CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, June 15, 2026

BOARD MEMBERS:
Valeriano Gomez, President
Lilia Ramos, Vice-President
Lydia Lopez, Secretary
Marino Solorio, Commissioner
Stacy Winfield, Commissioner
Jaylen Johnson, Commissioner
Grayling Gordon, Commissioner
Hashem Alhashem, Commissioner

STAFF:
Tracy Ailes
Eduardo Fontanez

Reported for Fissinger & Associates, Ltd.
By: Peggy S. LaLonde, court reporter

Call to Order: 4:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Present in Chambers: Val Gomez, Lydia Lopez, Lilia Ramos, Grayling Gordon, Jaylan Johnson, Stacy Winfield, Hashem Alhashem, Mario Solorio

STAFF - Present in Chambers: Tracy Ailes

MR. GOMEZ: Good afternoon everyone. I would like to call to order the Plan Commission meeting for Monday, June 15th, 2026. We do have a quorum.

First on the agenda is approval of the minutes from June 1st, 2026, as written. I would make a motion to approve the minutes as written.

MS. RAMOS: Second.

MR. GOMEZ: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. GOMEZ: Motion carries.

Move to New Business. We have three projects on the agenda; Windy Hill Enterprise Renovation 405 East 151st Street, RC Development new construction single family home at 4405 Elm Street, Prairie Crossing, and the other one is at 4142 Magoun.

And for the record, Commissioner Solorio is now here.

Under New Business, Marino?

MR. SOLORIO: So this project went through Tech Review. I don't think really there were any big issues. It's a standard home. What we would like is, if the Planning Commission approves it, it's approving it to be able to replicate in other parts of the City, as long as it meets the setbacks and things like that. This is pretty much the style to build. It won't be in any place that doesn't meet kind of the same type of aesthetics. This is really for like Prairie Crossing and some other areas where we would like to put this.

But, for example, this wouldn't go like in a new addition where there are smaller homes and it doesn't fit the context. But we are looking to get this design approved, that way, for the record, we would just come back to the Planning Commission and state whatever else, where this would go. And we would, Planning Department individually, will make sure that the setbacks and everything else is met. It's a good project and they are looking to -- I think it started this year at some point. So this is just a formal process.

And so they are being hired by the City to build this. So this is technically a City project through a developer that we have sought out for this development. Also, it does meet the covenant for that area.

So as many of you may know, Prairie Crossing has a covenant of like materials that can and can't be used, the square footage, things like that. It does meet all of those requirements also.

MR. GOMEZ: Questions?

MS. WINFIELD: Did it pass Tech Review?

MR. SOLORIO: Yes.

MR. GOMEZ: Any other questions or comments? (None) You want to go to the next home or do you want to make a motion separately?

MR. SOLORIO: I think they should be separate motions for sure.

MR. GOMEZ: There being no more questions or comments, I'd like to make a motion approving Prairie Crossing new single family home at 4405 Elm Street, with the stipulation this will be a replica project in the City so long as it meets these other conditions in that location.

MS. WINFIELD: Second.

MR. GOMEZ: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. GOMEZ: Motion carries.

We'll go to 4142 Magoun.

MR. SOLORIO: So this project here, initially there was some conditions or some situations that we, as a Tech Review, felt that should be alleviated. From what I understand, they have been.

Initially the property or the home was going to be built up about six inches. It was the advisement of the Tech Review to leave it at grade because it would cause probably substantial flooding issues for the neighbor and the alley. It's already susceptible for that already because it's already flooding on that alley.

So it was discussed that the house will be brought back to grade with no issues or changes in the grade, where those issues then would not exist per se, the way that we were cautioning. For the most part the house does meet the code. It meets the height requirement. There are no conditions to materials or anything like that there. It's a massive property and it's also a massive house for that property.

