

MUNSTER PLAN COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
January 13, 2026

The Munster Plan Commission held a meeting on January 13, 2026, 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:

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: 12/31/2026
David B. Nellans, Town Council Rep., Appointed by: Town Council President, Initial Appointment: 01/06/2025 - Term Expiration: 12/31/2026
George Shinkan, Town Council Rep., Appointed by: Town Council President, Initial Appointment: 01/06/2025 - Term Expiration: 12/31/2026

Members in Attendance

William Baker
Rachel Branagan
Joseph Hofferth
David Nellans
Roland Raffin
George Shinkan

Members Absent:

Jennifer Johns

Staff Present

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

President Baker announced we have a quorum.

Approval of Minutes:

November 18, 2025, PC Minutes

Motion: Councilor Shinkan moved to approve the minutes from November 18, 2025.

Second: Member Raffin

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

December 9, 2025, PC Minutes

Motion: Councilor Shinkan moved to approve the minutes from December 9, 2025.

Second: Member Raffin

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

Preliminary Hearings: None

Public Hearings:

PC25-015 SUBDIVISION PRELIMINARY PLAT: Matt Kimmel of Centennial Village requests review of a Preliminary Plat for a proposed 4-Lot Subdivision, a replat of Lot C to create Lots 10, 11 12, and 13 of CENTENNIAL VILLAGE RESUBDIVISION located at 9505 Calumet Avenue. This matter was a continuation of a previously opened public hearing.

Director Mendoza was invited to speak first on behalf of the petitioner. He explained that, following prior requests, updated documents had been submitted including information related to the required traffic study. President Baker invited the petitioner's representative to speak.

Mr. Russ Posen from DVG at 1155 Troutwine Road, Crown Point, IN, introduced himself and noted that a traffic engineer from DVG was present to address technical questions. Mr. Posen noted there were four petitions for this development, they would concentrate on the first two beginning with the plat. He summarized the proposed project, describing it as a four-lot development on the northern portion of the property originally known as Lot C, located north of 45th Street and east of Calumet Avenue. The original Planned Unit Development (PUD) contemplated a single large lot, but the current proposal seeks to divide it into four separate lots. The plat establishes access plans including space for a traffic signal and a right-in/right-out entrance along Calumet Avenue. Internal site planning includes shared ingress, egress, and parking easements.

Mr. Pozen compared the updated development program to the original PUD, which had provided for a 70,000-square-foot grocery store. The current plan proposes four developments totaling just under 67,000 square feet. The updated traffic analysis evaluated anticipated uses, including grocer, retail, office, and a potential medical office space which uses a higher rate. He confirmed that parking needs would be met, with approximately 360 parking spaces planned where the PUD requires a maximum of 246.

Mr. Pozen emphasized that the traffic study further concluded that at peak hours, the proposed four-lot development would generate less traffic than the originally approved 70,000-square-foot grocery store. He said that the updated traffic evaluation addressed the Commission's prior questions and included coordination between DVG's traffic engineer and the Town's traffic engineer to ensure an appropriate assessment of the surrounding conditions.

Mr. James Hus, a traffic engineer with DVG, 1155 Troutwine Road, Crown Point, IN, reported that a revised traffic study had been submitted to address questions raised by SEH and town staff. He noted

that while not all issues were fully resolved, the study now reflects updated trip generation figures based on the most recent development docket. According to the revised analysis, replacing the previously assumed 71,000 square foot grocery store with the proposed use in the northeast quadrant of the PUD results in an estimated 12% reduction in morning peak trips and a 35% reduction in evening peak trips.

Mr. Hus emphasized that delays at the adjacent intersections remain a concern but are largely attributable to long standing site constraints, including the unusually close spacing of the two intersections, land configuration, and surrounding railroad infrastructure. These conditions were established more than a decade ago and cannot be modified. He also referenced a 2015 study indicating that after the realignment of 45th Street, regional traffic patterns shifted, increasing the use of 45th Avenue as a primary route. Traffic counts from 2024 confirm that current conditions differ materially from earlier assumptions, contributing to present congestion independent of the PUD's impact. He stressed that while the PUD does bring traffic with it, the congestion in the area is not solely caused by that; he was explaining that there are delays and why.

He stated that there was no additional substantial information beyond what had been discussed at the previous meeting and reiterated that the development team continues to work within the fixed constraints of the existing North Centennial Drive intersection. Both a traffic signal and a roundabout present advantages and disadvantages.

Councilor Nellans asked whether the proposed traffic signal would operate as a smart, traffic responsive system. Mr. Hus confirmed that it would not operate on random cycles and would need to coordinate with the larger Calumet corridor signal network, given Calumet Avenue's higher traffic volume. The system would also monitor vehicles entering from adjacent properties to determine signal changes.

Director Mendoza confirmed for President Baker that the town's engineers had reviewed the petitioner's materials and those engineers were present to respond to questions. President Baker asked for the town's position on whether a stoplight, a roundabout, or no change would provide the greatest improvement.

