PLAN COMMISSION MEETING

August 14th, 2025

President John Alessia called the meeting to order at 7:00. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and a moment of silence was held. Recording Secretary, Dianna Cade called the roll. The members answering the roll call were Greg White, John Alessia, Manny Frausto, Daniel Smith, Shane Lawrence and Jim Konradi. Shane Tucker was absent. Also, present was Rich Oman, Director of Planning and Development and Town Attorney Nicole Bennett.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Mr. Konradi made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from June 12th, 2025, and seconded by Mr. White and carried by a voice call vote of all ayes.

NEW BUSINESS:

PC 25-010 – PUD ordinance, plan and preliminary plat Boulder Ridge.
Attorney Bennett stated for the record there is a typo in the docket number for this petition. It should be 25-010.

Kevin Paszko, OLTHOF Homes, 8051 Wicker Ave., St. John, IN

He is seeking an approval for a PUD plan, ordinance and preliminary plat for Boulder Ridge project.

The project was approved for rezone on May 8th, 2025. Since then, OLTHOF has been working with staff on engineering plans. OLTHOF is working on updating a few of the comments from the staff on the engineering plans. They will be submitted by next week. Mr. Paszko stated he would like to address the parking restriction for the townhome area at the northwest corner. Staff including EMS had requested that there be no parking on Timber Lane and Everstone St. in the extreme NW corner of the project. OLTHOF has written this into the PUD ordinance and submitted a formal request to the town council to consider an amendment to ordinance #72.03 to schedule of parking spaces to include this area for enforcement purposes. Discussion on additional parking spaces that were provided by OLTHOF for this area.

Mr. Oman stated they are following all town standards. They are not requesting any waivers. President Alessia asked if the density has changed. Mr. Oman stated it has not changed. Parking was added to townhome area.

President Alessia, read the rules of a public hearing. He opened the public hearing.

Tracy Centano, 401 Dogwood, Lowell, IN. Mr. Centano stated he could not hear. He stated he came to the meeting to hear about the houses off Belshaw and would like to know where this subdivision is that is being discussed currently. President Alessia explained what the petition for PC 25-010 entailed. Mr. Centano asked how many houses are being proposed for this subdivision. Mr. Paszko stated 354 houses. Mr. Centano stated, and Kingston Ridge has a lot of homes being built and there is one going up off Belshaw. He asked the commission how many houses they are going to build. The town does not have the infrastructure and traffic planning. President Alessia asked Mr. Oman to discuss the engineering, traffic process for each new proposed subdivision. Mr. Oman discussed those topics. Mr. Oman asked Mr. Centano what his concern was. Mr. Centano stated overpopulation and overconcentration. He discussed his other concerns. Discussion.

No further remonstrances for or against we heard in person. The online participants did not respond when asked if they wished to speak. Public hearing was closed.

Mr. White made a motion to send a favorable recommendation of PC 25-010, Boulder Ridge, PUD ordinance, preliminary plat and plan to the town council and seconded by Mr. Lawrence and carried with a roll call vote of all ayes.

PC #25-011 – **Rezone** - Approx. 18572 Clark St. and Approx North Portion of 5460 Belshaw Add lot 1- 11.34 acres AKA: Parcel 45-19-25-426-001.000-008 and Approx North portion (11.34 acres) Parcel #45-19-25-451-004.000-008. Petition to request a rezone from R1 (Residential) and R3 (Residential) to PUD (Planned Unit Development) on a parcel within the Town boundaries of Lowell. Petition has been filed by Schilling Development, St., PO Box 677, St. John, IN 46373.
Parcel 1 – Approx - 18572 Clark St., 45-19-25-426-001.000-008 (78 acres) Current zone is R1
Parcel 2 – 5460 Belshaw, 45-19-25-451-004.000-008 (11.34 acres) Current zone is R3

