



MEETING MINUTES

Planning & Zoning Commission

Thursday, October 1, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Alexander 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. Alexander led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Commission members present: Gary Alexander, Jamey Chinnock, Hilary Damaser, Dan Garvin, Kathy Harter. Victoria Newell arrived at 6:32 p.m.
Commission members absent: Kim Way
Staff members present: Bassem Bitar, Joe Batchelor, Zachary Hounshell, Christopher Will
Others present: Tyler Clark and Kimberly Ware, MKSK

ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING DOCUMENTS AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Garvin moved, Ms. Harter seconded, acceptance of the documents into the record and approval of the minutes of the August 20 and September 17 Regular PZC meetings and the September 1 Joint Work Session.

Vote: Ms. Harter, yes; Mr. Alexander, yes; Mr. Chinnock, yes; Ms. Damaser, yes; Mr. Garvin, yes. [Motion carried 5-0.]

Mr. Alexander explained that the Planning and Zoning Commission is an advisory board to City Council when platting and property rezoning is under consideration, with Council receiving recommendations from the Commission. In other cases, the Commission has final decision-making responsibility.

He outlined the meeting procedures: applicants present first, followed by staff analysis and recommendation, Commission questions, public comment, then Commission deliberation. No new agenda items would be introduced after 10:30 PM. Speakers were asked to use the microphone and keep comments to 3 minutes.

Anyone intending to address the Commission was sworn in by Mr. Alexander.

CASE REVIEW

Mr. Alexander announced that Case #26-045PDP, Aura Dublin, would not be heard that evening, as the applicant had requested a postponement. Members of the public present for that matter were advised they were free to leave.

Case #26-066ADMC

**ID-2 & ID-3 Text Modifications and WID Setback and Screening Design Manual
Request for non-binding feedback of text modifications to the City of Dublin Zoning Code Sections 153.047-153.042 for the ID-2, Research Flex District and ID-3, Research Assembly District, and non-binding feedback on the West Innovation District Setback and Screening Design Manual.**

Staff Presentation

Mr. Hounshell opened the staff presentation by providing context for the West Innovation District (WID), noting it is one of six special area districts identified in the City's Community Plan. He described the district's overarching goal as establishing a world-class innovation and research district to serve as an economic engine for Dublin. He noted that the WID encompasses approximately 2,200 acres, of which the ID-2 and ID-3 zoning districts represent roughly 78 percent of the land.

Mr. Hounshell explained that on July 1, City Council approved Ordinance 06-25, rezoning 370 acres in the southwest portion of the WID to ID-2, ID-3, and ID-6. Council subsequently directed staff to review and outline a strategy for near-term refinements to the ID-2 and ID-3 zoning districts, drawing on input gathered during the ID-6 process. He emphasized that the scope of the current effort is limited to modifications of existing zoning code requirements, and does not involve any rezoning of property.

Staff presented a two-pronged approach, with near-term refinements being the focus of that evening's session. These refinements fall into three categories: use permissions, use-specific standards, and setback and screening requirements as addressed in the WID Setback and Screening Design Manual. Longer-term refinements including a review of the overall district structure, development standards, and the review process were noted as being reserved for the broader zoning code update process.

Mr. Hounshell summarized stakeholder engagement that had taken place prior to the meeting. A public meeting was held with Washington Township on September 16, 2026. Feedback from township residents reflected recurring concerns, including uncertainty about the type of development that could occur adjacent to residential neighborhoods, potential traffic and environmental impacts, questions about performance standard measurement, concern about the maximum building height of 68 feet, requests for increased setbacks and mounding along public streets, and a recommendation to consider ID-6 zoning in lieu of ID-2 and ID-3. Staff also met with property owners within the WID, who expressed concerns about further reducing the developability of their properties, including potential removal of existing permitted uses, increased setbacks, and reduced building heights near Ohio University.

Mr. Hounshell outlined the proposed changes to permitted uses in the ID-2 and ID-3 districts. Certain uses were proposed for removal to better align the districts with their employment and innovation-focused intent, while core uses including manufacturing and assembly, research and development, and construction and contract services were proposed to be retained. He noted that the same approach was applied consistently across both districts.

