

# AGENDA

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Planning Commission Meeting

Wednesday, August 9, 2023

Potluck ❖ 6:00 p.m.

Regular Meeting ❖ 6:30 p.m.

**LOCATION: The Lodge at Hawk Woods Park & Campground  
3799 Bald Mountain Road ❖ Auburn Hills MI**

PHONE: 248-364-6900 ❖ [www.auburnhills.org](http://www.auburnhills.org)  
Meeting minutes are on file in the City Clerk's office.

1. **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**
2. **ROLL CALL OF PLANNING COMMISSION**
3. **PERSONS WISHING TO BE HEARD** (regarding items not on the agenda)
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – June 7, 2023
5. **PETITIONERS**
6. **OLD BUSINESS** - None
7. **NEW BUSINESS**
  - 7a. Adopt Y2022-2023 Planning Commission Annual Report
  - 7b. Discussion about the Auburn Hills Master Land Use Plan
  - 7c. Discussion on the Architectural Design Policy
  - 7d. Updates on Developments
8. **COMMUNICATIONS**
9. **NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING** – Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chamber
10. **ADJOURNMENT**

➤ **NOTE:** Anyone planning to attend the meeting who has need of special assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is asked to contact the City Clerk's Office at 248-370-9402 or the City Manager's Office at 248-370-9440 48 hours prior to the meeting. Staff will be pleased to make the necessary arrangements.

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE TO PETITIONERS**

Items will be presented to the City Council on **Monday, August 21, 2023**. It will be necessary for you to have a representative present to answer any questions from the City Council. **CITY COUNCIL WILL NOT ACT ON YOUR ITEM IF YOU OR YOUR REPRESENTATIVE ARE NOT PRESENT.**



**CITY OF AUBURN HILLS**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**  
**NOT YET APPROVED**

June 7, 2023

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Ouellette called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Present: **Carolyn Shearer, Ray Saelens, Dominick Tringali, Cynthia Pavlich, Brian Marzolf, Sam Beidoun, Greg Ouellette**  
Absent: Laura Ochs, Chauncey Hitchcock  
Also Present: Director of Community Development Steve Cohen, City Planner Shawn Keenan  
Guests: 4

**LOCATION:** City Council Chambers, 1827 N. Squirrel Road, Auburn Hills, MI 48326

**3. PERSONS WISHING TO BE HEARD**

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 3, 2023**

Moved by Beidoun to approve the minutes of May 3, 2023 as amended to add the following to page 3, last paragraph:

**“The Petitioner agrees to modify the north and south elevations, working with the City’s Administrative Team to make those elevations comparable to the front elevation.”**

Second by Pavlich.

**VOTE:** Yes: Pavlich, Shearer, Beidoun, Saelens, Tringali, Marzolf, Ouellette

No: None

**Motion Carried (7-0)**

**5. PETITIONERS**

**5a. Tommy’s Boats Auburn Hills (7:01 p.m.)**

**Public Hearing/Motion – Recommendation to City Council for combined PUD Step One – Qualification/Step Two – Site Plan and Tree Removal Permit approval.**

Mr. Keenan explained that this is a request from Tommy’s Boats for PUD approval to construct a 21,483 square-foot boat dealership sales and service building, a 4-tier state-of-the-art steel and glass “Boat Display Tower,” and associated inventory storage parking lot. The 4.89-acre site is zoned B-2, General Business district, and is located east of Topgolf Auburn Hills on Great Lakes Crossing Drive, just west of Joslyn Road. The proposed development will help improve the appearance along Great Lakes Crossing Drive and the I-75 corridor.

Tommy’s Boats operates 16 dealerships throughout eight states and has grown to become the largest ski and wake dealer globally and one of the largest pontoon dealers in North America, supplying a full suite of boat repair services, rental services, retail goods and apparel.

