

**JOINT WORK SESSION OF  
DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL,  
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION,  
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD,  
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS  
SEPTEMBER 2, 2025**

**Minutes**

Vice Mayor Alutto called the Tuesday, September 2, 2025 joint work session to order at 6:02 p.m.

**Attendance**

Council Members: Vice Mayor Alutto, Mr. Reiner, Ms. De Rosa, Ms. Fox, Mr. Keeler, Ms. Kramb  
Members absent: Mayor Amorose Groomes

PZC Members present: Ms. Call, Mr. Chinnock, Mr. Deschler, Mr. Garvin, Ms. Harter, Mr. Way  
Members absent: Mr. Alexander

ARB Members: Ms. Damaser, Ms. Patt-McDaniel, Dr. Stechschulte  
Members absent: Mr. Cotter, Ms. Cooper

BZA Members: Ms. Dalesandro, Ms. Tyznik  
Members absent: Mr. Anderson, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Linville

Staff Members: Ms. O'Callaghan, Mr. Bitar, Mr. Hartmann, Ms. Singh, Mr. Barker, Ms. Holt, Mr. Ament, Ms. Hunter, Ms. Wawszkiewicz, Mr. Earman

Ms. Fox led the pledge of allegiance.

City Council and board and commission members introduced themselves.

**BOARD AND COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORTS**

**Planning & Zoning Commission**

Deputy Director of Planning Bassem Bitar presented year-to-date statistics showing the Planning and Zoning Commission had reviewed 35 applications with determinations, most commonly amended final development plans. He highlighted that 20 administrative approvals had been processed, including items newly eligible under recent code changes designed to make the process more user-friendly.

Chair Rebecca Call thanked staff for their integral role in helping the Commission function effectively. She emphasized that while these are volunteer positions, they often feel like full-time jobs. Ms. Call highlighted the Community Plan as a tremendous help that provides a documented vision for the City's 10-year horizon. She raised concerns about implementing mixed-use neighborhoods when single-parcel applicants come forward wanting to develop only one component, noting the challenge of balancing housing needs with the commercial development that funds the City. Ms. Call questioned how code can be interpreted one way while the vision may be understood differently.

Vice Chair Kim Way praised the Community Plan as a wonderful tool that had been desperately needed. He specifically called out the Neighborhood Design Guidelines and conservation Design

Guidelines as particularly useful documents that help guide conversations about new urbanist ideas like buildings fronting streets with parking behind. Mr. Way shared the ongoing challenge of understanding new building materials, noting the Commission's work with consultants to evaluate whether materials are good quality and long-lasting. He mentioned recent discussions about imitation cedar shakes and slate, and highlighted the emergence of woonerfs as a design element requiring careful consideration of materials conducive to mixed pedestrian and vehicle use.

Ms. Call added that the Commission had extensive discussions about brick materials, joking they had an hour-and-a-half recorded meeting covering everything anyone would want to know about brick. She emphasized the challenge of implementing the City's vision as a green and connected city when current code doesn't make achieving these goals straightforward. She noted the need for code to dovetail with vision items.

Mr. Way raised additional points about structural supports as signage, noting this as something the Commission had thought extensively about. He discussed the challenge of aging PUDs that are 20-30 years old, questioning whether following outdated PUD requirements produces the desired outcomes or if there should be processes for updating these documents to reflect more contemporary approaches. He questioned whether materials approved decades ago should still be applied to current proposals or if there should be a rigorous process for translating old guidelines into something fitting contemporary Dublin.

Ms. Call elaborated on the PUD discussion using Councilmember De Rosa's phrase about whether developments should be "the last of the first or the first of the next." She explained that when parcels seek expansion, redevelopment, or increased lot coverage, the Commission must decide whether to maintain the existing identity or trigger requirements for second-generation development. She emphasized that Planning and Zoning Commission members serve out of love for the City and a desire to preserve what brought them to Dublin. Ms. Call thanked all commission members for their time, effort, and contributions, noting that the Commission's strength comes from having seven voices with equal weight and different experiences.

Mr. Chinnock added that the Commission continues to improve, crediting Envision Dublin, improved staff reports, and members. He stated these resources help commissioners ask better questions and ultimately reach the right outcomes. Mr. Chinnock appreciated that commission members do not always agree, viewing disagreement as healthy for productive conversations.

