



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

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

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

Gahanna Planning Commission met in regular session on October 22, 2025. The agenda for this meeting was published on October 17, 2025. Chair Sarah Pollyea called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Elizabeth Laser.

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

Absent 1 - Thomas W. Shapaka

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA - None

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2025-0195](#)

Planning Commission meeting minutes 9.24.2025

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

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

Absent: 1 - Shapaka

D. SWEAR IN APPLICANTS & SPEAKERS

Assistant City Attorney Matt Roth administered an oath to those persons wishing to present testimony this evening.

E. APPLICATIONS - PUBLIC COMMENT

[V-0024-2025](#)

To consider a Variance Application to vary Section 1103.07(e) - Development Standards: Large Lot Residential (R-1): Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna; for property located at 675 Parkedge Drive; Parcel ID 025-007586; Current Zoning R-1 - Large Lot Residential; Larry Champlin, applicant.

City Planner Maddie Capka provided a summary of the application; see attached staff presentation. The applicant property is located at 675 Park Edge Drive and is zoned Large Lot Residential (R-1). It shares the zoning designation with the rest of the neighborhood. Ms. Capka explained that the majority of the properties on the west side of Park Edge Drive and Laurel Ridge Drive are very narrow, deep properties. Despite their large size, all of the homes are located close to the right-of-way, due to a very large floodway and flood plain at the rear of the site. Therefore, there are limited spaces where buildings, structures, or additions can be located.

The applicant requests approval of a variance application to allow a 280 square foot addition within a side yard setback. For all properties zoned R1, the standard side yard setback for principal structures is 15 feet. In this case, the proposed addition is only 10 feet from the north property line. All other setback requirements are met. Under the previous zoning code, the site was zoned SF-2, which had a side yard setback of 10 feet. However, due to the large size of the site, it does align more with the R1 zoning designation under the new zoning code. The applicant stated that they began planning the addition before the current code was adopted, so they were under the impression that the setback was still 10 feet.

Ms. Capka shared a site plan of the property, showing where the existing home is located. The 15-foot setback was indicated with an orange line. The boundary of the 100-year flood plain was indicated with a blue line. The addition was shown in dark gray. The house is oriented on the site at an angle, so only a portion of the addition encroaches into the setback. Ms. Capka then shared an aerial image of the property, with the approximate location of the addition outlined in yellow. She pointed out a large existing patio to the rear of the home, further limiting where an addition can be placed. She also noted there is no fence, existing landscaping, or screening between this site and the property to the north. However, the neighbors to the north submitted a statement saying that they do not have an objection to the variance application.

Ms. Capka shared elevations of the addition. The east elevation faces Park Edge Drive, the west elevation is to the rear of the addition, and the north elevation faces the neighboring property to the north. The materials of the addition are planned to match the existing home. The siding and roofing materials, and the windows, will all be identical. One variance is

requested with the application. It is for chapter 1103.07(e), which states that the principal structure must be at least 15 feet from the side property lines and the addition is only 10 feet from the northern property line.

Ms. Capka shared the standard variance criteria which must be fully met in order for the application to be approved. 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 recommended approval of the variance as submitted. In summary, the lot is very narrow and there are both 500-year and 100-year flood plains to the rear of the house, meaning that there are minimal areas for the home addition to be located. The applicant also submitted four statements from neighbors in favor of the variance, including the neighbor to the north, which would be the most impacted by the variance application.

Chair Pollyea opened public comment at 7:07 p.m.

Larry Champlin, 675 Park Edge Drive, introduced himself as the homeowner. He expressed that Ms. Ms. Capka explained the application very well.

Chair Pollyea closed public comment at 7:08 p.m.

Mr. Mako asked the applicant if all building materials would be the same as the existing structure, which Mr. Champlin confirmed. Mr. Mako clarified that nothing was built yet, and that the project was in its planning phase when the zoning code changed, changing the setback

requirements. Mr. Champlin agreed with Mr. Mako's assessment. Mr. Mako asked if there were easements on the side of the property where the addition would be placed. Mr. Champlin stated there were no easements where the addition would be placed.

