



# 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, January 14, 2026

6:30 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

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**Organizational Meeting begins at 6:30 PM, immediately followed by the Regular Meeting**

**A. OATHS OF OFFICE: MAYOR LAURIE A. JADWIN**

Mayor Laurie Jadwin administered the oaths of office to Elizabeth Laser and Michael Tamarkin, who will each serve a three-year term ending December 31, 2028.

**B. CALL MEETING TO ORDER (Organizational) / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Gahanna Planning Commission met for the Organizational meeting on January 14, 2026. The agenda for this meeting was published on January 9, 2026. Mayor Laurie Jadwin called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.*

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

**Absent** 1 - Thomas W. Shapaka

*Mr. Shapaka arrived at 6:54 p.m.*

**C. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Mayor Jadwin opened the floor for nominations for Planning Commission Chair. Michael Tamarkin nominated Sarah Pollyea as Chair. Ms. Pollyea accepted the nomination. With no additional nominations, Mayor Jadwin closed nominations.

**Motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Mako, to elect Sarah Pollyea as Planning Commission Chair.**

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

**Absent:** 1 - Shapaka

**D. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

Chair Pollyea opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair. Mr. Greenberg nominated Michael Suriano as Planning Commission Vice Chair. Mr. Suriano accepted the nomination. With no other nominations, Chair Pollyea closed nominations.

**A motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Tamarkin, to elect Michael Suriano as Planning Commission Vice Chair.**

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

**Absent:** 1 - Shapaka

**E. ESTABLISH DAY AND TIME OF REGULAR MEETINGS**

Chair Pollyea opened the discussion for the 2026 meeting schedule. She proposed the Commission meet once per month, on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., except for the November meeting, which would be held on the first Wednesday of the month.

Mr. Mako stated the standard in the region is for Planning Commission to meet once per month, and stated his support for the proposed schedule.

Ms. Laser explained a scheduling conflict, noting her preference to meet at 7:00 p.m.

Chair Pollyea set the meeting schedule for the second Wednesday each month, with the November meet falling on the first Wednesday of the month due to the Veteran's Day holiday. Meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m.

**F. PLANNING COMMISSION REPRESENTATION ASSIGNED BY CHAIR**

**Council Liaison**

Chair Pollyea assigned Elizabeth Laser as Council Liaison.

**G. ADJOURNMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**

*There being no further business, the Organizational meeting was adjourned at 6:38 p.m.*

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

*Gahanna Planning Commission met in regular session on January 14, 2026. The agenda for this meeting was published on January 9, 2026. Chair Sarah Pollyea called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.*

**B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA**

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

[2026-0007](#)

Planning Commission meeting minutes 12.3.2025

**A motion was made by Suriano, seconded by Tamarkin, 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 administered an oath to those persons wishing to present testimony this evening.

**E. APPLICATIONS - PUBLIC COMMENT**

[V-0001-2026](#)

To consider a Variance Application to vary Sections 1109.05(e)(1)(A)/(D) - Fences of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna; for property located at 4171 Clotts Road; Parcel 025-001983; Current Zoning ER - Estate Residential; Megan Workman, applicant.

City Planner Maddie Capka introduced the application; see attached staff presentation. Ms. Capka explained that the property is zoned ER - Estate Residential. Estate Residential properties have at least one acre and are not located within a subdivision. The applicant requested a Variance to allow a fence within a front yard setback; there are two fences as part of the project. The first fence is a four-foot-tall split-rail fence that would be fully within the front yard. The second fence is a six-foot-tall privacy fence that would be along the west property line between the subject home and the adjacent property. Zoning Code allows decorative open fences 42 inches tall or less in front yards, and the split-rail fence exceeds code by six inches. Additionally, a portion of the privacy fence also extends past the front elevation of the house. Capka explained that to the rear of the property, there is a large pond and creek that are both located within a 100-year floodplain, limiting the

area in which a fence can be installed.

Capka shared a site plan submitted by the applicant. The approximate location of the house on the site was indicated with a purple box. A blue line indicated where the six-foot privacy fence would be located, and a green line showed the proposed location of the four-foot-tall split rail fence. A portion of the six-foot fence would extend past the front of the house and would be set back about one foot from the west property line, while the four-foot fence would be fully to the front of the house and set back about 30 feet from the front property line.

Capka shared aerial images of the site. One included large mature trees in the rear yard, as well as the approximate location of the pond and creek. Another image showed the exact location of the pond and creek, and another showed the location of the 100-year flood plane, which takes up the majority of the backyard. Capka also shared a street view image of the property, noting trees and foliage that would partially screen the fence. The split-rail fence would be partially visible from the right-of-way, but the majority of the privacy fence would not be visible. Capka then shared images showing the two types of fences that would be installed.

