

**MUNSTER PLAN COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING**  
Meeting Date: October 11, 2022

The announced meeting location was Munster Town Hall and could be accessed remotely via Zoom, a video conferencing application.

**Call to Order:** 7:30 pm

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Members in Attendance:**

Lee Ann Mellon  
Brian Specht (On Zoom)  
William Baker  
Steve Tulowitzki  
Rachel Branagan  
Roland Raffin

**Members Absent:**

Andy Koultourides

**Staff Present:**

Tom Vander Woude, Planning Director  
David Wickland, Attorney

**Approval of Minutes:**

**a. September 13, 2022, Regular Business Meeting**

**Motion:** Mr. Specht moved to approve the September 13, 2022 Regular Business Meeting minutes

**Second:** Ms. Branagan

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

**Preliminary Hearings:**

**a. PC Docket No. 22-020 SPIN Munster, LLC represented by Gary Warfel requesting approval of a preliminary plat for the Kenmara Phase 1B Dedication of Maple Leaf Boulevard.**

Mr. Vander Woude said this is Phase 1b of the former Lansing Country Club property development. It includes the extension of Maple Leaf Boulevard from the Maple Leaf Crossing development to the northwest within the former Pennsylvania Railroad right-of-way, which is owned by the Town, and west through the NIPSCO substation property. This is the southeast access point for the Lansing Country Club development. It includes different pieces of property that have to come together to provide the access points. Included in the plat is a dedication of a triangle of property at the southwest corner of the Pepsi bottling plant. This is where Maple Leaf Boulevard swings out to get onto the railroad right-of-way. In order to get the correct angle, they need to use the corner of the Pepsi bottling plant property. The next segment of the project is the improvement of the railroad right-of-way with a two-lane roadway, a parkway, and a multi-use path. The multi-use path that crosses over the new road and extends along the northeast side of the property, ultimately connecting to the Pennsy Greenway to the north. There is a driveway connection into the Pepsi bottling plant that will permit trucks to exit only from the Pepsi bottling plant, travel to the south and exit onto Calumet Avenue at a signalized intersection to be installed by Maple Leaf Crossing. There is a 66-foot-wide road right-of-way through the NIPSCO property

and a 50 foot long, 66-foot-wide easement under the NICTD railroad tracks. The tracks will be up on a bridge at this point. All of parties with property have been cooperative in reviewing this design and giving at least a verbal agreement to it. He said the plan implements the recommendations of the traffic impact study that was developed for the Lansing Country Club property. It includes a public landscaping plan that was provided in a previous submittal to the Town, but it needs to be updated. Most importantly from an overall planning perspective, it implements the improvement of the Pennsy Railroad, the Pennsy Greenway Trail, which has long been in the Town's plans and it allows truck traffic from the Pepsi plant to enter Calumet at a signalized intersection.

The staff is requesting that the multi-use trail crossing be moved northwest to the Pepsi semi-truck driveway. He explained that because of the other parties that are involved, written agreement would be needed from them as a condition of any approvals that would be granted for this project. The Town Council would be the party that would ultimately accept the public improvements to this project, similar to any other subdivision. The Plan Commission would give an approval, not a recommendation, but it would be contingent upon Town Council action.