With regard to use-specific standards, Mr. Hounshell stated that staff is proposing to apply performance standards to all manufacturing, assembly, and research and development uses with

the intent that no development activity will produce impacts beyond the property line. Additionally, staff proposed reducing the maximum building height from 68 feet to 55 feet in response to concerns expressed about the proximity of taller buildings to residential neighborhoods. Mr. Hounshell noted that 55 feet still accommodates the anticipated scale of research and development and manufacturing uses, including rooftop screening.

Setback and Screening Design Manual Presentation

Tyler Clark, MKSK, 462 S. Ludlow Street, Columbus, presented the proposed West Innovation District Setback and Screening Design Manual on behalf of staff. He noted that the manual serves as an extension of Chapter 153.040 of the Dublin Zoning Code and provides supplemental guidance for setbacks, landscape design, and implementation strategies, with all setbacks measured from future right-of-way lines of public streets within the WID.

Mr. Clark explained the principal approach of the manual: the establishment of an edge greenway network to be implemented within the required development setback. This network is designed to screen buildings, service areas, and parking from public rights-of-way while establishing a consistent, high-quality character throughout the district and supporting sustainability objectives. The core screening strategy involves the use of earthen mounds with dense, layered plantings. The mounds are to be designed in an overlapping and undulating fashion to avoid a uniform or monolithic appearance. Public-facing slopes are required at a 6-to-1 ratio, with private-side slopes generally at 3-to-1, though a retaining wall on the private side may be permitted in certain cases where additional mound height is desired within a constrained setback, provided the wall is not visible from the public side. Plantings are to consist of no-mow prairie grasses at the mound base, with a mix of deciduous and evergreen trees to ensure year-round screening, planted at specified densities per 100 linear feet with required species diversity.

Mr. Clark then described the roadway typology classifications and their associated setback requirements:

- Type A — Cosgray Road (previously adopted as part of ID-6): 200-foot setback with a 14-foot mound height requirement.
- Type B — 100-foot setback with a mound height range of 6 to 10 feet. An 8-foot mound requires approximately 90 feet of the 100-foot setback.
- Type C — 50-foot setback with a mound height of 3 to 6 feet, applied to the State Route 161 corridor and other identified streets.
- Type D — 35-foot setback with a 3-foot mound, applied to more interior roadways or areas where larger setbacks are less feasible.
- Local Streets — 35-foot setback with no mandatory mound requirement, but with a dense planting requirement consistent with what was adopted in the ID-6 district.

Mr. Clark then described the special conditions addressed in the manual, including: gateway intersections, where a higher level of design quality and materials such as Dublin stone are required; property boundary conditions, where mounds are to taper and transition naturally between adjacent properties; tree row preservation zones; waterway and rail line crossings, including crossing points along the Signature Trail; overhead transmission line easements requiring coordination with the applicable utility company; entry drives; existing farmsteads; and the incorporation of previously adopted ID-6 requirements for continuity.

Mr. Hounshell closed the staff presentation by outlining the anticipated schedule. The Commission's non-binding feedback that evening was to inform a recommendation to City Council, with the next

step being the October 15 Planning Commission meeting, followed by two Council hearings before year-end.

Commission Questions

Mr. Garvin asked whether the graphics depicting retaining walls also showed the denser plantings that would be expected on the private side in those conditions. Mr. Clark confirmed that the screening intent and opacity requirements remain the same regardless of whether a retaining wall is used.

Mr. Garvin also asked whether the removal of transit stations from the permitted use list was related to a transit station previously discussed in connection with the MORPC plan. Mr. Hounshell clarified that any such transit station would be in a different zoning district and outside the scope of the current districts under consideration.

Mr. Chinnock asked whether the residents and community members who had participated in the stakeholder meeting had seen the proposed updates before that evening. Mr. Hounshell confirmed that all proposed changes except the building height reduction had been shared at the time of the September 16 meeting. Mr. Chinnock asked about the origin of the 68-foot height standard, and Mr. Hounshell explained it was established approximately 15 to 20 years ago in anticipation of office buildings along State Route 33. He indicated that reducing the height to 55 feet was appropriate for the current land use intent, and confirmed that the 55-foot limit would be measured to the top of any rooftop screening.

