

**MINUTES
COLUMBUS PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2025 AT 4:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
123 WASHINGTON STREET
COLUMBUS, INDIANA**

Members in Person: Melanie Henderson, Andrew Beckort, Dave Bush, Dennis Baute, Keerthi Alapati, Laura Garrett, Michael Kinder, Zack Ellison, and Tom Finke (Bartholomew County Plan Commission Liaison)

Members Absent: Whitney Koelling, Evan Kleinhenz, and Chris Bartels

Staff in Person: Jeff Bergman, Melissa Begley, Kyra Behrman, Andres Nieto, Janie Meek, and Austin Whitted (Deputy City Attorney)

Mr. Kinder opened the meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of the August 13, 2025 meeting (Approval and Signing).

Motion: Ms. Garrett made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Ellison seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 7 in favor and 0 opposed.

OLD BUSINESS REQUIRING COMMISSION ACTION

None

NEW BUSINESS REQUIRING COMMISSION ACTION

Mr. Bush joined the meeting.

RZ-2025-008: Vision Housing – A proposal by Vision Housing, LLC to rezone 19.20 acres from RMc (Residential: Multi-Family with commitments) to I1 (Industrial: Light). The property is located on the west side of 150 West, 300 feet south of its southernmost intersection with Paula Drive, in the City of Columbus.

RZ-2025-009: Vision Housing – A proposal by Vision Housing, LLC to rezone 12.32 acres from RMc (Residential: Multi-Family with commitments) to I2 (Industrial: General). The property is located on Lots 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, and “Block A” of the Drive-In Commercial Park, on the west side of Indianapolis Road, 500 feet south of its intersection with Paula Drive, in the City of Columbus.

RZ-2025-010: Vision Housing – A proposal by Vision Housing, LLC to rezone 3.21 acres from RMc (Residential: Multi-Family with commitments) to I1 (Industrial: Light). The property is located on Lots 3 and 4 of the Drive-In Commercial Park, on the west side of Indianapolis Road, 500 feet south of its intersection with Paula Drive, in the City of Columbus.

Ms. Begley presented for the Planning Department.

Tim Thomas with Milestone Design Group and Nick Likens with Vision Housing represented the applicant. Mr. Thomas stated that, due to infrastructure costs, it would not be feasible to develop these sites for multi-family residential use, and they are requesting to return the zoning back to industrial. Mr. Likens stated that he agreed that infrastructure, specifically sanitary sewer, costs have proven to be too great to develop these sites for an affordable residential use.

Ms. Alapati asked if the applicant had an industrial business interested in the site if the rezoning change were approved. Mr. Likens stated that they do not have anyone interested at this time.

Mr. Ellison asked where the access for the far west property would come from. Mr. Likens stated they would build a road off of Omega Drive that would access the far west property, and there would be no vehicle access from 150 West onto any of the lots.

Mr. Kinder opened the meeting to public comment.

Adam Deaver, 1471 West Paula Drive, stated that if this were approved for the west parcel and the property returned to an industrial zoning, he would like to see all of the 2017 industrial rezoning commitments applied again.

Tammy Foist, 3863 North 150 West, stated that she went door to door in Tudor Addition, Vision Village, Princeton Park, and Abbey Place with a petition against industrial development in this area. She stated that she collected approximately 52 signatures of people who were concerned with security risks, sound and noise pollution, increased traffic, decreased property values, and environmental pollution. Ms. Foist provided the petition to the Commission.

Mr. Kinder closed the meeting to public comment.

Mr. Thomas stated that, with the commitments proposed in the staff report, there would be restrictions on what type of industry would be allowed to develop on these sites. He added that the applicants agree with all of the commitments noted in the staff report.

Mr. Bergman gave a comparison between what was included with the 2017 far west parcel industrial rezoning commitments and what the staff is currently recommending. He stated that currently recommended commitments prohibiting access from 150 West and requiring enclosed industrial operations were similar and the recommended buffering was increased. Mr. Bergman noted a new recommended commitment for a shared use path to be constructed in the 150 West right-of-way to further bicycle and pedestrian circulation in the area. He stated that the previous, 2017 commitments not currently included in the staff recommendation limited material silo height, prohibited outdoor storage, required any truck docks to be oriented to the south, and prohibited certain trucking-intensive warehousing and wholesaling uses.

Ms. Alapati asked why the recommended commitments had changed. Mr. Bergman stated that the increased residential development in the vicinity of the property necessitated a greater buffer, with that buffer also then decreasing the significance of limits on on-site activities, such as outdoor storage, which would be obscured by the buffering. He stated that the shared use path commitment was added to carry forward an opportunity to improve the area's bicycle and pedestrian network that was identified with the previous residential rezoning of the property.

