

**CITY OF OAK PARK PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2025
MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 14000 Oak Park Blvd, Oak Park, MI 48237, by Chairperson Torgow and roll call was made.

PRESENT: Chairperson Torgow
Vice Chairperson Brown
Commissioner McClellan
Commissioner Eizelman
Commissioner Walters-Gill
Commissioner Tungate
Commissioner Seligson
Commissioner Tkatch

ABSENT: N/A

OTHERS PRESENT: Economic Development & Planning Specialist, Salam Habhab
Deputy City Clerk/ Director of Elections, Jo Lynn Williams-Elliott
Director of Municipal Services, Kim Marrone
Attorney, Courtney Krause
Deputy City Manager, Dave DeCoster

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA OF JANUARY 22, 2025:

MOTION by Eizelman, SECONDED by McClellan, to approve the agenda as presented for the January 22, 2025, meeting

VOTE: Yes: All
No: None

MOTION CARRIED

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 11, 2024:

MOTION by Brown, SECONDED by McClellan, to approve the November 11, 2024, minutes

VOTE: Yes: All
No: None

MOTION CARRIED

5. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE:

A. Administrative Approval, Kerry Leasing, Auto Dealer Class B, 12800 Northend St.

This is an Administrative Approval for operating Kerry Leasing, LLC, a class B truck dealership with a combination of truck towing services, at the same location of Kerry Brothers Truck Repair facility at 12800 Northend Ave., Oak Park, MI 48237, Parcel ID # 52-25-32-177-039.

The sketch plan depicts the addition of one (1) Dwarf Korean Lilac tree and two (2) Double Play Red Spirea shrubs to the existing landscaped area. These plants are drought-tolerant, once established, requiring water during extended dry periods only. Additionally, the sketch plan depicts (10) truck display spaces consistent with the state requirements for a Class B dealership, as well as (20) off-street parking spaces that meet the off-street parking requirements of the zoning ordinance. Six (6) of these spaces are designated for the 4,000 sq ft vacant space located at the front portion of the building. The sketch plan indicates that Prairie Farms trailers will be parked on their site at 21631 Meyers Rd.

After reviewing the information provided, the Economic Development and Planning Department has administratively approved the request and the related Site Plan.

The approval is conditioned on the following:

1. All the conditions of the Administrative Approval granted on January 9, 2024, for Kerry Brother Truck Repair, 12800 Northend Ave. remain in effect.
2. In the Light Industrial District, the use of a class B dealership is permitted only in combination with a towing, body shop (collision-related mechanical repair and unitized body structure repair only), or custom utility vehicle manufacturer. The applicant intends to operate towing services alongside the truck dealership. Dealership use will only be allowed while the towing facility is actively operating. Should the towing facility cease operation, the city will take necessary steps to inform the state to revoke the dealership license.
3. The sketch plan does not depict a waste receptacle/enclosure. The applicant indicated a waste receptacle is provided as part of their tenant agreement within the adjacent property to the north at 21631 Meyers Rd. If the need for a dumpster becomes necessary, the applicant will be required to provide a dumpster with the required enclosure in compliance with Article 1 Division 1 Section 333 of the Zoning Ordinance.
4. All landscaped areas and plant materials shall be kept free from refuse and debris. Plant materials, including lawn, shall be maintained in a healthy growing condition, neat and orderly in appearance in accordance with the approved site plan/landscape plan. If any plant material dies or becomes diseased, it shall be replaced with 30 days' written notice from the City or within an extended time period as specified in said notice.
5. Any modifications to the access drive on Northend Ave. shall require obtaining permits/approval from the City of Oak Park Engineering Department.
6. All proposed roof-top or ground-level equipment must be screened as required by the zoning ordinance.
7. Any existing or proposed exterior lighting should be shielded and downward casting to eliminate the possibility of nuisance to the adjoining properties as required by the zoning ordinance.
8. No signs are approved as part of the Administrative Approval. A separate permit must be requested for the inclusion of any signs at this site.
9. This review is from the Economic Development and Planning Department only. The Site Plan shall comply with the requirements of the City of Oak Park Engineering, Building and Fire Departments, as applicable.

