

**CITY OF LIVONIA
PUBLIC HEARING**

Minutes of Meeting Held on Wednesday, November 19, 2025

A Public Hearing of the Council of the City of Livonia was held at the Livonia City Hall Auditorium on November 19, 2025.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Martha Ptashnik, Vice President
Carrie Budzinski
Rob Donovic
Lynda L. Scheel

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brandon McCullough, President
Scott Morgan
Laura M. Toy

OTHERS PRESENT: Carter Fisher, City Attorney
Mark Taormina, Planning and Economic Development Director

The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:09 p.m. with Council Vice President Martha Ptashnik presiding. This item is regarding the request to rezone the property at 13400 Newburgh Road, located at the southeast corner of Newburgh and Schoolcraft Roads in the Northwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 29, from M-1 (Light Manufacturing District) to C-2 (General Business District) to construct a gas station and convenience store.

This item will be moved to the Regular Meeting of **December 3, 2025**.

The Public Hearing is now open. There were approximately 15 persons in the audience.

Ptashnik Comment for the record that I'm Vice president Martha Ptashik Chairing the meeting tonight. With us we have Councilmember Rob Donovic, Councilmember Carrie Buzinski and Councilmember Lynda Scheel. Scott Morgan, Laura Toy and Brandon McCullough are absent. We also have with us our Economic and Development Director, Mark Taormina and our City Attorney, Mr. Carter Fisher. Mr. Taormina, I will go to you first.

Taormina Thank you. Again, this is a request to rezone certain property. This is at the southeast corner of Newburgh Schoolcraft Roads. This site measures roughly seven tenths of an acre in size. It's 173 feet in width by roughly 172 feet. So, it's almost a perfect square. The site does contain a one-story industrial building that is roughly 6800 square feet in size. That building is currently vacant. It was previously occupied by a service company. To the east, the west and the south of this property, all are industrial properties, all are developed. Then to the north is Schoolcraft Road and the I-96 expressway. The future land use plan designates the site and the surrounding properties under the Tech and Manufacturing category. Service stations or gasoline service stations are permitted in C-

2, district subject to waiver use approval. So, if this proposed change of zoning moves forward after our first reading, the next step is for the planning commission to review the waiver use and site plan. So, some conceptual plans were submitted with the application. This plan shows the general layout of the site, including the new gas station, the convenience store, the pump island, canopy, driveway approaches maneuvering out, as well as landscape features and dumpster enclosure. So, the canopy, as you can see from this conceptual site plan, is located to the north of the proposed building, that canopy is intended to cover roughly eight fueling pumps. The site plan shows four proposed driveway approaches, two on Newburgh as well as two on Schoolcraft Road. There would be 11 parking spaces, one of which would be barrier free. Site landscaping under this plan is minimal. The dumpster enclosure is shown in the southeast corner of the property that would have to be relocated in order to allow proper servicing. I will note that the Planning Commission is recommending approval of the zoning change, so that, Madam President, I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Ptashnik Thank you. Council. No questions from Council, do we have a petitioner?

Grysko Good evening, everybody. Good to be with you. Maybe a little fatigued, perhaps not as fatigued you all are, but happy to be here. Nonetheless, looks like Mark is queuing up some slides. I'm not gonna go through every single slide that I that I went through with the Planning Commission, but I did want to show a few things. So anyway, for everybody's benefit, I'm Brandon Grysko, an attorney representing J&J Lane holdings. Steve Hamade is here with me today to discuss, you know, his vision for the project as well, and some of his history and things like that. So, I did want to touch on a few things related to this. So, we are proposing a fuel station that is going to serve workers in the surrounding area 24 hours a day with food and fuel. One community location. Mr. Hamade has done business in surrounding areas for 20 plus years, maybe even 30 plus years, and he has fueling stations, for example, in Westland, I think, Garden City, and is an owner operator. So, this isn't a big firm, big business type of deal. This is somebody who is local, who we know in the community, and who's going to be operating this sort of as a family business. More or less. This property operated as a warehouse type of use since about 1972 but things have shifted within the market. The owner didn't have enough space, and so they moved out. And so that goes to show and can be a discussion point as to why this is no longer sort of fit for the use that it was originally being put to. And so, in support of this, Mr. Hamade was able to pick this property, close on the property, and is now looking to do something here. What we see in the slides here shows sort of a Google image of kind of what it looks like today, if you go to the next slide, this is a conceptual image showing kind of what we're going to do with the corner here, how we're going to landscape it, although Mr. Taormina indicated, you know that would be minimal in a sense, but it is going to be clean looking. And I think that's the key feature here, is that we're going to add some beauty

