



Village of South Russell

5205 Chillicothe Road
South Russell, Ohio 44022
440-338-6700

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

October 16, 2025, at 7:00 pm

Members Present: Elisa Budoff, Chair, Mark Porter, Phyllis Marino, Mayor Bill Koons, Greg Bruhn

Other Officials: Todd Hicks, Solicitor; Dave Hocesvar, Building Official; Ruth Griswold, Board Secretary

Visitors: Jason Piazza, 530 Euclid Ave #44, Cleveland; Christopher Woofert, 400 East Washington Street; Joey Nero, 2950 Chagrin Blvd, Pepper Pike; Julia Licastro, 3624 W 134th St, Cleveland; Jason Beudert, 8016 Long Forest Drive; Sarah Krivanka, 1432 East 40th Street, Cleveland; Derek Hoch, 1370 Bell Road; Sam Costuic, 9586 Stafford Rd, Chagrin Falls; Heather Scott, 222 S Main Street, Chagrin Falls; Chris Smith, 200 Fox Lane; Peter Cary, 6075 Chagrin River Rd, Bentleyville; Rob & Colleen Truax, 477 Industrial Pkwy, Suite A; James Nace, 400 East Washington Street; Ruth Cavanagh, 15 Paw Paw Lake Drive; Ed Gottschalk, 200 Industrial Parkway.

Ms. Budoff called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:12 pm.

Ruth Griswold conducted roll call.

Ms. Budoff said there are six agenda items that they will be going through, and as she has mentioned before, traditionally it is not Planning Commission's obligation to open the regular meeting for questions, however, anyone who does want to comment will be allowed five minutes to do so. Keep in mind, all comments or questions must be related specifically to the items on the agenda.

Ms. Budoff said the first item is to approve the minutes from the Planning Commission meeting on September 11, 2025. Ms. Marino motioned to approve. Mr. Porter seconded. On roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 1

PC Case #25-06: Applicant Mr. Sam Costuic of Signarama, on behalf of Gurney Elementary School, is seeking approval to relocate the existing sign at **1155 Bell Road**, to its former location.

Ms. Budoff asked Mr. Costuic if the sign was not on school property right now. Mr. Costuic said no, it is on the adjacent lot. He said it has better visibility where it is now, but they had overlooked the fact that it was not on school property.

Ms. Budoff asked board members for any comments. Mr. Bruhn asked if there is a setback required. Mr. Hocevar said yes, and having the sign moved back to its previous location complies with code.

Mayor Koons made a motion to approve. Ms. Budoff seconded. On roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Budoff thanked the applicants for coming.

Agenda Item 2

PC Case #25-07: Applicant Mr. Jason Piazza of Hangry Brands is seeking approval to open a restaurant, “Steak” at **504 East Washington Street**. The restaurant signage and a fence enclosure for equipment are included in the packet for approval.

Sarah Krivanka of Studio Krivan in Cleveland provided an overview of the site plan. She said the parking plan is similar to what it was, expanded slightly in the hatched areas. The fence will provide screening for the existing HVAC equipment, and the signage for Steak will be in the same location as the previous tenant’s sign. There is a ground landscape surround that they will maintain and have the tenant logo there, and a small logo on the building. Ms. Krivanka said there are a variety of exterior modifications, although there are no additions, and the patio is not being touched. There exists a variety of orientations and conditions of wood siding, and they are proposing horizontal ship lap siding in a rich color, the center color will be accented by charred wood, and a medium tone added with the glazing and accent panels.

Ms. Krivanka said the sign above the front door will have the Steak logo, and both signs are internally illuminated push-through construction with a black surround. The existing landscape bed will hold their second sign and will have their iconic branding tile surrounding what is currently timbers. They will have landscaping in the bed.

Ms. Budoff asked if all the restaurants have the same sign. Mr. Piazza said yes. Mr. Bruhn asked if the sign would be illuminated in any way. Mr. Piazza said yes, there is a thin neon that goes around all the lettering and on the inside of it. He said they use a local company called Ruff Neon who does all their signs for all their different concepts.

