



Village of South Russell

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

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes June 11, 2026 @ 7:00 pm

Members Present: Elisa Budoff, Chair; Greg Bruhn (Arrived at 7:19 pm); Mayor William Koons; Phyllis Marino; Ruth Cavanagh

Other Officials Present: Bridey Matheney, Solicitor; Dave Hocevar, Building Official; Ruth Griswold, Board Secretary, Colleen Lair, Board Secretary

Visitors: Lori Williams, CB Sign Services, Tanner Fox

Chair Elisa Budoff called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Ruth Griswold conducted roll call.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the regular Planning Commission meeting held on May 14, 2026, were presented for approval.

- A motion was made by Phyllis Marino and seconded by Ruth Cavanagh to approve the minutes as submitted.
- On roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 1

PC Case #26-05 Lori Williams of CB Sign Service, applicant for the property owned by Bell Market Express, is seeking approval to update the signage at the Gulf Station located at 5196 Chillicothe Road.

Request: Approval to update and rebrand signage at the Gulf Station located at 5196 Chillicothe Road.

Applicant Presentation

Lori Williams explained that Gulf periodically updates its corporate image standards, generally every seven to ten years, when franchise agreements are renewed and funding is released for property improvements. Compliance with Gulf branding requirements is necessary for franchise participation and funding eligibility.

The proposed project includes:

- Replacement of existing Gulf branding with updated Gulf corporate imagery.
- Refacing of the existing roadside price sign.
- Branding of the secondary canopy that is currently unbranded.
- Replacement of canopy fascia materials with updated Gulf branding colors.
- New branding graphics on fuel pumps, including pump identification panels, valances, door skirts, and related signage elements.

Ms. Williams noted that the original corporate design included Gulf logo elements extending above the canopy roofline. After discussions with Village staff, the design was revised so that the canopy signage remains within the permitted fascia area and does not project above the roofline.

She further explained that the proposal initially exceeded the Village's permitted color limitations. To address this concern, Gulf removed one color element from the design package, specifically a green diesel identification panel, reducing the proposal to the allowable number of colors.

Signage and Square Footage Discussion

A substantial portion of the discussion focused on the requested increase in total sign area.

Ms. Williams explained that the majority of the additional square footage resulted from corporate branding requirements applied to the fuel pumps. The calculations included graphics placed on:

- Pump valances
- Front and rear pump panels
- Door skirts
- Pump identification signage

Commission members questioned whether the increase represented additional structures or simply replacement graphics on existing equipment. The applicant clarified that no new structures were being constructed and that the increase reflected signage calculations associated with branding existing facilities.

The Commission discussed whether portions of the pump branding that project above the fuel dispensers could create zoning compliance issues similar to those addressed on the canopy signs. Staff noted that additional review would be necessary to determine whether those elements comply with sign-height requirements or would require variance approval.

Ms. Williams indicated she would work with Gulf representatives to determine whether modifications could be made to reduce or eliminate any potential non-compliance.

Existing Conditions and Branding Requirements

The applicant explained that the existing Gulf logo discs on the canopies appear to have been modified during a prior installation, likely because oversized logo elements had originally been ordered. As a result, portions of the circular Gulf logo had been cut off, leaving an incomplete representation of the brand.

Commission members discussed Gulf's desire to restore its trademark logo and maintain consistency with current corporate branding standards.

Ms. Williams also described the broader purpose of franchise image updates, explaining that fuel companies frequently invest in exterior and interior upgrades as part of franchise renewal programs and require participating stations to adopt updated branding standards.

Illumination and Lighting Concerns

A significant portion of the meeting focused on the proposed illumination of the canopy fascia.

The applicant explained that:

- New fascia panels would be internally illuminated using LED light bars.
- The illumination would create a soft glow effect behind the fascia rather than functioning as a direct light source.
- The lighting is intended primarily for visibility and branding rather than site illumination.

Commission members expressed concerns regarding:

- Increased brightness at night.
- Potential impacts on nearby residential properties.
- Compatibility with the Village's character and existing lighting conditions.
- Prior concerns regarding lighting associated with the gas station property.

Discussion included whether the illumination could:

- Be dimmed during evening hours.
- Be shut off after a specified time.
- Be installed but left disconnected if determined unnecessary.

Ms. Williams stated that similar requests had been accommodated in other communities and that illumination systems could be installed without being activated if required by local authorities.

Commission members requested additional information regarding the actual appearance of illuminated Gulf canopies at night before making a final decision.

Legal and Zoning Considerations

Solicitor Bridey Matheney reviewed the property's unique history as a prior non-conforming use and discussed the agreed judgment entry that governs previous expansion approvals for the site.

Key points included:

- The gas station predates current zoning regulations.
- Previous expansion and renovation activities involved litigation and an agreed judgment entry.
- Certain site improvements were approved through that process.
- Existing requirements emphasize minimizing off-site lighting impacts, particularly on neighboring residential properties.
- The agreed judgment entry references maintaining general consistency with previously approved architectural styles while recognizing that franchise branding may change over time.

The Commission discussed the importance of considering both the agreed judgment entry and current zoning requirements during review of the proposal.

Commission Discussion

Commission members discussed:

- The increased amount of orange coloring proposed in the updated branding package.
- Potential impacts of illuminated canopy fascia on neighboring residences.
- Whether additional signage on the rear canopy could increase visibility from nearby residential areas.
- The desirability of obtaining real-world examples of the proposed branding and illumination.

- The possibility that variance approval from the Board of Zoning Appeals may be required due to sign-area calculations.

Several members expressed interest in viewing comparable Gulf stations, particularly at night, before making a final determination.

Direction and Action

The Commission determined that additional information was necessary before taking action on the application.

The applicant agreed to:

- Provide photographs and/or video of similarly branded Gulf stations during nighttime conditions.
- Explore modifications to pump signage that may address zoning concerns.
- Continue discussions regarding illumination options and possible operational restrictions.

Motion

A motion was made by Greg Bruhn and seconded by Ruth Cavanagh to table PC Case #26-05 pending receipt of additional information, including:

- **Clarification regarding zoning and Board of Zoning Appeals requirements.**
- **Additional information concerning canopy illumination and nighttime appearance.**
- **Review of any proposed modifications to signage elements.**

On roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Alternate Member Appointment

Mayor Koons advised the Commission that Tanner Payne had not yet received formal Council approval as an alternate member but was expected to be considered at the upcoming Council meeting.

The Commission discussed attendance and participation expectations for alternate members. No action was taken.

Rescheduling of July Meeting

Due to scheduling considerations and the anticipated timing of any Board of Zoning Appeals review related to the Gulf Station application, the Commission discussed changing the date of its July meeting.

A motion was made and seconded to reschedule the July Planning Commission meeting from July 9, 2026, to July 16, 2026.

On roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

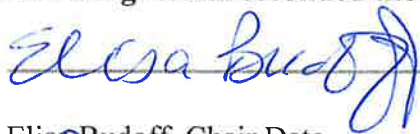
Staff Introduction

Building Secretary, Ruth Griswold introduced Colleen Lair, who recently joined the Village staff and will assume Board Secretary responsibilities following Ruth Griswold's retirement at the end of July.

Commission members welcomed Ms. Lair and noted that she would attend the July meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Budoff adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:46 pm and Greg Bruhn seconded the motion.



Elisa Budoff, Chair Date

7/23/26



7.27.26

Ruth Griswold, Board Secretary Date