



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, December 3, 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 December 3, 2025. The agenda for this meeting was published on November 28, 2025. Chair Sarah Pollyea called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Michael Suriano.

Present 7 - James Mako, Chair Sarah Pollyea, Vice Chair Michael Suriano, Michael Tamarkin, Thomas W. Shapaka, Michael Greenberg, and Elizabeth Laser

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA - None

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2025-0224 Planning Commission meeting minutes 10.22.2025

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

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

Abstain: 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-0029-2025

To consider a Variance Application to vary Section 1103.07 - Large Lot Residential (R-1) of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna; for property located at 167 Scottsbury Court; Parcel ID 025-006071; Current Zoning R-1 - Large Lot Residential; William Sweeney, applicant.

City Planner Maddie Capka introduced a variance application for a property located at 167 Scottsbury Court. It is in a neighborhood that is zoned R-1, Large Lot Residential. The site is a corner lot, with frontage on Scottsbury Court to the north and Highbury Crescent to the west. The applicant is requesting approval of a variance to allow a structure that's partially a shed and partially a greenhouse, within a rear yard setback, and past the front corner of the house, into what is considered the front yard. The structure is 240 square feet, measuring 10 feet and 10 inches to the peak of the roof, and it will be painted a dark green evergreen color. The shed also encroaches four feet into the 10-foot rear yard setback required for accessory structures on properties zoned R1. It encroaches along the southern portion of the site. Because the site is a corner lot, it has two front property lines and two rear property lines. The two front lines are along the two rights-of-way, and the remaining two property lines are considered rear property lines. Therefore, the entire area past the front of the house toward the right-of-way is considered a front yard, where no accessory structures may be placed. In this case, the shed extends past the southwest corner of the home and is partially in the front yard. Therefore, a variance is required.

Capka provided an aerial view of the site. A blue box indicated the area considered a front yard on the property. There cannot be any accessory structures within that area.

Capka shared a site plan submitted by the applicant. The location of the shed was shown in green, with a blue line indicating the 10-foot rear yard setback. A five-foot easement was indicated in purple. The shed does not encroach into the easement. Finally, a yellow line represented the existing fence on the property. The majority of the fence was approximately three to four feet high, with the taller portion set between the property and the adjacent neighbors to the south.

Capka provided photos that were submitted by the applicant. They included a view of the backyard from Highbury Crescent, showing the short fence and landscaping. Another image provided a view from the back yard where the shed would be placed, as well as the slightly taller fence in the back. There are two variances associated with the project, both for Chapter 1103.07(e). The first states that accessory structures must be at least 10 feet from the rear property line; the shed is only six feet from the rear property line. Second, code states that accessory structures must be located to the rear of the primary structure; the shed is

located past the front corner of the house in the front yard.

Capka shared 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 had no objection to the variance request. The shed would be visible from the right-of-way and the adjacent property. It would be partially screened by the existing fence and landscaping. The applicant stated that the shed design would complement the existing home. In the variance application, the applicant provided many limitations affecting where the shed can be placed. Limitations included an existing mature tree in the rear yard, the existing fence gate that could be blocked if the shed is shifted forward, the sunlight necessary for the greenhouse, and the standard restrictions that come with corner lots. Using Street View, staff located two other properties on Scottsbury Court with sheds that are visible from the right-of-way.

Chair Pollyea opened public comment at 7:09 PM.

William Sweeney, 167 Scottsbury Court, introduced himself as the property owner and applicant. He added that he understood the requirement for the shed to be placed behind the house. He requested the variance because of the way Highbury Crescent curves away from the

back yard, extending to the west. Mr. Sweeney described the road's curvature as making this property unique. He also noted the proposed shed would not be visible to the neighboring property behind the home, due to the fence height.

William Schorr, 260 Highbury Crescent, introduced himself as the property owner adjacent to Mr. Sweeny. He felt Mr. Sweeney's home improvements were positive overall and he stated he had no objection to the variance.

Chair Pollyea closed public comment at 7:11 PM.

