



**CITY OF WALLED LAKE
PLANNING COMMISSION
TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2026**

The Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Chairman Schinzing.

ROLL CALL: Bash, Martin, Schinzing, Swiatek

ABSENT: Amin, Robertson, Whitt

OTHERS PRESENT: Planning Consultant Ortega, City Attorney Vanerian, and City Clerk Stuart

**PC 06-01-26 MOTION TO EXCUSE COMMISSIONERS' AMIN, ROBERTSON,
AND WHITT FROM TONIGHT'S MEETING**

Motion by Bash, seconded by Swiatek: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To excuse commissioners' Amin, Robertson, and Whitt from tonight's meeting.

REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES: NONE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

**PC 06-02-26 APPROVAL OF THE MAY 12, 2026 PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Motion by Swiatek, seconded by Bash, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the May 12, 2026 Planning Commission meeting minutes.

Commissioner Martin said she did hear from a fellow resident if there was any checking on the distance between where the gas station is going to be put in and the neighboring housing. She said the city has two gas stations, the new Speedway on the corner and then we've got the one next to the farmer's market.

City Planner Ortega explained the exact measurement can be provided but it is not required.

Chairman Schinzing said there were comments made by Commission Amin at last month's meeting that there is not a checklist for planning commission petitioners but there is one, it is in this evening's packet. He wanted to ask Commissioner Amin for clarification on her comments, whether the checklist was not sufficient or whether she was looking for an additional packet.

City Planner Ortega said it was his understanding that Commissioner Amin was looking for a revised application that would better assist applicants.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: NONE

COMMUNICATION: NONE

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **PC 321** **750 N. Pontiac Trail, 92-17-34-277-001**
Applicant – IFS Holdings, LLC
Request – Site Plan – amendment, commercial building expansion

City Planner Ortega summarized review letter dated June 2, 2026. He said the property consists of approximately 0.27 acres and is zoned C-2, General Commercial. The applicant proposes a 108-square-foot addition to the east side of the existing building, replacing an existing detached shed. The project also includes the construction of a dumpster enclosure. He said the site complies with the dimensional requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. He said the original Special Land Use and Site Plan approvals were granted in 1986. Because the approval runs with the land, the proposed expansion requires only Site Plan approval. For example, the required rear yard setback for new construction is 20 feet, while the existing building maintains a setback of approximately 2 feet, 6 inches. Since this condition predates the proposal, it is considered legally nonconforming. He said the proposed dumpster enclosure is a positive addition because it contains refuse and discourages illegal dumping. It was suggested to slightly shift the enclosure to improve functionality for both waste collection vehicles and adjacent parking spaces. Additional information is needed to demonstrate that a garbage truck can safely access, service, and exit the site. A truck maneuvering plan illustrating turning movements and access to the enclosure is required to be submitted for plan review. He explained the building is currently used for auto repair and fuel sales, the proposed use would primarily function as a convenience store. Based on ordinance standards, the site is required to provide four parking spaces, while the site plan shows eight spaces. However, the plan must be revised to include at least one ADA-accessible parking space. He said convenience stores typically receive deliveries from tractor-trailer vehicles, the applicant is required to provide a truck circulation plan demonstrating that delivery vehicles can safely enter and exit the property. He said the landscaping is limited due to the site being almost entirely paved. He said the Planning Commission has authority under the Zoning Ordinance to modify landscaping standards when existing conditions make compliance impractical, provided the intent of the ordinance is met. Existing landscaping is limited to shrubs located near the sign and behind the building. He asked the commission if they wished to see additional landscaping. A photometric plan is required to demonstrate compliance with ordinance standards. Any new fixtures must be fully shielded and directed downward to minimize glare while providing adequate site illumination. He stated that the proposed site plan is in substantial compliance with applicable ordinance standards but identified several

outstanding items requiring additional information. He explained that the Planning Commission may grant approval contingent upon the applicant addressing the outstanding items identified in June 2, 2026, review letter, or alternatively, the Commission may require revised site plans to be submitted for review at a future meeting.

Chairman Schinzing said this request is for a site plan amendment, when was the overall site plan approved.

City Planner Ortega said most likely 1986.

