



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE CITY OF ANN ARBOR  
June 24, 2009**

The Regular Session of the Zoning Board of Appeals was held on Wednesday, June 24, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers, 100 N. Fifth Avenue, A2, MI  
The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairperson Carol Kuhnke

**ROLL CALL**

Members Present: (9) J. Carlberg, C. Briere, C. Carver, D. Gregorka,  
W. Carman, K. Loomis, C. Kuhnke and  
S. Briere.

Members Absent: (1) D. Tope

Staff Present: (2) C. Cheng, W. Rampson and B. Acquaviva

**A – APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**A-1** Without Opposition, the Agenda was Approved as Presented.

**B - APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**B-1** Draft Minutes of the 2009-01-28 Regular Session – ***TABLED***

Line 227- the first word should be *for* instead of *against*. (i.e., 'leaning against voting for....').

In the roll call, Carver and Gregorka were marked both present and absent.

Moved by K. Loomis, Seconded by W. Carman, "To approve the draft minutes of the 2009-01-28 Regular Session as Amended." (*Motion Withdrawn*)

Moved by D. Gregorka, Seconded by K. Loomis, "To postpone the Draft minutes of the 2009-01-28 Regular Session."

**On a Voice Vote – MOTION TO POSTPONE – PASSED - UNANIMOUS**

**B-2** Draft Minutes of the 2009-04-22 Organizational Session  
(*No Regular Session Was Held.*)

Moved by J. Carlberg, Seconded by K. Loomis, "To approve the minutes of the April 22, 2009 Organizational Session as presented."

**On a VOICE VOTE – MOTION TO APPROVE – PASSED - UNANIMOUS**

**C - APPEALS & ACTION**

**C-1 ZBA09-002 – 3700 PLYMOUTH ROAD**

**AATA Park and Ride Lot, Plymouth Road and US-23 – Appeal # ZBA09-002  
(Temporarily known as 3700 Plymouth Road)**

54 Ann Arbor Transportation Authority is requesting one variance from **Chapter 47**  
 55 **(Streets), Section 4:20:** A variance of 85 feet in order to permit a curb cut width of 145  
 56 feet *(60 feet is the maximum allowable width by current code.)*

### 57 Description and Discussion

58 The subject site is located on the southwest corner of Plymouth Road and US-23 within the  
 59 Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) right-of-way. The site is zoned R5 (Motel-  
 60 Hotel District) and is currently vacant.

61 The AATA proposes construction of a 245-space surface park and ride lot located between  
 62 US-23 and the southbound entrance ramp on Plymouth Road. After completion of the project,  
 63 the land will remain as MDOT right-of-way and the AATA will lease and maintain the park and  
 64 ride lot. The design of the park and ride lot includes a new drive approach on Plymouth Road  
 65 that aligns with the ingress and egress lanes of the on/off ramp to US-23 on the opposite side  
 66 of Plymouth Road. MDOT has approved this configuration. This results in a wider than normal  
 67 drive approach and requires Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) approval of a variance to exceed  
 68 the maximum curb cut width. Bus circulation is limited to the northern portion of the site. All  
 69 buses will enter the parking lot and drive directly east and loop around to the bus shelter to  
 70 pick up passengers. The curb cut will be the sole method of ingress/egress for AATA buses  
 71 and cars to the parking lot. City Planning Commission recommended approval of the project  
 72 on May 19, 2009. If the variances are approved by the ZBA, the project will proceed to City  
 73 Council for final approval of the site plan.

74 Project Management staff have examined the variance application and have no objection to  
 75 the proposed variance.

### 76 Questions to Staff by the Board

77 W. Carman (to C. Cheng) – When you come off the northbound exit off 23, people stack up  
 78 across the bridge. Is there anything that we can do to alleviate the traffic there? (C. Cheng –  
 79 Our traffic engineer hasn't provided us with comments, but representative of the petitioner may  
 80 be better equipped to answer that question.)

81 C. Carver – The City is in favor of this? (Yes). They want relief from their own ordinance?  
 82 (Yes.) I go by the South State Street park and ride each day, and it has two curb cuts at 60  
 83 feet, why isn't that sufficient here? (C. Cheng – I believe it needs to be aligned with the  
 84 entrance ramp across from it, but I defer to the professional engineer.)

