

**MINUTES OF THE AVON LAKE  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
July 1, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Avon Lake Planning Commission was called to order on July 1, 2025, at 7:00 P.M. in Council Chambers with Chairperson Ma presiding.

**ROLL CALL**

Present for roll call were Mr. Haas, Dr. Ma, Mr. Leitch, Mr. Orille, Mrs. Raymond, Mr. Smith, Mayor Spaetzel, Director of Law Ebert, City Engineer Howard, Community Development Director Esborn, and Planning and Zoning Manager La Rosa.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Haas moved, and Mrs. Raymond seconded to approve the June 3, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried (7-0).

**GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Email from Lori Glenn of 32069 Kossuth Drive objecting to the Handford Blvd extension, citing traffic, safety, and transparency concerns.

Email from Helen Zdrojewski of 621 Brust Drive regarding the unfulfilled MOU for gate installation at Handford Blvd, tied to the Port Side development.

No Planning Commission action is required; correspondence was included in the Commission's packets.

**COUNCIL REPORT**

Mr. Smith advised that the Avon Center Estates preliminary plat was approved, and the final plats for Sandridge and Port Side Townhomes had their first reading.

**SWEARING IN PUBLIC COMMENTERS**

Law Director Ebert administered the oath to all individuals providing public comments during the meeting.

Dr. Ma announced a procedural adjustment to enhance transparency and public participation. Beginning with this meeting, public comments for each case will be accepted after the Planning Commission's discussion and questions, but before any motion or vote.

Dr. Ma explained that under the previous format, public comment was reserved until the end of the meeting, which limited the public's ability to provide timely input on specific agenda items before decisions were made. By repositioning the public comment period within the order of business—following commissioner discussion but before action is taken—residents and stakeholders would have a more meaningful opportunity to contribute to the deliberation process. She emphasized that this change applies specifically to comments related to individual cases on the agenda, while general public comments would still be welcomed at the end of the meeting.

**NEW CASES**

**Case No. CPC-25-9, Pulte Homes of Ohio, LLC, Major Subdivision Preliminary Plat Approval for Harbor Crest Townhome Subdivision**, located in the southeast corner of Walker Road and Avon-Belden Road (SR 83). Applicable Code Sections: 1214.05: Major Subdivision and 1238: Subdivision Design Standards apply.

James Sayler of The Henry G. Reitz Engineering Company, representing Pulte Homes of Ohio, presented the preliminary subdivision plat for the proposed Harbor Crest Townhomes, located at the southeast corner of Walker Road and Avon-Belden Road (SR 83). Mr. Sayler was accompanied by Keith Filipkowski from Pulte Homes and confirmed that both had been sworn in for testimony.

Mr. Sayler began by noting that this project was not new to the Planning Commission, having previously appeared in work session format and as part of a rezoning request. He explained that feedback received from both the Administration and the Commission during those earlier meetings was incorporated into the current preliminary plat. The plat presented maintained the same layout and unit count as the prior concept but included more detailed engineering and design documents.

Mr. Sayler described the project as a 73-unit townhome development that would be constructed in two phases. Phase 1 would begin from the Avon-Belden Road (SR 83) entrance and include lots 1 through 42. Phase 2 would extend south and connect to Walker Road. The lot numbering was updated to reflect the phasing sequence.

Mr. Sayler highlighted several plan features:

- **Drainage Improvements:** In response to concerns raised by adjacent property owner Mr. Wolfe, the plan includes enhanced drainage design near his property to prevent stormwater runoff from the new development.
- **Recreational Space:** A pocket park and hardscape gathering area, shown previously during the rezoning process, was now formally included in the plan.
- **Traffic Analysis:** A traffic study has been completed and reviewed by an independent consultant retained by the city. While the study noted no current conflicts, it suggested relocating the development's entrance on SR 83 to better align with Huntington Bank's northern curb cut. Mr. Sayler stated that shifting the entrance could negatively affect the design and reduce space available for stormwater detention and recommended retaining the current location.
- **Engineering Review:** Mr. Sayler acknowledged comments from City Engineer Howard, including a request to conduct an auto-turn analysis for safety vehicle access, a lot consolidation review, and feedback on the traffic study. He committed to providing additional information as needed during the improvement plan phase.
- **Zoning Comments:** Mr. Sayler addressed two outstanding items, including establishing an easement or access plan for potential future connectivity at the southern stub street and reconsideration of a second exit lane for left-turning vehicles onto Avon-Belden Road, which Pulte preferred not to include due to limited space and minimal traffic impact.
- **Landscape and Assembly Plans:** A landscape plan by the EDGE Group was submitted and included in the application. Mr. Sayler noted that the applicant had resubmitted an updated lot assembly plan for engineering review and was in the process of finalizing deeds for property consolidation before construction.

