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Regular meeting

Documenter name: Wittman Sullivan

Agency: Akron City Planning Commission

Date: May 15, 2026

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Summary

- The Akron City Planning Commission unanimously approved the Lincoln-Mill Redevelopment District. This plan, north of the University of Akron (UA), includes the Greater Akron Polymer Innovation Hub and will allow for the construction of a new Polymer Research Pilot Facility, which will be built at [100 Lincoln St.](#) The plan works with UA and the National Polymer Innovation Hub to attract new international investments to Akron.
- The commission unanimously approved a conditional use permit for the Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority (AMHA) to build a 10- to 15-student daycare in a community center at [943 Springfield Drive](#) in North Hill.
- The commission unanimously approved a conditional use permit for the Akron Art Museum to install two 16-foot-tall LED display walls at 1 South High Street to advertise museum events and galleries. This is part of a \$12 million renovation of the former post office. The walls are modular and can be easily repaired in case of damage.

Follow-Up Questions

- How many vacancies are on the planning commission?

Notes

- Commissioner Stephanie York started the meeting at 9 a.m.
 - Commissioners Gary Wyatt and Ronald Owen were present.
 - Commissioner Renee Greene entered at 9:02 a.m.
- York said the meeting would hear presentations from city staff, commissioners will question city staff, community members will speak in support of a project, community members will speak against a project, and then the commission will vote
- A city attorney swore in community members wishing to speak

NOTE: PC refers to Planning Commission, RE refers to redevelopment, S refers to sales of city-owned land, and CU refers to conditional use permits. Conditional Use permits are given when a development does not conform to the zoning code and is getting permission from the city to be legally non-compliant with certain conditions. These permits must be approved by Akron City Council after a public hearing.

NOTE: The City of Akron Planning Department is split into two areas: comprehensive, which deals with long-term plans like the capital budget and consolidated housing plan, and zoning, which enforces and reforms Akron's zoning code.

[PC-2026-17 RE: Lincoln-Mill Redevelopment Plan](#)

- City of Akron Urban Planner (comprehensive) Kurt Mulhauser said this 39-acre plan, between Market Street, Forge Street, the CSX railroad, Union Street, College Street and Buchtel Avenue, with the current [National Polymer Innovation Center \(NPIC\)](#) at the University of Akron (UA), will support the [Polymer Innovation Cluster \(PIC\)](#). The area includes five residential structures, a gas station, a church, an office building, and St. Paul's Church. Two-thirds of the land is owned by UA.
 - The polymer hub includes UA and Goodyear and has received over \$100 million in grants since 2024.
 - This includes grants to construct a new Polymer Research Facility next to the innovation center on UA land and the demolition of 100

Lincoln Street. The goal is to innovate and attract new investments.

- Mulhauser said the plan will not change the existing zoning and will use [Tax Increment Financing](#) for future development goals. The plan solves the issue of not having enough developable land to create jobs for city residents he said.
 - Therefore, the City of Akron Department of Planning and Urban Development recommends approval.
- NPIH staffer Marshall Moore said he is leading the new pilot facility project with UA, and they are close to completing design work. They are building interest in the Midwest, U.S., and Europe and have brought several international polymer companies to Akron with “a lot of good progress.”
- Greene said a community member who wrote in opposition asked for copies of the plan
 - City of Akron Urban Planner (zoning) Ben Lee said the plan was sent
 - Mulhauser said he spoke with the community member over the phone and emailed him on May 14
- The plan passed unanimously

[PC-2026-10 CU: Petition of AMHA for a Conditional Use to establish a daycare business center at 943 Springdale St.](#)

- City of Akron Urban Planner (zoning) Karen Pateos said the petitioner, AMHA, is requesting a conditional use permit to build a daycare in a residentially zoned community center at 943 Springfield Drive in North Hill for Kids Space LLC for 10 to 15 pre-K through 5th grade students.. This will use an adjacent 10-space parking lot. The Land Use and Development Guide Plan ensures this retail use will not interfere with nearby housing.
 - When AMHA built the community center, they intended to put a daycare in the building.
 - The City of Akron Department of Planning and Urban Development recommends approval.
- Item passed unanimously.

[PC-2026-12 CU: Petition of the Akron Art Museum for a Conditional Use to install digital signage over the height limitation at 1 S. High Street.](#)

- Lee said the Akron Art Museum is requesting a conditional use permit to install two 16-foot-tall by 6-foot-wide wall-mounted LED displays on the northwest corner of 1 South High Street (the former main post office) to promote museum events to replace the current temporary vinyl signs. [The Form Based Zoning code](#) regulates

downtown signage and prohibits moving or flashing signs. The proposed signs will have to remain static for at least 8 seconds to not impede traffic.

- The sign contractor said they are also seeking a conditional use permit for sign placement to ensure the signs are centered.
- Akron Art Museum CEO Jon Fiume said this is part of [a \\$12 million renovation of the building](#), including new play spaces, galleries and a new black gallery. This will increase museum and downtown traffic
- Greene asked how the sign will be protected from vandalism
 - The sign contractor said they are built well and withstand vandalism, but a protective shield would prohibit the size and image of the seamless sign
- Greene asked if there would be security watches
 - Fiume said the signs “are pretty resilient,” but if they are damaged, they are modular and small sections can be replaced. Security systems are being upgraded facility-wide
- Owens asked what would be displayed
 - Fiume said this latest and greatest sign will show information about new galleries and promote summer bands. This will help the museum return to pre-pandemic attendance levels
- York asked if 8 seconds is enough to prevent distracted driving
 - City of Akron Zoning Manager Jim Hosbach said 8 seconds is standard for highway billboards seen at higher speeds
 - York said the area has more obstructions, and she wants to track accidents before and after the sign installation
- Item passed unanimously

[PC-2026-13 CU&S: Petition of the City of Akron for a Conditional Use to establish a parking lot use at 921 Cordova Ave. and sale of city property at 921 Cordova Ave. and 1474 Copley Road \(Parcel Nos. 6736192 and 6842324\)](#)

- City of Akron Urban Planner (zoning) Mike Meyer said this plan builds a small parking lot and 6-foot fence for [a retail property the city has issued a sale Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#). The parking lot will be built on an adjacent lot and alley right-of-way. Parking lots are a retail use, and the adjacent lot is residentially zoned, requiring a conditional use permit.
- The City of Akron Department of Planning and Urban Development recommended approval.
- Greene said she has reservations about how this interacts with adjacent residential properties. She asked about what happened to plans to help a nonprofit maintain the structure as a community center.

- A planning staffer said the lease with the West Akron Community Development Corporation would run a massive deficit
- Greene said she is worried about adding parking without a definite business
 - A planning staffer said this would allow parking but not immediately construct additional parking. If the business needs parking, then it would be able to build it
- Greene asked if the chiropractor next door has any concerns
 - A planning staffer said they haven't reached out
- York asked if there would be any spots for people with disabilities
 - Meyer said there are two ADA spots against the building
 - City of Akron Urban Planner (zoning) Mike Meyer City of Akron Urban Planner (zoning) said accessible spots are determined by building codes
- Owens asked who owns the lot
 - Hosbach said the Summit County Land Bank owns the lot
- Item passed unanimously

The meeting ended at 9:30 a.m.