COMMON COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
CITY HALL
MARCH 17, 2026

City Council President Frank Miller appeared in person and called a regular meeting of the City Common Council to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

I. Meeting Called to Order

A. Councilor Grace Kestler introduced Reverand Nic Cable with the Unitarian Universalist Church, who provided the invocation.

B. Councilor Grace Kestler led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Roll Call was taken. Elaine Hilber, Jerone Wood, Kent Anderson, Frank Miller, Jay Foyst, Josh Burnett, and Grace Kestler were present in person. Tom Dell was present via Webex. Chris Bartels was absent. A Quorum was established and the Policy for Electronic Participation was followed.

D. Councilor Foyst made a motion to approve the minutes from the Common Council meeting on March 3, 2026, as presented. Councilor Hilber seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Elaine Hilber	Aye
Jerone Wood	Aye
Kent Anderson	Aye
Frank Miller	Aye
Jay Foyst	Aye
Josh Burnett	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Grace Kestler	Aye

Motion passed by a vote of eight (8) in favor and zero (0) opposed.

II. Old Business

A. Second reading of an Ordinance entitled "ORDINANCE NO. 3, 2026, AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, INDIANA, AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 49, 2024, ADOPTED ON NOVEMBER 6, 2024." (Amended CCU Bonds) Roger Kelso, Executive Director of City Utilities, and Stan Gamso, Legal Counsel, presented this Ordinance. Roger stated the request is an amendment to Ordinance No. 49, 2024, that allowed the department bonding for projects. He explained when revised budget numbers were provided, they showed approximately a $10 million gap. Roger stated they can do all the projects that they need to do and have absolutely no impact on any of the projected rates at this point. Brief discussion followed. There were no comments from the public. Councilor Hilber made a motion to pass the second reading and adopt the Ordinance. Councilor Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Elaine Hilber	Aye
Jerone Wood	Aye
Kent Anderson	Aye
Frank Miller	Aye
Jay Foyst	Aye
Josh Burnett	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Grace Kestler	Aye

Motion passed by a vote of eight (8) in favor and zero (0) opposed.

B. Second reading of an Ordinance entitled "ORDINANCE NO. 4, 2026, AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A MODIFICATION TO THE COLUMBUS AIRPARK FINAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN." (Columbus AirPark PUD) Jeff Bergman, Planning Director, presented this Ordinance. He explained the Columbus Municipal Airport is requesting to modify the custom set of zoning regulations – the Columbus Airport Planned Unit Development (PUD) – that regulates land use on its non-aviation properties. Jeff displayed maps of the area and discussed the proposed modifications. He stated the Columbus Plan Commission forwarded this proposal to City Council with a favorable recommendation by a vote of nine in favor and zero opposed. Much discussion followed. President Miller opened the meeting for public comments. Brad Davis asked if there were any further changes foreseen in the PUD to achieve the goals in the Great by '38 plan. Jeff responded that the changes in this Ordinance should position the airport well around the goals in the plan. President Miller closed the meeting to public comments. Councilor Foyst made a motion to pass the second reading and adopt the Ordinance. Councilor Kestler seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Elaine Hilber	Aye
Jerone Wood	Aye
Kent Anderson	Aye
Frank Miller	Aye
Jay Foyst	Aye
Josh Burnett	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Grace Kestler	Aye

Motion passed by a vote of eight (8) in favor and zero (0) opposed.

