To: Leo Savoie, Township Supervisor  
From: Patti Voelker, Director of Planning, Building & Ordinance  
Subject: Site Plan Review and Special Land Use Request – Equinox Health Club  
4065 West Maple Road (19–33–101–002)  
Date: October 18, 2017

Proposal Description

The 146,583 sf (3.3 acres) subject site is located on the south side of Maple Road east of Telegraph Road and was previously occupied by Erhard BMW Dealership. The applicant, in conjunction with the property owner, proposes to renovate the existing 47,979 sf commercial building to accommodate a new tenant, Equinox Health Club, with associated landscape improvements.

Master Plan and Land Use

The 2007 Master Plan for Future Land Use recommends commercial uses on the southerly side of Maple Road in this area. The property is presently zoned B–3 General Business. A health club use is considered a permitted use in the B–3 General Business District. The subject site abuts a bank and the Country Club Manor Condominiums to the east, Oakland Hills Country Club Estates Subdivision to the south, and a shopping center to the west.

The applicant is seeking to extend hours at their proposed location from 5:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m. Monday–Friday. The proposed hours for Saturday and Sunday comply with 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. provisions of the Ordinance. Any use with hours of operation beginning earlier than 7:00 a.m. or ending later than 9:00 p.m. is considered a special land use in the B–3 General Business District and requires approval by the Township Board.

SITE PLAN AND SPECIAL LAND USE STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The Site Plan Review criteria (Section 42–6.1) and Standards for Reviewing Special Land Uses (Section 42–6.2) requires that the following standards be addressed by the applicant as part of the Board’s consideration of a site plan and special land use.

Site Plan Criteria

Chapter 42, Article 6.0 Development Procedures, Section 42–6.1 requires that the following standards be addressed by the applicant as part of the Board’s consideration of a site plan. In the process of reviewing the site plan, the Planning Commission shall:

A. Consider single-family development on the basis of a subdivision.

Not applicable.
B. Consider the location and design of driveways providing vehicular ingress to and egress from the site, in relation to streets giving access to the site, and in relation to pedestrian traffic.

The existing site driveway off Maple Road will be widened to provide one ingress lane and two egress lanes to help reduce delays for vehicles exiting the site. The applicant submitted a traffic impact study prepared by Tetrastechn Engineers dated July 31, 2017 which was reviewed by the Township’s Traffic Engineer, Mike Labadie with Flies & Vandenbrink who found it to be acceptable for access and circulation. The Road Commission of Oakland County will require review and approval of any improvements in the Maple Road right-of-way. The existing ground sign near the Maple Road entrance will be removed.

The parking area provided within the rear portion of the property zoned P-1 Parking will remain with enhanced landscape plantings.

C. Consider the traffic circulation features within the site and location of automobile parking areas, and may make such requirements with respect to any matters as will ensure:
   a. Safety and convenience of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic both within the site and in relation to access streets.
   b. Satisfactory and harmonious relations between the development of the site and the existing as prospective development of contiguous land and adjacent neighborhoods.

The number of existing parking spaces is to remain. A total of 213 parking spaces are required based on the zoning ordinance requirements for a Health and Fitness use. The applicant has provided a total of 213 parking spaces including 30 covered spaces in the rear of the building.

An existing loading area is located at the rear of the building. It is noted that delivery hours will be limited to between 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

D. The Planning Commission may further require landscaping, fences, and walls in pursuance of these objectives and same shall be provided and maintained as a condition of the establishment and the continued maintenance of any use to which they are appurtenant.

There are existing nonconforming conditions for the front and side parking setbacks, and the existing masonry wall adjacent to residentially zoned property. Landscaping enhancements are proposed to improve the existing parking lot. The site plan shows an addition of 6,639 sf of new landscape area provided within the parking lot islands and beds along the easterly and southerly lot lines.

The revised landscape plan dated August 22, 2017 was reviewed by the Township’s landscape consultant, Michael Dul & Associates, Inc., for conformance with the landscaping and tree planting provisions that accompany the proposed parking requirements. The landscape plan identifies 31 proposed trees to be located within the parking area to meet the required amount per the zoning ordinance. Since the parking lot is existing non-conforming, a portion of the parking lot trees are located within the existing parking lot setbacks.
The landscape plan notes there will be no plantings closer than 4 ft. from the property line and they will obtain necessary permits to install a hedge in the Maple Road right-of-way.