Mr. Jack Slager, Schilling Development, Po Box 677, St. John, IN 46356. Mr. Salger stated he represents S&W Holdings. He stated he presented the project to the Commission in February. He stated they meet with staff several times since then. Mr. Slager continued, he met with the neighboring parcel owners, Journey Church, and entered a purchase contract for the back portion of their parcel that was unused by them. That is why there are additional parcel numbers, and the zoning does not match. He is here tonight to petition for a PUD rezone. There will be three distinct products in the community. Mr. Slager stated the single-family homes are indicated in purple on the exhibit that was provided prior to the meeting. The single-family homes are along the perimeter of all the existing single-family homes to the north. Maintenance free single-family homes (AKA: cottage homes) are in the center of the parcel and paired villas between the church and the school. There is an entrance out East onto Clark, one on the south to Belshaw. There will be a connection to the neighboring development. And a connection to the development to the north. The project will be phased out for 5-6 years. Approximately 30-40 lots a phase. Mr. Slager stated a layout for the project had been provided for the Commission prior to the meeting. He asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Oman stated the original layout did not have the same type zoning products matching up with existing products in the neighboring developments. The maintenance free homes are in the middle of the subdivision not touching anyone. Paired villas are up against the church and Stone Mill's townhomes. The connections are being made there are no dead-end streets. Connection on Clark, Belshaw and all four directions.

President Alessia opened up the public hearing. No remonstrances were heard in person. There were participants listening in on zoom. Mr. Oman and President Alessia asked those viewers if they wished to speak and no response was heard. President Alessia closed the public hearing.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Oman to explain why the PUD is preferred compared to the way they are currently zoned. Mr. Oman stated the current zoning is R1 or R2 which is restrictive to single family homes. The products that are being presented are single family cottage homes or paired villas. R1 and R2 does not allow these types of homes. PUD allows multiple zones in one development. The underlying zoning is what they are asking for. The maintenance free homes are on a smaller lot size, and we do not have zoning that allows that. The PUD allows a variety of homes. President Alessia stated the council likes the PUD because it allows the town to have input on what product is where. This way there are similar types of houses back-to-back with the same. Discussion.

President Alessia stated that there was a letter received from Rena Glover at 5281 Southview Dr, in Lowell, IN. He stated her letter was written in opposition to the project and a copy was forwarded to the Commission members. This letter will be entered into the record.

Mr. Konradi made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to the town council for PC 25-011, property located at Approx. 18572 Clark St. and Approx North Portion of 5460 Belshaw Add 1, Hickory Ridge subdivision, to PUD zoning, seconded by Mr. Lawrence and carried with a roll call vote of all ayes.

Mr. White made a motion to approve the staff report as the Findings of Fact, seconded by Mr. Konradi and carried with a roll call of all ayes

Mr. White made a motion to accept the staff report as the Findings of Fact, for PC 25-010, Boulder Ridge, PUD Plan and ordinance, seconded by Mr. Lawrence and carried with a roll call vote of all ayes.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

DISCUSSSION:

Attorney Nathan Vis, and Dave Lee MTI Service Center. He passed out a presentation package for the Commission.
Attorney Vis stated they are here for a study session to get some feedback on the feasibility of petitioning for a rezone or use variance request to build an auto service center on an available location in Lowell.

Attorney Vis stated his client owns and operates two existing service centers known as MTI. He discussed the locations of these two service centers. He stated he had been searching for a location in Lowell for some time. This is a great location for them, with high visibility and good access. It is currently zoned PB. In order to operate a mechanic's shop, it would need to be zoned B2. He discussed the location of the possible new building for this shop. He discussed the existing surrounding zoning classes.

Attorney Vis referring to the photo in the package, he passed out discussing the building footprint and stated they are aesthetically pleasing. He discussed the concept plan of the shop they would build in Lowell including ingress and egress. He discussed the pros they feel this shop would bring to the complex. He stated they had spoken with the owner of the complex and one of the stipulations would be a height limit on any new buildings on this vacant parking lot. The business would employ 6-8 people. The company provides light automotive repair work with nothing scheduled late at night. He stated they could either go a rezone route or a variance.

