



MEETING MINUTES

Planning & Zoning Commission

Thursday, May 21, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Way at 6:30 PM at 5555 Perimeter Drive. He welcomed attendees and noted that the meeting could be joined in person or accessed via livestream on the City's website.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Way led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Commission members present: Gary Alexander, Dan Garvin, Hilary Damaser, Kathy Harter, Victoria Newell, Kim Way

Commission Members absent: Jamey Chinnock

Staff members present: Jennifer Rauch, Bassem Bitar, Thaddeus Boggs, Zachary Hounshell, Mara Hunter, Jeremiah Gracia, Aisling Babbit, Christopher Will, Jenna Goehring

ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING DOCUMENTS

Ms. Newell moved, Mr. Alexander seconded acceptance of the documents into the record and approval of the May 7 Regular Meeting minutes.

Vote: Mr. Way, yes; Ms. Harter, yes; Ms. Damaser, abstain; Mr. Alexander, yes; Mr. Garvin, abstain; Ms. Newell, yes.

[Motion carried 4-0-2.]

Mr. Way explained the Commission's advisory role to City Council on rezoning and platting matters, while noting the Commission holds final decision-making authority in certain other cases. He outlined the evening's procedural format: applicants would present first, followed by staff analysis and recommendation, then Commission questions, and finally public comment prior to deliberation. Members of the public wishing to comment were reminded to keep remarks to three minutes or fewer, to state their name and address for the record, and to refrain from repeating previously shared information. Mr. Way also noted that all written comments submitted in advance had been received and reviewed by the Commission.

Mr. Way administered the oath to all individuals intending to address the Commission or provide public comment on any administrative cases, asking them to stand, raise their right hands, and affirm that they would tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Way stated that there is one case eligible for the consent agenda.

Case #26-024AFDP

Atrium I Building Signage

Request for review and approval of an Amended Final Development Plan with a text modification to the sign provisions. The 18.1-acre-acre site is zoned PCD, Planned Commerce District – I-270/Tuttle Road and is located at 5525 Parkcenter Circle.

Mr. Way asked if any member wished to have a case removed from the consent agenda. No Commission members requested to pull the case from the consent agenda.

Ms. Newell stated she did not wish to remove the item from the consent agenda, but raised a brief clarifying question regarding the terminology used in the signage application. Specifically, she noted that the term "backlit" had been crossed out in the materials, yet the signage in question appeared to be backlit in nature. Staff clarified that the term "backlit," as used by the department, refers to a silhouetted effect against the wall, as distinct from internal illumination, and that the image provided in the materials was accurate and consistent with the proposal. Ms. Newell acknowledged the clarification, noting she would have characterized that effect as shadow imagery, but accepted the explanation.

Mr. Way asked if any member of the public wished to comment on the consent agenda. There was no public comment.

Ms. Damaser moved, Ms. Harter seconded approval of the consent agenda.

Vote: Ms. Harter, yes; Ms. Newell, yes; Mr. Alexander, yes; Ms. Damaser, yes; Mr. Way, yes; Mr. Garvin, yes.

[Motion carried 6-0.]

Case #26-001ADMC

West Innovation District (WID) - Administrative Request – Code Amendment

Request for review and recommendation to City Council of approval of Code Amendments to the City of Dublin Zoning Code Sections 153.002, 153.016, and 153.037-153.042 for the West Innovation District, and the Setback and Screening Design Manual requirements of the ID-6.

Staff Presentation

Mr. Hounshell presented on behalf of Planning staff. He oriented the Commission within the broader five-step process for the West Innovation District code amendments, noting that the current meeting constituted Step 3 of 5. He recapped that in January, staff had presented a WID roadmap outlining the intended scope of the code amendments, that the Commission had provided feedback at that time, and that on May 7, 2026, the matter had come before the Commission as a formal

introduction for the first time in its current form, including the actual draft code amendments and the associated setback and screening design manual for the area along Cosgray Road.

Mr. Hounshell explained that the Commission's role this evening was to provide a recommendation to City Council — either to approve or to disapprove the proposed code amendments — and that City Council would review the matter at two readings, tentatively scheduled for June 8 and July 1. He noted that any rezoning matters were entirely within City Council's purview, as the Commission had already issued its recommendation on that matter the prior year.

Mr. Hounshell provided a summary of the public engagement history since the outset of the rezoning process, noting that staff had begun that process in February 2025, that it was tabled by Council in August 2025 following resident concerns, and that Council subsequently directed staff to proceed with more targeted code amendments. Through that direction, staff developed the ID-6 zoning district, which was designed to serve as a transitional district between the broader WID development and sensitive adjacent uses, particularly residential.

