



# PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, September 10, 2025, 5:30 PM  
1 Benjamin Franklin Way Franklin, Ohio 45005  
[www.FranklinOhio.org](http://www.FranklinOhio.org)

## CLERK'S JOURNAL

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Christine Pirot at 5:33 PM.

### 2. ROLL CALL

Present: Dr. Sarah Nathan (left at 8:17 PM), Paul Ruppert, Christine Pirot, Mayor Brent Centers, Jason Hall, Brain Rebholtz

Absent: David Hopper (arrived at 5:50 PM)

Staff: Jonathan Westendorf, Liz Fields, Eric Damian, Cindi Chibis

Guests: Robert Lipps, Cheryl Roberts, Adam Korm, Jerry Atkins, Justin Platt, John Hall, Diane Hall, Stephen Lake, Wilbor Lake, Sandra Lake, Jessica Cook, Kellen Cook, Jeff Baumgardner, John Abraham, Paul Hanson, Mitchell Smith, Kurt Barney, Christian Stone, Tim Salmons

### 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Dr. Sarah Nathan.

### 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 July 9, 2025, meeting.

Motion made by Hall, Seconded by Ruppert

Voting Yea: Ruppert, Pirot, Hall

Voting Abstaining: Dr. Nathan, Rebholz

Motion carried

### 5. OATH OR AFFIRMATION

The Oath was issued to all guests.

### 7. OLD BUSINESS

Vice Chair Pirot called for a motion to recess until Chair Hopper's arrival.

Motion made by Ruppert, Seconded by Hall

Voting yea: Nathan, Ruppert, Pirot, Hall, Rebholz

Motion carried

The meeting recessed at 5:37 PM.

The Chair arrived at 5:50 PM and called for a motion to reconvene the meeting back to order at 5:50 PM.

Motion made by Ruppert, Seconded by Hall

Motion was adopted by a unanimous voice vote.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. PC 25-17 Major Site Plan – Interstate Utility Trailer**

The applicant, Cincinnati Commercial Contracting c/o Christian Stone, is requesting approval of a major site plan for the construction of a large equipment and truck retail, rental, and repair facility on an undeveloped property on Commerce Center Drive. The proposed use will include a new 53,241 sq. ft. Interstate Utility Trailer building and 210 trailer parking spaces.

Liz Fields introduced the project stating that the building will house 16 service bays, a retail parts showroom, a parts storage warehouse, supporting office spaces, and parking for both employees and trailers.

She pointed out changes to the site plan including the reduced building size (from 7,200 square feet to 46,041 square feet), and 17 fewer trailer parking spaces in the Northeast corner of the lot. She also noted the addition of six engine block heater pads for semi-trucks, a propane tank pad on the rear of the building, and the use of railroad-tie parking stops.

Fields noted that an eight foot black vinyl-coated chain-link fence is proposed along the perimeter of the trailer parking area extending into the front. She reminded Commission members that the maximum height for a fence in the front yard is four feet (Section 1107.11(j)(2)(A)(i)(1)) and the maximum height for a fence in the rear yard is six feet (Section 1107.11(j)(2)(A)(ii)). Accordingly, a variance is required.

Fields reviewed the proposed perimeter lot landscaping, screening of trash container receptacles, lot interior landscaping, building foundation plantings, as well as parking and loading spaces. She confirmed that all are in full compliance with Code requirements.

She next reviewed proposed interior parking landscaping noting that while the landscaping requirement for the west parking lot has been met, the applicant is requesting a waiver from Section 1111.06(j)(2) for the parking areas for the trailers as inclusion of interior landscaping islands will add obstacles to the parking and maneuvering of the 53-foot trailers.

