MINUTES
COLUMBUS PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026 AT 4:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
123 WASHINGTON STREET
COLUMBUS, INDIANA

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

Members via Webex: Keerthi Alapati

Members Absent: Melanie Henderson

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

Mr. Kinder opened the meeting with a brief explanation of the board and its responsibilities.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of December 10, 2025, meeting (Approval and Signing).

SUB-25-6: Brooks Bros. Addition Minor Subdivision – A request by Richard & Mary Fogler to subdivide an existing lot into two lots, including a modification request to waive the requirement to install a sidewalk on the new lot. The property is located at 111 South Gladstone Avenue, in the City of Columbus.

Motion: Mr. Ellison made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Garrett seconded the motion. The motion passed with a roll call vote of 8 in favor and 0 opposed.

OLD BUSINESS REQUIRING COMMISSION ACTION

None

NEW BUSINESS REQUIRING COMMISSION ACTION

Mr. Bartels arrived at the meeting.

PC-26-2: Timberland Springs – A request by Arbor Homes to annex 139.36 acres into the Columbus corporate limits. The property is located at the northeast corner of 150 West and Deaver Road, in Wayne Township.

PC-25-2: Timberland Springs – A request by Arbor Homes to rezone 107.25 acres from AP (Agriculture: Preferred) to RT (Residential: Two-Family). The property is located at the northeast corner of 150 West and Deaver Road, in Wayne Township.

Ms. Begley presented for the Planning Department.

Ms. Garrett asked how to approach the comments from the Department of Public Works (DPW) regarding their ability to handle the increase in residential services that would result from the development of this property. Ms. Begley stated that DPW indicated that they could handle the service needs of this potential

development site but are reaching their full capacity to provide service to the city as a whole with their current equipment and staff.

Tony Bagato with Arbor Homes and Kevin Sumner with Weihe Engineering represented the applicant.

Mr. Baute asked how the density of this proposed subdivision compares with the density of the Shadow Creek Farms subdivision. Mr. Baute stated he was concerned with the availability of on-street parking, given the small lots possible in the RT zoning district. Mr. Bagato stated that the concept plan for the site provides each home with a 2-car garage and driveways large enough to park 2 vehicles. He also mentioned that, where possible, driveways would be close to each other to consolidate other street frontage and make it available for on-street parking.

Mr. Kinder opened the meeting to public comment.

Darin Ness, 5321 Denois Street, stated that he was representing the Bethel Village neighborhood. They were concerned with the impact this subdivision would have on their wells and on their ability to continue to have farm animals. They are also concerned with the increased traffic on 150 West and Deaver Road, how the increase in residents would impact the school system's capacities, and possible trespassing resulting from a pedestrian/bicycle path along Deaver Road to be installed with the new development.

Collin Ruf, 4605 South 150 West, stated he appreciates the developer adding a buffer to their concept plan along his property line. He is concerned with the development's effects on his well and with the drainage between the two properties. He was also concerned about any future neighbors' complaints about his wife's home-based dog training business.

Sharon Kinsey, 4550 South 150 West, stated she is concerned with increased traffic on Deaver Road and 150 West. She was also concerned with the development's effects on wells.

Mr. Kinder noted that the commission received 3 letters submitted by the public, one from Ms. Kinsey, one from Mr. Ruf, and one from Andrea Valentine, 1371 Brookside Drive.

Mr. Kinder closed the meeting to public comment.

Mr. Bagato stated that this development would have city utilities, so the neighboring wells would not be affected. He stated that there may be de-watering during construction, but he has never known that process to affect nearby wells. He stated that, in regard to the neighbors' farm animals, as long as they are operating under the laws of the county they would continue to be allowed. Mr. Bagato stated that drainage and stormwater plans for the development would be regulated by the state and city.

Ms. Garrett asked if there were any plans for road improvements on Deaver Road or 150 West by the city or county. Mr. Beckort stated that the city plans to address the 150 West / 175 West misalignment at Deaver Road. He added that the city is considering other funding options for other improvements to that 150 West / 175 West corridor.