Mr. Raffin asked whether the Pepsi curb cut was being removed or if trucks would still be able to turn in there. Mr. Vander Woude answered that there were no plans for removing or modifying that curb cut. He doesn't think it has been suggested or approved by Pepsi. The idea is that trucks will still be able to enter through their existing Calumet Avenue access. There is a guard shack where they circulate into the building through that driveway. He expects that to remain the same, the existing traffic would be routed to that Maple Leaf Crossing. Mr. Baker said that this is the second point of ingress, egress into Kenmara but they don't own any of the land nor will they own any of this land. Mr. Vander Woude said that is correct. Mr. Baker asked if this is more a Town project than a Kenmara project, to provide access in there. Mr. Vander Woude said it is a Kenmara project that involves Town right-of-way. Mr. Vander Woude said that this would become a Town street and the Town would plow and maintain this road. Mr. Baker asked if the only curb cut approved by the Town is the one coming out of Pepsi. Mr. Vander Woude said it is the only one proposed at this point. Mr. Baker asked how many trucks they anticipate coming out of the Pepsi lot and coming to the light at Maple Leaf and Calumet Avenue. Mr. Vander Woude said he didn't know off the top of his head, but this was contemplated in the traffic study that was done for Maple Leaf Crossing. When they developed the plans for Maple Leaf Crossing and Maple Leaf Boulevard, that traffic study included truck traffic from Pepsi using that road, so they do know that number of trucks. Mr. Baker asked if they are only going to be allowed to leave, not to enter, in that way. Mr. Vander Woude said the intent is that they would use that curb cut for exiting traffic only. Mr. Baker asked if staff had looked into the truck traffic from the rest of the Lake Business Center using the road. There are hotels, offices, cigar smokers, bicycle people, all kinds of cool things happening there, he is curious about the amount of semi-truck traffic.

Mr. Gary Warfel, Saxon Partners, 25 Recreation Park Drive, Hingham, MA 02043 introduced himself. He said he has met with Pepsi several times. He doesn't know the number of trucks, but this is what they plan on doing. All the trucks that are currently coming onto Calumet Avenue and doing a left-hand turn or a right turn in some cases, with no signal, would be routed to Maple Leaf Boulevard. While it may bring more traffic to Maple Leaf Boulevard and Calumet Avenue, it reduces that same amount of traffic at the other area. The only changes they have made to this plan since the development plan was filed is

they took the curve at the corner of Pepsi, and they moved it further away from the Pepsi building so the actual amount of land that Pepsi has agreed to convey to Town is very small. He thinks it is under 1000 square feet. It is necessary to make that curve and that radius work for trucks. While they did accommodate Pepsi, they did take more wetlands. They did modify their wetlands permit for the mitigations. They are clear with NIPSCO, at least on principle. They are clear with NICTD in terms of that underpass. They are also ushering through the underpass for the Pennsy Greenway on the Town's behalf since they are already working with NICTD on the roadway. They are also working to get the Town the proper easements for the Pennsy pedestrian underpass. He said that they would be moving the crossing so it is further north of the truck crossing, and they will be putting traffic control in, a stop sign. For the benefit of the people in the room, to put it all in context, they have presented their platting in pieces and phases because of the complexity of the project. They are going to triple the greenway connectors in the area.

Baker asked if the only parcel that Pepsi is giving up is a part of 1B, that turning radius down at the south end. Mr. Warfel said it was. The only other part is that they are also going to grant them the construction easement for the curb cut that goes into their property because they are going to build the curb cut and the apron so they will take that about 10 feet into their property which is the truck parking. He also clarified that there are two more curb cuts in the curb north of the NIPSCO substation. There are two for NIPSCO and one for Pepsi. Mr. Vander Woude confirmed for Mr. Baker that the Town would have all the easements dedicated to them. They will be dedicated right-of-way. Mr. Warfel said their plan is to have land conveyed to the Town so all their work will be in Town right-of-way. Mr. Baker asked if this was an approval of the actual roadway, how it is configured and how it fits into the zoning or the Town plan. Mr. Vander Woude confirmed it is.

Mr. Tulowitzki asked about the benefits and drawbacks of doing curb cuts into the Lake Business Center. Mr. Warfel said they would be amenable to that. This is only platting. Once they start building, it might be a good idea to revisit traffic in the entire area. They have submitted their traffic studies. It might be a good idea to get some concurrence with Maple Leaf Village, Maple Leaf Crossing, Centennial Village, and any other development on Calumet Avenue. At some point, they can discuss the connection to Illinois. He said the more they start thinking about that internally, about what's happening on Ridge Road, and the traffic in the neighborhood that is just north of them on Manor and Timrick, this could present a solution. Mr. Tulowitzki asked about the timeline for the development. Mr. Warfel said they are following NICTD's lead on the Fisher crossing so that it is closed once and not twice. NICTD was delayed a little bit and they will not be doing that until March, so they have a little time. He said the development agreement is moving forward. They had a really good round of meetings with NIPSCO last week. Their senior management were in sync so that is going very well. They have technical things to work out. For timeline, they are holding back on marketing. They have had some interest, they have taken some tours, but they really need to get access because there is no point in talking about something that may not exist. They are looking at March for construction of infrastructure.