Mr. Hounshell outlined the key policy changes that had been developed through this process, including the prohibition of data centers anywhere within the West Innovation District; a 200-foot Cosgray Road setback with aggressive landscaping and buffering requirements; the prohibition of stand-alone warehouse and wholesale distribution; a reduction of maximum building heights from 68 to 45 feet, inclusive of rooftop screening and mechanical equipment; additional operational limits requiring all uses to occur entirely within buildings; performance standards addressing potential environmental emissions and impacts; and the prohibition of service areas, loading docks, and overhead bay doors along Cosgray Road.

He then presented the changes made since the May 7 meeting, using a summary of Commission feedback and public comment to structure his review.

Mr. Hounshell reported that, following the May 7 discussion, staff had retained the term "advanced manufacturing" as the use category name in order to avoid unintended impacts to other zoning districts in the WID and elsewhere in the City. However, the definition itself had been updated to incorporate principles of clean manufacturing, emphasizing a product lifecycle approach that limits toxic or hazardous raw inputs and minimizes the generation of hazardous byproducts. The updated definition refocused on the production of finished products rather than the processing of raw materials, and several minor editorial improvements were made without compromising the core intent of the use. Mr. Hounshell noted that a majority of the Commission at the prior meeting had concluded that further refinement of the use definition would adequately address concerns, and that the addition of a conditional use process would not be necessary. He acknowledged that dissenting views had been expressed, noting some Commission members had felt that classifying advanced manufacturing as a conditional use would be contrary to the district's economic development intent and would create a disincentive for investment.

Mr. Hounshell noted that noise had been inadvertently omitted from the performance standards and had been added back. The same performance standards were then carried over to research and development uses for consistency. He also noted that staff had reviewed and identified specific types of structures or processes that could present concerns regarding toxic or hazardous emissions, all of which would be prohibited within the ID-6 district. For any similar structure not explicitly listed, the burden would rest on the applicant to provide staff with sufficient information demonstrating that the use would not create any measurable increase in hazardous emissions.

Mr. Hounshell presented a consolidated summary of all the criteria — drawn from both the definition and the district intent — that any user seeking classification as advanced manufacturing would be required to satisfy. These criteria included: promoting a product lifecycle approach; limiting toxic or hazardous raw inputs and byproducts; demonstrating specialized skill training; utilizing advanced technologies; prohibiting stand-alone warehouse and wholesale distribution;

maintaining low intensity and scale; not resulting in adverse impacts to surrounding properties; not compromising the district's environmental responsibility or compatibility with adjacent residential areas; operating entirely within the building; and not emitting anything hazardous to surrounding areas. He noted that staff had also provided a non-exhaustive list of example uses that could potentially qualify under this standard, including prototype development labs, small batch manufacturing, additive manufacturing, precision electronics, biotechnology labs with small-scale production, flexible office users combining office and lab with light production, and engineering firms with fabrication and testing spaces.

Mr. Hounshell described updates to the fleet vehicle provisions, noting that changes had been focused on construction contract services to limit impacts to the ID-6 without broader citywide effects. Fleet vehicles were defined as those that fit within a standard off-street parking space of approximately 9 feet by 19 feet, and the definition explicitly excluded semi-tractors, semi-trailers, non-recreational trailers, and heavy construction equipment. He confirmed that existing code already required fleet vehicles to be maintained within a screened area and not to be located forward of the building, and that this applied across the entire West Innovation District, not solely to ID-6.

Mr. Hounshell noted minor modifications to the warehouse and wholesale distribution section to remove conflicting or repetitive use-specific standards, without altering the underlying intent of limiting warehouse and wholesale distribution within buildings to products and goods intended for the business's own use.

Mr. Hounshell reported that a minor addition had been made to explicitly state that mechanical equipment could not exceed the 45-foot height limit, as this had been the original intent. The 200-foot Cosgray Road setback was clarified to reference the future right-of-way, in anticipation of Cosgray Road's planned expansion. A development incentive provision was added, allowing properties along Cosgray Road a 5 percent lot coverage increase in recognition of the development challenges created by the 200-foot buffer.

Mr. Hounshell explained that the opacity standards applied to side and rear yards where development backed up against residential properties, while the design manual governed all frontage along streets. The language had been updated to target 90 percent opacity, with a defined staggered planting pattern requiring a minimum of 30 trees per 100 feet — a standard that Mr. Hounshell described as notably aggressive. He stated that the same standard was carried through to the design manual for consistency.

Mr. Hounshell noted that all development plan applications within ID-6 would be required to provide sufficient information demonstrating that the proposed use meets both the definition and the district intent as an integrated standard.

Mr. Hounshell described three additional updates to the setback and screening design manual. A new secondary two-dimensional section had been added to illustrate the scenario where pavement, rather than a building, is immediately adjacent to the 200-foot setback boundary. The utility easement area had been updated to reflect that a shared-use path could also be routed through that corridor, coordinated with the planned widening of Cosgray Road. Finally, the installation size specifications for trees had been refined: deciduous trees were specified at a caliper of 2 to 3 inches, approximately 10 to 12 feet in height at installation, while evergreen trees were specified at 12 to 14 feet in height. Mr. Hounshell noted that most species included in the manual were relatively fast-growing, averaging 2 to 3 inches in height growth per year.

