

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
March 9, 2026

The March 9, 2026, City Council work session was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 20600 City Center Blvd. Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois.

The following Council members were present: Mayor Raymond Soliman, City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall, City Treasurer Jamie Malloy, Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Nate Albert, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Joe Kubal.

Council Members Absent: Alderman Angelo Deserio.

Plan Commission Members Present: Chairman Bill Thomas, Ken Carroll, Cheryl Slabozeski, Marty Flynn, John Stanton.

Plan Commission Members Absent: Gordon Butler, Jeff Peterson.

Also Present were: City Administrator Blaine Wing, Community & Economic Development Director Dan Ritter, Assistant City Administrator/HR Director Ashley Monroe, City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi.

Absent were: City Attorney Mike Stiff, Finance Director Glenn Gehrke, Building Commissioner Don Seeman, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Public Works Director Gary Richardson, Police Chief Ed Clark.

TOPIC: Comprehensive Plan Workshop and Discussion

Community and Economic Development Director Dan Ritter opened the discussion and introduced the members from Houseal Lavigne. Director Ritter stated that he was excited about this meeting and thinks that this is a great thing for the community.

From Houseal Lavigne, Planning Practice Lead Josh Koonce introduced himself and stated that Mitchell Baker and Nihar Mhatre were with him and the three of them will function as the Core Team for this project.

Mr. Koonce went over what a comprehensive plan is for the City. It is considered a blueprint or a road map for the next couple of decades for the City. Where do we want to go long-term as a City? It's an assessment of the City's issues, strengths and opportunities and it should be the foundation for decision-making going forward. Since it's been twelve years since the City of Crest Hill has developed a comprehensive plan and it is now time for an audit and update and going to see what works in the document and to see how some things can be updated.

The comprehensive plan has the former city hall building picture on it and we have a six to eight months to get this up to date.

Planning Process:

1. Initiation and Outreach
2. Audit and Update
3. Update the document, establish the road map and prepare the draft and final plan for review and the public open house.

Council Members and Plan Commission Members introduced themselves, stated how long they have lived in Crest Hill and how long they have been in their role with the City of Crest Hill.

A handout was given to all members with questions:

- 1) Identify 5 issues or concerns facing Crest Hill.
- 2) List, in order of importance, the three most important issues discussed so far.
- 3) Identify 3 specific projects or actions that you would like to see undertaken.
- 4) List the primary strengths and assets of Crest Hill.

#1

Mayor Soliman, additional access to Weber Road from the Business Park and working with the state of Illinois regarding Stateville Penitentiary.

Chairman Bill Thomas, need to fill in vacant property we have and what he keeps seeing when a business goes into a vacant property, the residents say they want to keep the property vacant, make sure we can keep the water affordable, the north half of Crest Hill would like to be able to go on a pathway to get around.

Alderman Scott Dyke, redevelopment on Broadway, progress on the development of the property next door to City Hall, approved access past other communities to get to Crest Hill.

Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Redevelopment of Route 30, need more rooftops/residential development.

Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, short- and long-term vision, update zoning, need to be more business friendly, commercial beautification plan.

Alderman Tina Oberlin, Lake Michigan water, since we are land locked, current business retention, street lighting on Route 30.

Alderman Mark Cipiti, increase our tax revenue, being more initiative-taking on attracting more business.

Alderman Nate Albert, becoming more pedestrian friendly, need to address property maintenance on older properties, retain and improve the Hillcrest Shopping Center.

Alderman Joe Kubal, Need central place for celebrations, such as Fourth of July.

Commissioner Marty Flynn, Clean up and occupy vacant buildings.

Commissioner Cheryl Slabozeski, keep police department fully staffed at all times, limiting rental properties.

Commissioner Ken Carroll, Develop a central downtown area, wants to see Crest Hill as the City of destinations.

Commissioner John Stanton, Connection between City Hall with the community, would like to see turnabouts (Weber, Route 30 and Broadway), and big public art.

#2

Mitchell Baker from Houseal Lavigne went through the list of items that the members of the council and plan commission gave to see what the top 3 items are (See Item #1)

Keep Water Cost Down
Downtown Space
New Development on Broadway

#3

Identifying three specific projects or actions that you would like to see undertaken:
Alderman Claudia Gazal, Stateville Property and she would like to see Crest Hill collaborate with legislators.

Alderman Nate Albert, City needs a central location.

Alderman Tina Oberlin, City needs to be more pedestrian-friendly and safe for pedestrians.

Commissioner John Stanton, development of and access to parks.

Mayor Ray Soliman, decrease truck traffic on major roads throughout the City (dedicated truck traffic).

Alderman Darrell Jefferson, development of north and south vacant property of Division.

Alderman Mark Cipiti, entertainment/sports or conference center including a hotel, restaurants, shopping.

Alderman Scott Dyke, development around City Hall.

There will be an online survey that the community can take in regard to this question.

#4

Name the primary strengths and assets of Crest Hill.

Alderman Tina Oberlin, the small-town feel/essence of the City and also the Lidise Memorial.

Commissioner Cheryl Slabozeski, the residents who live here.

Alderman Nate Albert, the low water rates and low taxes right now, compared to surrounding communities.

Alderman Joe Kubal, location-being in the middle of Plainfield, Romeoville, Lockport, and Joliet.

Mayor Ray Soliman, low property tax rate, low sales tax rate and we do have some property tax rebate checks.

Alderman Claudia Gazal, the City of neighbors, the people.

Chairman Bill Thomas, the low cost of living surrounded by more expensive communities.

Crest Hill residents can take advantage of all the things that the expensive communities have to offer.

Alderman Scott Dyke, two historic roadways: Route 30 and Route 66 (Broadway).

Commissioner Marty Flynn, City financial stability.

Outreach strategies include the project website that is live at www.cityofcresthill.com/compplan and also the online community survey which is perfect for the people who couldn't make it to the meeting and wanted to get involved. Community & Economic Development Director Dan Ritter stated that there will also be a press release

and some social media posts coming soon. Mr. Mitchell Baker also stated that Houseal Lavigne will be looking at the survey results and compiling a summary of all those to be incorporated into the comprehensive plan as well. When asked if the 2014 comprehensive plan will be used at all, Mr. Baker replied that they will be going through every word of it, updating it and making it apply to Crest Hill as it is today.

Public Comment:

Linda Dyke she feels that beautification needs to be addressed, especially Ward 1. There are areas that have garbage that need to be addressed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12pm.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2026.

As presented _____

As amended _____

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR