

**PLAN COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION NOTES
AUGUST 18, 2025**

I. Call To Order

The Plan Commission Study Session was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by President Tom Anderson at the Schererville Town Hall, 10 E. Joliet St.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. Roll Call

Roll Call was taken with the following members present: President Tom Anderson, Vice-President William Jarvis, Mr. Myles Long, Mr. Bob Kocon, and Mr. Chris Rak. Staff present: Town Manager James Gorman, Director of Operations Andrew Hansen, and Recording Secretary Megan Schiltz. In the audience were Councilmen Caleb Johnson and Tom Schmitt. Absent were Secretary Gary Immig, Mr. Tom Kouros, and Planning & Building Administrator Denise Sulek.

II. Commission Business

A. 41° North Tavern (F/K/A: Northwood Falls)

General Location: 8101 Wicker Ave. – Eagle River Northwoods Addition

Petitioner(s): Silken & Shivangi Patel

Request: U.S. 41 Commercial Corridor Overlay District Development Plan Review

Mr. Silken Patel and Mrs. Shivangi Patel represented along with 41° North Tavern Manager Patrick Edwards. Mr. Patel stated that they had taken over the former Northwoods property a few months ago and opened last week after doing some remodeling. Mr. Patel went on to say that because the previous Northwoods signage was in such bad shape it had to be removed and replaced with a new sign that would meet the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Anderson asked if there would be a LED message board. Mr. Patel replied that was correct, to give information about upcoming events. Mr. Anderson asked Mr. Gorman if the sign met the ordinance. Mr. Gorman replied that it did, adding that the base could be included so it could be 10ft. tall x 8ft. wide. Mr. Anderson asked where the fencing would go. Mr. Patel replied that the fence would cover the water pond area towards the porch so customers could not walk directly in from the parking lot. Mr. Anderson wanted to clarify that the fence would be from the south end of the building to the property line. Mr. Patel responded that it would not be the property line but from the porch directly to the first tree area where the pond intersected with the tree. Mr. Patel added that this would block access from customers to leave the property with alcohol in hand; there is only one way in and out of the building, and that would be from the hostess station at the front. Mr. Patel went on to say with having only one entrance it would be easier to monitor the ins and outs for ABC Requirements and also fulfilling requirements for extra safety.

Mr. Anderson asked if they were doing a roof over the patio area. Mr. Patel stated that the plan is to do a pergola patio that would protect customers from rain by having it completely closed, but could still be open when the weather was good. Mr. Patel added that this project was still under engineering review. Mr. Anderson stated that if the pergola could fully close that would most likely mean that it would need to be sprinkled. Mr. Gorman responded that was correct. Mr. Patel informed the board that after the previous meeting with staff, they started working with the Fire Department to figure out all the necessary requirements. Mr. Jarvis stated that with them being located on a hill, the sign would need to be a clear designation for the entrance ways for vehicles going south on Route 41. Mr. Anderson stated that the sign met the ordinance and agrees with the fence, but the pergola needed to be sprinkled if it would be closed. Mr. Patel responded that they would definitely work with the Fire Department and follow those rules completely. Mr. Anderson then said to get with the

Fire Department and the Engineer to coordinate what would need to be done with that; then asked when they were looking to come in for the Public Meeting. Mr. Patel replied that they were ready for the soonest available. Mr. Hansen stated that the Plan Commission Public Meeting would be on September 8th. Mr. Patel stated they would be able to make that; adding that he would not be in attendance but both Mrs. Patel and Mr. Edwards would be and could answer any questions the board may have. Mr. Anderson stated that they would be looking at the sign and fence at that meeting which they did not have any issues with; the pergola is going to be something that would need to be figured out down the road. Mr. Anderson said to come back with those two items for the next scheduled meeting.

B. Crossroads YMCA Expansion – (F/K/A: Jak’s Warehouse)

General Location: 221 U.S. Hwy. 41 – Omni 41 First Addition, Part of the East
854.92 ft. of Lot 1

Petitioner(s): Crossroads YMCA

Represented by: DVG Team, Inc. – Russ Pozen, P.E.

Request: U.S. 41 Commercial Corridor Overlay District Development Plan Review

Mr. Jay Buckmaster, President and CEO of Crossroads YMCA, said that a couple years ago they had taken over the partnership with OMNI 41 and are now ready to begin Phase III. Mr. Buckmaster stated that with Phase I they renovated the hallway and front entrance; Phase II expanded the upper mezzanine area; and with Phase III they would expand into the former Jak’s Warehouse. Mr. Buckmaster continued to say that the fitness area would move to where Jak’s currently is located so they could expand the basketball courts, volleyball and pickle ball areas, and some studio areas as well. Mr. Buckmaster added that the intent was also to renovate the existing locker rooms while expanding the family rooms. Mr. Buckmaster concluded that he was excited to better serve the community by expanding this facility. Mr. Russ Pozen, P.E. from DVG Engineering stated that DVG was the Civil Engineers for this project and wanted to discuss the site development. Mr. Pozen stated that with the west portion of the YMCA property, they would mill off that area and put new asphalt course on it; along with that they would shift the pedestrian path to the south and make it a 7 ft. wide concrete walkway that would go right into the 15,000 sq. ft. building addition. Mr. Pozen went on to say that on the south west side at the “bump out” they would put in a better pedestrian path, which would also be safer because it would be south of the travel way; adding that along with that they would restripe the area. Mr. Pozen stated that the current drive aisle was too wide so they would narrow that down to 25 ft. which was more than enough room for two-way traffic. Mr. Pozen said that the YMCA was very good with operating the parking lots because most people get dropped off at the facility. Mr. Pozen then stated that a little bit north where the Franciscan connection is, they would create another drop off area with a sidewalk; removing all the current lots there to make it safer. Mr. Pozen went on to say that south west of that area there will be striping and separate drive aisles to create a better drop off. Mr. Pozen then said that the rest of the parking lot in the south would be cleaned up and have landscape islands; adding they were also working with NIES Engineering on having better drainage. Mr. Pozen then stated that they would be going before the BZA to seek a variance on the number of parking spaces. Mr. Pozen continued to say that this facility shared access with Franciscan but there are different hours; Franciscan closed at 5 P.M. which is when the YMCA business starts to pick up.