to the corner, and there's going to be some good-looking landscaping features here. But because this is rezoning, and it's sort of not like a site planning or not a special land use yet at this point, these are just conceptual. We just sort of wanted to show a little bit of the vision that Mr. Hamade brings to this site, and what it can look like. So, we do understand that the master plan would have this as type of manufacturing, but we believe that the current use is totally consistent with the master plan when you think about the fact that you've got it serving employees and visitors to the industrial areas, and then also, because the use as a fueling station is substantially similar to many of the uses that would be allowed either by right or by waiver use in an industrial zoning district. Just an example of a couple things that would be appropriate in in the industrial district, or highway services, automotive uses, petroleum product storage and truck stops. So again, you know we're talking parking lots too. So, when you think about it, what do you do? You know, add a fueling station, right? You've got storage of the product on site. You've got traffic in and out. You have parking going on in there. Even retail, actually, I think is allowed to in some industrial areas. So, the change in zoning, although technically a change from industrial to commercial, it's going from a more intense use as an industrial district to a much less intense use as a commercial zoning district. And I do want to touch on a little bit about the investment here, which is the slide that you should see on the screen now. Mr. Hamade is proposing to invest essentially 2 or 3 million dollars into the property here, investment that you probably would not see if somebody were to just reoccupy the building, you know, as a warehouse tech use or something like that. We're also talking about a half million dollars in fast EV chargers. I was talking with someone today who said, apparently, the nearest location you can do that is, like a Meijer or something like that. So, this is something that doesn't appear to be frequently around town, and something that probably we can use, especially right off the freeway. So, we already talked about the continuity with the master plan, but this is a direct quote from the vision 21 materials, that part of the intention for the master plan is to gradually improve the appearance of these areas, being the area that this is in, while retaining them as cost effective locations to support new and existing businesses in the city. You know, and I can't think of anything to better describing exactly. What Mr. Hamade is trying to do here by bringing a new business in, investing in the property, and then beautifying that corner as well, as he does that. I talked about some of the similar uses already, so we kind of skip over that. And so we'll just pop off to the next thing, gas stations, I think, should be viewed in continuity. Fueling stations should be viewed in continuity with other types of automotive uses that's fairly common amongst different communities, is to view a fueling station as similar to an automotive type use, especially in a freeway corridor like we have here today. So, this is just a Google shot, kind of highlighting some of the other nearby automotive uses. So, I also wanted to spend a moment just to talk about the existing zoning situation along the freeway in Livonia, because I think it's really important to view the Newburgh and Schoolcraft corner in the southeast corner,

which is zoned industrial. Obviously, we're seeking that rezoning, but it's going to be important, I think, for the Council to view that in continuity with the way that other industrial areas are zoned and used along the freeway area. And my position, of course, and Mr. Hamade's position would be that we should be zoned in essentially similar fashion to that. So, this is the Farmington and Schoolcraft corner, and so I think, and we're going to see this theme as we go through these slides, that you have these blue areas, which are industrial type areas, but right at the corners, you're going to see that punctuated with red commercial zoning districts. And if you were to look at a similar map of the Newburgh and Schoolcraft, you see all blue, and we're at the corner, and we're looking to put a little red box on the corner where Mr. Hamade would be able to do his fueling station. So, let's take a look at Merriman Schoolcraft now, and we see kind of the same type of thing right on the south freeway. There you have your blue industrial areas, and you sort of got that, that red pop, that punctuation, that is the commercial zoning district, sort of within that in that sea of blue. So again, we see continuity in the way that that's treated here when we're looking to do the same thing off anywhere. Then Middlebelt, which is a whole other can of worms, obviously, but again, you do see south of the freeway, you've got blue and red, and that's again, right where we're at, right south of the freeway. And we're looking to rezone our corner to be able to have a portion of use there for the fuel station. So, I won't belabor the point we meet the ordinance criteria for what the Council should consider with respect to a rezoning petition, and Mr. Hamade is here to just speak to some of his experiences. To the extent that that's something the Council is interested in. We're happy to address the questions, comments, concerns of the Council in ways you see fit. Thank you. We really appreciate your time.