Mr. Greenberg asked if the patio would remain. Mr. Champlin clarified that where the yellow box indicated the addition on the site plan, there was no concrete patio.

Mr. Tamarkin inquired about the garage door planned for the addition, wondering if it would lead to grass or a paved area. Mr. Champlin explained it would lead to grass, and would be used for mower access. The addition would have a seven foot-by-seven foot garage door and vehicles would not be stored in it.

Ms. Pollyea asked who was doing the work, to which Mr. Champlin replied AIS Renovations was the contractor for the job. He then explained that if the variance was not granted, the addition would have an angled corner, and would lose about 16 square feet. He felt it would look unsightly and also take away space from the addition.

Mr. Greenberg asked Deputy Clerk McGuire if there were any public comments received. Ms. McGuire explained there was one comment received via email from a neighbor supportive of the project. The email was forwarded to the Commission and was also a part of the online legislative file. Mr. Champlin added that the neighborhood was close-knit and his neighbors were all in support of the project, joking that some use his garage themselves.

A motion was made by Mako, seconded by Suriano, that the Variance be Approved.

Discussion on the motion:

Mr. Suriano stated he would be in support of the variance for the reasons that staff outlined. Members Laser, Greenberg, and Tamarkin also expressed support, with Mr. Tamarkin adding his appreciation for having letters from all nearby neighbors that supported the project. Ms. Pollyea stated she would support the project, adding that the topography would not lend itself to put the addition elsewhere.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Absent: 1 - Shapaka

[V-0025-2025](#)

To consider a Variance Application to vary Section 1111.03 - Permanent Sign Standards of the Codified Ordinance of the City of Gahanna; for property located at 722 Buckles Court; Parcel ID 025-013810; Current

Zoning GC - General Commercial; Ohio Gastro Group; Zack Cowan, applicant.

City Planner Maddie Capka provided a summary of the application; see attached staff presentation. The application is for a variance at 722 Buckles Court North. The property is zoned General Commercial (GC), and all properties along Buckles Court North share the same zoning designation. The site is unique in that it has frontage on three different rights-of-way. Interstate-270 is to the east, Tech Center Drive is to the south, and Buckles Court North is to the west.

Ms. Capka provided a brief history of the site. In October of 2022, a Final Development Plan, Design Review, and Variance applications were approved for a new medical office building on the site. The building includes two tenants. At that time, there were no sign variances included with the variance application. In February 2025, a sign permit was approved for a monument sign, which has since been installed. The approval did not include any wall signage. The applicant is requesting approval of a variance for three wall signs. Two of the wall signs are on the west elevation facing Buckles Court North. One is 32.25 square feet, and the other is 53 square feet. The zoning code only allows one wall sign at 50 square feet or less. There is one more wall sign proposed for the east elevation, facing I-270, which is also 53 square feet. Zoning Code allows a total of three wall signs (one sign per frontage) at the site and 150 square feet (50 square feet per frontage) of wall signage. The total square feet for all three wall signs is 138. When added with the existing 32 square foot monument sign, the total area of all signage on the site is around 170 square feet, which meets code requirements.

Ms. Capka shared a site plan indicating the location of all signage. The monument sign was included for reference but was not a part of the application. The first two signs are on the west elevation, which is considered the front of the building. Those signs are 160 and 180 feet from the edge of the right-of-way. The third sign is the only sign on the east elevation facing I-270, and is set back 70 feet from the edge of the right-of-way. She then shared elevations showing what the signs would look like. Sign two and sign three are both "Ohio Gastro" signs that are the same size and design. The first sign reads "Capital Psych Services" and is 32.25 square feet.

Two variances are included with the application, both of which are from section 1111.03 - Permanent Sign Standards of the zoning code. The maximum wall sign area allowed per frontage is 50 square feet, and the west elevation is proposed to have 85.25 square feet. Second, one wall sign is permitted per frontage, and the west elevation is proposed to have two wall signs.

