



PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 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 5:33 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Paul Ruppert, Brian Rebohlz, Christine Pirot, Jason Hall, Jackie Almanza

Absent: David Hopper, Mayor Brent Centers

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

Guests: Dustin Hurley, Sally Wheeler, John Wheeler, Steve Lake, Sandy Lake, Jaswant Kau, Inderjit Sinan, Amarjit Takrian, Gandi I., Darrel Ferguson, Kelly Schwieterman, Michael Lake, Stephen Lake, Karen Rodriguee, Jane Fiehrer, John Abraham

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jason Hall.

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 January 14, 2026, meeting.

Motion made by Almanza, Seconded by Pirot.

Voting Yea: Pirot, Almanza

Voting Abstaining: Rebohlz, Ruppert, Hall

5. OATH OR AFFIRMATION

The Oath was issued to all guests.

6. OLD BUSINESS

7. NEW BUSINESS

PC 26-03 Mural Sign – Lee's Famous Recipe Chicken

The applicant, Jane Fiehrer, Sign Connection, is requesting approval of a mural on the north façade of the new Lee's Chicken Restaurant. The mural is proposed to include commercial messaging, which requires approval from the Planning Commission per Section 1111.08(h)(9).

Fields introduced PC 26-03 by presenting a rendering of the proposed mural, that includes an image associated with Lee's Famous Chicken and the wording "Famous". She explained that

because the business sells chicken products and “famous” is part of its name (Lee’s Famous Recipe Chicken), the mural constitutes commercial messaging.

She further noted that if mural was intended for beautification purposes only, approval would fall under the discretion of the City Manager. However, because the Mural includes commercial messaging it is considered advertising and therefore requires approval by Planning Commission.

Per Section 1111.08(h)(9) “Murals that contain advertising or commercial messaging may be permitted per the approval of the Planning Commission, while weighing the following factors in determining approval/denial”.

1. Murals shall not be located on the principal facade(s) of a building unless approved by the Planning Commission.
The proposed mural is located on the north façade of the building which faces the access drive to Walmart. The east elevation of the building faces Commerce Center Drive, but the building is designed with the front door on the north façade. Staff would consider the north façade to be the principal façade due to the building’s design, but Planning Commission has the ability to approve the mural at that location.
2. Murals should not cover or detract from architectural features.
The proposed mural enhances the building as it is proposed to be installed on a blank brick wall.
3. The installation of a mural should complement and enhance the building and be incorporated architecturally into the façade.
Planning Commission will need to determine if the mural complements and enhances the building.
4. Murals should not be in an area which may cause undue distraction to drivers, thereby creating a safety hazard.
The proposed mural is incorporated into a blank brick wall and is proposed to utilize similar earth tone colors as the building.

Fields also reviewed factors of approval related to Mural Design and Materials.

1. The scale of the mural should be appropriate to the building and the site.
The proposed mural is approximately one-third the size of the north elevation. It appears to be in scale with the building’s design.
2. The theme of the mural should be appropriate within the context of the surrounding area and complement the existing character.
The theme and design of the mural complements the business it is located on.
3. The name of the artist or sponsor of the mural may be incorporated into the mural but shall not exceed five percent of the design or two square feet in area, whichever is less.
The name of the artist is not incorporated into the mural.
4. The paint utilized for the mural should be intended for exterior use, have a waterproof seal coating, and of sufficient quality which will not corrode or compromise the integrity of the surface to which it is applied.
The applicant has noted that the mural will conform to these regulations.
5. Reflective, neon, and fluorescent paints should not be used.
Reflective, neon, and fluorescent paints are not proposed.

Almanza requested and received clarification regarding the building's principal façade.

The Chair opened the floor for public comment at 5:46 PM.

Jane Fiehrer from Sign Connection approached the podium, provided her address, and confirmed that she had been sworn in. She stated that the proposed signage was designed to complement the building's appearance and would not be visible from the main roadway.

Hearing no further discussion, the Chair closed the floor for public comment at 5:56 PM and called for a motion on PC 26-03.

Motion to approve made by Hall, Seconded by Rebholz.

Voting Yea: Rebholz, Ruppert, Pirot, Hall, Almanza

Motion carried

PC 26-04 Conditional Use – Marathon

The applicant, Franklin Foodmart, LLC, is requesting conditional use approval for an automobile fueling/charging station located at 1111 William C. Good Boulevard. The use automobile fueling/charging station is conditional in the C-1 General Commercial District.

Fields provided an overview of the application explaining that the subject property consists of an existing automobile fueling/charging station constructed in 2000 that has operated continuously as an approved conditional use. In 2025, the property was sold to a new owner, which terminated the original conditional use approval pursuant to Section 1113.01(e) of the UDO, as such approvals are not transferable. Accordingly, the new owner must obtain a new conditional use permit to remain in compliance with the UDO.