**Motion:** Mr. Baker moved to set PC Docket No. 22-020 for a public hearing.

**Second:** Mr. Tulowitzki

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

**Public Hearings:**

- a. **PC Docket No. 22-017 SPIN Munster, LLC represented by Gary Warfel requesting approval of a preliminary plat for the Kenmara Phase 1A An addition to the Town of Munster a commercial subdivision located at the southwest corner of Timrick Drive, Manor Avenue, and Fisher Street.**

Mr. Vander Woude said this is the Fisher Street entrance into the Lansing Country Club project. This was reviewed by the Plan Commission at a preliminary hearing last month. A vote was taken to advance it to a public hearing. The applicant has publicized for the public hearing. The plan that was put before the Plan Commission last month proposes a rerouting of Manor Avenue to the west terminating at Timrick Drive at a single intersection on Fisher Street, which is extended to the west into the Lansing Country Club property. In addition to the roads, the project includes the replatting of the residential lots in this area and the modification of Evergreen Park. He said the Plan Commission raised some questions at the meeting last month about overall traffic flow in this area and potential backups on Manor Avenue. There were some questions about how the parkland would work with these residential lots including how one driveway would get access to the residential lot, whether through an easement or dedication of property. He said staff reviewed the Plan Commission comments and agreed.

He said that Parks and Recreation and Public Works had concerns that the proposed alignment could create a number of issues in terms of the overall line between public and private property, the maintenance of the parks, and the privacy of those residential lots, they would have parkland right in front of them and the awkwardness of the layout of these lots with a driveway in front of another lot. He said they coordinated with Mr. Warfel, the developer, and agreed that the layout, as proposed, is not desirable. The public hearing had already been advertised, so the recommendation is for discussion and suggestions from the Plan Commission and to table the agenda item to allow staff and the applicant to meet for a more technical discussion on this plat. Mr. Raffin said they are looking for staff recommendations. Mr. Baker said this is a Town issue, not a development issue. He asked if this is holding up the development in any way. He assumes the developer is paying for all this engineering. Mr. Vander Woude said that is correct. Mr. Baker said they have been through it before and now we don't like it because of the access points the Plan Commission brought up the last time to get into those lots. This is a scenario where those two houses are driving what we are talking about here. Mr. Baker wants to know what the feedback is from those two residents. Ms. Branagan said the driveway for lot 21 is very visible to the house next door. That is less than ideal for lot 20. She suggested relocating driveway access to Fisher Mr. Vander Woude said the original proposal was for a roundabout at that intersection. The developer decided about a year ago to go in a different direction. The roundabout was considered to be very land intensive and included multiple pedestrian crossings. The plan was then changed to redirect Timrick Drive into Manor Avenue. He said it was presented to the Park Board and the Plan Commission. Both of those bodies raised the concern that it would be disruptive to the houses that are on Manor Avenue. After receiving that feedback, Mr. Warfel went back to his design team. This design came out of a response to that criticism of the previous layout. From the staff perspective, it solved one problem but at the same time it created more significant problems. Mr. Tulowitzki asked if there any preliminary characterization and what the solution may be based on conversations with other departments. Mr. Vander Woude said they have talked internally about the roundabout, which increases the number of pedestrian crossings, but reduces maintenance issues, has no real adverse effects to any of houses in the area, and is a good way of slowing down traffic in that area.

Mr. Tulowitzki asked about a triple stop sign. Mr. Vander Woude said the Plan Commission had suggested last month that an additional stop sign be added at Timrick. Mr. Raffin said there are really only three actions, tying in the streets, a roundabout, or closing it off and making a cul-de-sac out of it.

