

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY OF ROMULUS  
PLANNING COMMISSION HELD ON MONDAY, JULY 17, 2023  
ROMULUS CITY HALL, ROMULUS MICHIGAN  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

1. **Pledge of Allegiance.** The meeting was called to order by Chair Freitag at 7:00 pm and all participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **Roll Call Showing:** Crova, Frederick, Gbogboade, Glotfelty, Long, McAnally, Roscoe, Talon-Jemison, Freitag

Excused: None

Also in attendance: Carol Maise, City Planner; Jessica Katers, Engineering Consultant (OHM); Jeff Kemp, Director of Building and Planning

3. **Approval of Agenda:**

**Motion by Frederick, support by Glotfelty, to approve the agenda as submitted.**

**Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Frederick, Glotfelty, Long, Crova, Gbogboade, Roscoe, Talon-Jemison, McAnally, Freitag. Nays – None. Motion carried 9-0.**

Agenda

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call – Frederick, Glotfelty, McAnally, Long, Roscoe, Talon-Jemison, Crova, Gbogboade, & Freitag
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes
  - A. Approval of the minutes of the regular Planning Commission meeting held on June 19, 2023
5. Comments from Public on Non Agenda Items
6. Public Hearings
7. Old Business
8. New Business
  - A. **SPR-2022-017; Romulus Self Storage**

Applicant:	Ronny Hamama, Applicant; Mark Roberts, Roberts Commercial Investments, LLC; Kate Bond, Midwestern Consulting
Request:	Site Plan
Location:	37270 Northline Road (DP#80-079-99-0019-703)
Project:	Construction of a 56,178 SF, 483-unit self-storage facility

(Action Required: Approve, approve with conditions, or deny site plan)

**B. SPR-2022-031; Ali Collision**

Applicant: Husein Ali, property owner, Alan Abbas, Luna Construction Company  
Request: Site Plan  
Location: 28190 Northline Road (DP#80-096-99-0005-000)  
Project: Construction of an 11,880-sq. ft. Collision Shop, Auto Repair and Used Car Dealership

(Action Required: Approve, approve with conditions, or deny site plan)

**C. SPR-2023-012; Project Wayne**

Applicant: Tony Antone, Kojaian; James Butler, PEA Group; Lindon Ivezaj, Cunningham Limp  
Request: Site Plan  
Location: 37685 Van Born Road (DP#80-021-99-0002-701)  
Project: Construction of a 295,375 SF multi-tenant office/warehouse with dual side dock doors

(Action Required: Approve, approve with conditions, or deny site plan request)

9. PC-Cases Involving Advice or Input from the Planning Commission

10. Reports on Interest Designation

11. Communications

A. Project Status Report

12. Adjournment

**4. Approval of Minutes**

A. Approval of the minutes of the Planning Commission meeting held on June 19, 2023.

**Motion by Crova, support by Long, to approve the minutes of the Planning Commission meeting held on June 19, 2023 as submitted.**

**Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Crova, Long, Talon-Jemison, Roscoe, McAnally, Gbogboade, Glotfelty, Frederick, Freitag. Nays – None. Motion carried 9-0.**

**5. Comments from the Public on Non Agenda Items**

None

**6. Public Hearings**

None

**7. Old Business**

None

**8. New Business**

**A. SPR-2022-017; Romulus Self Storage**

Applicant: Ronny Hamama, Applicant; Mark Roberts, Roberts Commercial Investments, LLC; Kate Bond, Midwestern Consulting  
Request: Site Plan  
Location: 37270 Northline Road (DP#80-079-99-0019-703)  
Project: Construction of a 56,178 SF, 483-unit self-storage facility

(Action Required: Approve, approve with conditions, or deny site plan)

Members of the development team present this evening included:

- Kate Bond, Midwestern Consulting
- Mike Lo, DesignHaus
- Ronny Hamama, MRE Ventures
- Mark Roberts, MRE Ventures
- Eric Rudland, MRE Ventures

Ms. Bond made the following points:

- 37270 Northline Road is a unique and challenging ~5-acre site, with frontage on I-275 to the north, Northline Road to the south, and is 70% - 80% wooded, with the remainder being a grassy area toward the front. There is a wooded wetland in the northeast corner. The property drains from southwest to northeast, toward the wooded wetland and then further off site to what is effectively the I-275 drainage corridor, on the south side of the eastbound lane. The I-275 bike trail is in the Northline Road right-of-way. To the east there is a significant paved area with outdoor vehicle storage. The western portion of the site is wooded.
- The proposal is for a mix of 483 climate-controlled and non-climate controlled self-storage units within seven buildings oriented north to south across the property, with a minimum of 30' between. There will be a single gated entrance to the site.
- The office portion will be in the southeast corner of Building #3, to be staffed by a single employee.
- Because the property drains southwest to northeast, the stormwater management system will be placed in the northeast area, and will consist of a detention basin and a BMP (best management practices) to the west of the basin. The property is relatively flat, and the applicants are trying to maintain as much slope as possible in order to get the impervious surfaces to drain toward the stormwater management area, so as to reduce the amount of underground conveyance as much as possible.
- The BMP to the north of buildings 3, 4, and 5 takes advantage of the surface flow, and then directs that into the detention basin to its east. The detention basin will outlet to the existing 12" storm sewer in Northline Road.
- The property is able to be serviced by utilities in the Northline right-of-way.
- With the double frontage and with this proposed use, the required setbacks on the property are 60' for both frontages, with side setbacks to the east and west required to be 15'.
- A significant amount of proposed screening vegetation will be provided along Northline Road, along with a berm in that area. The vegetation will include evergreens, deciduous trees

at varying heights, ornamental trees, understory trees, large shrubs, and small shrubs, in order to screen the site in every season with different textures and heights, providing a layered effect. The applicants were providing a very significant screen feature in the front.

- The applicants had worked with the Administrative Review Committee (ARC), and had gone through a number of submittals. They believed that tonight's plan reflected the work done with ARC and the comments made by city staff and consultants. Parking, building setbacks, architectural components, fire access and circulation, access between buildings with the 30' minimum, one-way marked client circulation, fencing, gated entrances, stormwater management fencing, tree mitigation taken care of on site, compliance with use regulations – all these things were worked through with ARC and noted on the plans.
- However, there were still some items that did not meet ordinance requirements, and therefore they were asking for waivers and variances for those items. Waiver requests included:
  - No dumpster on site, as was routine in this industry. Dumpsters invited mis-use and acted as collection facilities, both for items in the facility that tenants no longer wanted, and also items brought from home. The proposed garbage system is only within the office building, involving roll-outs for weekly street pickup.
  - A waiver to allow the detention pond in the I-275 front yard. As explained, the detention pond is in the low point of the site in the northeast area, where the water drains and outlets. Because of the double frontage situation, it is likely that wherever placed, the detention will be in a front yard setback. With the proposed plans, a very small corner of the detention basin is in the I-275 setback. The BMP to the to the west of the basin – a bio retention facility – is also in in that portion of the front setback. OHM supports this waiver request.
  - The architectural components complied with the masonry requirements, except for the south elevation of Building #3 – the office building – that primarily had metal siding. The metal siding was deemed acceptable as long as a waiver was received.

Variance requests included:

- Fences were required because of the use and because of the detention basin. Because of the property configuration, the fence will be 55.5' from the property line along Northline in both directions, instead of the required 60'; therefore a variance will be required for that fencing. Because of the significant landscape screening, it is unlikely the fence will be visible from Northline once the vegetation matures. The fence for the detention area along I-275 will also need a variance – this went along with the waiver for the detention pond to be in the front yard there. Because of the topography involving a 34' – 35' elevation drop from I-275 to the site, there was no vegetative screening that will comply with the ordinance to screen the detention pond fence or the buildings from I-275. However, the applicants are planting extra vegetation there, including their mitigation trees.
- Renderings showed the view from I-275 and from Northline Road, after the trees and other landscaping have matured. Screening was significant, in either case.

Referencing her July 7, 2023 review letter, Engineering Consultant Katers (OHM) said the majority of her comments were seeking clarifying information; those comments could be addressed administratively.

One outstanding item that needed to be discussed this evening involved the emergency vehicle turning movements at Buildings #7 and #4; this still needs a concession relative to the southwest corner of the buildings, in the form of moving the fence, widening that section of road, or changing the line of the building in that area.