There are two key issues listed on the cover page related to the boat dealership use and the 60.67’ display tower illumination. Tommy’s Boats agrees that the use of colors other than white light for internal nighttime lighting shall be prohibited. However, staff notes that Tommy’s Boats is working on a plan to utilize color accent lighting within their tower at their Grand Rapids facility, like the City Council had previously approved for the withdrawn Carvana Auburn Hills project last year. Once that new program is perfected in Grand Rapids, Tommy’s Boats intends to seek a separate approval from the City Council via Revised PUD Option application, requesting the use of accent colors within their Auburn Hills tower. Tommy’s Boats understands that the use of color accent lighting within the tower is at the sole discretion of the City Council.

There are also six deviations requested that are described in the cover letter related to reduced setbacks for the display tower, reduced greenbelt widths, amount of vehicle parking, location and size of the loading and unloading area, the location of the waste receptacle enclosure, and the size of the shared entrance sign

As a condition of PUD approval, the landowner, Buzz Silverman with Silverman Companies, has agreed to provide a \$250,000 donation as part of its sales agreement with Tommy's Boats. The \$250,000 donation will be paid to the Auburn Hills Community Foundation upon land closing with Tommy's Boats. It would be earmarked to assist with the funding of the new Auburn Hills Public Square project in downtown Auburn Hills.

#### **PUBLIC BENEFITS FOR PUD QUALIFICATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission and the City Council consider Tommy's Boats to be eligible for the PUD option as the project provides the following recognizable net public benefits to the community outlined in the Zoning Ordinance:

1. Architectural design quality and innovation.
2. High-quality landscaping.
3. Financial contribution to assist with the creation and maintenance of off-site public spaces and improvements (Auburn Hills Public Square).
4. Efficient consolidation of poorly dimensioned parcels or property with difficult site conditions such as topography, shape, etc.
5. Shared vehicular access between properties or uses.
6. Redevelopment of sites where an orderly change of use is desirable.
7. Installation of plug-in electric vehicle charging stations for use by employees and visitors in accordance with Section 1834 and/or the installation of other infrastructure for alternative fuel vehicles.

Tommy's Boats is targeting a construction start date no later than May 1, 2024. The project will take approximately one year to complete after the groundbreaking. Thus, the dealership is anticipated to open in Summer 2024. The proposed dealership is expected to employ between 20 and 30 people. The total investment is estimated at \$6 million.

**Jim Butler, PEA Group, 1849 Pond Run, Auburn Hills, MI 48326 and Roger Rehkopf, Orion Construction, 32 Market Avenue SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503** were available to answer any questions of the Commission and presented the proposal.

The Commission asked about the following:

1. The use of trailers and/or a forklift onsite.
2. The size of boats onsite.
3. The functionality of the site.
4. The number of boats onsite.
5. The number of boat spaces.
6. The grade of the site.
7. Soil conditions of the site.
8. The height of the tower.
9. Comparison of this proposal to the previously approved Carvana project.
10. The boating accessory retail component.
11. Lighting of the tower.
12. Fire suppression in the building and at the fuel tank.
13. East and south elevation and design.

Mr. Rehkopf stated that every boat is delivered already on the trailer, and will remain on the trailer. The spaces are all larger to accommodate the trailers. Most of the boats will range in size from 24'-28'. The boats in the tower remain on their trailers in the tower. There may be a small forklift or tractor onsite, but there will not be any large boat lifts. Tommy's Boats will offer delivery. The boats are primarily Malibu ski boats and pontoons. There could be some used boats for sale, but it is primarily new boats. There is also a retail component to the facility for various boating accessories. The accessory retail component is typically used by returning retail customers.

Mr. Rehkopf further explained that the facility would not be a storage site. It is a facility for service and sales. All storage will be off-site. The site is designed with 97 boat inventory storage spaces, not including the four boats displayed in the tower and five boats displayed on-site. There are some spaces designed as pull-in spaces for those

coming in for service. Boats in for service are typically there for less than 30 days. There are ten spaces inside the building for boats in service. There is no intention for long-term storage of boats onsite.

Mr. Butler explained that the site is essentially in a bowl, approximately 30' below the grade of I-75 and lower than the Topgolf site. The applicant is not aware of any soil issues but is working with a structural engineer. It is planned that the site will have deep foundations, as necessary.