Mr. Shapaka inquired as to whether the shed had a foundation or would sit on an existing concrete pad. Mr. Sweeney explained there will be a crushed limestone pad with arrow anchors sewn into it to anchor the structure to the crushed limestone. Mr. Shapaka confirmed that the color scheme would be the complimentary to the house. Mr. Sweeney explained that it would not be an exact match and would combine the shed with a greenhouse. The shed would have a green metal roof with polycarbonate over the greenhouse section to provide light. The wood around the sides would help it blend in with its surroundings. Mr. Shapaka asked how Mr. Sweeney found out he needed a variance. Mr. Sweeney explained that he learned of the need for a variance through the process of planning for the shed and submitting the required permit application.

Mr. Mako asked Mr. Sweeney to elaborate on the challenges of making this project compliant. Mr. Sweeney explained that he attempted to contact the Building Division to obtain guidance but could not connect with the department. He stated he was a novice at doing these types of projects and was not aware of code requirements. Mr. Sweeney explained the shed could not be placed on other areas of his property because of mature trees and an addition on the house that will begin in the spring. To be code compliant, he would lose approximately a third of his yard.

Mr. Suriano referred to the diagram provided with the application. He noted there was a blue dotted line running north and south with a small dimension of 39 feet, which gets wider as the street fans out toward the west. He asked what the blue line represented. Mr. Sweeney replied that the blue line indicates where the shed would need to be, to be compliant with code. Mr. Suriano noted two aspects that make the accessory structure's placement difficult: the shape of the lot, and a mature tree.

Mr. Greenberg inquired about the material of the proposed structure, to which Mr. Sweeney replied it will be a two-ply polycarbonate that will let the sunlight through.

Mr. Tamarkin asked the administration what code states regarding accessory structure square footage. Ms. Capka explained there is not a maximum size, but if it is below 200 square feet, a zoning permit is required. Structures over 200 square feet require a building permit and are subject to building code regulations. Provided lot and height requirements are met, there are no restrictions on square footage.

Ms. Polleyea directed her first question to the administration, and asked if Mr. Sweeney's email was not received, went to a spam folder, or if there was another reason it was unanswered. Ms. Capka noted the emails are monitored by the Building team rather than the Planning and Zoning team. Ms. Polleyea then asked the applicant what type of storage the structure would be used for. Mr. Sweeney stated the storage portion would be used for gardening tools, perhaps a snow blower and grill when not in use. He explained that the majority would be used for a greenhouse. The structure would be permanently affixed.

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

Mr. Shapaka stated he would vote in favor of the application. He noted some of the limitations on the property and felt it was an appropriate project for a variance.

Mr. Suriano stated he would be in support of the variance for reasons previously stated. He felt the applicant sufficiently explained the restrictions faced by the property.

Chair Polleyea also stated her support for the variance. She appreciated the due diligence the applicant did to determine what was compliant and what was not. She noted other variances with similar lot issues were approved in the past.

Yes: 7 - Mako, Chair Polleyea, Vice Chair Suriano, Tamarkin, Shapaka, Greenberg and Laser

V-0030-2025

To consider a Variance Application to vary Section 1103.08 - Medium Lot Residential (R-2) of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna; for property located at 1392 Hanbury Court; Parcel ID 025-007628; Current Zoning R-2 - Medium Lot Residential; Nichole Coverstone, applicant.

City Planner Maddie Capka introduced the application for a property located at 1392 Hanbury Court. The property was highlighted on the zoning map with a blue star. Capka noted it is in a cul-de-sac, and the applicant requested approval of a variance to allow a pergola to be

located at the side of the house instead of the rear. Zoning Code states that all accessory structures must be located to the rear of the primary structure and cannot be located to the side or front of the primary structure. Capka explained that all setback requirements are met with only one variance requested.

The proposed pergola is 190 square feet and approximately 8 feet 4 inches tall. Capka explained challenges in finding a suitable location for the pergola, as the rear yard is sloped, limiting accessory structure placements. There is also a 10-foot drainage easement along the rear property line. Capka then shared a site plan that highlighted the location of the pergola in yellow. A five-foot setback requirement was indicated with a red line, and a purple line indicated an existing five-foot fence on the property. A blue line to the north indicated the 10-foot drainage easement.

