

FRENCHTOWN CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
May 20, 2021

The meeting was held **entirely via Zoom** and was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

Roll call: Paul Thoma Dennis Staelgraeve Hillary Venier  
Fred Calkins Brian Dotson Don Abrams  
Chris Collins

Also present: Mark Mathe, Mannik & Smith Group, Township Engineer Representative  
Mario Ortega, McKenna Associates, Township Planning Consultant  
Natalie Askar, Planning Commission Recording Secretary  
Douglas Boehm, Monroe Storage Units, LLC – Owner  
Tim Matune, Cafaro - Senior VP Asset Redevelopment, Frenchtown Square Mall  
Joseph Mulligan, Associate Counsel, Cafaro Management  
Philip D. Goldsmith, Lennard, Graham & Goldsmith, Monroe  
Jared Kime, Project Manager, Atwell, Inc. – True Storage  
Chase Meylan, ODW Properties Monroe, LLC, Culver’s Restaurant  
Matt Cole, Project Engineer, Roosien & Associates, representing Culver’s Restaurant  
Kerry Bondy, Attorney, Frenchtown Charter Township

7 interested citizens

A quorum being present, Chairman Paul Thoma called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. This meeting was held under the Open Meetings Act.

**Item No. 1 Agenda Approval.**

**Motion**

Moved By: Dennis Staelgraeve Supported By: Hillary Venier

A motion was made to approve the agenda as presented.

MUC

**Item No. 2 Minutes of April 15, 2021 Meeting.**

**Motion**

Moved By: Hillary Venier Supported By: Dennis Staelgraeve

A motion was made to approve the minutes for the April 15, 2021 Planning Commission meeting as presented.

MUC

**Item No. 3 Public Hearing- Rezoning: to hear and consider a request to conditionally rezone a 7.104-acre portion of Parcel #07-065-093-01 (2121 N Monroe St – Unit 300) from C-2 General Commercial to Conditional C-3 Highway Commercial. The conditional rezoning request is to establish an indoor**

**climate controlled self-storage facility with up to 796 units. The 7.104 portion of the property requesting to be rezoned is a segment of the Mall of Monroe, located on the west side of N. Monroe Street, south of Mall Road and was previously occupied by a Sears retail store.**

Mario Ortega, McKenna Associates, Township Planner, presented the Planner's report dated May 11, 2021. Mr. Ortega states that the rezoning would be compatible with the adjacent uses depends on the site design and how the facility will function. At this time, we advise the Planning Commission to recommend denial of the proposed rezoning to the Township Board of a 7.104-acre portion of 2121 N. Monroe Street from C-2 General Commercial to Conditional C-3, Highway Commercial for an indoor self-storage facility based on the following findings of fact:

- 1) Inconsistency with the Township Master Plan.
- 2) The proposed rezoning would create a non-conformity with the rear and side yard setback requirements.
- 3) The location of loading areas will negatively impact the traffic pattern of the site.
- 4) Lack of evidence to indicate there is a demand for additional self-storage facilities.

Mr. Mathe, Mannik & Smith Group of Michigan, Township Engineer, presented the engineer's reports dated May 12, 2020. Mr. Mathe states that an unconditional rezoning from C-2 to C-3 on this parcel could present concerns from an engineering perspective with respect to the breadth of permitted and special uses. However, as the applicant has requested a conditional rezoning that restricts the allowable use to climate-controlled indoor self-storage only, the proposed use would be consistent with the available utility and infrastructure capacities. The comments made in Mr. Mathe's review should be utilized by the Planning Commission as a supplemental resource when making their recommendation as to this proposed conditional rezoning to the Township Board.