Mr. Bush asked if the developer would be required to make road improvements along their road frontages. Mr. Beckort stated that they would.

Mr. Bergman repeated that, if neighbors have farm animals and those animals are kept consistent with any county requirements, then a new neighbor would not have the ability to force the removal of the animals. He added any development of this property would not prohibit the legal use of the surrounding properties.

Mr. Bush noted that there is a large parcel of property between this site and Bethel Village, which should help mitigate any issues. He added that the property directly across 150 West from the site is already within the city.

Mr. Bergman shared with Mr. Ruf that the home-based dog training business his wife is operating likely requires a specific approval to comply with the zoning ordinance. He stated that if she does not have that approval yet, she should obtain it before they have new neighbors. Mr. Bergman recommended that Mr. Ruf or his wife contact the Planning Department for more information.

Mr. Bergman stated that the area proposed for annexation is more than adequately contiguous to the city limits to meet the requirements of state law. All the city departments have responded that they can serve the area, noting that the Department of Public Works has indicated that, city-wide, they are getting close to their maximum capacity. Mr. Bergman stated that the staff supports a favorable recommendation to the City Council for the annexation request.

Motion: Ms. Garrett made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to the City Council on PC-26-2. Mr. Ellison seconded the motion. The motion passed with a roll call vote of 9 in favor and 0 opposed.

Mr. Bergman stated that the property is served by what are planned to be significant road corridors. The property is not exceptionally close to grocery or convenience goods, but it is uniquely close to a significant area of employment. Mr. Bergman also noted that the transit department is preparing to make some significant changes to their routes that would bring a route to the Woodside Industrial area. Transit commented that their route could potentially serve this property. Mr. Bergman stated that the staff supports a favorable recommendation to the City Council for the rezoning request.

Motion: Mr. Bush made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to the City Council on PC-25-2. Ms. Garrett seconded the motion. The motion passed with a roll call vote of 9 in favor and 0 opposed.

PC-26-1: Columbus AirPark PUD – a request by the Columbus Municipal Airport to amend the Final Planned Unit Development for the Columbus AirPark to add a new animal shelter use category, expand the provisions for the Open Space 2 area, and revise the schedule of uses. The property is roughly located between Arnold Drive to the north, Chapa Drive to the south, River Road to the west and Poshard Drive to the east, in the City of Columbus.

Ms. Aldrich presented for the Planning Department.

Brian Payne and Charles Contegni represented the applicant. Mr. Payne gave an overview of the latest developments at the airport and Airpark.

Mr. Kinder opened the meeting to public comment.

Marc Gotoh, 4399 Osprey Drive, stated he was interested in exactly what was being proposed for Open Spaces 1 and 3 along the People Trail. He was specifically interested in knowing if that would be turned into a sports or public use area.

Mr. Kinder closed the meeting to public comment.

Mr. Payne stated that they may make improvements to the People Trail along Open Space 1 and Cunningham Drive, but there are no other plans for that space currently. He added that Open Space 3 currently has 3 soccer fields, a pollinator area, and open space.

Mr. Bush asked if the basis of the request is to remove some of the self-inflicted restrictions that were established previously. Mr. Payne agreed and stated his intent is to also accommodate the land use changes that have been happening in Columbus and at the AirPark in recent years.

Mr. Bergman stated that there has been a continued evolution of the AirPark. The initial PUD envisioned primarily offices. Today, the market for offices is diminished. Mr. Bergman stated that the PUD revisions sought a more diverse range of land uses and more freedom to mix and integrate those uses throughout

the AirPark. He added that the expansion of trails and sidewalks at the AirPark has made this area better suited for commercial development.

Mr. Payne stated that he intends to focus retail and restaurant commercial uses near the intersection of Poshard Drive and Central Avenue.

Ms. Garrett asked if there would be sidewalks along Arnold Street. Mr. Beckort stated that the new Animal Care Services facility would be installing a path along the Arnold Street frontage of its site. Mr. Payne stated that the National Guard Armory will also be adding a path along its Arnold Street frontage. He added that the airport plans to make any needed path connections along Arnold Street.