Capka shared an aerial view of the site, with a red box highlighting the site of the pergola and a yellow circle that indicated a large, mature tree that would screen the pergola. Capka then shared images of what the pergola would look like if constructed. The bottom left of the screen showed the maximum height of 8 feet and 4 inches, while the bottom right image showed the pergola sloping downward slightly.

One variance is associated with the application, for code section 1103.08, Medium Lot Residential. The code section states that accessory structures must be located to the rear of the principal structure. In this case, the pergola is located to the side instead of the rear.

Capka provided 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.

Capka stated that staff had no objection to the variance request as submitted. All of the setbacks are met and with a five-foot-tall privacy fence and existing mature tree in the front yard, the pergola would be partially screened. Additionally, per the applicant, there were physical limitations of where a pergola could be placed, including the slope of the rear yard, the 10-foot drainage easement, and a smaller backyard.

Chair Pollyea opened public comment at 7:29 PM.

Nichole Coverstone, homeowner at 1392 Hanbury Court, introduced herself. She added that the property is on a cul-de-sac, and that the front yard takes up a large portion of the property. She noted the back yard was narrower, sloped, with an easement. The owners hoped to find a space that provided both some privacy and outdoor seating. She noted there was little flat space, and much of the yard sloped. Ms. Coverstone explained she was not initially aware a variance was necessary.

Chair Pollyea closed public comment at 7:31 PM.

Mr. Mako confirmed with the applicant that a structure was not yet built, which Ms. Coverstone confirmed. She explained she was in the process of obtaining the appropriate zoning permit for structures under 200 square feet, when she learned of the variance requirement. Mr. Mako asked whether the space for the proposed pergola is currently open, which Ms. Coverstone confirmed.

Mr. Greenberg asked if the pergola would be stained any color. Ms. Coverstone explained that it would be steel and was a dark color and all-weather.

Chair Pollyea asked how the pergola would be affixed to the patio that is already on the property. Ms. Coverstone explained that it could be attached to the cement. The structure would be affixed strongly enough that it could withstand strong winds.

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

Yes: 7 - Mako, Chair Pollyea, Vice Chair Suriano, Tamarkin, Shapaka, Greenberg and Laser

V-0031-2025

To consider a Variance Application to vary Section 1103.09(e) - Development Standards: Small Lot Residential (R-3) of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna; for property located at 535 Humboldt Court; Parcel ID 025-009398; Current Zoning R-3 - Small Lot Residential; Rand Gulvas, applicant.

City Planner Maddie Capka introduced the application. The property is located near a city-owned parcel that is undeveloped and heavily wooded. The site itself is at the end of a cul-de-sac. Capka provided an aerial view, which showed existing trees on the property line and on the property itself. The applicant requested approval of a variance to allow an addition of 1,192 square feet within a rear yard setback. All properties zoned R-3 have a 25-foot rear yard setback for principal structures, which applies to additions. The addition is 18 feet and one inch from the south property line, encroaching about seven feet into the setback. All other setback requirements are met. Additionally, there is an easement along the west and south property lines.

The applicant states that the materials for the addition will match the existing house. Capka shared a site plan with the additional location indicated in blue. Most of the addition is planned for the rear of the house, with a small portion coming off of the west side. A red line indicated the five-foot side yard setback for the principal structures and the 25-foot rear yard setback. A green line indicated the easement located on the site. Capka explained that the easement, along with the site layout, created challenges to meet setback requirements.

The applicant stated in their application that the chosen location made the most sense for the addition. Capka then shared elevations of the addition, adding that the materials will match the existing home. The north elevation, shown in the upper right-hand corner, depicted the portion that would potentially be visible from along the right-of-way. Capka also shared a street view image, pointing out that only a small portion of the home would be visible from the right-of-way due to its placement and screening.

One variance is included with the application, for code section 1103.09(e), which states that the principal structure must be at least 25 feet from the rear property line. In the case of the application, the addition is 18 feet and one inch from the rear property line. 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 recommended approval of the variance request as submitted. Capka explained the site limitations, adding that the addition location was chosen due to the easement, roof tie-in, existing windows on the home, and an electrical meter that is in the rear yard. Capka added that most of the addition would not be visible from the right-of-way, and that the house is at the end of a cul-de-sac and is adjacent to a heavily wooded city parcel that provides additional screening.