Fields then reviewed building elevation and design details noting that cast stone, EIFS, pre-finished metal wall panels, split-face CMU, glass in aluminum-framed windows, overhead doors, and a standing seam metal roof are proposed. She stated that Section 1115.08(h)(3)(D) of the UDO limits the use of permitted building materials to no less than three and no more than four. Additionally, the development is proposing to metal wall panels that are not permitted in Section 1115.08(h)(C) of the UDO. Accordingly, the applicant is requesting a waiver from the exterior façade design standards pursuant to Section 1115.08(h)(2)(A).

Fields confirmed that proposed lighting is consistent with the requirements of Table 1111.07-4.

She concluded by stating that if the Major Site Plan is approved, submittal and review of a Sign Permit will be required.

Fields reviewed the **Major Site Plan Standards for Approval**. No compliance issues were noted outside of the recommended waivers and modifications previously identified.

The Chair opened discussion/questions for staff.

Rebholz requested additional information on the requested variance for the vinyl chain-link fence.

Fields confirmed that the applicant has submitted the required variance request for the fence to the Board of Zoning Appeals for consideration.

Dr. Nathan asked for clarification on the use of railroad ties.

The pros and cons of railroad ties versus concrete stops ensued. Considering cost, durability, and installation Ruppert and Rebholz expressed support for the use of railroad ties in the parking lot.

The Chair opened the floor for public comment on PC 25-17 at 6:10 PM and invited the applicant to speak first.

Chrisitan Stone, Cincinnati Commercial Contracting, approached the podium, stated his name and address, confirmed that he had been sworn in, and offered to answer any questions.

Hopper asked for a brief overview of the project and the company.

Stone invited Jerry Atkins to respond.

Jerry Atkins, Terrex Development and Construction, approached the podium, stated his name and address, confirmed that he had been sworn in. He presented a brief company profile, provided a project overview, and thanked staff for project support. He complimented City employees and Commission members on Franklin's on-going development efforts.

Pirot appreciated his excitement. She asked if the Site Plan was approved, if it was likely that the City would see an influx of drivers needing hotel accommodations.

Atkins explained that Castellini, which specializes in frozen and cold storage, packing, and transportation, is not expected to generate demand for overnight accommodations.

Kurt Barney, BND properties, approached the podium, stated his name and address, confirmed that he had been sworn in. As the owner of a neighboring property, he expressed concern about storm water runoff.

Adam Korm, Civil Engineer Kleingers Group, reviewed drainage plans and assured adequate controls.

Hearing no further comments, the Chair closed the floor for public comment at 6:27 PM and called for a motion on PC 25-17 noting that if recommending approval, the motion should include the following:

1. Compliance with all recommendations of the City Engineer, including but not limited to, submittal of a Sign Permit.
2. A waiver from the exterior façade design standards pursuant to Section 1115.08(h)(2)(A) of the UDO.
3. A waiver from Section 1111.06(j)(2) of the UDO to exempt the requirement for interior landscaping islands in the parking lot.

Motion made by Doctor Nathan, Seconded by Ruppert  
Voting Yea: Dr. Nathan, Ruppert, Pirot, Hopper, Hall, Rebholz  
Motion carried

### **PC 25-18 Conditional Use – Automobile Fueling Station**

The applicant, Casey's c/o Paul Hanson, is proposing to construct a Casey's General Store and automobile fueling station located at 1288 East 2nd Street. The subject property is zoned C-1, General Commercial District, and automobile fueling stations are a Conditional Use in that zoning district.

Fields introduced the Conditional Use application explaining that the proposed location for the Casey's development includes three separate parcels/single-family residential dwellings along East 2nd Street and East Lawn Drive. Caseys is proposing to demolish the homes, consolidate the three parcels, and utilize the entirety of the 1.59 acre lot for the fueling station and convenience store. When completed, the development will consist of a 4,319 square foot convenience store and a gas canopy with is proposed to contain 10 gas pumps. A total of 21 parking spaces are provided to support the use which will provide access via East 2nd Street as well as East Lawn Drive.

Fields reviewed the **Automobile Fueling/Charging Stations Specific Standards** in detail. No compliance concerns were noted.

