



# City of Gahanna

## Meeting Minutes

### Planning Commission

200 South Hamilton Road  
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

*Sarah Pollyea, Chair*  
*Michael Suriano, Vice Chair*  
*Michael Greenberg*  
*Elizabeth Laser*  
*James Mako*  
*Thomas Shapaka*  
*Michael Tamarkin*

*Sophia McGuire, Deputy Clerk of Council*

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Wednesday, April 8, 2026

6:30 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

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#### A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ROLL CALL

*The Regular Meeting of the Gahanna Planning Commission was held on Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at Gahanna City Hall. The agenda for the meeting was published on Friday, April 3, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Elizabeth Laser.*

**Present** 6 - James Mako, Chair Sarah Pollyea, Vice Chair Michael Suriano, Michael Greenberg, Elizabeth Laser, and Michael Tamarkin

**Absent** 1 - Thomas W. Shapaka

#### B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA - None

#### C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2026-0072](#)

Planning Commission meeting minutes 3.11.2026

**A motion was made by Tamarkin, seconded by Suriano, that the Minutes be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 6 - Mako, Chair Pollyea, Vice Chair Suriano, Greenberg, Laser and Tamarkin

**Absent:** 1 - Shapaka

#### D. SWEAR IN APPLICANTS & SPEAKERS

Assistant City Attorney Matt Roth swore in those wishing to present testimony.

**E. APPLICATIONS - PUBLIC COMMENT**[DP-0002-2026](#)

To consider a Development Plan application for property located at 350 Stygler Road; Parcel ID 025-001937; Current Zoning RI - Restricted Institutional; Middle School West Addition; Carrie Smith, Schorr Architects, applicant.

City Planner Maddie Capka introduced DP-0002-2026, a Development Plan for property located at 350 Stygler Road North, currently zoned R-1 - Restricted Institutional, for Gahanna Middle School West. Capka described the proposal as a Major Development Plan for a 14,215-square-foot addition to the northeast corner of the existing middle school building. The addition would reach a maximum height of 29 feet and would include a gymnasium and locker rooms. She explained that the exterior materials would match the existing building as closely as possible, despite the original masonry no longer being available.

Capka reported that the project would remove 16 parking spaces and add 17 new spaces north of the addition, resulting in a total of 288 parking spaces on-site, exceeding the required 257 spaces for both schools on the property. She noted that the project included approximately 4,500 square feet of additional landscaping and five new trees to meet zoning requirements. She stated that the addition would sit centrally on the site, with the closest property line located 343 feet south along Chapelfield Drive. Capka also reviewed the submitted elevations, which showed materials and colors consistent with the existing building and confirmed that the addition's height remained lower than some existing rooftop units.

Capka reviewed the standard Development Plan criteria. They are:

- The development meets the applicable development standards of the Zoning Ordinance.
- The development is in accord with appropriate plans for the area.
- The development would not have undesirable effects on the surrounding area.
- The development would be in keeping with the existing land use character and physical development of the area.

Staff recommended approval of the application. Capka noted that the development met all applicable zoning requirements, required no

variances, and aligned with the area's development standards and character.

Chair Pollyea opened the public comment portion of the meeting and invited the applicant to speak.

Carrie Smith of 230 Bradenton Avenue, Dublin, Ohio, identified herself as a project manager for the addition. Ms. Smith added that the new drive lane would provide fire access as required and would remain gated to prevent through traffic at all times. She offered to answer questions.

Chair Pollyea asked for additional public comment, and, hearing none, closed public comment.

She then opened the floor for questions from the Commission and recognized Mr. Mako. Mr. Mako asked for clarification regarding the proposed elevations and confirmed that the addition would remain at a similar height to the existing building. He also confirmed that the new access lane would serve fire access purposes.

Ms. Smith explained that the fire department requested a new drive connection to allow trucks to move through the site rather than reach a dead end at the north end. She stated that the connection to the southern parking lot would allow vehicles to circulate fully if necessary and confirmed that the drive would remain gated to prevent public access. Mr. Mako commented that he observed vehicles using the Stygler Road access incorrectly and expressed concern about traffic patterns. He indicated that these were his only questions.

