RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
VILLAGE OF PENINSULA PLANNING COMMISSION

Held: Monday, September 22, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Walters called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Chairperson Karen Walters	Present
Greg Canda	Present
Council Rep. Doug Steidl	Present
Mayor Daniel Schneider, Jr.	Absent
Kevin Royer	Present at 7:03

OTHERS PRESENT: Village Planner Rita McMahon, Solicitor Brad Bryan, Administrative Assistant Faith Dorton

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES:

August 25, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting

Mr. Steidl made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Canda to approve the Minutes. Roll call vote: Ms. Walters, yes; Mr. Canda, yes; Mr. Steidl, yes. The Minutes were approved.

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

Amy Frank-Hensley commented on the public parking proposals, noting that while she supports evaluating opportunities, residents on South Locust already face major parking issues and dislike the idea of extending the paid parking area. She expressed concern that increased parking could make the town feel more like a parking lot rather than a welcoming community. She raised the example of shopping mall parking, where convenience is expected but not always necessary, and emphasized that during busy weekends people are willing to walk across town.

Daniel DiAngelo suggested that instead of focusing only on adding parking in the Village, the master plan should encourage visitors to park at nearby locations and then walk or bike into town. He emphasized that behavior could enhance the visitor experience by making the walk part of the day, noting the beauty of the stretch from Deep Lock Quarry into the Village. He acknowledged that those with mobility issues would still need close access but felt offering alternatives could reduce congestion. He proposed that both event organizers and the Village promote these options in future communications to ease parking surges.

Steve Craig asked about details regarding the National Park's involvement in bringing water to the downtown area. Mr. Bryan explained the effort involves securing federal funding, with the County also working to assemble funds. The Park wants water and would be a paying customer. Mr. Canda clarified the plan may include installing dry water lines along with the sewer lines to avoid future road disruption. Mr. Royer noted the consultants have already drawn in a water line on Rt. 303. Ms. Walters asked about costs. Mr. Bryan stated figures vary depending on where the water is coming from, with Hudson, Boston Heights, or Cuyahoga Falls being less expensive than Akron, although the Akron option would serve more people.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Bryan reported on behalf of the Mayor that the Village Engineer provided a cost estimate for properly constructing and expanding the parking lot on the old Service Garage lot. The Engineer estimated it would cost $175,000–$200,000 to fully develop it into a 40–50 car lot.

A quick pavement fix on the existing hard surface area would cost $64,000–$70,000. The Mayor would prefer to see what happens this fall with the pending grant applications and then decide how much to spend on the lot next year. The discussion then shifted to fiber optic installation, with Mr. Bryan explaining that the County project only aims to connect municipal and county safety facilities. Extensions for residential service may come later. Ms. Dorton said she did not have a completion timeline for the County fiber optic project but understood progress was ongoing. Mr. Royer acknowledged the scale of the federal grant supporting the effort.

COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT:

Mr. Steidl reported Council authorized the purchase of another police cruiser as part of the annual replacement cycle, approved pavement striping, and authorized the Mayor to send a support letter for the State grants previously approved at an earlier Special Council Meeting. Mr. Bryan noted that the grant applications have been filed and support letters were submitted from the County, the Park, the Conservancy, and the Scenic Railroad. Mr. Steidl added that an ordinance left over from the COVID era requiring face coverings indoors was repealed. He stated Council also authorized the submission of a joint OPWC grant application with Boston Heights for funds for repaving North Akron Peninsula Road.

BUSINESS:

Motion to Approve Amended Version of the 2025 Downtown Plan

Mr. Steidl made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Canda to approve the amended version of the 2025 Downtown Plan. Roll call vote: Ms. Walters, yes; Mr. Royer, yes; Mr. Canda, yes; Mr. Steidl, yes. The motion was approved.

Ms. McMahon emphasized the Plan is something that can be amended in the future if conditions change. Mr. Canda asked whether the Plan should stand alone or be considered a part of the Long-Range Plan. Ms. McMahon recommended it be an addendum to the Long-Range Plan but noted it could function either way without conflict. Ms. Walters stated she feels it should remain a separate document. The Commission determined there was no need to make it an addendum to the Long-Range Plan.