Mr. Hounshell concluded his presentation by stating that staff recommended a recommendation of approval to City Council of the proposed WID code amendments and Setback and Screening Design Manual. He noted that the Commission's recommendation, whether affirmative or negative, would be transmitted to City Council along with any conditions or recommended further amendments.

Commission Questions

Ms. Damaser opened questioning by directing attention to the definition of advanced manufacturing and expressing concern regarding the phrase "limits toxic or hazardous raw inputs," specifically questioning whether this constituted a complete prohibition and how compliance would be measured. Mr. Hounshell explained that the intent was not a total prohibition, but rather to create a substantial set of standards that applicants must satisfy, allowing for some degree of flexibility as businesses evolve over time.

Consultant Greg Dale of McBride Dale Clarion, who had been engaged by staff to assist with drafting, elaborated on the rationale for the approach. He emphasized the innovative and evolving nature of the district, noting that the kinds of businesses likely to seek entry in five or ten years could be markedly different from those operating today. He characterized the standard as one granting staff authority, and not broad discretion, to make holistic determinations across the full suite of definition, purpose statement, and performance standards, and stated that comparatively, the proposed language represented a higher level of protection than what he had observed in similar districts nationally. He further noted that the direction of economic and technological change made specific quantifiable thresholds potentially counterproductive to the district's innovation-oriented goals.

Ms. Damaser then asked how the City would respond if an approved business later changed its operations to incorporate more hazardous materials. Ms. Rauch responded that, because the development plan application process requires users to disclose their operations, any identified deviation from approved operations could be evaluated through code enforcement mechanisms.

Ms. Damaser inquired about the storage of hazardous materials and whether that was addressed in the code. Mr. Hounshell confirmed that all storage must occur entirely within the building, and that the building code provided the regulatory framework for safe storage practices.

Ms. Damaser also asked about staff's plans to preserve existing agricultural tree lines along property boundaries. Mr. Hounshell confirmed that many of the existing tree lines already fell along property lines within the setback area, and that the code included a requirement to preserve trees to the greatest extent possible, including through root protection zones enforced by zoning inspectors. Mr. Way added that this approach had been developed through prior cases and now constituted standard practice, including requirements to respect the drip line of significant trees.

Ms. Harter raised a question about whether the City Attorney was a listed member of the Administrative Review Team (ART). Mr. Boggs explained that, given the nature of the ART's technical and planning-focused review process, he and his colleagues were available as a legal resource when specific legal questions arose, but did not believe formal membership on the ART would add significant value compared to remaining available on call.

Ms. Harter inquired whether the code amendments should be regarded as a fluid document capable of future revision. Mr. Hounshell confirmed that, while the code once approved becomes a binding legal document, it was entirely possible to revisit and revise standards that proved unworkable, as had been done in other parts of the code. Mr. Boggs cited the solar panel regulations as an example of code provisions that had been returned to the Commission and Council for revision after practical experience revealed the need for adjustment.

Ms. Harter raised the question of whether the reporting cadence to the Planning and Zoning Commission by the ART could be made more specific, as the current language used the word "periodically" without defining a time interval. Ms. Damaser noted that "periodically" implied a defined period but left the interval unspecified, suggesting "from time to time" as a possible alternative. Mr. Dale suggested that while changing the code language may not be necessary, staff

could administratively adopt a more regular reporting schedule. Mr. Way noted that the Commission could at any time request a status report on the WID from staff, and could also build a defined cadence into the Commission's own calendar.

Ms. Harter asked about the colors of rooftops and whether the architecture standards addressed the potential visual impact of stark or reflective roofing materials. Mr. Hounshell confirmed that the existing standards require neutral, off-white, or earth-tone base colors, and that these standards applied to all portions of buildings, including rooftops. He further noted that the 45-foot height limit, combined with standard flat-roof parapet walls, would mean that rooftops would generally not be visible from surrounding areas. Mr. Way sought clarification as to whether any existing or planned buildings within the district would exceed 45 feet and potentially allow views over the ID-6 buildings. Mr. Hounshell stated that while there were planned projects with taller buildings further north near State Route 161, none were proximate to the ID-6 properties.

Ms. Harter asked about coordination between private and City-owned landscaping along the Cosgray Road buffer to ensure cohesiveness as development occurs piecemeal over time. Mr. Hounshell acknowledged that this was a critical consideration and that the design manual had been developed to address worst-case scenarios where individual properties come forward for development separately. Staff had given significant attention to how existing vegetation along parcel lines could be incorporated into mounding and planting designs, and would continue to work on ensuring a consistent and cohesive buffer regardless of the sequencing of development.