Mr. Butler stated that it is likely that the top two tiers of the tower will be visible from I-75. It is intended that the lighting in the tower will be colored lighting that can be changed as desired. He explained that though the site has the same buildable area as the previously approved Carvana site, the location, size, and lighting of the building is different.

Mr. Rehkopf stated that the building will have a full fire suppression sprinkler system; however, there is not fire suppression at the fuel tank other than a fire extinguisher.

Mr. Rehkopf agreed that they would work with the City's administrative review team on the east and south elevations to enhance them to be of a cohesive four-sided design. These modifications should be done before the project appears before the City Council.

Mr. Ouellette opened the public hearing at 7:23 p.m.

Fadi Nassar, owner of the 115-acre site directly across from the proposed development, asked about the type and size of the fuel tank. Mr. Keenan explained that the tank is 500-gallon above-ground fuel tank.

Mr. Nassar asked about the number of boats that will be onsite. Mr. Rehkopf reiterated that the site is designed to store 97 boats.

Mr. Nassar asked about the type of truck that would be used for the delivery of boats. Mr. Rehkopf stated that it would be a semi-truck.

Mr. Nassar asked about the type and depth of the reinforced footings for the project. Mr. Rehkopf explained that the depth has not yet been determined. They will be either concrete or aggregate piers, i.e., rammed aggregate piers or helical piers, with the depth depending on the soil.

There being no further public comments, Mr. Ouellette closed the public hearing at 7:28 p.m.

**Moved by Beidoun to recommend to City Council approval of the combined PUD Step One – Concept Plan and PUD Step Two – Site Plan and Tree Removal Permit for Tommy's Boats Auburn Hills subject to the conditions of the City's Administrative Review Team.**

**Second by Saelens.**

**VOTE: Yes: Beidoun, Tringali, Marzolf, Shearer, Saelens, Pavlich, Ouellette**

**No: None**

**Motion Carried (7-0)**

**6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None.**

**7. NEW BUSINESS – None.**

**8. COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Keenan stated the Michigan Association of Planners (MAP) annual conference will be held October 4-6, 2023 in Traverse City if Commissioners are interested in attending.

**9. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**

The July 12, 2023 meeting has been canceled due to lack of applications. The next scheduled meeting is on Wednesday, August 9, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairperson Ouellette adjourned the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

Submitted by:

Susan McCullough, CMC, CMMC

Recording Secretary



# **Annual Report**

**June 1, 2022 - May 31, 2023**

## ***City of Auburn Hills Planning Commission***

Under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, the Planning Commission is required to provide an annual report to the City Council. This report is intended to coincide with the City Council's review of the City budget.

This report discusses the following topics:

- Summary of the Commission's operations during the past 12 months
- The status of any ongoing planning activities
- Recommendations to the City Council related to planning/development and funding

### **Commission Operations**

The Commission is governed by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act and the City's Zoning Ordinance. During the 12-month period starting on June 1, 2022, and ending on May 31, 2023, the Commission's membership was as follows:

Greg Ouellette, Chairperson  
 Sam Beidoun, Vice-Chairperson  
 Laura Ochs, Secretary  
 Brain Marzolf, City Council Liaison  
 Chauncey Hitchcock  
 Cynthia Pavlich (appointed on 9-12-22)  
 Carlene Pederson (served until 7-13-22)  
 Bob Pierce (served until 7-13-22)  
 Raymond Saelens  
 Carolyn Shearer  
 Dominick Tringali (appointed on 9-12-22)



During this time period, the Commission held nine meetings, and recommendations were made to City Council on 31 development-related items.