But, you know, aesthetically and based on the current code, the setbacks -- I think that was another thing, that it was off by a quarter of a foot. So we had them move it a quarter of a foot to meet the setbacks since it is a corner lot. Corner lots require the same setbacks at front, setback on both sides regardless of the house. In one way or another you have to meet the front setbacks for both sides. And so thank God he has a lot of land so he can move it. There is plenty of room.

We do advise for approval of this project and hopefully we see this house go up pretty soon.

MS. AILES: The orientation?

MR. SOLORIO: So, the orientation is facing 142nd and the address would then change to be identified as a 142nd address versus Magoun that it currently is addressed as. And we can talk to you about how to do the process with the Post Office, Post Master.

MS. WINFIELD: Is there a basement? Is there going to be a basement to that house?

MS. AILES: Do you want to speak on the project?

MR. SOLORIO: State your name for the record.

MR. LaCOSTA: I'm Rick LaCosta and I'm with RC Development. Marino, I had something else I wanted to talk about, kind of a development that came up after the Tech Review regarding the grade.

To answer your question, it's a tri-level. There is a partial basement. It will be a slab about three and a half feet below grade. So we checked the water table, because the Harvey's have had a couple sole borings, and we were a couple feet above the water table.

MS. WINFIELD: Thank you.

MR. LaCOSTA: And I spoke to DVG yesterday regarding a couple issues. First of all, to have them push the house back three feet so we meet the 25-foot setback line on 142nd.

And then the second one was regarding elevation.

So, I told them we wanted to bring this back down to the original site plan. So the problem there was that they recommend no less than two percent pitch away from the house. When we lowered it down to the original elevation, we met it everywhere but the northwest corner, pitching towards the northwest, and the elevations were only at 1.2 percent. So I think we were about ten inches higher, but I think about seven feet. So when you calculate that slope, it was about 1.2 percent. In order to meet that requirement of two percent, we are going to have to raise it a little bit.

Again, I just found out about this yesterday that's why I didn't bring it earlier, but we'll have to raise it up.

MR. SOLORIO: A half inch, an inch?

MR. LaCOSTA: I don't know, maybe 3 or 4 inches. I'm kind of shooting from the hip here. I didn't get to discuss with them in terms of how much we had to raise it. So I'll get ahold of them and find out, how high do we need to raise it so we have the two percent shown in that northwest corner. They are just not comfortable with a 1.2 percent slope.

MR. SOLORIO: My question is, when you came to us and discussed that they were -- they had no issue with not changing the grade. Did they not think about that, I guess at that point?

MR. LaCOSTA: Well, they weren't challenged. I don't think they were challenged with it, because when Tech Review notes came back, I sent them those notes to them. I said, this is what Dennis Korshak has said. What is your position on minimum slope? Well, we need no less than two percent. I said okay. What is the percentage in that northwest corner? They came back and said 1.2 percent.

MR. SOLORIO: My other question would be, does the whole site have to be picked up? Why not create a berm on the one side to recreate that slope?

MR. LaCOSTA: Well, the whole house will -- probably it depends on how much of the foundation we want to leave exposed.

MR. SOLORIO: That's my point. It's a tri-level, so as a tri-level you are going to have some exposure, a foot, foot and a half, because you are not necessarily going that full three-foot.

MR. LaCOSTA: We'll factor that in and we will raise it -- you don't want to raise it so much where you are actually touching the siding. You have to leave some exposed foundation.

MR. SOLORIO: I understand that.

MR. LaCOSTA: We'll raise the grade such that until we can't, till we have a minimal amount of foundation exposed, and maybe that will get us where we need to be. So that will all be worked out with DVG here in the next couple of days.

MR. SOLORIO: So, I guess for today's motion, it should be conditional to making sure that they meet the criteria that we first were discussing in terms of the elevation and the problematic flooding that could possibly happen.

So, I think as long as it meets that, if it doesn't cause that, then we would have a motion to approve with that condition.

MR. GOMEZ: The condition being the revised planning.