She then provide a thorough review of the following **Conditional Use General Standards for Approval** reminding Commission members that approval can only be granted if all Standards are met.

1. The proposed use is a Conditional Use in the zoning district for which it is proposed.  
**An automobile fueling station is an identified Conditional Use in the C-1 zoning district.**
2. The proposed Conditional Use will be in accordance with the general objectives, or with any specific objective, of the City's Comprehensive Development Plan or this UDO.  
**The proposed automobile fueling station is consistent with the intent of the C-1 Zoning District, which is to "provide for general commercial activity, including a wide range of goods and services that will serve the region."**
3. The proposed Conditional Use will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so as to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity and that such use will not change the essential character of the neighborhood.  
**The proposed use will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to be harmonious with the intended character of the general vicinity. The use will not change the essential character of the neighborhood.**
4. The proposed Conditional Use will not be hazardous or unreasonably disturbing to existing or future neighboring uses.  
**It is not expected that this use will be hazardous or unreasonably disturbing to adjacent uses.**
5. The proposed Conditional Use will be served adequately by essential public facilities and services such as streets, police and fire protection, drainage, water and sewer, or the persons or agencies responsible for the establishment of the proposed use shall be able to adequately provide any such services.

**The proposed Conditional Use will be served adequately by essential public facilities and services.**

6. The proposed Conditional Use will not create excessive additional requirements at public cost for public facilities and services and will not be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community.

**The proposed Conditional Use will not create excessive additional requirements or be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community.**

7. The proposed Conditional Use will not involve uses, activities, processes, materials, equipment and conditions or operations that will be detrimental to any persons, property, or the general welfare by reason of excessive production of traffic, noise, smoke, fumes, glare, or odors.

**The proposed Conditional Use does not involve uses, activities, processes, materials, etc. which are detrimental to any persons, property, or the general welfare.**

8. The proposed Conditional Use will have vehicular approaches to the property that are designed so as not to interfere with traffic on surrounding public thoroughfares.

**The proposed Conditional Use proposes two vehicular approaches which should not interfere with traffic on surrounding public thoroughfares.**

9. The proposed Conditional Use will not result in the destruction, loss, or damage of a natural, scenic, or historic features of major importance.

**The proposed Conditional Use will not result in the destruction, loss, or damage of a natural, scenic, or historical feature of major importance.**

Hopper requested that the City complete a review of PC 25-19 (Casey's General Store) and PC 25-20 (Conditional Use-Electronic Message Center) before opening discussion or public comment on PC 25-18 (Conditional Use-Automobile Fueling Station).

After staff presentations, public hearings, and commission discussion on PC 25-18, PC 25-19, and PC 25-20, the Chair reminded Commission members that it was their responsibility to weigh each application against the applicable standards. He noted that **Conditional Use General Standards for Approval #2, #3, and #8** were not met and called for a motion to reject the Conditional Use application. He reminded Commission members if PC-25-18 was rejected, then PC 25-19 and PC 25-20 must also be rejected.

Motion to deny made by Dr. Nathan, Seconded by Ruppert  
Voting Yea: Doctor Nathan, Ruppert, Pirot, Hopper, Hall, Rebholz  
Motion carried; application denied

### **PC 25-19 Major Site Plan – Casey's General Store**

The applicant, Casey's c/o Paul Hanson, is requesting approval of a major site plan for the construction of a Casey's General Store and automobile fueling station located at 1288 East 2nd Street. The proposed use will include a 4,319 square foot convenience store, a gas canopy with 10 fuel pumps, and 21 parking spaces.

Fields introduced the Major Site Plan for Casey's General Store stating that construction of a convenience store, will include 21 parking spaces located along the front and east of the building, and one loading space is provided to the west of the building. Access to the site will be provided via a right turn only lane from East 2nd Street and a driveway from East Lawn Drive.