Bob Bryce, the applicant's architect, explained that the property is an irregularly shaped parcel, which presents site design challenges. He stated that the proposed addition would not alter the essential character of the surrounding area and would instead improve the overall appearance and aesthetics of the existing structure. Mr. Bryce noted that he researched the size of typical gas station convenience stores and found that they generally range from approximately 2,500 to 3,500 square feet in Michigan and nationally, with some larger facilities ranging from 6,000 to 6,500 square feet. By comparison, the proposed building would contain approximately 1,500 square feet in total. He explained that the proposed addition is intended to improve the building's functionality and will primarily accommodate a new ADA-compliant accessible restroom and a mechanical room, representing the extent of the requested expansion. Mr. Bryce further stated that the property owner is committed to maintaining high-quality development and places significant importance on the aesthetics of the site and creating an attractive environment. He expressed confidence that the proposed improvements would uphold that standard.

Commissioner Martin asked if the service repair bays would be remaining or what is proposed for them.

Mr. Bryce explained the structures would remain, but the service bays will turn into a retail commercial retail space.

Chairman Schinzing asked about elevations.

City Planner Ortega clarified that the proposed building materials and architectural elements are intended to enhance the appearance of the structure. He explained that the design includes stone-clad columns to create vertical architectural elements, with brick serving as the primary exterior wall material. A stone cap is also proposed along the roofline to provide additional architectural detail. Mr. Ortega noted that the proposed materials are of a higher quality and are not EIFS or thin face brick. The plans also include decorative exterior light fixtures designed to emphasize the building's vertical elements and contribute to the overall architectural character. He further stated that the proposal includes steel awnings over the new windows and the corner entrance. The awnings are designed in a contemporary style and are intended primarily as an architectural feature while also providing some shade to the building at certain times of the day. Mr. Ortega noted that, although the applicant provided a rendering depicting an earth-tone color scheme, the plans do not identify the final material and color selections. He stated that staff

would like the applicant to provide the finalized exterior colors and material specifications as part of the project review.

Commissioner Bashi said she wanted to clarify the site would no longer be a service station or auto repair.

Applicant said it will be a WOW convenience store.

Chairman Schinzing asked if there is a proposed buffer at the back of building between the businesses and road.

City Planner Ortega explained no, possibly a raised landscape island but even in this case the site is very limited, plantings become a safety issue.

**PC 06-03-26 MOTION TO APPROVE PC CASE NO. 321, THE SITE PLAN
AMENDMENT REQUEST FOR 750 N. PONTIAC TRAIL,
CONTINGENT UPON THE APPLICANT'S RESUBMITTAL
SATISFACTORILY ADDRESSING THE COMMENTS AND
REQUIREMENTS OF THE CITY PLANNER, FIRE
DEPARTMENT, AND CITY ENGINEER, AS WELL AS
OBTAINING APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED COLOR
PALETTE AND EXTERIOR MATERIALS**

Motion by Swiatek, seconded by Martin, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve PC Case No. 321, the site plan amendment request for 750 N. Pontiac Trail, contingent upon the applicant's resubmittal satisfactorily addressing the comments and requirements of the City Planner, Fire Department, and City Engineer, as well as obtaining approval of the proposed color palette and exterior materials.

2. *Public Hearing*

PC 322 1881 N. Pontiac Trail, 92-17-26-251-061

Applicant – Game & Company Properties, LLC

Request – Lot Split

City Planner Ortega presented the proposed lot split request for the property located at 1881 N. Pontiac Trail, situated on the north side of Pontiac Trail east of Decker Road. The existing parcel consists of approximately 1.27 acres. Mr. Ortega explained that a previous lot split had been completed by a former owner. The northern boundary of the property coincides with the northern boundary of the City of Walled Lake, with the adjoining property located within Commerce Township. The office building located to the north is accessed by a separate driveway to the east, and an existing drive aisle on the subject property currently provides through access to that northern parcel. These existing access arrangements create certain encumbrances that were considered during the review. The applicant proposes to divide the existing parcel into two lots. The western parcel, identified as Child Parcel A, would contain the existing office building,

