



PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, May 14, 2025, 5:30 PM

1 Benjamin Franklin Way Franklin, Ohio 45005

www.FranklinOhio.org

CLERK'S JOURNAL

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Paul Ruppert, Christine Pirot, David Hopper, Jason Hall, Brain Rebholtz

Absent: Dr. Sarah Nathan, Mayor Brent Centers

Staff: Jonathan Westendorf, Liz Fields, Cindi Chibis

Guests: See attached

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Paul Ruppert.

4. APPROVE THE CLERK'S JOURNAL AND ACCEPT THE TAPES AS THE OFFICIAL MINUTES

The Clerks' Journal was approved, and the tapes were accepted as the official minutes of the March 12, 2025, meeting.

Motion made by Ruppert, Seconded by Hall.

Voting Yea: Ruppert, Pirot, Chair Hopper, Hall, Rebholz

5. OATH OR AFFIRMATION

The Oath was issued to all guests.

7. OLD BUSINESS

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. PC 25-09, PC 25-10 Rezoning & Preliminary Planned Unit Development | Shaker Meadows

The applicant, Todd Henderson, Henderson Development Company, is requesting to establish a Planned Unit Development Overlay on 47.28 acres currently located south of Pleasant Hill

Boulevard, and to approve a preliminary development plan to add 119 residential lots divided into 30 60-foot-wide lots and 89 50-foot-wide lots for a total density of 2.52 units per acre.

The proposed zoning designation will allow the property to develop a single-family residential subdivision that is similar in nature to the City's R-1A and R-1B Zoning Districts but allows the Planning Commission to vary the development regulations required in that district, including setbacks, density, lot sizes, and other similar features.

Liz Fields opened her presentation with a review of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) approval process, reminding Commission members that this is the first step of the process. She explained that this step allows the applicant to present an overall concept for the property for review and feedback. If supported, the Planning Commission will then make a recommendation to City Council, who will make the final decision of approval or denial. If Council approves the rezoning and preliminary development plan, the applicant will return to the Planning Commission with a development agreement and a detailed Final Development Plan before construction begins.

Fields explained that the 119 proposed single-family residential lots are a minimum size of 5,000 square feet with a proposed minimum front yard setback of 25 feet, individual side yard setbacks of 5 feet with a combined 10 feet, and a rear yard setback of 25 feet. She confirmed that the proposed development meets the front yard setback requirements of the R-1A and R-1B Districts but does not meet the minimum lot area, width, or side and rear yard setbacks. Fields noted that the proposed dimensions are generally consistent with the first phase of the Shaker Meadows subdivision.

Fields then reviewed amenities for the proposed subdivision which include a dog park, a 1.5-mile mulched walking trail, and 9.45 acres of open space plus 7.59 acres of dedicated parkland (36% of the total site), stating that the greatest concentration of open space (8.26 acres) is located in the northwest corner of the site. She confirmed that staff proposes that as a condition of approval the walking trail be paved to ADA standards and be connected to the proposed dog park. This improvement would ensure that the walking trail is fully assessable for all residents,

Fields verified that an emergency access road is proposed to extend from the end of the cul-de-sac on Pleasant Hill Boulevard to Surrey Drive (in the Devonshire Neighborhood). She emphasized that that this access road will be protected by locked gates on each end and is restricted to emergency use only.

Pirot asked for additional information regarding Phase I of Shaker Meadows.

Westendorf responded confirming that Phase I, completed in 2003, consists of 49 homes on approximately 12 acres. He explained that Phase 2 of Shaker Meadows could not be completed at that time due to rezoning challenges and the requirement to secure a secondary egress. Texas Eastern's recent approval of the needed egress presented an opportunity for further development. Westendorf pointed out that the Phase 2 development as now proposed, is less dense than originally planned. He affirmed that the proposed access road is for emergency use only and will be used if the primary access point on Shaker is temporality unavailable.

Fields reviewed the seven *Zoning Amendment Standards for Approval*:

- 1) The proposed zoning district classification and use of the land will not materially endanger the public health or safety; and
The proposed zoning district classification and use of the land will not materially endanger the public health or safety.