Chair Polleyea opened public comment at 7:39 PM.

Steve Benninger, homeowner, introduced himself. Mr. Benninger explained that his wife was born with a birth defect leaving her with one leg, and she has worn a prosthetic limb for nearly 60 years. Mr. Benninger explained they have lived in Gahanna for 40 years and bought their home in 2003. Now in their mid-sixties, his wife's mobility issues have become a challenge due to much of their living spaces being upstairs. He expressed that he and his wife love their home and neighborhood, along with the nature preserve right behind the property. He added that the addition would largely be invisible from the court and would not encroach on neighboring properties. It would allow the couple to maintain a portion of living space on the main level and would eliminate the use of stairs for his wife. He thanked the Commission for considering the application.

Chair Polleyea closed public comment at 7:40 PM.

Mr. Mako noted there was a response to a comment in the application about an electrical meter. He asked if the applicant could speak to that point and provide some clarification. Mr. Benninger requested that his electrical engineer speak to that question, noting that he arrived after the swearing-in portion of the meeting. Mr. Roth swore in the speaker. Mr. Rand Gulvas introduced himself as the electrical engineer on the project. He stated the addition would be built directly over the existing electrical service to the house. There is an electrical contractor that was secured and will work with AEP (American Electric Power) to coordinate rerouting the electrical service upon approval of the variance. The transformer is in the southwest corner of the property. AEP requires the property owners to install a conduit and for the conduit to route around the east side of the addition and connect to the house. Mr. Gulvas stated that due to this requirement, they cannot move the addition to the east any further, because they cannot build the building over top of the electrical conduit. Mr. Mako thanked Mr. Gulvas for the clarification. He then asked whether the existing shrubs on the west side of the home would be removed, which was confirmed.

Mr. Suriano noted that there appeared to be a swale and asked if it would be constructed or existed. Mr. Gulvas and Mr. Benninger stated that it was existing. Mr. Suriano noted that from his experience, the swale is likely channeling water away from the middle of the yard.

Ms. Laser asked whether the exterior would match the existing house. Mr. Ballinger stated it was planned to match. The current siding is vinyl with brick on the front.

A motion was made by Laser, seconded by Suriano, that the Variance be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Mr. Shapaka said that much consideration would be given to what was at the rear of the property. Since it backed up to a nature preserve and there were no neighbors behind them, he would be in favor.

Mr. Mako stated his support for the application.

Mr. Suriano stated his support, noting that it falls within the easements and does not disrupt much of the landscape. He noted that only a small portion of the addition infringes upon the setback.

Mr. Greenberg asked a clarifying question to the administration. He asked whether the building had to go through the permitting process after the Planning Commission's approval, which was confirmed.

Chair Pollyea asked the administration if construction can begin once the Variance is approved. Ms. Capka explained that if the application is approved, any outstanding comments must be resolved, and then the Building Division would issue the building permit. Construction could then begin. Chair Pollyea explained that she would be in support of the variance. Chair Pollyea

explained the application met the definition of necessity, and that not granting the variance would cause a hardship for the applicant.

Yes: 7 - Mako, Chair Pollyea, Vice Chair Suriano, Tamarkin, Shapaka, Greenberg and Laser

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

G. NEW BUSINESS

2025-0244

Discussion of 2026 Planning Commission meeting schedule

Director of Planning Michael Blackford introduced the topic of updating the Planning Commission meeting schedule for 2026. Director Blackford recalled the changes that took place in the 2024 updated zoning code, causing the number of items brought before Planning Commission to decrease. He explained that in 2025, the Commission was on track to have nine cancelled meetings, an increase over the last five years. He continued that this is predictable due to the zoning code more closely aligning with the city's vision. Additionally, there was a steady decline in the number of applications over the last five years. In 2020, the average meeting had five agenda items, while meetings now average fewer than three items. In 2025, there were about 45 applications, with about 70% of those being variances.