Ms. Harter noted the Commission had moved away from simply saying developments need to be "greener" because they now have specific rules and codes that clearly articulate green requirements. She emphasized the importance of understanding new materials and staying current, suggesting the Commission should investigate emerging technologies like 3D-printed houses rather than waiting for applications to come forward. Ms. Harter discussed the importance of understanding the historical context of developments, particularly on streets like Frantz Road where patterns and reasoning from 20 years ago still influence current decisions. She noted that while change is necessary to reflect contemporary needs, understanding original planning patterns remains important.

Mr. Garvin, as the most junior member, praised the excellent staff reports that include historical context and highlighted information, making it easy to review applications thoroughly.



### **Architectural Review Board**

Mr. Bitar reported the Architectural Review Board had reviewed 18 applications with 16 determinations, noting the almost equivalent number of administrative approvals. Recent changes to the Historic District Code had allowed much more flexibility for routine changes like signage and work on background buildings, reducing the need for applicants to wait through full application cycles for basic projects.

Vice Chair Hilary Damaser, filling in for absent Chair Sean Cotter, expressed satisfaction that Old Dublin continues to be a desirable place for investment. She highlighted three significant successes: finalization and approval of the CoHatch development at North Riverview (including the anticipated Red House restaurant), approval of the renovation of the old Oscar's building, and final approval of three properties on North Riverview Street north of Bridge Street that the City had taken over to prevent dilapidation.

Ms. Damaser noted the Board had maintained strong collaboration between residents, the private sector, and the City. She praised the streamlined review process through administrative approvals, expressing hope that staff wasn't overwhelmed by them. She complimented staff's judgment in determining which cases should come before the Board even if eligible for administrative approval, particularly when conflicts exist or bigger decisions are needed. Ms. Damaser expressed the Board's desire to have a dedicated architect or builder position when an opening becomes available, noting how much they missed Gary Alexander's expertise, particularly his knowledge of options for renovating old buildings to meet modern code. She thanked staff for their amazing reports that prepare board members well and praised their knowledge and willingness to provide background and field questions.

Ms. Patt-McDaniel agreed with Ms. Damaser's comments, noting that while Oscar's is probably the last big project in Old Dublin, the Board continues to see exciting developments. She appreciated the staff reports' information that helps board members make decisions, though she acknowledged sometimes disagreeing with recommendations. Ms. Patt-McDaniel praised the passion of all board members and their ability to work as a team despite not always agreeing.

New member Dr. Stechschulte expressed appreciation for staff's orientation and encouragement when he joined, as well as other board members' openness to his comments and the nice discussions they have had.

### **Board of Zoning Appeals**

Mr. Bitar presented statistics showing only three applications year-to-date, which he characterized as positive since it indicates the Code is working properly. The low number also reflects staff working with applicants to find ways to accommodate needs without requiring variances.

Ms. Tyznik thanked staff for their work providing background and recommendations. She noted it had been a good learning experience to see how more senior committee members operate and ask questions, expressing privilege at being part of the team.

Ms. Dalesandro, having attended only two meetings, noted her perspective as an attorney who had previously been on the other side of the process. She found being on this side interesting and different, appreciating the staff reports and background information.

## **Q & A OPPORTUNITY**

The discussion during the Q&A session revealed several key concerns and collaborative solutions between the boards, commissions, and Council.

### Mixed-Use Development Implementation

Ms. Call initiated discussion about implementing mixed-use development vision when single-parcel developers want to build only one component. She distinguished between two scenarios: large parcels owned by multiple parties unable to create unified plans, and small parcels in larger areas either with or without existing development. The commission struggles when developers meet current code but the vision suggests different outcomes, particularly when code hasn't matched vision for over a year.

Ms. Kramb acknowledged the gap between finishing the Community Plan and having Code to support new land uses like "mixed use medium density neighborhood." She noted that while code is being developed including area-specific requirements (Metro district will have its own code), commissioners must currently balance existing zoning options against community plan vision. She referenced a recent case where Planning and Zoning recommended approval but Council denied the rezoning for a small parcel, preferring to wait rather than allow piecemeal development.

Mr. Bitar explained that a Code audit is underway with consultants to compare Envision Dublin recommendations against current Code, identify conflicts, and work toward updates including better mixed-use standards. Ms. Call requested interim principles similar to temporary design guidelines used before Envision Dublin's adoption, providing "teeth" for decisions like requiring 60/40 ratios in certain zones or vertical mixed-use in specific areas. She emphasized the difficulty when applicants point to code compliance while commissioners see misalignment with City vision.