Mr. Warfel from Saxon Partners said this is delaying them, this is costing them a lot of money, but they want to do it right. This is a complex project; it is a complex intersection. He said the roundabout doesn't work. It looks nice, they thought it would, that was their initial idea. They talked to a lot of people about it. It is not safe; it takes up too much real estate. They never heard the idea of a cul-de-sac which would calm traffic down. He said they thought about the driveway through Fisher Street. They think it has merit. There are only two homes that are affected. Those are 8841 and 8837 Manor Avenue. They've talked with both of those homeowners.

Mr. Vander Woude said that the Fire Department would need to review a cul-de-sac; they'd like to maintain continuity between Fisher Street and Manor Avenue. Mr. Warfel said one negative would be an impediment for the people in this area to get to the hospital. Mr. Tulowitzki said it would have to be made clear what the alternative routes would be. Mr. Vander Woude noted from an emergency response perspective, the Town would need some connection between Ridge Road and Fisher Street. There will be times when the gates are down at the train station for minutes. The ambulances and fire trucks from Lansing and from the West will be using Manor or Hohman or Timrick.

Mr. Raffin opened the public hearing.

Angela Gomez, 227 Timrick, Munster. She wasn't aware of this until she got the registered letter. She said she cannot imagine stop signs being there with the traffic that already comes through Timrick onto Fisher Street. She also owns a property at 607 Cambridge, so the driveway goes into Fisher Street. She just moved there last year. She wants to be informed a little sooner. She thinks the cul-de-sac is better than a stop sign. She is right on Timrick, butting up against the park. She said she doesn't like the current design. She doesn't see how it's going to work without backing up. She sees the traffic that comes through, she sees people going through stop signs.. Someone had talked about a three-way stop sign. Now the traffic does flow. There is a lot of traffic, but it is in and out, nothing stationary, nothing staying so it never backs up. It works, but she realizes it has to change when they bring Fisher all the way through, so they have to figure out something. She sees the green that is the park and the plans to extend over to the other side of Manor. She likes green space; she doesn't see how extending it over will work.

Michael Goepfert of 10380 Oxford Place Munster says he will continue to bring this up. Instead of pushing all the traffic from this new development onto Calumet Avenue, a road that was just finished, that we just finished spending millions of dollars to move traffic off of, or the other option of moving a lot of this traffic into the residential neighborhood north of the proposed development, he asked why they are not looking to connect to Wentworth. He's heard rumors that the connection would bring crime and people think that it will provide an easy escape to Illinois, but Wentworth is no secret. It might not be utilized by some people in town, but it is not a secret to the many people who are using it from both Indiana and Illinois. If you open Wentworth as a second entry or exit, you can abandon this Fisher access which would herd traffic through the residential area to the north. Mr. Raffin told him that the developer said that option is still on the table as this development continues to be built, right now

we don't even have a building up yet. Mr. Goepfert said when he first proposed that, it got shut down immediately. Mr. Raffin said there is a space to get to Wentworth.

With no additional public comment, Mr. Raffin said he wanted to keep the public hearing open because if they propose a new plan next month, the public has the option to comment.

**Motion:** Mr. Tulowitzki moved to table PC Docket No. 22-017 until the November meeting of the Plan Commission and requested that it include a public hearing.

**Second:** Ms. Branagan

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

**b. PC Docket No. 22-019 Fadi Layous requesting a zoning map amendment, changing the zoning of the property at 500 45<sup>th</sup> Street from SD-M Manufacturing to CD-4.B General Urban – B District with the Special requirement: Ground Floor Residential /Dwelling Use Restriction.**