Mr. Satya Tallamraju, a professional engineer from SEH, introduced himself. He is working on behalf of the Town to summarize findings related to the traffic study and the operational impacts of potential intersection alternatives. He explained that the study evaluated volumes, levels of service, and operational impacts using traffic modeling software. Based on the data, both a roundabout and a traffic signal would create operational impacts on the adjacent intersections at 45th Street and Calumet Avenue. Since signals in close proximity must be coordinated, any new signal would need to communicate with the existing ones. Given the spacing, both alternatives would cause disruptions. He said SEH sought the least impactful option. In addition to the roundabout and signal options, he added a right-in/right-out configuration as another alternative. He asked Mr. Woller to provide additional information.

Mr. Joshua Woller, a traffic engineer from SEH, had joined the meeting remotely. He confirmed that SEH had reviewed DVG's Synchro models and the supporting report and found that both the roundabout and signal alternatives would produce differing, but notable, impacts. Existing congestion issues at 45th and

Calumet, especially during the PM peak, already cause traffic to back up through the proposed intersection location. With either a signal or a roundabout, vehicles on a daily basis would likely back up to the intersection and become stuck, potentially creating gridlock. The analysis indicated that a roundabout would be less likely than a signal to cause queues extending back to Calumet, though both alternatives pose operational challenges depending on driver behavior.

Mr. Woller explained that a right-in/right-out option limits movements but offers the least impact on existing roadway operations despite circulation challenges for the development. He also noted that the traffic signal alternative would require coordination with the existing 45th and Calumet signal, but because traffic volumes in all major movements at that intersection are relatively balanced, there is no ideal time to stop traffic on 45th without causing significant backups. As a result, the development would likely experience delays under either a signal or roundabout, though the need to keep 45th traffic moving would most likely disadvantage the development with backup and circulation issues. He emphasized that the existing congestion is not caused by the proposed development, though the development will contribute to overall demand. The updated development plan, which reduces the size of the grocery store, lowers trip generation because grocery stores generate more traffic than banks or medical offices. While this results in fewer new trips and slight reductions in delay, existing queues and congestion remain. President Baker asked if the right-in/right-out was off 45th into this parcel. Mr. Woller said that was an option that was evaluated in the study. He added that consideration would likely have to be given to a right-in/right-out on Calumet as well for eastbound vehicles to enter coming north of the intersection, and that also presents challenges from circulation. He stressed that, given the existing conditions, they are looking at this strictly from the position of what is the safest alternative and the least impactful to the existing network.

President Bakker asked for the definition of “impact” within the traffic study. Mr. Tallamraju explained in detail that impacts are measured primarily through delay, which is used to assign a Level of Service (LOS). Existing conditions already operate at or near capacity. Mr. Tallamraju added that LOS A is considered excellent and LOS B is acceptable, whereas LOS E and F are unacceptable. Mr. Woller concluded that, based on current conditions and expected performance, his highest level of comfort is with the right-in/right-out configuration, followed by a roundabout, with a traffic signal as the least favorable option.

The discussion continued with a comprehensive explanation from Mr. Woller regarding how trip generation was calculated for the proposed development. Mr. Tallamraju described that trip generation figures were prepared for both the morning and evening peak hours, identifying the volume of new vehicle trips anticipated from the development and adding those volumes to the existing baseline traffic present on the network. This approach also incorporated a pass by traffic component, acknowledging that certain land uses, such as grocery stores, attract a higher share of drivers already traveling through the corridor, who may stop as part of an existing trip rather than generating an entirely new one. Examples were provided comparing grocery stores with lower pass by uses such as banks and medical offices.

The discussion transitioned to the level of service at the affected intersections. Mr. Woller said that current operations are poor, functioning at approximately Level of Service E during peak periods. Mr. Pozen and Mr. Hus clarified that a formal level of service analysis for a right-in/right-out access configuration was not completed, because such limited access would fundamentally alter the type of development possible on the site. In particular, a grocery store, which is central to the proposed plan, would not locate on a parcel limited to right-in/right-out access. The proposed traffic signal is therefore integral to the development program being presented. Mr. Pozen added that certain development options were not evaluated because they were not viable under restricted access conditions.

President Baker sought clarification on whether traffic impacts would differ between a grocery store of 75,000 square feet versus one of 65,000 square feet. Mr. Woller indicated that specific trip generation numbers could be provided with additional analysis but noted in general terms that greater development intensity produces greater traffic. Additional uncertainty was introduced by the fact that two of the proposed buildings on the subdivided lots do not yet have confirmed tenants, meaning their eventual land use and corresponding traffic impacts remain unknown. These uses could range widely from high volume generators such as fitness centers to lower volume professional offices, and this variability contributed to the complexity of the evaluation being presented.

