



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

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

Sophia McGuire, Deputy Clerk of Council

Wednesday, August 27, 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 August 27, 2025. The agenda for this meeting was published on August 22, 2025. Chair Sarah Pollyea called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Thomas Shapaka.

Present 6 - James Mako, Chair Sarah Pollyea, Vice Chair Michael Suriano, Michael Tamarkin, Thomas W. Shapaka, and Michael Greenberg

B. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Chair Pollyea opened nominations for Vice Chair.

Mr. Greenberg nominated Michael Suriano for Vice Chair of Planning Commission. Mr. Suriano accepted the nomination. With no additional nominations, Chair Pollyea closed nominations and called for a motion.

A motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Shapaka, to elect Michael Suriano as Vice Chair. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

C. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA - NONE

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2025-0168](#)

Planning Commission meeting minutes 8.13.2025

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

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

E. SWEAR IN APPLICANTS & SPEAKERS

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

F. APPLICATIONS - PUBLIC COMMENT

[DP-0006-2025](#)

To consider a Development Plan Application for property located at 191 Granville Street; Parcel ID 025-000281; Current Zoning CMU - Creekside Mixed-Use; Northwest Bank; Andrew Gardner, applicant.

City Planner Maddie Capka provided a summary of the application; see attached staff presentation for details. The project is located at 191 Granville Street. Capka shared a zoning map, indicating the site on the southern side of Granville Street. It is zoned Creekside Mixed-use, which is the same zoning district as the downtown Creekside area. The site is located near the east boundary where the Creekside Mixed-Use zoning district ends. The project includes major development plan and variance applications to redevelop an existing building and site.

The existing building has been vacant for approximately five years and was previously used as a PNC bank. The project scope includes new exterior materials and building design, relocating the drive-thru to the rear of the building, shifting parking farther from the right-of-way, some new landscaping, and updated sidewalks both in the right-of-way and interior to the site. There are some newer code requirements that affect the project. Under the former zoning code, the site was zoned OG-2, Olde Gahanna Mixed-Use Neighborhood District. And at that time, the zoning code did not explicitly mention drive-throughs as an accessory use, and they were just considered incidental to whatever the primary use on the site was. In this case, that use was a bank. At that time, the existing drive-thru fully complied with the zoning code. Under the current zoning code, the site is now zoned CMU, and the zoning code considers drive-throughs an accessory use. This means they are only permitted in certain zoning districts, and they are not permitted in CMU. The current drive-thru on the site is considered legal non-conforming. So, it's able to

remain unless it's substantially altered. In this case, since the site is being redeveloped, a use variance is now required for the drive-thru to remain on the site.

Capka shared a site plan and an aerial view of what the site looks like today, indicating the drive-thru area in red. At present, the drive-thru is located on the west side of the building. On the proposed site plan, the ATMs have been moved to the rear of the site. The proposed drive-thru is to the rear, with some stacking spaces that go around the side of the building. A blue line on the proposed plan indicated the parking boundary. At present, parking is located right on the edge of the right-of-way. It has a zero-foot setback. On the proposed site plan, parking has been shifted back and is around 10 feet from the existing right-of-way at the closest point. All parking space requirements are exceeded on the site. The zoning code requires a minimum of seven parking spaces for this use and 16 are provided. The zoning code also states that parking cannot extend past the front facade of the building. In this case, there are six spaces to the front of the building and the remaining 10 spaces are to the side or to the rear. Therefore, a variance has been requested for this requirement. The zoning code also requires a 10-foot side yard parking setback, and the parking area is only five feet from the west property line. A variance has also been requested for the side yard setback. The parking area is screened from the right-of-way and the property to the west by three-foot-high shrubs. All the other landscaping requirements are met as well.

Capka shared a landscape plan. Planned screening was highlighted in a dark green color. It will help screen both the parking lot and the drive thru. A lighter green color indicated the location of mature trees. Capka also shared a rendering of the front of the building, along with an image of the site in its current state. With the proposed renovation, the drive-thru would be relocated and would no longer be visible from the right-of-way. The primary materials on the building would be stone veneer, metal siding, pre-cast concrete, and brick veneer, which are all permitted materials. The existing building is primarily constructed of brick and has a blue roof.

Capka described the four variances associated with the application. The first is related to the requirement that drive-throughs are not a permitted accessory use in CMU. The applicant proposes removing the existing drive-thru and installing a new one behind the building. The second

requirement is that the primary facade of the building must be at least 40% transparent glass. The proposed application has only 32% transparent glass. Third, parking cannot extend past the front facade of the building. In this case, there are six spots to the front of the building. And finally, parking areas must be at least 10 feet from all side and rear property lines. It is only five feet from the west property line in this circumstance.