Mr. Chinnock raised the question of whether setbacks along which mounding accounts for up to 90 feet of space could be made more purposeful or usable. For example, through the incorporation of meandering pedestrian paths or leisure trails. Mr. Clark confirmed that the manual does retain a provision allowing trails and paths to meander through the setback area, consistent with what was adopted for ID-6. Mr. Hounshell added that the private side of the mound may also accommodate stormwater management, which counts favorably toward lot coverage calculations and thus expands the net developable area on a site.

Ms. Harter expressed support for the community engagement that had occurred throughout the process and noted that additional targeted meetings with residents addressing specific questions, including the workings of code enforcement, could be beneficial. She asked about engagement metrics for the City's project website, which Mr. Hounshell indicated he did not have access to. Ms. Harter asked whether any consideration had been given to regulating the appearance of rooftops visible from nearby two-story residences, including through green roofs or controlled color palettes. Mr. Hounshell noted that existing code already requires mechanical equipment to be screened by parapets or screening walls, and that building colors must be muted tones. He also noted that green roofs are permitted but not currently required. He further indicated that the proposed mounding and planting, along with the existing 150-foot buffer required between development and residential property lines, would provide substantial vegetative separation.

Ms. Damaser asked why high schools were removed from the permitted use list while educational facilities and daycares remained. Mr. Hounshell explained that educational facilities in this context refer to training or touring functions associated with office or research environments, while a high school is inconsistent with the district's character. Daycare was re-added based on feedback from the development community, as it provides an amenity for employees working within the district.

Mr. Alexander asked about what uses the Washington Township residents had indicated they would prefer to see modified or removed. Mr. Hounshell explained that the primary feedback from those residents was a preference to make manufacturing, assembly, research and development, and construction and contract services conditional uses rather than permitted uses, and that some expressed a preference for removing them entirely given their proximity to residential areas.

Mr. Alexander noted that several of the uses proposed for removal were ones that could activate the area after business hours, providing natural surveillance and contributing to the mixed-use character that the City has generally sought to encourage. Mr. Hounshell acknowledged this tension, explaining that the intent is to concentrate mixed-use activity in specific nodes within the WID including the area adjacent to Ohio University and the mixed-use node near Shier Rings and Cosgray roads while positioning the ID-2 and ID-3 areas as primarily employment-driven.

Mr. Alexander raised questions about what drives the setback requirements for roads internal to the district, where development on both sides of a street may be of the same or similar use type. He observed that large setbacks in such instances may not provide meaningful buffering benefit and could place a significant development burden on smaller parcels, particularly along Houchard Road. He suggested that a site-specific exhibit showing proposed setbacks overlaid on existing parcel boundaries and structures would be informative. Mr. Clark acknowledged this concern and presented a large-format map showing the setback impact along the northern portion of Houchard Road south of State Route 161, noting that some smaller parcels in the southern portion of that corridor would need to be combined to meet the district's minimum lot size for development.

Mr. Alexander also asked whether certain special conditions like the entry drive provisions would require a stone retaining wall, and was advised that stone retaining walls are required only for the Cosgray Road segment adopted under ID-6. Elsewhere in the district, entry drives are addressed through offsetting and overlapping mound configurations that prevent a direct view corridor into the site without requiring a retaining wall.

Public Comment

Sandy McIntosh, 5792 Trafogger Lane, Dublin, addressed the Commission. She stated that the proposed amendments do not adequately reflect Council's direction to refine the code based on resident feedback and lessons learned from the ID-6 process, particularly with respect to parcels adjacent to residential areas. She identified several items she considered unaddressed, including: the continued permission of construction and contract services, manufacturing and assembly, warehousing, and distribution; the absence of definitions for phrases such as utilities — essential services and clean manufacturing; the permissibility of electrical substations in ID-3; and the absence of explicit prohibitions on smokestacks, smelting, natural gas turbines, fuel cells, and biosafety level 3 and 4 operations. She further noted that certain construction and contract services and research and development activities are not required to be conducted entirely indoors, and that warehousing, wholesaling, and distribution uses could theoretically permit large-scale logistics facilities as standalone uses. Ms. McIntosh stated that the setback and screening requirements in the current ID-2 proposal are less protective of neighboring residential areas than those adopted in ID-6, despite the uses in ID-2 being of greater intensity. She argued that the proposed performance standards lack a clear mechanism for measurement and enforcement, citing the absence of a previously referenced staff checklist confirmed through a public records request. She urged the Commission to require that development applications in these districts come before the Commission rather than proceeding exclusively through administrative review, and to consider making more intensive uses conditional rather than permitted by right. She closed by referencing recent public records indicating that a company with advanced manufacturing experience had