Councilor Nellans expressed concern regarding the right-in/right-out option, noting that such restricted access would substantially limit drivers' ability to travel north or south along Calumet Avenue. From a practical standpoint, he noted that many drivers choose destinations based on convenience, and imposing access restrictions would deter some patrons who would not want to reroute or make additional maneuvers. This, in his view, would negatively affect both existing uses in Centennial Village, such as Windy City Social, and future tenants like the proposed grocery store. Councilor Nellans further offered that he was not in favor of a roundabout either; his preference is for a signal.

Mr. Pozen agreed that people generally prefer direct access and that developments succeed when they align with the convenience expectations of the community. He emphasized that restricting access could push consumer spending outside the Town of Munster, diminishing economic activity in the area. He noted that this development has amenities that are important to the community and are ones that people want to use; that creates traffic. He reiterated that a grocery store would not locate on a parcel with restricted access, further underscoring the importance of a signalized intersection to the viability of the project.

President Baker noted that there was also the request to subdivide the existing single lot, originally designated for a grocery store under the Planned Unit Development, into four separate lots to accommodate multiple uses. Director Mendoza explained that the need for a traffic study originated specifically from examining how the shift from one large development to four distinct parcels would affect traffic volumes and circulation patterns. The subdivision would potentially introduce multiple independent users, creating new access and traffic considerations. President Baker noted how each new lot could influence overall operations in and around the development area, especially given the unknown uses associated with two of the parcels.

Commissioner Raffin asked whether the engineering teams had evaluated widening 45th Street or Calumet Avenue to alleviate congestion and allow for additional turn lanes. Mr. Tallamraju responded that they had not been asked to study such widening. Mr. Hus explained that there are several proposals that could have been made but there are numerous physical constraints preventing any substantial road expansion. Specific examples were provided, including buildings constructed within ten feet of the right-of-way, sensitive communications infrastructure beneath the southwest corner, and extremely limited space along the west leg of the intersection. These factors, combined with prior development patterns and right-of-way decisions, severely limit opportunities for meaningful widening. He explained that while a blank slate approach might allow for additional lanes or turn movements, the practical limitations of the built environment prevent many of the ideal treatments from being implemented.

Discussion continued around possible solutions as well as challenges with them. President Baker and Commissioner Raffin suggested that this is a wide open space at this time and repositioning the building layouts might be considered. Mr. Pozen explained that creating a lane on 45th would be complicated by adjacent buildings and would offer limited operational benefits. He and Mr. Hus noted that any new lane would also need to be balanced that on the roadway. Mr. Hus said that SEH would also agree that the westbound through movement at the PM peak major hour is not as bad as the interface at the westbound left turn, how much length it has to run out, and the complications that the close-proximity intersection create. Mr. Tallamraju and Mr. Hus discussed problems with all eastbound traffic. Mr. Hus added that when their models prioritized Calumet, it just got worse.

President Baker asked if they were proposing a deceleration lane to turn right at the proposed northbound curb cut. Mr. Hus said they were not; he said he could make the argument that one was warranted but also that there are zero northbound turn lanes on Calumet. Mr. Hus noted that right turn lanes are absent along most of Calumet Avenue, not due to policy choices, but because corridor development patterns left little room for expansion. He said if he had been asked about this 30 years, there would be right turn lanes not just here, but at 6-12 more intersections. President Baker suggested that it would be good, from a safety perspective, to create an avenue to allow people to get out of the flow of traffic.

Several commissioners commented on other areas along Calumet that could benefit from turn lanes. Commissioner Branagan questioned whether historical decisions should preclude improvements now. Mr. Hus explained that turn lanes are inconsistent with the Calumet Avenue corridor and physical limitations rendered the option impractical in this setting. The conversation also referenced difficulties at nearby commercial driveways, such as the backup issues near Jewel Osco, to illustrate challenges that arise when right turn movements lack adequate space for separation from through traffic. Mr. Hus reiterated that many areas along Calumet Avenue have similar challenges and that modifying the intersection geometry in this area would require impacts to existing private improvements that would be disproportionate to the expected benefits.

Traffic challenges on 45th Street were also examined. Councilor Nellans raised the possibility of adjusting building placement within the proposed development to permit additional turn lanes or to create more spatial flexibility for roadway improvements. Mr. Hus noted that westbound left turn lanes create

queuing problems due to limited storage and nearby intersections, and that westbound through lanes are not the primary issue. Instead, the eastbound left turn lane is considered the most significant operational problem. Previous adjustments to traffic signal timing, which were intended to prioritize Calumet Avenue, inadvertently worsened eastbound congestion. These issues highlight the complexity of balancing traffic movements in a constrained multileg intersection, where changes intended to alleviate one problem often intensify another. The commissioners discussed the potential for lane reconfiguration, including reassignment of left turn lanes to create deceleration or right turn lanes; however, engineers explained such reallocations are not feasible because opposing double left movements are already at or near capacity. Realigning lanes or shifting geometry would introduce new operational problems and would not provide meaningful relief under projected traffic conditions.