associated parking lot, and remaining land to the west, totaling approximately 0.88 acres. The eastern parcel, identified as Child Parcel B, would contain approximately 112 feet of frontage on Pontiac Trail and consist of approximately 0.36 acres. Mr. Ortega stated that the first consideration is whether the proposed parcels meet the required dimensional standards. Child Parcel B exceeds the minimum required lot area of 15,000 square feet, containing approximately 15,682 square feet, and also satisfies the minimum lot width requirement. Accordingly, the proposed lot split complies with the dimensional requirements of the zoning ordinance. Mr. Ortega further explained that the staff review evaluated the proposal against the criteria contained in Section 74-110 of the City's ordinances, including lot dimensions, depth-to-width ratio, and other applicable standards. Staff determined that the proposed land division complies with state law and the City's ordinance requirements. Mr. Ortega noted that Child Parcel B does not currently have a dedicated access drive; however, it possesses frontage on Pontiac Trail and therefore has the ability to obtain access through the Oakland County Road Commission. Should the parcel be developed or sold separately in the future, any proposed driveway or access point would be required to comply with all applicable Road Commission requirements and permitting standards.

Public Hearing open 8:04 p.m.

James Dean, applicant and owner of Game and Company downtown explained they purchased the lots as a package deal. Keep the lot in their possession and sell the other lot with building on it. They wish to keep the new parcel, Child Parcel A so that no one can build upon the lot.

Close public hearing 8:06 p.m.

Commissioner Swiatek asked for clarification on the proposed lot split; the east side of the building will remain vacant.

Mr. Dean said yes.

Commissioner Martin said there is a preschool and their parking lot behind the building, how will the access work.

Mr. Dean said that building is part of the purchase, it is no longer a preschool. That is where Game and Company will relocate.

Chairman Schinzing said the new parcel, will guarantee no encumbrance to their property to the back. He said he is excited about Game and Company; the business has been very successful in creating a great energy downtown.

PC 06-04-26

MOTION TO APPROVE PC CASE NO. 322, 1881 N. PONTIAC TRAIL LOT SPLIT CONTINGENT UPON THE APPLICANT SATISFACTORILY ADDRESSING THE COMMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE CITY PLANNER

Motion by Martin, seconded by Swiatek, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve PC Case No. 322, 1881 N. Pontiac Trail lot split contingent upon the applicant satisfactorily addressing the comments and requirements of the City Planner.

DISCUSSION:

1. Commercial Design Standards

Chairman Schinzing explained when the commission discussed the creation of these design standards it was in addition to the CPD and PUD ordinance amendments. This is not a replacement, and he requested the PUD and CPD ordinance amendments be back on the July agenda.

City Planner Ortega said this is not a replacement. He explained the proposed commercial design standards. He explained that the City's existing design standards are currently limited to the Central Business District (C-3) and primarily consist of restrictions on certain materials and general recommendations, rather than detailed or measurable architectural requirements. Mr. Ortega stated that the proposed standards were developed based on research of regulations used in neighboring communities, including Commerce Township, as well as his experience in other municipalities. The draft ordinance is intended to establish a baseline level of architectural quality while still allowing flexibility and creativity in building design. The proposal would apply to all commercial zoning districts, including C-1, C-2, C-3, and O-1. He noted that additional or more stringent standards specific to the downtown area could be developed in the future in coordination with the Downtown Development Authority if desired. Mr. Ortega explained that the standards focus on architectural features and building elevations that are visible from public streets, adjacent residential properties, parking areas, or vehicle access routes. The intent is to concentrate architectural investment on the portions of buildings most visible to the public while avoiding large, featureless walls. The draft standards encourage the use of complementary architectural elements, including windows, building materials, vertical and horizontal design features, columns, and other façade treatments. The proposal also seeks to require façade variations that break up long expanses of wall to create a more pedestrian-scaled appearance and improve the overall visual character of commercial developments. He stated that the ordinance utilizes general performance standards rather than highly prescriptive measurements, allowing property owners and designers flexibility in achieving compliance. However, the standards could be revised to establish more specific requirements regarding spacing, dimensions, or quantities of architectural elements if the Commission preferred. Mr. Ortega also discussed provisions related to building entrances and windows, emphasizing the importance of creating prominent entrances and incorporating sufficient window area to enhance building appearance. He noted that the proposed requirement for approximately 20 percent window coverage was intended to balance architectural interest with the functional needs of commercial tenants. The draft ordinance further establishes standards for exterior building materials by identifying acceptable principal and accent materials. Mr. Ortega explained that higher-quality materials are encouraged while allowing certain materials, such as EIFS, to be used as limited accent features rather than as the primary façade material. Under the draft