Commission discussion:

- In response to a question, Engineering Consultant Katers explained that the north and south lanes are one-way; the only two-way lanes occurred in between the drive access points for the units. A tenant could come in off of Northline and drive up and decide to turn right or left in order to circulate through multiple building areas. OHM was comfortable with this circulation pattern, which had changed after the packets had been distributed.
- Some Commissioners were concerned that no dumpster would be provided. What would happen with large items tenants left behind when they moved out?

Mr. Hamama said that tenants' security deposits were only returned to them if their unit was completely cleaned out. It was widely practiced in the industry not to provide a dumpster, because a dumpster became an invitation for inappropriate dumping, and the owner of the facility had to pay the extra fees to empty frequently full dumpsters.

In response to further comments. Mr. Hamama said he had not been in touch with the local waste hauling company in terms of putting the office trash out on the street for pickup; he would contact them about this issue.

- In response to questions, Mr. Hamama provided the following:
  - Currently there were no plans to rent trucks or trailers at this facility. Should that change, they would first seek approval from the City.
  - Snow storage areas were identified on the northern outermost aisle of the plan.
  - Climate controlled units would keep the temperature above freezing in the winter and would circulate the air in the summertime. There would not be air conditioning. The location of any mechanical systems would be worked out with the City and meet code.
  - The buildings would not be sprinklered. There would be a looped watermain, and hydrants would be provided per Fire Department requirements. Fire extinguishers would also be provided.
  - Abandoned items would be auctioned from time to time. The auctions would be publicized in advance, as required by law. Parking during auctions will not be an issue. Often very few people come to the auctions, but if necessary, the gate could be opened and parking provided along the sides of the buildings. People would not be allowed to park along the road.
  - Auctions can be online, but the preference is to hold them in person. If needed, the facility would pull a permit for the auctions.
  - The facility would have a state-of-the-art security system, with cameras. This did not impact the decision not to have a dumpster, as tenants who were leaving were likely not to care if they were caught on camera dumping their things.
  - Maintenance, including weed control and snow removal, would be contracted out.
  - The Police Department had requested that the applicants put signage on both sides of the driveway alerting drivers to the bike trail. They had done this and the sign locations were on the site plan.
  - Porous concrete in the interior corridors would help prevent slip and fall accidents in the winter. During inclement weather, caution signs would be posted.
  - Mr. Hamama had 10 years' experience with developing, owning, and operating storage units.
  - The facility's policy will not allow vehicle storage in the units, unless flammable liquids had been drained out. Electric vehicles will not be allowed.

- In response to questions, City Planner Maise and Engineering Consultant Katers provided the following:
  - Tree mitigation was met on the site.
  - Regarding emergency vehicle circulation at Buildings #7 and #4 as discussed above, the fence could be moved further out and the variance request increased. The applicant should address how this situation will be resolved.
  - Ms. Bond suggested moving the curb 2' toward Northline Road, and potentially moving the fence with that change. This change would provide an extra 9" in the area where there is concern.
  - Engineering Consultant Katers responded that this solution could not be approved tonight; the Fire Chief will have final approval on any plans involving fire truck circulation, although the Chief had indicated the solution suggested by Ms. Bond might work. Again, only the Chief could give final approval.
  - Commissioner Crova suggested eliminating one or two units on the corner of buildings #7 and #4 to get extra space. Ms. Bond said this had been considered; she felt that moving the curb 2' as already mentioned would resolve this issue.
  - Commissioner Talon-Jemison related experiences a family member had managing a self-storage facility; based on those experiences Commissioner Talon-Jemison supported not having a dumpster on site. She suggested language in the tenant's contract relative to the cost of cleaning out a unit when it was left with things still in it.
  - Commissioner McAnally said he had seen people dump large amounts of household trash in the dumpsters behind the Recreation Center.
  - In response to comments, City Planner Maise said the possibility of people living/sleeping in their storage units had been discussed early in the process. Management would be charged with checking on the units to make sure this did not happen.

Chair Freitag noted that per their July 7 letter, OHM was supporting the 3 waiver requests. She indicated that she was ready for a motion.

