applicant has requested that the Planning Commission consider the existing trees on the site and to the south of the site be considered adequate landscaping to meet ordinance.

Planning Commissioners are encouraged to review the Application against the Criteria in Section 9.6 to decide if they find it meets or fails to meet them. These Criteria shall be used to decide the Action taken by the Planning Commission.

Recommendation

Staff's only comment with regards to the site plan is the lack of a sidewalk within the south parking lot for the safety of the trying to gain access to the central aisle. With that for the Board's consideration Staff recommends **approval** of the Site Plan Review Application for a Agricultural Education Center at 730 WATER TOWER RD, as it meets the Criteria for Review found in Section 9.6.6 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Action

Three options lay before the Planning Commission regarding Site Plan Review Applications: Approval, Denial, or Approval with Conditions. Explanations and sample motions are below.

Approval

An approval motion is appropriate when the Application meets the Standards of the Zoning Ordinance and approves the Application. Sample motion:

"I move that the Site Plan Review Application for both phases of 730 WATER TOWER RD (PIN 17-15-300-003) for an agricultural education center, be approved, because it meets all of the Criteria for Review set in Section 9.6 of the Zoning Ordinance."

Approval with Conditions

An approval with conditions motion is appropriate when the Application meets the Standards of the Zoning Ordinance, but the Planning Commissioners believe a few minor conditions or alterations are required. This motion approves the Application contingent upon the listed conditions. Sample motion:

“I move that the Site Plan Review Application for an agricultural education center at 730 WATER TOWER RD (PIN 17-15-300-003), be approved with conditions. The Application meets the Criteria for Review set in Section 9.6 of the Zoning Ordinance, but conditions are required to *(select from the relevant reasons below)*

- (1) Ensure that public services and facilities affected by the proposed land use or activity will be capable of accommodating increased service and facility loads caused by the land use or activity.
- (2) Protect the natural environment and conserve natural resources and energy.
- (3) Ensure compatibility with adjacent uses of land.
- (4) Promote the use of land in a socially and economically desirable manner.

The following conditions are required to address this need: *(list conditions [such as requiring additional permits, revising plans to show needed changes, demonstrating adequacy of the stormwater detention facilities, among others] here).*

A revised, dated site plan and documents addressing the above shall be submitted for staff approval within 60 days.”

Denial

A denial motion is appropriate when the Application fails to meet the Standards of the Zoning Ordinance and ends the application process. Sample motion:

“I move to deny the Site Plan Review Application for an agricultural education center at 730 WATER TOWER RD (PIN 17-15-300-003), because it does not meet Criteria 9.6:X of the Zoning Ordinance. *(Fill in the X with which number Criteria the application does not meet.)*”