The requested variance pertains to the Zoning Code section that states that fences cannot extend past the front elevation of the principal structure and privacy fences are prohibited in the front yard. It also states that fences in the front yard must be decorative, open, and 42 inches tall or less.

Capka shared the standard variance criteria that must be met for approval. 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.

Chair Pollyea opened public comment at 6:45 p.m.

Ben Workman, 266 Colony Court, addressed the Planning Commission. Mr. Workman is the owner of Arrow Fence, the contractor carrying out the project. Mr. Workman provided a correction to Ms. Capka's report, noting that the six-foot fence that runs on the west side property line does not exceed the front of the house. He explained there was an error when the project was submitted. The six-foot fence would not impede the front yard. He added that the homeowner would consider having a 42-inch fence; their primary goal was to enclose the space for their dog. What was submitted was the owner's preference, but it could be changed if needed. He provided one additional correction to the application: the split-rail fence was supposed to be a three-rail fence, not a four-rail fence.

There being no other members of the public wishing to speak at the time, Chair Pollyea closed public comment at 6:47 p.m. and opened the floor for questions from the commission.

Mr. Suriano inquired about the plan for a dog enclosure, and whether that would be in the four-foot fence or six-foot fence sections. Mr. Workman explained there was not a split between the two types of fences, so there is simply one large enclosure. The two types of fencing are proposed for some added privacy. Mr. Suriano noted there was a space on the plan that looked very tight and wondered whether it was accessible. Mr. Workman explained the area in question was approximately a 7-foot passageway.

Mr. Greenberg asked for clarification whether the privacy fence would extend into the front yard. Mr. Workman confirmed it would not, and it would extend no further than the front corner. Split rail will be in front of the home. There would be two gates, one in the back corner, and one in the front corner. Mr. Greenberg asked whether there were comments from neighbors, to which Deputy Clerk McGuire replied she did not receive any.

Mr. Tamarkin confirmed that there would be a transition from the solid fence to the split rail fence around the corner of the house. He then inquired about the split rail having a path through the trees in the front yard. Mr. Workman explained that the trees were removed.

Ms. Pollyea asked what kind of material went in between the slats in the three-rail fence. Mr. Workman stated there was a wire mesh material between them.

Mr. Greenberg asked where the driveway to the home was. Mr. Workman described the two driveway access points. He confirmed that an emergency vehicle would be able to access the driveway if needed.

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

**Mr. Suriano stated he supported the variance due to limitations posed by the floodplain and the reasons outlined by staff.**

**Mr. Tamarkin stated he would also be in support of the variance, adding that the fence height is appropriate considering the rural-type setting of the property.**

**Ms. Pollyea added her support as well, citing the hardship placed on the homeowner.**

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

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

**Absent:** 1 - Shapaka

[V-0002-2026](#)

To consider a Variance Application to vary section 1103.06(e) - Estate Residential: Development Standards of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna; for property located at 52 Price Road; Parcel ID 025-000967; Current Zoning ER - Estate Residential; Barbara Rogers, applicant.

City Planner Maddie Capka introduced the application; see attached staff presentation. The property at 52 Price Road is just under five acres and is zoned Estate Residential. Capka shared a site map; the property is narrow and deep. The applicant requested approval of a variance to have less frontage than required. Zoning Code states that the properties zoned Estate Residential must have at least 150 feet of frontage along a right-of-way. There is a proposed lot split application, after which each parcel would be below the required 150 feet. The west parcel would have approximately 120.9 feet, while the east parcel would have approximately 120.3 feet of frontage. After the lot split, each parcel would be around 2.4 acres. A subdivision without plat application has not yet been filed, but if the variance is approved, that would be the applicant's next step. Capka explained that there was both a house and garage previously on the site, and both were demolished in November of 2025.

Sharing a site plan submitted by the applicant, Capka pointed out that

the lot is proposed to be split almost exactly down the middle. If split, each site will still exceed the required one acre.

The requested variance is for Section 1103.06(e) of the Zoning Code, which states that all properties zoned Estate Residential must have at least 150 feet of frontage. As previously noted, each proposed parcel will have around 120 feet.

Capka then shared the standard variance criteria that must be met for the variance to be approved:

- 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

Mr. Shapaka arrived at 6:54 p.m.

Staff recommended approval of the variance as submitted, stating it is relatively minor in nature at a 30-foot deviation, and both parcels remain more than double the minimum lot size for the zoning district. She stated that the Planning Commission previously approved a frontage variance for another Estate Residential property on Shull Road.

Chair Pollyea opened public comment at 6:56 p.m.

Barbara Rogers, 462 Hamilton Court, introduced herself as the applicant and owner of the property. She said that although the house and garage were demolished, there are two small outbuildings still existing on the property. She stated she also learned there is well water and septic on the property. She contacted the Franklin County Department of Health to understand the process of sealing off the well and hauling away the

septic system.