language, accent materials would generally be limited to approximately 25 percent of a building façade. Mr. Ortega encouraged Planning Commissioners to observe commercial developments within Walled Lake and neighboring communities and identify architectural elements they believe would contribute to a distinctive community character. He emphasized that the goal of the proposed standards is to establish a consistent minimum level of quality while preserving design flexibility and creating an architectural identity unique to the City.

Chairman Schinzing said this is exactly what he was looking for.

Commissioner Martin asked about the signs and their requirements.

City Planner Ortega explained the city does have a sign ordinance. He explained the Commercial Design Standards can regulate to bring into scale with the building, making sure to create enough recognition for the business and still meet the city's design standards.

Chairman Schinzing said this is the start of something; this is what he was wanting to see. What would the process include to move this forward.

City Attorney Vanerian said this would be a zoning ordinance amendment process. He explained that the Planning Commission would send it to City Council with recommendation that they adopt a zoning amendment. City Attorney Vanerian said it would go before City Council for first reading, then to Planning Commission for required public hearing, then back to City Council for final approval.

Chairman Schinzing said if staff has ideas about amendments to the sign ordinance those should be included in discussions.

City Attorney Vanerian said the sign ordinance needs a top to bottom rewrite, legal revisions as well as content-based regulations are needed due to supreme court rulings that occurred.

Commissioner Swiatek said he would prefer to review the PUD and CPD ordinance amendments as a group, it is a lot.

Chairman Schinzing said there is a lot, next meeting we will take it one section at a time.

2. Planning Commission Educational / Training Opportunities – McKenna Associates

City Planner Ortega outlined training opportunities available to Planning Commissioners through McKenna and in partnership with the Michigan Association of Planning. He explained that the introductory training program, Planning and Zoning Essentials, is a two-hour session designed to provide commissioners with a foundation in planning and zoning principles. Mr. Ortega stated that the training reviews the statutory authority governing planning commissions, the requirements of the Open Meetings Act, and the respective roles and responsibilities of the Planning Commission, City Council, Zoning Board of Appeals, staff, and property owners. The

session is intended to provide commissioners with an understanding of the legal framework and decision-making process involved in land use planning. He also described an additional course, the Planning Commissioner's Toolkit, which focuses on the day-to-day functions of the Planning Commission. Topics include meeting procedures, reviewing site plans, identifying key issues during development review, and understanding the typical structure of a site plan application. Mr. Ortega noted that he prefers an interactive format that includes opportunities for questions and discussion following the presentation to address commissioners' immediate concerns and build confidence in their decision-making responsibilities. Mr. Ortega emphasized that effective planning seeks to provide housing opportunities that allow residents to remain within the community as their housing needs change over time, from young adults to families and seniors requiring independent or assisted living options. Mr. Ortega recommended beginning with the Planning and Zoning Essentials course and then offering additional topic-specific training sessions based on the Commission's interests and needs. He noted that the introductory session could be completed in approximately two hours while allowing ample time for questions and discussion.

Commissioner Swiatek asked if the city has a listing of properties for sale. Mr. Swiatek said if you don't know what is for sale, how do you generate a plan. He said the Speedway location could have been used better than having a seventh gas station. He said we are a built-out community; we need a game plan.

Chairman Schinzing said the City Manager brought up at last council meeting the need for review of the Master Plan. What do we want to be, how do we plan it out from a master plan perspective.

Giovanni Johnson said Game and Company is what we want to see in the city. He said we have heard from several people who want to build in the city, then they fade away. He asked what these developers are requested to provide to make life better for the residents of the city.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS: NONE

PC 06-05-26 ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Swiatek, seconded by Bashi, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To adjourn the meeting at 9:15 PM



Jennifer A. Stuart
City Clerk



Russ Schinzing
Chairman