Mr. Vander Woude said the applicant, Fadi Layous, has purchased the property at 500 45th Street and has applied to the Town to rezone it from SD- Manufacturing to CD-4.B General Urban- B District. This will allow him to redevelop the property and remodel it from what it is currently, which is a light industrial building, into a pulmonary clinic. The property is currently zoned SD-M which does not permit medical offices. He said the board needs to pay reasonable regard to the comprehensive plan, current conditions and character of current structures and uses for the district, the most desirable use for which the land use district is adapted, conservation of property values around the jurisdiction, and reasonable development and growth from the staff perspective. This zone change meets those criteria. Under the former manufacturing zoning, this type of use was permitted provided that it conformed to the standards of a commercial district. Prior to 2019, a medical office would be permitted in this district without the zone change. He said there are some actual commercial uses within an existing manufacturing district. The staff recommendation is a favorable recommendation to the Town Council. Mr. Raffin asked for confirmation that, if it passes, it will come to the Plan Commission for the site plan. Mr. Vander Woude said that none of those things specific to the site are up for vote now. This is just to send a recommendation to the Council to change the zoning. If the Board wanted to, they could place a condition on that recommendation, or the Board could require a commitment from the applicant to develop the property in conformity with the plan that is presented. Mr. Baker spoke in favor of eliminating the curb cut on 45<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Tulowitzki asked whether the proposal last time was that the curb cut on 45th would be removed and ingress and egress would go to Kennedy Court. Mr. Vander Woude said that is part of the preliminary plans that they presented. Mr. Tulowitzki asked what the rationale was behind the code changes in 2019 and the decision to have this manufacturing and to require a zone change to put in a medical use. Mr. Vander Woude said that is standard to prohibit medical offices in manufacturing districts, because there are some incompatibility issues. Mr. Tulowitzki said there is a mix of light industrial, office and others such as Humane Indiana.

Amer Sassila, with the HOH Group based in Schaumburg, 623 Cooper Court, Schaumburg, IL 60173 introduced him as the representative of the applicant. Mr. Tulowitzki asked him to verify his intention to remove the curb cut on 45<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Sassila said if that were a condition, they would comply. Mr. Raffin said that would be in the site plan process, this is a rezoning.

Mr. Raffin opened the public hearing to the public. Hearing no comments, Mr. Raffin closed the public hearing.

**Motion:** Mr. Tulowitzki moved to forward a favorable recommendation to the Town Council on PC Docket No. 22-019 to approve a zoning map amendment changing the zoning on the property at 500 45<sup>th</sup> Street from SD-M Manufacturing to CD-4.B General Urban – B District with the Special requirement: Ground Floor Residential /Dwelling Use Restriction.

**Second:** Ms. Branagan

**Vote:** Yes – 5 No – 0 Abstain – 1. Motion carries

Mr. Specht abstained from voting on PC Docket No. 22-019.

**Findings of Fact:**

- a. **PC Docket No. 22-014 Image Resource Group on behalf of CA Health and Science Trust requesting approval of an amendment to the Lake Business Center Planned Unit Development to revise the site signage plan for the Lake Business Center PUD located at 9200 Calumet Avenue.**
- b. **PC Docket No. 22-015 CA Health and Science Trust and Poblocki Sign Company on behalf of Rush University Medical Group requesting approval of a development plan for Rush University Medical Group at Lake Business Center PUD at 9200 Calumet Avenue.**
- c. **PC Docket No. 22-016 Centennial Village LLC requesting approval of a development plan for Building F of the Centennial Village Planned Unit Development at 9600 North Centennial Drive.**

**Motion:** Ms. Branagan moved to approve Findings of Fact for PC Docket Nos. 22-014, 22-015, and 22-016.

**Second:** Ms. Mellon

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

**Additional Business/Items for Discussion:**

Mr. Tulowitzki pointed out that the next regular meeting of the Plan Commission is on Election night, which may have some people out of town. Mr. Raffin added that it is also fall break for Munster School students. Mr. Vander Woude said that he would work with the Commission to find a new date. Ms. Mellon said that Ms. Gomez, the resident in attendance, should be contacted if there is a change to the November meeting.

**Next Meeting:** Mr. Raffin announced that the next regular business meeting is to be determined and announced at a later time.

**Adjournment:**

**Motion:** Mr. Tulowitzki moved to adjourn.

**Second:** Ms. Mellon

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 pm



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President Roland Raffin  
Plan Commission

11/15/22

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Date of Approval



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Executive Secretary Thomas Vander Woude  
Plan Commission

11/15/22

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