Council members expressed support for developing bridge principles during the gap period. Ms. De Rosa suggested using "mix of uses" rather than "mixed use" phraseology, looking for substantial contribution to the mix rather than single-use development with token mixed components. Ms. Fox recommended a roundtable workshop between Council and Planning and Zoning to proactively address these challenges rather than just reacting to applications, enabling proactive recommendations as Code allows.

### Aging PUDs and Redevelopment

Planning & Zoning Commission raised concerns about 20–30-year-old PUDs governing parcels when developers want minor additions. Ms. Call questioned whether to start conversations with the new vision and let developers say no, rather than waiting until after they have paid fees and contracted architects for minimal changes. She suggested this direction should come from Council to staff about engaging applicants early about broader possibilities, especially for businesses that have called Dublin home for decades.

Council members had varied responses. Ms. Kramb noted PUD text is legal code giving developers rights to build within it, though amended final development plans allow changes. She questioned whether Council wants to encourage updates and if so, how to make the cumbersome process easier to incentivize modernization. Ms. Fox advocated for building flexibility and efficiency, particularly in planned areas like West Innovation District and Bridge Park where the City wants progressive innovation. She emphasized developers want predictable timelines and costs while the City wants to stay contemporary.



Mr. Reiner cited Frantz Road as an example of 1980s development needing updates, suggesting staff should ask applicants to go further. Mr. Keeler distinguished between redevelopment and new development, suggesting smart developers recognize when boards make suggestions about improvements, creating competition where developers who do not follow suggestions risk losing to neighbors who do. He emphasized using Envision Dublin as framework to encourage contributions while acknowledging existing development rights.

Ms. Call noted this is about Council providing policy direction for staff to have early conversations with applicants before they are committed to minimal plans. Ms. De Rosa recommended a "black belt exercise" bringing developers to discuss hesitations, acknowledging money as the primary factor. Vice Mayor Alutto agreed it's time to "paint the next room" in the improvement process.

#### Materials and Professional Development

Commission members expressed the need for proactive learning about new building materials. The recent training addressed not just what materials are but how and where to use them. Ms. Call explained their methodology: non-permitted materials may be considered but will not be primary materials, using baby steps for new materials. They reject applications wanting 80% coverage with untested materials.

Mr. Garvin suggested requiring certified, experienced installers for new materials. Mr. Keeler agreed installation specifications from manufacturers are crucial for durability. Ms. O'Callaghan offered to have contracted architects attend meetings for real-time consultation. Mr. Way emphasized landscape materials deserve equal attention to architectural materials. Ms. Fox stressed the importance of neighborhood engagement, particularly where commercial abuts residential, as part of being a connected city.

#### **COUNCIL GOAL PROGRESS AND UPDATES**

Vice Mayor Alutto introduced the Council's strategic goals, with Ms. De Rosa assisting in the presentation. The first goal discussed was to be the most connected community. Vice Mayor Alutto explained this goal originated with technology in mind, rooted in Dublin's early foundations. The initiative arose from recognizing the need for better internet service beyond single providers serving portions of the City. AltaFiber's installation of fiber-to-the-home capability was progressing ahead of schedule with higher uptake than anticipated. Vice Mayor Alutto emphasized this as a key driver of economic growth, enabling remote work, telehealth, education, and smart home devices. The connectivity goal had evolved beyond technology to encompass health, social experiences, and transportation/mobility networks, including the ConnectedDublin bus service and the Dublin Wellness Alliance (formerly under a different name) to better understand and address community health needs.

The second goal focused on Metro Center revitalization. Ms. De Rosa emphasized the size and opportunity of this premier office park redevelopment, highlighting how it connects to the signature trail running through the park and promotes connectivity in terms of both business and health. She noted this represents balanced development - not simply housing but creating connectivity with wellness and a signature park. Ms. De Rosa highlighted Sasaki's involvement as one of the premier landscape designers, describing their characterization of the project as "a vision for Dublin's investment in revitalization." The conceptual design shows a mix of uses within the development.

Mr. Keeler noted this is an infill project with six buildings in the inner loop, some 100% occupied and not going anywhere soon. He emphasized the challenge of balancing old and new, predicting that as new



development occurs, tenants in older buildings will eventually move, forcing older building owners to redevelop.