**Motion**

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Brian Dotson

MUC

A motion was made to accept and place on file the following correspondence:

- Mario Ortega, McKenna Associates, dated May 11, 2021
- Mark Mathe, Mannik & Smith Group of Michigan, May 12, 2021
- Josh Maddox, Fire Inspector, dated May 12, 2021
- Randy Kendall, Frenchtown Water Department, dated April 28, 2021
- Legal Notice – publish date May 4, 2021
- Affidavit of Mailing, dated October 22 of which 52 envelopes were mailed
- Tim Matune, Cafaro - Senior VP Asset Redevelopment, email with attachment dated May 17, 2021
- Submittal Documents of April 15, 2021

**Motion**

Moved By: Dennis Staelgraeve

Supported By: Don Abrams

A motion was made to **open** the public hearing at 7:19 pm.

MUC

Applicant Presentation:

Phil Goldsmith, Attorney for Cafaro, discussed the 2017 Master Land Use Plan, vacancy rates within Frenchtown Square Mall with respect to the Anchor stores and the current trends in retail shopping.

Tim Matune, Senior VP Asset Redevelopment for the Cafaro Company, discussed anchor store vacancies the various types of business that they could possibly have in the mall and the types of business that they have tried to get to come to the mall.

Douglas Boehm, Owner – Monroe Storage Units, LLC gave a power point presentation providing market study information, the need for climate-controlled storage units, cube smart storage facilities, the future of malls, loading and unloading at the facility.

Back to the Public Hearing (at 7:46 pm):

Paul Thoma, Planning Commission Chairperson, asked three separate times if there were any citizens who wished to address the Commission or Applicant. There were no citizens who wished to speak.

**Motion**

Moved By: Dennis Staelgraeve

Supported By: Fred Calkins

A motion was made to **close** the public hearing at 7:48 pm.

MUC

The Commission further discussed.

**Motion**

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Chris Collins

A motion was made to accept and place on file the following additional documentation:

- Douglas Boehm, Monroe Storage Units, LLC Owner – Power Point Presentation, May 20, 2021

MUC

The Commission further discussed.

**Motion**

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Don Abrams

A motion was made to recommend denial to the Township Board of the request to conditionally rezone a 7.104-acre portion of Parcel #07-065-093-01 (2121 N Monroe St – Unit 300) from C-2 General Commercial to Conditional C-3 Highway Commercial. The denial is based on the following findings of fact:

1. Inconsistencies with the Township Master Plan.
2. The proposed rezoning would create a non-conformity with rear and side yard setback requirements.



**Item No. 5 Final Site Plan Review: Parcel ID# 5807-124-016-10 (1290 N Monroe St.) proposal to utilize the existing former K-mart and tire center buildings for internal, climate controlled self-storage. A 2-acre out parcel will be reserved for future C-2 development use.**

Mario Ortega, McKenna Associates, Township Planner, presented the Planner’s report dated May 11, 2021. Mr. Ortega states that the proposed use will result in the redevelopment of a significant portion of a long vacant site and enhance the overall appearance in the immediate area. He recommends that the Planning Commission grant final site plan approval contingent upon the applicant submitting the following outstanding items for administrative review:

- A. Submittal of a cross access easement agreement with the adjacent Circle K property,
- B. Submittal of a revised final site plan that includes:
  - 1) A revised sheet 4 that includes all required C-3 minimum setbacks,
  - 2) A revised landscape plan that provides enhanced landscape islands in addition to any other required improvements from the Planning Commission,
  - 3) A revised photometric plan with average light levels meeting ordinance requirements,
  - 4) Confirming the availability of residential garbage can service or providing a method for organized trash removal,
- C. The applicant addressing any site plan issues identified by the Township Engineer, and
- D. Submittal of any outstanding applicable approvals from Township departments and any outside agencies.

Mr. Mathe, Mannik & Smith Group of Michigan, Township Engineer, presented the engineer’s reports dated May 12, 2021. Mr. Mathe’s states that he has no objection to the Planning Commission granting approval of the final site plan, subject to the applicant addressing all comments provided in his review and incorporating them into revised final site plan drawings to be submitted to the Township Building Department for further review and approval by the Mannik & Smith office.