Ms. Garrett asked if there would be a site plan review for these properties to monitor how this potential shared use path would be designed. Mr. Bergman and Mr. Beckort stated that the path would most likely follow a straight course along the existing 150 West right-of-way, with other options being limited due to overhead utilities and the confines of that right-of-way. Mr. Bergman added that he was not aware of a scenario where a site plan for development on this property would come before the Plan Commission. Mr. Bergman noted that the subdivision plat for the area may need to be revised to reflect the applicant's current plans for streets and circulation.

Mr. Kinder reopened the meeting to public comment.

Adam Deaver, 1471 West Paula Drive, stated he would like to see all of the commitments discussed included as part of this rezoning, those that are new and those from 2017. He was also concerned with the enforcement of the buffer requirements and long-term maintenance of plantings. He would also like to see all the overhead power lines buried.

Tammy Foist, 3863 North 150 West, stated she would also like to see all of the discussed commitments applied to this rezoning. She was also concerned with the berm and just how much of the site it would actually shield. She added that she likes that 150 West will be a dead end at her south property line.

Mr. Bergman stated that the recommended berm itself would be 8 feet in height with an opaque planting of trees on top of the berm.

Mr. Kinder closed the meeting to public comment.

Mr. Bergman stated that landscape maintenance can be a challenge and that is why, over time, staff has determined that adding the berm to the landscaping requirement is a more effective long term buffer option.

Mr. Bergman stated that staff is recommending a favorable recommendation to City Council for RZ-2025-008 and repeated the recommended rezoning commitments:

1. The property shall gain access only from Omega Drive with no vehicle access from 150 West.
2. Rather than the required Type A buffers, those that are a minimum of 50 feet in width and include 8-foot tall berms with 3 to 1 slopes shall be installed along the north, west, and south property lines. This includes along the west side of the county road 150 West opposite the entire frontage of the property at 3863 North 150 West. Landscaping meeting the Zoning Ordinance specifications for a Type A buffer shall be planted on top of the berms. The berms and landscaping shall be installed at the time the property develops and shall be complete prior to occupancy of any development.
3. The required buffers along the west and south property lines, including the required setback, shall be provided directly adjacent to and outside of the Joseph Anthony regulated drain right-of-way.
4. All industrial operations shall be completely enclosed within structures and shall not require overhead doors to be opened for ventilation or any other purpose other than typical and customary access.
5. The existing right-of-way of 150 West along the east property line of the subject property shall not be considered a street frontage for the purposes of the zoning ordinance, but shall be improved with a shared use path meeting the specifications of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. This shared use path shall be constructed, with the development of the subject property, from the current terminus of the 150 West roadway at 3863 North 150 West along the entire subject property frontage to its south property line. The path shall be complete prior to occupancy of any development on the subject property.
6. Material silos or storage bins shall be no taller than the primary structure(s) on the property.
7. Outdoor storage of any type is not permitted.
8. Any truck docks and/or loading areas shall be oriented to the south, with the industrial building(s) between those features and the north property line.
9. Permitted uses shall be limited to those indicated as such by the zoning ordinance effective September 10, 2025, excluding the following: self-storage, warehouse & distribution facility, and wholesale facility.

Mr. Bergman added that the rezoning should include the following conditions:

1. The companion rezoning requests for the property to the east (RZ-2025-009: Vision Housing – Omega Drive and RZ-2025-010: Vision Housing – Omega Drive Lots 3&4) shall first be complete.
2. The property to the east shall first be re-platted to provide access to this subject property from Omega Drive.

Motion: Mr. Bush made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to the City Council for RZ-2025-008, including all of the commitments and conditions stated by Mr. Bergman. Ms. Garrett seconded the motion. The motion passed with a ballot vote of 8 in favor and 0 opposed.

Mr. Bergman stated that RZ-2025-009 addresses the majority of lots around Omega Drive, lots 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, and Block "A", which includes the pond. The request is to rezone from RMc to I2. Mr. Bergman stated the staff recommends a favorable recommendation to City Council, including two commitments:

1. The properties shall gain access only from their Omega Drive frontage and not from frontage on 150 West.
2. At the time the current Lots 11 and/or 12 of the Drive-in Commercial Park are developed and the sidewalk along their Omega Drive constructed as required by the zoning ordinance, a sidewalk shall also be constructed along the Omega Drive frontages of the adjacent storm water pond (on Block "A" of the Drive-in Commercial Park). This sidewalk shall be included on the Lot 11 and/or 12 Zoning Compliance Certificate site plan, shall be complete prior to Lot 11 and/or 12 occupancy, and shall be consistent with the Subdivision Control Ordinance sidewalk standards.

Motion: Mr. Bush made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to the City Council for RZ-2025-009, including the commitments stated by Mr. Bergman. Ms. Alapati seconded the motion. The motion passed with a ballot vote of 8 in favor and 0 opposed.

Mr. Bergman stated that RZ-2025-010 addresses lots 3 and 4, which the applicant is requesting to rezone from RMc to I1. Staff is recommending a favorable recommendation to City Council with the following commitments:

1. The property shall gain access only from its Omega Drive frontage and not from frontage on 150 West.
2. All industrial operations shall be completely enclosed within structures and shall not require overhead doors to be opened for ventilation or any other purpose other than typical and customary access.

