



Jennifer MacDonald &lt;macdonaldj@rochesterhills.org&gt;

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**Fwd: Cat Café Concept – Follow-Up from October 21 Planning Meeting**

1 message

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**Marvie Neubauer** <neubauerm@rochesterhills.org>  
To: Jennifer MacDonald <macdonaldj@rochesterhills.org>

Mon, Oct 27, 2025 at 4:43 PM

Hey Jennifer,

Can you please make sure the rest of the planning department and commissioners get a copy of the email below, if it is appropriate to do so?

Thanks,  
Marvie

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Devon Yousif** <devonyousif98@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Oct 23, 2025 at 10:24 AM

Subject: Cat Café Concept – Follow-Up from October 21 Planning Meeting

To: &lt;mcleodc@rochesterhills.org&gt;

Cc: &lt;neubauerm@rochesterhills.org&gt;

Hello Chris and Marvie,

My name is Devon Yousif, and I'm reaching out regarding the potential for a cat café in the Brooklands neighborhood. You spoke with my brother-in-law, Maverick Toma, after the public hearing on October 21, and he kindly shared your contact information so I could address a few concerns and misconceptions about the concept.

**Operations & Purpose****Q: What is the primary purpose of this cat café?**

**A:** To serve as a community space that encourages cat adoption through a relaxing and social atmosphere. Cats are given a comfortable home while we help them find their forever families and guests can enjoy light food, drinks and books while spending time with cats in the lounge.

**Q: How does this differ from a pet store?**

**A:** Unlike pet stores, the cat café doesn't sell animals. Cats are provided through a local rescue partner, live temporarily in the lounge until adopted, and are fully cared for by the shelter and café staff. It's an experience-based business centered around community engagement and adoption. While we will have retail merchandise available at the café, it is separate from the animal adoptions.

**Q: Will visits be appointment only?**

**A:** The cat lounge will operate primarily on a reservation system to manage traffic and ensure the cats' well-being. However, limited walk-ins will be allowed when capacity permits.

**Q: Is this a service-animal or therapy-animal concept?**

**A:** No, the café is a leisure destination. Visitors come to relax and enjoy an animal-friendly experience.

**Health, Safety & Sanitation****Q: Food safety and sanitation concerns**

**A:** The café and cat lounge will be completely separated by floor-to-ceiling glass walls and a double-door system that prevents any cat access to food or beverage areas. All food will be pre-made off-site and brought in—there will be no cooking or baking on-site. This setup will comply with Oakland County Health Department regulations for food service.

**Q: Odor or noise**

**A:** The building will include a ventilation and air-filtration system to prevent odor. Litter boxes will be enclosed, located away from guest areas and cleaned multiple times per day. Cat cafés are naturally quiet environments—cats spend most of the day resting, and a reservation system limits visitor numbers to maintain a calm space.

**Q: Are the cats vaccinated, safe and supervised? What about cat scratch fever or liability?**

**A:** All cats will come from a licensed rescue partner and will be fully vaccinated, spayed/neutered and health-checked before arrival. Staff will monitor visitor interactions, and guests will sign a waiver before entering the lounge, acknowledging the minimal risk involved in interacting with animals. Cats will not be declawed, but they will be temperament-tested and selected for friendly, social behavior.

**Q: How many cats will live in the lounge at one time?**

**A:** The cat lounge will likely have a maximum of 15 cats at any time, ideally with around 1,000 sq ft of space. This ensures each cat has adequate room to roam, rest and engage with visitors while maintaining a clean and low-stress environment.

**Q: Is there an age restriction for guests?**

**A:** Guests 13 years or younger must be accompanied by an adult. Ages 14 and up are permitted to visit without an adult. Staff will always be monitoring the cat lounge to ensure the safety of both cats and guests.

**Q: Are there OSHA or sanitation standards in place?**

**A:** Yes, the café will follow OSHA workplace standards, Oakland County Health Department regulations for food and drink and similar best-practice models established by other Michigan cat cafés.

**Regulation & Oversight****Q: Who regulates the cat café? Would the city need to take on oversight?**

**A:** Oversight is managed through existing channels:

- The Oakland County Health Department regulates all food and beverage operations.
- The partnering animal rescue oversees animal care, vaccinations and adoption compliance under state and local animal control laws.
- As the business owner, I would ensure OSHA compliance, building safety and adherence to city building codes.

No additional oversight would be required from the City of Rochester Hills beyond standard business licensing and occupancy review.

## Zoning & Location Suitability

### Q: Why the Brooklands?

**A:** The Brooklands has been thoughtfully developed to become a walkable, community-focused corridor, and I want to contribute to that vision. The current plan is to tear down the existing liquor store located at 1629 E Auburn Rd and rebuild a 2–3 unit mixed-use building with the cat café (and possibly other retail) on the ground floor and apartments above. The cat café would align with the city's ongoing investment in the Brooklands and support the growing, vibrant, local business ecosystem.

I'd love to explore whether this could be a viable project for the Brooklands district, as I'd like to positively contribute to the area's continued growth. If there are any additional questions or steps I should take, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

**Devon Yousif**

[devonyousif98@gmail.com](mailto:devonyousif98@gmail.com)

(248) 326-5025

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