Capka shared the variance criteria to be met. 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 all four variances as submitted. Capka recalled that the drive-thru will be relocated to the rear of the building, so it will be much less visible than it is currently. Additionally, there is both existing foliage and new screening that will be installed to help screen the drive thru. The total window area of the building will be higher after the redevelopment compared to what it is now and will only be 8% less than what code requires. Most zoning districts in the city only require 25% transparent glass on the primary facade. The proposed parking area aligns much more with the current zoning code than the existing parking area does. The existing parking lot is zero feet from the right-of-way and zero feet from the west property line. Finally, the applicant states that they need the six spaces that are located to the front of the building in order to meet the bank's parking needs.

Capka then shared the major development plan criteria. The

development must meet the applicable development standards of the zoning ordinance, be in accordance with appropriate plans for the area, not have undesirable effects on the surrounding area, and it must be in keeping with the existing land use character and physical development potential of the area. Staff recommended approval of the major development plan. The site has been vacant for around five years, and the redeveloped site aligns much more closely with the current zoning regulations than the existing site. Most of the requested variances are minor in nature and staff does not believe the development would have undesirable effects on the area.

Chair Pollyea opened public comment at 7:12 p.m.

Andrew Gardner, Site Civil Engineer, introduced himself to the Commission. He noted the purpose of the variances is primarily to renovate the existing building as opposed to tearing it down and rebuilding it. The goal is to reuse the structure. Therefore, some limitations exist, such as with glass transparency and parking. Mr. Gardner noted the grade in the back of the site drops off steeply and is a flood plain area.

Chair Pollyea closed public comment at 7:13 p.m.

Mr. Greenberg asked if the automated tellers would be available 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Steven Bell, Director of Corporate Real Estate for Northwest Bank, introduced himself. He explained that between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M., customers could interface with a live teller. After those hours, the bank would operate as a normal ATM. Mr. Greenberg expressed concerns about safety. He questioned whether it would be lit in the drive-thru area, and if there would be a fence at the property line. Mr. Gardner explained that a photometric plan was submitted with the application, and there will be sufficient parking lot lighting in the area. The machines have canopies with lighting underneath as well. He stated there was not a plan for a fence at the time. Mr. Greenberg asked whether this site would be the first Northwest Bank in the Columbus and/or Ohio region. Mr. Bell replied that the corporate headquarters for Northwest Bank was moved to the region within the last couple of years, and this project is one of three planned for the Columbus area, with other planned locations for Westerville and Polaris Parkway.

Mr. Shapaka inquired about the layout of the site. He noted there was one way in and one way out and wondered if angled parking would permit additional landscaping. He also wondered how the parking areas would be used, since additional parking is provided beyond what is required. Mr. Bell stated they had removed the parking and concrete directly in front of the building to create what they felt would be a nice pedestrian walkway. So, having a single flow around the bank would make things both more convenient and safer. Dave Sabina, landscape architect on the project, introduced himself. He explained that if the spaces are angled on the side, some spaces end up lost. More 90° spaces can fit than angled spaces. Additionally, van-accessible parking spaces cannot be skewed due to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. He explained that the parking area shown on the right side of the plan provided was six spaces for staff. Public spaces were situated to the left.

Mr. Mako stated he had some zoning-specific questions. He clarified that the variances are required due to the accessory nature of the drive-thru, and that the primary use would be a bank. Ms. Capka confirmed, adding the bank was the primary use and the drive-thru would be listed as an accessory use. They are not permitted in the Creekside Mixed-Use zoning district. He asked if it would be a fair assumption that the planned use is essentially the same as the prior use of the building. Ms. Capka confirmed. Mr. Mako shifted his questions to the applicant. He noted that the site plan shows an interior sidewalk extending to the west side of the property. Mr. Sabina said that the extension is for connectivity for future development on Shull Avenue. Right now, it is a "sidewalk to nowhere," but will be available for future connectivity. Mr. Mako asked if there would be removal of any existing trees in the back of the site. Mr. Gardner explained there was no tree removal anticipated. Mr. Mako asked if the canopies would be lit, which the applicants confirmed. He then inquired about the potential expanded right-of-way from Granville Street, including the purpose and long-term plan, and whether it would impact future parking. Mr. Gardner explained that the city's proposed thoroughfare plan requires additional right-of-way if the site is redeveloped. The area the applicant plans to grant to the city was highlighted on the site plan with a blue line. They would also reconstruct the brick sidewalk in front of the building, which is currently not ADA compliant.