Ptashnik Thank you, Mr. Grysko, we're gonna go to Council now. Mrs. Budzinski.

Budzinski I had the opportunity to speak with the developer on this, and I'm excited to see the EV charging stations there, as noted, you know that there aren't a lot of EV charging stations along the freeway. As an EV owner, you know, that's something that you look for, and there's a lot more EVs on the road. And so, I think it's a great amenity, and glad that you're making that investment. Just curiosity, are you're doing diesel, car and regular so like trucks will come through as well?

Hamade Good evening. So, we are doing the fast EV chargers, and they're the top of line, latest and greatest. 10 minutes, 12 minutes. We also going to have diesel fuel for midsize trucks, not for semi-trucks yet. So, the lot size does not allow us to have that for big trucks.

Budzinski And that was just my question and concern was that with both the lot size, I couldn't see how semis could fit in there. So, thank you for your clarification. You know, I think it's an appropriate use. I think there's no

gas stations or really good food options right there. And so, I'd like to offer an approving motion.

Donovic Thanks Council. Good evening, gentlemen. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your presentation. I thought it was interesting how you illustrated that on each of these corners along the Schoolcraft freeway corridor, there's a blue industrial and there's that box of red on each corner, which is exactly what you're asking for. So, I do think that the use you're asking for is consistent with the other freeway users along the freeway corridor. I am interested to see the site plan. Of course, we're not at that phase yet, so it is interesting to illustrate that conception he gave us is nice. So, is this going to be a Shell? Do you think you're not gonna necessarily show a brand just yet to it in the process for that?

Hamade Good evening Mr. Donovic. So, we have not decided on a brand as of yet. Now it could be a Shell, it could be a Mobile, could be any brand that steps up and provides a good contract for us, a viable contract for both sides. So, I have my wife with me here tonight. She's the CFO of my company, and I also have my business attorney, David Gam and so we've been together for 28 years, and we've been doing business for 20 years. I've been in business for close to 32 years, so I'm well versed in the fueling industry.

Donovic So, what you're saying is you brought your boss here with you tonight?

Hamade She is the boss. She watches me closely.

Donovic So, you mentioned you in business for a long time. That's important to me, that you guys are local owner operators. What are some other stores in the area that you own to help us understand where you're at.

Hamade Well, we can start on the border of Livonia and in Westland. Joy Newburgh. We also have Warren Newburgh across from Meijer. That's also on the slate of getting a complete renovation in that area there. And then we have one Warren and Venoy, which I've been there since 1991. We have one on Warren and Merriman, the Sunoco there. I used to have one on Ford Road and Newburgh as well. Okay, so local businessmen in that area.

Donovic Yeah, the one you own at the corner of Newburgh and Joy, I grew up right there, and I love that you have a large American flag. Are you willing to say that you will, if this project moves forward, install a nice, large American flag at this location as well?

Hamade Absolutely. That's a must in any business I operate/

Donovic When looking at the site plan, I noticed you moved the building back so help us understand what the building, the existing structure, are you

demoing a part of it or adding and addition, what do you do to the existing building?

