

Heather Hanover
Chair

James Eshelman
Vice-Chair

Commissioners

Scott Dzurka, Mayor
Eric Hufnagel, Commissioner
Mark Holden
Melvin Renfrow
Eric Harger
Brian Mills
Vacant



PLANNING COMMISSION

MARCH 12, 2025
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the St. Johns Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Hanover at 5:31 p.m.

Members Present: Heather Hanover, Mark Holden, Brian Mills, Scott Dzurka, Eric Hufnagel (arrived at 6:19 pm),
Eric Harger
Members Absent: James Eshelman, Melvin Renfrow
Staff Present: Chad Gamble, City Manager; Mindy Seavey, City Clerk; Chris Khorey, McKenna

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Holden to approve the agenda as presented.

YEA: Hanover, Holden, Mills, Dzurka, Harger

NAY: None

Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 12, 2025 & FEBRUARY 24, 2025 MEETINGS

Motion by Commissioner Holden seconded by Commissioner Mills to approve the minutes as presented.

YEA: Hanover, Holden, Mills, Dzurka, Harger

NAY: None

Motion carried.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Chairperson Hanover asked if there were any public comments.

There were none.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. Special Land Use – 101 W. Townsend Road/Cedar Creek Hospital

Motion by Commissioner Mills seconded by Commissioner Dzurka to open the public hearing.

YEA: Hanover, Holden, Mills, Dzurka, Harger

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The public hearing was opened at 5:33 p.m.

Chris Khorey, McKenna, discussed the special land use for Cedar Creek Hospital and said the expansion is straightforward from a zoning perspective and will increase hospital capacity.

Chairperson Hanover asked if there were any public comments.

There were none.

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Mills to close the public hearing.

YEA: Hanover, Holden, Mills, Dzurka, Harger

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The public hearing was closed at 5:35 p.m.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Special Land Use Recommendation to City Commission – 101 W. Townsend Road/Cedar Creek Hospital

Chris Khorey, McKenna, went over the site plan.

Ryan Ysseldyke, Holland Engineering, was present. He said Steve with the facility is present also. He said they were here 1½ - 2 years ago and completed that addition. He discussed: they are in the process of petitioning for more beds with the state and they were awarded additional beds; the second addition will be right next to the addition recently completed and will look exactly the same (construction type); the fire lane; doing additional landscaping to the west; reviewed comments on the sidewalk along Townsend, and there is no problem to comply with that; there was a question about building height (it will be about 19' tall and match up with the existing building); and the site lighting plan has been completed and sent this morning.

There was a discussion of:

- Appreciate their willingness to put in a sidewalk.
- Complimented the facility.
- How many beds to a room?
- 2 per room, will be adding 10 rooms.
- Total beds: 81.

Chris Khorey said we recommend approval of the special use to the city commission subject to site plan approval.

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Holden that the planning commission recommends approval of special use to the city commission upon condition of Site Plan approval.

YEA: Hanover, Holden, Mills, Dzurka, Harger

NAY: None

Motion carried.

B. Site Plan Approval – 101 W. Townsend Road/Cedar Creek Hospital

Chris Khorey, McKenna, said we have a few concerns. He discussed: building height; sidewalk required; landscaping – new landscape ordinance in place; west side landscaping – Planning Commission has discretion due to when the property to the west gets developed.

There was a discussion of:

- Landscaping on the west side.

Steve Vernon, CEO at Cedar Creek, was present. He said there will be no further expansion at the St. Johns site (anymore beds would require more cafeteria and recreation space and there's not room).

Chris Khorey said 28 more trees and 33 more shrubs are needed.

City Manager Gamble discussed the caliper of tree required to be planted.

Chris Khorey said we could dial it back from a 2" caliper, as long as they will survive.

Mr. Ysseldyke said 1" to 1½" caliper tree would save them, and they could plant more trees; it would be a pretty similar cost to what is proposed.

Chris Khorey discussed the requirement for parking lot trees; 2 of 3 trees required are more than 15' feet away. He said the lighting plan has been submitted but not reviewed.

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Mills that the planning commission conditionally approve the site plan for 101 W. Townsend with the following conditions: confirm height of existing building and proposed addition; sidewalk included along Townsend Road; photometric plan is compliant with our lighting requirements; and comply with the natural buffer and granting flexibility to use 1" caliper trees.

YEA: Hanover, Holden, Mills, Dzurka, Harger

NAY: None

Motion carried.

C. Revision to Approved Site Plan and Sidewalk Waiver Request – 1327 E. Townsend Road/Clinton County Maintenance Garage

Chris Khorey, McKenna, said this was approved last fall, but some revisions are being made to the application. One revision is the applicant is requesting the sidewalk requirement be waived; and some changes to the plan itself.