Mr. Bergman stated that there are 6 conditions listed in the staff report regarding further edits to the proposed PUD document that was presented. He stated the staff supports a favorable recommendation to the City Council, subject to those 6 conditions / edits listed in the staff report.

Motion: Mr. Bush made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to the City Council for PC-26-1, including the 6 conditions listed in the staff report. Mr. Ellison seconded the motion. The motion passed with a roll call vote of 9 in favor and 0 opposed.

Election of 2026 Officers

Motion: Mr. Bush made a motion to elect Michael Kinder as President, Dennis Baute as Vice President, and Laura Garrett as Secretary for 2026. Mr. Kleinhenz seconded the motion. The motion passed with a roll call vote of 9 in favor and 0 opposed.

Appointment of a Plan Commission Hearing Examiner

Motion: Mr. Bush made a motion to appoint Laura Garrett as Plan Commission Hearing Examiner. Mr. Ellison seconded the motion. The motion passed with a roll call vote of 9 in favor and 0 opposed.

Appointment of a Liaison to the Bartholomew County Plan Commission

Motion: Mr. Ellison made a motion to appoint Dennis Baute as Liaison to the Bartholomew County Plan Commission. Ms. Garrett seconded the motion. The motion passed with a roll call vote of 9 in favor and 0 opposed.

Appointment of Plat Committee Members

Motion: Mr. Bush made a motion to appoint Jeff Bergman, with Melissa Begley as his alternate, Andrew Beckort, with Amber Porter as his alternate, and Dennis Baute as the 2026 City Plat Committee members. Ms. Garrett seconded the motion. The motion passed with a roll call vote of 9 in favor and 0 opposed.

Appointment of a Joint District Plan Commission Member

Motion: Ms. Garrett made a motion to appoint Keerthi Alapati as the Joint District Plan Commission member. Mr. Ellison seconded the motion. The motion passed with a roll call vote of 9 in favor and 0 opposed.

President's Appointment of a Utility Review Committee Member

Mr. Kinder appointed Zack Ellison to the Utility Review Committee.

DISCUSSION ITEMS / DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Finke left the meeting.

Columbus Zoning Ordinance Revisions

Mr. Bergman presented draft revisions to the Columbus Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Bush asked what constitutes Permanent Supportive Housing. Mr. Bergman stated that Permanent Supportive Housing involves services for the residents, such as rehabilitation assistance, mental health assistance, financial counseling, and/or other services that would help someone who finds themselves unable to afford other types of housing. Mr. Kinder asked if, to qualify as a Permanent Supportive Housing facility, there would have to be services attached. Mr. Bergman stated that was correct. Mr. Kinder asked what would happen to the facility if it no longer offered the services, but there were still people living there. Mr. Bergman stated that it would become a different use at that point.

Mr. Bush stated that it appears to have a similar definition as a shelter. He added that, if there is no difference between the two it may not make sense to separate them.

Mr. Kinder asked if there was a plan, because of the zoning ordinance text changes being discussed, to also update the zoning map. Mr. Bergman stated the update would include both the text and a significant map component.

Mr. Baute asked about accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and why they were allowed in some residential zoning districts but not others. Mr. Bergman stated that ADUs are allowed in zoning districts where single-family residential is also allowed. The ADU would not be considered an ADU in a district that allows multi-family residential but not single-family residential. In those cases, it would be considered one of the multi-family units.

Mr. Ellison asked if the proposed zoning changes would assist in creating more affordable housing options in Columbus. Mr. Bergman stated that the Zoning Ordinance is just one piece of an affordable housing discussion; the housing market includes many factors beyond the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance cannot set price points for rentals or for sales, affect construction material costs, bring more builders into the market, or bring more labor to the market. The Zoning Ordinance can, however, address any local regulatory barriers and support the development of a variety of housing types.