Fields reviewed the Landscape Plan including perimeter lot landscaping noting that while six-foot opaque fences are not typically permitted in the front yard, Planning Commission may approve a

six-foot opaque fence in the front yard for the purpose of satisfying a buffering requirement per Section 1107.11(j)(2).

Fields noted that proposed loading dock landscaping, screening of trash container receptacles, lot interior landscaping, building foundation plantings, tripartite configuration, building articulation, building materials, and lighting, all meet applicable Code requirements.

She next reviewed interior parking area landscaping noting that while a landscaping island is provided, the minimum size of a landscape island is 200 square feet with a minimum width of 10 feet per Section 1111.06(j)(2)(C). Since this requirement is not met, the applicant is requesting that Planning Commission vary the size of the landscaping island to 90 feet per Section 1111.06(j)(2)(D).

Fields also noted that the applicant is requesting a waiver from Section 1111.06(j)(2) for the interior parking area. While a 90 square foot parking island is provided, 1,300 square feet is required. The applicant states that due to site constraints it would not be possible to meet this requirement and proposes that an additional 1,217 square foot landscape area is provided along the western property line to provide screening.

Per the requirements of Table 1111.07-5, a minimum of 12 parking spaces is required, 21 parking spaces are proposed. Staff recommended removal of five side parking spaces and removal of spaces in front of the dumpster enclosure to avoid operational conflicts and allow more interior landscaping. Staff also recommends the removal of the parking spaces in front of the dumpster enclosure to avoid conflict between cars parked in those spots and the dumpster needing to be emptied.

Fields stated that although it is not required for commercial buildings under 5,000 sq. ft., one Type A loading space is proposed approximately 25 feet from a residential district, requiring a variance from Section 1111.07(m)(8) which prohibits loading spaces within 50 feet of a residential district.

She explained that the applicant has included a sign package which indicates that one wall sign, three canopy signs, and a brick ground sign are proposed. While the majority of these signs will require the submittal and review of a Sign Permit at a later date, conditional use approval is required for the electronic message center proposed in the ground sign.

Fields then moved to review the **Major Site Plan Standards for Approval** reminding Commission members that approval can only be granted if all Standards are met.

After staff presentations, public hearings, and commission discussion on PC 25-18, PC 25-19, and PC 25-20, the Chair reminded Commission members that it was their responsibility to weigh each application against the applicable standards. He noted that **Conditional Use General Standards for Approval #2, #3, and #8** were not met and called for a motion to reject the Major Site Plan application. He reminded Commission members since PC-25-18 was rejected, then PC 25-19 and PC 25-20 must also be rejected.

Motion to approve by Chair Hopper, Seconded by Hall  
Voting Nay: Dr. Nathan, Ruppert, Pirot, Hopper, Hall, Rebholz  
Motion rejected; application denied.

#### **PC 25-20 Conditional Use – Electronic Message Center**

The applicant, Casey's c/o Paul Hanson, is proposing to construct a ground sign with an electronic message center at the proposed Casey's General Store located at 1288 East 2nd Street. The subject property is zoned C-1, General Commercial District, and electronic message centers require Conditional Use approval.

Liz Fields introduced PC 25-20 explaining that the electronic message center is proposed to be part of a ground sign located at the northwest corner of the site near the intersection of East 2nd Street and East Lawn Drive. In addition to advertising for Casey's General Store, the sign would digitally advertise current fuel prices. The sign is proposed to be set back 30 feet from the property line abutting East 2nd Street and 15 feet from the property line abutting East Lawn Drive.

Fields reviewed Electronic Message Center Specific Standards noting approval would require a variance from Section 1111.08(h)(11)(C) regarding minimum distance from adjacent residential uses and submittal of a certificate of maximum illumination per Section 1111.08(h)(11)(J).

The Chair moved to questions for staff on PC-18, PC-19, and PC-20.

Rebholz asked about the distance of the proposed sign to the nearest residential property.

Fields responded 211 feet from the proposed sign to the property line and 260 feet from the proposed sign to the closest residential structure.

