

Minutes of VERMILION MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
of November 5, 2025 @ 7:00 pm

*PRESENT: Heather Shirley, Mike Cremean, Edward Leonard. Absent: Jeff Hammerschmidt*

*In ATTENDANCE: Mayor Forthofer; Chris Howard, City Engineer; Tony Valerius, Service Director; Jeff Lucas, Council Representative; Melanie Wood, Clerk of Council; Dannin Strittmather, Assistant Clerk of Council.*

Call to Order:

Heather Shirley, Chair called the Wednesday, November 5, 2025, meeting to order.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

M. Cremean MOVED; E. Leonard seconded to approve the October 1, 2025, minutes. Roll Call Vote 2 YEAS; 1 ABSTAIN (Leonard). MOTION FAILED. Due to lack of quorum, the board will have to approve the October minutes at the next scheduled meeting on December 3, 2025.

Correspondence/Audience: None.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

**Applicant:** Oak Knoll Investment Company – Property Location: Ridgeview Drive, West of Foxwood Drive – PPN#:01-00-001-110-036 – (Major Subdivision)

Ken Cassell of 5425 Liberty Avenue said he was presenting the additional six lots for the next phase of the development on Ridgeview Drive. He received the letter from the City Engineer, and they are in the process of addressing the comments mentioned. H. Shirley asked if it was an additional six lots for phase two? Steve Cassell answered yes.

C. Howard said the plat is still under review and the final plat cannot be accepted until the final improvements are in. M. Cremean asked if there were any major changes from the original to the final plan. C. Howard answered this is just an extension of this phase. H. Shirley asked if the lots were sold. K. Cassell said no, he will not sell them until all the improvements are in. H. Shirley asked the anticipated completion date for this phase. K. Cassell said he hopes they can get some things going this coming year and they can't start concrete work until the spring.

**M. Cremean MOVED**; E. Leonard seconded to approve the major subdivision contingent upon the items from the City Engineer's letter being addressed. Roll Call Vote 3 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

**Applicant:** Premier Development Partners – Property Location: NE Dorner of Claus Road and Co Route 2 – PPN#: 0100021000032; 010002214029; 4040; 4045 – (Recommendation to Council for Private Utility Right of Way)

Chris Westbrook with CSO Civil Engineer represented Premier Development Partners and Jerry Gruszewski with Premier Development Partners at 5605 Granger Rd. in Cleveland Ohio introduced themselves and said they

are proposing a sanitary pump station and force main to serve the property. The property is approximately 119 acres and is located between Claus Road and Baumhart Road and also has a boundary by the Norfolk Southern Rail line on the north end and Route 2 to the south. They are proposing approximately 5,000 linear foot force main to transmit the sanitary sewage from the property to the city sewer located at the corner of Sunnyside Road and Brownhelm Station Road.

M. Cremean asked if this was approved, who would maintain the main going forward? C. Howard answered it would be privately owned. H. Shirley asked the purpose of the development, what they plan to develop. J. Gruszewski answered it is currently a parcel they are bringing improvements to in order to serve the parcel so they can further market it.

E. Leonard asked with the capacity of the line, what types of development would it be capable of supporting. C. Westbrook answered that the capacity is approximately 20,000 gallons per day based on the zoning that underlies the site.

H. Shirley asked if they received the letter from the City Engineer. C. Westbrook answered he has not reviewed it, but he would be willing to take a look at it to see what the comments are. C. Howard said he emailed the letter to the person who made the application. He read a portion of his letter and stated the applicant will be required to obtain any permits and approvals from the railroad for any work performed on Claus Road within Railroad Right-of-Way. Final improvement plans will be required for review and approval by the City if Council approves the installation of a private sanitary sewer force main within the City Right-of-Way. The next step, if the Planning Commission approves it, will go to Council for acceptance.

M. Cremean asked if there was any precedent for this in the city since it is privately owned. C. Howard answered no, the city does not want to maintain the force main and there is no precedent. M. Cremean said it looks like it will run along Brownhelm Station off the pavement. C. Howard answered the preliminary plan showed it off the south side of Brownhelm Station Road. C. Westbrook replied that is correct. M. Cremean noted the road had been recently paved and they should try to minimize the disruption there.

