

**Town of Griffith  
Plan Commission  
September 15, 2025**

The September 15, 2025, Plan Commission meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Chairman Larry Ballah, with members, Rob Bubala, Dave Maglish, Rick Ryfa, Dan Blount. Also present was Attorney Bob Schwed, Engineer Jake Ballah, Building Commissioner Veronica Horka. Absent were members, Jim Marker and Larry Stassin.

Minutes from August 18, 2025, meeting were approved as written.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Item #1 Indi Homes 200 LLC; 1001 E 40<sup>th</sup> Pl., Preliminary Site Plan Review; MOU to build townhomes.**  
**Mr. Maglish made a motion** to grant a continuance to the meeting on October 20, 2025, due to engineering.  
**Motion was seconded by Mr. Bubala. All favored, motion carried.**

**Item #2 Westpark Development; Turnberry Phase 2 – Update.**

Mr. Kovich appeared before the Commission to provide an update regarding infrastructure improvements (haul route, mass grading and site utilities). Mr. Kovich stated that there have been modifications due to the amount of soil loads. Mr. Ballah asked if Mr. Kovich was looking for approval for number of loads into a public subdivision. Mr. Kovich replied yes. Mr. Ryfa stated that his request should go through the Board of Zoning Appeals. Mr. Kovich stated that, according to the town code, deliveries can be made through residential areas. Mr. Ryfa asked what code that was, Mr. Kovich was unaware. Mr. Ryfa suggested that Mr. Kovich sites the code he is referring to, maybe a variance wouldn't be required. Mr. Kovich then proposed a discussion with the Plan Commission attorney, so another month won't pass. Mr. Ryfa stated that Mr. Kovich is entitled to that type of meeting. Mr. Larry Ballah requested that Mr. Kovich submit his proposal and a meeting can be scheduled. Mr. Ryfa said that there is a cost associated with that type of special meeting. Mr. Kovich asked in the future if the Town would be crossing the bike path and wetland so construction can cross over. Mr. Ryfa replied that it was the plan, and the financial issue is what the town is concerned about, and the town may take over the pipelines. Mr. Ryfa said that the rights-of-way were in line, and the Town is waiting on wetland permits. Mr. Ryfa said that a decision will hopefully be made in approximately (60) days as to what direction the Town is headed. Resident, Ray White; 613 Edinburg Dr., had an open discussion as to how he is disappointed with the project. Mr. Maglish asked if there was any feedback from the residents in the area and Mr. Kovich said, "No.

**Item #3 Vennequity Lake Shore LLC, by Gary Warfel; Rensselaer Place. Final Approval to rezone the property from R2 to a PUD for the construction of 3 duplex homes and 1 quadplex home. Mr. Bubala made a motion** to grant a continuance to the October 20, 2025, meeting due to engineering. **Motion was seconded by Mr. Maglish. All favored, motion carried.**

**Item #4 Vennequity Lake Shore LLC, by Gary Warfel; Rensselaer Place. Final Approval on a 4-lot subdivision for the construction of 3 duplex homes and 1 quadplex home. Mr. Bubala made a motion** to grant a continuance to the October 20, 2025, meeting due to engineering. **Motion was seconded by Mr. Blount. All favored, motion carried.**

**Item #5 100 N Colfax LLC, by Jeff Austgen; Final Site Plan Review for the construction of a new commercial office building.** Kevin Coros, McMahon Architects Project Manager, appeared before the Commission on behalf of Jeff Austgen. Mr. Coros stated the Board of Zoning Appeals granted a Developmental Variance on the amount of parking spaces that are required. Mr. Ballah questioned the conversation that was brought up at the BZA meeting by another resident. Mr. Coros stated there was not an issue as the concerns brought up have nothing to do with this project. Mr. Ryfa asked what was going to be done with this property. Mr. Coros stated that they are building to suit whomever rents the property or it will be a contractor flex space. Mr. Coros stated due to the (2) overhead doors – (1) on the north side, and (1) on the south side, there is limited parking spaces. Mr. Coros stated if the renter does not want the overhead doors, parking would not be affected. Mr. Maglish asked if there was going to be any green area between the north and the south as a buffer. Mr. Coros replied, "Yes there would be green space, and all existing green areas would remain the same. Mr. Coros also stated that all storm water infrastructure is located on the north side. Mr. Bubla asked if there were any engineering issues. Mr. Jake Ballah replied, no. Mr. Ryfa asked if there were any changes to the site plans since the last meeting and Mr. Coros replied, no. **Mr. Bubala made a motion** to grant a Final Site Plan approval for the construction of a new commercial office building. **Motion was seconded by Mr. Maglish. All favored, motion carried.**

