

**MUNSTER PLAN COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**  
March 11, 2025

The Munster Plan Commission held its regularly scheduled meeting on March 11, 2025, at Munster Town Hall, 1005 Ridge Road, in the Main meeting room and could be accessed remotely via Zoom webinar, a videoconference application.

**Call to Order:** President Baker called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance:**

**Roll Call:**

**Members in Attendance**

Rachel Branagan  
Joseph Hofferth  
Jennifer Johns  
David Nellans  
Roland Raffin  
George Shinkan  
Bill Baker, President

**Members Absent**

**Staff Present**

Sergio Mendoza, Planning Director  
Nicole Bennett, Town Attorney  
Denise Core, Administrative Assistant

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion:** Commissioner Raffin moved to approve the February 11, 2025, minutes.

**Second:** Councilor Nellans

**Vote:** Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 1. Motion carried.

President Baker abstained stating he missed the February 11, 2025, meeting.

**Preliminary Hearings :** None

**Public Hearings:**

**President Baker introduced PC25-002 REZONE TO PUD: David Otte of Powers Health requests a rezone, CD4-A and PUD to POWERS HEALTH 800 MACARTHUR PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT located at 800 MacArthur Boulevard.**

President Baker noted this is a continued public hearing

Director Mendoza said his understanding from the minutes is that there was quite a bit of discussion on the architecture of the proposed building and some recommendations. The applicants went back and proposed a revised architecture rendering. There are ribbon windows now rather than the punch out or wide out windows. They have also amended the design standards as part of the rezone PUD to PUD to include the language from that previous meeting. He stated that they are now requesting a favorable recommendation to the Town Council for approval of their rezone.

President Baker asked if the petitioner would like to speak on behalf of PC25-002.

Mr. Dave Otte from 901 MacArthur, Munster, Indiana, introduced himself and said he is here seeking approval for the 4 story, 100,000 square foot outpatient building. He said they had made some modifications; they looked at several alternatives for the windows, and they decided that they like the ribbon windows the best. He said that (style) seems to provide the most modern look along with the wider precast panels. He said the building will serve all their outpatient services, house PT, Cardiac Rehab, Neurology, and Healthy for Life. He said it will make a nice addition to the community. It will be located on the southwest corner of the parking garage. He concluded by saying they are ready to get started.

President Baker asked if there were any questions for Mr. Otte. Commissioner Brangan said she didn't have questions but she did want to thank Mr. Otte for working with them. Mr. Otte stated that he wants to make sure it is fully understood that the ribbon windows will be on the south elevation only. The windows on the west elevation, the north elevation, and the elevation that abuts the parking garage will still be the punched windows. He said there were some code issues they had to address and it really wouldn't be that visible.

President Baker asked what floor will connect to the parking garage. Mr. Otte answered that it will connect to the parking garage on every floor. He added there will be 3 elevators in the building and 2 sets of stair towers. He said it would be a nice addition; it would really help move people in and out for outpatient services.

President Baker said he missed last meeting but wanted to understand if Phase 1 if the 1st building that's going up, which is on the southern portion of the parcel. Mr. Otte said he is correct; it will be a 4-phase, 20-year project overall. He said this is the 1st phase of it, and we'll connect on the north face of this building. He said the 4 phases could potentially be 100,000 square feet and with a center courtyard. President Baker asked if the existing structures are coming down. Mr. Otte said in Phase 1, they will be able to build around the existing building. He said the 1st phase is in the existing parking lot for 800 MacArthur, the next phase would take out the east wing of the building, and then in Phase 3 and Phase 4, it will wrap around and there will be a center courtyard area. President Baker said as the phases go, they will take down the whole structure. Dr. Otte said yes, there will be 28 or so suites in there and they own all but one. Commissioner Raffin as asked if they were doing this job with a power crane. Mr. Otte said they would leave that up to the contractors but knowing the how tight the site is, it would probably be best because they are going to be really tight against the parking garage, Brayden Way, and the existing building. He added that they are going to be drilling caissons right up against it so it will site logistics nightmare. He said they are putting foundation caissons in for 6 stories so if they decide to go up in the future, they'll have that ability. Commissioner Raffin asked what the soil bores look like and how deep they will have to go. Mr. Otte said about 75. President Baker said he assumes there is new infrastructure for this new building but they are keeping the existing building infrastructure. Mr. Otte said they are going back and forth with Nipsco on how to manage all the transfers of the gas and the power. President Baker added the water and the storm. Mr. Otte said Torrengea is involved with the water and the storm and, on the west side of the site, there will be some underground water retention areas designed for all 4 phases so they will be ready to go in the future. President Baker asked if there were any more questions for Mr. Otte.

