MERRILLVILLE PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026
6:30 PM

Plan Commission President Margaret Uzelac led the Meeting of the Merrillville Plan Commission at 6:30 PM to order and then led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance at the Merrillville Municipal Complex, 7820 Broadway, Merrillville, Indiana.

ROLL CALL:
Members in attendance were Mr. Brian Gong, Mr. Jeff Swike, Councilwoman Leona Chandler-Felton, Councilman Shawn Pettit, Mr. Kristopher Mellon, Plan Commission Vice President Brian Dering, and Plan Commission President Margaret Uzelac.

MINUTES: MARCH 17, 2026
Plan Commission Vice President Brian Dering made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilman Shawn Pettit.
There was a unanimous voice vote of 7 – 0 to approve the minutes.

COMMUNICATIONS:
NONE

COMMENTS FROM CHAIRMAN
NONE

OLD BUSINESS
NONE

1. **P5FS-0426 COSTCO WHOLESALE CORPORATION, PETITIONER AND OWNER**
   Located at 1420 E. 79th Avenue and 1500 E. 79th Avenue
   Request: Final (1) Lot Subdivision Approval on 1.968 Acres in a Planned Unit Development/C-3, Highway Commercial Zoning District
   Purpose: To Allow a Costco Employee Parking Lot

   Mr. Larry Dziurdzik of 1955 Raymond Drive, Northbrook, Illinois presented his petition to the Plan Commission.

   Plan Commission President Margaret Uzelac stated that the review for the lighting system, traffic control and the plans for the parking lot seem to be in order.

   Mr. Jeff Swike agreed that all the plans seem to be fine.

   Councilwoman Leona Chandler-Felton stated that the plans are good.

   Plan Commission Vice President Brian Dering inquired if the petitioner could have signage placed by Culvers restaurant that states “Pedestrian Crosswalk Ahead”.

   There was a discussion about if the sign could be placed in the right-of- way.

   Town Engineer Steve King stated that the signage could be placed in the right- of- way.

   Plan Commission Vice President Brian Dering stated that there was a discussion at a previous meeting if the petitioner could have shuttle buses for the employees, especially during harsh weather.

   Mr. Kristopher Mellon stated that the proposed project looks good.

   Councilman Shawn Pettit inquired if the ‘Waiver and Release’ document has been finalized, and who will need to sign the form.

   There was a discussion about who would need to sign the form: either the Town Manager or the Town Council President.

Building Director Sheila Shine read the staff report.

Mr. Bob Csanyi of Robinson Engineering stated that from the engineering point, the proposed project has everything in order.

Councilman Shawn Pettit made a motion to approve this petition. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Leona Chandler-Felton.
There was a unanimous voice vote of 7 – 0 to approve this petition.

2. P6Pp1-0426 NWI LINCOLN HIGHWAY PARTERS, LLC PETITIONER AND LAKE COUNTY TRUST COMPANY, AS TRUSTEE OF TRUST 5471, OWNER

Located at 7350 East U.S. 30 Highway
Request: Preliminary Planned Unit Development Approval on 20.04 Acres in C-3, Highway Commercial Zoning District
Purpose: To Allow a Commercial Auto-Plex

Mr. Nick Pannos presented his petition to the Plan Commission.

Mr. Brian Gong had no questions.

Mr. Jeff Swike had no questions.

Plan Commission Vice President Brian Dering stated that the plans and the proposed project looks good.

Mr. Kristopher Mellon spoke in favor of the proposed project.

Councilman Shawn Pettit stated this proposed project is in his ward and that this petition will need to be open for public comment.

Mr. Tim Jones, who lives near the proposed project site, inquired about the proposed project.

Mr. Nick Pannos explained to Mr. Tim Jones that the proposed project will have a fueling station, a convenience store, and the Auto Storage.

Councilman Shawn Pettit stated that there will be a shared road cut, and he inquired about the status of the frontage road.

Building Director Sheila Shine read the staff report.

Mr. Bob Csanyi of Robinson Engineering stated that he and the petitioners' engineers are working through the review process.

Councilman Shawn Pettit inquired if all eighteen points have been met for this petition.

Mr. Bob Csanyi of Robinson Engineering answered that yes, all eighteen items on the Preliminary Planned Unit development have been met.