E. Leonard asked long term, once the property has been developed, does the maintenance fall to whoever buys and develops the property. J. Gruszewski answered it will transfer with the property as a utility if there is a sale of the property. C. Westbrook said the Ohio EPA during the permitting process will also ask that it be documented that the responsibilities be transferred. J. Gruszewski said all the way up to the tie in at the west side of Sunnyside Road.

M. Cremean asked if the plan for ultimate development is to sell the land or to maintain the land ownership. J. Gruszewski answered right now the plan is to get the utilities to service the property so they can go ahead and mark it and design it for development. M. Cremean asked the estimated time for this project, assuming approval. J. Gruszewski answered there are still a few other steps they need to go through as far as the approval process but if everything lines up, they could possibly go ahead and begin the force main in the spring if everything is permitted properly. M. Cremean asked if the pump station was located south of the residents and asked if they knew the what the distance it would be for any other houses. J. Gruszewski answered he is not sure of the location as of yet it would be based upon the design and where they would be able to get it to fit in best based on track record they would prefer to work with the city and residents that are there to make it as less intrusive to residents – nobody wants to see it but with development you need to have these things if you don't have those types of utilities to serve the area.

E. Leonard MOVED; M. Cremean seconded to make a recommendation to City Council the approval of the private utility in the City Right-of-Way. Roll Call Vote 3 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

**Applicant: 3B's Foods LLC (Bowl Thyme)** – Property Location: 4855 Liberty Avenue – PPN#: 20-00114.000 – (Zoning Certificate)

Jeremy Crawford of 13417 Mason Road and Joe Jesco of 412 Annis Road, South Amherst Ohio said they were there to present a patio expansion in front of Bowl Thyme to accommodate a liquor license they purchased. J. Crawford stated he did receive the Engineer's letter and they spoke about things and provided the revised plans to the Planning Commission.

H. Shirley said in the proposed plan they would be losing parking spaces in the front of the existing building and two of those are handicapped spaces and asked how they would accommodate to make sure they still have those. J. Crawford said they will still have 49 available parking spaces after losing the seven spaces in the front. They will move the two designated handicapped parking spaces next to the entrance door which already has a ramp going into the building. The 49 parking spaces will accommodate 196 occupants based on four seats per car and their current capacity is 96 with the proposed addition in the front.

H. Shirley asked if they would be expanding anything onto the empty lot next to them. J. Crawford answered they are currently focusing on this one and they are hoping to work on a partnership with Linwood with their support and collaborating with two businesses together to develop into it eventually, but their main focus right now is just this front portion. If anything were to come up it would be another round of proposed plans.

H. Shirley asked with this expansion if they were also renovating their current building. J. Crawford answered the front room that used to be the playground will be a proposed bar area. J. Jesco said there would be no major renovations, the room is almost completely done, the floor is done, ceilings are done primarily what they are proposing is having a garage door with a frame and window and then installing a bar with seating. Nothing structurally is being planned for the inside, just seating and the garage door. H. Shirley asked if they would have seating outside as well. J. Crawford answered yes, it will be fenced in so they can have alcohol sales outside as well. H. Shirley asked if the fence would be along the sidewalk. J. Crawford answered no, it won't encroach on the sidewalk, where the asphalt ends is where the fence would end.

E. Leonard asked what type of screening they would use around the propane tank. J. Crawford said they would like to bring the food truck back to bring all their history of Vermilion businesses back together. The food truck would serve charcuterie boards and finger foods. In order to fuel that, they would need a small DOT propane tank, and it would ideally be in the front corner, and they would put in the crash ballasts, and everything needed for it if they allowed it. They can also move the tank anywhere else the board would recommend, it could be hidden for aesthetics and wouldn't impede traffic. E. Leonard said he was wondering if the screening was more of an aesthetic screening or if it was a protective screening. J. Crawford said they would have the crash ballasts to ensure safety and also to hide the aesthetics.