Councilor Nellans acknowledged that alternative building configurations might have provided more options had they been considered earlier in the corridor's development. However, because prior phases of Centennial Village placed buildings close to Calumet Avenue, the current proposal is constrained by legacy decisions. Discussion reflected that while these limitations cannot be undone, the Commission must, nonetheless, focus on achieving the most functional layout possible for the remaining undeveloped parcel. He further emphasized that development should continue despite traffic challenges, as economic growth in the area remains important. He recognized that traffic would remain challenging regardless of which improvements are made but expressed support for a development layout that maximizes usability and economic benefit within the limits of the existing roadway network.

President Baker acknowledged that this was a continued public hearing, the public session remained open from previous meetings. He invited any final questions from the Commission before opening the floor for public comment. With no public speakers coming forward, President Baker closed the public hearing and returned the matter to the Commission for deliberation.

Councilor Hofferth expressed that, after hearing the engineering perspectives from both sides, there was no clear or convincing conclusion regarding the proposed changes. Concerns were raised about existing traffic congestion and the likelihood that disruptions or delays at the affected intersections would increase. Based on these concerns, he moved to deny PC25-015, the 4-lot subdivision. The motion failed due to the lack of a second.

Motion: Councilor Hofferth moved to deny PC Docket No. 25-015.

Second: (None)

Vote: Yes – 0; No – 0; Abstain – 0. Motion failed.

Commissioner Raffin asked whether SEH could explore the impact of adding additional lanes to help alleviate traffic heading west and north. He recognized such exploration would likely require the petitioner to redesign lot layouts and building placements. He noted that it is extremely difficult for the Plan Commission to decide this without every possible piece of information. Attorney Bennett explained that the petitioner was not asking for that. Unless the petitioner requests those changes, possibly to keep the project moving along, studying them could be an unnecessary use of resources. She emphasized that consideration must be limited to the petitioner's actual request, not the Commission's preferences for alternative site configurations.

Mr. Pozen clarified that previous evaluations had already examined turn lanes on 45th Street. Additional widening was not feasible due to constraints such as the property to the west which they don't own or control and large existing utilities. He reiterated that their proposal did not include turn lanes because they did not believe additional lanes would materially improve traffic operations. He clarified that they are not proposing that. President Baker suggested that they could add land on the southern portion of the parcel, they could shift everything and still line it up.

The discussion turned to the broader development context. Councilor Nellans emphasized the importance of developing the land despite traffic challenges, noting that past decisions had been criticized but development still proceeded. Commissioner Branagan questioned the practical difference between denial and tabling. Attorney Bennett explained that would depend on whether the petitioner was willing to entertain options beyond the current proposal; any further considerations depend on what the petitioner is requesting and willing to change. She stressed that the petitioner has made their request and that is what the Plan Commission can consider; this is not a negotiation.

Mr. Pozen clarified that the request before the Commission was limited to reconfiguring one lot into four lots without altering the roadway network. They reaffirmed that their proposal included a signal at 45th and North Centennial and a right-in/right-out access on Calumet Avenue. He emphasized that their traffic evaluations showed that additional turn lanes would not meaningfully improve conditions and that the current plan represents the most viable approach within existing constraints. He stated that the proposed uses for the four lots would result in less traffic impact than was previously approved under the existing PUD. He noted that the developer already possesses the right to build a grocery store with a traffic signal under the current PUD. Delays or additional right-in/right-out requirements could jeopardize existing agreements with prospective tenants, including high-quality users whose commitments may lapse if the matter continued to be tabled. He said they are bringing good amenities to the town; they have presented good data and are presenting as is.

Commissioner Raffin and President Baker raised renewed concerns about safety and congestion, citing examples of other intersections in town and expressing the belief that an added turn lane could help separate traffic movements and potentially reduce accidents. Mr. Pozen and Mr. Hus reiterated that although traffic volumes may support certain warrants, physical constraints and prior analysis indicated that improvements such as additional width or turn lanes would not address the underlying congestion.

Commissioner Raffin made a motion to deny PC25-015 . It was seconded by Councilor Hofferth.

Mr. Matt Kimmel argued that rejecting the proposal would leave the land undeveloped indefinitely and undermine ongoing development momentum, whereas the proposed plan represented the most efficient approach. He emphasized the town's significant investment and the need for decisive action to support economic growth.

During comment, Commissioner Raffin suggested that site adjustments, vertical density, or rearrangement of buildings could address issues. Councilor Nellans referenced historical challenges with the property, including past claims that it was undevelopable except for uses such as a high tech car wash, and argued that the current proposal offers substantially greater community benefits. He stated his support for advancing the plan despite anticipated traffic increases, emphasizing the need for

economic development. Councilor Shinkan expressed concern about the long duration of the review process, noting that petitioners, staff, and consultants had collaborated for more than a year with no resolution. He raised the issue of the town's reputation for being unfriendly to business. He noted that Sprouts and Chase Bank are quality establishments that should not be dismissed. He stated he would vote no to the denial. Commissioner Raffin noted that this meeting was the first time they had heard substantive traffic input from SEH, the town's consultant on traffic, and highlighted the need for a holistic approach to traffic issues across the community rather than isolated modifications. President Baker expressed discomfort with the ultimatum as well as with the change from one to four lots and in the way it is laid out.