Councilman Shawn Pettit asked Mr. Nick Pannos if his attorney has been in contact with Attorney Joseph Svetanoff or Attorney Ricardo Hall for the ordinance.

Mr. Nick Pannos stated that he and his attorney were waiting for comments before reaching out to the Town attorneys for the ordinance.

Councilman Shawn Pettit expressed that this PUD has 135 uses, and the petitioner is currently seeking two uses which are the convenience store and the classic car storage, which would lock the petitioner into the two uses

There was a discussion about the uses for this proposed project.

Plan Commission Vice President Brian Dering asked Attorney Ricardo Hall if the conditions for this petition could be stated as for this petitioner only, for this use only, and for this location only.

Attorney Ricardo Hall stated that he had that condition in mind.

Councilman Shawn Pettit made a motion to approve this petition. The motion was seconded by Plan Commission Vice President Brian Dering.
There was a unanimous voice vote of 7 – 0 to approve this petition.

3. P7Z1-0426 TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, PETITIONER AND CRP, LLC OWNER

Located at 6110 Broadway

Request: Zone Change Approval on 19.540 Acres in an M-2, Limited Industrial Corridor Overlay District

Purpose: To Allow a Zone Change from M-2, Limited Industrial Corridor Overlay District to C-2, Community Commercial Zoning District

Mr. Michael Griffin, Town Manager for Merrillville, presented the petition before the Plan Commission. He stated that eight years ago the zone was changed for this property.

Mr. Brian Gong agreed that the zoning should be returned back to what it was previously.

Mr. Jeff Swike agreed that the zoning needs to be restored back to the previous zoning.

Councilwoman Leona Chandler – Felton agreed that the zoning should be returned to the previous zoning.

Plan Commission Vice President Brian Dering agreed that the zoning for this property should be restored back to the previous zoning.

Mr. Kristopher Mellon agreed that the zoning should return to the previous zoning.

Councilman Shawn Pettit stated that he is in favor of restoring the zoning back to the previous zoning.

Mr. Kristopher Mellon made a motion to approve this petition. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Leona Chandler – Felton.
There was a unanimous voice vote of 7 - 0 to approve this petition.

4. P8A1-0426 AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA, PROVIDING THAT THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, LAKE, COUNTY, INDIANA, BE AMENDED BY REVISING CHAPTER 21 ENTITILED "ZONING" OF THE MERRILLVILLE MUNICIPAL CODE WITH REGARD TO SECTION 21-107 ENTITLED "C/I-S COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL SPECIAL DISTRICT

Councilman Shawn Pettit expressed that amending this ordinance will be a small step to clear up the ordinance.

Attorney Richard Anderson of Anderson and Anderson, 9211 Broadway, Merrillville, Indiana presented this amendment to the Plan Commission.

There was a discussion that this amendment requires a minimum of 200 acres, and that if a piece of property is under 200 acres, a petitioner could file for a Planned Unit Development petition.

Plan Commission Vice President Brian Dering inquired if the Town were to approve this Amendment, would the Town still have control for a petition with a project to say that a certain property is not an appropriate spot for that project.

Attorney Richard Anderson answered that when the property is rezoned, the Town would be able to specify a type of project/use.

Councilman Shawn Pettit stated that there are just a few properties in the Town that are zoned C/IS Commercial/Industrial Special District.

Plan Commission Vice President Brian Dering expressed that data centers can be beneficial for the Town, but he and the Plan Commission want to protect the residents.

There was a discussion about the acreage, and a PUD petition for a data center.

Plan Commission Vice President Brian Dering asked if the Plan Commission is adding the permitted use to the CIS district but is it only the data centers that are being held to the 200+ acre if it is a permitted use.

Councilman Shawn Pettit inquired if the CIS had an acreage requirement when the CIS was created.

Attorney Richard Anderson stated that the CIS did have an acreage requirement of 100 acres.

Plan Commission President Margaret Uzelac inquired about the noise level of a data center.

Attorney Richard Anderson stated that the decibel level should be in the Town ordinance.

There was a discussion that the Town might review and/or revise the noise ordinance.

OTHER BUSINESS
None

ADJOURNMENT
Councilman Shawn Pettit made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Plan Commission Vice President Brian Dering.
There was a unanimous voice vote of 7-0 to adjourn the meeting.
The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:12PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marie Wilson,
Recording Secretary