Mayor Koons said as mayor, he would like to see the sign say South Russell instead of Chagrin Falls, but he understands the draw that Chagrin Falls brings. He thinks they will be successful and swamped with business and parking will become an issue. He likes their attitude about working with the neighboring businesses who all know the parking situation. Mayor Koons said they are coming into a good atmosphere that he feels Dave Hocevar has established throughout the years. Mayor Koons welcomed them to the Village.

Mr. Porter said a frequent concern is parking, but they apparently have solved that issue by renting spaces from St. Joan’s next door. He said it looks like you are renting 15 spaces in addition to the spaces on your lot. Mr. Piazza said that is correct. Mr. Porter asked Mr. Hocevar if that would be sufficient, per the code, for parking. Mr. Hocevar said yes, it is. Ms. Budoff asked if those spaces would be utilized for valet parking. Mr. Piazza said yes, they will use the same valet company that they use for their Tremont location, as well as a local valet

service that they have established a relationship with. Ms. Budoff said she noticed the parking agreement is from 4:00 pm to midnight, and she's just curious because St. Joan's has a 4:30 pm mass on Saturdays and asked if that was addressed. Mr. Piazza said they did discuss this and there will be a front section marked off that will not impact any of St. Joan's services, but if it ever becomes an issue, they will readdress it. They have also reached out and introduced themselves to all their neighbors and explained what they are trying to achieve. He said if down the road, they realize they could use more parking, those relationships would already have been established. Ms. Budoff said she thinks it's wonderful and she loves to see that you are all cooperating; it's a good community effort. Mr. Piazza said they love that and want to be a part of the community. Mr. Beudert said it is also important to note that each of their restaurants has an owner/operator, they do not have managers running their restaurants.

Mr. Porter asked if all patrons would have to use valet or could they self-park. Mr. Piazza said there will be spaces for people to park, but their valet usually parks everyone. That is how they do it in Tremont. Mr. Beudert said they prefer valet for their patrons because it's part of the elevated experience, and most people prefer it as well. He said it is important to them to manage traffic, and he agrees with Mayor Koons that they will be busy, and they want to ensure that traffic flows right and people are safe. Especially with inclement weather, it is imperative to provide people with the convenience of getting in and out easily.

Mr. Porter asked Mr. Hocesvar if the submission would have to appear before the Architectural Review Board. Mr. Hocesvar said yes and added that neon signs are not permitted in the Village, so that must be addressed. Mr. Piazza said they are actually made with push-through LED rather than neon. Mr. Beudert said ideally they love the neon, and when it's done right it makes a difference. Mr. Piazza told the board to please feel free to reach out to him for any reason.

Ms. Budoff asked for any comments from guests. There were none.

Ms. Marino made a motion to approve. Mr. Porter seconded. On roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Budoff thanked the applicants and welcomed them to the Village. Mr. Porter asked when they plan on opening. Mr. Beudert said since they are dealing with a lot of construction related issues, they are hoping to open mid-year at the latest.

Agenda Item 3

PC Case #25-10: Applicant Ms. Heather Scott of Fur, LLC, is seeking to open a dog grooming business at the property located at **300 Industrial Parkway, Unit J**, owned by Mr. Ed Gottschalk.

Ms. Scott said her current salon is on the lower level of her home on South Main Street in Chagrin Falls. She opened her business on November 11, 2024, and began doing dog-grooming part-time. She also works as a paralegal. Her dog-grooming business really took off, and she currently has over 300 clients. Ms. Scott said she listened to people in the area that are not having good experiences with their dogs getting groomed. Their concerns are that their pets are terrified of going, the wait time, the length of time their dogs are kept, and the end results are not always what they expected. Ms. Scott explained to them that many grooming facilities have an "assembly line" type of structure. She said she has never done things that way, nor will she. Her concept is

basically like a salon: one dog per groomer each time, not a lot of dogs, barking, or chaos. There are no cages, and the pets do not have any crazy traumatic experiences.

Ms. Scott said she believes this concept is really important to people, which is why she is so popular with very little marketing needed. She has hired two new groomers to help handle the response. When Mr. Gottschalk showed her the tenant space, she knew it would be perfect for her business. She has been hugely successful and she's looking forward to growing and expanding.