H. Shirley asked if the business plan was changing as far as the type of restaurant they have. J. Crawford answered right now the current business is about 93% to-go between door dash, drive through, and carry out. With purchasing the liquor license, they see the opportunity to bring people into the building so they are hoping that part of the business changes, but they don't plan on changing the food end of things and will still do their monthly specials and the food can be plated inside. They think it would be another benefit to have people in the building in a casual setting.

M. Cremean asked if they had already secured their liquor license. J. Crawford answered yes.

Mayor Forthofer said when they first opened their business, this was originally in their plans years ago and at that time it was a popular concept people responded to. He understands this is their third element in Vermilion and he thinks it is a good idea they waited this long but with the anticipation of the community he thinks this will be popular.

H. Shirley asked the applicant to elaborate on the proposed glass enclosure. J. Crawford responded that the glass enclosure will be on the side wing and they would like it for the all-season element for that kind of dining similar to the wineries in Port Clinton. It can be built large enough to have small meeting rooms or private family rentals and that type of thing. They hope to draw people in from outside of town.

H. Shirley asked if it was approved when the anticipated start date would be. J. Crawford answered they would like to start renovating as quickly as they can knowing they have the liquor license and they would hope to begin in February and before the spring launch.

M. Cremean asked in terms of the 75-foot setback, is the triangle portion of the building that does not comply or is it the bar area that further reduces the 75-foot setback, they would need a variance for that. J. Crawford answered the 75-foot setback goes through the northwest corner of the front building which would be the outdoor bar on the deck and the front corner access door. T. Valerius said the pergola is in front of the setback and a variance would be necessary to move forward with that.

H. Shirley said one of the questions the City Engineer had on his letter was additional site lighting. Will they have any additional they will provide? J. Crawford answered they are going to add mood lighting, but they will not be changing anything with parking lot lights or anything preexisting.

M. Cremean said the planters and the fence on the east side will reduce the overall driveway width. J. Crawford said they spoke with the architect and they moved the setting in to accommodate a 25-foot path all the way around for both entrance and exit. It is reflected in the revised drawings.

E. Leonard asked confirmed there wouldn't be any additional lighting on the patio area. J. Crawford said they didn't plan to change any of the parking lot lights or anything preexisting. The only potential addition would be canopy or string lights at the final development stage but there will not be any spotlights, just what is already there. There are three light poles; one in the front grass area, one across the driveway that would illuminate that section and one next to where the rock feature will be but those are all preexisting.

H. Shirley noted the proposed location of the propane tank will need to be approved by the Fire Marshal.

C. Howard said looking at the revised plan, the dumpster is in the rear of the building, and the plan shows two stalls right where the dumpster is, will they lose those two stalls on the west side of the building? J. Crawford said when he counted the spots, he counted the painted spots so that spot might need to be moved over on the plans. C. Howard asked him to confirm because it does show the dumpster there. J. Crawford said they will double-check and make sure it is adjusted on any revised plan.

E. Leonard said he is looking at the northwest corner of the patio where the fencing is, it looks like there is a dead space and then the start of the patio. He is worried if a car pulls in and hits the fence - there are concrete planters and landscaping that lead to the corner but not all the way. J. Crawford responded that it is currently a raised

flowerbed, but they can put ballast in as well. E. Leonard said something to reenforce the fence because things happen.

H. Shirley asked if they would maintain the current drive through still. J. Crawford answered yes and that there would be a sign posted as exit only. E. Leonard asked if the drive through exit is wide enough for vehicles looking to exit the establishment as well, would they use the same path? J. Crawford answered there is also an exit off of Vermilion Road. C. Howard said there is a parking lot to the east as well that they can use to get out. J. Crawford said there is a lip there, but there is an access to leave there as well.

**E. Leonard MOVED**; M. Cremean seconded to approve the Zoning Certificate as presented contingent upon meeting the requirements in the City Engineer's letter and obtain BZA approval. Roll Call Vote 3 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**Adjournment:**

H. Shirley adjourned the meeting upon no further business.

*Next meeting – December 3, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. - Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street*

*Transcribed by Melanie Wood, Clerk of Council (11/10/2025)*