B. Administrative Approval, Mackey Holdings, Live-Work Residential Unit, 13200 Capital St.

This is an Administrative Approval for converting the second floor of the front office building to a live-work residential unit at 13200 Capital St., Oak Park, MI 48237, Parcel ID # 52-25-32-151-034.

After reviewing the information that you provided, the Economic Development and Planning Division has administratively approved the request and the related Site Plan.

The approval is conditioned on the following:

1. All the conditions of the original Administrative Approval granted on May 5, 2022, for outdoor storage and operating a concrete crushing machine inside the building remain in effect.
2. The site plan shows an open space of 200 sq. ft. designated for residential use consistent with the requirement of the zoning ordinance. This area shall be maintained and kept in good condition for residential use at all times.
3. All driveways, parking lots, access lanes and other vehicles area shall be hard-surfaced with concrete or plant-mixed bituminous material in accordance with specifications of the City. The applicant shall be aware that parking vehicles or storing equipment on grass or other unpaved surfaces are prohibited.
4. Landscaped areas and plant materials shall be kept free from refuse and debris. Plant materials, including lawn, shall be maintained in a healthy growing condition, neat and orderly in appearance in accordance with the approved site plan/landscape plan. If any plant material dies or becomes diseased, it shall be replaced with 30 days' written notice from the City or within an extended time period as specified in said notice.
5. Any modifications to the access drive on Capital St. shall require obtaining permits/approvals from the City of Oak Park Engineering Department.
6. All proposed roof-top or ground-level equipment must be screened as required by the zoning ordinance.
7. Any existing or proposed exterior lighting should be shielded and downward casting to eliminate the possibility of nuisance to the adjoining properties as required by the zoning ordinance.
8. No signs are approved as part of the Administrative Approval. A separate permit must be requested for the inclusion of any signs at this site.
9. This review is from the Economic Development and Planning Department only. The Site Plan shall comply with the requirements of the City of Oak Park Engineering, Building and Fire Departments, as applicable.

C. Administrative Approval, Sunnyside Enrichment Center, 12702-12706 W. Nine Mile Rd.

This is an Administrative Approval for operating a childcare center at 12702–12706 W. Nine Mile Rd., Oak Park, MI 48237, Parcel ID # 52-25-29-377-093.

The site plan depicts the addition of an outdoor play area for children (19 ft X 65 ft), located at the northeast corner of the property. The play area will be enclosed with a 4-foot chain link fence. The applicant has indicated that the existing dumpster near the proposed outdoor play area will be relocated along with the other dumpsters on-site. Additionally, the floor plan outlines the proposed preschool rooms #1&2, toddler room #3, infant room, kitchen, restrooms, and laundry room. The applicant has stated that the exact number of children approved for the center will be determined after the state licensing visit, in accordance with the State Licensing Rules.

After reviewing the information that you provided, the Economic Development and Planning Department has administratively approved the request and the related Site Plan.

The approval is conditioned on the following:

10. The use shall be registered with the City Clerk's Office and shall continually have on file with the city documentation of a valid license as required by the state.
11. The facility shall be brought into compliance with all state building and fire codes pursuant to state licensing rules.
12. The applicant is responsible for providing documentation and information to demonstrate that the requirements for any state licenses or registration have been met, and copies of such documentation shall be provided and have it on file with the City Clerk's Office.
13. The location of the proposed play area shall be relocated southward to ensure an adequate turning radius for trash trucks and delivery trucks accessing the rear of the property. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the placement of the playground area maintains a safe play area for children as well as efficient vehicle circulation and maneuvering to the rear access area.
14. If any changes are made to the exterior elevations to comply with the building and fire codes, the applicant shall submit elevation drawings to Economic Development and Planning for review and approval prior to construction.
15. The applicant has indicated a waste receptacle is provided as part of their tenant agreement within the same plaza. If the need for a dumpster becomes necessary, the applicant will be required to provide a dumpster with the required enclosure in compliance with Article 1 Division 1 Section 333 of the Zoning Ordinance.
16. The applicant has also indicated that the existing dumpster near the proposed outdoor play area will be relocated along with the other dumpsters on-site. The new location of the dumpster shall comply with the zoning ordinance requirements. It is the responsibility of the property owner or the applicant to contact the waste management company before finalizing the dumpster location and orientation to ensure there are no accessibility issues.
17. Any modifications to the access drive on Nine Mile or Scotia Rd. shall require obtaining permits/approval from the City of Oak Park Engineering Department.
18. All proposed roof-top or ground-level equipment must be screened as required by the zoning ordinance.
19. Any existing or proposed exterior lighting should be shielded and downward casting to eliminate the possibility of nuisance to the adjoining properties as required by the zoning ordinance.

20. No signs are approved as part of the Administrative Approval. A separate permit must be requested for the inclusion of any signs at this site.
21. This review is from the Economic Development and Planning Department only. The Site Plan shall comply with the requirements of the City of Oak Park Engineering, Building and Fire Departments, as applicable.

6. PUBLIC HEARING: None

7. CONSENT AGENDA: None

8. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

I. OLD BUSINESS: None

II. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Site Plan Review, Toras Chaim Synagogue, 14631-14651 Balfour Ave.

Chairperson Torgow mentioned that 11 letters of support were received in favor of this Project.

Four individuals voiced their position on the project; one against the approval and three were in support.

This is a Site Plan Review (SPR) request submitted by PEA Group to build a new synagogue at 14631, 14641, and 14651 Balfour Ave. The site of 0.41 acres (17,994 sq ft) currently comprises three contiguous single-family residential parcels:

- 14631 Balfour Ave.: Parcel A (further east parcel): 0.137 acres (5,968 sq ft) comprises a one-story, single-family structure (1,350 sq ft) and a garage structure (418 sq ft).
- 14641 Balfour Ave.: Parcel B (middle parcel): 0.137 acres (5,968 sq ft) comprises a two-story, single-family structure (2,022 sq ft).
- 14651 Balfour Ave.: Parcel C (further west parcel): 0.137 acres (5,968 sq ft) comprises a two-story, single-family structure (1,738 sq ft) and a garage structure (420 sq ft).

Parcel A has been used as a synagogue since 2016 without obtaining the required development approvals, leading to daily use of the residence, increased traffic, and parking issues. The City has received resident complaints and has since been working with the applicant to address these concerns and obtain the necessary approvals. The applicant proposes to combine the three parcels, demolish the existing structures, and construct a new synagogue with parking to resolve these issues and accommodate the congregation's needs.

The applicant proposes to construct a new two-story synagogue structure with a basement on Parcel A. Parcels B and C will be utilized as a parking area. A greenbelt is proposed along the frontage of the lots on Balfour Ave. A new 6-foot screen wall is proposed on the east property line, and a landscaped buffer along the west and south property lines.

The proposed development aims to address the existing unauthorized use, provide a suitable facility for the congregation's needs, and mitigate parking and traffic concerns. The applicant has submitted a project narrative as part of the application materials; describing the project and demonstrating that the site plan satisfactorily meets the zoning ordinance requirements. The project narrative is attached to this report.

Chairperson Torgow stated that he will recuse himself from voting on this project as he is the property owner.