Mr. Saylor concluded by reaffirming Pulte's willingness to collaborate with the city to resolve outstanding technical details and respond to any further questions from staff or Commission members.

Planning Commission comments focused on the following:

- **Entry Drive Alignment [Avon-Belden Road (SR 83) / Huntington Bank]:** Concerns were raised about the proposed entrance on Avon-Belden Road (SR 83) not aligning with Huntington Bank's drive. It was noted that misaligned curb cuts could lead to future traffic conflicts, especially with left-turning vehicles entering or exiting either site. There was discussion about whether the entrance could be moved slightly south or otherwise to improve spacing and safety.
- **Lack of Left-Turn Exit Lane [Avon-Belden Road (SR 83)]:** The absence of a dedicated left-turn lane for vehicles exiting onto Avon-Belden Road (SR 83) was identified as a potential cause of traffic congestion and safety concerns. It was noted that this could result in delays, stacking, and future complaints from residents. Additionally, once construction is complete, the city may have limited options to mitigate these issues if a turn lane is not incorporated during development.
- **Southern Stub Street Connection:** Considerable discussion focused on whether the southern stub street should remain open for future interconnection or be closed. Concerns were raised about potential complications based on past experiences with unresolved or disputed private street connections. Some suggested that the stub be closed and landscaped, unless or until a formal agreement for future access is reached.
- **Parking Availability and On-Street Parking Limitations:** Concerns were expressed regarding limited guest parking, particularly near the Walker Road end of the site. Questions were posed regarding the potential for residents to improperly store vehicles in common areas, such as near the mailbox cluster. It was noted that the 22-foot-wide private streets do not accommodate on-street parking, further limiting available space.
- **Comprehensive Plan Consistency / Mixed-Use Vision:** Questions were raised about whether the proposal fully aligns with the city's Comprehensive Plan, which envisions a mixed-use, walkable Town Center. While the plan encourages increased housing diversity and density, it also emphasizes integration with retail or civic uses, elements not included in the Harbor Crest proposal. Director Esborn clarified the distinction between the general mixed-use land use designation and the formal Mixed Use Overlay District, which was not applied to this site.
- **Stub Street Circulation / Waste Collection:** Inquiries were made about how waste collection vehicles would service the units along the stub street and whether adequate turning space is provided. The applicant responded that no turnaround is proposed, noting this approach is consistent with how similar stub streets are currently serviced in Avon Lake.
- **Lighting Plan Details:** The Commission asked about the provision of street lighting along the private roads. Mr. Filipkowski stated that lighting would be coordinated with FirstEnergy and supplemented by coach lights on the exterior of each unit. However, a detailed photometric plan was not presented.
- **Neighbor Coordination / Landscape Buffering:** Inquiries were made about outreach to adjacent property owners, particularly those along the shared property lines. Mr. Filipkowski reported having positive communication with Mr. Wagner and a willingness to coordinate fence and landscaping placement. At the time of the meeting, no outreach occurred with the other nearby property owners.

- **Phasing and Infrastructure Timing:** Clarification was requested on the phasing plan and utility extensions. Mr. Saylor explained that the phasing reflects typical build-out timelines and noted that some infrastructure details would be addressed during final engineering.
- **Clarification of Traffic Study Terminology:** It was suggested that future traffic study submissions include a legend or key to clarify abbreviations and technical terms, making the documents easier to interpret.

William Zimmerman (resident) was in opposition to the plan, citing traffic and walkability concerns.

Mr. Haas moved, and Mr. Leitch seconded to table Case No. CPC-25-9, Pulte Homes of Ohio, LLC, for Preliminary Plat Approval of the Harbor Crest Townhome Subdivision, to allow the applicant time to revise and resubmit the plan. The Commission requests that the following items be addressed and presented at the next regular Planning Commission meeting:

1. A revised entry configuration at Avon-Belden Road (SR 83) that explores one or more of the following: aligning the development entrance with Huntington Bank's drive, shifting the curb cut further south to improve spacing from adjacent access points, or adding a left-turn exit lane to improve outbound vehicle circulation and minimize queueing.
2. Clarification regarding the proposed stub street connection at the southern end of the site, including whether it will remain open for future connection or be terminated with appropriate landscaping or buffering, and how this will be addressed in the HOA governing documents.
3. Confirmation that the applicant will meet with the Development Review Committee (DRC) before resubmission, to address staff and departmental concerns and ensure coordinated review of the revised plan.

Motion carried (7-0).

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Proposed Right-of-Way Vacations – Electric Boulevard:**

A proposal to vacate portions of the Electric Boulevard right-of-way adjacent to properties owned by Anthony and Kimberly Calabrese and the Smugglers Cove Condominium Complex No. 4. The proposed vacation includes approximately 0.1505 acres (6,556 square feet) to be incorporated into the Calabrese property and approximately 0.1567 acres (6,824 square feet) to be incorporated into the Smugglers Cove parcel. Applicable Code Section: 1216.03 (c) Zoning District Map and District Boundaries, Vacation of Public Rights-of-Way applies.