A vote was taken on Commissioner Raffin's the motion to deny PC25-015 which was seconded by Councilor Hofferth. The motion failed with 2 voting yes and 4 voting no.

Motion: Commissioner Raffin moved to deny PC Docket No. 25-015.

Second: Councilor Hofferth

Vote: Yes – 2; No – 4; Abstain – 0. Motion failed.

Councilor Nellans made a motion to approve the petition. Councilor Shinkan seconded the motion. Commissioner Raffin said he wanted to give SEH more time to look at ways to improve that area. Councilor Nellans raised concerns about demands placed on petitioners to resolve intersection-wide issues. He noted that improvements to that intersection may fall under the town's responsibility.

Councilor Nellans motion to approve PC25-015 which was seconded by Councilor Shinkan failed with 3 voting yes and 3 voting no.

Motion: Councilor Nellans moved to approve PC Docket No. 25-015.

Second: Councilor Shinkan

Vote: Yes – 3; No – 3; Abstain – 0. Motion failed.

A discussion followed on what alternatives remained beyond denial, approval, or tabling. Attorney Bennett clarified that tabling was permissible but warned that it was unclear what could materially change before the next meeting unless additional information or revised positions emerged. Director Mendoza noted that the petitioner also has the option to withdraw or return.

Councilor Nellans made a new motion to approve PC25-015 with a caveat that SEH is asked to do a study to see if this piece of property can be tweaked to improve traffic on it; the report could then be taken to the petitioner to accept what the Plan Commission is asking for or not. President Baker asked Attorney Bennett if this open ended motion could be acted upon. Attorney Bennett said not without a conclusion that could then be negotiated with the petitioner to accept; a condition could not be from the outcome of a study.

The motion to approve PC25-015 conditioned on the results of further study by SEH failed for lack of a second.

Motion: Councilor Nellans moved to approve PC Docket No. 25-015 conditioned on further study by the town's engineers for presentation to the petitioner.

Second: (None)

Vote: Yes – 0; No – 0; Abstain – 0. Motion failed.

Commissioner Raffin asked Director Mendoza if he could initiate an additional study of this intersection by SEH. Director Mendoza answered that he could submit that request to the Town Manager who could work with the Town Council to authorize that work. Commissioner Raffin asked if that could happen quickly.

Further discussion focused on whether an additional traffic study, particularly regarding deceleration and turn lane configurations on Calumet Avenue, could be performed. Mr. Pozen explained that modifications on the east side of the intersection would require improvements on the west side, including property acquisition or cooperation from third parties, which are beyond the petitioner's control. Councilor Nellans said the petitioner does not own the property, but the town has the opportunity to request forfeiture or eminent domain, noting that broader intersection redesigns would be a municipal responsibility and not an appropriate condition on the petitioner. Attorney Bennett noted that these property considerations are not conditions that the petitioner has any control over so that is separate from this petition.

Commissioner Raffin made a motion to table PC25-015. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Motion: Commissioner Raffin moved to table PC Docket No. 25-015..

Second: (None)

Vote: Yes – 0; No – 0; Abstain – 0. Motion failed.

Discussion continued among the commissioners on possible next steps.

Mr. Pozen stated that, after speaking with Mr. Kimmel, the developer, they are still presenting as is. They are, however, considering Councilor Nellan's statement of approval contingent upon an evaluation of Calumet Avenue turn lanes. He stated a willingness to collaborate with the town and SEH to evaluate whether adjustments on Calumet Avenue might improve traffic conditions. Attorney Bennett clarified that such an evaluation cannot be a condition of approval and would instead require a motion to table the petition for further study. She recommended that if a motion was made to table the petition, the motion should include reopening the public hearing at the next meeting.

Councilor Nellans made a motion to table PC25-015 with the condition that the petitioner will work with the town to look at a deceleration lane to see what it adds and for both the town traffic engineer and the petitioner's traffic engineer to study that for the next meeting. President Baker confirmed there was a motion to table until next month and to keep the public hearing open. Commissioner Raffin seconded the motion.

President Baker asked for a timeline on this. Councilor Nellans asked if the engineers and site designers could complete the analysis and site plans within two to three weeks so they would be ready for the next meeting. Mr. Pozen said yes.

Councilor Nellans's motion to table PC25-015 until February 10, 2026, keeping the public hearing open which was seconded by Commissioner Raffin proceeded to a vote. The motion passed with 5 voting yes and 1 voting no. President Baker voted no.

Motion: Councilor Nellans moved to table PC Docket No. 25-015, until February 10, 2026, keeping the public hearing open and including all discussions and findings.

Second: Commissioner Raffin

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

PC25-016 PUD AMENDMENT: Matt Kimmel of Centennial Village requests to amend the CENTENNIAL VILLAGE PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT to revise the CV Design Standards and Site Plan to include revisions to the sign standards and the size, location, and shape of buildings and lots of Lot C located at 9505 Calumet Avenue. This matter was a continuation of a previously opened public hearing.