MOTION by McClellan, SECONDED by Tkatch, to approve the site plan review submitted by Toras Chaim Synagogue with the following conditions:

1. The Site Plan Review approval is contingent upon combining the parcels into one parcel in accordance with the requirements of the State Land Division Act and the City of Oak Park Code of Ordinance, and other applicable statutes and ordinances.
2. The Site Plan approval is contingent upon receiving dimensional variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), as follows:
 - a. A waiver from the requirements of Sec. 544.g.1.b to allow the parking lot to extend in the front building setback area. The zoning ordinance states parking shall not be provided in the front building setback area.
 - b. A waiver from the requirements of Sec. 544.g.1.d to reduce the east side yard setback to 4 feet. The zoning ordinance requires 50 feet.
 - c. A waiver from the requirements of Sec. 544.g.1.d to reduce the rear (south) yard setback to 10.76 feet. The zoning ordinance requires 50 feet.
 - d. A waiver from the requirements of Sec. 215.d to allow impervious surfaces of 84%. The zoning ordinance requires a total area of all impervious surfaces to not exceed 70% of the lot area.
3. The Site Plan approval is contingent upon submitting a professional parking study to the Planning Commission, in compliance with the requirements of the zoning ordinance. If the parking study submitted is determined to be insufficient to meet the requirements of the zoning ordinance, the applicant shall be required to provide parking in accordance with Sec. 401 or obtain a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.
4. Landscaped areas and plant materials shall be kept free from refuse and debris. Plant materials, including lawns, shall be maintained in a healthy growing condition, neat and orderly in appearance in accordance with the approved site plan/landscape plan. If any plant material dies or becomes diseased, it shall be replaced with 30 days written notice from the City or within an extended time period as specified in said notice.”
5. The applicant shall obtain Public Works Department approval for removing a city, right-of-way tree and planting at least three (3) new 3” caliper trees on-site or at another location around the city as approved by the Public Works Department.
6. The applicant shall obtain permits/approvals from the City of Oak Park Engineering Department for the proposed modifications to the accesses on Balfour Ave.
7. The site plan does not depict a dumpster and dumpster enclosure. The applicant indicated that interior facilities are provided. If the need for a dumpster becomes necessary, the applicant will be required to provide a dumpster with the required enclosure in compliance with Article 1 Division 1 Section 333 of the Zoning Ordinance.
8. Any existing or proposed exterior light fixtures should be shielded and downward cast to eliminate the possibility of nuisance to the adjoining properties. The intensity of light within a site shall not exceed one (1) footcandle at any property line, except where it abuts a service drive or other public right-of-way in compliance with the provision of Article 4, Division 5 Lighting Standards.
9. All ground or mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened in compliance with the provisions of Article 3, Division 1, Sec.318 Mechanical Equipment.
10. No signs are approved as part of the Site Plan Review. A separate permit must be requested for the inclusion of any signs at this site.
11. The site plan must comply with the requirements of the City of Oak Park Engineering, Building, and Fire Departments.

VOTE: Yes: Brown, Eizelman, McClellan, Seligson, Tkatch, Tungate, Walters-Gill
No: None
Recused: Torgow

MOTION CARRIED

B. Site Plan Review, Stone For You Expansion, 10700 Capital St.

This is a Site Plan Review (SPR) request submitted by Costin Dragnea to expand the building and construct a new warehouse at 10700 Capital St.

The site of 0.69 acres (30,000 sq ft) comprises an existing, one-story industrial building of 4,222 sq. ft. There is egress and ingress access from Capital St., and a parking lot is located on the southwest side of the property. The rear yard is paved with concrete and screened with an 8-foot block wall. A well-maintained landscaped area is located at the front of the building along Capital St. The applicant proposes expanding the existing building and constructing an additional 6,500 sq. ft. structure at the rear, which will be used as a warehouse. The building material of the new structure will match those of the existing building. The current use of the property is stone fabrication and installation, with all operations conducted inside the building, except for accessory use of outdoor storage of stone slabs and equipment.

