

**PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF WILLOUGHBY
MAY 28, 2026
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

PRESENT: J. Cook; K. Kary; Ben Capelle; M. Wildermuth; S. Norris, Chairman
ABSENT: None
OTHERS: Mike Lucas, Law Director; Vicki Grinstead, Secretary; Tim Lannon, City Engineer;
Darryl Keller, Chief Bldg. & Zoning Official

Chairman Norris called the regular in-person meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

MINUTES

Regular Meeting Minutes

May 14, 2026

Mr. Capelle moved to approve the Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes for May 14, 2026 as submitted and Mr. Cook seconded.

ROLL CALL: Yeas: Ben Capelle; K. Kary; M. Wildermuth; J. Cook; S. Norris, Chairman
 Absent: None
 Nays: None

Motion Carried: APPROVED

Public Hearing Meeting Minutes

May 14, 2026

Mr. Wildermuth moved to approve the Planning Commission Public Hearing Meeting Minutes for May 14, 2026 as submitted and Mr. Capelle seconded.

ROLL CALL: Yeas: K. Kary; M. Wildermuth; J. Cook; Ben Capelle; S. Norris, Chairman
 Absent: None
 Nays: None

Motion Carried: APPROVED

OLD BUSINESS

The Shankland Reserves
Shankland/PPN#27A0150000230 & 240
(Rep.- Greg Sommers, Sommers Development Group)

**Major Subdivision/Final Plat &
Improvement Plans for 16 townhomes**

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Mr. Capelle moved to untable the Major Subdivision/Final Plat & Improvement Plans for 16 townhomes, deemed The Shankland Reserves located on Shankland Rd./ PPN#27A0150000230 & 240, Willoughby, OH 44094 and Mr. Cook seconded.

ROLL CALL: Yeas: M. Wildermuth; J. Cook; Ben Capelle; K. Kary; S. Norris, Chairman
 Absent: None
 Nays: None

Motion Carried: UNTABLED

Mr. Sommers, 10585 Somerset Dr., Chardon, OH 44024 is representing the Major Subdivision/Final Plat & Improvement Plans for 16 townhomes, deemed The Shankland Reserves located on Shankland Rd./ PPN#27A0150000230 & 240.

Mr. Sommers said they are here this evening for the Final Plat approval for the Shankland Reserve development. They confirmed they have now completed the property combination with the school district, meaning they possess the required property. Work on the project is already underway, including utility installation, and they've coordinated with the Law Department to resolve any remaining open items and respectfully ask for approval for the final plat.

Chairman Norris asked whether there were any significant changes to the development plan, and Mr. Sommers responded that there were no major changes. The only updates were minor clerical corrections based on county comments, which were addressed in coordination with the city's Law Department and Mr. Lannon.

Mr. Lucas added that part of the project involves a partial vacation of an easement, which will be brought forward at the next City Council meeting. This is because part of the existing easement may run beneath planned housing. Mr. Sommers agreed with that understanding and noted there was some uncertainty regarding a storm sewer alignment. They discussed potentially vacating the easement and rerouting the storm sewer, and he deferred to the Law Department on how to proceed. Mr. Lucas confirmed that the matter will be handled through formal legislation.

Mr. Keller, Mr. Lannon and Mr. Lucas had no concerns.

Mr. Sommers added they have partnered with George Davis of Probuilt Homes to construct these townhomes.

Mr. Wildermuth moved to approve the Major Subdivision/Final Plat & Improvement Plans for 16 townhomes for the Sommers Development Group deemed The Shankland Reserves, Shankland Rd./ PPN#27A0150000230 & 240, Willoughby, OH 44094 as submitted and Mr. Cook seconded.