Ms. Capka shared the variance criteria, which 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 had no objections to the variance. Master Sign Plans are typically preferred for multi-tenant buildings; however, there are only two tenants in the building, so the applicant property owner preferred to seek approval for variances. Ms. Capka described the request as minor, as there is only one extra sign on the west elevation and the total area of all signage on the site is below the maximum allowed by code. The applicant stated they need the signage for increased visibility and identification.

Chair Pollyea opened public comment at 7:19 p.m.

Jim McFarland with Zoning Resources introduced himself as the representative for the application. He shared that Ohio Gastro and Ohio Psych are excited to be dual tenants in the facility, and thanked the Commission for their consideration of the application. He explained that the monument sign was initially helpful to identify Ohio Gastro. However, there will be two businesses in the facility and clearer identification is necessary. Ohio Gastro tried to work as closely within code as possible. He felt the variance request was de minimus and that it would help patrons identify the building.

Chair Pollyea closed public comment at 7:21 p.m.

Mr. Mako asked the administration if the sign requiring a variance would

face Buckles Court, which Ms. Capka confirmed. Mr. Mako asked if this application was similar to that of a variance application for signs at Orthopedic One that was heard by the Commission in the past year. Ms. Capka confirmed, noting that they both had frontage on the highway, and this application had less signage than Orthopedic One.

Mr. Tamarkin asked if the building was fully leased, though Mr. McFarland was unsure. Ms. Capka stated her assumption the building was fully leased due to the fact that there are only two tenant spaces. Mr. Tamarkin noted that the Commission could hear an application for another sign if there is a third tenant that moves in. Ms. Capka explained there were only two tenant spaces on the building permit. Mr. Tamarkin then pointed out that if a tenant moves out, the variance as approved stays with the building. But any additional signage would require another variance or a master sign plan. Ms. Capka agreed, adding that if there are many more than two tenants in the future staff would likely recommend a master sign plan.

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

Discussion on the motion:

Ms. Pollyea explained she would be in support of the application primarily because there were similar applications recently, in which signage variances were approved for wayfinding and visibility purposes.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Absent: 1 - Shapaka

[V-0026-2025](#)

To consider a Variance Application to vary section 1103.07(e) - Development Standards: Large Lot Residential (R-1): Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna; for property located at 559 Wickham Way; Parcel ID 025-004606; Current Zoning R-1 - Large Lot Residential; Angela and Thomas Austin, applicants.

City Planner Maddie Capka provided a summary of the application; see attached staff presentation. The property is located at 559 Wickham Way and is zoned Large Lot Residential (R-1). The applicant is requesting approval of a variance to allow a shed within a side-yard setback. For all properties zoned R1, there is a 10-foot side and rear yard setback for all accessory structures. And this shed encroaches five feet into the north side yard setback. In this case, this is an existing shed that was already on the property and was moved to a new

location. In the shed's previous location, it fully met all setback requirements, but the shed was moved prior to city approval or any

permits. So, a variance application is now required because it no longer complies with code. There's also a 10-foot sanitary sewer easement along the rear property line, and the property owner agreed that the shed will not encroach into the easement.

Ms. Capka shared a site plan outlining the new location of the shed in yellow. It is five feet from the northern property line and 10 feet from the east property line. She noted the shed's previous location just south of the yellow box. In its previous location, the shed was 10 feet from the rear property line and more than 10 feet from the north property line. Red lines on the site plan indicated the location of the 10-foot side and rear setbacks, and the 10-foot easement as measured from the east property line. The applicant noted on the site plan that the southern portion of their yard slopes downward, so the shed could not be located in that area. The applicant also had a survey done. Ms. Capka shared an image in which the survey markers were placed.

One variance is included with this application. Per second 1103.07(e), accessory structures must be at least 10 feet from the side property lines. In this case, the shed is only five feet from the north property line. Ms. Capka shared the 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.

Chair Pollyea opened public comment at 7:28 p.m.

Ms. Angela Austin, 559 Wickham Way, introduced herself as the property owner. Ms. Austin explained that if the variance was not granted, the

shed would have to be torn down with no place for their lawnmower. She elaborated on the yard, noting the flat area is limited and some of the yard slopes. They simply pivoted the shed, and it is now five feet from the property line. On the other side, it will be ten feet from the property line to be in compliance of the sewer easement.