**Item #6 The Ross Group; 312 Woodlawn Ave., Final Site Plan Review to review proposed site changes to the existing parking lot (landscape & stormwater).** David Tiemens, Stevens Engineering, appeared before the Commission, on behalf of The Ross Group. Mr. Tiemens stated that comments were received after last month's meeting from the town engineer and all items have been addressed. Mr. Tiemens stated that this project is to relocate the driveway, add an additional row of parking spaces, interior building improvements,



significant landscaping improvements and drainage improvements. Mr. Tiemens said that there will be no exterior building additions or improvements. Mr. Larry Ballah asked Mr. Jake Ballah if he needed to further look at the plans. Mr. Jake Ballah replied, no and requested to have a discussion with Mr. Tiemens afterwards. **Mr. Ryfa made a motion** to grant a Final Site Plan approval for proposed site changes to the existing parking lot (landscape & stormwater). **Motion was seconded by Mr. Maglish. All favored, motion carried.**

**Item #7 Duneland Group: 305 W. Ridge Rd., by Charlie Ray, Preliminary Site Plan Review for the construction of an automotive service station.** Owner has acquired additional property to the south, would like to be removed from the agenda. **Mr. Bubala made a motion** to remove Petitioner from agenda. **Motion was seconded by Mr. Maglish. All favored, motion carried.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Item #1 Best Tires: 611 E. Main St., by James Berry, for Change of Use for Vehicle Sales at current business.** James Berry appeared before the Commission. Mr. Berry stated that he would like to have the ability to add vehicles sales to his current business location. Mr. Larry Ballah asked if there was parking available for these vehicles and Mr. Berry replied, yes. Mr. Berry said he would like to keep (5) vehicles on the property for sale. Mr. Berry stated that he is renting the lot next to his business to stage the vehicles that need to be worked on. Mr. Ryfa asked if he has a clear perimeter for staging. Mr. Berry replied yes and the vehicles would be behind the dumpster area and where they are located on the map provided. Mr. Schwerd stated that if this Change of Use is for Mr. Berry to only have (5) vehicles for sale at a time, he would like Mr. Jake Ballah to create a legal description of where the vehicles can be located. Mr. Ryfa stated that the number of vehicles should not be limited if Mr. Berry has the area to store them Mr. Berry said that he would also apply for a new business license for a name change to his business. **Mr. Ryfa made a motion** to grant Change of Use to add used cars sales, provided that the vehicle sales occur in the area described on the map Mr. Berry provided. **Motion was seconded by Mr. Maglish. All favored, motion carried.**

**Item #2 Jessica Nix: Central Park, 600 N. Broad St., Preliminary Site Plan Review for Central Park Ball Field Improvements.** Anthony Terzarial, Griffith Park Board member, appeared before the Commission. Mr. Terzarial stated the project would include the following improvements: all (3) fields would receive updated surface treatments, turf infields for major and minor fields, updated concessions, press box modernization, new fencing and dugout shelters. The existing playground area will be improved to cater to 2-5-year-old children. There will also be improvements to the underground drainage system, sporting level lighting, PA system enhancements, pedestrian and American Disability Act compliance walkways. Mr. Terzarial stated that the project timeline would go as follows; bidding to start at the end of October, bids due end of November, contract will be awarded mid-December, construction would begin as early as spring 2026 and final completion of the project to be October 2026. Mr. Terzarial stated for the 2026 season, Babe Ruth will be playing all games in Schererville, and all T-ball will be played at St. Mary's. Mr. Larry Ballah asked if the fields are big enough to host tournaments. Mr. Terzarial stated their intention is to try to generate some tournaments, but with only having (2) diamonds it will be hard to accommodate large tournaments. Mr. Terzarial said that the board has also had discussions about softball playing there because pitching mounds are removable. **Mr. Bubala made a motion** to grant Preliminary Site Plan approval for Central Park Ball Field Improvements. **Motion was seconded by Mr. Maglish. All favored, motion carried.**