PC25-017 DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW: Matt Kimmel of Centennial Village requests review of a Development Plan on proposed Lot 11 for a 23,299 square foot, 1-story Sprouts Market Building to be commonly known as 800 45th Street. This matter was a continuation of a previously opened public hearing.

PC25-018 DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW: Matt Kimmel of Centennial Village requests review of a Development Plan on proposed Lot 13 for a 4,270 square foot, 1-story Chase Bank Building to be commonly known as 9521 Calumet Avenue. This matter was a continuation of a previously opened public hearing.

President Baker questioned whether the remaining Plan Commission items related to Centennial Village should be addressed despite the absence of an approved plat. Attorney Bennet indicated that action on these items would be futile until the plat issue is resolved, her guidance was given that the items could still be formally called together in compliance with procedural rules, allowing the public hearings, which had been left open, to continue.

President Baker proceeded to call three petitions: PC25-016, a PUD amendment, PC25-017 a development plan for Sprouts, and PC25-018 a development plan for Chase. He invited any members of the public wishing to speak on the three cases to come forward. When no speakers came forward, President Baker left the public hearing open and brought the discussion back to the commission.

Councilor Nellans made a motion to table all three items, PC25-016, PC25-017, and PC25-018 pending approval of the plat and to keep the public hearing open. Councilor Hofferth seconded the three motions. No further discussion followed. The motion passed with 6 voting yes and 0 voting no.

Motion: Councilor Nellans moved to table PC Docket No. 25-016, until February 10, 2026. The public hearing remained open.

Second: Councilor Hofferth

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

Motion: Councilor Nellans moved to table PC Docket No. 25-017, until February 10, 2026. The public hearing remained open.

Second: Councilor Hofferth

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

Motion: Councilor Nellans moved to table PC Docket No. 25-018, until February 10, 2026. The public hearing remained open.

Second: Councilor Hofferth

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

PC25-021 SUBDIVISION PRELIMINARY PLAT: Scott Yahne Attorney on behalf of G.H.K. Developments, Inc., requests review of a Preliminary Plat for a proposed replat of 45th AVE ADDITION LOT 1 to 4-Lot Subdivision to be known as 45TH STREET PROPERTIES, LLC. This matter was a continuation of a previously opened public hearing.

Director Mendoza noted there were no changes from the previous month's proposal and explained that the subdivision's approval was dependent on the approval of the associated Planned Unit Development (PUD). He also reported that information regarding required public infrastructure improvements had been received earlier in the day, including sidewalk extensions along the frontage of the property along 45th Street and to the south along Fran Lin. The estimated cost of these improvements was approximately \$65,000.00 and would be tied to the final plat approval. It would ultimately be secured as part of the public infrastructure improvements at the time of final plat consideration.

President Baker questioned whether all necessary paperwork for the petitions had been submitted. Director Mendoza clarified that while the plat documents were complete, the plat approval remains contingent on the PUD because the proposed uses for the new lots impact whether the subdivision configuration was appropriate. President Baker asked why the plat was dependent on the PUD amendment approval. Director Mendoza explained that the commissioners may approve the subdivision in advance, but they would be doing so without the full underlying PUD policies in place. He further clarified that the subdivision merely creates lots, but the PUD establishes the development standards tied to those lots.

President Baker questioned whether the hearings for all related petitions could be called together. Attorney Bennett recommended calling all three petitions: the subdivision, PUD amendment, and development plan review together, however, each of the motions should be addressed individually.

President Baker called two additional petitions to be included in the discussion with PC25-021.

PC25-022 PUD AMENDMENT: Scott Yahne, Attorney, on behalf of G.H.K. Developments, Inc., requests to amend the PAVILION at 45th PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT.

PC25-023 DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW: Scott Yahne, Attorney, on behalf of G.H.K. Developments, Inc., requests review of a Development Plan for a 117,000 square foot, 2-story self-storage facility on proposed Lot 4 of The Pavilion on 45th to be commonly known as 9749 Fran-Lin Parkway.

Director Mendoza noted that updated documents had recently been submitted but had not yet been reviewed sufficiently to provide formal comments, so the applicant was asked to speak.

Attorney Scott Yahne, 3 Lincoln Way, Suite 201, Valparaiso, IN, representing G.H.K. Development, appeared and noted that members of the design team were in attendance in person and via Zoom. He explained that extensive revisions had been made since the prior meeting, including continuous submittals throughout the holidays. He explained that a new development standards document had gone through multiple iterations with staff including substantial redlining and the addition of standards that may be used town-wide in future applications. He noted that comments he had received the previous day included input that appeared to originate from a commissioner, Commissioner Raff, though he was unsure whether all commissioners had seen those comments.