Fields referenced **Section 1113.01(e) Validity: A Conditional Use Permit issued under this Section shall have no expiration date, but shall be subject to revocation, as provided below. Conditional Use Permits shall be specific to the applicant and the building, structure, and/or address for which the Permit is approved; they shall not be transferable to a subsequent owner, tenant or occupant of the designated building, structure and/or address, nor shall they transfer with the applicant to another location. A Conditional Use Permit shall terminate upon the building, structure and/or address no longer being used for such Conditional Use, or upon the change of occupancy of such building, structure and/or address, or upon violation of any provisions of this Section.**

Fields reviewed Automobile Fueling/Charging Station Specific Standards and Conditional Use General Standards for Approval. She noted that these standards are primarily intended for evaluating new uses. As no change in use or location is proposed, she confirmed that no compliance issues were identified.

However, Fields stated that should the Planning Commission choose to approve the Conditional Use Application, the following should be considered as conditions of approval:

- 1) **Dumpster Enclosure Screening:** The dumpster is located at the rear of the property and is currently unenclosed. Section 1111.06(i) requires that all trash containers or receptacles be fully screened or enclosed on all sides.

The dumpster shall be enclosed in accordance with the requirements of Section 1111.06(i).

- 2) Parking Lot Striping: The striping of existing parking spaces has faded in certain areas and must be refreshed. Section 1111.07(e)(1) requires that parking space demarcation be adequately maintained through periodic restriping or other appropriate means.

All faded parking space markings shall be restriped in accordance with the requirements of Section 1111.07(e)(1).

- 3) Truck Parking: The site currently includes several parking spaces designed for semi-trailer trucks, which is prohibited under the UDO (see definition of "Truck Stop/Truck Service or Gasoline Center"). These spaces must be removed.

All designated semi-trailer truck parking spaces shall be removed, and the parking of semi-trailer trucks on the property shall be prohibited.

Almanza asked if the three listed conditions were the result of recent Code changes.

Westendorf confirmed that Code changes, community conditions, and evolving expectations contributed to the recommended conditions. He provided a brief history of the parcel and discussed the gradual increase in semi-trailer parking on the property.

The Chair opened the floor for public comment at 6:00 PM.

Attorney Dustin Hurley, representing the applicant, approached the podium, provided his address, and confirmed that he had been sworn in. Hurley stated that the new owners have no connection with prior ownership and have made significant investments in the property in preparation of opening. He explained that it was only after purchasing the property that they became aware that the approved conditional use did not automatically transfer to the new ownership. Hurley affirmed the applicant's commitment to comply with the listed conditions (dumpster enclosure, improved parking space markings, and removal of semi-trailer truck parking spaces) and offered to answer any questions.

Inderjit Singh approached the podium, introduced himself as the property owner, provided his address, and confirmed that he had been sworn in. At the request of the Commission Chair, he briefly discussed his experience as a small business owner and his decision to purchase property in Franklin. He affirmed his continued commitment to comply with the City's conditions.

Rebholz welcomed him to Franklin business community and acknowledged the City's ongoing growth and improvement.

Pirot also extended a warm welcome.

Hearing no further comments, the Chair closed the floor for public comment at 6:10 PM and called for a motion on PC 26-04.

Motion made by Rebholz, Seconded by Almanza.
Voting Yea: Rebholz, Ruppert, Pirot, Hall, Almanza
Motion carried

PC 26-05 Conditional Use – Valvoline

The applicant, OH Franklin East 2nd, LLC c/o John Whitson, is requesting conditional use approval for the construction of a 1,467 square foot Valvoline facility located at 1276, 1288, 1296 E. 2nd Street (Route 73). The use automobile service/repair, light is conditional in the C-1 General Commercial District.

Pirot noted that the next four agenda items PC 26-05, PC 26-06, PC 26-07, and PC 26-08, were interrelated and asked for guidance on the most effective way to approach the agenda.

Fields suggested that she begin by providing a brief overview of the four agenda items but address each separately for purposes of voting. She explained that the agenda items included a Conditional Use and Major Site Plan application for Valvoline, a Major Site Plan for Dutch Bros, and a right-of-way dedication. Fields presented slides illustrating that, as proposed, Valvoline and Dutch Bros would be located on opposite ends of a single building.

Focusing on PC 26-05, Fields explained that the proposed development consists of a Valvoline facility located approximately 50 feet from the East 2nd Street right-of-way. The property is interconnected with the adjacent Dutch Bros development at the corner of East 2nd Street and East Lawn Drive and, therefore, does not include direct access points. Vehicular access will be provided via a right-turn lane on East 2nd Street, as well as a shared curb cut located at the rear of the Dutch Bros site. Pedestrian access will be provided by a designated striped walkway connecting the development to a proposed sidewalk along East 2nd Street.