Lynn Talarico, 561 Wickham Way, introduced herself as Ms. Austin's neighbor to the north. She stated she had no objection to the shed.

Chair Pollyea closed public at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Mako asked the applicant for the square footage of the shed, which Ms. Austin said was 8 feet by 10 feet. She described it as at least 20 years old. She added that they moved into the house in the fall and the backyard was mostly dirt and rocks. They wanted to improve the backyard and have more space to use and play with their grandchildren, so they put down sod, planted trees, and pivoted the shed. Mr. Mako asked whether the city required her to have a survey conducted. Ms. Austin replied that it was their own choice and they wanted to understand where their property lines were.

Ms. Laser questioned what would happen if a different neighbor moved into the neighboring property, and whether the shed would affect anything a neighbor may want to do on their own property. Ms. Austin stated that if the neighbor stays within their own property lines, her shed would not have an effect on any future projects.

Mr. Greenberg wondered if there was more stored in the shed than just a lawnmower. Ms. Austin explained it is used to store a multitude of tools.

Ms. Pollyea inquired about the age and stability of the shed, and whether another variance would be needed if the shed was torn down, or if the variance applied to the property. Ms. Capka explained the variance would apply for the life of the property.

Mr. Mako noted there are four variances on the meeting agenda, and that two of them are for the same section of code. Ms. Capka explained that staff is considering code changes to reduce side yard setbacks, but nothing is finalized.

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

Discussion on the motion:

Mr. Suriano stated he was in favor of the application.

Mr. Tamarkin expressed his favor for the variance as well, considering a

neighbor voiced their support.

Ms. Pollyea also said she was in favor of the variance, adding the suggestion that the applicant double check code prior to moving it in the future.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Absent: 1 - Shapaka

[V-0027-2025](#)

To consider a Variance Application to vary Section 1109.01(h)(1) - Parking, Access, and Circulation of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna; for property located at 817 North Hamilton Road; Parcel ID 025-001918; Current Zoning RI - Restricted Institutional; One Church; Brent Allen, applicant.

City Planner Maddie Capka provided a summary of the application; see attached staff presentation. Ms. Capka provided a development history on the site as it relates to the current application. In October of 2023, a gravel lot was installed on the site without city approvals. That same month, a notice of violation was issued by Code Enforcement, and the applicant was required to submit Design Review and Variance applications in order to keep the gravel lot. The applications went before the Planning Commission in June of 2024, and the variance was approved with an expiration date of December 31, 2024. At that time, construction for an auditorium and parking lot project was planned to begin by the end of 2024. The applicant stated they would remove the parking lot once construction began. In August of 2024, Final Development Plan, Design Review, and Variance applications for the auditorium and new parking areas was denied by Planning Commission due to concerns regarding screening, landscaping, and the removal of trees. Then, on December 31, 2024, the previous variance approval expired. The applicant was required to submit a new Variance application to continue the use of the gravel lot; that application was denied in January of 2025. At that point, the gravel lot was in violation of the zoning code again. In May of 2025, revised Development Plan and Variance applications for the auditorium and parking areas were approved. This most recent variance application is to extend the use of the existing gravel parking lot. The lot currently does not conform with the zoning code and requires approval of a new variance application to remain. If this variance application is denied, the gravel lot must be removed. There were no changes to the lot since the previous variance application in January. It is still around 23,000 square feet, can accommodate around 70 vehicles, and is 21 feet from the edge of the right-of-way. The applicant states that the lot would be used as a staging area during construction, and would be removed once construction is complete.

Ms. Capka shared two site plans. One site plan provided the location of the gravel lot today, with the other showing a portion of the site plan that was approved by Planning Commission in May 2025. That site plan shows a new parking lot in the same area where the gravel lot is now. By the time construction is complete, the gravel lot will be removed and replaced by a new hard-surface parking lot. Ms. Capka shared the standard variance criteria to be considered. 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.

