



CITY OF AUBURN HILLS PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

March 4, 2026

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Beidoun called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: **Carolyn Shearer, Darlene MacMillan, Jack Ferguson, Raymond Saelens, Dominick Tringali, Cynthia Pavlich, Dominic Patrus, Sam Beidoun**
Absent: None
Also Present: Director of Community Development Steve Cohen, Assistant to the Director of Community Development Devin Lang, DPW Director Stephen Baldante
Guests: 8

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

3. PERSONS WISHING TO BE HEARD

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 4, 2026

Moved by Saelens to approve the minutes of February 4, 2026.

Second by Ferguson.

VOTE: Yes: Shearer, MacMillan, Saelens, Ferguson, Pavlich, Tringali, Patrus, Beidoun
No: None **Motion Carried (8-0)**

5. PETITIONERS

Chairperson Beidoun shared the public hearing procedure and the steps the Commission will follow.

5a. Auburn Hills Downtown Municipal Parking Lots. (6:04 p.m.)

Part 1 - Public Hearing/Motion – Recommendation to City Council for approval of the rezoning of 3157 Auburn Road from B-2, General Business District to D, Downtown District, or any other appropriate zoning district.

Part 2 – Recommendation to City Council for Site Plan approval to construct municipal parking lots on the portion of 3157 Auburn Road immediately adjacent to Auburn Road and on vacant land located at the northeast corner of Churchill Road and Auburn Road.

Mr. Beidoun opened the public hearing at 6:05 p.m.

Mr. Cohen confirmed that the hearing documents are in order and that no written communications have been received regarding this petition.

Mr. Cohen stated that this is a City-initiated proposal to establish two new public parking lots to support Downtown Auburn Hills and Riverside Park.

He explained that Planning Commission consideration includes two separate but related actions:

1. A rezoning request, and
2. Site plan approval.

The first action is a request to rezone the former Farm Boy property at 3157 Auburn Road from B-2, General Business District, to D, Downtown District. This request is consistent with the City's Master Plan, which designates the property for Downtown Mixed Use. The proposed rezoning will align the zoning classification with the long-term vision for this area and further strengthen its integration into Downtown.

The second action involves approval of a site plan for a total of 111 public parking spaces. Of these, 91 spaces are proposed on the former Farm Boy property along Auburn Road, and 20 spaces are proposed on the vacant parcel at the northeast corner of Churchill Road and Auburn Road.

Mr. Cohen explained that the City has completed parking studies to assess both current and future needs in Downtown Auburn Hills. The findings demonstrated a clear need to expand public parking capacity to support the continued success of Downtown businesses and ensure a convenient, positive experience for residents and visitors. In response to these findings, the City Council strategically acquired the properties and directed staff to proceed with developing the proposed parking lots.

These parking lots have been thoughtfully designed as a western extension of Downtown Auburn Hills. The plan incorporates extensive landscaping and a decorative streetscape along Auburn Road to create an attractive, pedestrian-friendly environment that complements the character and quality of the Downtown.

The City's goal is to complete all or part of these improvements by the end of this year to address parking needs in a timely and proactive manner.

Mr. Cohen stated that the staff recommends approval of both the rezoning request and the site plan.

Andy Wiseman, Nowak and Fraus, 46777 Woodward Ave., Pontiac, MI 48342, who designed the project on behalf of the City, was available to answer any technical questions from the Commission.

The Commission asked about the following:

1. Sufficient capacity of the underground water detention system;
2. Necessity of oil separation in the detention system;
3. A physical barrier between the parking lot and the auto repair shop;
4. The walkway in front of the auto repair shop;
5. Potential that this will be paid parking.

Mr. Wiseman explained that the capacity of the underground water detention is sufficient and will be cleaned out regularly. This detention area does not require an oil separator. He stated that there will be a landscape barrier between the lot and the auto repair shop, but not a fence. Mr. Cohen explained that the sidewalk in front of the auto repair shop is not anticipated to be replaced until the property is redeveloped, but this improvement could be further evaluated as this project is implemented if the property owner is agreeable.

With respect to paid parking, Mr. Cohen explained that the City is exploring paid parking in certain high-traffic areas of Downtown, but at this time, it is not foreseen for these lots. There have been preliminary discussions about the City offering a paid residential permit or license for some of the spaces in the Farm Boy lot in the future, as part of a long-term plan to accommodate the existing residential units in the mixed-use developments within Downtown. Mr. Lang stated that an electronic gate is not planned for these lots.

Richard Lehto, 37 Churchill Road, who resides north of the Farm Boy lot, stated that while he supports additional Downtown parking lots, he is concerned about whether the lots will have posted hours. He also asked whether there will be a barrier or fence along the back (north) part of the parking lot, as well as concerns about people walking through the auto repair shop parking lot.

Mr. Cohen explained that it has not yet been determined whether the parking lots will have limited hours. He reiterated that some spaces may be permitted or licensed for use by nearby residential units in the Downtown. Mr. Cohen explained that there will be a decorative fence at the top of the retaining wall, except for a small area left open to pile the snow in the winter. Mr. Cohen felt confident that the City would work with the adjoining residents to ensure proper buffering and security on both sides of Churchill Road if trespass or nuisances became an issue after the lots were constructed and operational.

Ty White, 30 Churchill Road, also expressed a similar concern about the fencing. She thanked Mr. Cohen for speaking with her and for sending her information about the project prior to the meeting. She plans to demolish the existing home on her property and build a new one in the future. Mr. Cohen stated that the City is open to providing additional landscaping and, if needed, a decorative fence barrier for the Churchill lot adjacent to Ms. White's property.

There being no further public comments, Mr. Beidoun closed the public hearing at 6:19 p.m.

**Moved by Pavlich to recommend to City Council the approval of the rezoning of 3157 Auburn Road from B-2, General Business District to D, Downtown District.
Second by Shearer.**

VOTE:

Yes: MacMillan, Saelens, Pavlich, Tringali, Shearer, Patrus, Ferguson, Beidoun

No: None **Motion Carried (8-0)**

**Moved by Patrus to recommend to City Council approval of the Site Plan for the Auburn Hills Downtown Municipal Parking Lots subject to the conditions of the City's Administrative Review Team.
Second by Saelens.**

VOTE:

Yes: Pavlich, Saelens, MacMillan, Shearer, Patrus, Tringali, Ferguson, Beidoun

No: None **Motion Carried (8-0)**

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None.

7. NEW BUSINESS – None.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

8a. Board and Commission Member Training Session on Open Meetings Act and Roberts Rules of Order – Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Mr. Cohen reviewed the four items expected to be considered at the April 8, 2026 Planning Commission meeting.

9. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next scheduled meeting is on Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Auburn Hills Council Chambers.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Beidoun adjourned the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

Submitted by:

Susan McCullough, MiPMC III, CMC

Recording Secretary