

MUNSTER PLAN COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
August 12, 2025

The Munster Plan Commission held a meeting on August 12, 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: Vice President Raffin called the meeting to order at 7:36 pm.

Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

William Baker, President, Appointed by: Town Council, Initial Appointment: 01/15/2007 -Term Expiration: 12/31/2026

Roland Raffin, Vice-President, Appointed by: Town Council, Initial Appointment: 03/12/2007 - Term Expiration: 12/31/2026

Jennifer Johns, member. Appointed by: Town Council, Initial Appointment: 12/17/2018 - Term Expiration: 12/31/2027

Rachel Branagan, member, Appointed by: Town Council, Initial Appointment: 06/01/2022 - Term Expiration: 12/31/2027

Joseph Hofferth, Town Council Rep., Appointed by: Town Council President, Initial Appointment: 01/06/2025 - Term Expiration: 12/31/2025

David B. Nellans, Town Council Rep., Appointed by: Town Council President, Initial Appointment: 01/06/2025 - Term Expiration: 12/31/2025

George Shinkan, Town Council Rep., Appointed by: Town Council President, Initial Appointment: 01/06/2025 - Term Expiration: 12/31/2025

Members in Attendance

Jennifer Johns
Rachel Branagan
Joseph Hofferth
David Nellans
Roland Raffin
George Shinkan

Members Absent:

William Baker

Staff Present

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

Vice President Raffin said we have a quorum.

Approval of Minutes: July 23, 2025

Motion: Councilor Shinkan moved to approve the July 23, 2025; minutes as presented.

Second: Commissioner Johns

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

Preliminary Hearings:

PC25-014 REZONE: Gary Warfel, SPIN Munster, LLC c/o Saxon Partners on behalf of Kenmara Development requests to rezone 58 acres from CD-4 B to a PUD Technology Park at S of 400-440 Fisher Street.

Director Mendoza gave a review of project. The property is owned by SPIN Munster, LLC which is a Saxon Partners (Indiana) ownership entity. A previous Development Plan for the subject site was submitted to the Plan Commission and approved in 2023. It was part of a Phase 1A Development Agreement executed between the Town of Munster Redevelopment Commission and SPIN Munster, LLC. The Kenmara Development has returned and will be seeking multiple reviews and approval for revised plans, including a rezone to a PUD for a technology park. The current zoning for the Kenmara site is designated as CD-4 B, a "General Urban B Character District" for the development of medium density areas that have a mix of building types primarily designated for residential, retail, personal service, office, and light industrial uses with variable private and public open spaces and landscaping. The proposed new Kenmara Development project will reduce traffic significantly because of the lower number of anticipated employees and less required parking spaces that are generated by technology parks. The new parking plan anticipates only 57,000 SF of office and parking 3.56 per 1,000 square feet. A proposed technology park will consist of larger scale buildings consistent with a Certified Technology Park established under Indiana Code Section 36-7-32 for larger lot size and increased block perimeter. The proposed PUD Rezone will not include residential, retail, or personal service use. He concluded by saying staff recommends that this be set for a public hearing. Commissioner Raffin asked if there were any questions for staff before acknowledging the petitioner to speak.

Mr. Gary Warfel of SPIN Munster, LLC located at 25 Recreation Park, Hingham, MA, introduced himself and gave a brief history of the project since he began working with the Town several years ago. They had an approved plan that went through the Plan Commission two years ago. He said it has been quite an undertaking and they have worked very hard trying to make the CD-4 B zoning fit for the property. He said they listened to some of the complaints about CD-4 B; it's a little bit vague, it tends to be contradictory in spots, and it's very complex. He said they also learned there is a lack of support for CD-4 B. He said a zoning ordinance came out, he thought it was 1847, that repealed residential use from permitted to conditional, which made it very difficult. He said since that time, they've heard comments like no high density residential, no connection to Illinois, the impact on the School Town, and traffic concerns, but the one thing that everybody was in favor of was the substantial economic impact which was shown in a Baker Tilly study on the project. He said the taxes on the property, included in the report, are \$15,000.00 a year which is about the same as most homes across the state line. With the change in use, they expect to see \$320 million of net present value for 30 years. He said that is about 700 times what the current tax is so there's a tremendous economic benefit here. They have looked at all sorts of different uses; with the recent uptick in technology and innovation, they believe that the Certified Technology Park that's allowed by state statute is probably the best use of the site right now. He said that precipitated the change in zone. He stated there are only three differences between what they're proposing with the PUD and the previously approved original development plan. Change one is the increase in lot size. He referenced Figure 5 on the revised development plan included in the staff report and said they have not replatted the property yet. They stayed with the existing roadway plats and the subdivision plat, but they have combined lot sizes so in the combined lots they end up with a little larger coverage and building perimeter. Change two is the Use that's allowed by the Certified Technology Park, the rezoning. Change three is that they're adding the North