Director Blackford then provided statistics from surrounding communities. In similar communities, nine out of ten Planning Commissions met once per month, and seven out of ten started their meetings earlier than 7:00 p.m. Director Blackford described Gahanna as an outlier of the communities. He provided benefits of reducing the meeting frequency, including fewer meetings for Commission members to plan around, and less preparation time for staff. Director Blackford also explained that variance applications do not create urgency, and the Commission did not need to meet more frequently simply to consider non-urgent items such as variances, which were often the result of code enforcement violations. He explained that there are other processes that can begin while the variance application process is still underway, such as building permits and engineering plans. Director Blackford explained that staff saw no downside in reducing meeting frequency, noting that applicants can also request a special meeting or a workshop. Director Blackford respectfully requested to change the Planning Commission 2026 meeting schedule to once per month at 6:00 p.m. He added that the second Wednesday would work except for November, as Veteran's Day falls on the second Wednesday in 2026.

Ms. Pollyea inquired with Deputy Clerk McGuire whether this item would

need to be voted on. Deputy Clerk McGuire explained that discussion could take place tonight, but the meeting schedule would be set at the organizational meeting in January 2026. Ms. Pollyea provided Commission members with the opportunity to ask questions.

Ms. Laser asked whether the anticipated Creekside redevelopment would cause an increase in applications, and if this was an inappropriate time to change the meeting schedule. Director Blackford stated that he felt that having Planning Commission meetings once per month would require applicants to accelerate their application process. He stated there are five to seven development plans a year, so a reduced frequency should not have an impact. He noted that there would also be the opportunity to schedule special meetings if warranted. Those meetings could be scheduled according to the Planning Commission's availability and meeting room schedule.

Mr. Greenberg asked if the rules provided for any Planning Commission member to request a meeting. Deputy Clerk McGuire explained that Planning Commission rules only require Planning Commission to meet at a specific time and added that if an item was raised for a special meeting, Deputy Clerk McGuire would notify that chair, and availability would be obtained, and a meeting would be scheduled. Director Blackford noted there was a longstanding practice of Planning Commission discussion starting earlier than 7:00, as caucusing ahead of the meeting used to be standard practice.

Mr. Tamarkin opined that large application items, such as Sheetz, One Church, and Creekside, should perhaps be scheduled for their own meeting to avoid scheduling large projects to occur simultaneously with small projects such as sheds. Director Blackford stated Gahanna would be an outlier in doing so, adding that it is up to the preference of the Commission.

Mr. Shapaka noted the Commission does not know what is on the agenda ahead of time and cannot know what items will be small or large. He wondered if it could be presented in a way so that they would know ahead of time what would be a longer or more well-attended meeting. He wondered if they could be made aware of what applications would be on an agenda ahead of time, to determine if a special meeting could be called for selected items. Director Blackford stated he did not feel it would be feasible to determine a list ahead of time. He stated that typically, a meeting could be continued to return to a discussion later, if an item was not concluded.

Ms. Pollyea asked Mr. Shapaka if he sought an opportunity to evaluate

agenda items to determine if they were appropriate to separate an item for its own special meeting. Mr. Shapaka explained that he hoped to know ahead of the agenda being published, but he realized it would have to be determined at the meeting. Chair Pollyea felt that a continuation could be determined at the meeting. Mr. Shapaka noted that from his personal experience in the field, he would want to know ahead of time if an item was going to be tabled. Mr. Tamarkin said that there is usually awareness of a large item pending, such as Creekside, and that a special meeting could be called for such an item that occurs less than once per year. Director Blackford explained that it is also standard practice across the United States to continue an item to a second meeting if needed. Mr. Greenberg stated that in his four years on the Commission, it was very rare to not finish an agenda.

Mr. Mako agreed with Director Blackford in his assessment that meeting once per month is the standard. He felt positive about scheduling once per month. He also remarked that other communities structure boards differently, with Boards of Zoning and Building Appeals handling items such as variances. Director Blackford concurred, appreciating that Planning Commission can serve several needs of residents. Mr. Mako also remarked on special or continued meetings being very rare. He inquired whether there were any rules stating how many meetings must be held per year. Deputy Clerk McGuire explained that there were no rules or code that determined how many meetings must be held, only that the meeting schedule would be determined at the organizational meeting. Mr. Mako asked how workshops would be scheduled, to which Ms. McGuire expressed an expectation for workshops to be handled similar to current practice. Mr. Blackford concurred, adding that workshops are not frequent. They could be scheduled for Wednesdays on which meetings are not scheduled.