There being no other members of the public wishing to speak at the time, Chair Pollyea closed public comment at 6:57 p.m.

Mr. Shapaka asked if the site would be tied into the City of Gahanna water and sanitary, which Ms. Rogers confirmed. Ms. Rogers noted there is a sanitary sewer easement across the property. Due to the easement and flood plain at the back of the property, the site could not be split horizontally.

Mr. Mako confirmed with the administration that the Variance request is specifically for road frontage, which Ms. Capka acknowledged. All other requirements for the lot to be split are met. Mr. Mako directed remarks to the applicant, stating that the access and maintenance agreements that were established are very good to have. He asked whether there would be one point of access to the properties, which Ms. Rogers confirmed there would be a shared driveway.

Ms. Laser asked whether two driveways would be feasible, noting that in a couple of decades, there could be new property owners. Ms. Rogers cited the importance of the maintenance agreement, highlighting the shared responsibility of maintaining the single driveway, which would stay with the property.

Mr. Greenberg asked the administration if the lot split were to be approved, if any other approvals would be required of Planning Commission. Ms. Capka stated all other approvals would be the purview of the city administration.

Ms. Pollyea provided comments to the applicant from her perspective as a real estate attorney. She encouraged the applicant to hire a real estate attorney to review the maintenance agreement, and also to have it filed after the split occurs. Ms. Rogers noted that the City of Gahanna requested the access and maintenance agreement during the application review process but agreed that it should be re-signed and filed after the lot split.

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

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

**F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE**

**G. NEW BUSINESS**

[RULES-0001-2026](#) Planning Commission Rules of Procedure - Proposed Draft 1.14.2026

Chair Pollyea introduced the item and opened the floor for questions from the Commission. Mr. Shapaka inquired about the changes in the rules. Deputy Clerk McGuire explained that the rules were updated to eliminate the stated start time of 7:00 p.m., so that the Commission had flexibility to meet at the proposed 6:30 p.m. start time.

**A motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Shapaka, that the Rules of Procedure be adopted as proposed. The motion carried by the following vote:**

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

**H. OFFICIAL REPORTS**

**Director of Planning**

Director Blackford expressed his appreciation to the Commission for their modifications to meeting attendance. Director Blackford shared that the new Gahanna Lincoln High School opened the prior week, adding that the City of Gahanna Building team spent thousands of hours on the project. He expressed his thanks to Senior Building Official Ken Fultz, and Building Division members Ed Loper, Fredena Williams, and Mike Frey. Director Blackford also remarked on activity happening on Mill Street, where demolition has begun on the Creekside redevelopment project. He added that Creekside, in addition to the recently-constructed library, the high school, and the new Civic Center

**Council Liaison**

Chair Pollyea reported that City Council had their organizational meeting and swearing in ceremony on January 2, 2026. Council selected Trenton Weaver as Council President, with Jamille Jones serving as Vice President.

**Mayor**

Mayor Jadwin echoed Director Blackford's comments about the Building Division team. She shared that the school district's leadership expressed their appreciation of the Building team for their role in opening the building. She added that Public Safety and Engineering played critical roles in the project as well. In reflecting on her own experience visiting the building, Mayor Jadwin stated that she was overwhelmed by the

opportunities the building presents for students for generations to come. She commended the community for understanding the importance of investing in education. Mayor Jadwin then shared that the grand opening of the new Civic Center would be held in the coming months. She anticipated staff to begin moving in in the first quarter. The mayor also recounted being present for the beginnings of demolition at Creekside, and expressed excitement for the future of Creekside. Mayor Jadwin also remarked on the adoption of Our Gahanna, the Strategic Plan and Economic Development Strategy that was previously adopted in November. The administration is shifting to the implementation aspect of the plan and will continue to partner with Planning NEXT to work on tracking metrics and reporting. She ended her comments by thanking the Commission for their changes to the meeting schedule, which will make a positive difference for staff, and thanked the Commission for their expertise and commitment.

### Chair

Chair Pollyea echoed sentiments about the new high school. She expressed that as an alumnus, she appreciated the opportunity to tour both the old and new buildings.

### I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS - NONE

### J. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT

Mr. Shapaka shared congratulations to the Commission Chair and Vice Chair on their elections. Mr. Shapaka also remarked on the high school construction, noting its impressiveness, adding that he also had the opportunity to tour the one-room school for the first time.

Mr. Suriano also shared his thoughts on the new building, stating that his three daughters will all have gone through Gahanna schools, with his youngest starting at the new high school. He remarked that the new school is an achievement. He felt it was a milestone for the community.

Ms. Laser said she has a high school senior and was also impressed by and excited about the new building. She remarked that some seniors may feel sadness about transitioning to the new building.

### K. ADJOURNMENT OF REGULAR MEETING

*There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m.*