Mr. Suriano asked if any of the material of the building would be reused

or if it will all be replaced. Mr. Sabina explained that essentially all the brick would be replaced.

Mr. Shapaka asked if there was a dumpster enclosure. Mr. Sabina explained that most trash generated by the business must be destroyed in compliance with certain regulations due to confidentiality. Therefore, only a small amount of trash will be generated, such as that of employees' lunches. There would not be dumpster enclosures at the site.

Ms. Pollyea asked if there was one lane at the bank, or if the teller stations had their own lane while the ATMs had a separate lane. Mr. Sabina explained that there was one lane and two stations stacked one in front of the other. However, there would be a bypass lane, allowing the vehicle in back to leave if it is done before the vehicle in front of it. Ms. Pollyea asked where the tellers were located. Mr. Sabina elaborated that they are remote and there is no need for a live teller. Ms. Pollyea inquired about the vestibule. She noted that some banks have vestibule access 24 hours per day, seven days a week, because they may have an ATM or deposit box inside the building. She wondered if Northwest Bank would be set up similarly. Mr. Bell replied that there is a night drop feature, but it would be located elsewhere. Ms. Pollyea asked where a sign indicating there was a drive-thru ATM would be located. Mr. Garnder explained it would be on the right side of the drive as customers enter the site. He explained it was shown on page five of the application packet submitted.

A motion was made by Mako, seconded by Shapaka, that the Development Plan be Approved.

Discussion on the motion:

Mr. Greenberg explained he felt the bank would be a great improvement to the site and appreciated the applicant for bringing their business to Gahanna. Mr. Greenberg commented, for the administration, that he hoped Granville Street would become a key focus for redevelopment.

Mr. Tamarkin agreed that it was a nice addition to the community.

Mr. Shapaka stated he understood the existing conditions on the site, and thought it was well designed. He stated he was in support of the project, though he noted he would like to see more structures positioned closer to the street on Granville Street.

Mr. Mako also expressed support for the project and excitement for Northwest Bank coming to town.

Mr. Suriano agreed that, ideally, buildings would be closer to the street to tether the community together. However, given the limitations, he felt that the team did an excellent job with the redesign.

Ms. Pollyea concurred with other members' comments that the building was well-designed and would be an improvement upon what was currently there.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

[V-0021-2025](#)

To consider a Variance Application to vary Sections 1105.01(b) - Comprehensive Use Table, 1107.02(c)(4) - Creekside Mixed-Use Design Standards, and 1109-01(a)(1)/(4) - Parking, Access, and Circulation of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna; for property located at 191 Granville Street; Parcel ID 025-000281; Current Zoning CMU - Creekside Mixed-Use; Northwest Bank; Andrew Gardner, applicant.

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

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

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE

H. NEW BUSINESS - NONE

I. OFFICIAL REPORTS

Director of Planning

Director of Planning Michael Blackford shared that there would be two items at the next meeting, including a residential variance and a conditional use application.

Mayor

Mayor Laurie Jadwin provided updates. On August 26, there was a kickoff event to reveal the final draft of the Our Gahanna Strategic Plan. She estimated there were between 300-350 people that attended and provided input. There will be an opportunity to provide feedback online until September 20th. She also shared plans for additional popup events at the YMCA, library, and other places in the community. This will be the final opportunity for community feedback on the city's strategic plan. The

Mayor also provided information on Reimagining Creekside, a project developing alongside Our Gahanna. Renderings were shared at the kickoff event. The project stemmed from flood mitigation planning. A community conversation for Reimagining Creekside is planned for Wednesday, September 24, 2025 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Creekside Conference and Event Center.

Council Liaison

Chair Pollyea reported that Committee of the Whole met on Monday, August 25th. During the meeting, the City Attorney shared updates to Council rules to improve efficiency.

J. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS - NONE

K. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT

Members congratulated Chair Pollyea and Vice Chair Suriano on their first meeting in their new roles.

Mr. Shapaka inquired as to whether future agendas could order applications with multiple parts in the order of importance. In the case of the Northwest Bank applications, Mr. Shapaka explained that the Development Plan would be contingent upon the Variance passing. Ms. McGuire explained she could order them as such on future agendas.

Mr. Suriano inquired as to whether the staff presentations can be made available to Planning Commission members ahead of the meeting.

L. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.