Ms. Harter raised the topic of fire department expertise on the ART. Mr. Hounshell confirmed that both the fire department and the building department each had a representative on the ART, and that all board members participated equally in the review process. He added that the ART functioned similarly to other public boards, with a vote on applications, and that all members would be aware of any concerns within their respective fields before the formal meeting.

Ms. Harter raised a final point regarding lighting, questioning whether the 10:00 PM dimming requirement could be moved to 8:00 PM. It was clarified that the existing regulation applied to parking lots of 150 spaces or more on a citywide basis, but that within ID-6, the 150-space threshold had been removed, meaning all parking lots in the district would be required to dim lights by 50 percent by 10:00 PM, excluding areas immediately adjacent to building entries for safety purposes.

Mr. Alexander noted a specific provision within the use-specific standards that referenced compliance verification through currently acceptable methods of testing, a mechanism familiar from the building code context of relying on recognized testing agencies. He asked whether there had been consideration of incorporating similar language in other sections of the code, specifically the intent statements, as a means of providing greater assurance to the public that safety and environmental performance would be objectively evaluated. Mr. Dale agreed that this was a well-taken observation and indicated he saw no reason why that language could not be incorporated into the intent statement as well.

Mr. Alexander asked whether data centers were prohibited in all zoning districts or specifically in the West Innovation District. Mr. Hounshell clarified that data centers were prohibited throughout the entire West Innovation District, but remained a permitted use in the Tech Flex zoning district, though most Tech Flex sites were small and already developed.

Mr. Alexander asked landscape consultant Tyler Clark of MKSK how the specified tree installation sizes had been established and whether they were realistic for initial planting. Mr. Clark explained that the sizes represented the largest and most mature planting size that was both beneficial to long-term tree health and reasonable in terms of affordability given the quantities required and the

typical availability of plant material. He confirmed that the specified sizes of approximately 10 to 14 feet in height at installation were fairly standard and feasible for procurement.

Mr. Garvin expressed appreciation for the presentation and acknowledged the public comment as excellent. He followed up on Ms. Damaser's earlier question regarding the phrase "limit toxic or hazardous" materials, noting that the discussion seemed to indicate an unwillingness to set firm limits due to the desire to accommodate businesses that might exceed those limits in the future. He asked whether there was a way to establish a threshold above which a use would be classified as a conditional use, thereby triggering Planning and Zoning Commission review. Mr. Dale acknowledged the appeal of such an approach in theory, but noted the significant practical difficulty in setting a quantifiable threshold that could be applied defensibly across a wide and evolving range of uses, given that different materials present different hazard profiles for different reasons. He suggested that if staff could not determine with confidence that a proposed use met all applicable standards, the appropriate course would be to deny the application, with the applicant having recourse through the Board of Zoning Appeals. Mr. Hounshell added that staff would work closely with the building department, which maintains standards regarding quantities and management of specific materials, and that outside expertise could be brought in as needed for novel or unfamiliar uses.

Mr. Garvin asked whether other jurisdictions had attempted to codify objective testing standards in similar districts. Mr. Dale noted that to the extent other communities had attempted such standards, they had generally done so in conjunction with other governmental agencies engaged in more specific environmental regulation, rather than within the zoning code itself.

Mr. Garvin asked for clarification regarding Houchard Road and whether the ID-6 district could be extended to cover that area. Mr. Boggs clarified that Houchard Road essentially serves as a jurisdictional boundary, with the east side incorporated within the City of Dublin and the west side within the township and therefore outside the City's zoning authority in the relevant area. He further noted that the present proceedings concerned only the ID-6 code and the buffering study, and that the Commission's recommendation on the rezoning of land east of Houchard Road and west of Cosgray Road had already been transmitted to City Council, where it remained pending.

Ms. Newell directed attention to the definition of advanced manufacturing and the district intent in Section 153.037, specifically noting that the materials included biotechnology labs as an example of a permitted use, yet neither the definition nor any other provision of the proposed code made any reference to biohazards. She noted that biohazards and hazardous materials represent two distinct regulatory concepts, and that biotechnology facilities may engage in research involving infectious disease, cancer therapies, or vaccine development, all of which can entail exposure to biohazardous material. She expressed concern that the code's silence on this matter effectively permitted biohazardous uses without any restriction. Mr. Hounshell acknowledged the point and indicated that staff could incorporate language addressing biohazards if the Commission wished to see that addressed. Ms. Newell noted her regret at not having raised the issue at the prior meeting, as it would have given staff an earlier opportunity to address it.

Ms. Newell also expressed appreciation for the revisions to the fleet parking provisions, noting that they mirrored the standards applied elsewhere in the Dublin zoning code and were precisely what she had been looking for.