Measurable	Y2012 -2013	Y2013 -2014	Y2014 -2015	Y2015 -2016	Y2016 -2017	Y2017 -2018	Y2018 -2019	Y2019 -2020	Y2020 -2021	Y2021 -2022	Y2022 -2023
Meetings	12	12	11	14	13	11	11	9	7	6	<b>9</b>
Site Plans	5	12	7	10	17	12	12	10	3	7	<b>7</b>
Special Land Use Permits	3	6	7	8	11	7	8	9	4	11	<b>5</b>
Tree Removal Permits	5	6	8	6	7	11	13	9	1	4	<b>10</b>
Planned Unit Developments	1	3	4	4	5	6	6	4	3	1	<b>7</b>
Rezoning	8	0	1	3	4	4	5	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
Master Plan Amendments	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Text Amendments	5	1	2	2	4	1	2	1	1	1	<b>1</b>
Private Road	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	<b>0</b>
Total Projects	27	28	29	34	62	42	54	42	14	25	<b>31</b>

Note: The Planning Commission's regularly scheduled meetings in August, October and January were canceled due to a slowdown in construction.

### **Professional Planning Support Staff**

Steve Cohen, Director of Community Development, provides primary staff support to the Commission. Mr. Cohen has served the Commission since October 4, 1999. He is certified as a professional planner (AICP) with the American Planning Association. He has a Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Urban and Regional Planning from Michigan State University.

Shawn Keenan, City Planner, also provides staff support to the Commission. Mr. Keenan has served the Commission since March 15, 2011. He is certified as a professional planner (AICP) with the American Planning Association. He has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Law & Government and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Eastern Michigan University.

### **Notable Commission Items**

#### **1. Development Applications**

Notable projects reviewed by the Commission were the following:

- The Parkways (Phase 3) – The revised plans included the construction of a total of 50 residential units. Three owner-occupied townhouse-style condominiums totaling 18 units and five townhouse-style apartment buildings consisting of 32 units.
- TA Systems – The plan called for the construction of a 71,775 square-foot clean, high-tech facility that will serve as their new corporate headquarters, bringing more than 100 jobs to the City.
- 2111 North Squirrel Road – The development included a 3,480 square-foot Panera Bread restaurant with a drive-through facility and outside seating on the north end of the property and a 10,196 square-foot one-story retail center on the south end.
- FANUC America – The proposal included a 671,100 square foot light industrial facility (West Campus building) to house manufacturing, engineering, and R&D projects and the repurposing of the existing 132,745 square foot law school building into an R&D center and educational facility for the next generation of robotics and automation workers.
- Clean View Car Wash – The request called for the construction of a 16,307 square-foot automobile laundry with a wash tunnel and a 15-stall indoor vacuum wing.
- The Webster – The plan called for constructing a six-story mixed-use building in Downtown Auburn Hills, with 7,476 square feet of first-floor retail space, a 22-space parking garage, and five floors consisting of 85 residential apartments.
- TI Fluid Systems – The development includes the construction of a 49,374 square-foot building addition and associated parking and improvements at the existing TI Fluid Systems building. The expansion will increase the facility to 193,282 square feet in size.
- UL Solutions - This is a request from Cunningham-Limp Company to construct an 83,061-square-foot high-tech research and testing facility with 12,600 square feet of office space, 50,000 square feet of research and development space, 10,394 square feet of warehouse space, and 10,067 square feet of testing space.
- Atlantic Boulevard Light Industrial Speculative Building – The request called for the construction of a 55,422 square foot light industrial building with 11,696 square feet of office space, 21,863 square feet of manufacturing space, and 21,863 square feet of warehouse space.
- Magna Seating – The proposal called for the construction of a 280,000 square-foot light industrial building.
- GM Electric Vehicle Parts Assembly, Distribution, and Office Facility – The plan included constructing a 1,100,764-square-foot light industrial building that will operate as a “Value-Added Assembly” (VAA) facility manufacturing various automotive components for the assembly lines at the company’s Orion Assembly Plant.

2. Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

Article VIII, B-1, Limited Business Districts, and Article IX. B-2, General Business Districts. The Ordinance amendment was designed to address the permitted locations for the four adult-use marihuana establishments to be allowed in the City of Auburn Hills. The Ordinance also repealed the map of required locations for the four (4) allowed adult-use marihuana establishments near Lapeer Raod and Brown Road/Dutton Road as outlined in Section 18-232 – Limitation of Adult Use Marihuana Establishments of Ordinance No. 22-932.