Attorney Yahne stated that updated architectural elevations and renderings had also been submitted. He wished to focus only on outstanding issues, particularly concerns regarding proposed building materials, so the team could “cross final T’s and dot final I’s” and reach closure. He asserted that only a small number of issues remained and that once the development standards were resolved, the subdivision plat could be approved because it hinges on that document. He reiterated that the development standards document was the key component of the PUD amendment.

Director Mendoza acknowledged that significant communication had taken place, but the development standards document still required staff review before it would be ready for presentation to the Commission. He noted that while versions had been exchanged with the applicant, none had yet been formally shared with the Commission for consideration.

No new evidence was presented that would invite public comment.

Councilor Nellans made a motion to table PC25-021, PC25-022, and PC25-023. Attorney Yaney noted that the petitioners are facing contract timing issues, though he acknowledged that this was not the Commission’s responsibility. Councilor Hofferth seconded the motion to table the three petitions. Director Mendoza clarified the documents that are incomplete until a full review by staff pertained specifically to the PUD amendment and the development plan review.

President Baker sought confirmation from Director Mendoza about whether the outstanding documents could realistically be reviewed before the next meeting. Director Mendoza explained that the proposed PUD amendment and development plan required further refinement and updates were needed before the Commission could conduct a final review. He emphasized that discussions and revisions should occur outside the Commission prior to their consideration.

Attorney Yahne expressed frustration with the process citing it just isn’t working. He expressed concern about ongoing delays and the extended timeline he has experienced, referencing multiple redline versions and uncertainties about how long further revisions might take.

Councilor Shinkan noted the impact on yet another business coming to town and 6 months later, they have no answers. Councilor Nellans commented on the challenges created when applications are received without having provided complete information. Commissioner Branagan questioned why

incomplete items continue to be placed on agendas, citing the inefficiency of spending meeting time on matters not yet prepared for action.

Attorney Bennett provided that “incomplete” can be subjective; however, the ordinance outlines required submission materials. Historically, the town has allowed petitions to advance once all items were submitted, with final vetting occurring before the Commission rather than after staff resolution. This longstanding practice often results in protracted exchanges, continued drafts, and extended discussion during meetings. She said this has been a practice for decades, but she noted that the Town is evaluating updates to tighten up these processes. In particular, revisions often require significant back-and-forth, especially for PUDs due to their complexity and the need to reconcile ordinance requirements, staff expectations, and petitioner proposals.

A vote was taken on Councilor Nellan’s motion to table PC25-021, PC25-022, and PC25-023 and continue the public hearings which had been seconded by Councilor Hofferth. The motion for the three petitions passed with 6 voting yes and 0 voting no.

Motion: Councilor Nellans moved to table PC Docket No. 25-021, until February 10, 2026. The public hearing remained open.

Second: Councilor Hofferth

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

Motion: Councilor Nellans moved to table PC Docket No. 25-022, until February 10, 2026. The public hearing remained open.

Second: Councilor Hofferth

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

Motion: Councilor Nellans moved to table PC Docket No. 25-023 until February 10, 2026. The public hearing remained open.

Second: Councilor Hofferth

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

Following the vote, Attorney Yahne commented that the filing process began on September 16, 2025, and that numerous drafts and iterations had already been submitted. He described a two-hour meeting with Director Mendoza (the week prior) and stated that he had addressed and responded to all the comments; no further response had been received. He emphasized the complexity of the documents and the difficulty of balancing legal requirements, existing site conditions, and new development standards. He noted that extensive timelines and worksheets had been prepared for stakeholders, who are asking for clarity on the anticipated schedule. He reiterated the challenge of interpreting requested legal language seeking guidance on how to translate staff comments into compliant ordinance text.

Findings of Fact:

PC25-020 DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW: Jim Glascott of WT Group representing the School Town of Munster received approval with conditions for a Development Plan for the construction of ten (10) tennis courts at 8839 Calumet Avenue.

Motion: Councilor Nellans moved to approve Findings of Fact for PC25-020.

Second: Councilor Shinkan

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

DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW: Erin Gogolin of Bohler Engineering on behalf of Dutch Brothers Coffee received approval with conditions for a Development Plan for the redesign of an existing building and parking lot located at 8032 Calumet Avenue.

Motion: Councilor Shinkan moved to approve the Findings of Fact for PC Docket No. 25-025.

Second: Councilor Nellans

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

PC25-026 DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW: Marc Smith of E. Anthony, Inc. on behalf of Orthopedic Specialists of Northwest Indiana (OSNI) received approval (check conditions) for a Development Plan for expansion of a 30,000 square foot parking lot located at 9900 Columbia Avenue.

Motion: Councilor Nellans moved to approve Findings of Fact for PC25-026

Second: Commissioner Shinkan

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

Other Business:

PC25-013 SUBDIVISION FINAL PLAT: Bruce Boyer on behalf of Crew Car Wash requests Final Plat approval for a 1-Lot Subdivision, a replat of Lots 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29 to create Lot 1 of CREW CAR WASH SUBDIVISION located at 111 Ridge Road.