Ms. Budoff said one of her dogs jumps back in the car when he realizes they are at the groomer, so she understands. She said many groomers are not taking any new clients. Ms. Scott said some groomers also do not take large dogs, but she does. Ms. Budoff asked if there was a large dog and a tiny dog there at the same time, would they ever cross paths. Ms. Scott said no, she will have partitions. She is currently working with an architect, and she will design the space so there will not be too much interaction at all. She realizes those interactions could cause anxiety.

Mayor Koons asked if people would drop off their dog and leave. Ms. Scott said typically the clients leave, but they are welcome to stay for all or part of the grooming. Mayor Koons said his concern is parking if all the clients do stay. Ms. Scott said most of her clients do not stay. Mr. Porter asked if there would be generally 6 people including herself at the facility. Ms. Scott said yes. Mr. Porter asked if she had been assigned parking in the lease. Mr. Gottschalk said they do not provide assigned parking for their tenants due to the way the buildings are laid out. Ms. Scott added that most of the time her employees will not all be there at the same time, some are part-time employees. Mayor Koons asked about her hours of operation. Ms. Scott said her hours are Monday through Saturday, 8:00 am-6:00 pm.

Ms. Budoff asked when she was hoping to be open. Ms. Scott said as soon as she is approved, and the space is finished being prepared. Mr. Bruhn asked for clarification on the site plan. Discussion followed.

Ms. Budoff asked if there were any other comments or questions. There were none.

Mr. Porter made a motion to approve. Ms. Marino seconded. On roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Board members welcomed Ms. Scott to the Village and thanked her for coming.

Agenda Item 4

PC Case #25-11: Applicant Ms. Emily Motyka of Studio One Pilates Cleveland LLC, is seeking to open a Pilates studio at the property located at **516 East Washington Street, Suite I**, owned by Washington Street Partners LLC and managed by Mr. Peter Cary.

This item was withdrawn from the meeting agenda by Mr. Peter Cary.

Agenda Item 5

PC Case #25-12: Applicant Mr. Derek Hoch of D.M.H. Ventures LLC is seeking approval to open a personal fitness training site at the property located at **477 Industrial Parkway, Suite C**, owned by Tectonics Developers LTD and managed by Mr. Peter Cary.

Ms. Budoff welcomed the applicant and asked him to begin his presentation. Mr. Hoch said this space is going to be an office with a fitness area set up only for his personal use. There will not be any group activities. He wanted to clarify that. He is a South Russell resident, and he is moving his office from Beachwood. There will be no third-party training, maybe his family members, but mostly just for himself. Ms. Budoff asked what type of business he was in. Mr. Hoch said he is an insurance broker, and he needed something closer to home to be able to work more remotely. Ms. Budoff asked if parking would be an issue. Mr. Hoch said no, it's just going to be him and family members. They would need only a couple of spaces. Mr. Porter asked what type of equipment he would have in his personal gym. Mr. Hoch said the run-of-the-mill items that are common in a gym setting, dumbbells, barbells and weight benches. Mr. Porter asked if he would be charging anyone for the use of the equipment. Mr. Hoch said no, there is no for-profit business going on from an athletic standpoint.

Mr. Bruhn said the project description on his application says, "personal fitness training, individual and small group activities". He said this implies this is a business where you are doing that for other people. Mr. Cary said he completed the form on his tenant's behalf and that was his description. Discussion followed. Mr. Bruhn said he won't be using the exercise equipment to train others, but would he be having insurance customers come to the office. Mr. Hoch said yes, basically this is an insurance office with his own personal gym, to which only he and family members have access. Mr. Porter asked if he took walk-in customers or appointments. Mr. Hoch said it is by appointment only. Mr. Porter said once again they must ask about parking. Mr. Hoch said he would use one space out front, and it wouldn't even be every day since he travels a lot. If the family uses the equipment on the weekends, maybe three spaces would be used.