**Item #3 Jesus Loe: 221 W. Ridge Rd., by Don Torrenza – Torrenza Engineering, Preliminary Site Plan Review for El Michoacano Restaurant.** Don Torrenza, Torrenza Engineering, appeared before the Commission, on behalf of Jesus Loe. Mr. Torrenza stated this is the old United Way building and it is east of Dairy Queen. Mr. Torrenza stated there has been an issue with ingress and egress on the site. Mr. Torrenza said they want to take a portion of the building down to create enough room on the west side of the building for two-way traffic. Mr. Torrenza stated that there will be modifications to the building and parking lot. There is also a proposed detention area at the back of the property. Mr. Torrenza stated that the utilities to service the building are all present. Mr. Larry Ballah asked if the storm water detention area has been designed. Mr. Torrenza said that the storm water detention area is designed, and everything that Mr. Jake Ballah asked for has been taken care of except for the Town of Griffith standards that should be used on this project. Mr. Ryfa asked when the project would begin. Mr. Loe stated as soon as they can get approval he would like to start on the project. Mr. Ryfa asked if everything in gray, on the drawings, was Mr. Loe's property, Mr. Torrenza said yes. Mr. Torrenza stated that during the construction, they are making a two-way, in and out, entrance. Mr. Maglish asked how wide the two-way entrance would be. Mr. Torrenza stated 23' to split each way – building to curb. Linda Angel, owner of Dairy Queen located at 221 W. Ridge Rd., asked what the definition of a 1' wide curb cut is. Mr. Torrenza replied that it is a 1' curb cut as requested by Mr. Jake Ballah due to foreseeable storm water problems and any water that falls on to the Dairy Queen property that cannot get to the drainage could drain onto Mr. Loe's property. Ms. Angel asked if there were going to be any trees removed and Mr. Torrenza said that a lot of trees will be removed, but only the necessary ones. Ms. Angel asked if 23' is the standard for ingress and egress and Mr. Torrenza stated that there is not a standard for that. Ms. Angel inquired with NIPSCO about the pole and was told that it will not be moved, per NIPSCO. Mr. Jake Ballah stated that he would like to review the plans before Final Site approval. Mr. Ryfa asked if Mr. Jake Ballah saw any adverse issues occurring on the adjacent property with this development. Mr. Jake Ballah stated that from a quick look he did not see any issues. **Mr. Ryfa made a motion** to grant Preliminary Site Plan approval for El Michoacano Restaurant. **Motion was seconded by Mr. Bubala. All favored, motion carried.** Petitioner, Jesus Loe, asked the Plan Commission to suspend the rules to grant Final Site Plan approval. **Mr. Ryfa made a motion** to suspend the rules. **Motion was seconded by Mr. Bubala. All favored, motion carried.** **Mr. Larry Ballah made a motion** for roll call vote. Larry Ballah – in



favor, Rob Bubala – in favor, Dave Maglish – in favor, Rick Ryfa – in favor, Dan Blount – in favor. **Mr. Larry Ballah made a motion** to grant Final Site Plan approval for El Michoacano Restaurant contingent upon plan engineer conditions and attorney approval. **Motion was seconded by Mr. Bubala. All favored, motion carried.**

**Item #4 Mance Consulting, LLC/Greg Mance: 200 W. Avenue B, Request permission to advertise for a Public Hearing to rezone from OS; Open Space to I1; Light Industrial.** Greg Mance appeared before the Commission. Mr. Torrenga presented the Commission with drawings of the proposed storage area. Mr. Mance said this property could be used as a sawmill to cut lumber or could be used as an equestrian facility which could produce a lot of dust. Mr. Mance stated that he is proposing a change to light industrial to put up outdoor storage for motor homes, trailers and boats as there is a need for this in the community. Mr. Mance said that there are currently only a few RV storage areas, but they are at full capacity and that is an issue for the community. Mr. Mance stated that this would have a minimal impact on the community and would provide revenue for the Town. Mr. Larry Ballah asked if access to the piece of property is down Avenue B, but the actual easement ends just to the west of Griffith Blvd. Mr. Torrenga said that he was correct, and the Right-of-Way for Avenue B ends at Griffith Blvd., from that point on it is owned partially by Mr. Mance and the other existing homeowner. Mr. Mance is willing to dedicate a 15' Right-of-Way and Marathon Pipeline has been contacted through their real estate agent, which they are currently in the process of reviewing. Mr. Torrenga said that he added an additional Right-of-Way request from the Pipeline to the water tower and there is only verbal approval at this point. Mr. Bubala asked how many spots would be available for storage and Mr. Mance replied (67). Mr. Schwerd told Mr. Mance he would need a letter from Marathon Pipeline stating that he has their permission to rezone that part of the property. **Mr. Ryfa made a motion** to advertise for a Public Hearing to rezone from OS; Open Space to I1; Light Industrial. **Motion was seconded by Mr. Blount. All favored, motion carried.**

#### COMMUNICATIONS

None

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Plan Commission, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

  
Larry Stassin, Secretary

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Tricia Hanrath, Recording Secretary