To date, conditional approval has been received from the Monroe County Drain Commissioner’s Office, with respect to site plan. As such, final site plan approval should be contingent upon:

- Approval from the Monroe County Drain Commissioner’s Office, with respect to soil erosion and sedimentation control,
- Approval from the City of Monroe, with respect to the sanitary sewer system,
- Approval from the Township Fire Marshal,
- Approval from the Township Water Department, and
- Approval from the Township Planning Consultant.

**Motion**

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Fred Calkins

MUC

A motion was made to accept and place on file the following correspondence:

- Mario Ortega, McKenna Associates, dated May 11, 2021
- Mark Mathe, Mannik & Smith Group of Michigan, May 12, 2021
- Josh Maddox, Fire Inspector, dated May 11, 2021
- Submittal Documents dated April 15, 2021

Jared Kime, Atwell - Engineer, presented their case for final site plan approval for an indoor self-storage facility located on an 8.38-acre portion of 1290 N. Monroe Street (Parcel# 5807-124-016-100). Utilizing the existing former K-mart and tire center buildings for internal, climate controlled self-storage. A 2-acre out parcel will be reserved for future C-2 development use.

Mr. Kime answered questions from the Commissioners regarding the sprinkler system, garbage dumpsters and outdoor lighting.

The Planning Commission is very appreciative of the applicant making the requested changes to the plans that were requested at Tentative Site Plan approval.

**Motion**

Moved By: Chris Collins

Supported By: Don Abrams

A motion was made to approve the proposed final site plan for an indoor climate controlled self-storage facility located on an 8.38-acre portion of 1290 N. Monroe Street (Parcel# 5807-124-016-100). The approval is contingent upon the items listed in the Planner’s, Engineer’s, Fire Inspector’s reports, the applicant’s willingness to adhere to those specifications and obtaining all outside approvals.

Roll Call: Collins – Yes, Abrams – Yes, Calkins – Yes  
Dotson– Yes, Venier – Yes, Thoma – Yes  
Staelgraeve – Yes.

MUC  
7 - Yes votes, 0 - No votes

**Item No. 6 Final Site Plan Review: Parcel ID# 5807-076-002-00 for a drive-through restaurant on a 5.84-acre portion of a vacant parcel located on the west side of N. Telegraph Road, south of Mall Road (Parcel# 5807-076-002-00). The 5.84-acre portion of the property where the special use is being requested is located in the C-2, General Commercial zoning district.**

Mario Ortega, McKenna Associates, Township Planner, presented the Planner’s report dated May 12, 2021. Mr. Ortega states that the proposed drive-thru restaurant final site plan is in substantial compliance with zoning ordinance standards. However, a few outstanding issues remain. He recommends that the Planning Commission grant final site plan approval contingent upon the following:

- A. The applicant submitting detailed lighting cut sheets for fully shielded fixtures,
- B. The applicant submitting a revised landscape plan addressing the landscape islands, residential buffer, and detention pond issues to the satisfaction of the Planning Commission,
- C. The applicant addressing any site plan issues identified by the Township Engineer, and
- D. Submittal of any outstanding applicable approvals from Township departments and any outside agencies.

Mr. Mathe, Mannik & Smith Group of Michigan, Township Engineer, presented the engineer’s report dated April 7, 2021. Mr. Mathe has no objection to the Planning Commission granting approval of the final site plan, subject to the applicant addressing all comments provided in his review and incorporating

them into revised final site plan drawings to be submitted to the Township Building Department for further review and approval by our office.

To date, contingent approval has been received from the City of Monroe, with respect to sanitary sewer. As such, final site plan approval should be contingent upon:

- Approval from the Monroe County Drain Commissioner’s Office, with respect to site plan and soil erosion and sedimentation control,
- Approval from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, with respect to the wetland impacts,
- Approval from the Michigan Department of Transportation, with respect to the proposed approach,
- Approval from the Township Fire Marshal,
- Approval from the Township Water Department, and
- Approval from the Township Planning Consultant.