Mr. Bartels asked what the driving factor was in assigning 450 square feet as the minimum square footage for a unit. Mr. Boshell stated that it came from current designs, developers, and studies on what square footage would be needed to accommodate the necessary items for sanitary living conditions. Mr. Bartels stated that he has seen some prefabricated housing options that are less than 450 square feet and was curious if there would be an opportunity for something that small in the future. He added that homes like that, which are mass-produced, can be more affordable than those that are built on-site.

Mr. Kleinhenz asked if the square footage of a home was counted by the ground floor only. Mr. Bergman stated that it is the total of all floors.

Mr. Kinder asked if a home was proposed below the minimum living area, would that developer still be able to ask for a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals. Mr. Bergman stated that was correct.

Mr. Bartels asked if modular homes also had to comply with the same regulations. Mr. Bergman stated that there is no difference in regulation based on method of construction.

Mr. Kleinhenz stated he would like to see farmers have the opportunity to turn unused portions of their homes into rental units for their own sustainability. Mr. Bergman stated these would likely quality as ADUs, which would be allowed.

Mr. Bartels stated that there is a company out of Indianapolis creating what they are calling veteran's villages using shipping containers that are approximately 320 square feet of living space with kitchen and bathroom facilities in them. He noted that something like that would be hard to have in Bartholomew County with the current or proposed regulations. He stated that the homes are not on permanent foundations and, in many cases, are then regulated as a mobile home park.

Mr. Bergman stated that there are many different housing possibilities, and it is challenging to identify and craft regulations specific to each. Mr. Bush commented that one can only intelligently anticipate a small portion of market change, that is why the variance process exists.

Mr. Kleinhenz stated that he would like to see added to the ADU definition something that recognizes upper and lower floors with their own entrance, bathroom, and kitchen, so that there is no confusion that "accessory" means it must be a separate structure.

Mr. Kinder asked if the Plan Commission members would get the opportunity to review and send recommendations to the City Council for any areas that may be rezoned through this process. Mr. Bergman stated that would be part of the process.

Mr. Bergman described the diversity of "middle" housing options – townhomes, apartments, cottage courts, etc. and the challenges to developing regulations with the flexibility to accommodate all the possible variables. He proposed an approach where the zoning ordinance regulates primarily density - the number of units in a development - and provides some minimal design standards, but otherwise was flexible with the details of each project. Mr. Bergman added that, within these projects, the ordinance may not regulate number of structures, if individual units were subdivided for sale, etc.

Mr. Kinder asked if there would be the potential for small lots as a result of this approach. Mr. Bergman stated that there could be.

Ms. Garrett asked if the developer wanted to make the units for individual ownership, would they have to have the lot replatted. Mr. Bergman stated that there would need to be a platting process.

Mr. Kinder asked what the process would be to change any of these proposed new regulations if needed adjustments are later identified. Mr. Bergman stated that a subsequent zoning ordinance revision process could reverse or further modify the requirements.

Ms. Garrett stated that she is in favor of the change and likes the flexibility it provides to the developers. She asked if there would be any wording that encourages the new units to match the surrounding structures to maintain neighborhood character. Mr. Bergman stated that, at this time, the staff is not considering any architectural standards, but more-so focusing the orientation of buildings; for example, making sure that the front of buildings face the street with parking behind.

Mr. Bush asked the difference between an apartment complex and condominiums. Mr. Bergman stated there is not a difference in how the zoning ordinance regulates each.

Mr. Bush asked if townhomes would have separate lots and no side setbacks if are individually owned. Mr. Bergman stated that was correct. He referenced the recently constructed townhomes on 7th Street that are individually owned and noted the multiple variances the developer had to obtain for that project. Mr. Bergman stated these proposed zoning ordinance changes would lessen or even eliminate the need for those variances.

Mr. Bergman stated that his intent with this discussion is to assess the comfort level of the Plan Commission members with the proposed direction. By consensus, the commission members expressed support for the approach described by Mr. Bergman.

ADJOURNMENT: 6:57 p.m.

Motion: Mr. Baute made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Ellison seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote of 9 in favor and 0 opposed.

These minutes were approved at the Plan Commission meeting on March 11, 2026.

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Michael Kinder, President	Laura Garrett, Secretary