Mr. Reiner highlighted the water feature as the major focal point, contrasting it with Bridge Park where the water is inaccessible in the Scioto River valley. The Metro Center plan envisions retention basins becoming recreational beaches where people can enjoy sun and water.

Ms. Fox shared the concept of biophilic design, hoping for natural materials and waterways that incorporate a wellness lifestyle connecting people to nature. She envisioned architecture reflecting this through green roofs, natural materials, and bringing nature inside buildings, challenging developers to connect to nature in this particular project.

The third goal involved reimagining and launching Dublin's community events program. Vice Mayor Alutto explained the comprehensive review of all community events (Fourth of July, St. Patrick's Day Parade, Spooktacular, etc.) to understand their individual characteristics. Staff developed recommendations for shifting some events. The study included a holiday market feasibility study, with more information coming next year. This goal focuses on resident engagement and social connectedness.

The fourth goal aimed to create a premier athletic complex. Vice Mayor Alutto described the land purchase near SportsOhio, creating one of the largest potential sports complex areas in the country when combined with Darree Fields. The vision includes excellent planning with properly placed amenities, shade structures, and attractions beyond sports events. The goal balances local sports teams' needs with economic draws from regional and national competitions to generate hotel stays. Sports Facilities Companies is developing conceptual alternatives through a master planning process.

Mr. Keeler noted the approximately 250-acre site is more efficient than Grand Park's 500 acres, which is too large and creates parking and walking challenges. Dublin's size allows for proper amenities that Grand Park lacks.

Planning and Zoning Commissioner Jason Deschler asked about hotel capacity for the anticipated events, noting there would not be enough beds. Ms. O'Callaghan stated that hotels are part of the master planning process, with a hotel contemplated in Ohio University's master plan (though their RFPs had received no responses) and potential development once the sports complex vision becomes clearer.

The fifth goal focuses on accelerating development in the West Innovation District. Ms. De Rosa provided historical context, showing the district's location at the intersection of Madison, Union, and Franklin counties, involving multiple jurisdictions including Plain City, Jerome Township, Hilliard, and Dublin. She emphasized this represents an opportunity for regional planning partnerships. While new as a Council Goal, work began with the 2017 West Innovation District Special Area Plan. The City continues to consider strategic economic development, Intel's impact, housing needs, and other factors. Planning NEXT is helping coordinate this work with the SportsOhio planning to ensure cohesion.

Ms. De Rosa noted the mixed-use language is not new, having been present since 2017. Council typically reviews their goals at their November retreat to determine what is missing, completed, or needs revision. She gave the example of a previous goal to grow revenues 3% annually, which was achieved and absorbed into regular city operations.

Ms. Call requested that when committees affecting the City like Sports Ohio or Envision Dublin meet, staff could send notices about accomplishments and next steps to board and commission members. While acknowledging these are public meetings, she noted limited capacity and time prevent full participation, but members want to understand how their work fits with other initiatives. Ms. Call appreciated the

Council action summaries already being provided but sought additional information about ongoing committee work.

Vice Mayor Alutto suggested several ways to improve communication: sharing Council's memo updates with boards and commissions, utilizing board/commission liaisons for questions, and potentially sharing Council's updated goals after their retreat. These approaches would provide multiple avenues for understanding progress without creating excessive additional work.

Mr. Way expressed particular concern about the West Innovation District, calling it "the frontier" compared to the well-prescribed Bridge Park and Metro Center developments. He worried about making decisions while many elements remain unresolved.

Ms. De Rosa acknowledged the district had been a frontier for a while, noting the corridor between Dublin and Marysville is the hottest development area in Ohio. She mentioned New Albany Company's huge recent acquisition in Marysville, predicting continued push and pull in the area. Communication will be key as studies progress.

Ms. Fox emphasized that the West Innovation District is "a huge bear to hug" that no single entity can handle alone. She advocated for roundtable conversations involving all stakeholders - Council, Planning Commission, consultants, citizens, and district entities like OU and OSU - to ensure broad perspective and continual dialogue for success.

The discussion concluded with Vice Mayor Alutto encouraging boards and commissions to bring forward any needs for education or resources, particularly regarding new materials or architectural expertise. She noted Council actively seeks diversity in professional backgrounds when making appointments and encouraged architects to apply for positions.

The joint work session was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

  
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Vice Mayor, Dublin City Council  
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Chair, Planning and Zoning Commission

Vice

  
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Chair, Architectural Review Board  
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Deputy Clerk of Council