



**CITY OF WALLED LAKE**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2026**  
**7:30 P.M.**

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

Pledge of Allegiance led by Commissioner Schinzing.

**ROLL CALL:** Bash, Martin, Robertson, Schinzing, Swiatek, Whitt

**ABSENT:** None

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

**REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES:**

Commissioner Whitt said he would like to move to nominate Commissioner Schinzing as Chairman.

**PC 04-01-26 MOTION TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER SCHINZING AS CHAIRMAN**

Motion by Whitt, seconded by Swiatek, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To nominate Commissioner Schinzing as chairperson.

Roll Call Vote

AYES: (5) Bash, Martin, Robertson, Swiatek, Whitt

NAYS: (0)

ABSENT: (0)

ABSTENTIONS: (1) Schinzing

**PC 04-02-26 MOTION TO NOMINATE ROBERT ROBERTSON AS VICE CHAIRMAN**

Motion by Swiatek, seconded by Bash, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To nominate Robert Robertson as vice chairperson.

Roll Call Vote

AYES: (5) Martin, Schinzing, Swiatek, Whitt, Bash

NAYS: (0)

ABSENT: (0)

ABSTENTIONS: (1) Robertson

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**PC 04-03-26 APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 9, 2025 PLANNING  
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

Motion by Robertson, seconded by Schinzing, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the September 9, 2025 Planning Commission meeting minutes.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:**

Resident of community said he is interested in purchasing 1272 E. West Maple and converting it to a car dealership and auto repair facility. He explained the site is up for auction and he would like to bid.

Chairman Schinzing said the commission is not in position to answer this question right there is not enough information. He recommended working with the city planner and staff.

City Planner Ortega said he does host office hours at the city on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday each month and offered to meet with him to discuss existing zoning uses, which the site is zoned RM-1 and have more discussion on what can go there.

**COMMUNICATION:** NONE

**DISCUSSION**

1. Annual Planning Report

City Planner Ortega explained he will be working on the annual planning report to be reviewed by the commission and highlights to be provided to city council including preferred actions of the commission.

City Manager Whitt explained there is a brand-new commission basically with all the new members and an action item of the new commission is to review and update the master plan. He said situations have changed in the city, the city has acquired a new linear park that is not in the master plan. City Manager Whitt explained that with the new members there is training, and he has requested funding be made available for training.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

1. PC 319 – 1237 E. WEST MAPLE RD  
Request: Special Land Use and Site Plan  
Applicant: Sarmad Jabro and Nassim Isaak

City Planner Ortega explained that automobile service stations located in the C-2, General Commercial district require special land use approval more intense evaluation. He explained that the special land use request was reviewed in accordance with the Walled Lake Zoning Ordinance to include compatibility, consistency with ordinance, and compatibility with the natural environment. He explained the surrounding areas do include auto activity. The prior development was an oil change shop which has since been abandoned. Mitigation has already occurred with the site, and they are at the end of that with the state. No woodlands or wetlands are in the area and applicant's plan shows required detention pond for storm water. He explained the applicant is proposing to eliminate one of the three curb cuts, but the remaining curb cuts must be to county standards. He explained there is a 35-foot setback measurement line or street right-of-way. The proposed market style building and pumps are all in compliance with this standard, but the proposed canopy is only ten (10) feet from the setback measurement line. The canopy location must be revised to comply with the 35-foot buffer from the setback measurement line.

*Open Public Hearing 7:48 p.m.*

Chairman Schinzing said there are many outstanding items with the site plan and did not wish to combine the special land use with the site plan approval. He said the site plan was incomplete.

Applicant Rod Hadash explained he is here on behalf of developer and owner of the property. He explained that a number of people have an interest in the property, they did their due diligence meeting with the city, and this led them to the applicant before the commission now. He explained they were happy and excited to find this purchaser for the property. He explained their goal is to become an asset to the community, proving an upscale market style store with a service station compared to other service stations, they are unique in offering the fresh market advantage. Mr. Hadash said their proposal was generated to get a read from the planning commission, they know there are several items to be addressed with the site plan. He said they will address all the items. He said they reached out to the Road Commission of Oakland County; the circulation of this site would be safer with two access points. He asked if what was proposed is attractive to the community. He said he is looking for approval of special land use to move this project forward.