President Alessia asked if the owner of the lot and the complex are the same. Mr. Lee stated yes, it is Regency. Mr. Konradi asked if the proposed building was the same size as his existing ones. Mr. Lee stated yes, it is identical. The other two are 5,472 sq ft buildings. They all would have an identical layout. The aesthetics would be like the building in Cedar Lake. Mr. Konradi asked if the traffic would be allowed to go through on the frontage road. Mr. Lee stated yes. He does not feel the traffic would be an issue. The volume of customers would be a lot less than if this space was a fast-food restaurant. Attorney Vis stated the town, and their engineer would need to discuss if there should be a calming driving mechanism through the lot in the front stretch. Mr. White stated he did some measuring at other complexes in the region that have business in front of the main tenant. He stated the secondary businesses were located at least 500 feet from the road. He stated this proposed building would be 250 feet. He continued he would need to see a comprehensive plan on the schematics of the entire parking lot for the complex and the upgrades that would be made including lighting and traffic. Mr. White stated without that in his opinion this would not be a good site for this business or any additional new buildings on this lot. He stated this business is a great idea for the town. All the interested property owners within this complex need to be a part of the discussion about future growth within the lot including Strack's and the dentist's office. Attorney Vis stated there are no other lots within this parcel. Mr. White stated that it could change. The stakeholders would all have to be privy to future growth expansion. Mr. White discussed the road cut entrance off Route 2 and the problems that this unstructured entrance causes. A plan is needed before this area is regenified. Attorney Vis stated the difficulty for his client is that he has no control over the property. President Alessia stated he thinks Greg is spot on. He agrees that there are traffic issues. Discussion. Mr. White discussed the stormwater route from the high school which drains into the pond behind this complex. He stated stormwater issues need to be addressed also. Discussion. Attorney Vis stated what would Regency need to do. Mr. Oman, and President Alessia stated traffic pattern would need to change. Attorney Bennett stated is it a fair representation from the Plan Commission and staff that this would be the consensus regardless of what business was interested in building in this lot? Yes, is heard around the Commission. Attorney Bennett stated any development in this lot would have to address the same comments from the Commission and staff. Mr. White stated there is a need for this type of business in town but this site at this time without looking at it a little more comprehensively. Attorney Bennett asked if any calculations were done on parking spaces. Mr. Oman stated no. Discussion.

John Terpstra, Crown Point Christian School - John Terpstra, 4393 Willard Ln, Lowell, IN.

Mr. Terpstra stated he is here to represent Crown Point Christian, St. John, IN as a member of the enrollment expansion task force. He discussed the large number of children on the wait list. He read off a typed presentation packet that he passed out to the Commission members. He stated the location of the proposed new school location which is described as Route 2 and Austin St consisting of 44 acres, and zoned AG. He stated the project would be done in phases. First phase would carry 170 students' pre-k- 8th grade. When completed the school could hold 450-900 students. They did three years of study on locations. He discussed stormwater release/detention. They realize the importance of queuing cars for drop off and pickup. He discussed the proposed driveway. There would be 240 parking spaces. Future development would be athletic spaces and an additional 75 parking spaces. Single entry at SW boundary of parcel and additional at NW boundary both spilling over to Austin. Their intention is to divert their traffic out of the Carriage Crossing Sub. The package that was passed out is preliminary only with potential modifications being made from the school EMS and staff comments. The school would love a meaningful partnership with the community and surrounding neighbors to share outdoor venues and open spaces. They are proposing a PUD development. Discussion.

Mr. White stated he is a snowplow driver in the winter, and Longwood St. would need to go all the way through to Austin St for access. This would also benefit EMS. He stated it cannot stay a dead-end a cul-de-sac is a possibility. Mr. Terpstra stated you would request that Longwood extend on their parcel and divert north onto Austin. Mr. White stated yes, it could swing north. Discussion. Mr. Konradi stated it should be connected to all surrounding subdivisions. Mr. White stated no more dead ends. Connectivity is a must. Mr. Terpstra stated they used Manhard Engineering. President Alessia asked if the fields would be lighted. Discussion. Mr. Lawrence asked if they would change in name. Mr. Terpstra stated yes, it is still being discussed. Mr. Lawrence asked if the school was for sure only going to be up to 8th grade. Mr. Terpstra stated the plan is for 8th grade only. That could change if the demand is seen as a need. Mr. Terpstra stated he believes a high school would not fit on this site. Mr. Lawrence asked if the teachers had to be certified through the state of Indiana. Mr. Terpstra stated yes. Mr. White is the school will accept vouchers. Mr. Terpstra stated yes. Discussion. Mr. White asked if the school would be willing to discuss regional ponding. Discussion. Mr. Lawrence stated that Austin will be a traffic nightmare. Mr. Terpstra stated they are projecting opening for the 2027/2028 school year.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Nothing further is heard in person or online.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on September 11th, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

With no further comments or questions, Mr. White made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15pm, seconded by Mr. Lawrence and carried by a voice vote of all ayes.

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John Alessia, President	Manny Frausto, Secretary