

Heather Hanover
Chair

James Eshelman
Vice-Chair

Commissioners

Scott Dzurka, *Mayor*
Eric Hufnagel, *Commissioner*
Mark Holden
Eric Harger
Brian Mills
Shelley Gunther
Kelly Taylor



PLANNING COMMISSION

JANUARY 14, 2026
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the St. Johns Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Hanover at 5:36 p.m.

Members Present: Heather Hanover, Mark Holden, Eric Hufnagel, Brian Mills, Scott Dzurka, Shelley Gunther
Members Absent: Eric Harger, James Eshelman, Kelly Taylor
Staff Present: Kristina Kinde, Interim City Manager; Mindy J. 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, Hufnagel, Mills, Dzurka, Gunther

NAY: None

Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 3, 2025 MEETING

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

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

NAY: None

Motion carried.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Chairperson Hanover asked if there were any public comments.

There were no public comments.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. Outdoor Cafes Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the public hearing be opened.

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

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The public hearing was opened at 5:38 p.m.

Chris Khorey, McKenna, discussed:

- The proposed zoning amendment.
- Outdoor dining & sidewalk cafes.
- Elimination of Special Land Use.
 - This would make it a zoning permit process.
- It can be tweaked and discussed tonight.

Chairperson Hanover asked if anyone from audience had any comments.

There was no one present with comments.

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the public hearing be closed.

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

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The public hearing was closed at 5:40 p.m.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Outdoor Cafes Zoning Ordinance Amendment

There was a discussion of:

- Sidewalk Clearance: A key discussion was the requirement for a minimum five-foot clear, contiguous sidewalk space for pedestrians, based on ADA guidelines. Debate ensued on whether this clear space should be mandated along the curb or if businesses should have flexibility. Concerns included safety from car doors and pedestrian access. A suggestion was made to require a two-foot setback from the curb and a five-foot clear walkway elsewhere. A general “five-foot rule” for other obstructions like rolling racks was also mentioned.
- Permit Requirements (Public vs. Private Property): The group clarified that permit requirements and associated rules apply only to outdoor dining on public property (sidewalks, parks). For establishments on private property, a permit is not required, but they must still comply with ordinance rules (e.g., trash, noise). Enforcement on private property would be complaint-based.
- Hours of Operation: The DDA suggested allowing outdoor dining to operate as long as the associated business is open, simplifying enforcement. Noise concerns for nearby residences were noted. A distinction was made between a fenced outdoor dining area (where alcohol service can continue as long as the business is open) and the broader “social district” (where alcohol is only permitted during specified hours).
- Other Permit Details: DDA approval should only be required if the cafe is in the Central Business District (CBD).

Motion by Commissioner Mills seconded by Commissioner Dzurka that the planning commission approve the ordinance amendment with the recommendations discussed at the meeting.

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

NAY: None

Motion carried.

7. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Zoning Amendment Discussion: Sidewalk Requirement

Chris Khorey, McKenna, discussed:

- Current requirement for sidewalks to be installed.
 - Concerns ordinance is too restrictive.
- They are proposing 3 exemptions.

There was a discussion of:

- Proposed Exemptions: The group discussed exemptions for projects needing only administrative site plan approval, properties zoned industrial (I-2) north of Walker Road, and single-family homes with no existing sidewalk within 300 feet.
- Concerns were raised that exempting single-family homes could hinder creating connected networks. The industrial park exemption was also debated due to the Quest building potentially becoming an educational facility, which would increase pedestrian traffic. It was suggested that the Site Plan Review Committee be granted authority to approve waivers.
- A member suggested the city should set an example by installing sidewalks on all city property and creating a fund to assist residents with installation costs.

Chris Khorey, McKenna, discussed consensus on holding a public hearing at next meeting.

8. COMMITTEE SITE PLAN APPROVALS: None

9. CITY COMMISSION UPDATE – MAYOR DZURKA:

Mayor Dzurka said there has been a leadership change at the city and if you have questions feel free to approach him after the meeting. He discussed a number of items were addressed in December: Lansing Street rezonings; approved changes to the fire code to update (those changes help us comply with the building code and are not necessarily new restrictions); they are still making progress on the 5-year master plan; they approved the 5-year parks and recreation plan and next is the master plan approval.

There was a discussion of:

- If there was clarity on a sprinkler system in downtown buildings.
 - A major remodel only triggers new fire code requirements if there is a change of use.
- The status of the nine-acre city property on Townsend.
 - There have been inquiries, but no firm offers. A key issue is the road configuration, with a proposal to create a cul-de-sac and vacate the right-of-way seen as the most realistic option to avoid costly road upgrades. The property remains for sale.
- The city commission is in the midst of identifying a search firm for a city manager.

10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

There were none.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.