

**MINUTES OF THE PLAN COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING
JANUARY 5, 2026**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Plan Commission Public Meeting 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. Introduction of Members

President Anderson introduced the members including himself: Mr. William Jarvis, Mr. Myles Long, Mr. Gary Immig, Mr. Robert Kocon, Mr. Chris Rak, and Mr. Tom Kouros.

(Roll Call was not taken, but in addition to the above mentioned members being present, Staff present: Town Manager James Gorman, Director of Operations Andrew Hansen, Planning & Building Administrator Denise Sulek, Recording Secretary Megan Schiltz, Attorney Christian Bartholomew of Burke, Costanza & Carberry, and Mr. Mike Helmuth of Nies Engineering. In the audience were Councilmen Tom Schmitt and Caleb Johnson.)

C. Election of Officers

Mr. Jarvis made a motion for all current officers to stay in their current positions: President Tom Anderson, Vice-President William Jarvis, and Secretary Gary Immig. Mr. Rak seconded the motion which carried 7-0.

D. Appointment of Attorney

Mr. Jarvis made a motion to retain Burke, Costanza & Carberry. Mr. Rak seconded the motion which carried 7-0.

E. Appointment of Town Engineer

Mr. Jarvis made a motion to appoint the firm of Nies Engineering as Town Engineer. Mr. Rak seconded the motion which carried 7-0.

F. Appointment to Board of Zoning Appeals

Mr. Rak made a motion to keep Mr. William Jarvis and Mr. Tom Kouros as liaisons for the Board of Zoning Appeals. Mr. Long seconded the motion which carried 7-0.

G. Approve Minutes of the Plan Commission Public Meeting of December 1, 2025

Mr. Rak made a motion to approve which was seconded by Mr. Long and carried 7-0.

II. PUBLIC ACTION AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. P.C. Case #25-12-23 Anna Street Second Addition

General Location: 143 W. Joliet St.

Petitioner(s): Town of Schererville, James M. Gorman – Town Manager

Request: Primary Approval of a 1-Lot (INST) Institutional Subdivision W/Waivers of the Storm Drainage Control Ordinance No. 2009 Regulations:

Chapter Five, Paragraph A, Entitled: Design Storm Frequencies

- 6) A minimum of 25 feet from the top of the bank on each side of a new channel shall be designated on the recorded plat as a Drainage easement. No landscaping is allowed within any Drainage Easement, except for a minimum 25-foot width of filter strip or suitable grass that shall be installed along the top of bank.

Chapter Five, Paragraph G, Entitled: Drainage and Swales

- 6) A minimum of 20 feet along the swale (10 feet from each side of the centerline) must be designated on the recorded plat as Drainage Easement.

Chapter Six, Paragraph D, Entitled: General Detention Basin Design Requirements

- 13) A minimum of twenty (20) feet horizontally from the top of bank of the facility, or the 100-year pool if no defined top of bank is present, shall be dedicated as permanent storm water easement if the above-noted boundary of the common area does not extend that far: Within this easement area, no trees shall be planted within 50 feet of any pipe outlet entering the pond or the outlet for the pond.

In addition, an exclusive easement to assure access to the pond from an adjacent public street/right-of-way shall be required. No above-ground utilities or other obstruction that may hinder access shall be allowed within the exclusive access easement. Additional access easements may be required for larger ponds.

Mr. Anderson asked if proofs of publication were in order. Attorney Bartholomew replied that all notices were in order. Mr. Gorman informed the board that Mr. Hansen had created a power point presentation to make the requests easier to follow. Mr. Gorman stated that the orange outlined area shown is the 4-acre parcel that was purchased by the Town from the church located to the south; adding that there is also a small parcel behind 135 Joliet St. Mr. Gorman said that one of the reasons they are seeking waivers of the Stormwater Ordinance is due to the irregular shape of that parcel. Mr. Gorman went on to say that the area to the north is very narrow, and that there is a water tower on the area to the east. Mr. Gorman added that because of the water tower, they would not be on that area other than having an entrance on Anna St. to the south. Mr. Gorman said that before going through each waiver he wanted to read a statement from Town Engineer Neil J. Simstad from Nies Engineering.

While numerous subdivisions within the Overlay District have been granted exemptions from all requirements of the current (No. 2009) and previous (No. 1708A) Stormwater Ordinances, this requirement generally for location, separation and infrastructure configuration based exemptions, not necessarily for detention volume or capacity conveyance requirements. The waivers will be mostly due to maximize site utilization opportunities for the purpose of the public safety building.

