

MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
May 5, 2026

The Stark County Regional Planning Commission met in regular session Tuesday, May 5, 2026, 7:00 p.m., in the Stark County Regional Planning Commission Conference Room.

RPC Members or Alternates

Dave Thorley, President

Dave McAlister, County Appointee

Michael Miller, Village of Brewster

Bob Sanderson, County Appointee

Bill Watson, Perry Township

Bob Leach, County Appointee

Tony Peldunas, County Appointee

Dan Moeglin, Vice President

Travis Boyd, Village of Magnolia

Staff

Bob Nau, Secretary

Curtis Bungard

Jonelle Melnichenko

Diane Sheridan

Barb Buonaspina

Dan Slicker

Valerie Watson

Jennifer Bayer

Other

Josh Lyons, GPD Group

1) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dave Thorley opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2) MINUTES OF THE APRIL 7, 2026 MEETING

Miller moved, Leach seconded, and the motion carried to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2026 meeting.

3) FINANCIAL REPORT

There being no questions or additions, the financial report for April 2026 will be filed for audit.

4) STAFF REPORT

Comprehensive Planning Update - Jonelle Melnichenko, Chief of Planning

The Planning Department provided an update on recently completed comprehensive plans and upcoming projects, specifically covering the Canton Township Comprehensive Plan, the Perry Township Comprehensive Plan, and an update to the Stark Parks five-year plan.

Canton Township Comprehensive Plan The planning process began in May 2021 and the trustees adopted the plan in February 2023. Public engagement was extensive, including an online survey that received 473 responses, attendance at Canton Township Community Day events in 2021 and 2022; a township tour; attendance at a Canton Local Schools school board meeting; Trustees meetings, and special meetings set by the Trustees to present survey results and the draft plan. Based on public engagement activities, priority areas were identified including:

- **Southgate Commons Shopping Center** – Centrally located with access from Cleveland Avenue and adjacent neighborhoods. Some facade improvements and new tenants have been added, but vacancies remain. Ideas include creating a designated outdoor refreshment area and hosting community events. An approximately seven-acre area with overhead power lines was identified as a potential event staging area.
- **North Industry Area** – A formerly vacant school that attracted crime has since been demolished with assistance from the Land Bank. Blighted properties in the area remain a concern the community would like Trustees to address.
- **Faircrest Park** – One of two township-owned parks and a popular community destination. Recent improvements include an amphitheater, picnic shelter, restrooms, and additional playground equipment.
- **Cleveland Avenue/SR-800 Corridor** – The main thoroughfare through the township. Residents would like to see more businesses, street safety improvements, general cleanup, and access management upgrades.
- **I-77/Faircrest and US-30/CR-172 Interchanges** – Identified as opportunity areas due to high traffic volumes entering the township.
- **Meyers Lake Plaza** – The largest shopping center in Canton Township, but suffering from vacancies and a poorly maintained exterior. A nearby former gas station was cleaned up using US EPA Brownfield and ODSA grants administered by the Planning Department. While the plaza primarily serves a small portion of the township, redevelopment could boost local tax revenue.

Key recommendations included:

- Exploring a dedicated police force. Currently, the Sheriff's Office provides only five to six officers per shift across all 11 county townships. A community survey found that 64% of respondents feel the township is safe, but many expressed concern about rising crime, limited

- police presence, and slow response times. Contracting with the Sheriff's Office to hiring dedicated officers is being considered.
- Attracting businesses that provide dining, shopping, and personal services, as residents currently travel to neighboring communities for many of these needs. Vacant units at existing shopping plazas could potentially accommodate these businesses.
 - Updating and expanding park amenities through a strategic plan that ensures grant funding is secured before projects begin. Canton Township recently received additional acreage from the former Canton Local Schools elementary school site for expansion of Community Park.
 - Continuing and expanding community events such as concerts in the park, 5K races, and parades.
 - Implementing gateway signage and landscaping at the township's highway interchanges to better identify and brand Canton Township's entrances.
 - Considering zoning amendments, including expanding the depth of the Cleveland Avenue commercial corridor or adopting an overlay district, exploring where two- and multi-family housing would be appropriate, and ensuring zoning aligns with the comprehensive plan's goals.

Perry Township Comprehensive Plan The planning process began in March 2023 and the township adopted the plan in May 2025. Two separate online surveys were conducted — a general township survey (460 responses) and a dedicated Lincoln Way corridor survey (465 responses plus 72 interactive map points where participants placed location-specific comments). Staff attended community events including Flags of Freedom, Picnic in the Park, and Oktoberfest in 2023, and also engaged with the Rotary Club, Business Advisory group, and History Club, set up a booth at the Turkey Trot Thanksgiving Day 5K, attended Trustees' meetings, and conducted a tour of the township.