Commissioner Swiatek said in general it looks like a beautiful presentation, not a fan of another service station, this will make seven gas stations inside a square mile. That is one concern. He said the site already had gas station however, this proposal is an upscale gas station which would be nicer. He said other concerns are things that have gone on within the city prior to the new commissioners being seated. He said he is not in favor of having seven gas stations inside a square mile.

Vice Chairman Robertson said this proposal is much better than a convenience store at least from the review of the provided architectural drawings. He said the site does not back up to residential and he does not have a problem with idea, but the site plan needs major work. He said he is ok with approving special land use, but the site plan must be amended and come back before the commission.

Chairman Schinzing the site plan does not have enough information to approve it.

Mr. Hadash explained the site was picked for its location, he agreed there are a number of stations in the city. However, most people fill up in the evening, most are headed west bound on Maple Road and there is only one station along that route currently. If you pass by that one, you are then dispersed to other ones leaving you to search around for one. He said this site is a direct line, that is why this site was reviewed.

Commissioner Martin asked if a traffic study was done. She said making a left hand turn out of the Market Place parking lot is difficult. Did the applicant review this for their proposal.

Mr. Hadash said evening traffic is primarily when the site would be busy, he has not conducted a traffic study.

Commissioner Martin said there is one exit and entrance, with a tanker providing deliveries, one access point is tight.

Mr. Hadash said that is why they proposed two points of ingress and egress, this design provides safe traffic flow.

Commissioner Martin asked if the site would connect to the bike trail.

Mr. Hadash said he is an avid biker, he would like to see people have access to it. He said it would be convenient for anyone on the trail.

Chairman Schinzing explained Walled Lake is a pass-through community, why not capitalize and have people stop here and spend their money here. He said the applicant needs to justify the development is a benefit to the city. He asked if the site is at the end of its remediation.

Mr. Ortega explained remediation monitoring wells were placed and one is remaining. He explained at some point the state may allow them to remove the last monitoring well.

Mr. Hadash explained there is a deed restriction on the property, residential use would be limited.

Chairman Schinzing explained there were no elevations provided. The renderings that were provided are beautiful, it is a stunning project, and he would have picked this over many others. He asked how the WOW gas station development obtained two drives.

City Planner Ortega explained the ordinance requires gas stations one ingress and egress. He explained the site has been vacant for more than six months and the existing non-conforming status goes away after six months of vacancy. City Planner Ortega explained if the planning commission granted leeway under the special land use, to go from 3 to 2 it brings the site into greater compliance with ordinance.



**2. PC 320 – 1126 N. PONTIAC TRAIL**  
**Request: Special Land Use and Site Plan**  
**Applicant: ZA Design Build**

Mr. Ortega presented the proposed development, which includes construction of a new 2,197 square-foot building with a drive-through, as well as façade improvements to the existing building to enhance aesthetics. He explained the site's zoning and compatibility with surrounding uses. The property is zoned C-2, with adjacent zoning of C-2 to the north, east, and west, and industrial to the south. A restaurant with a drive-through is permitted after special land use approval and is compatible use within the C-2 district. Mr. Ortega further explained that the development represents efficient use of the property. The existing multi-tenant building is set back a considerable distance from Pontiac Trail, and the site currently contains excess parking. Redevelopment may help reduce vacancy in the existing building. He also noted that demand for drive-through facilities has increased since COVID. Concerns were identified regarding setbacks and landscaping requirements. The required setback is 35 feet from the Pontiac Trail centerline; however, the submitted site plan shows a 35-foot setback from the property line only. Planner Ortega explained the proposed building would need to be shifted approximately 15 feet to comply. Additionally, a required 10-foot landscape setback is not shown on the site plan. It was recommended that the applicant revise the site plan to address these deficiencies and return for further review.