MOTION by Tkatch, SECONDED by Eizelman, to approve the site plan review submitted by Stone For You located at 10700 Capital St. with the following conditions:

1. While the site plan does not depict a barrier-free parking space, the site has an existing, one barrier-free parking space in compliance with the State Building Code requirements. The applicant shall submit a revised site plan that depicts the barrier-free parking space as part of the building permit application.
2. Landscaped areas and plant materials shall be kept free from refuse and debris. Plant materials, including lawns, shall be maintained in a healthy growing condition, neat and orderly in appearance in accordance with the approved site plan/landscape plan. If any plant material dies or becomes diseased, it shall be replaced with 30 days written notice from the City or within an extended time period as specified in said notice.”
3. The site plan does not depict any modifications to the access on Capital St. Any modifications to the access on Capital St. shall require obtaining permits/approvals from the City of Oak Park Engineering Department.
4. The site plan does not depict a dumpster and a dumpster enclosure. The applicant indicated that interior facilities are provided. If the need for a dumpster becomes necessary, the applicant will be required to provide a dumpster with the required enclosure in compliance with Article 3 Division 1 Sec. 333 of the Zoning Ordinance.
5. Any existing or proposed exterior light fixtures should be shielded and downward cast to eliminate the possibility of nuisance to the adjoining properties. The intensity of light within a site shall not exceed one (1) footcandle at any property line, except where it abuts a service drive or other public right-of-way in compliance with the provision of Article 4, Division 5 Lighting Standards.
6. All ground or mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened in compliance with the provisions of Article 3, Division 1, Sec. 318 Mechanical Equipment.
7. No signs are approved as part of the Site Plan Review. A separate permit must be requested for the inclusion of any signs at this site.

8. The site plan must comply with the requirements of the City of Oak Park Engineering, Building, and Fire Departments

VOTE: Yes: Eizelman, McClellan, Seligson, Tkatch, Tungate, Walters-Gill, Torgow, Brown
No: None

MOTION CARRIED

C. Extension of Special Land Use Approval, Yeshiva Gedolah Aterer Mordechai Dormitory, 24600 Greenfield Rd.

On August 14, 2023, the Planning Commission approved a Special Land Use for Yeshiva Gedolah Ateres Mordechai (YGAM) Dormitory at 24600 Greenfield Rd. However, the project has not yet commenced, and the site plan is set to expire on February 14, 2025. Building permits have already been submitted and are currently under review. The approved site plan comprises an existing one-story school building of 62,340 square feet and the addition of a new 27,999 square feet, two-story dormitory building with a basement. The dormitory building will house 29 bedrooms (116 beds); the first floor will have 14 bedrooms and the second floor 15 bedrooms. The basement floor will house a dining area, kitchen, storage, and service areas.

The Economic Development and Planning Department received a request from the owners at 24600 Greenfield Rd to extend their Special Land Use Approval for one year. The applicant indicated that due to unforeseen circumstances and ongoing projects at the site, additional time is necessary for them to fully comply with the terms of conditions outlined in the original approval. The applicant's goal is to have the building fully operational by August 2026. A detailed preliminary construction schedule (attached) has been submitted with the request. Here is a summary of the project timeline: • YGAM Dormitory Preconstruction – Progressing through February 2026 • Earthwork – March 2025 • Completion – August 2026 • Start of the 2026 School Year - August 2026 Per Section 555 of the Zoning Ordinance, a special land use approval is valid for 18 months. Upon written application filed prior to the termination of the 18 months, the Planning Commission may authorize a single extension of the time limit for a further period of not more than one year. Such extension shall only be granted based on evidence from the applicant that the development has a reasonable likelihood of commencing construction within a one-year extension. Based upon the evidence provided, the Economic Development and Planning Department recommends approval of the extension of the Special Land Use for an additional 12 months. The extension will expire on February 14, 2026.

MOTION by Seligson, SECONDED by McClellan, to approve a one-year special land use extension for the Yeshiva Gedolah Ateres Mordechai Dormitory located at 24600 Greenfield Rd

VOTE: Yes: Brown, Eizelman, McClellan, Seligson, Tkatch, Tungate, Walters-Gill, Torgow
No: None

MOTION CARRIED

9. PLANNING COMMISSION MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION – None

10. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Torgow adjourned the meeting at 6:21 p.m.

Jo Lynn Williams-Elliott, Deputy City Clerk