parcel, which is 22 acres of lake and trails into the PUD. He added that they are open to consideration on how that might be activated into the community for recreation and public use. He concluded by saying they now have an 81-acre PUD and feel that a PUD is much better than the CD-4 B in terms of what they are trying to accomplish. They are asking to be granted a public hearing next month to be able to affect the change.

Commissioner Branagan asked for a better description of the entire site layout. Mr. Warfel stepped to the screen and pointed out the 81 acres, showing the State Line north to south, the 150 feet NIPSCO right-of-way which runs through the midsection of the property, transitions at the State Line to a ComEd right-of-way which feeds the site from Illinois, and then comes over and hits the Munster substation. He said that right-of-way is not just for NIPSCO, there is also a 60-foot Town of Munster right-of-way. He said, originally, Fisher Street was going to connect all the way through to Illinois but when the subdivision was built, three homes were built within the town right-of-way so that idea was abandoned. He said they purchased those three homes and tore them down so a natural barrier still exists. The north parcel is basically a 22-acre lake and trails around it and it opens right up to the Pennsy Greenway. He said you can't see the Pennsy Greenway because of the fencing and the overgrown brush so most of the people that live in the subdivision probably don't even know it exists. He said their original development plan was limited the southern 59 acres, but now they want to put both of those parcels into the PUD.

Councilor Nellans asked they are talking about including the Illinois property. Mr. Warfel said no, just all of the Indiana side; they are doing this to get more use out of at the Indiana side. He said they have been working with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD), Robinson Engineering on the Illinois side, and their own engineers on the Indiana side, to do a stormwater detention basin that would span the state line. That would be used for Indiana, not for Illinois, and it looks like they have concurrence on the ability to do that. Councilor Nellans said there would not be a usable, direct road connection. Mr. Warfel confirmed there would not be a public road, there is a private locked gate for NIPSCO access but that's a private lot for service delivery.

Commissioner Raffin said this is a concept, we're not approving a 720,000 square foot building and they will be combining lots. Mr. Warfel said they are looking at the footprints and he believes CD-5 zoning governs the PUD. He said they've been able to keep their impervious coverage; they've got 70%; the coverage on the overall PUD is only 40% so they comply with the setbacks, density and bulk that are in the standards. They expect when they get users, they would need to file an amendment like any PUD. Commissioner Raffin noted they ran an economic impact on the 1.2 million square feet and asked if they ran an economic impact of adding a second floor or 2.4 million square feet. Mr. Warfel said he hasn't but he talked to Baker Tilly and engaged Jim Marino. He said they do know that if they're able to get that kind of density, the economic impact is significant, much larger than what they had projected before. The participants discussed the economic impact expectations from the original development to the revised development over the course of many years. Commissioner Raffin asked if they are going to file the Developmental Standards to present to the Plan Commission. Mr. Warfel said they will have everything the Plan Commission wants to see; they'd like to get the PUD zoning done now because it takes a lot of time and expense to further develop everything. They want to get concurrence from the Plan Commission to move forward.

Commissioner Branagan asked if the building will be positioned as they are shown; she would like to see Lot 1 and Lot 2 aligned more parallel to the roadway parcel so there won't be that awkward roadway between Lot 3 and Lot 1 and Lot 2. Mr. Warfel explained that the roadways and the subdivision are already platted, so

the easiest thing was to combine the lots. He said if, for example, a building with a large footprint would take place, they would put it parallel to the railroad tracks, which gives them better land use. He anticipates that the roadway could be moved; he understands the CD-5 wants building lines parallel. He said one of the benefits of doing it this way is the landscape screening and buffering from the residential district to the north. He said that can all be worked out.