*Open Public Hearing 8:15 p.m.*

Applicant Zaid Arabo, ZA Design Build, discussed review letters from fire, engineering, and planning. He explained currently the site has 4 tenants in their multitenant building with 3 to 4 vacancies. He said this additional new building for a drive-through and the proposed improvements to the façade will drive the other vacant units to become occupied. He provided photos before and after from another site development the property owner owns, and he was involved with redesigning it in Keego Harbor. Mr. Arabo said they are proposing a faux stone that is glued to the building mixed with hardy siding, canopy, and awnings. Mr. Arabo asked if a traffic study is required.

City Planner Ortega explained the site plan must show details of traffic with large vehicle circulation; can they efficiently access site for loading. He explained the required shift in location of the building may change these current traffic flow calculations. He explained there was not enough information provided at this time by the applicant to approve site plan.

Mr. Arabo explained losing 7 to 8 parking spaces for the new drive-through is acceptable, however the proposed drive-through is one building which can be split into two units or remain for one tenant. Either way they may lose one to two cars for stack-ability when relocating it. Mr. Arabo suggested an island for greenery to aid in landscaping requirements. He is asking for special land use approval for the drive-through and is permitted to continue to work with City Planner Ortega on the site plan requirements. Mr. Arabo confirmed the building must be set back 95 feet from centerline of the road.

Planner Ortega said yes.

Commissioner Swiatek asked if the building is being proposed as one unit or two. What will become of the parking area in the rear of the existing building. He asked what the game plan is to fill the vacancies in the existing building to the rear. What has the owner done in an attempt to fill those vacancies. He said he is concerned with traffic flow, how does the new drive through and single new access point affect existing tenants in the strip mall.

Mr. Arabo said the building is going to be split into 2 units. Mr. Arabo said today's tenant does not want inside seating, so the footprint is smaller. However, if a Starbucks comes in, they may take the entire building. Employee parking, dumpster and its enclosure. Mr. Arabo said right now the building is not attractive, the owner is working with a realtor. Mr. Arabo said he is confident they will have tenants to fill the existing vacancies and the new building.

Commissioner Martin asked about making the drive-through building smaller, she was picturing a structure like Scooters on Union Lake Road.

Mr. Arabo said there is patio proposal with tables and umbrellas if there were a standalone tenant, they may wish to outdoor seating. He said there is no proposed tenant at this time.

Commissioner Bashi liked the idea of a coffee shop but stressed the importance of refacing the building.

Mr. Arabo said the building will be refaced regardless and the parking lot will be resurfaced.

Chairman Schinzing explained he is not thrilled just building more tenant space that could be just vacant. He said he is not opposed but not thrilled. He asked how the parking ordinance addresses multitenant structures.

City Planner Ortega explained the ordinance does address multitenant buildings. He explained as the parking fills up each tenant's use has a required parking space allotment. If all the tenants were a sit-down establishment, then the last tenant may not be able to be a eat in sit down establishment because they would not have the required parking.

Chairman Schinzing asked about the large marquee sign, is it staying as is. Could it be addressed and modified to fit the new façade.

Mr. Arabo said yes, it could be wrapped with the same hard material to match the new facade. He said all the existing signs the tenants would be required to upgrade to channel letter signs. All the leases will be amended to meet the new design.

Commissioner Swiatek asked regardless of whether drive-through is built, the existing building façade will be addressed.

Mr. Arabo said yes but there will be additional tenants drawn in with new building. Mr. Arabo said the property owner is taking a chance to build the new building, new water and sewer tap



not required. One of the problems with a mandatory member is the joint member cannot vote on the ZBA if it also came before the planning commission the member is a part of.

*Open Public Hearing 9:06 p.m.*

No public comments

*Close Public Hearing 9:07 p.m.*

Chairman Schinzing said we are a very small town, we need the flexibility and he is agreement with amendment.