E. In recommending approval of the site plan to the Township Board, the Planning Commission may recommend marginal access drives. For a narrow frontage, which will require a single outlet, the Planning Commission may recommend that money in escrow be placed with the Township so as to provide for a marginal service drive equal in length to the frontage of the property involved. Occupancy permits shall not be issued until the improvement is physically provided or monies have been deposited with the Township Clerk.

Not applicable.

F. The Planning Commission shall require marginal access drives for all subdivisions having residential lots facing onto a major thoroughfare. Where practical, the Planning Commission shall require a rear lot relationship to major thoroughfares.

Not applicable.

Standards for Reviewing Special Land Uses

The Township Board shall review each case individually based upon the standards set forth in Section 42–6.2 and, in addition, such uses, if approved, shall be subject to conditions, restrictions, and safeguards as are authorized by law and deemed to be necessary by the Township Board:

A. Taking into consideration the size, location and character of the proposed land use, viewed within the context of surrounding land uses and land use planning for such area, the proposed use shall not be incompatible nor inharmonious, as determined by the application of generally accepted planning standards and/or principals, with:
   a. The surrounding uses; and/or
   b. The orderly development of the surrounding neighborhood and/or vicinity.

The proposed health club use will be compatible with the surrounding bank and retail uses. The applicant meets the bulk, building setbacks, parking, loading, and area requirements for the B–3 District.

B. The proposed use shall be of a nature that will make vehicular and pedestrian traffic no more hazardous than is normal for the district involved, taking into consideration vehicular turning movements in relation to routes of traffic, flow, proximity and relationship to intersections, adequacy of sight distances, location and access of off-street parking and provisions for pedestrian traffic, with particular attention to minimizing child–vehicle interfacing.

The site plan shows the existing means of ingress and egress from Maple Road to be widened. Detailed engineering plans will be required for approval and a permit will be required from the Road Commission of Oakland County. Furthermore, the cross access drive between the subject property and the adjacent shopping center to the west will be eliminated and a 4 ft. decorative metal fence with landscaping will be added in the front of the site and a 6 ft. decorative fence will be located in the rear of the site along the westerly property line.
A masonry enclosure with wood gates is proposed in the rear of the building and complies with the Ordinance requirements. The site plan notes that trash pick-up will not occur before 8:00 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, with no trash pick-up to occur on Sundays in conformance with the Noise Ordinance.

C. The proposed use shall not unreasonably impact upon the surrounding property in terms of noise, dust, fumes, smoke, air, water, odor, light and/or vibration, and shall not unreasonably impact upon a person perceiving the operation in terms of aesthetics. Where such concerns can be remedied by way of design, construction and/or use, the proposed use shall be designed, constructed and used so as to eliminate the effects of the use which would otherwise substantiate denial thereof, taking into consideration the location, size, intensity, layout and periods of operation of such use.

   Noise – The roof top mechanical units will be set back from the building edge and screened from view by metal panels to match the color of the brick on the building.

   Odor – No odors other than those customarily associated with a commercial building are anticipated with the Equinox building.

   Light – Except for relocating existing parking lot poles within the front parking lot, existing light poles will remain with new fixtures added. A photometric plan dated September 22, 2017 shows the parking lot illumination is contained within the property. The light poles will be on timers to reduce the number of pole lights to 20% to remain on after close of business.

   Aesthetics – The proposed architectural design of the building compliments the design of the adjacent commercial buildings.

D. The proposed use shall be such that the proposed location and height of buildings or structures and the proposed location, nature and height of walls, fences, and landscaping will not interfere with or discourage the appropriate development and use of adjacent land and buildings or unreasonable affect their value.

   The revised landscape plan dated October 13, 2017 shows a 4 ft. metal decorative fence with additional evergreen screening proposed along the front westerly lot line and a 6 ft. metal decorative fence is proposed along the rear westerly lot line. An existing masonry wall along the southerly lot line and portion of the easterly lot line will remain. Additional landscaping will be provided to enhance the existing buffer between the single family residential to the south and the multiple family residential to the east. The exiting height of the building will remain and complies with the standards of the B-3 zoning district. Roof top mechanicals will be screened with a proposed metal screen wall to match the building.