Director Mendoza reported that preliminary plat approval had been granted in November, and the applicants had completed all requirements as needed and the mylars are ready for final signature, including installation of public infrastructure and inspection steps; no surety is required. The plat combines multiple lots and parcels into a single lot of record to maintain accessory uses in compliance with zoning ordinances.

Motion: Councilor Nellans moved to approve the PC Docket No. PC25-013, a final plat for a 1-Lot Subdivision, a replat of Lots 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29 to create Lot 1 of CREW CAR WASH SUBDIVISION located at 111 Ridge Road.

Second: Councilor Hofferth

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

Election of Officers: President, Vice President, Executive Secretary.

The Commission proceeded to the annual election of officers. Each position was voted on individually.

For President, Commissioner Raffin nominated Mr. Baker. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Branagan. President Baker accepted the nomination. With no additional nominations, the Commission approved this appointment unanimously.

Motion: Commissioner Raffin moved to nominate Bill Baker for President of the Plan Commission.

Second: Commissioner Branagan

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

For Vice President, Commissioner Branagan nominated Commissioner Raffin. Councilor Hofferth seconded the motion. Commissioner Raffin accepted the nomination. With no additional nominations, the Commission approved this appointment unanimously.

Motion: Commissioner Branagan moved to nominate Roland Raffin for Vice President of the Plan Commission.

Second: Councilor Hofferth

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

For Executive Secretary, Councilor Shinkan nominated Director Mendoza. Councilor Nellans seconded the nomination. Director Mendoza accepted the nomination. With no additional nominations, the Commission approved his appointment unanimously. With no additional nominations, the Commission approved this appointment unanimously.

Motion: Councilor Shinkan moved to nominate Sergio Mendoza as Executive Secretary of the Plan Commission.

Second: Councilor Nellans

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

Plan Commission Appointee to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Councilor Shinkan nominated Commissioner Branagan to the Plan Commission appointment to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Councilor Hofferth seconded the motion. Rachel Brannigan was nominated for the position. After a motion and second, the Commission voted unanimously in favor of her appointment. The appointees were congratulated.

Motion: Councilor Shinkan moved to nominate Rachel Branagan as the Plan Commission appointee to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Second: Councilor Hofferth

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

2026 PC Schedule of Meeting Dates and Filing Deadlines.

The Plan Commission reviewed the 2026 Planning Commission meeting dates and filing deadlines. Director Mendoza explained that the updated schedule differs from 2025 by further identifying formal filing deadlines. The first column of the schedule identifies filing deadlines for new applications, while the second column outlines deadlines for submission of review materials required for staff analysis. These deadlines provide staff adequate time to review submissions, prepare reports, and communicate necessary information with commissioners. The second column the lists the dates, approximately two weeks after the prior meeting, that applications already in process must submit updated materials for that information to be incorporated into the next staff report.

President Baker asked how this would be enforced. Director Mendoza explained that the rules and regulations already contain the necessary language and only requires adoption or passage through a resolution. At this time, the Plan Commission just needs to accept and understand these guidelines.

Attorney Bennett explained in detail the need to define the deadlines. If an application or required information is not submitted by the established deadlines, staff cannot advance the application. For new filings, missing a filing deadline results in the application not being placed on the next meeting agenda. For continued applications, the petition must remain on the agenda even if updated documents are not received, because continued public hearings must remain listed. However, staff will not provide updated reports if deadlines are missed, and such matters will likely result in a motion to table.

Commissioner Branagan asked if the petitioners are aware of staff recommendation. Attorney Bennett said all agendas and reports are publicly available on the town website. She clarified that petitioners may respond to staff questions during review, but any substantively updated documents intended for the next meeting must meet established deadlines so staff can properly evaluate the materials and prepare guidance.

Motion: Councilor Shinkan moved to accept the 2026 Plan Commission Schedule of Meeting Dates and Filing Deadlines.

Second: Councilor Nellans

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

Continued Discussion Items:

Councilor Nellans asked that the Plan Commission request that the town use the town engineer to evaluate traffic conditions at the intersection of 45th and Calumet. He noted that this concern was a broader town responsibility rather than an issue tied to a specific subdivision or petition. He emphasized that, without a formal request, no action was likely to occur, and the Plan Commission should therefore initiate a request for the town engineer to provide a proposal.

President Baker supported expanding this into a comprehensive traffic study of all the major corridors including Calumet Avenue, Ridge Road, Main Street, and 45th Street to assist future development and investment. A discussion ensued among the commissioners regarding possible improvements

Attorney Bennett clarified that while the Plan Commission may raise the concern, but this would not be related to any specific petition; any resulting action must be taken by the Town Council. Initiating the discussion at the Plan Commission level helps begin the process, which would then proceed through staff to the Town Council for consideration.

Next Meeting: President Baker announced that the next regular meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2026.

Adjournment:

Motion: Councilor Shinkan moved to adjourn.

Second: Councilor Nellans

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:59pm

President Baker
Plan Commission

Date of Approval

Executive Secretary Sergio Mendoza
Plan Commission

Date of Approval

DRAFT