Chair Pollyea recognized Vice Chair Suriano. Vice Chair Suriano asked about the exterior materials, noting that the applicant indicated that the original brick was unavailable and inquired how the design would address the transition between materials. Ms. Smith explained that the addition would not directly connect to the existing structure because the code required a firewall due to the building's size and use. She stated that the team constructed a full-size mockup on-site and worked with the brick supplier to identify a close match using currently available materials. Vice Chair Suriano thanked her and indicated he had no further questions.

Chair Pollyea recognized Ms. Laser. Ms. Laser asked whether the existing gymnasium would remain. Ms. Smith confirmed that it would remain and serve as an auxiliary gym. Ms. Laser also asked about the status of the tennis and basketball courts shown on the site plan. Ms. Smith stated that the project would remove the tennis courts and that the team intended to install basketball hoops either on the building or in the asphalt area south of the addition, although that element was not part of the current plan. She explained that site constraints, including the fire lane and stormwater requirements, required the use of the space previously occupied by the tennis courts. Ms. Laser asked whether the site would still provide activity space for students, and Ms. Smith confirmed that the area south of the building would continue to support student activities. Ms. Laser noted her appreciation for the gated access and stated she had no further questions.

Chair Pollyea recognized Mr. Greenberg. Mr. Greenberg asked for clarification regarding a structure shown to the south of the proposed addition. Ms. Smith clarified that the area was not a building but a paved playground area for students. He then asked about landscaping changes. Ms. Smith stated that the plan included additional trees along the fire lane and that the project provided the five trees required. Mr. Greenberg indicated he had no further questions.

Mr. Tamarkin asked a follow-up question regarding the building elevation and noted that the addition's height appeared similar to the existing structure and slightly lower than rooftop units. The Commissioner asked whether the new addition would include rooftop units.

Ms. Smith stated that rooftop units would be located on the lower roof at the north side of the addition. She explained that the gymnasium portion would reach a height of 29 feet at the parapet, while the locker room portion would be approximately 18 feet tall. She noted that the rooftop units would sit on the lower roof and would not be visible from the site, and she confirmed that the highest point of the addition would remain the 29-foot roof, which was lower than the rooftop units on the existing building.

Chair Pollyea asked about the number and location of access points for the new building. Ms. Smith explained that a main corridor running north to south would include doors providing access to both the north and south

parking lots. She stated that the northern locker room would include access to both men's and women's locker rooms and would have two exterior doors. She added that an electrical room would include a door on the north side. She further stated that the gymnasium would include two direct exterior exits to the east, which would serve as emergency exits.

Mr. Greenberg asked about the construction schedule. Ms. Smith stated that the project would follow a two-year construction timeline, with work beginning in the summer and continuing beyond a single summer season. She noted that roof replacement work would occur during summer periods and would be split between two summers. Mr. Greenberg asked about safety measures, and Ms. Smith stated that the site would include fencing around the construction and staging areas, along with temporary interior walls to restrict access and ensure student safety.

Ms. Laser asked whether the new gymnasium would have higher ceilings than the existing gym. Ms. Smith stated that she believed the new gym would have higher ceilings and noted that the design referenced other Gahanna middle schools, although she would need to confirm the exact height.

**A motion was made by Tamarkin, seconded by Suriano, that the Development Plan be Approved.**

**Discussion on the motion:**

**Mr. Mako expressed support for the development plan and stated that he looked forward to its completion. Ms. Laser also expressed support and stated that she was pleased to see improvements to Middle School West. Mr. Greenberg expressed support and appreciation for the School Board bringing the project forward. Chair Pollyea stated that she supported the development plan and looked forward to the finished project.**

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 6 - Mako, Chair Pollyea, Vice Chair Suriano, Greenberg, Laser and Tamarkin

**Absent:** 1 - Shapaka

[V-0008-2026](#)

To consider a Variance Application to vary the Stoneridge Master Sign Plan; for property located at 1365 Stoneridge Drive; Parcel ID 025-004272; Kroger #871; Rebecca Green, applicant.

