

MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
July 7, 2026

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

RPC Members or Alternates

Dave Thorley, President
Bob Sanderson, County Appointee
Tony Peldunas, County Appointee
Kris Vincent, County Appointee
Bill Watson, Perry Township
Dave McAlister, County Appointee
Aaron Stoller, Village of Minerva
Bob Leach, County Appointee

Staff

Bob Nau, Secretary
Sean Phillips
Jonelle Melnichenko
Sarah Peters
Lauren Durr
Valerie Watson
Jennifer Bayer
John Anthony
Malia Burgasser
Heather Cunningham
Dan Slicker

Other

Ashley Stack
Brenda Parsons
Ruth Ann Chaffin
Sam Smith
Anita Smith

1) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dave Thorley opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2) MINUTES OF THE JUNE 9, 2026 MEETING

Vincent moved, Stoller seconded, and the motion carried to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2026 meeting.

3) FINANCIAL REPORT

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

4) STAFF REPORT

Land Bank – Side Lot Program Update

Sarah Peters, Land Bank Manager, provided an overview of the Stark County Land Bank's mission, funding sources, and current programs. She highlighted the organization's ongoing efforts to acquire blighted properties, return them to productive use, improve property values, and support community revitalization.

Peters reviewed the Land Bank's major state-funded demolition and brownfield remediation grants, including completed and ongoing commercial and residential demolition projects, environmental remediation efforts at former industrial and gas station sites, and the successful completion of the former Molly Stark Hospital demolition. She also discussed recently awarded grants for additional demolition projects, environmental assessments, and the Welcome Home Ohio program, through which the Land Bank has partnered with Canton for All People to purchase and resell 10 newly constructed homes to income-qualified buyers.

She concluded by outlining the Land Bank's local programs, including its demolition funding assistance program, which provides matching funds for eligible demolition projects, and its acquisition and disposition programs, including the Side Lot, Vacant Lot, and Targeted Acquisition Assistance programs, which help return vacant and tax-delinquent properties to productive use through strategic acquisition and redevelopment.

Lauren Durr, a summer intern, presented the 2026 Side Lot Program re-review of the lots transferred to new ownership, updating previous studies completed in 2019 and 2022. She reviewed the program's purpose of expanding adjacent property owners' lots, improving neighborhoods, and increasing property values through the transfer of qualifying vacant parcels.

The analysis looked at 1,394 side lots that have been transferred since the program began in 2013, with most remaining in the ownership of the original recipients. While the percentage of tax-current properties has declined slightly over time and the number of tax-delinquent properties has slightly increased, the majority of transferred lots remain current on property taxes. Most transfers have occurred in the City of Canton, with additional activity in Massillon, Alliance, and other Stark County communities. Since the 2022 study, 320 additional side lots have been transferred, including the program's first transfers in the Village of Beach City and Marlboro Township, reflecting continued expansion beyond the county's three legacy cities.

Following the presentation, the committee discussed the increase from 2022 in side lots that are now tax-delinquent. Staff explained that delinquent taxes often occur when side lots are not combined with the owner's primary parcel, particularly when mortgages prevent parcel combinations or when property ownership changes. While tax-delinquent side lots may eventually return through the foreclosure process, the Land Bank does not actively pursue reforeclosure on these properties.

Members expressed concern that delinquent side lots contribute to the county's overall delinquent tax balance and discussed whether parcel combination should become a requirement for eligible property owners who are not restricted by mortgage requirements. Staff noted that the Land Bank currently encourages whenever applicable, but does not require, parcel combinations and agreed to evaluate whether a policy change could help reduce future tax delinquencies while maintaining participation in the Side Lot Program.