III. New Business

A. First reading of an Ordinance entitled "ORDINANCE NO. ___, 2026, AN ORDINANCE ANNEXING AND DECLARING CERTAIN TERRITORY TO BE A PART OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, INDIANA." (Arbor Homes/Timberland Springs Annexation) Jeff Bergman, Planning Director, presented this Ordinance and the following Ordinance together. He stated the applicant, Arbor Homes, was requesting annexation of approximately 140 acres and rezoning of approximately 107 acres to develop single-family homes. The difference in the sizes of the annexation and rezoning requests is because the rezoning request is only for the portions of the property located outside of the floodplain. Jeff stated that while the RT zoning allows single-family homes and duplexes, the applicant intends to build only single-family homes and is seeking this zoning due to the smaller minimum lot size requirement. Jeff showed maps and pictures of the area. Tony Bagato, Arbor Homes Director of Land Entitlement, discussed the applicant's plans for the development. Tony stated they are planning to build approximately 284 homes at various modest price points. Jeff and Tony also highlighted the proximity of the proposed development to employment opportunities and the new BCSC elementary school. Much discussion followed. Councilor Hilber and President Miller stated that Council members had received a letter from Collin Ruf, 4605 S 150 W, who owns the rural residential property north of the subject property. The letter expressed concerns about a landscape buffer along the north edge of the development, drainage, and potential contamination of well water. Jeff stated that the Plan Commission was satisfied that existing regulations would address these concerns. Tony said he had spoken with Mr. Ruf and agreed to provide a buffer with berms for drainage and noted that construction should improve drainage. The plan for the development also includes several retention ponds that will help with drainage. President Miller opened the meeting for public comments. Karen Sekerak, 4674 S 150 W, expressed concerns about congestion on S 150 W with the increased traffic to the proposed development. Brad Davis asked how many of the homes in the proposed development would be the Arrival series, and how many would be the Arbor series. Brad also asked how the Arrival series homes in the Sutter Place development were selling. Tony said the plan was for 150 Arrival homes and 132 Arbor homes. He indicated the Arrival homes were selling well and would likely be the first homes constructed in the new development. President Miller closed the meeting to public comments. Councilor Hilber made a motion to pass the first reading of the Ordinance and place it in proper channels. Councilor Kestler seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Elaine Hilber	Aye
Jerone Wood	Aye
Kent Anderson	Aye
Frank Miller	Aye
Jay Foyst	Aye
Josh Burnett	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Grace Kestler	Aye

Motion passed by a vote of eight (8) in favor and zero (0) opposed.

B. First reading of an Ordinance entitled "ORDINANCE NO. ___, 2026, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF COLUMBUS, INDIANA, REZONING THE SUBJECT PROPERTY FROM AP (AGRICULTURE: PREFERRED) TO RT (RESIDENTIAL: TWO-FAMILY)." (Arbor Homes/Timberland Springs Rezoning) Jeff Bergman offered no additional information. There were no comments from the public. Councilor Hilber made a motion to amend the Ordinance to include an additional commitment to include a fifty-foot (50') setback, as well as a berm and landscaping along the northern boundary of the subject property. Councilor Kestler seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Elaine Hilber	Aye
Jerone Wood	Aye
Kent Anderson	Aye
Frank Miller	Aye
Jay Foyst	Aye
Josh Burnett	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Grace Kestler	Aye

Motion to amend the Ordinance passed by a vote of eight (8) in favor and zero (0) opposed.

Councilor Hilber made a motion to pass the first reading of the amended Ordinance and place it in proper channels. Councilor Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Elaine Hilber	Aye
Jerone Wood	Aye
Kent Anderson	Aye
Frank Miller	Aye
Jay Foyst	Aye
Josh Burnett	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Grace Kestler	Aye

Motion passed by a vote of eight (8) in favor and zero (0) opposed.