Ms. Budoff asked the solicitor what would have to be done to the inaccurate application. Mr. Hicks said as a requirement of approval, a new application should be submitted so it is consistent with what Mr. Hoch told us. Mr. Porter asked if they could line item the one they have. Mr. Hicks said yes. Ms. Budoff consulted with Mr. Hicks and changed all three forms that had been submitted, to reflect the true nature of his tenancy. Mr. Hoch marked his initials on all the areas.

Ms. Budoff asked if any guest had comments or questions. Mr. Rob Truax of 477 Industrial Parkway said they were pleased with the clarification of the application. He asked if they would be having pads in the gym. Mr. Hich said yes, he will have half-inch rubber flooring, which is very common in any gym. Ms. Truax asked if he dropped weights. Mr. Hoch said no.

Mayor Koons asked how the corrected project description was worded. Ms. Budoff said the project description now says, "insurance brokerage office" on all three forms.

Ms. Budoff asked if there were any other comments or questions. There were none. Ms. Budoff clarified they will be voting to approve the applicant, Mr. Derek Hoch, to open an insurance brokerage office at 477 Industrial Parkway, Suite C. Mr. Porter made a motion to approve Mr. Bruhn seconded. On roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

The board welcomed the applicant, and Mr. Hoch thanked the board.

Agenda Item 6

PC Case #25-13: Applicant Mayor William Koons, on behalf of the Village of South Russell, is seeking approval for the building of a salt dome on Village property at **5205 Chillicothe Road**. Mayor Koons will recuse himself from reviewing this item.

Ms. Budoff asked Mayor Koons to please describe what's going on and any changes the board should take into consideration. Mayor Koons said basically the salt storage structure is a large barn and will have wings coming out on either side. Equipment will be stored underneath the wings. It is possible some vehicles will be parked there.

Mayor Koons said the salt storage structure will be located basically on the other side of the current domed structure, which will be taken down. He said there is no neighbor around that area.

Mayor Koons said the walls are 15' of concrete, in order to hold a lot of weight. Mr. Porter asked how thick the walls would be. Mr. Hocevar said 18". Ms. Budoff asked what a variance is needed for. Mr. Hocevar said the structure exceeds the height limit for an accessory structure, which is 15'. Photographs of the area were viewed on the large media screen. Mayor Koons said the dirt from the excavation will be used to build a mound behind the police station and plant some trees and vegetation.

Mr. Porter asked what the height of the building would be. Mr. Hocevar said 32'. Mr. Porter said this is substantially more, but a variance will be sought. Mr. Hocevar said yes, that is correct, this will appear before the Board of Zoning Appeals. Mr. Bruhn asked how tall the Village Hall building is. Mr. Hocevar guessed it to be about 35'. Ms. Budoff said the salt storage structure would be almost as tall as Village Hall. Mr. Bruhn asked how tall the service building is, since he's trying to get a picture of how it will look among the other buildings. Discussion followed.

Mayor Koons said Orange Village has the same structure. Mr. Bruhn asked what type of materials would be stored under the right wing. Mr. Porter said his recollection was that the street commissioner was going to use that area for storage of miscellaneous materials, such as stone and mulch, that are currently visible and unsightly, so it won't be seen as much. He said it will have a much bigger footprint than the current salt dome. Mr. Bruhn asked what would be done with the dome. Mayor Koons said it will be taken down once the new structure has been built.

Ms. Budoff asked members for any questions. Hearing none, she made a motion to approve the salt storage structure. Mr. Porter seconded. On roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business: None

Under **New Business**, Ms. Budoff said she is curious as to what is being planned for the southeast corner of the Village property. Mayor Koons said nothing has been decided yet. Ms. Cavanagh said she admires what Chesterland has done at the corner of 306 and 322. It is beautifully landscaped all summer long. She went on to say that the street commissioner and others would like to have a digital sign installed in that space. It would eliminate the need for the service department always putting up signs announcing events. Ms. Budoff said there was a concern with the sign on the gas station that it could be a distraction, which is why it was not approved. Mayor Koons said there is a lot of talent in the Village, and maybe they should ask residents' thoughts.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm.


Elisa Budoff, Chair


Ruth Griswold, Board Secretary


Date


Date