

MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
July 16, 2026

The Stark County Regional Planning Commission met in a special session Thursday, July 16, 2026, 1:00 p.m., in the Stark County Regional Planning Commission Conference Room.

RPC Members or Alternates

Dan Moeglin, Vice President
Todd Miller, Canton Twp
Michael Miller, Village of Brewster
Ted Herncane, City of Massillon
Tony Peldunas, County Appointee
Bob Leach, County Appointee

Richard Regula, Stark County Commissioner
Cassie Pearson, City of Canton
Donn Angus, City of Canton
Bob Sanderson, County Appointee

Staff

Bob Nau, Secretary
Jonelle Melnichenko
Corine Valentine
Nicole Blunk
Lauren Durr
Chloe Garner
John Anthony
Susan Nason

Other

Zoe Oswalt
Edmond Oswalt
Ashley Slack

1) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dan Moeglin opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2) Waive the 15-day Special Meeting notice as required by the by-laws

Leach moved, Regula seconded, and the motion carried to waive the 15-day Special Meeting notice.

3) TOWNSHIP ZONING AMENDMENTS

Nicole Blunk presented the staff recommendations for the following zoning amendment:

CA #3 Proposed rezoning from R-R Rural Residential to B-2 Neighborhood Business District – One tract, approximately 0.18 acres, part of lot 1 in The Cannaerts Allotment, located on the northeast corner of 7th and Whipple in the SW ¼ Section 6, Canton Township (legal description on file with Township). OWNER/APPLICANT: Zoe Oswalt/Legacy Property Renovation, LLC, CURRENT USE: Single-family Residential PROPOSED USE: Bakery, PPN: 1401333

Schillig moved, Herncane seconded and the motion carried to recommend **denial** of the proposed rezoning to B-2 Neighborhood Business District. The following facts were presented to the Commission for consideration:

1. The area surrounding the subject tract primarily consists of single-family residential uses to the north and east, and property owned by a church identified as public service to the south and west. Further east is one tract consisting of a two-family dwelling and to the northwest are two tracts identified as two- and multi-family residential.
2. The existing zoning consists of R-R Rural Residential on the east side of Whipple, and R-2 Single and Two Family Residential on the west side of Whipple in Perry Township. Further north at the intersection of Whipple and 8th in Perry Township are four tracts zoned R-3 Single Family, Duplex, and Four-Family Residential.
3. The tract proposed for rezoning is approximately 0.18 acres and is on the northeast corner of 7th and Whipple. According to the application, the purpose of the zone change request is to open a bakery. The site appears to have been zoned in a residential capacity since zoning was initiated and RPC has not reviewed any zone change requests for the parcel.
4. The Stark County 2040 Comprehensive Plan designates the future land use of the area as Developed Urban.
5. The Whipple corridor does contain commercial uses; however, these are further north towards the intersection of 12th, and the area under consideration is predominantly residential. Rezoning the subject tract to the B-2 district could be considered spot zoning.
6. The zoning recommendation for this area in the Canton Township Comprehensive Plan discusses creating a Planned Unit Development (PUD) District to account for the commercial uses along the Whipple corridor, which may help provide a better mix of housing and development options if the Township is interested in allowing more commercial development further south on Whipple.
7. According to the Zoning Resolution, the setback for the B-2 district is 50 feet when adjacent to a residential district. The existing structure appears to be only 10 feet from the residential property to the north. Additionally, the existing lot size would be non-conforming within the B-2 district.

If a PUD is created along the corridor this could account for the smaller lot sizes that would not meet current requirements of the B-2 district and allow commercial uses compatible with the adjacent residential properties.

Schillig asked whether zoning and land use in an adjacent township would be considered when evaluating a property located near a township boundary. Nau responded that it would be taken into consideration, explaining that the evaluation is based on the existing zoning and surrounding land use.

A member of the public, Zoe Oswalt, addressed the Commission regarding her request to rezone a residential property to allow operation of a bakery. She described her background as a bakery owner, explained her efforts to find a suitable commercial location, and outlined plans for the property, including off-street parking, accessibility improvements, and minimal neighborhood impacts. She also noted her intent to preserve the property for long-term family use and questioned whether a nearby commercial property within a residential area represented a precedent.

Regula asked if the applicant already purchased the building. Oswalt stated that it wasn't but was contingent on the zone change being approved. However, the current owner request the purchase be completed or release the property due to the zone change process being delayed. She does prefer to own rather than rent.