Director Mendoza said he wanted to make a point for clarification. He said the phased portion of this development is elaborated in PC25-003, which was approved last month. That development plan will also incorporate this petition, PC25-002 as part of the PUD for approval. He said they will have that information

included as well as the design guidelines and bulk standards which also reference that. He stated that any changes or additions to the existing section would require another approval. The additional phases will be coming back for approvals. President Baker said the process is to rezone the property and then set it as a PUD. Director Mendoza said it is a rezoning to a PUD; a favorable recommendation from the Plan Commission to the Town Council is being sought for their approval of the PUD.

President Baker opened the continued public hearing. There were no public comments, he closed the public hearing.

**Motion:** Commissioner Raffin moved to send a favorable recommendation to the Town Council to approve PC Docket No. PC25-002 REZONE TO PUD, CD4-A and PUD to POWERS HEALTH 800 MACARTHUR PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT located at 800 MacArthur Boulevard, including all discussions and findings.

**Second:** Councilor Hofferth

**Vote:** Yes – 7 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

**President Baker introduced PC21-006 DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPROVAL Amendment to Conditions-Amit Shah of HP Munster Investment LLC is requesting to remove the living wall condition on the north wall approved under PC21-006 at 9420 Calumet Avenue**

President Baker said he remembered this petition. Director Mendoza said he was not here at the time, but he has read the minutes and found that there was quite a bit of discussion about the wall to the north that did not have a break in that wall expanse. He said full windows were discussed but ultimately, the motion was to provide some type of relief for that 1st floor and the Development Plan was approved with the condition that a living wall being installed along the side of the building facing Maple Leaf Boulevard. Mendoza said the concern now is the maintenance of keeping a living wall alive during certain weather conditions. For that reason, the applicant is now requesting that the conditions that were initially part of that approval for PC21-006 be amended to remove the living wall requirement. President Baker asked if there were any questions for staff.

Commissioner Branagan asked if there were any alternate plans. Director Mendoza said he was not aware of any but certainly there could be some discussion to meet the requirement to break up that expanse of wall which had been called the architectural relief. This relief could be a faux living wall or a metal design that could give it some architectural integrity or design. He clarified for President Baker that the approval specifies a living wall and that is interpreted as live plant material and there are ways to irrigate that material. Councilor Hofferth asked how close the wall is to Maple Leaf Boulevard and if there is parking nearby that in the wintertime could introduce salts and other things that would destroy the plant material. President Baker said, at that time, this PUD had to do with the connection of Maple Leaf Boulevard into (the former) Lansing Country Club property so there was going to be a lot of traffic. He said there was a lot of discussion about how this wall would look, but currently that is not connected so Maple Leaf is not being utilized and directly across the street, all you see is the open end of tractor trailers at Pepsi. He added that, aesthetically, the wall is light years ahead of what's across the street. Commissioner Branagan asked where there may be other living walls in town, she thought perhaps at Target. A discussion ensued around examples of living walls in town and the difficulty of maintaining them due to factors like exposure and salt. Commissioner Raffin said the Dialysis Center was supposed to have one but there is no living material there

and it looks like a chicken coop fence now. Councilor Nellans said you just see the fence; you don't see the plants. President Baker asked if there was someone to speak on this petition.

Mr. Amit Shaw of 9420 Calumet Avenue, representing HP Munster, introduced himself. He said everything Director Mendoza mentioned is what he's looking to do, to remove that requirement for the living wall. He said he is open to hearing any feedback the commission has. Commissioner Raffin asked Mr. Shaw if he had considered planters in the front. Mr. Shaw said they do have landscaping and planters in the front. President Baker said the living wall was a condition of the PUD approval. Councilor Nellans asked about the dark color on the first floor and why it was chosen. Councilor Hofferth asked Mr. Shaw if there was room in front to create a planting area. Mr. Shaw said he has about a foot. There was an additional discussion about what could be used in the area, for example a mural or an iron sculpture. There was a discussion as to when the connection might be made that would increase the traffic and the public view as well as what processes need to be completed first, including the development and a streetlight. Mr. Shaw was concerned with the timing since he needs his final occupancy.