ROLL CALL: Yeas: J. Cook; Ben Capelle; K. Kary; M. Wildermuth; S. Norris, Chairman
 Absent: None
 Nays: None

Motion Carried: APPROVED

This item will remain tabled per the applicant's request

Lowe's
36300 Euclid Ave.
(Rep.- Ben Reale, Lowes)

Conditional Use Permit to allow storage of bagged product, a temporary customer quick load zone, permanent lumber storage, a permanent outdoor sales display, and a permanent appliance trailer

NEW BUSINESS

Double D's Honkytonk & Smokehouse
3941 Erie St.
(Rep.- Sarah Dykstra, Owner)

Conditional Use Permit for outdoor dining

Ms. Dykstra, Owner of Double D's Honkytonk & Smokehouse, 3941 Erie St., Willoughby, OH 44094 is representing the Conditional Use Permit for outdoor dining.

Ms. Dykstra explained that the restaurant already has an existing outdoor patio and they would like to open it for use as part of their operations. The proposed hours on their application are: Sunday and Tuesday–Thursday from 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., and Friday–Saturday from noon to 1:00 a.m., with Mondays closed.

Chairman Norris asked whether there would be music on the patio. Ms. Dykstra said any music would be limited—only occasional acoustic music on Saturday afternoons, and it would not continue late into the night (e.g. 1:00 a.m.). She also noted they would have piped-in background music that could be turned off and controlled separately from the rest of the building.

Chairman Norris responded by setting a standard consistent with other downtown businesses: both piped-in and live acoustic music must remain at conversational levels and are only permitted between noon and 10:00 p.m., seven days a week. He also referenced the Mayor's comments that no live bands would be allowed on a second-floor patio.

Chairman Norris asked about patio lighting, and Ms. Dykstra said it would be string lights, as previously used, plus a few lanterns, all contained to the parcel. He also asked about trash containers, and Ms. Dykstra said they would be inside the doors, not on the patio.

Mr. Kary suggested adding a condition that, if indoor live music exceeds conversational level, all patio doors shall remain closed. He noted this condition has been applied to other restaurant/bars in the area because open windows and doors can allow music to spill out onto the street. Chairman Norris stated that live acoustical music is permitted, and that the patio doors would only need to remain closed if there is a live band or DJ playing loud music indoors above conversational level.

Mr. Wildermuth asked about the patio door, and it was determined to be a swinging door. Ms. Dykstra said the upstairs is open for events and dancing, with an occupant load of 150. Mr. Keller said his calculation showed they were ten over based on table layouts, but because there are no tables on the second floor, he had no issue and said

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the rest of the area complies. Chairman Norris asked about the indoor seating count, and Ms. Dykstra said approximately 328, allowing about 90 outdoor seats but wishes to only have 61.

Chairman Norris stated that, in the downtown area, the commission adds an expiration or termination date of one year from the date of approval. This allows any issues that arise to be addressed at the time of renewal. If no issues are identified when the applicant returns before the commission, this condition will be removed.

Mr. Capelle moved to approve the Conditional Use Permit for Double D's Honkytonk & Smokehouse, 3941 Erie St., Willoughby, OH 44094 as submitted but with the following conditions: 1) Acoustical live and piped in music on outdoor patio hours: Monday-Sunday, Noon-10:00 p.m., 7 days a week 2) No outside trash collection, 3) If indoor live music/DJ is above conversational level all patio doors shall remain closed, 4) This CUP terminates one year from approval date of this CUP (expires May 28, 2027) and Mr. Cook seconded.

ROLL CALL: Yeas: Ben Capelle; K. Kary; M. Wildermuth; J. Cook; S. Norris, Chairman
 Absent: None
 Nays: None

Motion Carried: APPROVED

CRAVE Golf DTW
37930 Second St.
(Rep.- Craig Rowe, Rowe Mgmt. Group Inc.)

**Conditional Use Permit for a sports
facility in a downtown business district**

Mr. Rowe of Rowe Management Group Inc. owner of CRAVE Golf DTW, 37930 Second St., Willoughby, OH 44094 is representing the Conditional Use Permit for a sports facility in a downtown business district.

Chairman Norris inquired about Mr. Rowe's proposed hours of operation. Mr. Rowe stated the facility will operate from 5:00 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week. He also noted that no outdoor music will be permitted.

The site will provide 10 parking spaces, with an expected occupancy of approximately 1-3 vehicles at any given time. The facility will be for exclusive use by members and their guests, and members will schedule their time through an online reservation system.