C. First reading of an Ordinance entitled "ORDINANCE NO. ___, 2026, AN ORDINANCE SETTING SALARIES AND WAGES OF EMPLOYEES AND APPOINTED OFFICERS OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, INDIANA FOR THE 2026 PAYROLL CALENDAR YEAR AS REQUIRED BY INDIANA CODE §36-4-7-3 AND CONTINUING THEREAFTER UNTIL DULY CHANGED." Jake Sipe, Director of Community Development, and Mikala Brown, Assistant Director of Redevelopment, presented this Ordinance and the following Ordinance together. Jake explained that the Community Development Department wants to replace a part-time office administrator with a full-time Community Development specialist who would be cross trained to provide customer service for Community Development, Redevelopment, and other city departments. The Community Development Specialist would also be responsible for managing projects including DORA (Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area) information and the community garden. Mikala stated that the additional appropriation request was to cover the salary of a full-time employee that had previously been shared between Redevelopment and Community Development, whose salary had been paid through the Community Development budget, but whose position would be moved solely to the Redevelopment Department. Mikala stated that the Redevelopment General Fund can fully absorb the appropriation request with no additional cost to the city. She stated that the Redevelopment Department has twenty active projects, with more anticipated from the Columbus Downtown 2030 Plan. Mikala said that the administrative role had grown to include additional responsibilities such as website design and project management. Much discussion followed. President Miller opened the meeting to public comments. Brad Davis asked if there was a timeline for the upcoming salary study. Eric Frey, Executive Director of Administration, answered that Human Resources has received quotes and hopes to make a recommendation later this year. President Miller closed the meeting to public comments. President Miller made a motion to amend the Ordinance, changing a job title from "Office Administrator" to "Redevelopment Specialist." Councilor Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Elaine Hilber	Aye
Jerone Wood	Aye
Kent Anderson	Aye
Frank Miller	Aye
Jay Foyst	Aye
Josh Burnett	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Grace Kestler	Nay

Motion to amend the Ordinance passed by a vote of seven (7) in favor and one (1) opposed.

President Miller made a motion to pass the first reading of the Ordinance and place it in proper channels. Councilor Hilber seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Elaine Hilber	Aye
Jerone Wood	Aye
Kent Anderson	Aye
Frank Miller	Aye
Jay Foyst	Aye
Josh Burnett	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Grace Kestler	Nay

Motion passed by a vote of seven (7) in favor and one (1) opposed.

D. First reading of an Ordinance entitled "ORDINANCE NO. ___, 2026, AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE REDEVELOPMENT GENERAL FUND FOR BUDGET YEAR 2026." Jake Sipe and Mikala Brown offered no additional information. Much discussion followed. There were no comments from the public. Councilor Hilber made a motion to pass the first reading of the Ordinance and place it in proper channels. President Miller seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Elaine Hilber	Aye
Jerone Wood	Aye
Kent Anderson	Aye
Frank Miller	Aye
Jay Foyst	Aye
Josh Burnett	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Grace Kestler	Aye

Motion passed by a vote of eight (8) in favor and zero (0) opposed.

IV. Other Business

A. Transit Department Update – Matt Dudukovich, Director of Transportation, gave a presentation on the Transit Department and the new bus routes that begin March 23. Matt discussed the 2024 Transit Study findings, which suggested that the department redesign the fixed routes, expand coverage, offer demand response transit similar to Lyft or Uber, and utilize wayfinding technology. He shared that the four new bus loops will offer more transfer opportunities, provide new service to Waters Edge and Southern Indiana Orthopedics, move to designated stops, make NexusPark a connection point, and expand to Taylorsville and Walesboro on April 6.

B. Standing Committee and Liaison Reports – President Miller asked Deputy Clerk Liz Storm to read the slate of City Council appointments to the Human Rights Commission for three-year terms expiring on March 31, 2029 as follows:

Janae Garner-Kelley (reappointment)
Blake Fields (new appointment)
Felicia Garr (new appointment)
Ethan Crough (new appointment)

Councilor Hilber made a motion to approve the appointments. Councilor Kestler seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Elaine Hilber	Aye
Jerone Wood	Aye
Kent Anderson	Aye
Frank Miller	Aye
Jay Foyst	Aye
Josh Burnett	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Grace Kestler	Aye

Motion passed by a vote of eight (8) in favor and zero (0) opposed.

C. The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 6:00 p.m.**

D. Councilor Anderson made a motion to adjourn. Councilor Hilber seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Elaine Hilber	Aye
Jerone Wood	Aye
Kent Anderson	Aye
Frank Miller	Aye
Jay Foyst	Aye
Josh Burnett	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Grace Kestler	Aye

Motion passed by a vote of eight (8) in favor and zero (0) opposed. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:13 p.m.

Presiding Officer

Clerk of the City of Columbus