City Planner Maddie Capka introduced the application as a Variance for

Kroger at Stone Ridge, zoned General Commercial. Capka provided a brief history of zoning on the site. In 1995 and 1996, Phases I and II of the Stoneridge Plaza Master Sign Plan were approved. In 2012, a permit was approved for the current Kroger sign; however, it does not meet Master Sign Plan (MSP) requirements and was likely permitted incorrectly. In 2018, an updated Stoneridge MSP was approved. In May of 2024, Planning Commission denied a Variance for a Cinemark wall sign in the same plaza due to concerns with sign scaling and design. In February of 2025, Planning Commission approved a Variance for a larger Kroger wall sign in Hunter's Ridge, which has a total area nearly identical to that proposed in the Kroger Stoneridge application.

Capka explained that the Stoneridge MSP limits the main Kroger wall sign to 72 square feet and eight feet tall, and the existing sign already exceeds the requirements at 181.5 square feet. She elaborated that the existing sign measured just over 16 feet in width and 11 feet in height, while the proposed sign would measure approximately 28 feet in width and just over 10 feet in height, with a total square footage of 290.5. She noted that, aside from the addition of the cart element in the logo, the overall scale of the sign remained similar, although the total sign area increased significantly. Capka explained that the increased area resulted from the measurement method, which accounted for the ascenders and descenders in the "K" and "G" lettering and the added cart element. Capka provided images of the current and proposed signs, as well as sign renderings with measurements.

Staff reviewed the standard variance criteria. They are:

- The variance is not likely to result in substantial damage to the essential character of the neighborhood.
- The variance is not likely to result in damage to adjoining properties.
- The variance is not likely to affect the delivery of government services.
- The variance is not likely to result in environmental impacts greater than what is typical for other lots in the neighborhood.
- The variance is necessary for the economical use of the property, and such economical use of the property cannot be achieved through another method.
- The variance is not likely to undermine the objectives of the Land Use Plan.

- Whether the variance is substantial and is the minimum necessary to make possible the reasonable use of land or structures.
- The practical difficulty could be eliminated by some other method, even if the solution is less convenient or more costly to achieve.

Staff proposed no objections to the request. The existing sign already did not conform to the Master Sign Plan and the proposed sign aligned with Kroger's updated branding and remained in scale with the building. Staff also referenced a previously approved variance for a Kroger sign at another location, which was smaller but similar in design.

Chair Pollyea opened public comment and invited the applicant to speak. Jim McFarland of Zoning Resources, 5765 Boucher Drive, Orient, Ohio, identified himself as a representative for Sign Vision, which represented Kroger. Mr. McFarland stated that Kroger sought to maintain consistent national branding while also working within local zoning regulations. He explained that sign codes often lag advancements in signage technology and design, which frequently require variance requests. He emphasized that the ascenders and descenders in the lettering, along with the cart element, significantly increased the calculated sign area.

Mr. McFarland stated that the proposed sign would replace an existing sign on the building rather than introduce new signage. He presented views of the site from Morse Road and Hamilton Road and reiterated that the request involved updating an existing graphic. He explained that if the ascenders, descenders, and portions of the cart were excluded, the effective sign area would measure approximately 112 square feet. He also presented an example of a code-compliant sign and stated that such a design would not be visually appropriate for the building. He noted that the building featured approximately 335 feet of linear frontage and stated that the proposed sign size was appropriate for the building's scale, setbacks, and surrounding roadway conditions. He added that the sign aligned with current branding trends among similar retailers.

Chair Pollyea closed public comment after confirming that no other speakers wished to address the Commission.

She then opened the floor for questions and recognized Mr. Mako. Mr. Mako asked whether the primary basis for the variance related to the enlarged "K" and "G" lettering and the cart logo. Mr. McFarland confirmed

that those elements accounted for the majority of the variance request. Mr. Mako also asked whether the rebranding effort applied broadly beyond Gahanna, and Mr. McFarland confirmed that Kroger implemented the updated branding statewide and nationwide.