Based on public engagement activities, priority areas were identified including:

- **Lincoln Way Corridor** – Both a key asset and a major concern for residents. The corridor has historically been the township's primary commercial artery connecting Canton and Massillon, containing approximately half of all business land uses and over 65% of business-zoned land. Key concerns include vacant and deteriorating properties, declining and relocated grocery stores and other businesses, and a concentration of hotel and motel properties associated with safety and quality-of-life issues.
- **Fasnacht Park** – Has sat mostly undeveloped with a tenant farmer leasing the property. The site includes a house, barn, and two residential structures. A concept plan was created but never implemented.
- **Perry Park** – Offers a wide range of amenities including ball fields, basketball and tennis courts, pickleball courts, playground equipment, pavilions, restroom facilities, and a walking path. Residents would like to see continued improvements and drainage issues addressed.
- **Summerdale Park** – Was inaccessible during the planning period due to a 12th Street closure for a Stark County Engineer's Office project. Residents want it reopened and request more amenities in addition to the existing ball fields, basketball courts, pavilions, and playground equipment.
- **Perry Local Schools** – The plan was written during the construction of new elementary schools. Community members expressed interest in former school sites potentially being converted to parkland, and residents discussed wanting more partnerships between the township and schools for collaborative events and programs.

Key recommendations included:

- Exploring a focal point/township center along the Lincoln Way corridor with potential for a designated outdoor refreshment area tied to nearby businesses was also considered.. Consider overlay district to manage development, protect neighborhoods, and guide design standards including access management, setbacks, landscaping, and parking.
- Further developing Fasnacht Park, which is legally restricted to park, recreation, museum, or natural preservation uses. The township has applied for grants supporting two phases of

- improvement: Phase 1 (currently ongoing) focuses on improving access, adding a walking path, and expanding community gardens; Phase 2 focuses on restoring the barn and determining which structures are salvageable. Connections to nearby township, city, and county parks are also an interest of the township.
- Strengthening collaboration with Perry Township businesses by staying active with the Canton Chamber, Massillon Chamber, Perry Rotary, and Business Collaborative to support existing businesses and attract new ones.
 - Providing a variety of housing types to help retain population and attract new families, as the township currently lacks diverse housing options for all stages of life.
 - Considering zoning amendments including overlay districts along the Lincoln Way corridor, encouraging construction of two- and multi-family housing (as most of the township is zoned for two-family residential but developed predominantly with single-family dwellings), and using planned development tools for mixed-use developments.

Stark Parks Comprehensive Plan The contract began in September 2024, and the plan was approved by the Board of Park Commissioners earlier on the day of the meeting. Unlike the previous five-year plan, this new plan covers a ten-year period. An online survey received 467 responses, and SCRPC staff co-hosted nine public engagement meetings across the county in Alliance, Brewster, Canal Fulton, Canton City, Lake Township, Magnolia, Massillon, Minerva, and Nimishillen Township. Each meeting included a stakeholder session with elected officials and administrators prior to the general public meeting. Additional meetings were held with Stark Parks staff, Stark Parks stakeholders, the Stark Parks planning committee, and members of the Stark Parks management team throughout the process.

As part of the planning process, Stark Parks' mission statement was updated. The former mission — *"to preserve, manage, and connect natural areas to serve the community through recreation, conservation, and education"* — was replaced with a new mission statement reflecting the organization's broader role: *"to enrich the quality of life in Stark County by conserving and connecting our natural and cultural resources while providing meaningful recreation and educational opportunities that bring value to everyone in the community."*

The top six parks prioritized by both the survey and public meeting activities were Sippo Lake Park, Quail Hollow Park, Tam O'Shanter Park, Congressman Ralph Regula Towpath Trail, Walborn Reservoir, and Petros Lake Park. Top areas identified as needing additional trail connections were Plain Township, Jackson Township, Canton City, Perry Township, North Canton City, and Brewster Village.