Ruppert inquired about projected daily traffic volumes, citing concerns about intersection traffic flow.

Rebholz asked if the gas pumps would be equipped with audio/video advertising.

Ruppert asked if the proposed 1.59-acre lot was smaller than typical Casey's development.

The Chair opened the floor for public comment on PC 25-18, PC 25-19, and PC 25-20 at 7:27 PM and invited the applicant to speak first.

Paul Hansen, representing Casey's, approached the podium, stated his name and address, and confirmed that he had been sworn in. He addressed Commission questions by confirming that the gas pumps will not be equipped with audio/video capabilities, and that the lot size is consistent with other Casey's developments. He confirmed commitment to work with the City Engineer to finalize traffic circulation, ensure a safe right hand turn lane, and comply with all City signage requirements. He expressed a preference to retain the proposed parking spots located near the dumpster for staff use and the loading zone space for deliveries. He then reviewed landscaping and fencing to be provided at the rear of the property to buffer adjacent residences.

Hopper asked about hours of operation.

Hanson stated that Casey's prefers to remain open 24-hours but will work with the City before finalizing hours.

Pirot emphasized that the City devoted significant effort to preparing a new Comprehensive Plan to guide future land use and development. She noted that community feedback during the planning process consistently reflected that Franklin already has an adequate number of gas stations.

Hanson responded that Casey's is more than a gas station highlighting that the company is the fourth-largest pizza retailer in the nation. He expressed the company's desire to be a part of Franklin's future.

Robert Lipps approached the podium, stated his name and address, and confirmed that he had been sworn in. He referenced Franklin's UDO requirement that gas pumps and service buildings be at least 50 feet from adjacent residential property. He questioned why the proposed gas station was only 30 feet away from the nearest neighboring property. Additionally, he objected to the removal of three homes when the City is working to increase the housing supply. He expressed

concerns about stormwater runoff, the intensity of development on the site, and existing traffic issues at the Walgreens entrance.

Eric Damian, City Engineer, responded to the drainage concerns, explaining that stormwater runoff would be routed into an underground detention storm system on Second Street.

John Hall approached the podium, stated his name and address, and confirmed that he had been sworn in. Hall said he lives next to the proposed development and is concerned about traffic impact, pedestrian safety and runoff into his property. Hall noted that Franklin already has too many gas stations and that removal of three affordable homes is contrary to community needs since most new housing being built is "too expensive".

After reviewing language in the UDO, Fields addressed Mr. Lipps' question, clarifying that the Casey's General Store does not meet the definition of a "service station." She explained that under Section 1107.09(c)(2) of the UDO, gasoline pumps must be located at least 50 feet from adjacent residential property or districts, and this standard has been met by the application.

Hearing no additional comments, the Chair closed the floor for public comment at 7:42 PM and called for general discussion.

Hopper opened discussion and reiterated that the City's engagement process revealed strong community sentiment that Franklin has enough gas stations. He acknowledged that the concern may be reflective of the location and/or quality of existing gas stations but emphasized that future use of the subject parcel is commercial - not residential.

Ruppert expressed continued concern about traffic impacts and the lack of need for another gas station. He stated that the proposed development use may not represent the best use of the property to meet community needs.

Rebholtz questioned the sound, light, and visual screening for neighboring properties.

Fields confirmed that the building would be fully screened and that all lighting standards, including maximum illumination levels and fixture angling, would be met to minimize impacts.

Dr. Nathan noted that she shared community concerns about the number of gas stations, but acknowledged that, given the property's constraints, this may be a reasonable option for development.

Hopper began discussion on PC 25-18 confirming that he finds no issue with full compliance with the **Automobile Fueling/Charging Stations Specific Standards.**

He then reviewed the **Conditional Use General Standards for Approval.** After discussion, a consensus was reached that application PC 25-18 does not meet the following Standards.