Matt Cole, Project Engineer, Roosien & Associates representing Culver’s Restaurant, presented the final site plans for a drive-through restaurant on a 5.84-acre portion of a vacant parcel located on the west side of N. Telegraph Road, south of Mall Road (Parcel# 5807-076-002-00). The 5.84-acre portion of the property where the special use is being requested is located in the C-2, General Commercial zoning district.

Mr. Cole also answered questions regarding parking and the interpretation of the ordinance and will double check to make sure there are not any bug issues with regards to the white fir trees that they have selected for this location.

The Planning Commission is very appreciative of the applicant making the requested changes to the plans that were requested at Tentative Site Plan approval.

**Motion**

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Don Abrams

MUC

A motion was made to accept and place on file the following correspondence:

- Mario Ortega, McKenna Associates, dated May 12, 2021
- Mark Mathe, Mannik & Smith Group of Michigan, May 12, 2021
- Josh Maddox, Fire Inspector, dated May 11, 2021
- Randy Kendall, Frenchtown Water Department, dated May 11, 2021
- Submittal Documents, April 30, 2021

**Motion**

Moved By: Dennis Staelgraeve

Supported By: Fred Calkins

A motion was made to grant final site plan approval for a drive-through restaurant on a 5.84-acre portion of a vacant parcel located on the west side of N. Telegraph Road, south of Mall Road (Parcel# 5807-076-002-00). The 5.84-acre portion of the property is located in the C-2, General Commercial zoning district. The approval is contingent upon the items listed in the Planner’s, Engineer’s and Fire Inspector’s Reports.

Roll Call:           Abrams – Yes,                   Calkins – Yes,                   Venier – Yes,  
                          Thoma – Yes,                   Staelgraeve – Yes,           Dotson – Yes,  
                          Collins – Yes.

MUC  
7 - Yes votes, 0 - No votes

**Item No. 7 Review and Discussion: Zoning Ordinance Article 200 Section 4.46 Solar Panel Arrays – Specifically Solar Panel Farms.**

The Commission discussed the following:

- Setbacks
- Abandon/removal bond
- Placed near existing infrastructure

**Motion**

Moved By: Dennis Staelgraeve

Supported By: Chris Collins

A motion was made to TABLE this item in order for further research to be done on this subject.

**Item No. 8 Old Business.**

Zoning Ordinance Committee is getting close to completing the revisions to the Zoning Ordinance. The next step will be for the Planning Commission to review and hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to the Township Board. May need to have additional meetings on the first Thursday of the months for a short time in order to have sufficient time to go through the revisions.

The Commission discussed what format to have the Planning Commission meetings going forward. The consensus was that future meetings will be a hybrid of in person and Zoom. The entire board will attend in person. Applicants and the public will have the option of attending via Zoom.

**Item No. 9 New Business.**

There were no citizens remaining to open the floor for questions, comments or concerns to the Planning Commission.



**Item No. 10 Administrative Reviews Update/Chairperson.**

- **Township Board Report:**

Changes coming soon

- **ZBA Report:**

No ZBA meeting in May, nothing to report.

- **Planning Commission Update:**

Paul Thoma, Planning Commission Chairperson, informed the Commission of the items proposed to be on next month's agenda.

- SPECIAL USE – Humane Society – Phase 1
- TENTATIVE & FINAL SITE PLAN – Humane Society – Phase 1
- SPECIAL USE – The Sports Garden
- TENTATIVE SITE PLAN – The Sports Garden

- **Mini Committee:**

- Memory Lane – Site Changes & Food Trucks (temporary solution)
- Forest Glen – Phase 2

**Item No. 11 Adjournment.**

**Motion**

Moved By: Dennis Staelgraeve

Supported By: Fred Calkins

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

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