Zoning Map Changes

Ms. Walters recused herself from this discussion due to her employment with the Peninsula Foundation. Ms. McMahon explained the proposal involves rezoning five parcels. Four parcels on Main Street owned by the Peninsula Foundation that housed longtime commercial uses would be rezoned from R-2-Residential to C-Commercial and one parcel owned by the CVNP would be rezoned from R-2-Residential to CR-Conservation Recreation. Ms. McMahon noted this rezoning effort aligns the properties with their long-standing commercial uses, making those uses permitted by right and reducing the need for repeated variances or conditional use permits. Mr. Canda asked whether property owners had offered feedback. Daniel DiAngelo, representing the Peninsula Foundation, voiced support for the rezoning measure, agreeing that it made sense based upon the current and historic uses of the parcels. Mr. Steidl stated he supported the rezoning change. Richard Slocum asked whether adjacent property owners were notified. Mr. Bryan stated the owners of the property being

proposed for rezoned were both supportive. He clarified that the adjacent property owners will be notified pursuant to law if the matter advances to Council.

Ms. McMahon presented a list of ten findings of fact to justify rezoning the five parcels, noting that the properties are already occupied by commercial uses that are currently nonconforming and thus limited for investment potential. She explained that the rezoning would support long-term development, align with the goals of both the Long-Range and Downtown Master Plans, reinforce the Village's financial stability, and create a logical zoning boundary. This change would modestly increase the total commercial acreage in the Village and maintain the National Park parcel as Conservation Recreation, consistent with past practice. Ms. McMahon emphasized that zoning the 4 parcels Commercial would protect and encourage viable businesses that contribute to the community.

Mr. Canda asked for clarification on the map details regarding North Canal Street parcels and whether the National Park's North Canal Street property was the only parcel on that street that should be referenced in the measure. Ms. McMahon confirmed it is the only lot that fronts on North Canal Street. The other parcels have Main Street addresses. Richard Slocum clarified the CVNP lot sits behind the wood store (River Light Gallery) on the east side of North Canal Street. Ms. McMahon agreed to amend the language to specify the National Park's North Canal Street property.

Mr. Steidl moved to recommend the rezoning measure to Council based on the reasons set forth by Ms. McMahon. Mr. Royer seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Royer, yes; Mr. Canda, yes; Mr. Steidl, yes. The motion was approved. Mr. Canda noted the Ordinance before Council would involve three readings rather than emergency legislation. Mr. Bryan added that a public hearing would also be held with adjacent property owners being notified of that hearing.

West Side of N. Locust Street

Ms. Walters returned to Chair the Meeting and opened discussion about the west side of North Locust Street. Mr. Canda noted that some of the property owners favor keeping the property zoned Commercial. Mr. Bryan cautioned against rezoning only select parcels to the R-2 Zone while keeping Commercial zoning for properties in between, explaining it could undermine the consistency of the Village Zoning Map. Ms. McMahon added that any change must serve a public purpose, not just individual owners' preferences. With several owners opposed to their properties being rezoned to Residential, members agreed that no action should be taken at this time, leaving the properties as Commercial. Richard Slocum raised concerns that without more oversight, new owners could build large commercial structures as-of-right, suggesting Mixed-Use zoning as an alternative to preserve some control. Mr. Bryan noted that Planning Commission review is still required for site plans in Commercial zones. The group acknowledged the potential to revisit this issue in the future but concluded that no immediate action should be taken.

Mr. Bryan suggested the Commission should review the Mixed-Use zoning standards in the future and determine whether they should be more detailed and include building size limits near residential properties, as has been previously discussed. Richard Slocum emphasized zoning discussions should be kept flexible. Daniel DiAngelo reminded the Commission that residents across the street also have a stake in maintaining the neighborhood's residential character, not just the property owners subject to rezoning. Mr. Steidl supported keeping the issue open for

further discussion in the future, particularly as the Mixed-Use provisions are updated. Ms. Walters noted that while buyers knew the properties were zoned Mixed-Use or Commercial when they bought them, no one wants overdevelopment. Amy Frank-Hensley pointed out that the parcels were not purchased strictly for commercial uses. Ms. McMahon confirmed the Mixed-Use provisions allow for residential uses as well.