Fields referenced Automobile Service/Repair, Light Specific Standards and noted no compliance concerns.

Rebholz inquired about the type of hydraulic equipment used at Valvoline and questioned the potential noise associated with its operation.

Fields acknowledged the question and suggested it be addressed by the applicant during public comment.

Fields then reviewed the Conditional Use General Standards for Approval and noted no concerns. She stated that the proposed use 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.” She further noted that the proposed use aligns with the property’s designation on the Future Land Use Map as “Community Commercial,” which is intended to support a mix of residential uses and complementary services, including retail, dining, service-oriented businesses, civic facilities, and offices.

The Chair opened the floor for public comment on PC 26-05 at 6:16 PM.

Kelly Schwieterman of CESO, representing the applicant, approached the podium, provided her address, and confirmed that she had been sworn in. She responded to questions regarding expected daily volume (30–60 vehicles), the number and location of service bays (two), and stacking capacity (one vehicle per bay, with up to three additional vehicles per bay). She also reviewed vehicular access points and traffic flow patterns, noting that the design was coordinated with the City Engineer to minimize impacts on surrounding roadways. She stated that the proposed use aligns with the City’s vision for development.

Rebholz thanked Schwieterman for her comments and requested that the Commission review the Major Site Plan for Valvoline (PC 26-06) prior to voting on the Conditional Use application (PC 26-05).

At the request of the Chair, Fields introduced PC 26-06, the Major Site Plan for Valvoline. She reiterated that the property is interconnected with the adjacent Dutch Bros development via a proposed access easement and does not include direct access points. Vehicular and pedestrian access would be provided as previously described.

Fields provided an overview of the proposed landscape plan, including 197 plantings around the site perimeter and building foundation. She also reviewed interior parking lot landscaping and buffer yard requirements.

Fields presented renderings of the proposed parking and stacking spaces, building elevations, and design elements, including materials, lighting, and signage.

John Wheeler approached the podium, provided his address, and identified himself as a nearby resident. He confirmed that he had been sworn in. Mr. Wheeler inquired about the proposed fencing material and whether it would be sufficient to buffer noise and contain debris. He also expressed concern regarding potential drainage impacts to his property.

Fields responded that the proposed fence would be a six-foot wooden structure designed to serve as both a visual barrier and a sound buffer.

Damian stated that stormwater runoff would be directed to the East 2nd Street sewer system, which is expected to significantly reduce existing drainage concerns.

Pirot asked about hours of operation for Valvoline.

Schwieterman reapproached the podium to provide weekday and weekend hours of operation.

Hearing no further comments, the Chair closed the floor for public comment at 6:24 PM and called for a motion on PC 26-05.

Motion to approve made by Hall, Seconded by Rebholz.

Voting Yea: Rebholz, Ruppert, Pirot, Hall, Almanza

Motion carried

PC 26-06 Major Site Plan – Valvoline

The applicant, OH Franklin East 2nd, LLC c/o John Whitson, is requesting approval of a major site plan for the construction of a 1,467 square foot Valvoline facility located at 1276, 1288, 1296 E. 2nd Street (Route 73).

Fields reviewed the proposed dumpster enclosure, landscaping, parking, and stacking spaces, building design and elevation, lighting, and signage. She referenced the Major Site Plan Standards for Approval, noting no issues or concerns.

Commission members asked that PC 26-07 Major Site Plan-Dutch Bros be reviewed prior to moving to a vote on PC 26-06.

Pirot inquired whether there was a risk that the Dutch Bros drive-through queue could extend onto East 2nd Street and create traffic congestion.

Damian confirmed that a traffic impact study, conducted in accordance with current industry standards, evaluated traffic volume, turning movements, roadway capacity, and parking. He stated that the analysis identified no concerns requiring mitigation measures.

The Chair opened the floor on PC 26-06 for public comment at 6:51 PM.

Almanza requested clarification regarding lot configuration, specifically whether the development would consist of two or three separate parcels.

Westendorf responded that the three lots shown in the renderings would ultimately be consolidated into two parcels. He explained that, given the shared building configuration with one exit and two entrances, Dutch Bros would need to allow shared access with the co-located business, emphasizing that “in totality, they have to work together.”

The Commission engaged in further discussion regarding alternative traffic flow options and access for emergency apparatus.

Darrel Ferguson approached the podium, provided his address, and identified himself as a nearby resident. He confirmed that he had been sworn in. Mr. Ferguson expressed concerns about increased traffic and existing delays experienced by residents turning onto East 2nd Street from East Lawn Drive.

Westendorf encouraged Mr. Ferguson to contact the City regarding signal timing for the turn onto East 2nd Street, noting that adjustments can be made outside of the application review process.

Pirot asked about the hours of operation for Dutch Bros.

