

MINUTES OF MEETING
PLANNING COMMISSION
July 22, 2025

Members Present: Coyne, Allen, DeMarco, Bishop

Presence Noted: Ray Reich, Building Commissioner

Dylan Minek, Planning and Community Development Administrator

Michael O'Shea, Law Director

Council Members Present: Michael O'Boyle, Ward 2

Chairman Bishop called to order the July 22, 2025, meeting of the Rocky River Planning Commission at 6:00 P.M. in City Council Chambers of Rocky River City Hall.

Mr. Bishop asked if there were any corrections to the Planning Commission meeting minutes of June 17, 2025. Mr. DeMarco moved to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Coyne seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays
Passed

Mr. Allen said on page 7, the first paragraph, the last sentence said, "Mr. Bishop and Mr. Allen said they are less considered about the one bedrooms than the studios." He thinks that it should be concerned rather than considered. Mr. Allen also said there is an applicant, Mr. Allen, and there is a commission member, Mr. Allen. The minutes should be distinguished between the two.

Mr. DeMarco moved to amend the previous motion per Mr. Allen's comments. Mr. Coyne seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays
Passed

Mr. Bishop asked if there were any corrections to the Planning Commission meeting minutes of June 26, 2025. Mr. DeMarco moved to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Coyne seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays
Passed

1. Joe's Deli – 19215 Hilliard Blvd. – Final Review – Parking lot expansion

Present – Tony Valore, Valore Builders

Mr. Bishop said it looks like he covered everything from the preliminary, the signage, the speed bump, and a couple of arborvitaes. Mr. Bishop said the minutes from the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals meeting said they approved it "with the 4' masonry wall," and he believes it should read "without the 4' masonry wall." Mr. Reich agreed.

Mr. Bishop moved to grant final approval to Joe's Deli, 19215 Hilliard Blvd, for a parking lot expansion. Mr. DeMarco seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays
Passed

2. Wald & Fisher INC – 20090 Center Ridge Rd. – Informal Discussion – The possibility of a new outlot at Rockport Shopping Center

Present – Mark Glick, Wald & Fisher

Mr. Glick said they wanted to get the Commission's thoughts on an additional outlot at Rockport Shopping Center. Wanted to keep the entrances and drive aisles the same. One drive aisle will be affected. The ingresses and egresses are untouched, the main drive aisles are untouched, but this does impact the third drive aisle, and what they deemed to be the least traveled.

Mr. Bishop said they are entitled to build there, assuming they have enough parking, depending on the type of tenant that would occupy that space. The type of use has an impact on the parking calculation, so just be mindful of that. Mr. Bishop said he believes they are overparked now, but they will be removing spaces. Burger King is not part of this property, and Mr. Bishop asked if that could be labeled next time in their submission. Mr. Bishop said that while they have Mr. Glick, if he could make a few comments about the center itself. Mr. Bishop said Sage Nails are parking at the rear door, and there is no fire lane there that prohibits parking at that rear door. There should be a fire lane back there. Mr. Glick said they will get that taken care of. Mr. Bishop said it looks like Pita Way has a dumpster outside the enclosure; it's in the southwest corner of the building.

Mr. DeMarco asked if the plan is to split the parcel. Mr. Glick said it is. Mr. DeMarco asked if the building would be one or two tenants. Mr. Glick said that at its current size, it would most likely be one tenant. Mr. DeMarco said the other similar outlot buildings along Center Ridge are oriented along Center Ridge, and it would be nice if this building did the same. When they come forward with any future submissions, the leasing diagram should include the square footage of each tenant and the parking associated, so the parking can be validated. Mr. Bishop asked if the parking calculations in each parcel number meet the code requirements. Mr. Glick said he would have to go back and see what easements they have. Mr. Allen said that Tomorrow Salon has a parking agreement to be able to use that lot as well. Mr. Glick said that the agreement has been terminated. Tomorrow Salon did not renew it.

3. The Foundry at Rocky River – 20325 Center Ridge Rd. – Final Review – Change of use from office to multi-family residential/ multi-family redevelopment

Present – Garrett Allen, Walter Haverfield
Scott Wallenhorst, HEART Design Group

Mr. Bishop said they received their Design and Construction Board of Review approval with some changes. Received Board of Zoning and Building Appeals approval as well. Mr. Bishop asked if they are waiting on signage. Mr. Wallenhorst said yes, and they will come back

sometime later this year when construction is ready to start. Mr. Bishop asked if “at Rocky River” will be used as part of the branding for the building. Mr. Wallenhorst said that is what they named it for the time being; it has not been finalized yet. Mr. DeMarco wanted to acknowledge that the Design and Construction Board of Review had them remove the screening element they proposed originally off the side of the building and place them within the existing window frames. Mr. DeMarco said the Porte Cor Sar has consistently been shown to be darker than the rest of the building, is that the case? Mr. Wallenhorst said the intent would be to have them in the darker color that is shown in the renderings.