**MOTION by McAnally, support by Frederick**, that in the matter of SPR-2022-017, Romulus Self Storage, 37270 Northline Road (DP#80-079-99-0019-703), the Planning Commission grant conditional approval of the submitted site plan, in order to construct a 56,178 square foot, 483-unit self-storage facility as described, with the following waivers and conditions:

1. Waivers from the following:
  - a. *Section 8.04(b)(1)* to allow the detention pond in the I-275 front yard;
  - b. *Section 13.06, Trash Receptacles and Enclosures* to allow individual containers for curbside pick-up rather than a dumpster, based on the nature of the use;
  - c. *Section 13.02(c) Greenbelt*, to allow the existing vegetation and detention pond plantings on the I-275 frontage to satisfy the greenbelt requirements.
2. Variances from the BZA to allow the fence to encroach into the front setbacks on both the Northline Road and I-275 frontages;
3. Resolution of the site circulation;
4. Any future outdoor storage of RVs or van/truck rental will require an amended site plan;
5. If any of the exterior doors or the chain link fence are visible upon completion of construction, additional screening will be required;
6. A revised site plan being submitted for administrative review addressing the outstanding items noted above and in other ARC reports and any comments of the Planning Commission; and

7. Any other items as identified by other agencies and departments.

**Roll Call Vote: Ayes – McAnally, Frederick, Gbogboade, Long, Roscoe, Talon-Jemision, Crova, Glotfelty, Freitag. Nays – None. Motion carried 9-0.**

**B. SPR-2022-031; Ali Collision**

Applicant: Husein Ali, property owner, Alan Abbas, Luna Construction Company  
Request: Site Plan  
Location: 28190 Northline Road (DP#80-096-99-0005-000)  
Project: Construction of an 11,880-sq. ft. Collision Shop, Auto Repair and Used Car Dealership

(Action Required: Approve, approve with conditions, or deny site plan)

Alan Abbas, Luna Construction Company, and Ali Husein, property owner, were present on behalf of this request for site plan approval in order to construct a building to house a collision shop, auto repair, and used car dealership at 28190 Northline Road.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Abbas provided the following information:

- The proposal was for a 9000sf facility plus about 2280sf of office space and 2600sf of mezzanine.
- The site will have an underground detention system. Landscape requirements had been met. A fire hydrant will be provided on site.
- There will be a dumpster with dumpster enclosure and gate on the rear of the property.
- Parking requirements were met, with 32 parking spaces in the back and approximately 16 10'-wide parking spaces in the front of the property.
- There will be a combination of screen/fence around the rear of the property.
- The 8" split face masonry block in light and dark colors will be complementary to other buildings in the neighborhood, including next door.
- The 20' driveway would be one-way circulation only; there would be one-way circulation on both the east and west side drives.
- The property had a 120' frontage, which met the 100' minimum requirement.
- The applicants will resolve the issue of the gravel encroachment in the east side setback with the adjacent property owner; that conversation had not yet taken place.
- The applicants had received comments from the City and from OHM; they believed they could resolve all issues and asked for approval this evening.

Referencing her July 7, 2023 review letter, Engineering Consultant Katers said that OHM supported the waiver request for the centering placement of the driveway; the placement was not making anything worse. The narrowness of the site doesn't allow the applicants to space their driveway any other way, and the driveway placement is per multiple discussions. The grading can be detailed out during the engineering review, after any necessary conversation with the adjacent property owners.

The applicant should state whether there will be a glass garage door in the showroom area, and should address whether there are adequate turning movements to bring display vehicles into the showroom.

Mr. Husein said there would be a 10' glass garage doors in the showroom area. The 20'-wide driveway should be enough room to get a vehicle in and out of the showroom and the site.

In response to questions from the Commission, the applicants gave the following information:

- A maximum of 4 vehicles would be in the showroom at any one time.
- They would be purchasing some of their vehicles from auction. The vehicles will be unloaded in the back of the building and all vehicles that are being repaired will be stored inside only. No damaged vehicles will be stored outside. Only display vehicles or vehicles for sale will be in the parking lots.
- The applicant will not take on any vehicle repair for which there is not room in the building.
- Vehicles repaired on site will be for sale after vehicle inspection.
- Parts will be purchased directly from the dealer. They will not be selling parts salvaged from damaged vehicles.
- City Planner Maise emphasized that this use did not allow any salvage or recycled parts to be used for parts or to be sold.
- Signage will be approved separately.
- There was a stream and wooded area behind the building location. No vehicles will be parked in that area. The fence will also limit expansion there.
- A third party company will remove the used oil, and manage any toxic waste from the spray booth.
- Maximum number of cars on the lot is 25.
- Parts removed from damaged cars will be removed from the site regularly and on a timely basis.