Mr. Bergman stated the favorable recommendation should also be contingent on the completion of the companion rezoning request for the adjoining lots (RZ-2025-009: Vision Housing – Omega Drive).

Motion: Mr. Bush made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to the City Council for RZ-2025-010, including the commitments and condition listed by Mr. Bergman. Ms. Alapati seconded the motion. The motion passed with a ballot vote of 8 in favor and 0 opposed.

DP-2025-005: Bartholomew County Fairgrounds - Storage Building – A proposal by the Bartholomew County Commissioners for a major modification of the Bartholomew County Fairgrounds site development plan to allow the addition of a storage building, including a modification for building height and a modification for a fence that exceeds the maximum height in a front yard. The property is located at 750 West 200 South, in Columbus Township.

Ms. Behrman presented for the Planning Department. Ms. Behrman stated that it has been determined that the modification for fence height is not needed and the fence as proposed complies with the zoning ordinance.

Ms. Garrett asked if there were any drive separation requirements for this request. Mr. Bergman stated that the drive separation proposed meets the requirements of the zoning ordinance; in this case a minimum of 100 feet.

Steve Ruble with Strand and Associates, and Carl Lienhoop, Bartholomew County Commissioner, represented the applicant. Mr. Ruble stated that the main concern for this request was the height of the proposed building. He stated that the requested height is driven by multiple factors. It starts with a 14-foot door height chosen due to the height of the vehicles that would be going in and out of the building (box trucks). The County is struggling to meet its required storage needs at this time, which is the general purpose for this building. The rest of the height is driven by required mechanical equipment and the height needed to provide the appropriate roof pitch for the building size, which is a 3 to 1 pitch for this particular building type. Mr. Ruble stated that this is what pushes the height above the 25-foot limit established in the Zoning Ordinance for an accessory structure. He stated the total building height is approximately 28 feet, 2 ½ inches.

Mr. Ellison asked if there was any way to change the building roof so that it would not require such a steep pitch and still accommodate the 14-foot doors and mechanical equipment, as well as the needed

storage space. Mr. Ruble stated that to span the 80-foot building width, lower-sloped trusses would not be sufficient to handle snow load requirements. He added that this proposed building will be comparable in size to the other buildings in this area.

Mr. Ellison asked the applicant if he knew the height of the surrounding buildings. Mr. Ruble stated that he did not know the exact height of those buildings. He added that 25 feet is the average height of a 2 story building and the majority of the buildings on the fair grounds are 1 or 2 story buildings. He went on to say that, with the distance this building will be from the other buildings, any slight height difference would not be noticeable.

Mr. Kinder opened the meeting to public comment.

No one from the public requested to speak.

Mr. Kinder closed the meeting to public comment.

Mr. Bergman stated that the Plan Commission must vote on the site plan overall and specifically on the request to exceed the maximum building height standard. He stated that there could be just one vote taken as long as a finding for the waiver request is included and that at least one of the following criteria have been met:

Criteria #1: The requested waiver or modification will better serve the intent of the development requirement.

Criteria #2: The requested waiver or modification will better serve the intent of the P (Public/Semi-Public Facilities) zoning district.

Criteria #3: The requested waiver or modification will better serve the general standards listed by Zoning Ordinance Section 12.8(E)(2).

Mr. Bergman stated that the staff finds, with regard to the modification request for the structure to exceed the maximum building height and be up to 28 feet, 2½ inches, that criteria #2 has been met. He stated the intent of this zoning district is to provide locations for a large-scale public facility with the need for specialized structures, and the proposed waiver for the building height will better serve the intent of the zoning district. The staff recommendation on the site development plan is, therefore, approval, including approval of the height waiver.

Motion: Ms. Garrett made a motion to approve the site development plan request as submitted, including approval of the height waiver, agreeing with staff findings that criterion #2 had been met for the waiver. Ms. Alapati seconded the motion. The motion passed with a ballot vote of 8 in favor and 0 opposed.

Plan Commission Rules of Procedure Revisions – Revisions to the Commission's Rules of Procedure regarding electronic meeting participation by the public, meeting livestreaming and archiving, and written public comments.

Mr. Bergman presented for the Planning Department.

Mr. Kinder asked how the public might be informed if WebEx were an option for their participation at a Commission meeting. Mr. Bergman stated that, if WebEx is offered to the public, then the required legal notices would reflect that option.

Motion: Mr. Ellison made a motion to approve the Rules revisions. Ms. Garrett seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 8 in favor and 0 opposed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS / DIRECTOR'S REPORT

None

ADJOURNMENT: 5:11 p.m.

Motion: Mr. Ellison made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Beckort seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 8 in favor and 0 opposed.

These minutes approved at the Plan Commission meeting on October 8, 2025.

Michael Kinder, President

Laura Garrett, Secretary