Mr. Way raised the topics of containment and disposal, observing that while the code addressed containment through the requirement that all activities occur within the building, it did not clearly speak to the proper disposal of any hazardous materials that might be generated on-site. He

suggested that language addressing proper disposal, specifically ensuring that any generated byproducts are removed from the site and disposed of at a licensed facility in a timely manner, would close an important gap in the current proposal. Mr. Dale agreed and indicated that adding language to address containment and disposal was appropriate and straightforward.

Mr. Dale then summarized the three potential additions that had emerged from the Commission's discussion: the addition of biohazard language; the incorporation of currently acceptable methods of testing language into the intent statement; and the addition of containment and disposal language.

Mr. Garvin expressed support for reflecting these additions in the conditions, and suggested that the Commission discuss whether any specific industries should be flagged as conditional uses. Mr. Way indicated that the challenge lay in the difficulty of anticipating what kinds of uses might emerge in the future, making it difficult to establish clean thresholds. Ms. Rauch reiterated that the WID code already included broader manufacturing and assembly as permitted uses, and that advanced manufacturing was a further narrowing of that category. She cautioned against codifying specific numerical limits, noting that a use coming in just under any defined threshold would still need to demonstrate genuine alignment with the district's intent, and that this risk could not be fully addressed through bright-line limits.

Ms. Harter raised the question of quality control, noting that a quality control provision had been removed from an earlier draft. Mr. Hounshell agreed that it could be added back without difficulty and that it did not alter the substantive intent of the code. Ms. Harter revisited the topic of more formalized reporting to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Mr. Boggs summarized the procedural options available to the Commission: the Commission could vote on a recommendation to City Council that evening, subject to conditions, or it could postpone a vote to a subsequent meeting. He noted that if the Commission voted with conditions, those conditions would be transmitted to City Council but the matter would not return to the Commission for further review. Mr. Alexander expressed comfort with allowing staff to incorporate the identified revisions without the matter returning to the Commission, citing staff's strong performance in addressing the feedback from the May 7 meeting within two weeks.

Public Comment

Mr. Way opened the floor for public comment.

Christian Cooney, 5835 Barronscourt Way, Dublin, addressed the Commission regarding the Administrative Review Team. He stated his general support for the concept of an ART as a means of efficiently processing applications that clearly conform to a tightly written code. However, he identified several concerns with the current structure. First, he argued that neither the City's current staff nor the ART membership included a subject matter expert in hazardous or biochemical materials, which he characterized as a fundamental deficiency for a body being asked to review industrial applications. He suggested that such expertise should be a standing component of the ART rather than an as-needed consultant arrangement. Second, he expressed concern about the permissibility of designated representatives voting in place of department heads, suggesting that for such a consequential process, limits should be placed on the number of designated alternates permitted to vote on any given application. Third, he questioned the alignment between the notice timeline and the 28-day application review window, noting that a resident receiving notice on day 13 of a 28-day review period would have very limited time to research, prepare, and submit

meaningful comments. Fourth, he observed that the code did not specify how ART approvals were determined, whether by majority vote of all members, majority vote of members present, or unanimous agreement, and argued that this should be explicitly stated. He reiterated that he supported the concept of the ART while urging that significant refinements were necessary.

Denise Hemmert, 5824 Houchard Road, Dublin, offered points for consideration. She argued that ID-6 should serve as a true transition between residential and industrial uses, consistent with best zoning practices that layer residential uses, then office or retail, then light business, before reaching light and heavy industrial — a progression she did not see clearly established in the current language. She stated that clear and measurable standards were essential and that, as a matter of professional principle, nothing goes into production without rigorous testing and defined metrics. She stated that these standards should apply equally to all residential adjacent parcels and not only to Ballantrae, noting that residents on Houchard Road who rely on well water faced equal or greater risk from industrial runoff. She asked the Commission to prioritize residents over economic development. Finally, she requested that the Commission either vote no or return the proposal to staff to ensure permitted uses were truly transitional, that clear measurable standards be added, and that ID-6 protections be extended to all residential adjacent areas.

Jennifer Hammil, 5725 Trafalgar Lane, Dublin, raised two primary concerns. First, she argued that ongoing vehicle traffic on Cosgray Road would pose a greater quality-of-life threat to Dublin residents than the intermittent train traffic that staff had previously cited as a concern regarding alternative residential development in the area, referencing diesel exhaust, particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, and low-frequency acoustic pollution from vehicles operating near the backs of residents' homes. She requested that the Commission consider adding a neighborhood traffic calming overlay zone to the affected area. Second, she asserted that the Planning and Zoning Commission had the authority, under Dublin Code Section 153.234, to initiate an administrative request code amendment case and direct staff to revisit the proposal, and encouraged the Commission to exercise that authority if the code was not yet in a state that adequately protected residents' health and safety. She stated that making advanced manufacturing and research and development conditional uses would provide ongoing flexibility to address uses that could not be anticipated at the time of code drafting.