In response to questions about pollution protection, Director Kemp explained that everything would be paved, and there would be an oil/water separator in the building. The spray booth must be approved before it can be installed and/or used.

**MOTION by McAnally, support by Gbogboade**, that in the matter of SPR-2022-031, Ali Collison, 28190 Northline Road, that based on the comments in the June 27, 2023 Planner's letter, and comments of other departments and agencies, the site plan for SPR-2022-031; Ali Collision Shop – Used Car Dealership at 28190 Northline be approved, subject to the following waiver and conditions:

1. A waiver from *Section 14.06(e)* to reduce the distance between driveways, due to the narrow width of the parcel and proposed driveway location being centered along the property frontage;
2. The gravel contained in the east side setback must be resolved with the adjacent property owner prior to issuance of any permits;
3. The parking/display spaces in the front parking lot must be reconfigured to meet minimum dimensional requirements for space and aisle width or directional signage provided;
4. A revised site plan being submitted for administrative review addressing all of the outstanding items noted in the ARC reports; and
5. All comments of other agencies and departments be addressed.

**Roll Call Vote: Ayes – McAnally, Gbogboade, Frederick, Talon-Jemison, Roscoe, Glotfelty, Long, Crova, Frietag. Nays – None. Motion carried 9-0.**



**C. SPR-2023-012; Project Wayne**

Applicant: Tony Antone, Kojaian; James Butler, PEA Group; Lindon Ivezaj, Cunningham Limp  
Request: Site Plan  
Location: 37685 Van Born Road (DP#80-021-99-0002-701)  
Project: Construction of a 295,375 SF multi-tenant office/warehouse with dual side dock doors

(Action Required: Approve, approve with conditions, or deny site plan request)

Jim Butler, PEA Group, 1859 Pond Run, Auburn Hills MI, was present on behalf of this request for site plan approval for the construction of a 295,375 square foot multi-tenant office/warehouse building with dual side dock doors at 37685 Van Born Road, an approximately 35.55 acre site. Access will be provided from a private road access easement on the ProTrans property. The property is zoned M-2, and is surrounded by M-2 to the east and M-1 to the west and south.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Butler made the following points:

- There will be 64 docks on both the north and south side of the building.
- 126 storage spaces for trailers will be provided.
- The building will be 38' tall, with 204 parking spaces; 64 of the parking spaces will be land banked.
- Renderings showed images including views of the building looking to the north from the south, and showing the front parking area and truck docks. The office area was also shown at the front of the building.
- The building will be precast concrete, with glass and some metal accents. The site plan meets all the requirements of ordinance standards.
- The applicants were requesting 3 waivers:
  - Payment in lieu of construction of sidewalk along Van Born Road, due to the wetland that runs through there and the gas main that runs through the site. A similar waiver was approved for Pro Trans.
  - Reduction in the required greenbelt landscaping along Van Born Road due to the existing wetlands and 3 high-pressure gas mains, and
  - A waiver of the automatic irrigation system around the detention basin subject to an acceptable alternative method of irrigation.

Referencing her July 6, 2023 review letter, Engineering Consultant Katers highlighted the following points:

- OHM supported the 3 waiver requests. There is additional information that needs to be added on the cover sheet that can be reviewed and approved administratively.
- A traffic impact study will be required. The traffic impact study has been started by the developer's engineer; OHM will have the opportunity to review that when completed. The traffic study may require some off-site mitigations, such as a right turn deceleration lane for the eastbound traffic, increasing the left turn storage for the westbound traffic, and possibly installing a dedicated left turn phase for the traffic signal. The developer has agreed to install any of those items at their cost, should they be required.