Mr. Gorman reminded the board that the intent is to have a central fire station at this location which would require waivers due to the size of the building and the configuration of the parcel. Mr. Gorman stated that the first waiver would be regarding the requirement that a minimum of 25' from the top of the bank on each side of a new channel be designated as a drainage easement. Mr. Gorman went on to say that typically on private property there needs to be some type of easement due to the fact that the Town maintains all of the stormwater on most sites. Mr. Gorman added that this does go on private property, but given that it is Town owned property they would have access to it. Mr. Gorman then showed where all the detention areas were on the site. Mr. Gorman stated that they do not have the 25' required and that it would be 10'-15' from those detention areas where they could plat easements; that being said, there is access to the site that is Town owned property. Mr. Gorman added that they would meet all the requirements in the Stormwater Ordinance other than the setbacks. Mr. Gorman informed the board that he had just gone in front of the B.Z.A. for the building setbacks on the front, side, and rear which were granted for that same purpose. Mr. Gorman then showed on the plans that the fire station is located in the center of the large area with a detention pond both to the south and to the northwest. Mr. Gorman said that the second waiver would be regarding the requirement that a minimum of 20' along the swale must be designated as drainage easement. Mr. Gorman stated that there is not enough room to do that amount. Mr. Gorman then stated the third waiver would be the requirement that a minimum of 20' horizontal from the top of bank be dedicated as permanent stormwater easement because there would not be enough room. Mr. Gorman then said that they would meet all the capacity and conveyance requirements for this site according to the ordinance, but would need those setback waivers due to the detention. Mr. Gorman added that not only would it handle conveyance of detention on the actual site, but also the off-site water conveyance that comes from Route 30 and heads north. Mr. Gorman asked the board if they had any questions or comments in relation to the waivers before proceeding with the rest of the presentation for the 1-Lot Subdivision.

Mr. Anderson asked if the ponds shown were wet ponds with water in them all the time or dry ponds. Mr. Gorman asked Mr. Mike Helmuth from Nies Engineering to respond. Mr. Helmuth replied that he believed the intent is for them to be dry ponds. Mr. Anderson wanted to clarify that they are not meant to continuously hold water. Mr. Helmuth replied that he did not believe so and would have to get back to them. Mr. Gorman pointed out where the fire station would be located and also the “weird shape” of the detention area because fire personnel would need to go through there. Mr. Anderson asked if there would be a fence on the west side. Mr. Gorman replied that there would be. Mr. Anderson then asked if it ran all the way from the north to the south on the west end. Mr. Gorman replied that was correct. Mr. Gorman added that they had been working with the management team from Le Jardin Condominiums to keep them up to speed on what is going on with the property. Mr. Anderson asked if the property directly butting next to Le Jardin at the north end would be greenspace. Mr. Gorman replied that it is a 20’ area that will remain to be the greenspace that it is currently. Mr. Kouros asked what the area between the two ponds would be. Mr. Gorman replied that was the parking area. Mr. Kouros then asked if there was parking in the front. Mr. Gorman replied that there would be parking in the front for people that visit the fire station. Mr. Kouros asked if the front of the building faced Route 30. Mr. Gorman responded that the front of the building would face the northwest. Mr. Kouros asked what would face Route 30. Mr. Gorman replied that it would be the side of the building that the firemen use for training, then the detention pond, then the church, and then Route 30. Mr. Kouros asked what would be the area to the north of the side of the building. Mr. Gorman replied that would be the four bays just to the southwest of the training facility with a second floor to store the equipment. Mr. Kouros then asked if the fire station property at the corner of Cline Ave. was for sale. Mr. Gorman stated that has not been determined. Mr. Kouros verified that it would not function as a fire station.

Mr. Anderson asked if there would be an open road where anyone would be able to go through the property. Mr. Gorman replied that there would be a road with signage but would not be a through road. Mr. Long asked if there would also be parking on the southeast side of the building. Mr. Gorman replied that there would be. Mr. Jarvis asked if the road would have signage that would say, through traffic is prohibited or that it would be a ticketable offense. Mr. Gorman replied that there would be no through traffic signage. Mr. Long asked if there would be a road leading to the church property on the southern portion of the property. Mr. Gorman responded yes, and that part of the agreement from when the property was purchased from the church was to give them access from the road so vehicles could get out on to Anna St. Mr. Long then verified with Mr. Gorman that there would be stop signs. Mr. Anderson asked if there would be fencing on the east side and the north side. Mr. Gorman replied that there would not be on the north side and there probably would not be any on the east side because of the grade difference. Mr. Gorman added that is the reason there would be a retaining wall just south of the water tower. Mr. Kouros questioned that when the fire trucks get called out they could either exit onto Anna St. or Joliet St. Mr. Gorman replied that was correct and that the fire department would determine which one will be a return and which an exit. Mr. Kouros then asked if Anna St. would be wide enough to handle the fire trucks. Mr. Gorman responded that it is probably the same width as Cline Ave. Mr. Anderson stated that the driveway from Joliet St. to the building was long and asked what would be done with the lighting to not disturb the surrounding neighbors. Mr. Gorman responded that they would need to look into that and believed there would be a retaining wall with lights because of the big difference in grading. Mr. Immig asked if the church was going to build the connecting road. Mr. Gorman replied that the Town would be building it.