There is one variance being requested with the application, which is to the section of code that states all parking areas must be hard-surfaced. In this case, the parking lot is gravel and does not meet the hard surface requirement. Staff recommends approval of this variance application. The project was approved by the Planning Commission and is in the building permitting process. The applicant stated they will remove the gravel lot by the end of construction. If approved, staff recommend adding a deadline of October 31, 2027, as two years is a reasonable time for all permits to be issued and for construction to end and the gravel lot to be removed. Staff would not recommend approval of any further extensions past October 31, 2027.

Chair Pollyea opened public comment at 7:42 p.m.

Brent Allen, Operations Director of One Church, introduced himself. Mr. Allen thanked the Planning Department for their help. He added that their ask is to continue to park on the gravel lot until their planned construction

begins.

Chair Pollyea closed public comment at 7:42 p.m.

Mr. Mako asked how the space would be used for construction staging, and what type of security measures One Church would have. Mr. Allen replied that Weaver Construction of Dalton, Ohio, would handle security measures. Mr. Mako asked whether the applicant could finish the project by the October 31, 2027, deadline suggested by staff. Mr. Allen stated they would be able to. He added that once construction begins, it would become a staging area, and no cars would be able to park on the gravel lot. Mr. Mako wondered if for some reason they could not make the deadline, whether One Church would return for an additional variance. Mr. Allen explained that if needed, they would have to return for permission to use the gravel lot as a staging area, but not for parking.

Mr. Suriano asked whether the project was permitted yet. Mr. Allen explained it was not permitted yet, but it was in the permitting process.

Ms. Laser asked where the attendees who use the gravel lot would park once construction starts. Mr. Allen stated they would be shuttled from the Ohio State medical facility parking lot, located across Hamilton Road.

Mr. Greenberg asked if there were any environmental permits for issues such as fugitive dust. Ms. Capka stated she was not aware of such a requirement. Mr. Allen also stated he was not aware of any environmental permits. Mr. Greenberg asked if the recommended date needed to be added to the motion. Assistant City Attorney Roth said that if the Commission would like to add a date for the Variance to expire, it should be included in the motion. Additionally, Ms. Capka stated that while the Planning staff only suggested a condition on the timeline, the Commission could include a statement indicating there would be no additional Variances provided beyond October 31, 2027, if it wished to add that information.

Ms. Pollyea asked when construction would begin. Mr. Allen replied it would start as soon as permits were received by the city. They hoped to begin construction as early as November, 2025. He felt very confident that the October 31, 2027, deadline was reasonable, and that One Church would not have to ask for additional time.

A motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Mako, that the Variance be Approved with a condition that the Variance will expire October 31, 2027, with no extensions.

Discussion on the motion:

Ms. Pollyea expressed hope that the project could move forward in a timely manner.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Mako, Chair Pollyea, Tamarkin, Greenberg and Laser

Absent: 1 - Shapaka

Abstain: 1 - Vice Chair Suriano

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

Assistant City Attorney Roth stated that the Board of Zoning & Building Appeals (BZBA) met the prior evening to hear the appeal for the pool cabana at 400 Braemer Court. It was rejected by the BZBA; the applicant may submit a final appeal to Franklin County courts. Attorney Roth explained that during the BZBA appeal, the contractor described the difficulties that would be involved in making the structure shorter.

Director of Planning

Director Blackford reminded the Commission that the meeting schedule changes to the first and third Wednesdays during November and December, and that the next meeting was scheduled for November 5th. He then discussed an article he shared, which was attached to the agenda, regarding legal actions experienced by Genoa Township. He remarked that the article is a reminder that the Planning Commission's role is to uphold the laws in place, and it should be cautious when weighing input from neighbors and members of the public.

[2025-0204](#)

Director of Planning report

Council Liaison

Chair Pollyea stated that the 2025 budget presentation was scheduled for the following day, and the second reading of the Creekside Development agreement was scheduled for November 17, 2025. Finally, the adoption of the city's Strategic Plan was scheduled for a vote on

November 3, 2025. Documents associated with each project could be found online.

I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS - None

J. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT - None

K. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.