Schwieterman provided both weekday and weekend hours of operation. She noted that no indoor or outdoor seating is proposed but confirmed that an exterior walk-up service window will be included.

Pirot reminded those present that the property is zoned for commercial, not residential, use. She stated that the issue before the Commission is not whether a commercial use will occur, but rather what constitutes the most appropriate commercial use for the site. She expressed support for the proposal.

Westendorf confirmed that staff finds the application suitable for the site. Hearing no further discussion, the Chair closed the floor at 7:01 PM and called for a motion on PC 26-06.

Motion to approve made by Hall, Seconded by Almanza.
Voting Yea: Rebholz, Ruppert, Pirot, Hall, Almanza
Motion carried

PC 26-07 Major Site Plan – Dutch Bros

Major Site Plan Application | Parcels #0426452005, 0426452006, and 0426452007 (1276, 1288, 1296 E. 2nd Street (Route 73)) - Dutch Bros. - The applicant, OH Franklin East 2nd, LLC c/o John Whitson, is requesting approval of a major site plan for the construction of a 1,025 square foot Dutch Bros coffee shop located at 1276, 1288, 1296 E. 2nd Street (Route 73).

The Chair redirected discussion to PC 26-07.

Fields offered to repeat any information related to PC 26-07 or answer questions. She confirmed that the City supports the application and reviewed the following Major Site Plan Standards for Approval citing no compliance issues.

1. That it fully complies with all applicable requirements of this UDO;
The proposed major site plan conforms with all applicable requirements of the UDO.
2. That it adequately protects other property or residential uses located on the same property from the potential effects of a non-residential use;

The development adequately protects other property from the potential effects of a non-residential use. Adequate buffering and screening is provided to mitigate potential impacts to the residential properties south of the site.

3. That it is not detrimental to the use and character of the surrounding properties;
The proposed development is not detrimental to the use and character of the development is consistent with the built environment of the vicinity.
4. That it provides safe conditions for pedestrians or motorists and prevents the dangerous arrangement of pedestrian and vehicular ways; and
The proposed development provides safe conditions and prevents the dangerous arrangement of pedestrian and vehicular ways.
5. That it provides safe ingress and egress for emergency vehicles.
The proposed development provides safe ingress and egress for emergency vehicles.

Rebholz asked for landscaping and fencing details.

Fields provided the requested information adding that landscaping and fencing is designed to muffle noise and provide a visual buffer as well. She stated that proposed buffering exceeds City requirements.

Hearing none, the Chair opened and closed the floor for public comment at 7:06 PM and asked for a motion on PC 26-07.

Motion made by Rebholz, Seconded by Ruppert.
Voting Yea: Rebholz, Ruppert, Pirot, Hall, Almanza
Motion carried

PC 26-08 Major Subdivision – Right of Way Dedication

The applicant is requesting approval of a proposed major subdivision to dedicate right-of-way for a multi-tenant commercial development, including an oil change facility and a quick service restaurant, located at 1276, 1288, 1296 E. Second Street, (Route 73).

Fields stated that as part of the development review process, a Traffic Impact Study was completed and accepted by the City, which identified the need for a new right-turn lane on East 2nd Street. This improvement will function as part of the public roadway and requires right-of-way dedication along the site frontage. She further explained that the subdivision will also create two lots of approximately 0.6047 acres and 0.7434 acres.

Fields confirmed staff recommends that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval of the major subdivision for a right-of-way dedication to Franklin City Council.

Eric Damien explained that the right-of-way dedication is required to designate the legal transfer of private land for public use.

The Chair invited Commission questions. Hearing none, the Chair opened and closed the floor for public comment at 7:08 PM and called for a motion.

Motion to approve PC 26-08 made by Almanza, Seconded by Hall.
Voting Yea: Rebholz, Ruppert, Pirot, Hall, Almanza
Motion carried

8. DISCUSSION

Pirot thanked all attendees for their time and participation. She stated that it is an honor to serve in a volunteer capacity on the Planning Commission and described the role as both challenging and rewarding.

Westendorf announced that there will be no Planning Commission meeting in May but anticipates meetings will resume in June and July 2026.

He provided a brief overview of ongoing development activity within the City, including water main replacement projects, installation of new mast arms at the railroad crossing, demolition of blighted structures, site restoration efforts, and preparation and paving of public parking lots.

Westendorf also highlighted planning efforts in support of America250, as well as the seasonal return of community events such as the Ohio Valley Cruisers Downtown Cruise-In, Fourth Friday on Fourth, and the Saturday Farmers Market. He expressed enthusiasm for the anticipated groundbreaking of Slipcast Brewery, which is expected to open in early 2027.

He concluded by inviting the public to attend the Grand Opening of the Franklin Spray Park on May 22, 2026.

Pirot expressed appreciation for the City's ongoing development initiatives and community events, noting their lasting positive impact on the community.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 PM.