Key recommendations included:

- **Trail expansion and connectivity** – Walking, hiking, and jogging were the most popular activities identified. Expansion depends on time, funding, land availability, and partnerships, and underserved areas should be prioritized alongside more populated ones.
- **Trail and facility maintenance and improvements** – Responses emphasized managing existing properties, with recommendations for better signage, more amenities (permanent restrooms, water fountains, benches, trash bins, dog stations), increased staffing, more trail and park monitoring, updated schedules, and coordination with nearby park systems.
- **Education and programming** – Expanding programs in terms of offerings, capacity, and frequency, along with better advertising to communicate available events and programs to the public.
- **Safety and general awareness** – Evaluating the need for increased ranger presence, reviewing current ranger station locations for more even county-wide distribution, and improving signage around park rules and etiquette.
- **Accessibility** – Improvements to provide access to the parks and enhance mobility within parks, including upgraded surfaces and parking, ADA enhancements to picnic areas, ramps, and kayak launches, inclusive website updates, accommodations for older adults, and expanded transportation partnerships with SARTA.

- Individual parks and trails managed by Stark Parks also received tailored recommendations based on planning process insights.

Upcoming Projects

- *Village of Minerva Plan* – Work began March 1, 2026. The survey is currently being finalized and the steering committee is being formed. Public engagement events are planned throughout the summer, with periodic steering committee meetings continuing through the remainder of the year.
- *Stark County 2050 Plan* – This will be an update to the Stark County 2040 Plan, which was last adopted in July 2017. A public survey will be available soon, and staff will attend events in Alliance, Canton, and Massillon over the summer to gather public input and promote the plan.

5) TOWNSHIP ZONING AMENDMENTS

Melnichenko presented the staff recommendations for the following zoning amendments:

R-3 Low Density Multi-Family Residential – One tract, approximately 78.05 acres, located on the north side of Applegrove, west of Elmhurst in the SW ¼ Section 4 & SE ¼ Section 5, Plain Township (legal description on file in the office). OWNER/APPLICANT: McKinley Development Company, LTD/Forward Principals, LLC CURRENT USE: Former Golf Course PROPOSED USE: Single & Multi-Family Residential PPN: 10020630 & 10020631

McAlister moved, Leach seconded and the motion carried to recommend **approval** of the proposed rezoning to the R-3 Low Density Multi-Family Residential. The following facts were presented to the Commission for consideration:

1. There are a mix of uses surrounding the subject tract. To the north consists of single, two and multi-family residential uses, along with recreation. To the south are single-family agricultural and residential uses. East of the subject area is classified as recreation, and single-family residential, with some business uses further east of Applegrove. To the west there are single and multi-family uses. Additionally, the subject tract surrounds an apartment complex identified as multi-family residential.
2. The existing zoning consists of the R-1 Single Family Residential and R-2 One- and Two-Family Residential districts to the north, the R-R Rural Residential and R-1 Single Family Residential districts to the east, and R-1 Single Family Residential and R-3 Low Density Multi-Family Residential to the west. To the south consists of the R-R Rural Residential District and North Canton City's R-50 Single Family District. The apartment complex surrounded by the subject tract is zoned R-3 Low Density Multi-Family Residential.
3. The tract proposed for rezoning is approximately 78.05 acres and is currently split zoned between the R-R Rural Residential (approximately 11 acres) and R-1 Single Family Residential (approximately 67 acres) districts.
4. According to the Plain Township Zoning Resolution, the purpose of the R-3 district is to provide single, two-family and multi-family dwelling units, allowing for a mix of housing types. Approximate density shall be eight (8) to nine (9) dwelling units per acre, which will permit a higher density of population adjacent to commercial areas or major roadways. The R-3 District will restrict the multi-family dwellings to no more than four units per building unless a conditional use permit is issued to allow for more than four units per building.
5. For areas with a central sewer system, minimum lot size in the R-R district is 20,000 sq. ft. and 15,000 sq. ft. in the R-1 district. For the R-3 district, minimum lot sizes are as follows: multi-

family housing is 5,000 sq. ft. per dwelling unit, two-family housing is 10,000 sq. ft., and single-family housing is 8,000 sq. ft. Sanitary sewer is available to the site; however, capacity has not been discussed with the Sanitary Engineer's Office.

6. The Stark County 2040 Comprehensive Plan identifies the future land use of the area as developed urban. According to the Plain Township Mini-Master Plan, this property is in the northern residential planning area. Recommendations for this area encourage rezoning larger parcels available for development to avoid standard subdivision patterns that are not sensitive to environmental features. The plan recommends the R-6 Planned Unit Development District; however, the R-3 district would also allow a mix of uses and require open space reservation when multi-family units are proposed.
7. Although a preliminary layout was not provided, the applicant indicated an approximately 10-acre area adjacent to the existing neighborhood to the west would be restricted to single-family development only. Established planning practices generally encourage a gradual transition in land uses in terms of intensiveness. The proposed R-3 district would be an appropriate use of land as the tract is situated adjacent to existing R-3 districts with multi-family development. If the Township is interested in having more involvement in the development of the area, rezoning to the R-6 Planned Unit Development District should be considered.