Clinton County Maintenance Supervisor, Rob Wooten, was present. He discussed: the lighting plan has been submitted; 10 additional trees along Townsend Road frontage is not a problem, they can get an additional site plan submitted; parking lot trees, ordinance requires trees based on all buildings on the parcel and the county requests a waiver for that tree requirement; sidewalk: support recommendation to not complete sidewalk to the east; to west of driveway we have proposed for a deed restriction that would require county to construct when there is construction to the parcel to our west, there is no imminent construction to our west and we feel it doesn't make sense at this time.

There was a discussion of:

- The parking lot island.
 - McKenna in support of that waiver (in existing parking lot).
- The sidewalk and deed restriction.
 - Ordinance language.
 - East of driveway there is a wetland; to the west is up to the planning commission.
 - Businesses on 27 that have put in sidewalk with nothing connected to them.

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Mills that the planning commission approve the site plan with the following conditions: deed restriction in place for sidewalks on west side of driveway; lighting plan must be submitted; require 10 trees along Townsend Road; and parking lot trees requirements only applicable to maintenance lot.

Chris Khorey discussed a deed restriction for sidewalk to the east as well.

Mayor Dzurka said both sides of driveway.

John Fuentes, Clinton County Administrator, was present. He said if development occurred to the east, then it would be for the entire development. He said he has a draft. He said if development to the west, it would be within 12 months. He said development to the east would require a sidewalk for the entire frontage of the parcel.

Mayor Dzurka clarified his motion: deed restriction applicable to west side of driveway if west side developed; to the entire property if east side is developed.

The amended motion was seconded by Commissioner Mills.

YEA: Holden, Mills, Dzurka, Harger

NAY: Hanover

Motion carried.

D. Zoning Policy Discussion – 700-800 Blocks of West State Street FLU/Zoning Disconnect

Chris Khorey, McKenna, said they received a call from the property owner. He said this house faces Morton Street and the request was for home occupation for a beauty salon. We do not allow home occupations in commercial zoning.

Commissioner Hufnagel arrived at 6:19 p.m.

Chris Khorey said she already applied for zoning; we feel it is not an efficient way to treat the property owner; in the future master plan, it is zoned as residential. He asked about pursuing one of those two options.

There was a discussion of:

- Why wouldn't we want a home occupation in commercial district?
- Likelihood of that home to change to a commercial use.
 - Future land use.
- Restrictions on home occupation.
 - Not allowed to have employees.
- Mixed use category.
- Discussion of the process; change to home occupation to all districts; change of zoning & master plan for mixed use.

Chris Khorey said he could contact the applicant and refund her fee. We would then set two public hearings.

The Planning Commission directed McKenna to pursue that.

7. OLD BUSINESS: None

8. COMMITTEE SITE PLAN APPROVALS - NONE:

9. CITY COMMISSION UPDATE – MAYOR DZURKA:

Mayor Dzurka discussed the last city commission meeting: finalized noise ordinance, corner setback stipulations, height restrictions, and chicken ordinance regarding setbacks; received the CIP and are continuing with the budget.

Commissioner Mills asked how the RFP for Townsend Road is going.

City Manager Gamble said it is currently being developed, and he and Chris Khorey will be working on that language.

10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Hufnagel asked if communication has been placed to Commissioner Renfrow.

City Manager Gamble said he reached out to him.

Chairperson Hanover asked that his phone number be given to her so she could call him.

There was a discussion about getting an appointment done at one of the next meetings.

Chairperson Hanover said it will be St. Johns Day at the Lugnuts game on June 11th, which is the same date as the Planning Commission meeting. She asked if there was not an actual site plan, if we have to have a meeting in June?

Chris Khorey said if there is a pressing issue, they could schedule another night in June.

Mayor Dzurka said he received call from Representative Tsernoglou's office regarding communication from the Humane Society. He asked if the issue with the one person had been addressed.

City Manager Gamble said that issue has been addressed for the moment. He discussed if there is not a trap there, they will be cited.

Commissioner Mills discussed sidewalks and said it might be helpful if we looked at all of our city-owned property and identify any that don't have sidewalks and put them in immediately.

Mayor Dzurka said the city and schools are working on Safe Routes to School Grant.

City Manager Gamble said we are looking at redoing our Senior Citizen Park. When that redevelopment happens, we are looking at installing sidewalk in there. He said upon development of city property we would follow our own ordinances.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the Planning Commission adjourn the meeting.

YEA: Hanover, Holden, Mills, Dzurka, Hufnagel, Harger

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.