- 2) The proposed zoning district classification and use of the land is reasonably necessary for the public health or general welfare, such as by enhancing the successful operation of the surrounding area in its basic community function or by providing an essential service to the community or region; and
The proposed zoning district classification and use of land will provide for high-quality housing and a residential community that includes amenities that promote well-being such as the dedicated walking trail.
- 3) The proposed zoning district classification and use of the land will not substantially injure the value of the abutting property; and
It is not expected that the proposed zoning district classification and use of the land will not injure the value of abutting land.
- 4) The proposed zoning district classification and use of the land will be in harmony with the scale, bulk, coverage, density, and character of the area of the neighborhood in which it is located; and
The proposed zoning district classification will be in harmony with the scale, bulk, coverage, density, and character of the neighborhood in which it is located. This project is proposed to be the second phase of the Shaker Meadows Subdivision and is designed to seamlessly continue the design of the first phase.
- 5) The proposed zoning district classification and use of the land will generally conform with the Comprehensive Land Development Plan and other official plans of the City, unless actual development within the area or changes in the conditions of the area makes conforming to the Comprehensive Development Plan impractical; and
The subject properties are identified as “Low Density Residential” on the City’s Comprehensive Plan. This land use category recommends detached, single-family houses in subdivisions or platted neighborhoods. Typically, low density residential represents 1-6 dwelling units per acre”. The proposed zoning district and development is generally consistent with the land use category as it conforms to the use and density recommendations.
- 6) The proposed zoning district classification and use of the land are appropriately located with respect to transportation facilities, utilities, fire and police protection, waste disposal, and similar characteristics; and
The proposed zoning district classification and use of the land area are appropriately located in this regard.
- 7) The proposed zoning district classification and use of the land will not cause undo traffic congestion or create a traffic hazard.
The proposed development will need to meet the city’s construction standards and install all traffic improvements required by the City Engineer.

Fields stated that no compliance concerns were noted. She said that if the Planning Commission recommends approval of the PUD to City Council, staff suggests that the proposed walking trail be paved as a condition of approval.

The Chair opened the floor for public comment on PC 25-09 and PC 25-10 at 5:58 PM., inviting comments from the applicant first.

Phillip Brandon, representing the applicant Henderson Development Company, approached the podium, stated his name and address, and confirmed that he had been sworn in. Brandon explained that the Preliminary Plan represents six (6) months of a culminating process. Using a

supplemental Power Point slide deck, Brandon provided information about the Henderson Development Company and the company's community design guiding principles (Distinctive Architectural Diversity-Anti-Monotony Standard, Enhanced Housing Quality, Responsible Density & Expansive Open Space, Enhancing Lifestyle & Well-Being).

Brandon provided insight into the unique challenges pointing out that Phase I serves as the primary entry point influencing overall marketing perception and limiting finished home values. Additionally, infrastructure costs have risen dramatically, making density a crucial factor on financial feasibility.

Brandon emphasized the importance of alignment with the City of Franklin's 2024 Comprehensive Plan in support of Franklin's long-term vision for growth and development. He stated that bringing new houses into the community will help upgrade the housing stock, provide quality housing for all stages of life, support vibrant commercial centers, and help address national and local housing shortages.

Brandon announced the partnership with Arbor Builders and introduced a wide variety of floor plans catered to varied audiences (e.g. ranch style homes for aging in place residents, spacious four bedroom homes for growing families and flexible floor plans with dedicated home offices for young professionals).

Brandon confirmed that construction will occur in three phases and is expected to be completed in two to three years. He referenced a completed traffic study that confirmed that there is no need for substantial changes to the proposed traffic pattern. The traffic study will be submitted to the City with the Final Development Plan.

He concluded by thanking the City for the opportunity to present the project and offered to answer questions.

The Chair asked that questions be held until attendees have had a chance to speak. At which time Mr. Brandon will be invited back to the podium to answer questions. With that, the Chair then invited members of the public to speak.

Brian Wardlaw approached the podium, stated his name and address, confirmed that he had been sworn and thanked the commission for an opportunity to speak. Wardlaw expressed concern about 119 new homes in a community where the most recent Fire Levy failed to pass. Although he personally voted in favor of the Fire & EMS levy, he quoted Mayor Centers who said growth in the community is unsustainable without Fire funding. He appreciated Franklin's revitalization efforts and supported the Levy but if current City services are unsustainable, he questioned if this was the right time to encourage community growth. Wardlaw added that while the proposed development may not negatively impact the monetary value of existing properties, he reminded the Commission that the value of a home is not only a financial consideration but also a quality of life consideration. He concluded by asking for clarification on long-term plans for the proposed emergency access road.

Todd Henderson approached the podium, stated his name and address, and confirmed that he had been sworn in. He introduced himself as the project developer who completed Phase 1 of Shaker Meadows in 2003. He said that he "is adamant that the access road does not become a paved driveway....the easement must be for emergency access only."

David Deal approached the podium, stated his name and address, and confirmed that he had been sworn. Deal introduced himself as Civil Engineer and asked what controls, such as a covenant on the easement, that the City could put on the access road to ensure it was not paved and remains permanently gated.

Hopper responded that the Planning Commission does not have the authority to place a covenant on the land.