Tim Myers, 5845 Glendavon, Dublin, expressed appreciation for a productive meeting with city staff earlier in the week and acknowledged that several of the ideas discussed had been reflected in the presentation. He suggested that the reference to robotics and automation in the definition of advanced manufacturing was inconsistent with the intended low-intensity, low-scale character of ID-6, noting that robotic and automated processes are economically viable only at high volumes and thus do not suit a prototyping or small-batch research environment. He raised the question of what constituted "low intensity and scale" and requested more specific criteria. He expressed concern about the removal of quality control from the use-specific standards, arguing that quality control was essential to any manufacturing or research process and that outsourcing it created risk. He cautioned that businesses engaged in trial-and-error research would introduce chemical changes to their processes over time and that there was no mechanism in the current code to ensure the city would be informed of such changes. He reflected on his 35 years of experience in the automotive industry and noted that research and manufacturing facilities of this type had historically been located far from residential areas for reasons related to risk management. He urged the Commission to connect the City's stated sustainability objectives with the manufacturing

definitions in a way that provided clear assurances to residents, businesses, and sports participants regarding the absence of adverse chemical or environmental impacts.

Sandy McIntosh, 5792 Trafalgar Lane, Dublin, asked whether the mention of biotechnology labs as a permitted use example contemplated facilities engaged in research involving pathogens such as anthrax, Ebola, or hantavirus, and questioned what standards would define whether such biohazardous risk had been minimized or limited. She expressed skepticism about staff's ability to make such determinations objectively, citing the history of the WID process. She questioned why the definitions for advanced manufacturing, research and development, clean manufacturing, and clean production remained difficult to finalize after months of drafting by consultants and attorneys. She argued that this difficulty reflected a fundamental tension between industrial development and a residential area and suggested that, if ID-6 were truly to serve as a transition district, the only permitted uses should be offices and parks. She asked at minimum that advanced manufacturing and research and development be classified as conditional uses. She also raised procedural concerns regarding the publication of updated code amendment language at 5:00 PM on the preceding Friday, leaving interested residents with only two business days before the meeting to review, digest, and respond to new materials, which she characterized as inconsistent with the transparency Dublin claimed to value.

Victoria McDonald, 5642 Tynecastle Loop, Dublin, addressed the Commission on the topic of safety and the absence of objective criteria for safeguards relating to clean production. She introduced the concept of greenwashing — the practice of presenting businesses, organizations, or government entities as more sustainable than they are in practice — and suggested the City risked falling into that paradigm by advancing language about clean production without having defined measurable standards for its enforcement. She noted that Dublin's own vision statement committed the City to exemplary environmental stewardship and the best quality of life for all, and asked whether the current amendments were consistent with that vision and whether they would adequately protect children in the surrounding neighborhoods and those using the nearby athletic and recreational facilities. She urged the Commission to continue setting the high standard Dublin had built by tightening the code to provide more substantive safeguards around future development on one of the last remaining open green spaces in the city.

Amy Swank, 5945 Vandeleur Place, Dublin, posed the question of whether the amendments as currently drafted fulfilled the original directive from City Council in August of the prior year — specifically to permit development while addressing resident health and safety concerns and creating an area that would serve as a buffer from more intense industrial uses. She stated her view that the amendments failed to accomplish this in their current form and that further work was necessary. She noted, as an attorney who had assisted communities throughout Ohio in navigating data center siting issues, that several statements made by Commission members at the prior meeting regarding conditional uses were, in her view, inconsistent with Ohio law. She referenced the April 2025 City Council meeting at which council members had unanimously concluded that a conditional use designation was appropriate for data centers in ID-3 specifically because it preserved Planning and Zoning Commission review as an additional layer of protection for residents. She stated her view that the Commission had the authority to request a conditional use designation for any use about which it was not comfortable. She also raised a procedural concern, stating her belief that the version of the code publicly posted for the current meeting did not match the code language approved by City Council at the April 2025 meeting, and that this discrepancy,

combined with other notice-related deficiencies, raised due process concerns. She requested that the Commission recommend further work before the matter proceeded to City Council.

Joy Kouns Lewis, 6639 Barronscourt Loop, Dublin, addressed the Commission as a member of the Ballantrae Community Association's Planning and Zoning Committee. She stated that the vast majority of the nearly 700 active members of the Ballantrae community Facebook group were deeply concerned and experiencing significant anxiety about the WID and the decisions pending before the Commission. She noted that not all residents were comfortable speaking publicly or submitting written comments, but asked the Commission to understand that those concerns were broadly shared. She acknowledged that several school events that evening had prevented additional residents from attending in person. She reaffirmed that the community's request was simple: to send the code amendments back to staff for further refinement, citing the legitimate concerns about lack of clarity on key terms and objective criteria. She argued that getting the code right would benefit not only residents but also developers, who would have clearer guidance on what was permissible before purchasing property. She urged the Commission to consider what its decision would mean for the long-term safety of the Ballantrae neighborhood.