Mr. Suriano agreed with the proposed meeting frequency. He also agreed that Gahanna is a “one-stop shop” and appreciates that residents do not have to attend various meetings for different types of applications. He noted that in his experience, he was involved in high-tension or well-attended meetings. He felt a monthly cycle was appropriate, but that the agenda should be structured in a way so that the smaller items should be handled quickly, and residents did not have to wait for extended periods of time while larger items were being heard. He added that in some situations, applicants travel for the meetings, and tabling their item would be a concern. He felt that the Commission should be conscientious of such situations. He acknowledged that a two-week turnaround could be difficult from the city’s perspective but noted that a full month can make a difference for applicants. Director Blackford noted that the staff review happens at the front end of the application process. The internal

review time for staff is ten days and there are two primary staff members, one from each department, Planning and Engineering. He stated that to staff's own detriment, they work to ensure applicants do not wait more than one to two weeks, appearing before Planning Commission as soon as possible. Mr. Suriano noted that there should also be considerations made to the number of meetings a Commission member can miss. Deputy Clerk McGuire noted that attendance requirements are set by City Charter, and that 2026 is a Charter Review Commission year, so it would be an appropriate time to review attendance requirements.

Mr. Greenberg inquired about the timeline for applications. Director Blackford and Deputy Clerk McGuire explained the application procedures and legal requirements, including timeline, role of various departments, notification of contiguous property owners, applicant letters, and public notice. Clerk McGuire stated she sends out a draft agenda to the Chair and Vice Chair, prior to the meeting, for their approval.

Mr. Shapaka asked what would happen if it was determined that an application should be moved to a later date upon review of the draft agenda. Deputy Clerk McGuire and Assistant City Attorney Roth agreed that the notice process would start over again, due to contiguous property owner and public notice requirements. Mr. Roth noted that in his experience, there was one meeting that ran notably late, and only two or three nights that business was not finished, usually because the applicant requested time to make changes. Chair Pollyea acknowledged the importance of being judicious with time, and agreed that it seemed as though a once-per-month schedule would be amenable.

Chair Pollyea then raised the question of whether an earlier start time was suitable for members.

Ms. Laser shared that she has another volunteer commitment during the 6:00-7:00 PM hour but added that she could make changes to her schedule for one Planning Commission meeting per month. Ms. Pollyea concurred that she prefers a later start time due to her own work but acknowledged she could work around it.

Mr. Tamarkin asked if workshops would begin at 5:00 PM if Planning Commissions start at 6:00 PM. Director Blackford felt that workshops could be worked around, adding that they used to be handled at the end of meetings. He also added that the Council Office is receptive to working with the Planning Department on how the agendas are structured. Ms. McGuire added that Council Office staff aim to order agendas so that residential projects are discussed first. This is done so that residential applicants are not waiting for large or commercial items

to be discussed. Ms. Pollyea noted that she could not do a workshop at 5:00 PM, and Director Blackford agreed it would be difficult for others. Mr. Suriano noted that starting regular meetings at 6:30 PM may be an agreeable approach. Commissioners agreed that meeting once per month at 6:30 PM would be appropriate.

Mr. Shapaka asked if cancelling meetings looked bad for the city, or if the schedule should remain at two meetings per month with meetings cancelled as needed. Chair Pollyea noted that the administration made the request for the schedule change due to the desire to change their workflow, and continuing a schedule of two meetings per month would negate the purpose of their request.

The 2026 meeting schedule will be voted on at the organizational meeting on January 14, 2026.

H. OFFICIAL REPORTS

Assistant City Attorney

Mr. Roth stated that he was working on the appeal at 400 Braemer Court regarding the pool cabana that was in the county courts.

Council Liaison

Chair Pollyea stated that the city's budget is scheduled for a vote on December 15, 2025. There is also legislation for the upcoming Creekside improvements. Finally, an annexation for a parcel located on Johnstown Road was approved by the County Commissioners.

I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS

J. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT

Mr. Shapaka noted that he was in favor of meeting one day per month at 6:00 PM.

K. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.