

**Highland Township Planning Commission  
Record of the 1392nd Meeting  
October 6, 2022**

**Roll Call:**

Scott Green, Chairperson  
Eugene H. Beach, Jr  
Grant Charlick - absent  
Kevin Curtis - absent  
Chris Heyn  
Beth Lewis  
Roscoe Smith  
Scott Temple  
Russ Tierney

Also Present:

Elizabeth J Corwin, Planning Director

Visitors: 4

Chairman Scott Green called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

*Work Session*

**Agenda Item #1:**

Parcel #	11-22-353-025
Zoning:	HS, Highland Station Business District
Address:	290 N John St
File#:	SPR 22-10
Request:	Site Plan Review for Façade and Signage Change in HS Zoning District
Applicant:	Thompson Phelen Group
Owner:	Michigan Legacy Credit Union (successor of Huron Valley Schools Credit Union)

Mr. Green introduced the request for signage and façade upgrades for the existing Legacy Credit Union at 290 N. John Street in the Highland Station Zoning District. Ms. Corwin explained that due the regulations for Highland Station Zoning District reserve the authority for façade and signage review to the Planning Commission. The site plan includes other image items such as refreshing the landscaping. No changes are proposed to site circulation, grading or drainage.

Mr. Brian Van Peteghem of the Thompson-Phelen Group presented an overview of the project. Ms. Carma Peters and Mr. Gary Leach of the Legacy Credit Union were also present to represent the owner. Mr. Van Peteghem explained the history of the credit union since its beginnings as Huron Valley Schools Credit Union through its current organization as a branch of Legacy Credit Union comprised of six unions that have joined together. Much of their service is now online.

While most of the remaining branches of Legacy Credit Union have embraced new image programs with a 50's diner theme, after meeting with officials and staff at Highland Township, they have opted for a modern farmhouse theme for this branch. They believe this approach is consistent with the Highland

Station design guidelines. The applicant believes an image update is needed since the branch suffers from limited visibility from major roads like M-59 and Milford Road.

The footprint of the building will not change. The porch roof will be replaced with a new shed roof. The siding will be changed to a mixture of black board and batten siding and white clapboard siding made of cement board such as Hardy Plank. The roof will be black asphalt shingles. There will be led lights behind the truss on the north face to wash the wall with soft lighting. The ramp will be replaced with new composite material.

Mr. Beach explained the history of the building as one of the early schoolhouses in Highland, which was eventually dedicated as a kindergarten cottage. Ms. Maurine St Clair was a beloved teacher of the time; and was known throughout the community for her creative themed teaching units.

Mr. Beach stated that he appreciates the effort to maintain the basic skeleton of the historic schoolhouse. He finds the two tone color scheme to be pleasing; and he likes the lines of the board and batten and the clapboard siding. He suggested the only other improvement that would complete the memory of the schoolhouse would be to restore a cupola and school bell.

Mr. Temple noted his concern that we have worked diligently to honor the design guidelines and regulations of the Highland Station District, and thought that the internally lit, modern digital sign board was not consistent with the intent of the ordinance. The applicant again stated their concern about the visibility of the location, and their desire to have signage that might attract traffic from the major roads to the east and north. While the Planning Commission was sympathetic to those challenges, they also noted that a vibrant and engaging presence in the community would do more to draw attention than would signs, such as involvement in the schools.

Mr. Beach offered the following findings: The proposed façade changes are consistent with the character of the Highland Station District and the historical nature of the building. The façade changes will complement other municipal buildings such as the Township Hall renovations currently underway on John Street.

Mr. Tierney made a motion to approve the site plan with façade, signage and landscape modifications for Legacy Credit Union at 290 N. John Street based on the findings offered by Mr. Beach and leaving the question of the number and size of signs to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Beach supported the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Temple - yes, Mr. Heyn - yes, Mr. Green - yes, Mr. Beach - yes, Mr. Tierney - yes, Mr. Smith - yes. Ms. Lewis—yes. The motion was approved with seven affirmative votes (7 yes, 0 no)

**Agenda Item #2:** Committee Updates  
Zoning Board of Appeals:  
Township Board:  
Highland Downtown Development Authority:  
Planning Director's Update

Committee updates were discussed.

**Agenda Item #3:** Minutes: September 15, 2022

Mr. Tierney moved to approve the minutes of September 15, 2022, as presented. Mr. Beach supported the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

At 8:15 p.m., Mr. Tierney made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Temple supported the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

A. Roscoe Smith, Secretary  
ARS/ejc