E. The proposed use shall relate harmoniously with the physical and economic aspects of adjacent land uses in regards to prevailing shopping habits, convenience of access by prospective patrons, continuity of development, and need for particular services and facilities in specific areas of the Township.

   The proposed commercial use for the redeveloped property is compatible with the adjacent commercial and multiple family residential uses along Telegraph Road and W. Maple Road.
F. The proposed use is so designed, located, planned and to be operated so that the public health, safety and welfare will be protected.

The proposed improvements to the former dealership and redevelopment of the existing building meet the purpose and intent of the B-3 General Business District.

G. The proposed use shall not cause substantial injury to the value of other property in the neighborhood in which it is to be located and will not be detrimental to existing and/or other permitted land uses in the zoning district.

Darrin Kraatz, Township Assessor, indicates the property located on the south side of Maple Road and east of Telegraph Road is currently classified as commercial property. Preliminary analysis indicates that the surrounding commercial and residential properties would not suffer any further external obsolescence caused by the subject property’s special land use request. Therefore, there would be no true cash value changes to the surrounding properties.

H. The proposed use shall not result in an impairment, pollution, and/or destruction of the air, water, natural resources and/or public trust therein.

The site plan and improvements as proposed do not pose any negative environmental impact as presented.

I. The proposed use shall not unreasonably burden the capacity of public services and/or facilities.

Public services will continue to be provided to the property with the proposed improvements.

J. The proposed use shall have appropriate physical, visual and spatial characteristics based upon compatible design and architectural elements that relate harmoniously to the design characteristics of area development, taking into consideration the design criteria set forth in Section 42–6.4.

The exterior of the building will be comprised of a decorative metal coping, new storefront glass, wood grade planks and painted brick veneer.

Design Review Board Review

Pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance, the Design Review Board reviewed the site plan, drawings, and materials on September 20, 2017 and forwarded the proposal to the Planning Commission as follows.

Motion by Kepes and supported by Roncelli to forward the request to the Planning Commission, with the exception that the fencing in the Maple Rd. frontage be removed and landscaping to be installed instead, contingent upon compliance with all other Departmental requirements, including obtaining all necessary permits. The motion was carried unanimously.

Departmental Reports
The Township Departments of Assessor, Building, Fire, Engineering and Environmental Services, Ordinance, Public Works, and Police have had an opportunity to review the site plan and drawings, with their comments attached.

EESD – Engineering plans will be required prior to issuance of permits.

Fire Department – No objections to the proposed project. The Fire Department requires compliance with all applicable codes.

Police Department – No objections to the proposed project.

Planning Commission Recommendation

At the Planning Commission meeting of October 16, 2017, the Commission heard the special land use request, and site plan improvements from the applicant, and heard public comment. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Commission made the following motion:

Motion was made by Barnett, support by Salz, and was unanimously supported to forward the site plan and special land use for Equinox to the Township Board of Trustees with a recommendation for approval, subject to:

1. Compliance with the requirements noted by Township Departments.
2. Compliance with the requirements with the Township’s Engineer.
3. Compliance with the requirements with the Township’s Landscape Architect.
4. Seeking approvals and permits for the right-of-way improvements from Road Commission of Oakland County.
5. Signage requires approval from the Design Review Board.
6. Signage for “no parking” in the rear parking lot prior to 7:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m. and for the health club to inform clients during membership recruitment of the time restrictions on parking in the rear parking lot.
7. The installation of shields on parking lot lights that abut residential properties.

YEAS: Salz, Barnett, Mintz, Selik, Atto, Petinga, Seneker. NAYS: None

TOWNSHIP BOARD CONSIDERATION

Based on the recommendation of the Planning Commission, the Township Board should consider under what conditions:

A. site plan approval may be granted for Equinox health club to be located at 4065 W. Maple Rd., subject to:

1. Compliance with the requirements of the Township Departments.
2. Compliance with the requirements of the Township’s Landscape Architect.
3. Compliance with the requirements of the Township’s Traffic Engineer.
4. Installation of shields on the parking lot lights that abut residential properties.
5. Seeking signage approval by the Design Review Board.

B. special land use approval may be granted for the hours of operation of 5:00 a.m. –11:00 p.m. Monday–Friday for the new Equinox health club, including:

1. Signage for no parking in the rear parking lot prior to 7:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m. and for the health club to inform clients during membership recruitment of the time restrictions on parking in the rear parking lot.