### 85 Petitioner Presentation

86 Steve Dearing, Orchard, Orchard, Hiltz & McCliment Inc - Designed this park and ride lot  
 87 with MDOT. Fundamentally, it would have been advantageous to keep this access to the park  
 88 and ride lot relatively tight; it's basically functioning for 3 lanes; 1 in, two out and the two  
 89 outbound lanes are to separate the traffic that would want to go left or straight across, which  
 90 would gain them access to US 23; or make a right turn out which would allow them to go east  
 91 toward Ann Arbor Township and Superior Township; or gain the ramp that would allow them to  
 92 go north on US 23.

93 The problem is that the ramps that exist in the northwest quadrant of this interchange were  
 94 designed by MDOT to have a very large median separation from the southbound off ramp and  
 95 the northbound on ramp. That wide separation was intentional and is to minimize the  
 96 likelihood of cars going the wrong way down the ramp and traveling the wrong direction on the

107 freeway. There is no other logical location to access this property for a park and ride lot. We  
 108 will go in directly opposite from those ramps, and that means that the driveway for the park and  
 109 ride lot will be able to use the existing traffic signal. The traffic signal will be modified to  
 110 provide the signal indications for this lot. Because it will be under signal control, we were  
 111 required by MDOT to force the left turn lanes for the southbound off-ramp to directly align with  
 112 the left turn lanes coming from the park and ride lot.

113  
 114 To make a left, you have to see around and past a vehicle opposing you, also waiting to make  
 115 a left turn. That was imperative. The trouble, again, is the median separating the two is so  
 116 wide, that traffic would want to go straight across Plymouth Road to gain access to the loop  
 117 ramp that would allow them to go southbound on US 23.

118  
 119 There is nothing that can be done to change the 'ramp geometry,' so our position (also  
 120 supported by MDOT), is the proposal before you.

121

### 122 Questions to the Petitioner by the Board

123

124 S. Briere – What is the risk for the drivers crossing the traffic? Due to the heavy traffic, I see  
 125 this as a potential risk. (This will be under signal control. When Plymouth is running green,  
 126 the park and ride lot and the off ramp will go green at the same time and left turning cars will  
 127 have to wait for a break in the traffic. The signal that is currently there will be rebuilt and re-  
 128 orientated to accommodate this proposal.)

129

130 K. Loomis – There is a sidewalk running across the front of the park and ride? (It does not  
 131 exist, but we plan to put that in). The crosshatching on the plan – will that be a pedestrian  
 132 island that is raised? (It is not intended to be raised, it will just be 'striped out' and the reality is  
 133 for practically all hours of the day, that Plymouth Road gets most of the 'green time' from the  
 134 light. It will continue to do so when this facility is built. With that long green time, that  
 135 particular pedestrian crossing at that entrance to the park and ride lot will have a 'walk phase'  
 136 associated with it. When it comes time to terminate green on Plymouth road, an adequately  
 137 long pedestrian clearance interval will be provided to keep from getting trapped in that hatched  
 138 out area.)

139

140 Is it your opinion that this park and ride lot would not be built if the variance weren't granted?  
 141 Is there any alternative? (MDOT has made it clear that this is the proper point of access and it  
 142 meets their safety criteria. If we can't access this location in the way it's planned out, this  
 143 project is dead. It would then be up to AATA to try to find another location.)

144

145 Chris White (Mgr. Of Service Development at AATA) – Scheduled to use Federal Stimulus  
 146 Finds and the environmental assessment is also specific for this site, so if we have to look at  
 147 another site, we would have to look at next year. It took a good deal of effort to work with  
 148 MDOT and the Federal highway Administration to work out the details to this entrance to their  
 149 satisfaction. When we approached them six or seven years ago for this location, they turned  
 150 us down flat. They've changed their attitude some, but are still very concerned about making  
 151 certain that this functions without causing problems for Plymouth Road and the US 23 on and  
 152 off ramps.

153

154 W. Carman – The issue of lining it up with the exit of the freeway is evident as to why it has to  
 155 be that way, my question would be why did you pick this site? Did you consider other sites?

156

157 Chris White – We did look at other sites. One of the things that makes this ideal, from our  
 158 point of view, is that it takes people off of city streets without getting on them at all.