**PC 04-08-26 MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL AND REFER TO CITY COUNCIL THE ORDINANCE AMENDMENT C-375-26 TO CHAPTER 51, "ZONING", OF TITLE V, "ZONING AND PLANNING", THE CITY OF WALLED LAKE ZONING ORDINANCE, TO AMEND ARTICLE 23.00 "ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS", SECTION 51-23.01(A) "CREATION" AS PROVIDED BY THIS ORDINANCE**

Motion by Swiatek, seconded by Bashi, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To recommend approval and refer to city council the ordinance amendment to Chapter 51, "Zoning", of Title V, "Zoning and Planning", the City of Walled Lake Zoning Ordinance, to amend Article 23.00 "Zoning Board of Appeals", Section 51-23.01(a) "Creation" as provided by this ordinance.

Roll Call Vote

AYES: (6) Bashi, Martin, Robertson, Schinzing, Swiatek, Whitt  
 NAYS: (0)  
 ABSENT: (0)  
 ABSTENTIONS: (0)

**4. C-377-26 Amendment to Chapter 51 Zoning to Amend Article 16.00 Planned Unit Development (PUD)**

City Attorney Vanerian explained that the Planned Unit Development (PUD) ordinance is a separate development option under the Zoning Ordinance that involves both the Planning Commission and City Council, with City Council holding final approval authority. He noted that the PUD process allows for modification of certain zoning requirements through agreement between the City Council and the applicant, reducing the need for strict compliance and often avoiding the need to seek variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals. City Attorney Vanerian explained that approximately 10 weeks prior, City Council determined that the existing PUD ordinance required a comprehensive overhaul and adopted a moratorium on new PUD applications to allow time for review. He noted that one PUD application was pending at the time the moratorium was enacted. Due to the scope of the needed revisions, City Council subsequently

lifted the moratorium at its most recent meeting. He said that the Planning Commission is no longer required to expedite review. Attorney Vanerian outlined key goals of the proposed amendments, including establishing more objective criteria and standards, reducing discretionary decision-making, and increasing Planning Commission involvement in the process. Under the proposed changes, any modifications granted by City Council would require input from the Planning Commission. The amendments are also intended to eliminate open-ended provisions and introduce more defined standards, including stricter study requirements such as traffic impact analyses. Attorney Vanerian explained that the draft ordinance represents an initial version developed collaboratively between himself and the City Planner, Mr. Ortega, reflecting potential improvements to the current ordinance. He added that City Council has completed a first reading of the draft; however, significant additional work is anticipated. The draft has been referred to the Planning Commission for a required public hearing, comprehensive review, and formal recommendations back to City Council. He also suggested that the draft be shared with the City's planning consultant for further input and noted that the Planning Commission Chair, who previously served on the related committee, may also wish to provide feedback.

Chairman Schinzing expressed concern regarding the Planning Commission's lack of authority in certain decisions and emphasized that the Commission should have greater authority and input in the process. He further noted that if City Council does not support a recommendation, the matter should be referred back to the Planning Commission for further consideration. He also stated that additional work is needed to update the City's ordinances, as the community has evolved significantly over the past 50 years. He expressed a desire for the Commission to take time to thoroughly review and evaluate the ordinances in detail over the long term.

Commissioner Swiatek asked if this a separate meeting could be held to go over it collectively.

City Manager Whitt this could be addressed during the regularly scheduled meeting. He said the planning commission members did well this evening and there will be time to work through this.

No action taken.

Chairman Schinzing asked about the retention pond for Speedway.

City Planner Ortega explained the location and size were approved and to keep in mind the site is still under construction. It may not have all the required components yet. He explained one of the design features is to detain more water onsite, slowly release it rather than release it quickly.

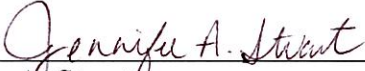
**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**                      None


**NEW BUSINESS:**                              None

**COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:**        None

**PC 04-09-26                      ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Robertson, seconded by Bashi, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To adjourn the meeting at 9:48 PM

  
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Jennifer A. Stuart  
City Clerk

  
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Russ Schinzing  
Chairman