Richard Weeks, 5826 Houchard Road, Dublin, expressed his view that the issues raised by Commission members that evening — including biohazard concerns — indicated that the matter was not yet ready to be forwarded to City Council. He requested that references to Cosgray Road be removed from the ID-6 language to allow Houchard Road to be considered with ID-6 protections, noting that residents on Houchard Road had not yet had the opportunity to formally engage in that conversation. He referenced prior concerns he had raised regarding fire hazards associated with battery manufacturing and the risk that an incident on the west side of the railroad tracks could directly affect the Ballantrae neighborhood. He urged the Commission not to vote to forward the matter to Council given the amount of work that remained.

Kathy Balmert, 5860 Houchard Road, Dublin, stated that Houchard Road was a residential area and asked why its residents should be afforded less protection than those in the Ballantrae neighborhood. She noted that Houchard Road was not yet incorporated within Dublin but anticipated eventual annexation, and asked that the Commission consider treating its residents as deserving of equal protections, particularly with respect to noise, toxicity, and other adverse impacts from adjacent development.

The Chair then closed the public comment period.

Commission Discussion

The Chair invited the Commission to deliberate on the matter and opened discussion.

Mr. Alexander asked how the Commission should proceed if it wished to incorporate the revisions discussed during the questioning period. Mr. Boggs outlined two options: the Commission could vote on a recommendation to City Council subject to conditions, in which case the matter would not return to the Commission; or the Commission could postpone the vote to a subsequent meeting.

Mr. Way noted that the evening had surfaced three specific areas for modification, as catalogued by Mr. Dale: biohazard language, testing methodology language, and containment and disposal language.

Mr. Garvin stated that he had not attended the May 7 meeting and had come to the current meeting with substantial reading. He expressed appreciation for the staff's responsiveness to public comment. He reiterated his interest in discussing the question of objective testing or measurable criteria and whether a threshold could be established above which a use would be treated as a conditional use. He acknowledged the complexity of this question. He asked for a straw poll of Commission members on whether anyone wished to flag specific industries or uses for conditional use. Ms. Rauch responded that it would be very difficult to identify such industries, given the breadth of potential future uses. She reiterated that the proposed code already represented a significant narrowing from the existing WID framework and that the intent language provided robust standards for staff to apply.

Ms. Newell expressed regret at not having raised the biohazard issue at the prior meeting and stated that the code's silence on biohazards was a concern, particularly given the explicit inclusion of biotechnology labs as an example of permitted uses. She indicated a preference for returning the matter to staff for further refinement on that point specifically, while acknowledging the modifications staff had made.

Ms. Harter expressed appreciation for the work of staff and all participants, acknowledged that significant progress had been made, and stated that she would be comfortable supporting further refinement before the matter proceeded to Council. She returned to the question of expert availability within the ART and reiterated that she believed it was important for relevant expertise to be consistently accessible — particularly given the novelty of this type of development for the City. She also noted that the Commission had spent considerable effort on landscaping and buffering and that it was now time to give equal attention to what would occur inside the proposed buildings.

Ms. Damaser asked whether there was any Council-imposed deadline for the Commission's recommendation. Staff confirmed there was no established time limit. Ms. Damaser indicated that she would be in favor of seeing the proposed language changes before voting, and expressed a preference for postponing the vote to allow those changes to be made. She acknowledged, however, that if the language could be drafted and displayed during the meeting, she would be comfortable proceeding to a vote that evening.

Mr. Way expressed concern about the risk of the process continuing indefinitely. He observed that the matter was proceeding through a funnel toward increasingly specific language, and noted that at some point the code's intent must be relied upon rather than attempting to codify every conceivable scenario. He stated his openness to one additional round of revisions but emphasized the importance of defining a clear and finite list of outstanding items.

Mr. Alexander expressed confidence in staff's ability to address the identified revisions without the matter being returned to the Commission, citing the quality of work completed between the May 7 and May 21 meetings. He stated that City Council would have additional opportunity to review and refine the language through its two readings.

Mr. Way called a recess of approximately ten minutes at 8:40 p.m. to allow staff and consultants to draft the proposed language changes.

The meeting was reconvened at 8:50 p.m.

Following the recess, Mr. Boggs presented the language developed during the break by himself, Mr. Dale, Mr. Hounshell, and Ms. Rauch, noting that text highlighted in yellow reflected changes brought into the meeting and text shown in blue reflected additions made during the recess.

Condition 1. Biohazard Materials. The proposed language would add to the ID-6 district intent a provision stating that uses within the district do not include the use, storage, production, or emission of biohazard materials.