6) SUBDIVISION ACTION

Melnichenko presented the Subcommittee's recommendations on the following projects:

SITE IMPROVEMENT PLAN REVIEW

7 Brew – Everhard/Jackson

(510 sf bldg., approx. 280 sf cooler, canopies, trash enclosure, walkways, paving, parking & access drive)

NW ¼ Section 24, Jackson Township

Conditional Approval

Christadelphians Church

(Approx. 1,300 sf addition & concrete pad)

SW ¼ Section 34, Marlboro Township

Conditional Approval

F.E.A. Adult Day Center

(2,400 sf bldg., 252 sf covered entry, walkways, paving & parking)

NE ¼ Section 6, Plain Township

Conditional Approval

JEM Plumbing (Rev)

(9,000 sf addition, retaining wall, paving, parking & access drive)

SE & SW ¼ Section 6, Lake Township

Conditional Approval

Pegasus Farm – Riding Arena

(16,640 sf bldg., walkways, paving & parking)

SE & SW ¼ Section 16, Marlboro Township

Approval

Sacred Heart of Mary Church

(3,200 sf bldg.)

SE ¼ Section 3, Nimishillen Township

Conditional Approval

Sheetz – Orion & Cleveland

(6,139 sf bldg., fuel canopy, dumpster enclosure, walkways, paving, parking & 2 access drives)

NE ¼ Section 6, Plain Township

Conditional Approval

Warstler Cemetery

(paving & access drive)

SE ¼ Section 14, Plain Township

Approval

Leach moved, Sanderson seconded, and the motion carried to accept the Subcommittee's recommendations of the above-noted site improvement plan review.

PRELIMINARY PLAN REVIEW

Upland Meadows

NE ¼ Section 23, Tuscarawas Township

Conditional Approval

McAlister moved, Moeglin seconded, and the motion carried to accept the Subcommittee's recommendations of the above-noted preliminary plan review.

FINAL PLAT REVIEW

Carrington West No. 2

SW ¼ Section 17 & SE ¼ Section 18, Jackson Township

Conditional Approval

Country Place Estates No. 2

(replat of lot 1 in Country Place Estates and part of the SE 1/4 Section 5, Jackson Township)

SE ¼ Section 5, Jackson Township

Conditional Approval

Daniel Graber's Subdivision No. 2

(replat of parts of lots 1 & 2 in Daniel Graber's Subdivision)

SW ¼ Section 11, Perry Township

Approval

Estates of Glenmoor No. 28

(replat of lots 411 & 412 in Estates of Glenmoor No. 24)

SE ¼ Section 22 & NE ¼ Section 27, Jackson Township

Conditional Approval

Mudbrook Village No. 3

(replat of Lot 44 & Open Space Tract E in Mudbrook Village No. 2)

NE ¼ Section 17, Jackson Township

Approval

Leach moved, Moeglin seconded, and the motion carried to accept the Subcommittee's recommendation for the above-noted final plat review. The Commission also approved the variance requests of Section 420.A (Conformance with the Preliminary Plan) and Section 530.1.B (Width to Depth Ratio) for Carrington West No. 2.

7) AGREEMENTS

a. Village of Brewster – Davis-Bacon Prevailing Wages Amendment

Moeglin moved, McAlister seconded, and the motion carried to approve the agreement. Miller abstained.

- b. Stark County Commissioners - CDGB Administration Agreement
- c. Stark County Commissioners - HOME Administration Agreement

Miller moved, Sanderson seconded, and the motion carried to approve the agreement.

- d. 2026 STIC Grant – authorize grant submittal and 20% match not to exceed \$2,500

Mogelin moved, McAlister seconded, and the motion carried to approve the agreement.

8) PERSONNEL

McAlister motioned and Leach seconded and motion carried to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss the employment and/or compensation of a government employee. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Boyd, Moeglin, Leach, Watson, Miller, Sanderson, McAlister, Peldunas, Thorley, and Nau.

McAlister motioned and Leach seconded and motion carried to adjourn from Executive Session

McAlister moved, Sanderson seconded, and the motion carried to hire Abdullah Alanazi to the position of Engineering Technician with a start date of May 11, 2026 at an annual salary of \$55,000.

9) OTHER BUSINESS

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

David Thorley, President

Bob Nau, Secretary