expressed interest in ID-3 zoned sites, and that a letter of intent was reportedly in draft form, suggesting that the Commission's feedback has immediate and concrete implications.

Amy Swank, 5945 Vandelier Place, Dublin, stated that she had submitted written comments containing four requests she described as reasonable and consistent with Council's direction. She expressed frustration that the September 16 meeting with Washington Township did not constitute a genuine dialogue and characterized it as a one-way presentation. She echoed Ms. McIntosh's concern about the letter of intent, suggesting the accelerated timeline for this process may be driven by a prospective development. She also noted that the stated goal — that development should produce no impact beyond the property line — should be reflected in more explicit air quality restrictions, including on incinerators, smelting, and smokestacks. Ms. Swank provided context on the history of the rezoning process, noting that the March 2026 staff memo to Council had recommended a more phased approach and that the decision to rezone the entirety of the southwestern WID in a single action was made at the direction of one member of Council without broader public input or additional Commission review. She expressed concern that this limited the Commission's ability to weigh in meaningfully at critical decision points.

Richard Weeks, 5826 Houchard Road, Dublin, spoke on behalf of his neighbor, Mr. Todd Hemmert, who was unable to attend due to a prior business commitment. He raised three principal concerns: the continued discrepancy between the 55-foot height limit proposed for ID-2 and ID-3 and the 45-foot limit that applies to ID-6, noting that Houchard Road residents are equally deserving of protection; the absence of changes to electrical distribution and related infrastructure permissions; and the question of how the city intends to protect the health, safety, and quality of life of Houchard Road residents under this proposal. Mr. Weeks also questioned why the ID-6 zoning framework was not extended to properties adjacent to Houchard Road, stating that a more targeted application of ID-6 around that corridor could provide additional protection without requiring the reclassification of the entire district. He acknowledged that Houchard Road residents are not currently within Dublin's municipal boundaries but noted that they participate in Dublin's civic processes and hold a Dublin mailing address.

Commission Discussion

Mr. Garvin expressed general agreement with the performance standard language but noted the need for a reliable mechanism to measure and verify compliance, particularly with respect to noise, vibration, and electromagnetic interference. He asked whether any of the permitted uses would inherently be unable to meet the standard of no impact beyond the property line, particularly those involving smokestacks, smelting, or similar functions that could produce visible emissions or odors. Mr. Hounshell explained that code enforcement has historically addressed such concerns after development, working with property owners as issues arise, and that the ID-6 code language does explicitly prohibit smokestacks, smelting, and similar functions through a statement of similar uses and a requirement that applicants demonstrate they will not create a nuisance to adjacent properties.

Mr. Bitar clarified that the zoning code is one component of a multi-layered permitting process and that other regulatory agencies including those responsible for building code compliance, clean air requirements, and public health are also involved in reviewing certain types of development. He noted that it is not feasible for zoning code language to anticipate and regulate every conceivable scenario, and that much of what the residents described falls under the jurisdiction of state and other regulatory bodies.

Mr. Garvin suggested that more intensive uses should be subject to additional scrutiny and that, to the extent practicable, such uses should be located further away from areas outside the ID districts — particularly residential uses — rather than at the perimeter of the district.

Ms. Harter reiterated her support for increasing direct community engagement and suggested that a structured educational component about code enforcement processes could be valuable for residents. She expressed support for the reductions in building height and for the landscaping standards, including the use of native grasses and larger stones. She also suggested that the fitness and exercise uses that were proposed for removal be reconsidered, given their potential to activate the district at non-business hours.