Discussion on Additional Public Parking Opportunities, Possible Amendments to the Village Parking Ordinance, and Potential Zoning Code Amendments

Ms. McMahon summarized her August memo prepared at Mr. Steidl's request, which evaluated Village-owned property for possible additional parking. The only feasible options aside from the old Service Garage lot were extending on-street parking along South Locust Street for about twenty-six spaces and adding about twenty spaces on North Locust Street. Both options would probably require costly road widening expenses. She explained other areas, such as Canal Street, Riverview Road, and Parker Court, were too narrow, steep, or constrained to be practical, while improvements along Rt. 303 would fall under the jurisdiction of the State. Mr. Canda emphasized these options constituted possibilities, not commitments, and could complement the streetscape plan if it is funded. Mr. Steidl suggested beginning with the North Locust lot as part of a long-range parking strategy. Ms. Walters expressed concern that adding street parking could burden residents and suggested exploring satellite parking options, such as the empty land on the south side of Rt. 303 just east of downtown. Mr. Bryan noted an engineer would need study that option in detail to determine the costs of not only paving the property but also addressing runoff, drainage, and traffic safety issues. The land is owned by the CVNP and it is within an ODOT right-of-way easement. Mr. Bryan noted that ODOT and the CVNP had once been cooperative about the potential parking lot, but the CVNP later indicated it was opposed to the idea. Ms. Walters emphasized that satellite parking would help keep cars out of the Village center. Mr. Steidl reminded members that Ms. McMahon already provided a memo outlining options. Mr. Royer raised the possibility of a right-of-way connector near Locust and Auburn. A discussion then followed about event parking, with Mr. Canda asking where people parked during Music on the Porches. Mr. Royer reported some parked illegally, and others used the school lot. Ms. McMahon suggested documenting parking patterns during major events. Amy Frank-Hensley asked about special event signage at the school. Mo Riggins and Ms. Walters stated concerns about insurance restrictions prevented use of the Heritage Farm lot for Village events. The group acknowledged that heavy congestion occurred, including long backups from intersections. Ms. McMahon and Ms. Walters noted that the Police Department directs traffic at times. Mr. Canda reiterated that the Village should track parking at the next major event scheduled for October 4.

Ms. McMahon then presented a second document outlining six potential options for adjusting parking code requirements, drawing on examples from other communities to promote flexibility while balancing under and over-parking. She highlighted option two, which eliminates parking minimums and allows developers to propose their own parking needs based on criteria reviewed by the Planning Commission. That approach could be paired with maximum limits to prevent excessive lots. Ms. Walters expressed a desire to ensure that clear evaluation criteria exists. Mr. Bryan noted considerations such as nearby public lots and residential parking should be factored in. Mr. Steidl supported combining flexible minimums with Planning Commission oversight. Ms. McMahon explained that some powers could be shifted from the BZA to the

Commission to streamline approvals. She also described shared-use parking models that account for different business peak hours. Ms. Walters questioned enforcement of such systems. Ms. McMahon clarified they rely on usage patterns and calculations rather than strict assignment. Mr. Canda concluded a hybrid of options two and five, with Planning Commission oversight and possible maximums, would best address Peninsula's limited space issues and need to preserve the small-town character.

Ms. McMahon explained the Planning Commission, with its broader perspective and planning mission, is better positioned than the BZA to evaluate parking code adjustments. Mr. Steidl proposed that members review the materials provided by Ms. McMahon and provide feedback at the October Meeting. Mr. Royer inquired about past projects that were prevented from going forward due to parking issues. Ms. Walters requested clearer criteria for option two, while Mr. Bryan noted the benefits and flexibility of combining options two and five. Ms. McMahon emphasized the potential for hybrid standards, such as requiring minimums for residential units but allowing flexibility for commercial uses, which Mr. Canda endorsed. Ms. Walters also raised the need for safe employee parking to prevent overflow into church or business lots. Mr. Bryan concluded the Commission would discuss these options in more depth next month. Ms. McMahon stated she would flesh out the details of options two and five and provide expanded information on building size restrictions adjacent to residential properties.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Canda made a motion that was seconded by Ms. Walters to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote: Ms. Walters, yes; Mr. Royer, yes; Mr. Canda, yes. The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Karen Walters, Chairperson Date

Karen James Walters 10/30/2025