In response to questions from the Commission, Mr. Butler provided the following further information:

- No tenants were lined up at this time. The building was set up for two tenants, in terms of building design and parking fields. There was full circulation around the entire building.
- The building will have its own detention basin on the south end; they will not share or use the ProTrans detention pond.
- In response to a comment in the Planner's Report, it appeared that 465 trees will be removed (not 377).
- There were no plans to have EV charging stations; however, that could change at the direction of the tenant.
- There were no plans to include solar panels in the building design.
- The high-pressure pipeline runs diagonally through the site and should not impact the construction of a deceleration lane, should that be required as a result of the traffic study.
- The request to waive the sidewalk requirement matched the waiver approved for ProTrans. A wetlands structure would have to be destroyed in order to construct the sidewalk.

Engineering Consultant Katers said that often the high-pressure pipelines came closer to the surface where a sidewalk would be installed, and often had no vertical clearance in those areas.

Commission discussion:

- The traffic light on Van Born Road – shared with Ford – did not operate 24 hours. This would probably need to be changed to a full 24-hour parking light.
- The hours of operation will be determined by the tenant.
- When a tenant is secured, the traffic study may need to be tweaked. City Planner Maise noted that a condition of approval is the submittal of a traffic impact study prior to engineering approval. Engineering Consultant Katers added that the original traffic study assumes the highest and best use of the building, and then when there is a request for occupancy, a trip generation report will be requested specific to that occupant.
- Commissioner McAnally thought the Commission should see the results of any traffic study and traffic study modification for the site.
- After discussion, City Planner Maise suggested the wording of the condition regarding the traffic study be changed from “prior to engineering approval” to “during engineering approval.”

**MOTION by McAnally, support by Long**, that in the matter of SPR-2023-012; Project Wayne, a request for site plan approval for the construction of a 295,375 square foot multi-tenant office/warehouse with dual side dock doors at 37685 Van Born Road, the Planning Commission conditionally approves the site plan subject to the following waivers and conditions:

1. The following waivers from:
  - a. *Section 13.04*, to allow payment in lieu of construction of sidewalk along Van Born Road in the amount of \$20,978.55;
  - b. *Section 13.02(c)*, to reduce the required greenbelt landscaping along Van Born Road due to existing wetlands and gas mains; and
  - c. *Section 13.02(m)*, to waive the automatic irrigation system around the detention basin subject to an acceptable alternate method of irrigation.
2. Submittal of a traffic impact study (TIS) during engineering approval;
3. Any on- or off-site traffic mitigation improvements will be at the sole expense of the developer unless other funding sources are available;

4. If the trailers are visible from the roadway upon completion of construction, additional landscaping for screening may be required if determined to be necessary;
5. Construction of land banked parking will require City approval based on requirements per use or employee and a permit from EGLE for any impacts to the wetland;
6. A draft of any proposed modifications to the Private Road Easement must be submitted to the City;
7. A revised site plan be submitted for administrative review addressing the outstanding items noted above and in other ARC reports and any comments of the Planning Commission; and
8. Any other items as identified by the Planning Commission and other agencies and departments.

**Roll Call Vote: Ayes – McAnally, Long, Talon-Jemison, Roscoe, Glotfelty, Gbogboade, Crova, Frederick, Freitag. Nays – None. Motion carried 9-0.**

**9. PC-Cases Involving Advice or Input from the Planning Commission**

None

**10. Reports on Interest Designation**

Commissioner Talon-Jemison related a recent very difficult experience she had when searching for EV charging stations in Las Vegas, and spoke to how important it was to have an EV policy in place and charging stations available for electric vehicles generally.

Commissioner Gbogboade pointed out that solar panels could be used to charge EV charging stations. The question to the applicants referencing solar panels on the buildings related to this.

City Planner Maise and Director Kemp spoke of conversations and research being done on the City level regarding this issue.

**11. Communications**

**A. Project Status Report**

City Planner Maise noted that the 7099 Wayne Road gas station proposal would be returning to the Commission soon, without the request for diesel pumps.

**12. Adjournment**

**MOTION by Long, support by McAnally, to adjourn the meeting at 9:05pm**

**Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Long, McAnally, Talon-Jemison, Roscoe, Crova, Frederick, Gbogboade, Glotfelty, Freitag. Nays – None. Motion carried 9-0.**

/cem

  
Adewunmi Gbogboade, Secretary  
City of Romulus Planning Commission