Nau explained what constitutes spot zoning. He asked for the zoning map to be displayed and clarified that spot zoning would be created due to the residential nature of the area and although there may be legal nonconforming use established before the current zoning regulations. Although Whipple is a busy road, this area is primarily residential. He also clarified that the Regional Planning Commission serves in an advisory role, making recommendations to the Township Zoning Commission and ultimately the Township Trustees, who have final authority on rezoning decisions.

Regula confirmed that if it is denied by the Regional Planning Commission, the trustees can still approve the zone change. Miller discussed the history of the nonconforming use mentioned.

Following the discussion, the Commission voted to approve the staff recommendation to deny the rezoning request.

Corine Valentine presented the staff recommendations for the following zoning amendment:

CA #4 Proposed rezoning from R-2 Single Family Residential to R-3 Two Family Residential – One tract, approximately 0.62 acres, lot 19 in the Village of North Industry, located on the west side of Ridge, north of 53rd in the NW ¼ Section 34, Canton Township (legal description on file with Township). OWNER/APPLICANT: Benjamin & Ashley Slack , CURRENT USE: Vacant Land PROPOSED USE: Two-family Residential, PPN: 1312479

Leach moved, Peldunas seconded and the motion carried to recommend **denial** of the proposed rezoning to R-3 Two Family Residential. The following facts were presented to the Commission for consideration:

1. The area surrounding the subject tract primarily consists of single-family residential uses and vacant land. To the east, on the east side of Ridge there are three tracts of multi-family residential, one tract of two-family residential and one tract of business. To the west, on the west side of Wiseland is one tract of two-family residential. These tracts appear to be legal non-conforming uses within the area.
2. The zoning consists of R-2 Single Family Residential to the north, south, east and west of the subject tract. The R-R Rural Residential District exists further south and east.

3. The tract proposed for rezoning is approximately 0.62 acres along the west side of Ridge and is currently a vacant tract. According to the application, the purpose of the zone change request is to develop a duplex. The parcel appears to have been zoned as single-family residential since zoning was initiated in Canton Township. RPC has not reviewed any zone change requests for the parcel.
4. The Stark County 2040 Comprehensive Plan designates the future land use of the area as Developing/Developed Suburban.
5. The purpose of the R-2 district is to accommodate single-family residential development at a density of two to three dwelling units per acre in areas served by a central sanitary sewer system, while the R-3 district is intended to provide for two-family dwellings at a maximum density of six dwelling units per acre in areas served with a central sanitary sewer system.
6. The zoning recommendation for this area in the Canton Township Comprehensive Plan discusses considering a variety of residential districts to allow for different housing options. If the Township is interested in permitting higher density residential development, including two-family dwellings in this area, staff recommends exploring a comprehensive rezoning strategy for the area which would better align with the existing land use.

Discussion followed regarding the proposed rezoning request and the staff recommendation, with questions about the property's history, available infrastructure, and the basis for the recommendation. It was noted that public sewer service is available to the parcel.

Staff explained that the request constituted spot zoning because the property is surrounded by land currently zoned R-2, despite the presence of nearby commercial, duplex, and multifamily uses. Those neighboring uses were identified as legal nonconforming uses that predate the current zoning regulations. Staff emphasized that, rather than approving an isolated rezoning, the township should consider a comprehensive review of the area to create a zoning scheme that better reflects the existing pattern of development.

Applicant and property owner Ashley Slack spoke in support of the request, explaining that she and her husband had recently purchased the property with the intent of constructing a two-family duplex. She provided background on the parcel, stating that it had once functioned as two buildable lots with two existing sewer taps. She stated that the parcel is larger than most surrounding lots and argued that the existing mix of housing types demonstrates the area's need for additional quality housing. She expressed her belief that constructing a duplex would be a more practical use of the property than a single-family home and emphasized that she and her husband are local residents committed to maintaining the property and providing well-managed, affordable housing.

It was questioned whether the property had ever been legally divided into two lots. Staff explained that although historical records suggest the property may have had two addresses, it is currently one legally described parcel. They noted that dividing it into two lots would require a replat and review of frontage and access requirements. Ms. Slack responded that, if the rezoning request were denied, they would likely pursue subdivision of the property and construct two single-family homes instead.

Additional discussion focused on the surrounding vacant land and the distinction between the zoning map and the existing land use map. Staff clarified that although nearby properties include commercial and multifamily uses, the zoning throughout the area remains predominantly R-2, with the mixed uses existing as legal nonconforming uses. Several comments acknowledged that the area presents a mixture of land uses and agreed that a broader zoning review would be more appropriate than approving a single rezoning request. Regula confirmed that the white on the map is vacant, not oil and gas.

Following the discussion, the Commission voted to approve the staff recommendation to deny the rezoning request.

8) OTHER BUSINESS

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

David Thorley, President

Bob Nau, Secretary