Mr. Greenberg stated that he had no questions and commented that he had recently visited the Hunter's Ridge Kroger and found the signage there to be clearly visible.

Chair Pollyea asked staff about the previously approved variance for the Hunter's Ridge Kroger and whether any modifications were made to that sign to better align with code requirements. Mr. MacFarland recalled that he was not aware of any differences between the approved variance and the final permitted sign. She recalled that the applicant at that time adjusted the design, possibly by repositioning the cart element, to better fit within code limitations and asked whether similar adjustments could occur in this case. Mr. McFarland explained that, in some locations, the cart could be placed below the logo depending on code requirements, but in this case such a change would likely require an additional variance. Ms. Pollyea asked whether any modifications could reduce the overall variance, and Mr. McFarland stated that while adjustments might slightly reduce the area, they would not significantly change the scale needed for the sign to fit the building appropriately.

**A motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Tamarkin, that the Variance be Approved.**

**Discussion on the motion:**

**Vice Chair Suriano stated that he supported the variance for reasons similar to those discussed during the Hunter's Ridge application, noting that the proposed sign appeared appropriately scaled for the building façade and that the unique characteristics of the logo contributed to the variance request.**

**Mr. Tamarkin stated that he supported the variance and offered two comments. He explained that the Commission previously denied the Cinemark sign because its design did not fit the building, rather than due to its size. He also emphasized the importance for retailers to display their logos and branding consistently, noting that Kroger operated many stores and relied on recognizable branding. He stated that he would support the application.**

**Chair Pollyea stated that she had no additional comments and indicated her support for the variance.**

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 6 - Mako, Chair Pollyea, Vice Chair Suriano, Greenberg, Laser and Tamarkin

**Absent:** 1 - Shapaka

**F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None****G. NEW BUSINESS - None****H. OFFICIAL REPORTS****Assistant City Attorney**

Assistant City Attorney Roth reported that an application for a property on Carpenter Road, which the Commission reviewed at a previous meeting, was appealed to the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals. He stated that the Clerk of Council was working to schedule the appeal.

**Council Liaison**

Ms. Laser reported that the City Council approved annexation of properties on Johnstown Road at its March 16, 2026, meeting. She announced an upcoming Visit Gahanna showcase on April 14, 2026, at Noble Cut Distillery, where attendees could receive a single-day pass to the Jazz and Blues Fest with a RSVP. She also reported that the city planned to launch a new mediation program to assist with neighbor disputes. Ms. Laser further reported that at the April 6, 2026, meeting, the city received a grant for body-worn cameras. She announced two upcoming events: a bike rodeo at Academy Park on April 18, 2026, and a litter cleanup event on April 25, 2026, at Friendship Park.

**Mayor**

Mayor Jadwin addressed the Commission and reported that she attended the groundbreaking for the One Church expansion, a project previously reviewed by the Commission, and stated that construction was expected to be completed by the following summer. She also reported that City Council adjusted its April meeting schedule, with no meetings scheduled for April 13 or April 20, 2026, and a combined Regular and

Committee Meeting scheduled for April 27, 2026. Mayor Jadwin announced that the Economic Development Department would host its annual event on May 8, 2026, which would include presentation of the City of Gahanna’s economic development strategy and the inaugural Gahanna Business Excellence Awards. She noted that invitations would be distributed and that additional information regarding award nominations would follow. She also provided an update on the 825 Municipal Complex project, stating that final adjustments were underway before announcing an opening date.

**I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS - None**

**J. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT**

Chair Pollyea then invited comments from Commission members. Mr. Mako apologized for missing the previous meeting due to illness and commended the Commission and staff for their work.

**K. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

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**Sophia McGuire**  
**Deputy Clerk of Council**

*APPROVED by the Planning Commission, this  
day of 2026.*

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**Sarah Pollyea**  
**Chair**