Commissioner Raffin read the staff recommendations and said Mr. Warfel will want to start developing the standards for design guidelines, permitted usages, lot sizes, stormwater management agreements, building size, building material, landscaping, lighting standards, and signage. He said they can work with staff on that.

Councilor Shinkan made a motion to set this to public hearing, the motion was seconded. Councilor Nellans said he would like input from Attorney John Reed who is handling this one. Councilor Shinkan said Attorney Reed was in the agenda meeting for this project and said he highly recommended this; that's why they put it through. He said they could have Attorney Reed here next time for the public hearing.

Motion: Councilor Shinkan moved to set PC Docket No. 25-014 to a public hearing

Second: Councilor Hofferth

Vote: Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

Commissioner Raffin asked Mr. Warfel to work with staff on getting all the required notification requirements met for the public hearing.

Public Hearings: None

Other Business:

PC05-004 CERTIFICATE OF AMENDMENT: Ryan Zente, Steiner Homes, requests a change of address for Lot 22 of Community Resources Phase 1, from 10117 Allison Road to 444 Jenna Drive.

Director Mendoza said we did one of these a year ago. He explained that when subdivision plats originally get recorded, occasionally the corner lots get assigned two addresses; this one did not get recorded with two addresses. Since the body that approved the subdivision was a Planning Commission, they are now asking them to amend that portion of the recorded subdivision to add this secondary address. The homeowner would like their home constructed facing on Jenna Drive and they would like it to have a mailing address of 444 Jenna Drive. They contacted a surveyor, an engineering company, and were issued a certificate of amendment that has been recorded. He concluded by saying that we can update our records considering the Plan Commission's approval for the amendment.

Motion: Councilor Shinkan approve the Certificate of Amendment PC Docket No. 05-004.

Second: Commissioner Johns

Vote: Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

PC22-005 SURETY RELEASE and SURETY ACCEPTANCE: Brian Sluiter, Construction Manager for Powers Health is requesting the release of a Performance Surety and the acceptance of a 2-year Maintenance Surety for COMMUNITY FOUNDATION INC, BLOCK 5 at 10240 Calumet Avenue.

Director Mendoza said this request is for the release of a Performance Surety Bond for Community Foundation Block 5 serving 3 lots of record with two out lots. He said they are requesting a favorable recommendation be made to the Town Council to authorize the clerk to release the Surety that is in place. He said they have completed all the requirements and inspections for Public Works and the Community Development inspectors on the site. In lieu of that Surety, they have submitted a 2-year Maintenance Surety. Director Mendoza said the staff recommendation is to send a favorable recommendation to the Town Council to release the Performance Bond.

Motion: Councilor Shinkan said I'll make that motion.

Second: Councilor Nellans

Vote: Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

Findings of Fact:

PC25-006 DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW: Scott Yahne, Attorney, on behalf of Family Christian Center received approval of a Development Plan at 340 45th Street.

Motion: Commissioner Branagan moved to approve the Findings of Fact for PC Docket No. 25-006.

Second: Councilor Hofferth

Vote: Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

PC25-010 FINAL PLAT: Scott Yahne, attorney representing Munster MOB I LLC received Final Plat approval at 9260 Calumet Avenue.

Motion: Councilor Shinkan moved approve the Findings of Fact for PC Docket No. 25-010.

Second: Councilor Nellans

Vote: Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

PC23-010 (Amended) SITE PLAN: David Beach, Attorney, for Jay Lieser of Maple Leaf Crossing LLC, received an unsubstantial modification to Lot 7 and a Modification of Site Plan approval, per SECTION 26-6. 804.G.12 at 9450 Calumet Avenue.

Motion: Councilor Nellans moved to approve the Findings of Fact for PC Docket No. 23-010.

Second: Councilor Hofferth

Vote: Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

Continued Discussion Items:

Commissioner Raffin said they look forward to seeing the changes made to the Zoning Code after Director Mendoza and the attorney have them ready.

Next Meeting: Commissioner Raffin announced the next regular business meeting will be held on September 9, 2025.

Adjournment:

Motion: Councilor Shinkan moved to adjourn.

Second: Councilor Nellans

Vote: Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm

President Baker/Vice President Raffin
Plan Commission

Date of Approval

Executive Secretary Sergio Mendoza
Plan Commission

Date of Approval