Hamade Well, the existing building, we're demoing the front part so we can accommodate the canopy, the pumps, the right of way, the clear movement of vehicles, and we're also going food service in there. So, we needed the storage for a store, for the restaurants for the product that we need. So, we decided to use the rest of the property in the back and also to help our neighbors from people cutting through off of Newburgh and messing with their operation as well. So, we want to be a good neighbor, and, you know, solve that issue once and for all, especially once we get operated. We don't want any issue. We don't want someone traveling behind our building and hitting the building with a semi-truck or with anything.

Donovic It's good to hear. I know, when Mr. Taormina was doing his initial review presentation, he talked about the dumpster enclosure. I know you have it located on that southeast corner. He alluded that that may not be permissible. I did look at the property. There's currently garbage cans right there, and they're not compliant throughout. There's no wall around there's no enclosure around them right now. So, I'm looking forward to, if this project is approved, we'll figure out where to put the dumpster enclosure that the city's happy with, but there'll be a proper dumpster enclosure, not like what's out there right now. Assume that your neighbor, maybe, I don't think that's your dumpster, because the building's closed, right?

Hamade Well, there were two dumpsters there. The previous owner of the property took that out, and now it's my neighbor. I'm guessing it's my neighbor, because now we'll get this, it looks bad, and they're not in compliance. And this new property, you'll have your dumpster and dumpster enclosure.

Donovic When looking at, when looking at your conceptual site plan, right now, you have two entrances off of Schoolcraft and two edges off of Newburgh. And I know council Budzinski asked about semi-trucks, and this is not going to be a truck stop. No semi-trucks are here, with the exception of just three fuelers, correct?

Hamade Absolutely not.

Donovic Good. So, these entrances, you have enough parking, you feel the two entrances on Newburgh, two on Schoolcraft is adequate for you. Which direction are there?

Hamade Normally, you know, fueling stations should have enabled in and out. And we're, we're going to work closely with Mr. Taormina to see what's best fit in engineering and my architect. And if we have to take one off of Newburgh.

Donovic But you need two for sure, off Schoolcraft, all that circulation coming into Schoolcraft and leading out off Schoolcraft, it's a must. Okay, I'm trying to think of any other questions I have. I think that's all the questions. And Vice President, thank you. Thank you, sir.

Ptashnik I just wanted to say I glad to hear that you're the owner of the Joy and Newburgh location, because it's right across from where I work, and I go to that gas station quite often, and it's one of the cleanest and most professional gas stations. So glad to know that it's yours. So, I appreciate that. And also, yeah, I know I was, when I was looking with the Planning Commission, they did talk about that cut through. And I'm excited to see how we're going to avoid that, because there's a quite a bit...and I drive Newburgh every day, so it's, it's quite an issue with people cutting through off Schoolcraft to get to, you know, Schoolcraft or Newburgh to get across there. I've seen so many accidents at that corner, so, yeah, vice versa. And it's crazy. So, I'm looking forward to how that's gonna actually help that situation. And I am glad to hear that you are putting in the EV chargers as well. I think that's forward thinking and a need that we have in this part of the city that there's none in that area at all.

Hamade Yeah, this will help serve since it's off the freeway, federal government is pushing fueling stations. It's just a big investment. That's why not too many fueling stations offer that. But I'm willing to make that investment

Ptashnik All right, thank you. Mrs. Scheel.

Scheel So just, I can't recall off the top of my head, what are the hours of the service station?

Hamade 24 hours.

Scheel So the EV station will be available 24 hours?

Hamade Yes.

Ptashnik Anyone else?

Donovic Thanks. Environmentally, speaking with underground. So right now, I'm assuming this building's old, there's no underground detention for stormwater, right now, correct?

Hamade Correct. So, the site does not fit the criteria of underground storage.

Donovic What about underground tanks for fueling operations. How does that work?

Hamade We're going to be using the latest and greatest double wall fiberglass, tanks, continuous piping, no joints, with the latest and greatest couplings.

So, it'll be a continuous loop throughout, with the interstitial measures to where if there's ever any leak, it shuts down the system and it will alert seal itself.

Donovic Great, awesome. Yeah. All right, thank you, sir, thank you.