Mr. Chinnock expressed general appreciation for the work done and acknowledged that community feedback has been instrumental in driving meaningful improvements, including the dedication of substantial greenway setback space. He raised a concern about the cumulative effect of very large setbacks (particularly the 100-foot setbacks) on the ability to attract a diverse range of tenants and uses. He noted that imposing such requirements on both sides of an interior district street could inadvertently consolidate development potential to only very large single-user sites, and asked the Commission to consider whether there is a way to make setback areas more purposeful and usable where appropriate.

Ms. Newell stated she had no strong objection to the proposed setbacks, noting that 200-foot setbacks have been applied elsewhere in Dublin, such as along Post Road, and that while they are constraining, they provide meaningful protection and contribute to an attractive district character. She noted that the screening approach proposed in the manual is sensitive and well-considered. She agreed with Mr. Chinnock that uses such as manufacturing and assembly and those capable of generating the most concern for adjacent residents are likely where additional restrictions or specificity in the code would be most appropriate, while many of the other listed service uses are not significantly different from what already exists adjacent to residential areas elsewhere in the city.

Ms. Damaser noted her primary concern was the Houchard Road corridor, given the small lot sizes and the proximity of existing residences to potential industrial development. She expressed that if existing code protections for residential adjacency are already in place and will be applied, she would be satisfied, but emphasized that additional scrutiny of this particular corridor was warranted.

Mr. Alexander noted that setbacks within the WID interior — where the same or similar use type may exist on both sides of a street — may not warrant the same depth of setback as those facing externally toward residential or incompatible uses. He reiterated his concern about the impact of 100-foot setbacks on smaller parcels, particularly those along Houchard Road.

Mr. Hounshell, in response to a Commission question about the difference in building height between the ID-2 and ID-3 proposal at 55 feet and the ID-6 standard at 45 feet, explained that the 45-foot limit in ID-6 was established specifically because of the direct adjacency of that district to the Ballentrae neighborhood and Houchard Road residences. The ID-2 and ID-3 districts encompass a much broader area, much of which is not adjacent to residential uses, and several existing buildings within ID-3 have already been constructed to heights approaching or exceeding 45 feet. The 55-foot standard was therefore determined to be an appropriate balance.

Mr. Chinnock suggested that the current proposed use list may benefit from some additional clarity or delineation without becoming so prescriptive as to unduly restrict development. Ms. Damaser, speaking from her perspective as an attorney, echoed the concern raised during public comment about undefined terms, and indicated a preference for clear definitions accompanying any use that appears in the code.

Mr. Alexander summarized that the performance standard language addressing impacts beyond the property line should be more prominently integrated — potentially as an antecedent clause — and that the Commission generally supports the direction of the proposed amendments while recommending further definition of terms, additional specificity for more intensive uses, and continued attention to the Houchard Road corridor.

With respect to the setback and screening design manual, Mr. Hounshell sought clarification from the Commission as to whether the proposed setbacks — particularly the 100-foot typology — were acceptable, noting that any reduction in setback depth would correspondingly reduce mound height and screening effectiveness. Ms. Newell and Ms. Harter expressed support for retaining the proposed setbacks. Mr. Alexander and Mr. Chinnock expressed residual concern about the impact of 100-foot setbacks on smaller parcels within the interior of the district. No consensus was reached on this point, and Mr. Hounshell indicated the feedback would be incorporated into materials for the October 15 meeting.

Mr. Will clarified for the record that the 200-foot setback is limited exclusively to the Cosgray Road frontage that was addressed as part of the ID-6 process, and that no other portion of the WID is proposed to carry that requirement. The 100-foot setback is largely concentrated west of Cosgray Road in areas designated for heavier ID-2 and ID-3 uses. Properties east of Cosgray Road largely align with existing setback standards of 30 to 50 feet.

Case #26-045PDP

Aura Dublin

Request for review and approval of a Preliminary Development Plan for a new multi-tenant building and site improvements. The approximately 3.65-acre site is zoned BSD-C and is located at 6285 Sawmill Road.

Ms. Newell moved, Mr. Garvin seconded postponed of Case #26-045PDP to the next available meeting.

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

[Motion carried 6-0.]

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Bitar noted that staff had no communications and reminded the Commission that the next meeting is scheduled for October 15, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 pm.



Vice Chair, Planning and Zoning Commission



Deputy Clerk of Council