The applicant, Anthony Calabrese, requested the vacation of an undeveloped portion of Electric Boulevard right-of-way, totaling approximately 0.3072 acres, to be split between his property and the adjacent Smugglers Cove Condominium Complex. Mr. Calabrese stated he intended to consolidate these parcels and build a single-family home for his family.

Director Esborn and Engineer Howard confirmed the right-of-way was unimproved and not needed for public access or utility purposes.

No opposition from other Commission members was recorded, and no additional technical concerns were raised by staff.

Mr. Smith disclosed that he had previously represented Mr. Calabrese and also owned property in Smugglers Cove. He recused himself from participating in or advising on this case.

Mr. Leitch moved, and Mayor Spaetzel seconded to approve Mr. Smith's request to abstain from voting

due to a potential conflict of interest. Motion carried: (6-0). Mr. Smith abstained from the vote.

Jennifer Fenderbosch (resident) raised a question about whether property owners seeking rights-of-way vacations should be required to pay the City for the land being vacated. She cited past examples during former Councilman Rob James's tenure where such compensation had been required and suggested that the City Clerk research historical precedent.

Amy Adams (Smugglers Cove resident) requested that, in addition to researching prior cases involving payment, a list showing instances where no compensation was required be provided to ensure a balanced view.

Mr. Haas moved, and Mr. Leitch seconded to vacate portions of the Electric Boulevard right-of-way adjacent to properties owned by Anthony and Kimberly Calabrese and the Smugglers Cove Condominium. Motion carried (6-0), with Mr. Smith abstaining.

#### **Proposed Right-of-Way Vacation – Shields Avenue and Electric Boulevard**

A proposal from Avon Lake Regional Water to vacate a 15.15-foot-wide portion of the Shields Avenue right-of-way and a portion of the Electric Boulevard right-of-way. The proposed vacation areas are intended to be incorporated into the Avon Lake Regional Water property for operational purposes. Applicable Code Section: 1216.03 (c) Zoning District Map and District Boundaries, Vacation of Public Rights-of-Way applies.

Director Esborn explained that this request was part of a minor subdivision and had been reviewed twice by the Development Review Committee. The land in question was formerly associated with the power plant property and was acquired by Avon Lake Regional Water for operational expansion. Engineer Howard confirmed the vacation involved paper streets not currently in use. He supported the request as a cleanup measure for the unused right-of-way. Mr. Haas asked whether the vacation would affect emergency access or connectivity. Director Esborn responded that fire and safety services had reviewed the proposal and expressed no concerns. No objections were raised by the other Commissioners. All acknowledged the vacation as appropriate for utility operations and not needed for future city infrastructure.

Jennifer Fenderbosch (resident) reiterated her earlier point from the Electric Boulevard vacation case, questioning whether the city should consider requiring payment or compensation when vacating public right-of-way, especially for large utility operators. She suggested that the Council Clerk could provide records of past vacations that involved reimbursement.

William Zimmerman (resident) requested a visual depiction of the exact area being vacated. Mr. Zimmerman was provided the map for clarification.

Mr. Haas moved, and Mr. Leitch seconded to vacate a 15.15-foot-wide portion of the Shields Avenue right-of-way and a portion of the Electric Boulevard right-of-way to property owned by Avon Lake Regional Water. Motion carried (7-0).

#### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Debra Beal (resident) raised concerns during public comment about pedestrian safety at the intersection of Miller Road and Lake Road, particularly the lack of flashing lights or enhanced crosswalk features near the park. She also inquired about the demolition timeline of the Avon Lake Power Plant and whether the high-voltage power lines and the overpass/bridge would be removed.

Mayor Spaetzel stated that the City is aware of pedestrian safety concerns at this intersection. The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) previously removed a traffic signal there, which limited options for installation. The City is currently working on a sidewalk improvement project in the area, sponsored by ODOT. Due to the timing and coordination with the state-funded project, the City cannot install flashing lights immediately but is considering improvements as part of the larger sidewalk project. The demolition of the power plant is progressing on schedule, with the main plant structure expected to be fully demolished by August 2025. The high-tension transmission lines and substations on the south side of the property are owned by FirstEnergy and will not be part of the demolition; they will remain in place. The overpass or bridge on the site is owned by Avon Lake Regional Water and will remain as well.

William Zimmerman (resident) praised the Planning Commission's decision to allow public comment before votes.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Leitch moved, and Mayor Spaetzel seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm. Motion carried (7-0).

  
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Planning Commission  
Chairperson Ma

  
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Recording Secretary  
Kelly La Rosa