MR. SOLORIO: Revised grade plan.

MR. LaCOSTA: Okay. As soon as I get it then what do I need to do, see Tracy with that?

MR. SOLORIO: We'll get back to you. Let's see if the motion carries first and then gets approved, then we'll go from there.

So, again, the motion would be to approve the project conditional to approved grade plan, a new grading plan.

MR. GOMEZ: Okay. Any other questions or comments?

MR. GORDON: I'll second the motion.

MR. GOMEZ: Hold on. There being no further questions or comments, I'd like to make a motion approving the plan subject to approval of the revised grading plan.

MR. GORDON: I'll second that motion.

MR. GOMEZ: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. GOMEZ: Motion carries.

MR. SOLORIO: I'll get back to you.

MR. GORDON: I thought Marino was actually making the motion but he was explaining the motion.

MR. GOMEZ: Windy Hill Renovation? They are not here.

MS. AILES: Nobody appeared.

MR. GOMEZ: So that concludes our New Business. Any other comments from the Commissioners or the Public?

MR. SOLORIO: I'll just mention something. So we are coming to this Board pretty soon, if not this following week, but the following meeting, to start going over revising the C3 Ordinance on Main Street and replicating the C3 on this downtown. We are making changes of what is not working in that downtown, so we make sure what we approve for this downtown, that it is going to work the way that we need it to work.

Specifically there are a lot of businesses that aren't allowed in the C3 District currently in the North Harbor that we feel makes no sense. One of them is like a doctor's office cannot be on the first floor, that makes no sense. Banquet halls, that doesn't make sense. There are some things that we do agree with. So like liquor stores, bars, specific to just bars, that was kind of the demise of that downtown to begin with.

We are making some changes that would make that downtown flourish a little bit better just because limitation is causing havoc with anyone opening a business, such as a doctor's office or even a regular office, an architect office or studio requires you to go through a variance. That's a tedious process. It's costly. And in real estate, in business, time is money, and that's the killer of all development. And so we want to make sure we make it as -- still get what the City wants -- but make it more feasible and make the real estate work for what we are looking for in that area.

So, those changes are coming and once we get that approved, it will be killing two birds with one stone. Approving those changes and then creating the new C3 District in this downtown to mimic the other downtown, because there are some things that we do really like over there, the signage, the aesthetics, things like that.

So I am bringing that up to the Board because that will probably be a longer meeting to go over any questions, go over the ordinances, and all that good stuff. And that will be a map change and a text change, not only will the zoning code reflect the different things we don't want or we do want, but it also will be a change on the map, because currently it

is designated a certain way and we need to make those changes. So just an FYI.

MR. GOMEZ: Okay, thank you. Any other comments? (None)

There being no further questions or comments, our next meeting will be Monday, July 6th, at 4:30 p.m., in Chambers.

That concludes all items on the agenda for tonight, I'd like to make a motion for adjournment.

MR. SOLORIO: Second.

MR. GOMEZ: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. GOMEZ: Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned.

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Approval of the Meeting Minutes of Monday, June 15, 2026

Approved and signed July 6, 2026

Valeriano Gomez, President

Lilia Ramos, Vice-President

Lydia Lopez, Secretary

Marino Soloria, Commissioner

Stacy Winfield, Commissioner

Jaylen Johnson, Commissioner

Grayling Gordon, Commissioner

Hashem Alhashem, Commissioner

Tracy Ailes, Recording Secretary

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Peggy S. LaLonde, a competent and duly qualified court reporter, do hereby certify that I did report in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings and that my shorthand notes so taken at said time and place were thereafter reduced to typewriting under my personal direction.

I further certify that the foregoing typewritten transcript constitutes minutes of the said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Munster, Indiana, this 16th day of June 2026.

Peggy S. LaLonde

Peggy S LaLonde
Notary Public Seal State of Indiana
Porter County
Commission Number NP0710216
My Commission Expires 2/6/2034