3. Support Staff Training

Steve Cohen and Shawn Keenan attended the *APA's National Planning Conference* held in Philadelphia on April 1-4, 2023. In addition to the national conference, Mr. Cohen attended the *Michigan APA Conference* held at Mackinac Island on October 12-14, 2022, and Mr. Keenan attended the conference virtually. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Kennan also participated in several other virtual planning webinars in 2022 and 2023.

AICP planners like Mr. Cohen and Mr. Keenan are required to obtain professional development training in order to maintain their credentials. AICP planners must earn a minimum of 32 CM credits (1 hour = 1 CM credit) within a designated two-year reporting period. A minimum of 1.0 credits must be on the topics of planning law, ethics, equity, and sustainability & resilience. Mr. Cohen has earned 50.25 CM credits thus far for the current reporting period of January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2023. Mr. Keenan has earned 52.25 CM credits thus far for the current reporting period of January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2023.

4. Commission Training

Training is a high priority for the Commission and City Council. Members are faced with an enormous responsibility to help guide the physical development of the community. Poor decisions could lead the City into costly litigation. The Commission has benefited greatly over the years from training, whether they are new members who want to learn about planning or veteran members who need to keep up to date with changes in the law and planning practices.

Member Beidoun attended the *Michigan APA Conference* at Mackinac Island on October 12-14, 2022.

The City of Auburn Hills has been involved with a very limited number of development-related lawsuits over the past 20 years, which is mainly attributed to a proactive Commissioner training program and well-trained staff. It is our understanding that this record of accomplishment has helped the City lower its general liability insurance rates over the years, which saves taxpayers money.

5. The City's Woodlands Preservation Ordinance – City's Tree Fund

During this reporting period, one development established that the planting of the required replacement trees on-site was not possible, and an appropriate off-site location was not available. In this case, the applicant chose to make a payment into the City's Tree Fund and/or utilized the alternative provision of Section 34-310(b)(4) in a way in which the City Council believed the highest and best outcome could be achieved.

- FANUC America Corporation, West Campus – The applicant made a payment of \$217,360 into the City's Tree Fund to account for the 572 replacement trees that could not be planted on-site or at alternate locations.



**Planning Commission Terms and Attendance Records**

During this reporting time period, the Commission held nine Regularly Scheduled meetings. No Special Meetings were held during this reporting period.

Name	Term Endings	Regular Meetings	Special Meetings
Greg Ouellette	July 2024	7 / 9	0 / 0
Sam Beidoun	July 2026	8 / 9	0 / 0
Laura Ochs	July 2026	5 / 9	0 / 0
Brian Marzolf	Nov. 2023	9 / 9	0 / 0
Chauncey Hitchcock	July 2024	8 / 9	0 / 0
Cynthia Pavlich	July 2025	7 / 7	0 / 0
Carlene Pederson	July 2022	0 / 2	0 / 0
Bob Pierce	July 2022	2 / 2	0 / 0
Raymond Saelens	July 2024	7 / 9	0 / 0
Carolyn Shearer	July 2025	6 / 9	0 / 0
Dominick Tringali	July 2025	6 / 7	0 / 0

**Ongoing Planning Activities based on the City Council's Y2024 Strategic Goals & Objectives**

1. Explore options for industrial redevelopment within the community.
2. Continue to foster development along the M-24/Opdyke Road Corridor.
3. Focus redevelopment efforts on TIFA, city-owned, and private properties.
4. Continue to keep Auburn Hills friendly and livable for all ages and abilities.
5. Provide input during the process of updating the Auburn Hills Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

**Commission Recommendations to City Council**

The Commission respectfully recommends that the City Council ensure that the Y2024 City of Auburn Hills Budget allows for the following items:

1. Continued staff support from Mr. Cohen, Mr. Keenan, and the City's Administrative Development Review Team
2. Funding planning activities (e.g., citizen participation, maps, printing, technical research, Master Plan and Zoning Ordinances updates, etc.)
3. Funding for educational materials and technical training for Commission members