Fields suggested that the City may be permitted to include a covenant that is recorded as a part of the Final Development Plan, but conceded that this idea would have to be vetted for a legal opinion.

Hopper remarked that neither the City, the developer, nor the residents are advocating paving or opening the proposed access road.

Westendorf asked that attendees from Franklin Twp, who would like to comment on concerns other than those related to the access road, please approach.

Fred Fletcher approached the podium, stated his name and confirmed that he had been sworn in. Fletcher stated that he is a resident of Franklin Township and expressed concern that the City of Franklin does not provide services such as snow removal to his property.

Westendorf responded that services such as snow removal for Franklin Township residents are not provided by the City. He encouraged Fletcher to contact Franklin Township directly with his concerns.

Dax Gruber approached the podium, stated his name and address, and confirmed that he had been sworn in. Gruber vocalized two concerns: 1. He intentionally purchased a home in Franklin Township and does not want to be “engulfed by the City” and 2. He is concerned about possible increased traffic resulting from increased housing.

Robert Oliver approached the podium, stated his name and address, and confirmed that he had been sworn in. Oliver objected to the extension of the access road into his neighborhood. Additionally, he stated that he believes that the proposed property setbacks are insufficient and create a fire hazard.

Westendorf reassure Oliver that safety is a priority. He explained that both the Fire Chief and the Fire Marshall carefully reviewed and approved the preliminary development plans and found no concerns related to the proposed housing density.

Laura Walden approached the podium, stated her name and address, and confirmed that she had been sworn. Walden expressed concern about a potential increase in traffic, as well as a possible negative impact on current home values.

Mathew Zinkiewicz approached the podium, stated his name and address, and confirmed that he had been sworn. Zinkiewicz shared his concerns about traffic flow with only one primary entrance/exit to the Shaker Meadows plat saying that “it’s a pinch point”. He added that his “buddy ran some preliminary numbers and predicts there will be 1500 cars a day in and out” of the neighborhood. He questioned what would happen if there was an auto accident at the primary entrance closing access to the entire neighborhood. Zinkiewicz maintains that Franklin City Schools currently provide “unreliable bus service” and have “inadequate space to serve the students”. He added that his “son is in a pod at the school not in a classroom-adding more children into a failing school system will make matters worse.”

Joe Rosenacker approached the podium, stated his name and address, and confirmed that he had been sworn in. He expressed concerns related to snow removal, street sweeping, proposed setbacks, lot sizes, the single point of entry, and requiring students to wait for the school bus at the subdivision entrance.

Westendorf reassured Rosenacker that busing concerns would be taken into consideration.

Teresa Parks 3161 Surrey Drive. approached the podium, stated her name and address, and confirmed that he had been sworn. Parks said that adding another 119 homes “will change our entire way of life”. She condemned the City for making changes, objected to increased housing, warned that she does not want to be annexed into the City of Franklin and fumed “this just doesn't need to happen”. Additionally, she complained about water flooding issues.

Teara Gruber approached the podium, stated her name and address, and confirmed that she had been sworn in. Gruber shared her concerns about a limited access point and increased traffic.

Travis Lamb approached the podium, stated his name and address, and confirmed that he had been sworn in. Travis asked if there would be a homeowners association involved and questioned who received notice of the Planning Commission hearing.

Fields reviewed Code requirement for Franklin's Public Hearing Notices.

Cass Fisher approached the podium, stated her name and address, and confirmed that she had been sworn. She expressed concern about increased traffic.

Kevin Howard approached the podium, stated his name and address, and confirmed that he had been sworn in. He threatened to install his own guardrail to keep people out of his neighborhood. He snapped that if the City wants to put a lock on a gate, then they should make it a gated community. Howard remarked that Franklin Township residents were not provided with an opportunity to express their concerns.

Hopper bristled at the remark reminding Howard that today's Public Hearing is exactly that-an opportunity for the public to express their concerns, views, and opinions. Adding that public hearings are designed to gather public input and ensure transparency in the decision making process.

Judy Deal approached the podium, stated her name and address, and confirmed that she had been sworn in. She suggested that turnaround bump-outs be considered in Phase 2 plans. Using the shared map, Westendorf pointed out planned bump-outs to improve traffic flow and increase directional change opportunities.

Hopper invited Mr. Phillip Brandon back to the podium to respond to questions/concerns.

Phillip Brandon, representing Henderson Development Company, returned to the podium. He began by thanking attendees for their comments. He again provided reassurance that access to Surrey Drive from Pleasant Hill Blvd would be limited to emergency situations only and would include a locked gate on both ends of the access road. He explained that the developer did not advocate for the access road but included the road to comply with City demands to address Fire & EMS safety concerns.