President Baker opened the public hearing. There were no public comments so he closed the public hearing.

Councilor Shankan said Mr. Shaw doesn't have full occupancy for the building. President Baker asked Director Mendoza for confirmation that this process needs to be completed before he can get the paperwork he needs. Director Mendoza stated that there needs to be a decision made on the conditions that were imposed as part of the Development Plan approval for the facade articulation. The condition was identified to install a living wall; that living wall was to meet the facade articulation that is identified in this part of the code. He said there could be alternatives. In reviewing the minutes, he said it looks like there was some discussion on alternatives with full windows or other relief methods but for some reason, that living wall condition placed on those 2 areas. President Baker asked if this were the only missing item for him to get final certificate of occupancy. Director Mendoza said yes, everything else is in compliance. It was noted that this is not part of the PUD conditions; it is part of the development plan conditions. It was never identified as part of the PUD Approval or outlined as a bulk standard design requirement as part of the PUD approval. The Commission could approve or deny the petition or come up with another alternative. Councilor Shankan asked what needs to be done to help Mr. Shaw get his final occupancy. Director Mendoza answered that they could either remove that condition from the original approval, deny the request to install the living wall so Mr. Shaw would have to install the living wall, or the commission can come up with an alternative to meet the architecture of the facade articulation. Instead of living wall, it could be another material or something. Councilor Shankan said there are other living walls and everything is dead. President Baker agreed that was not an option. Councilor Shankan made a motion to remove the living wall requirement. Attorney Bennett asked for confirmation that the motion is to amend the development plan and to remove this as a condition. Councilor Shankan said yes. President Baker confirmed that this will go to the Town Council.

President Baker opened the public hearing. There were no public comments, he closed the public hearing.

**Motion:** Councilor Shankan moved to amend the conditions of the Development Plan approval for PC Docket No. 21-006 removing the living wall requirement.

**Second:** Commissioner Raffin

**Vote:** Yes – 7 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

**Continued Discussion Items:** None

**Other Business:**

**President Baker introduced PC25-004 FINAL PLAT: David Otte of Powers Health requests approval of a Final Plat POWERS HEALTH 800 MACARTHUR, LOT 1 located at 800 MacArthur Boulevard.**

**Motion:** Councilor Shinkan moved to approve PC Docket No. 25-004 Final Plat for POWERS HEALTH 800 MACARTHUR, LOT 1 located at 800 MacArthur Boulevard, including all discussions and findings.

**Second:** Councilor Hofferth

**Findings of Fact:**

**President Baker introduced the Findings of Fact for PC24-012 DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW: Tony Gierczyk with E. Anthony Inc. for OSNI (Orthopaedic Specialists of Northwest Indiana) received conditional approval for a Development Plan impacting the building facade and site updates, including the interior renovation of a 10,000 SF church building into a medical office facility at 9900 Columbia Avenue.**

**Motion:** Commissioner Raffin moved to approve the Findings of Fact for PC Docket No. No. 24-012.

**Second:** Commissioner Branagan

**Vote:** Yes – 7 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

**President Baker introduced the Findings of Fact for PC25-001 PRELIMINARY PLAT: David Otte of Powers Health received approval of a Preliminary Plat POWERS HEALTH 800 MACARTHUR; LOT 1 located at 800 MacArthur Boulevard.**

**Motion:** Commissioner Raffin moved to approve the Findings of Fact for PC Docket No. No. 25-001.

**Second:** Councilor Hofferth.

**Vote:** Yes – 7 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

**President Baker introduced the Findings of Fact for PC25-003 DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW: David Otte of Powers Health received Development Plan approval for a new 4-story medical office building to be part of POWERS HEALTH 800 MACARTHUR PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT at 800 MacArthur Boulevard.**

**Motion:** Commissioner Raffin moved to approve the Finding of Fact for PC Docket No. No. 25-003.

**Second:** Councilor Shinkan.

**Vote:** Yes – 7 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

**Next Meeting:** Vice President Raffin announced the next regular business meeting will be held on April 8, 2025.

**Adjournment:**

**Motion:** Commissioner Raffin moved to adjourn.

**Second:** Councilor Nellans

**Vote:** Yes –7 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 pm

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President Baker  
Plan Commission

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Approval

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Secretary Sergio Mendoza  
Plan Commission

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Approval