5) SUBDIVISION ACTION

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

SITE IMPROVEMENT PLAN REVIEW

Compass North Church - Canton

(25,157 sf bldg., dumpster enclosures, walkways, paving, parking & drive modification)

SE ¼ Section 22, Perry Township

Conditional Approval

Dairy Queen – Tuscarawas/SR 172 & Anna

(2,161 sf bldg., retaining wall, dumpster enclosure, concrete pads, walkways, paving, parking & drive modification)

SW ¼ Section 12, Perry Township

Conditional Approval

Dollar General - Kent/SR 43 & Market (Rev)

(10,640 sf bldg., dumpster enclosure, walkways, paving & parking)

NW ¼ Section 3, Plain Township

Conditional Approval

Tuscarawas Valley Pioneer Power Association

(2,400 sf bldg. & gravel)

NE ¼ Section 24, Sugarcreek Township

Conditional Approval

Williams & Johnson Family Dental

(6,585 sf bldg., dumpster enclosure, walkways, paving parking & access drive)

SW ¼ Section 24, Jackson Township

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

Clayco Trailer City

(16,000 sf bldg., 4,320 sf trailer, 2,880 sf trailer, 2,160 sf trailer, 5 – 1,440 sf trailers, approx. 64 sf bldg., walkways, paving, parking & access drive)

SW ¼ Section 25, Perry Township

Conditional Approval

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

RENEWAL OF PRELIMINARY PLAN REVIEW

Portland Place

SE ¼ Section 34, Sugarcreek Township

Withdrawl

Leach moved, Vincent seconded, and the motion carried to accept the request to withdraw the renewal from consideration.

PRELIMINARY PLAN REVIEW

Kennedy Estates (Rev – 3)

SE ¼ Section 32, Lake Township

Conditional Approval

Sanctuary North

SE ¼ Section 5, Plain Township

Conditional Approval

McAlister moved, Leach seconded, and the motion carried to accept the Subcommittee's recommendation for the above-noted preliminary plan reviews. The Commission also approved the variance requests of Section 410 (Contiguous Holdings Sketch); Section 520.1.A (Street Arrangement to PPN 2003012); Section 520.1.A (Street Arrangement to PPN 2000427 & 2000392); Section 520.1.A (Street Arrangement to PPN 2002788); Section 520.12 (Block Length) for Kennedy Estates Rev-3. The Commission also conditionally approved Section 410 (Contiguous Holdings Sketch) and approved the variance requests of Section 520.1 (Street Arrangement to PPN 10020630) Section 520.1 (Street Arrangement to PPN 10002390) for Sanctuary North.

FINAL PLATS

Belden Village Subdivision No. 7

(replat of part of lot 34 in Belden Village Subdivision No. 3)

SE ¼ Section 24, Jackson Township

Conditional Approval

Floradale Acres No. 5

(replat of parts of lots 8, 9 & 10 in Floradale Acres)

SE ¼ Section 9, Jackson Township

Approval

Vincent moved, Sanderson seconded, and the motion carried to accept the Subcommittee's recommendation for the above-noted final plat reviews.

VARIANCE REQUESTS

David R. & Miriam E. Bennett

Proposal to permit a parcel to have less than the required lot frontage

SW ¼ Section 35, Tuscarawas Twp

Approval

Leslie Zeisig Sr.

Proposal to permit a parcel to exceed the required 4:1 width to depth ratio

NW ¼ Section 20, Lake Twp

Conditional Approval

McAlister moved, Leach seconded, and the motion carried to accept the Subcommittee's recommendation for the above-noted variance requests.

6) **AGREEMENTS**

a. District 19 OPWC – Administrative Services

Stoller moved, Leach seconded, and the motion carried to approve the agreement.

7) **PURCHASE ORDERS**

a. Office Revolution – 18 office side chairs (new location)

Nau requested approval for the purchase of 18 office side chairs (14 with half arms and 4 armless) for the new office. The cost was consistent with the contract pricing established through the furniture bid. It was noted that the commissioners have funded the majority of the new office furnishings and that this purchase addresses an item that had been overlooked during the original furniture order. Following brief discussion, the board approved the purchase order.

McAlister moved, Leach seconded, and the motion carried to purchase the chairs from Office Revolution.

8) OTHER BUSINESS

Nau provided an update on the office renovation, noting that the design is approximately 90% complete with final details being finalized. The last meeting in the current building is expected to be held next month, with the office move currently scheduled for the week of August 10, potentially extending into the following week. A moving company will handle the relocation, and most existing furniture will not be moved, with surplus items to be auctioned where appropriate. Nau expressed appreciation to the County Commissioners for their support of the project.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

David Thorley, President

Bob Nau, Secretary