Ms. Damaser asked whether the term "biohazard" should also be incorporated into the advanced manufacturing definition. Mr. Hounshell clarified that, because the intent language applied to all uses in the district, and because the development plan application requirement obligated applicants to demonstrate how they meet the intent as well as the definition, an explicit addition to the definition was not necessary.

Mr. Garvin raised a concern about the potential breadth of the phrase "do not include biohazard materials," noting that common laboratory items such as syringes, scalpels, and microscope slides could technically be classified as biohazardous waste. He questioned whether language that absolutely prohibited biohazard materials might inadvertently preclude acceptable biotechnology laboratory uses. Ms. Newell agreed that the term was very broad, encompassing blood contact, exposure to infectious material from experiments, and other forms of biohazard that could be present in a legitimate small-scale research environment. Mr. Garvin expressed concern that an absolute prohibition might exclude businesses that would otherwise be appropriate for the ID-6 district.

Mr. Way suggested that the language be revised to say "minimizes" rather than "do not include," noting that some biohazardous material might be inherent to legitimate biotechnology work, and that the appropriate standard was proper containment and disposal rather than a categorical exclusion. Mr. Garvin suggested adding biohazard materials to the list in the second blue clause addressing byproducts. The group agreed to revise the language to reflect minimization and proper disposal of biohazard materials rather than an outright prohibition.

Mr. Garvin noted, for the record, that the CDC identifies four biosafety levels for biohazards and inquired whether it would be useful to specify that only certain risk levels were permissible. Mr. Way indicated that specificity at that level was probably beyond the appropriate scope of the zoning code at this stage. Mr. Boggs noted that if the Commission's recommendation were transmitted to City Council with this direction, the Council's two readings would provide additional opportunity for further refinement. Mr. Garvin concurred that noting this as a suggestion for Council's consideration was appropriate.

Condition 2. Development Plan Application Testing Language. The proposed language would revise the development plan application requirements to add that, in addition to providing sufficient information to demonstrate that the proposed use meets the district intent, applicants must also provide data demonstrating, using currently acceptable methods of testing, that the use does not create any measurable increase of hazardous emissions to neighboring properties.

Mr. Way confirmed this language mirrored language already present elsewhere in the code. Ms. Damaser expressed approval of the phrase "any measurable increase" as appropriately calibrated. Mr. Boggs confirmed that both the containment and disposal concerns and the testing language had been incorporated into the intent section through the blue revisions, and asked the Commission to confirm whether the three items had been sufficiently addressed. Mr. Way asked whether all members were satisfied, and the Commission indicated agreement.

Mr. Alexander moved, Ms. Damaser seconded a recommendation to City Council to approve the the proposed WID Code Amendments and Setback and Screening Design Manual, with the following two conditions:

1) Amend the "Intent" section as follows:

(6) Research Transition (ID-6) District. The ID-6 District is intended to support economic development, fostering innovation and the advancement of cutting-edge research, technology, and employment opportunities, while providing a sensitive transition from established single-family residential neighborhoods. Uses within the ID-6 District are expected to incorporate clean production principles that minimize waste, hazardous inputs, hazardous byproducts, and stormwater discharge; and that minimize the use, storage, production, disposal, or emission of biohazard materials. Land uses are expected to be of lower intensity and scale, and should not result in adverse impacts to surrounding properties, including but not limited to environmental emissions, noise, traffic, lighting, other off-site effects, and other environmental impacts, including but not limited to impacts occurring in containment or disposal of any minimized waste, hazardous inputs, or hazardous and/or biohazard byproducts.

2) Amend the "Development Plan Applications" section as follows:

Development Plan Applications

(b) Development plan applications within the ID-6 District shall include: (1) sufficient information to demonstrate that the proposed use meets the intent of the ID-6 District set forth in § 153.037(H)(6); and (2) data, using currently acceptable method(s) of testing, that the use does not create any measurable increase of hazardous emissions to neighboring properties.

Vote: Ms. Damaser, yes; Mr. Garvin, no; Mr. Alexander, yes; Mr. Way, yes; Ms. Newell, yes; Ms. Harter, yes.

[Motion carried 5-1.]

COMMUNICATIONS

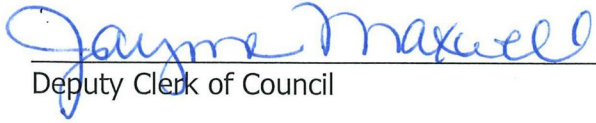
Ms. Rauch offered two brief reminders to the Commission. First, she noted that June 8 was the date of a reception for incoming and outgoing board and commission members, scheduled to begin at 5:30 PM prior to the Council meeting that evening. Second, she reminded the Commission that a joint work session related to West Bridge Street and the code audit was scheduled for June 15, and that relevant background materials including the walkability presentation prepared by Jeff Speck had been or would be distributed through OnBoard in advance of that session.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 pm.



Chair, Planning and Zoning Commission



Deputy Clerk of Council