Project Manager Justin DeFields from Elevatus stated that from a material standpoint, a lot of what is being shown matches what is existing and what is defined by the ordinance. Mr. DeFields said that with the new storefront it creates a new entry into the YMCA; the existing entry is towards that left and there is a long hallway before you get in. Mr. DeFields added that with the new entry it serves to bring the entrance closer to the rest of the program and the front desk closer to where the parking spaces are. Mr. DeFields went on to say that they would be replacing the existing Jak’s sign on the front of the building with a YMCA sign that would just be a swap from a size perspective. Mr. DeFields stated that they would also be replacing all of the exterior materials on the existing pre-engineered metal building with metal panels all around it.

Mr. Anderson asked what the timetable was. Mr. Pozen replied that they had submitted the engineering and landscape plans and are looking to be on the next agenda. Mr. Pozen added that they are anxious to start construction on the interior first because it involved a lot of gutting and demo; and are looking to begin the exterior this year. Mr. Anderson asked if they were on the B.Z.A agenda for this month. Mr. Pozen replied they were. Mr. Rak asked if

they would entertain doing a raised crosswalk to slow traffic coming in from U.S. 41 at the main entrance since they would be repaving the parking lot. Mr. Rak added that inevitably there would be a parent who was late for pick up that would just fly through and a raised crosswalk would help from a safety aspect. Mr. Pozen stated that they would actually prefer a push button and a pedestrian crosswalk; adding that he would make a note to add some more pedestrian signals. Mr. Anderson asked if there were any more questions or comments. There were none.

C. Fountain Park Subdivision Commercial (Proposed: Floor & Décor)

F/K/A: Ashley Furniture

General Location: 1516-1530 U.S. 41 – Fountain Park Subdivision, Lot 1
(Resubdivision of Lot 5 and Part of Lot 8)

Petitioner(s): Floor & Décor – Caitlin Pipkin, Development Manager

Represented by: Torrenga Engineering

Request: U.S. 41 Commercial Corridor Overlay District Development Plan Review

Mr. Don Torrenga from Torrenga Engineering represented on behalf of Floor & Décor based out of Atlanta, Georgia. Mr. Torrenga stated that the old Ashley Furniture Store had been vacant for a number of years and there was currently a business located at the southern portion of the building which would be moving out. Mr. Torrenga went on to say that they plan on doing a complete interior remodel of the building; along with that there would be some basic modifications to the front of the building. Mr. Torrenga added that with the drive-in there would be some new signage. Mr. Torrenga said that he had submitted a minimal landscape plan because the property is mainly asphalt. Mr. Anderson wanted to verify that Floor & Décor would be taking over the entire building. Mr. Torrenga responded that was correct and that the current business called D-Bat would be moving out. Mr. Anderson asked if the landscaping at the north end would be low height. Mr. Torrenga replied that there was currently three trees there that would not be removed but the rest of it was overgrown. Mr. Torrenga added that there would be low shrubs because there is an issue with seeing around that corner. Mr. Anderson asked if they met the sign ordinance. Mr. Gorman stated that he had received the signage package but has not had time to review it yet. Mr. Gorman went on to say that he knew the main sign on the east end of the building met the ordinance because it would be a one-to-one sign, but would need to review the additional signage. Mr. Torrenga responded that if it did not meet the ordinance he was sure Floor & Décor would be happy to revise so that it met.

Mr. Jarvis asked if the speed bumps that were previously in the parking lot would be brought back. Mr. Torrenga replied that he did not believe they would be. Mr. Anderson stated that he hoped the back of the building by the pond would be power washed. Mr. Jeff Keith, managing owner of the property, replied that they would power wash the building. Mr. Anderson asked if the parking lot would be refreshed. Mr. Torrenga replied that they would be restriping and they would also be spacing out the four handicap spaces in front of the building. Mr. Torrenga added that they would meet the ADA requirements. Mr. Anderson asked what the timeline looked like. Mr. Torrenga replied they would like to start as quick as possible.

D. 1427 Austin Ave. – Bob Morris (Proposed: Cedar Heights Addition)

General Location: 1427 Austin Ave.

Petitioner(s): Housemart, Inc. – Bob Morris

Request: 1-Lot (R-2) Residential Subdivision

Mr. Don Torrenga from Torrenga Engineering represented on behalf of the petitioner. Mr. Torrenga stated that the petitioner would like to add on with a building on this property, but would need to subdivide because it is under metes and bounds. Mr. Torrenga added that there were no elevation changes. Mr. Anderson wanted to verify that they were looking to bring the property into a lot of record and would not be tearing it down to build a new one. Mr. Torrenga replied he did not believe so. Mr. Anderson stated that the plan was pretty straight forward, adding that they would need to advertise to get on the next agenda. Mr. Torrenga replied that they would get the advertisement out before the September 8th meeting.

III. Correspondence

- A. Plan Commission Public Meeting and Plan Commission Study Session scheduled for September 1, 2025 has been rescheduled to September 8, 2025

IV. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:32 P.M.