There being no further comments the matter was opened to the floor. Mr. Ira Zimmer from 1720 S Park Ave. approached the podium. Mr. Zimmer asked Mr. Jarvis and Mr. Kouros that if the HVAC system were to go down at their business if they would shut down the building and move to a new location. Mr. Kouros replied that he would not. Mr. Zimmer went on to say that at a previous meeting a few months ago it was stated by a fireman that they need a new building because of the HVAC system which did not make sense to him. Mr. Zimmer continued to voice his concerns about the Plan Commission and Town Administration “spending tons of money, wrecking peoples homes, and taking out part of Joliet St.” Mr. Zimmer added that there are 11 acres of land for sale across Anna St. which has access to the best highway in Town. There being no further comments the matter was closed to the floor and returned to the board.

Mr. Jarvis commented that he had relocated his business to benefit the community better; and at this point, they are just reviewing the plans. Mr. Rak asked with the assumption that Joliet St. would be closed if Reed St. would be closed as well or would it still have access to Route 30 from Joliet St. Mr. Gorman replied that it would remain open but modified. Mr. Gorman added that in regards to Joliet St. it has not been determined or designed yet, and that it is five years out. Mr. Kouros stated that he understands Mr. Zimmers concerns, but it is the Plan Commissions responsibility to help the emergency management team if they do not have the

means or if they need upgrades. Mr. Anderson reminded the board that the meeting was for a 1-Lot Subdivision with waivers of the Storm Drainage Control Ordinance. Mr. Rak made a motion to approve P.C. Case #25-12-23 pursuant to all State, Local, and Federal Regulations, and that all fees be kept current. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kocon and carried 7-0.

B. P.C. Case #26-1-1 Shoppes of Schererville, Lot 1 – Crunch Fitness

General Location: 715 U.S. 41 – Shoppes of Schererville, Lot 1

Petitioner(s): Fit Fusion Team – Bart Jackson

Request: Primary Approval of the U.S. 41 Commercial Corridor Overlay District Development Plan

Mr. Chirag Patel approached the podium and stated that he is one of the partners of Crunch Fitness. Mr. Anderson stated for the record that this matter was at the previous Study Session and then wanted to confirm that there are not any structural changes to the building. Mr. Patel replied that the only change would be to change the color of paint on the building. Mr. Anderson asked if there were any questions or comments from the board. There were none. Mr. Anderson opened the matter to the floor. There being no questions or comments the matter was closed to the floor and returned to the board. Ms. Sulek asked if there would be a work trailer located on the site. Mr. Patel responded there would be one for about 2 – 3 weeks. Ms. Sulek replied that would be considered a temporary trailer. Mr. Patel said that was correct. Ms. Sulek asked if the trailer would be for construction. Mr. Patel replied that it would be used for presale. Ms. Sulek asked the petitioner to show where on the site the trailer would be placed. Mr. Patel responded that it would be at the Outlot and as close to the building as it could be. Mr. Sulek thanked the petitioner and said that she just wanted the trailer to be on the record. Mr. Gorman asked the petitioner to review the plan such as the total square footage, business hours, etcetera. Mr. Patel said that the building in question was the old JoAnn Fabrics and that they would occupy the entire 35,000 sq. ft. Mr. Patel went on to say that this would be a big box gym with cardio, free weights, machines, group fitness studio, hot yoga studio, and areas for functional training. Mr. Patel added that they would also have relax and recover amenities such as cryotherapy, red light therapy, massage chairs, and tanning beds. Mr. Patel stated that they would also provide a child care center where members could drop off their kids prior to their workout. Mr. Gorman confirmed with staff that they had applied for the Business License already.

Mr. Anderson asked how the parking lot looked for striping. Mr. Gorman replied that he was unsure. Mr. Anderson stated that he knew they met the Ordinance, but wanted to know what shape the striping was in. Mr. Hansen pulled up an area view of the parking lot for the board. Mr. Rak stated it looked good. Mr. Anderson said that he just wanted to make sure the lot didn't need any major work. Mr. Immig asked if the petitioner could provide more detail regarding child care. Mr. Patel responded that child care would be in a separate room under supervision; and believed there is a certain license required which workers would have. Mr. Patel went on to say that there would be board games, video games, movies, and other activities for the kids to do. Mr. Immig confirmed that it would be supervised at all times. Mr. Immig then asked what type of licensing he was referring to. Mr. Patel replied that the first location they have is located in Illinois which required a certain license; and if Indiana required the same they would be sure to get them. Mr. Gorman replied that a license from the State would be required depending on the number of kids that would be there; and that he believed if there are over five or seven the license would be required. Mr. Immig asked if there were any physical requirements such as closed doors, windows, or anything of that nature. Mr. Gorman replied that the State would check into the requirements not the Town. Mr. Jarvis asked if the employees would be trained in CPR and if there would be AED units on site. Mr. Patel replied that the managers and personal trainers would be trained in CPR. Mr. Jarvis made a motion to approve P.C. Case #26-1-1 pursuant to all State, Local, and Federal Regulations and that employees be required to have CPR and emergency health training. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kocon and carried 7-0.

III. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Cancellation of the January 19, 2026 Plan Commission Study Session

Mr. Rak made a motion to cancel which was seconded by Mr. Long and carried 7-0.

B. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:37 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

Gary Immig, Secretary