Mr. Wildermuth commented that he was pleased with the building's design.

Chairman Norris asked how members would be granted access to the building. Mr. Rowe explained that members would enter using a PIN code at the rear entrance. Each member's PIN code would be activated only during their reserved booking time. He further stated that no employees would be present on-site during operating hours and that outdoor video cameras would monitor individuals entering and exiting the building. Chairman Norris then asked how many golf bays the business would have, and Mr. Rowe replied that there would be two bays located in the rear of the building. Mr. Rowe stated that the maximum occupancy would be approximately 15 to 20 people at any given time and that this limitation would be specified in the membership agreement.

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Chairman Norris asked whether private parties would be permitted. Mr. Rowe stated that he anticipates hosting private parties, but members would be vetted. He explained that the club is seeking professionals, local business owners, and families as members. Mr. Rowe noted that he belongs to the CRAVE Golf facility near the News-Herald and described it as quiet and private, making it a suitable place to take clients and conduct business. He added that any member who becomes a problem would have their membership revoked and be removed from the facility.

Chairman Norris asked about the proposed cigar lounge. Mr. Rowe responded that the cigar lounge had been removed from the plans and provided the Commission with a revised building layout, which had been modified within the previous month and entered into the record. (May 28, 2026, as Exhibit "A").

The building contains approximately 3,700 square feet. While the space could accommodate approximately 40 people, Mr. Rowe stated that he intends to limit occupancy to significantly fewer than that, proposing a maximum of 15 to 20 patrons. Mr. Wildermuth noted that the calculated occupant load for the building is 74 persons, meaning Mr. Rowe's proposed limit is well below the allowable capacity. Mr. Rowe confirmed that he would like to cap occupancy at no more than 20 people.

Mr. Kary asked whether any instruction would take place at the facility. Mr. Rowe responded that it would not, explaining that if a professional instructor brought clients to the facility, it would constitute operating a business within a business. However, if a member independently hired an instructor, that arrangement would be permitted and is addressed in the membership agreement.

Mr. Rowe also stated that members will be allowed to bring food and beverages into the facility. Members will be responsible for properly disposing of their trash upon departure and may use the dumpster located behind the building. The dumpster is not currently enclosed, but there are plans to install fencing around it in the future.

Mr. Capelle moved to approve the Conditional Use Permit for CRAVE Golf DTW, 37930 Second St., Willoughby, OH 44094 as submitted but with the following conditions: 1) Hours of operation: 7 days a week, 5:00 a.m. until midnight, 2) Maximum occupancy allowed in building at any time is 20 people, 3) The dumpster must be enclosed/fenced in, 4) This CUP terminates one year from the approval date (expires May 28, 2027) and Mr. Cook seconded.

ROLL CALL: Yeas: K. Kary; M. Wildermuth; J. Cook; Ben Capelle; S. Norris, Chairman
 Absent: None
 Nays: None

Motion Carried: APPROVED

Planning Commission
(Mike Lucas, Law Dept.)

**Text Amend –
C.O. 1131.03
Schedule of Permitted Uses
Remove Two-family dwellings as
Permitted Use**

**Text Amend –
C.O. 1131.05
Lot Area and Width Regulation
Remove Two Family Dwellings**

**Text Amend –
C. O. 1131.06
Yard Regulations
Remove Two Family Dwellings**

**Text Amend –
C.O. 1131.07
Dwelling Unit Area Requirements
Remove Two Family Dwellings**

**Text Amend –
C.O. 1131.10
Accessory Buildings and Uses
Remove Two Family Dwellings**

Mr. Lucas, representing the Willoughby Law Department, explained the proposed text amendments and noted that the ordinances address two separate subject matters.

Regarding C.O. 1131, he provided background on the proposed modifications, including the elimination of two-family dwellings as a permitted use in the R-50 District. This issue arose during a series of discussions concerning the appropriateness of allowing two-family dwellings in that district. Although the use has been permitted under the zoning code since 1997, concerns were raised about space constraints and whether accommodating two families was suitable for the character of the R-50 District.

