

**MINUTES
COLUMBUS PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2025 AT 4:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
123 WASHINGTON STREET
COLUMBUS, INDIANA**

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

Members via Webex: None

Members Absent: Whitney Koelling, Melanie Henderson, and Christopher Bartels

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

Mr. Kinder opened the meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

RZ-2025-011: National Road Professional Plaza – A request by the National Road Professional Plaza Owners to rezone 12,346 square feet from RM (Residential: Multi-Family) to CO (Commercial: Professional Office). The property is located on the west side of Sycamore Court, 325 feet north of National Road, in the City of Columbus.

Minutes of the October 8, 2025 meeting (Approval and Signing).

Mr. Bergman gave an overview of the rezoning request. Mr. Kinder asked the commission members and the public if anyone would prefer that RZ-2025-011 be removed from the consent agenda. There was no such request made.

Motion: Ms. Garrett made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Alapati 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

PP-2025-004: Columbus Gateway Major Subdivision Preliminary Plat – A request by Midland Atlantic Properties for preliminary plat approval to create 7 lots and 1 common area over +/- 20.73 acres. The property is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of State Road 46/Jonathan Moore Pike and Interstate 65, in the City of Columbus.

Mr. Ellison stated that he is a Columbus Regional Health Board of Trustees member and, because Columbus Regional Health is the property owner, he will recuse himself from this request. Mr. Ellison left the meeting room.

Mr. Bush joined the meeting.

Mr. Nieto presented for the Planning Department.

Mr. Baute asked if the rerouted trail would be lower than its current lowest point. Mr. Kinder asked if the new trail would have a tapered incline.

Mr. Baute asked if the sidewalk along Jonathan Moore Pike/State Road 46 will remain. Mr. Nieto stated that the provided drawing shows that the sidewalk will remain.

Connor Strege, with Kimley-Horn, represented the applicant. Mr. Stege confirmed that they would not be disturbing the sidewalk along Jonathan Moore Pike/State Road 46.

Mr. Baute asked if there would be a drive connection between the proposed site and the Speedway Gas Station next door. Mr. Strege stated that there were no plans to have a drive connection between the two properties.

Mr. Kleinhenz asked who owns the property where the possible future road extension by the City of Columbus is shown. Mr. Beckort stated that it is currently owned by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). He added that there are conversations with INDOT regarding if that property may be relinquished to the city.

Mr. Bergman stated that, regarding Mr. Baute's question of the connection between this site and the Speedway, the applicant proposes to extend a public street along the western edge of the Speedway property, but it would be up to Speedway if they wanted to connect to that road at their own expense.

Ms. Garrett asked how the proposed dead-end street would be designed and if someone could just drive off the site onto the trail below. Mr. Strege stated that, if approved, the developer would figure out what would be best suited to acknowledge that dead end. They are open to the use of barricades, signage, landscaping, or any combination that will be the safest for the development. They plan to coordinate with City Engineering for the best and safest solution.

Ms. Garrett stated that, at different locations along the existing People Trail system, it would be nice to have a connection to a nearby commercial establishment. She asked if there had been any thought of making a connection to this site from the trail. She noted that she, as well as the Parks Department, is concerned with the moving of this trail, potentially causing it to have more flooding than in its current location. She stated that adding a connection from the trail to the site could be beneficial in a flooding event.

Mr. Kinder stated that the site does appear to be much higher than the adjoining trail. Mr. Strege stated that the site is in a flood zone, which requires buildings to be elevated. Mr. Bergman added that the topography shown on the plat is what is proposed, and not the current topography on the site. He added that it is within the developer's control to potentially elevate the trail in addition to the building sites.

Ms. Garrett asked if the applicant could include raising the trail as they raised the lots. Mr. Strege stated that it is feasible.

Mr. Kinder asked if there were any regulations on the slope or grade of the People Trail. Mr. Beckort and Ms. Garrett stated the trail grade would need to follow ADA regulations, the same as public sidewalks. There was much discussion amongst the commission members regarding when and how often the trail floods in this area.

Ms. Garrett asked for clarification regarding the fire department's comments about having a cul-de-sac turnaround at the proposed dead-end. Mr. Kleinhenz stated that normally the fire department prefers a cul-de-sac for a dead-end, but in this instance, a hammerhead turnaround with a 28-foot corner radius will be sufficient. Ms. Garrett asked if that hammerhead would also be the driveway to one of the parcels. Mr. Strege stated that it would also serve as access to the adjacent parcel. He added that the typical cul-de-sac turnaround would take up a lot more space, decreasing the adjacent lot sizes and making them harder to sell and develop.

Mr. Kinder asked if the lots closest to State Road 46 would be considered to have two frontages. Mr. Bergman stated that they would – one on State Road 46 and one on the new proposed street. He stated that the ordinance does not require a buffer along one of those frontages to screen potential dumpster, loading, and storage areas but it is within the Plan Commission's purview to request one.

Mr. Bush asked if the site plans for the individual lots would be reviewed by the Plan Commission. Mr. Bergman stated that this site is part of the Front Door Overlay District and each lot's site plan would be reviewed by the Plan Commission.

Ms. Garrett asked if they could make the street dead-end more aesthetically pleasing; for example, using landscaping in place of, or in conjunction with, hard barriers. Mr. Bush added that, with the proposed elevation change, it would be a large drop-off at the end of the street, so trees would be nice there.

Mr. Bergman asked if access to the proposed Lot 7 would be from the street's dead-end. Sam Boyle from Midland Atlantic Properties stated that if they were able to develop Lot 7 it would obtain access by a driveway that extends from the currently proposed dead-end.

There was much more discussion amongst the Commission, the applicant, and staff regarding the People Trail being elevated, if Lot 7 would be developed, and options for the dead-end street.

Mr. Kinder opened the meeting to public comment.

Brad Davis with The Republic newspaper, 2980 North National Road, Suite A, asked if the developer planned to retain ownership of the lots or sell them individually. Mr. Boyle replied that they did not have an answer for that question at this time.

Mr. Kinder closed the meeting to public comment.

Mr. Bergman pointed out that staff is recommending a continuance, as there are currently 3 violations of the Subdivision Control Ordinance that would either need to be remedied through a design change or the applicant would need to formally request modifications from those ordinance provisions: (1) the length of the single access street is more than 650 feet, (2) a portion of the new street does not include a sidewalk, and (3) the new street is proposed to end with a hammerhead turn-around instead of the typical cul-de-sac.

Motion: Mr. Bush made a motion to continue the request to the December 10, 2025 Plan Commission meeting. Ms. Garrett seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 7 in favor and 0 opposed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS / DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Bergman discussed the recent phishing scam, by which scammers used publically available information to create fraudulent Planning Department invoices for recent applicants. He added that the Planning Department will be taking steps to shield future applicant's contact information from public materials.

ADJOURNMENT: 5:03 p.m.

Motion: Ms. Garrett made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Alapati seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 7 in favor and 0 opposed.

These minutes approved at the Plan Commission meeting on December 10, 2025.

Dennis W. Baute, Presiding Officer

Laura Garrett, Secretary