Ptashnik All right, we're gonna go to the audience, so this is the public's chance to ask questions. You'll have two minutes. Mr. Donovic is going to watch the time. Make your way to either podium. If you have any questions, we need to be able to hear you. Take your time. You could just give us your name and address for the record.

Herron My name is Dean Herron, and I'm at 37055 Schoolcraft, and this corner cannot handle that kind of gas station. It's crazy already, because of everybody's flying off the freeway. There's accidents. There's no way that property is not big enough for what he wants to do. And I'm sure they're taking easement from city electric supply, correct? If I read the looked at the one thing they gave up, there's just no way all the traffic, the semis for the fueling, really come behind it and come around where the tank is going to be, I just don't think it's feasible. That is the craziest corner in Livonia, if you ask me, I've been there five years, and it just can't handle what he's trying to do. And it's an emergency way for St. Mary's. If there's traffic backed up, how are they going to get through? And already people leave cars that don't run. You know, I have to have them towed away now, and that's going to be twice as bad once they get a gas station in 24 hours. It's crazy. I just don't think it's feasible for that corner when there's gas stations just a mile and a half either way. But that corner is just nuts, because of crashes, everybody rushing to get off, and everything around it, just that's not the right corner for that.

Ptashnik Thank you. Anyone else from the audience? Seeing none, I'm gonna come back to Council. Mr. Donovic.

Donovic To the petitioner, there was a comment about an easement Can you or your attorney answer that question about an easement that was just mentioned?

Grysko Yeah, there is an access easement for the property next door to Mr. Hamade's property, and that's intended to service the property that is one to the east, the lot off to the east, and so that's just an access easement so that that property owner can access their property in their parking.

Donovic So sorry, more English. Are you saying that you guys giving easement to the next door, or they're giving you an easement?

Grysko No, there is an easement already. It's been there for a really long time.

Donovic Okay, so you guys are granting them an easement, allowing them to use the access in and out?

Grysko Well, it's not, it's not a new easement. It's just pre-existing property purchase. But yes, I mean, essentially, it's the neighborhood property uses the easement access.

Donovic Because I'm looking at the site plan we have, and if I'm reading it correctly. It says 23.3 feet to the property line, and then there's a little bit of parking area next door. So, they're using your property, getting in and out of your property, is what you're saying. That's right. Okay. I just because, again, I want to clarify the comment made that you're using their easement. So, if I understand correctly, for the record, you that's your property, you allow them to enter your property, to enter their building, kind of thing. So, they can park there and then the comment about the building behind, because the first plan we had to not have the building at the end. Now you are extending the building south, so you no longer can drive behind the building to cut into the east side of the property that will be pretty much to the property line, whatever those dimensions are. So, you cannot physically get a vehicle behind the building anymore.

Grysko That's the intention. That was in coordination with wanting to work with the neighboring property owner to make sure that they weren't having their property driven across in order to get out

Donovic Sure, because you don't want cars cutting behind off of Newburgh, cutting behind this building, driving up the eastern portion of your property up on Schoolcraft. Now you're getting rid of that problem, and it's safe and just better for circulation in front of the building. So okay, thank you, Madam, Vice President

Ptashnik Sorry, the public part of it is over, but we're gonna go back to Council. We'll get the petitioner to share the closing.

Grysko Just one closing thought on the traffic issue. I understand, you know, things that happen in the corner there and everything. You know, the Police Department reviewed this obviously, part of the Planning Commission recommendation took into account, plus a Police Department's recommendations were and we have no objection with working through those issues. There was a comment I think about making it a right turn only or something like that on Newburgh. Again, things that are of no issue to us whatsoever. So, I think we're able to surmount those challenges pretty easily.

Ptashnik Thank you. Mrs. Scheel.

Scheel Were those mentioned in the Planning Commission recommendations?

Taormina No, not at this point. That would be something that would carry over to the site plan review process.

Scheel So not part of this. Thank you.

Ptashnik Thank you. Okay, so we do have an approving and we are going to adjourn this meeting at 7:37. Thank you.

As there were no further questions or comments, the Public Hearing was declared closed at 7:37 p.m.