Mr. DeMarco moved to grant final approval to The Foundry at Rocky River, 20325 Center Ridge Rd, with the one condition that they come back at some point for signage approval. Mr. Bishop seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays
Passed

4. Depot St. Development LLC – 19061 Depot St. – Sign Review – Signage type not permitted

Present – Tom Gillespie, Owner
Owen Gillespie, Owner’s son

Mr. Bishop asked if, since Mr. Tom Gillespie has purchased the property, has he changed the projecting sign on the building. Mr. Tom Gillespie confirmed that he did. Mr. Bishop said he was approved by both the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals and the Design and Construction Board of Review. He has a copy of those meeting minutes. According to the Design and Construction Board of Review minutes, a bronze color was to be added to the northeast elevation, existing garage door was to be painted copper red, existing man door was to be painted copper red, exterior brick was to be painted alabaster, and the exterior light fixtures were to be bronze. Mr. Tom Gillespie said they have a new color palette, and he gave it to Steve Jennings, Design and Construction Board of Review Chairman. Mr. Bishop said, regardless of whether Mr. Jennings saw it or not, it would have to be reviewed by the Design and Construction Board of Review for the new color palette. Mr. Bishop said that Mr. Reich told them that Mr. Tom Gillespie has not received his occupancy yet. Mr. Tom Gillespie said that it is true. Mr. Reich said it is not the Commission’s responsibility to address that. Mr. Bishop asked about the exhaust fan, as there has been concern voiced about the exhaust system. Mr. Tom Gillespie said it is the same exhaust fan that was there previously; he has not changed that.

Mr. Bishop said that what he is proposing is not in compliance. He can list them all off, but highly recommended that he look at Section 1193 in the Codified Ordinances for the city after this meeting. The sign would be interpreted as an outdoor wall sign. The street frontage would be Depot Street. Mr. Bishop said he does not have frontage on the east side of the building. Signage would not be allowed on the side of the building; it is only allowed on the street frontage, which would be Depot Street only. Mr. Bishop said the signable area can’t be calculated because the dimensions of the building have not been demonstrated. Mr. Bishop said there are unrelated areas of fluttering this this signage, it is not very attractive. Mr. Bishop said they don’t know the dimensions of his projecting sign, but it is limited to 6 square feet, it can only be 3’ off the wall,

and 10' above the sidewalk. That would need to be demonstrated. Mr. Bishop also said there are three elements of signage on the frontage. There is a projecting sign, the storage.com sign, and the logo sign. Mr. Bishop says the code only allows for one element of signage. Signage would require Design and Construction Board of Review approval and a permit. The code reads that wall signage should be fabricated and of good materials. Mr. Bishop would say this sign does not fall within that. He can have a mural, but it cannot have any commercial advertisement.

Mr. Tom Gillespie asked if he could apply for a variance. Mr. Reich said you can always apply for a variance. Like Mr. Bishop said, you have no frontage on Lake Road; your frontage is on Depot Street. Mr. Tom Gillespie said that it is hard to see from Lake Road. Mr. Bishop and Mr. Reich said that the solution to that would be the projecting sign. Mr. Tom Gillespie said he had over 20 examples of signage that were painted on the building, but the Commission did not want to see that because it does not change the fact that his signage is not compliant. Mr. Tom Gillespie said The Bank has signage that looks painted on. Mr. Bishop and Mr. Reich said, but it's not; it is individually mounted letters, and all of its signage is permitted. Mr. Reich said if he goes for a variance, not to bring those photos in because a precedent is not set when it comes to variance requests, it's a case-by-case basis. These minutes will be included so that the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals sees all that is being said about this signage. Mr. Reich said there are a couple a variances that they will need to get because there are three elements of signage of the Depot Street frontage, and that would need to be addressed. Mr. Bishop said this has to go in front of the Design and Construction Board of Review for the changes in the color palette as well.

Mr. Bishop said he doesn't know what they have that can be interpreted as a sign. Mr. DeMarco said if you read the definition of a sign, it says painted on. Mr. Bishop said it also says fabricated, and the stricter rule applies. Mr. Reich said if you read the definition of wall sign, it says affixed or attached to an outdoor wall. Mr. DeMarco said that when Mr. Tom Gillespie was here for his public hearing, they explicitly talked about signage. He acknowledged that he would paint a sign on the building, on the Depot Street elevation. The signage on Lake Road was never approved. Mr. DeMarco said the elements of signage should be consolidated into one area, but they need to be on the Depot Street elevation because that is his frontage. Mr. DeMarco would not support the variance.

Mr. Bishop said he would need to go to the Design and Construction Board of Review first to get the signage and color palette approved, and then go to the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals for the variance. You want to go to the Design and Construction Board of Review with a total package that shows the whole picture. Mr. Tom Gillespie said he wants to continue with what signage he already has. Mr. Bishop said he thinks his biggest issue is that he has a large, unprofessional-looking sign; if it were much smaller towards the top corner, it would be much more digestible. His chances of getting a variance might be higher in Mr. Bishop's opinion. Mr. Tom Gillespie said the painted sign would fit more with the period in which the building was constructed. The box sign or something that might match the code may not fit the time period of the building.

Mr. Tom Gillespie would like to withdraw.

Withdrawn

5. Planning Commission – DORAs, Designated Outdoor Refreshment Areas

Mr. Allen had an update on DORAs. Mr. Allen sent over an outline and examples of DORAs to Rich Snyder, Director of Public Safety-Service for the City of Rocky River. Mr. Snyder thought it was a great idea. Mr. Snyder said he was going to have a conversation with Kathryn Kerber, Director of Planning and Community Development, and George Lichman, Police Chief. Mr. Allen said he is going to sit down with him and have a conversation with Mr. Snyder eventually.

Mr. Bishop moved to go into an executive session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 to discuss a legal matter. Mr. Demarco seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays
Passed

Mr. Bishop moved to close the executive session. Mr. Demarco seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays
Passed

Mr. DeMarco moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bishop seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays
Passed

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.



William Bishop, Chairman



Michael DeMarco, Member

Date:  _____