- Standard #2: The proposed Conditional Use will be in accordance with the general objectives, or with any specific objective, of the City's Comprehensive Development Plan or this UDO.
- Standard #3: The proposed Conditional Use will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so as to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity and that such use will not change the essential character of the neighborhood.



- Standard #8: The proposed Conditional Use will have vehicular approaches to the property that are designed so as not to interfere with traffic on surrounding public thoroughfares.

Following discussion, Commission members determined that PC 25-18 did not meet the required standards for approval.

After staff presentations, public hearings, and commission discussion on PC 25-18, PC 25-19, and PC 25-20, the Chair reminded Commission members that it was their responsibility to weigh each application against the applicable standards. He noted that **Conditional Use General Standards for Approval** #2, #3, and #8 were not met and called for a motion to reject the Conditional Use application. He reminded Commission members since PC-25-18 and PC 25-19 were rejected, then PC 25-20 must also be rejected.

Motion to approve made by Chair Hopper, Seconded by Ruppert  
Voting Nay: Dr. Nathan, Ruppert, Pirot, Hopper, Hall, Rebholz  
Motion rejected; application denied.

### **PC 25-21 Major Subdivision, Final Plat – Right of Way Dedication**

The City of Franklin is requesting approval of a proposed major subdivision for a right-of-way dedication of City owned property along William C. Good Boulevard for its extension to Scholl Road. This will also create two lots of approximately 1.899 acres and 21.302 acres. Additional right of way will also be dedicated along SR 123 and Beal Road.

Eric Damian, City Engineer, introduced the project explaining that William C. Good Boulevard was extended to Scholl Road. The proposal dedicates approximately 1.4202 acres of City owned property along William C. Good Boulevard as public right-of-way.

Damian confirmed that Staff recommends approval of the major subdivision for a right-of-way dedication to City Council.

Dr. Sarah Nathan left at 8:17 PM.

The Chair opened the floor for public comment on PC 25-21 at 8:19 PM.

Callen Cook approached the podium, stated his name and address, and confirmed that he had been sworn in. He requested clarification on use of the term "Major Subdivision", asking if the City was proposing new development on William C. Good Boulevard to Scholl Road.

Hopper acknowledged the confusion, clarifying that the right-of-way dedication represents the conveyance of private land to the City for roadway purposes and that no development was proposed.

Westendorf concurred, explaining that this was a technical requirement to finalize a project that was previously approved.

Hearing no further comments, the Chair closed the public hearing at 8:24 PM and called for a motion on PC 25-21.

Motion to recommend approval of the right of way dedication to City Council made by Ruppert, Seconded by Pirot.  
Voting Yea: Ruppert, Pirot, Hopper, Hall, Rebholz  
Motion carried.

**PC 25-22 Amendments to Municipal Code**

The City of Franklin is requesting amendments to the City's Municipal Code Chapter 1103 Definitions, Table 1107.04-1: Agricultural, Residential, and Parks and Recreation Districts Use Table, Table 1107.04-2: Nonresidential Districts Use Table, and Sections 1107.12(d) and 1103.01 regarding the addition of "Model Home" as a temporary use.

Liz Fields reviewed the proposed text amendments to the City's Municipal Code to add "Model Home" as a permitted temporary use in the R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, MU-1, RMU, TN-1, and TN-2 zoning districts. Use-specific standards are proposed for the use to limit model homes during the construction of the subdivision. A definition for "Model Home" is also proposed.

Fields summarized the Text Amendment Review Criteria and **Text Amendment Standards for Approval** explaining the Planning Commission options to recommend approval, approval with modifications, or denial to City Council.

Hearing no discussion, the Chair opened and closed the floor for public comment on PC 25-22 at 8:27 PM and called for a motion.

Motion to recommend approval of the proposed text amendments made by Hall, Seconded by Rebholz.

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

Motion carried

**9. DISCUSSION**

Westendorf confirmed that there will be no October Planning Commission meeting.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 PM.