Ms. Sievers expressed support for removing two-family dwellings from the R-50 District, and the general consensus among those involved in the discussions was that the change was appropriate.

Mr. Lucas also addressed concerns regarding sign regulations. He explained that the permitted square footage for signs previously varied by district; however, the proposed amendment would establish consistent square footage requirements across all districts.

Chairman Norris asked if two-family dwellings are permitted in other districts and Mr. Keller noted they are permitted in the multi-family district and possibly the Lakeshore Gateway district.

Mr. Kary said that his concern is that someone could purchase three single-family homes and replace them with three duplexes on these small lots. This would increase the number of households from three to six, potentially changing the character of the neighborhood.

Chairman Norris stated that, for a new homebuyer, shared housing is a more affordable option than a single-family home. Mr. Lucas noted that shared housing is still permitted in several other districts. Mr. Wildermuth stated that it would be challenging to construct a duplex on an existing R-50 lot. Mr. Capelle agreed with Chairman Norris,

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noting that eliminating this option could also eliminate "mother-in-law" suites, which have historically been common throughout the United States.

Mr. Lucas stated that at a previous meeting, when duplexes were proposed, many residents expressed strong concerns that such development would adversely affect the character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Chairman Norris stated that duplexes could provide a more affordable housing option, attract additional residents to the north end, add newer housing, and potentially increase the value of existing homes.

Mr. Kary expressed concern that allowing duplexes could create a domino effect, resulting in the loss of existing homes and long-standing lakefront improvements.

Mr. Keller noted that an individual who builds a duplex would own the entire structure and could rent out the units; however, the property could not be divided into separate parcels. Mr. Lucas agreed, adding that a duplex is a two-family dwelling located on a single lot.

Mr. Capelle stated that he was concerned the discussion was being driven by reactions to a specific project, despite there being many factors involved that were unrelated to zoning. He emphasized the importance of clarifying that distinction.

Mr. Wildermuth moved to approve and recommend the text amendment changes to C.O. 1131.03, 1131.05, 1131.06, 1131.07 and 1131.10 as submitted to City Council and Mr. Kary seconded.

ROLL CALL: Yeas: M. Wildermuth; J. Cook; K. Kary
 Absent: None
 Nays: Ben Capelle; S. Norris, Chairman

Motion Carried: APPROVED

Planning Commission
(Mike Lucas, Law Dept.)

**Text Amend –
C.O. 1163.08
Signs During Elections
Regulations for Political Signs**

Mr. Lucas of the Willoughby Law department is representing these text amendment changes.

Mr. Lucas stated that this text amendment deals exclusively with political signs. He explained that there were conflicts between the City's internal code and Ohio law. Over the years, the City received numerous complaints from residents regarding political signs that remained in place long after elections had ended.

He noted that the City's code previously imposed time limits on when political signs could be erected and when they had to be removed. However, Ohio law does not permit such restrictions because they may violate First

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Amendment protections. He further stated that both state and federal court decisions have found that regulating political signs based on their timing can constitute an unlawful restriction on free speech.

Mr. Lucas explained that the City may require the removal of political signs if they become tattered or otherwise constitute a nuisance, as this addresses the condition of the sign rather than its content. In his opinion, the amendment should be approved because it brings the City's regulations into compliance with applicable law.

Mr. Capelle moved to approve and recommend the text amendment changes to C.O. 1163.08 Signs During Elections, Regulations for Political Signs as submitted to City Council and Mr. Wildermuth seconded.

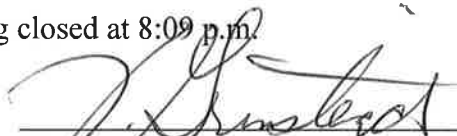
Chairman Norris thanked Mr. Lucas for his years of service to the Planning Commission and wished him well in his retirement.

ROLL CALL: Yeas: J. Cook; Ben Capelle; K. Kary; M. Wildermuth; S. Norris, Chairman
 Absent: None
 Nays: None

Motion Carried: APPROVED

There being no further business the regular meeting closed at 8:09 p.m.


Steve Norris, Chairman


Vicki Grinstead, Secretary