Brandon responded to questions regarding the traffic study explaining that the Study was completed on the higher density plan by a professional third party contractor who believes that the traffic pattern as presented will fully support the proposed 119 home addition. He also recognized that housing developments can contribute to increased traffic but is confident that based on the results of the traffic study, the infrastructure in place will keep pace with the anticipated population growth.

He reminded attendees that both he and the property owner live in the area and are committed to making this work. He noted attendees' concerns surrounding home values and affirmed that in his experience the addition of high quality homes as proposed will increase, not harm, surrounding home values.

Brandon addressed setbacks, buses, fire safety, and snowplows and reassured community members that the City has their best interests in mind. He also addressed the issue of a covenant, confirming that a developer can only put a covenant on property that they own. He confirmed that the Final Development Plan will address the issue of stormwater management. Additionally, he confirmed that there will be an HOA in place to maintain uniformity, which will bring an opportunity to improve the HOA effectiveness of Phase 1 properties.

Amanda Lamb interrupted, provided her name and addresses, and confirmed that she had been sworn in. Lamb asked "Are you saying that there is an HOA that will be forced on us who live in Shaker Meadows now?" .

Brandon replied explaining that an HOA cannot be forced on anyone. Instead, homeowners who purchased land in Phase I development signed an HOA Agreement when they purchased the property.

Lamb then asked about stormwater drainage.

Brandon again reassured her that stormwater management will be fully addressed in the Final Development Plan.

Westendorf added that work in this area is already underway. He explained that new stormwater management design standards will be incorporated to ensure that an effective storm sewer collection and run-off system is in place.

Susan Little approached the podium, stated her name and address, and confirmed that she had been sworn in. Little spoke to what she described as Franklin's "broken school system". She questioned how the City can consider bringing more students into an educational system where school resources are already overstretched.

Noting a break in comments, Pirot thanked attendees for coming and sharing their views. She said that she was pleased with the participation and said that it was an honor to serve on Planning Commission for a community that she genuinely cares about. She complemented Commission members for rushing here from their full-time jobs and family obligations to volunteer on the Board. She acknowledged that these are not easy discussions. Pirot reminded attendees that the best way to stay informed of community news and events, public hearings, and emergency announcements is to sign up to receive alerts. Signup for the service is quick, easy, and free can be found on the City's website.

Hopper concurred and stated that it has been years since the City has had a chance to consider such an exciting impactful development decision. He noted that "the stakes are high, and we appreciate you being here".

Hearing no additional comments, the Chair closed the floor for public comment at 7:40 PM and called for a motion on PC 25-09 and PC 25-10

Motion to approve with further consideration as detailed on page 13 and 14 of the packet including the paved walking path made by Hopper. Seconded by Ruppert.

Voting Yea: Ruppert, Chair Hopper, Hall, Rebholz

Voting Nay: Pirot

B. PC 25-11 Amendments to Municipal Code

Fields introduced PC 25-11 requesting that the Planning Commission adopt a motion to initiate the following proposed text amendments to the UDO:

- Chapter 1103 “Definitions” – Add a definition for “Truck Terminal.”
- Section 1107.11(j) - Move the existing front yard material standards from Section 1111.07(j)(2)(i) to Section 1111.07(j)(1) “General Requirements” and include regulations for the materials of fences located in side and rear yards.
- Section 1111.07(d)(1)(A) - clarify that paving material for off-street parking and loading areas include blacktop, concrete, and pavers.
- Table 1111.07-5: Required Number of Parking Spaces - Modify the existing parking requirement for the use “Retail, Services”.
- Section 1115.11 “Approvals by the Zoning Official” - Clarify that a Certificate of Zoning Compliance is required for permitted uses moving into existing facilities.

Fields briefly reviewed the **Text Amendment Standards for Approval:**

Hearing no public comment, the Chair opened and closed the floor on public comment on PC 25-11 at 8:10 PM.

Hopper then called for a motion on PC 25-11 to initiate Amendments to Municipal Code as presented for City Council consideration.

Motion made by Hall, Seconded by Rebholz.

Voting Yea: Ruppert, Pirot, Chair Hopper, Hall, Rebholz

9. DISCUSSION

Westendorf thanked the Commission members for their service and recognized how challenging change can be. He praised the City’s Zoning Code saying that it will serve as a model Code for other Cities and Townships. He celebrated the City’s continued transformation that has put Franklin in a position to keep improving.

Pirot asked if we can consider improved microphones and more screens to better serve the public.

Westendorf committed to evaluating ways to improve attendee experience.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Pirot, Seconded by Hall

Voting Yea: Ruppert, Pirot, Hopper, Hall, Rebholtz

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 PM.