

**KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026**

Chairman Dunham called the meeting to order on May 07, 2026, at 6:15 p.m. [EST and 5:15 p.m. CST] and opened the proceedings with the Pledge of Allegiance, invocation by Commissioner Ryan, roll call, and the meeting and safety procedures. The meeting was held in the Kenton Chambers of the Kenton County Government Center, 1840 Simon-Kenton Way, in Covington.

Attendance of members is as follows (for this meeting as well as those during the year to date).

Commission Member	Jurisdiction	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Doug Armbruster	Elsmere	X	-		X								
Margo Baumgardner	Crestview Hills	X	-	X*	X	X							
Todd Berling	Fort Wright	X	-			X							
Gailen Bridges	Bromley	X	-	X	X	X							
Paul Darpel, Vice Chair	Edgewood	X	-	X	X								
Gabriella DeAngelis	Covington	X	-	X	X	X							
Kevin Dicke	Fort Mitchell	X	-	X	X	X							
Brian Dunham, Chairman	Kenton County	X	-	X	X	X							
Sarah Flem	Covington	X	-	X	X	X							
Tom France	Ludlow	X	-	X	X	X							
Ken Heidrich	Lakeside Park		-	X	X	X							
Todd Herrmann	Erlanger	X	-	X	X	X							
Betsy Janes	Villa Hills	X	-	X	X	X							
Matthew Martin	Taylor Mill	X	-	X		X							
Phil Ryan, Treasurer	Park Hills	X	-	X	X	X							
Kareem Simpson	Covington	X	-	X	X	X							
Greg Sketch	Crescent Springs	X	-	X	X								
Maura Snyder	Independence	X	-	X	X	X							
Debbie Vaughn	Kenton Co	X	-		X	X							
Quin Wichmann	Ryland Hts.		-	X	X	X							

"X" denotes attendance at the regular meeting.
 "*" denotes arrival after roll call was taken.

"/" denotes not on Commission
 "-." denotes no meeting

**KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026**

Also present: Legal Counsel Ms. Perrin Langfels, and the following PDS Staff: Mr. Josh Wice, PDS Director; Ms. Nicole Cullum, PDS Deputy Executive Director; Mr. Andy Videkovich, PDS Director of Planning; Mr. Patrick Denbow, PDS Senior Planner; Mr. Cody Sheets, PDS Principal Planner, and Pamela Bushelman, PDS Senior Secretary, Planning & Zoning and KCPC Secretary.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS AND REPORTS

Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Dunham noted that members had received a copy of the final agenda for this meeting. There were no corrections or changes and he asked for a *motion to accept the agenda. So moved by Commissioner Snyder; seconded by Commissioner Ryan. The motion carried by acclamation of all members present.*

Approval of the Minutes

Commissioner Snyder expressed confusion about the process of circulating meeting minute changes via email before meetings, saying she preferred the old method of reviewing and discussing changes together during the meeting so all members are voting on the same version at the same time. Chairman Dunham clarified that the emailed materials should reflect the most up to date version and agreed that discussing changes at the meeting is fine. Commissioner Snyder confirmed she had no concerns about the minutes themselves and Chairman Dunham asked for a *motion to approve the March 05, 2026, meeting minutes. So moved by Commissioner Bridges; seconded by Commissioner Snyder. A roll call vote found Commissioners Vaughn, Wichmann, Baumgardner, DeAngelis, Dicke, Dunham, Flem, France, Heidrich, Herrmann, Janes, Ryan, Simpson, Martin, Bridges and Snyder in favor; Commissioner Berling abstained and the motion carried.*

Chairman Dunham addressed the approval of the March 30, 2026, meeting minutes, there were no corrections or changes and *Commissioner Bridges made a motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Commissioner Snyder. A roll call vote found Commissioners Bridges, DeAngelis, Dicke, Dunham, Flem, France, Heidrich, Herrmann, Janes, Ryan, Simpson, Wichmann, Baumgardner and Snyder in favor; Commissioners Vaughn, Martin and Berling abstained and the motion carried.*

Report of Receipts and Expenditures

Chairman Dunham stated the receipts and expenditures report for March 2026 were distributed. There being no comments or questions regarding the report, he asked for a *motion to approve. Commissioner Ryan moved to approve the report; seconded by Commissioner Snyder. The motion carried by acclamation of all members present.*

Next, Ms. Nicole Cullum presented the FY26-27 Budget Summary. She explained that the total projected revenues for the fiscal year ending 2027 are \$1,857,248, driven primarily by the PDS contractual contribution of \$1,688,148, application fees of \$135,000, and interest income of \$34,000. She stated the total appropriations are projected at \$1,846,248, resulting in a net surplus of \$11,000 which will be applied to the Surety Interest Reserve Fund. She continued to report that the strategic investments in the budget include additional funding for education and training, a one-time cost to migrate email accounts from Network Solutions to Outlook, an anticipated increase in the annual audit cost, and a modest \$2,600 increase in legal services. She concluded with the projected fund balance heading into the next fiscal year is \$668,174, comprised of a \$500,000 Surety Reserve (the threshold established in the bylaws), a \$64,920 Surety Interest Reserve, and an unassigned fund balance of \$103,254. She stated that the Executive Committee has agreed to

**KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026**

wait until the fiscal year closes before deciding how to allocate the unassigned balance, in order to keep cash flow streamlined. She asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Flem inquired about the approximately \$150,000 decrease in the staff services line item. Ms. Cullum explained that the reduction reflects a natural decrease in PDS's expenses this year, driven by retirements rather than any intentional budget cuts.

There were no further questions and *Commissioner Ryan made a motion to approve the FY26-27 Budget; seconded by Commissioner Snyder. A roll call vote found Commissioners Ryan, Snyder, Vaughn, Wichmann, Martin, Berling, Baumgardner, Bridges, DeAngelis, Dicke, Dunham, Flem, France, Heidrich, Herrmann, Janes, and Simpson in favor; none opposed and the motion carried.*

Next, Ms. Cullum reviewed the FY26-27 Fee Schedule and stated that the proposed fee schedule includes a 3% increase, calculated using the Bureau of Labor Statistics March CPI figures. She explained this annual adjustment approach was adopted several years ago to implement small incremental increases each year rather than allowing fees to accumulate and require a large adjustment after an extended period.

Chairman Dunham added that the decision to adopt annual CPI-based increases was largely driven by feedback from the home building community, who found it difficult to budget when fees would jump significantly after several years and noted the incremental approach has worked out well.

Commissioner Ryan noted that the Southern District's February CPI figure was 1.8%, but by the March release it had risen to 3%, a notable jump in a single month that brought the final rate from approximately 1.8% to 3%.

Commissioner Heidrich questioned how the fee schedule compares to those of other jurisdictions. Ms. Cullum responded that when she met with the Executive Committee it was reviewed and the fees were found to be comparable and roughly in line with other counties in the area. Chairman Dunham noted they may actually be on the lower end by comparison.

There was no further discussion and Chairman Dunham asked for a *motion to approve the fee schedule. So moved by Commissioner Ryan; seconded by Commissioner Snyder. A roll call vote found Commissioners Ryan, Simpson, Snyder, Vaughn, Wichmann, Martin, Berling, Baumgardner, Bridges, DeAngelis, Dicke, Dunham, Flem, France, Heidrich, Herrmann and Janes in favor; none opposed and the motion carried.*

Chairman Dunham presented the **Report of Last Month's Actions by Staff**, covering the subdivision plat letter and Stage 2 updates; there was no cell tower activity to report. The related report from the legislative bodies was also reviewed, and no questions were raised.

Chairman Dunham then introduced **FILE NUMBER: PC-26-0002-PF**

APPLICANT: The City of Fort Wright

LOCATION: 409 Kyles Lane, Fort Wright

REQUEST: A public facility review per KRS 100.324 and KRS 147.680.

SUMMARY: The applicant is proposing to construct a new salt storage building with a 45-foot diameter and a height of 28 feet. The proposed salt storage building will be 69 feet from the nearest property line in common with 406 Kentucky Drive and will include an asphalt apron and landscaping features.

**KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026**

Mr. Cody Sheets, PDS Staff, presented the public facility review for the proposed salt storage building at the Fort Wright City complex on Highland Drive. He stated the 5.1-acre site is located on the north side of Highland Drive within the First Ring Suburban sub-area of the 2024 Kenton County Comprehensive Plan and currently contains two existing buildings — the Fort Wright City Building and a separate public works building. He noted the proposed building site was formerly a park and playground known as Fort Tot, which has been removed to accommodate the new structure.

Mr. Sheets stated the proposed salt storage building will be approximately 1,590 square feet with a 45-foot diameter and a height of 28 feet. It will feature an 18x15-foot sliding or overhead door, a roughly 600-square-foot asphalt apron, and a four-foot concrete walk connecting to existing sidewalks. He added that at its closest point, the structure will be 69 feet from the property line shared with 406 Kentucky Drive to the west. He then reviewed the building materials which are intended to match those of the adjacent existing structure.

Next, Mr. Sheets provided a review of the landscaping plans which include a 2-to-3-foot mound around the base of the structure, with the building slightly sunken into the mound to reduce visual impact and he noted that additional features include vegetation along the rear of the structure, extended existing landscaping beds, and five existing pine trees.

He stated the property is zoned institutional and is surrounded primarily by single-family residential uses. Mr. Sheets stated that Staff found the proposed development consistent with the 2024 Kenton County Comprehensive Plan, which designates the area as 'other community facilities' and pointed out that as an instrumentality of the state, the City of Fort Wright is exempt from local zoning regulations per KRS 100; however, Staff recommends that buffer yard requirements for institutional uses adjacent to residential areas be observed to ensure proper integration into the surrounding neighborhood. He then offered to answer any questions.

Commissioner Ryan asked how many cities have their own salt storage facility, and Mr. Sheets noted that it appeared to be somewhat unique, adding that the applicant may be able to speak further to that.

There were no further questions and Chairman Dunham noted the following attendees were signed up to speak:
Ms. Jill Bailey, representing the City of Fort Wright
Mr. Marty Hellman with Verdantas, representing the City of Fort Wright

Ms. Jill Bailey, City Administrator for the City of Fort Wright, introduced her team — Mr. Marty Hellman of Verdantas, serving as city engineer, and Mr. Jeff Bethell, Jr, Public Works Director. She expressed enthusiasm for the project and offered to answer any questions from the Commission.

With no questions or additional speakers, Chairman Dunham recessed the public hearing for Commissioner discussion. He reminded the Commission that public facility reviews are not subject to zoning regulations but do require Planning Commission review to determine consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and noted that Staff had indicated the proposal is consistent. Hearing no concerns, the public hearing was reopened, and with no clarifications needed from Staff or the applicant, the public hearing was closed and he asked for a motion. *Commissioner Berling made the motion to approve **File No. PC-26-0002-PF**, submitted by the City of Fort Wright, for the proposed salt storage building, based on Staff's recommendation that the proposal is consistent with the land use designation and in compliance with the 2024 Kenton County Comprehensive Plan; seconded by Commissioner Ryan. A roll call vote found Commissioners Simpson, Snyder, Vaughn, Wichmann, Martin,*

KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026

Baumgardner, Bridges, DeAngelis, Dicke, Dunham, Flem, France, Heidrich, Herrmann, Janes, Berling and [Ryan] in favor; none opposed and the motion carried.

Chairman Dunham introduced **FILE NUMBER: PC-26-0003-PF**

APPLICANT: Northern Kentucky Port Authority

LOCATION: 11 E. Rivercenter Boulevard, Covington; an area of approximately 1.9 acres located on the south side of E. Rivercenter Boulevard, between Madison Avenue to the west and Scott Street to the east.

REQUEST: A public facility review per KRS 100.324 and KRS 147.680.

SUMMARY: The applicant is proposing to construct a public university facility to house the Northern Kentucky University Chase Law School and the University of Kentucky Medical School. The facility, to be known as the Commonwealth Center for Biomedical Excellence (CCBE), includes a seven-story building with underground parking and a public plaza.

Mr. Patrick Denbow, PDS Staff, presented the public facility review for the Commonwealth Center for Biomedical Excellence, a proposed facility that will house the Northern Kentucky University Chase Law School and the University of Kentucky Medical School. He pointed out that as required by KRS 100, the Planning Commission's review is advisory and not binding, focusing on consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Denbow provided the site review which is located within the Urban Sub-area and Downtown Riverfront character district of the Comprehensive Plan, currently occupied by a 180-space public parking lot with primary access from River Center Blvd. and secondary access from Scott Street. He added that the surrounding area consists of large-scale downtown developments including hotels, offices, restaurants, the Convention Center, condominiums, and institutional uses.

Next, Mr. Denbow provided a review of the proposed facility which will be seven stories and 103 feet tall, featuring a first-floor parking garage with 170 spaces, common space, NKU Law School administrative offices, and a college courtroom. He stated that floors two through four will house the law school, the fifth floor will serve as future expansion space for both schools and include a pedestrian bridge to the Kenton County parking garage, and floors six and seven will be dedicated to the medical school. He explained that the building will be significantly set back from all surrounding roads and surrounded by a plaza featuring landscaping, pedestrian lighting, architectural pavers, public art, and site furnishings. He added that the east side of the plaza is designed for passive use compatible with the adjacent residential building, while the west side will be more active to complement nearby commercial and event spaces.

Next Mr. Denbow addressed parking and explained that the Downtown Riverfront character district requires no minimum parking but does establish a maximum determined through a parking study. He stated that the applicant's study identified a projected peak demand of 621 spaces; with 170 spaces provided on site and an average of 1,045 public parking spaces available in nearby facilities, approximately 451 of those public spaces would be needed at peak demand, leaving roughly 594 public spaces still available. He noted that based on these findings, the study recommended a parking maximum of 180 spaces for the site, and city staff expressed no concerns with the study.

Mr. Denbow then stated that Staff finds the proposal consistent with the 2024 Kenton County Comprehensive Plan, noting that the project will strengthen the urban core, support regional economic vitality, advance educational opportunities, and place a community facility near population centers with good transit access.

**KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026**

He noted that as public universities are instrumentalities of the state, they are exempt from local zoning regulations per KRS 100; however, the Port Authority has adopted a policy requiring compliance with the Covington Neighborhood Development Code. He stated that Staff recommends coordination with the City of Covington on required setback variances from the Board of Architectural Review, potential foundation height variances, urban forestry coordination, and compliance with downtown streetscape and public realm design guidelines. He then offered to answer questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Baumgardner asked about the parking, referring to the claim that there are over 1,000 available parking spaces, and sought clarification on the definition of "available" specifically, whether it refers to spaces that exist in the area or spaces that are simply not being utilized at any given point during the day. Mr. Denbow explained that the parking study identified a significantly greater number of parking spaces within other area facilities than the figure cited. He clarified that the 1,045 represents the average number of spaces that go unused at any given point throughout the day.

Commissioner Ryan asked for clarification on when the projected peak parking demand would occur, questioning whether it reflects a scenario in which the conference center is at full capacity simultaneously with full student attendance. Mr. Denbow clarified that the peak demand figure represents the maximum parking demand generated specifically by the university facility itself.

Commissioner Berling followed up by confirming that the peak parking demand figure applies exclusively to the proposed facility and does not account for simultaneous activity in adjacent buildings. Mr. Denbow confirmed that was correct.

There were no further questions and Chairman Dunham noted the following attendees were signed up to speak:

APPLICANT

Ms. Christine Russell, the applicant [Northern Kentucky Port Authority]

Mr. Nestor Melnyk, representing the applicant [Commonwealth Center for Biomedical Excellence (CCBE)]

Mr. Craig Honkomp, representing the applicant [The Kleingers Group]

FOR

Ms. Kaitlin Bryan, representing the City of Covington [Regulatory Services Manager & Historic Preservation Specialist]

NEUTRAL

Ms. Gretchen Landrum, representing the Northern Kentucky Convention Center

Ms. Christine Russell, Executive Director of the Northern Kentucky Port Authority, introduced her team, including Nestor Melnyk, architect with MSA Design, and Craig Honkomp from Kleingers Group, civil engineers, and landscape designers, both part of a design-build team led by Pepper Construction.

She continued on the topic of parking and confirmed that 35 spaces in the garage will be reserved for customers of adjacent retail establishments, including Demetrios and Butler's Pantry, with an additional 35 spaces available for validated parking on a non-reserved basis. She acknowledged this arrangement represents lost revenue for the Port Authority, but noted the motivation was to maintain the existing relationship with neighboring businesses, support the local economy, and provide convenient amenities for university faculty, students, and staff.

KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026

Next, Ms. Russell shared a design update that occurred since the package was submitted indicating that an elevator is being added at the northeast corner of the site at the Scott Street and River Center Blvd. intersection. She stated the elevator will connect the parking garage to the plaza level, providing convenient access for retail customers and building guests. She added that for security reasons, the interior elevator core connecting the garage directly into the building will likely be limited to FOB access for faculty, staff, and students. She noted that the addition of this elevator may reduce the garage capacity from 170 to 168 or 169 spaces.

Regarding peak parking concerns, Ms. Russell noted she has already begun discussions with the Convention Center to coordinate event schedules, pointing out that many high-attendance Convention Center events occur in the evenings and on weekends, which do not coincide with the facility's peak parking hours. She expressed a commitment to ongoing coordination with all nearby parking facilities once the building opens.

Finally, Ms. Russell mentioned that the Port Authority is working with Duke Energy to explore burying above-ground utility lines along the property boundaries. While still evaluating costs and feasibility, she expressed optimism about the effort, noting it would improve aesthetics, enhance power reliability, and complement similar work already being undertaken by the City of Covington.

Next, Mr. Nestor Melnyk, Principal in Charge at MSA Design, confirmed that the project team has already met with PDS, the City of Covington, Covington Fire, Urban Forestry, and Public Works, with a meeting with the building officials also in progress. He noted a potential design change since the original submission: an additional shell floor may be added to the building for future expansion, which would bring the total to eight stories and approximately 118 feet in height and if approved, appropriate documentation will be submitted to the Commission.

On streetscape, Mr. Melnyk confirmed that all streetscape improvements along the half-block between Scott Street, Madison Avenue, and River Center Blvd. will conform to the City of Covington's current streetscape standards, coordinated alongside the utility burying effort. He added that while no signage is currently shown in the plans, it will be developed at a later date and will go through all proper permitting channels and the signage will be limited to the north and/or west faces of the building, ensuring no signage faces the residential area to the east.

Mr. Melnyk also addressed the two variances identified by staff noting that the first relates to foundation height — because the site spans an entire half-block with significant grade changes ranging from approximately seven feet above grade to four or five feet below grade, a variance from the 24-inch maximum foundation height requirement will be necessary, and discussions with the City of Covington are already underway. He stated the second variance concerns setbacks, which are impacted by the proposed amenity plaza and he noted that the public plaza and landscaped space represent a significant benefit to the surrounding neighborhood, and the project team is working with the city to ensure the proper approval process is followed.

Commissioner Dicke raised a question about pedestrian safety, noting that a development of this nature with a significant student population would likely generate increased foot traffic, and asked whether enhancements were planned to improve pedestrian safety at intersections and crosswalks along River Center Blvd. Ms. Russell responded that while she could not speak to improvements beyond the project's property boundaries, the team is planning to widen the sidewalks along River Center Blvd. to provide more space for pedestrians and create a safer and more enjoyable walking experience along that block.

**KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026**

Commissioner France asked if the plaza level would be open to the public and Ms. Russell confirmed it would be.

Commissioner Simpson commended the team for proactively collaborating with neighboring parking facilities and asked for clarification on the 170-space garage capacity, confirming it is intended for faculty, staff, and students. Ms. Russell confirmed this and noted that the figure accounts for growth already planned by both universities, meaning 170 spaces represents the projected peak demand over a number of years rather than immediate usage upon opening.

Commissioner Simpson then raised a follow-up question about whether the average 1,045 available public parking spaces identified in the study accounted for the peak usage of those adjacent facilities. Ms. Russell deferred to the parking study and noted that the figure appeared to reflect average available spaces recorded during February rather than peak demand scenarios.

Commissioner Simpson suggested it would be valuable to understand the peak usage of those adjacent facilities as conversations with parking partners progress, in order to get a clearer picture of true availability during high-demand periods. Ms. Russell acknowledged the feedback and agreed it was a worthwhile consideration.

Commissioner Flem raised several concerns about the parking study. First, she noted that the study does not account for the potential addition of an eighth floor, which is already being contemplated, and emphasized that any future expansion should be factored into parking demand projections. Second, she questioned the reliability of the study's data, pointing out that February is not a peak period for the Convention Center and that a single month of utilization data is insufficient to fully understand the true parking needs of the surrounding area. She said that a more holistic study covering not just the proposed facility but all parking demand within a three-block radius, and across multiple months, would have been more appropriate. She raised a specific concern regarding the Convention Center's own reported plans for expansion, and asked whether Compass, the firm that prepared the parking study, had reached out to the Convention Center to assess how that proposed expansion might impact overall parking utilization in the area. Ms. Russell acknowledged she did not know the answer but noted that Gretchen Landrum from the Convention Center would be speaking and might be able to address whether their planned renovations would generate additional parking needs.

Commissioner Wichmann asked whether the building elevations reflected the mechanical penthouse referenced in the presentation. Mr. Melnyk confirmed they do, adding that site studies are being conducted to ensure all mechanical equipment, including open-air chillers, is set back from the building edges and screened from street-level view. Commissioner Wichmann followed up by confirming that the slightly raised upper portion visible on the elevations represents the mechanical penthouse, which Mr. Melnyk confirmed.

Commissioner Berling asked whether the team had evaluated the potential impact of site lighting on the adjacent residential building at The Ascent. Mr. Melnyk acknowledged that a detailed lighting design has not yet been completed but noted that the plaza at the southeast corner sits below grade, which naturally limits light exposure to the residential building. He added that the lighting planned for the area will be pedestrian-scale downlighting, minimizing any direct light or glare toward nearby residences. He also noted that the east side of the plaza is intentionally designed to be quieter and more passive, with seating, trees, and planters to keep activity and commotion directed away from the residential building and toward the west side of the plaza. Mr. Craig Honkomp, with the Kleingers Group, civil engineer for the project, added that all streetscape and roadway lighting

**KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026**

will comply with the City of Covington's established lighting standards, ensuring that nothing exceeds what would be approvable by the city.

Commissioner Flem asked whether any additional parking studies had been conducted beyond the one used to establish the 180-space parking maximum. Ms. Russell confirmed it was the only study completed. Commissioner Flem followed up by noting that a different study, particularly one taking a broader view of parking impact in the area, could potentially reach different conclusions. Ms. Russell agreed that it was possible, while noting the team ensured full compliance with the applicable requirements.

Commissioner France inquired about the reflectivity of the building's curtain wall glass facade and whether it would mirror the surrounding buildings. Mr. Melnyk clarified that the glass will have a natural degree of reflectivity but that mirrored glass is not being used.

Ms. Russell then expressed the university's enthusiasm for becoming part of the urban core and their commitment to contributing to the vibrancy of the area. She acknowledged that a construction project of this scope and scale will inevitably impact the surrounding community but assured the Commission that the design-build team has extensive experience with urban construction projects and that the Port Authority is committed to being as considerate a neighbor as possible throughout the construction process.

There was nothing further and Chairman Dunham called on Ms. Kaitlin Bryan to comment in favor of the project.

Ms. Kaitlin Bryan, Regulatory Services Manager for the City of Covington, noted that while several variances have been identified for the site, the city does not anticipate any issues with their approval. She acknowledged that the variances will be subject to a public hearing, allowing neighboring residents to weigh in on any potential impacts. She concluded by thanking the Port Authority for their continued collaboration and commitment to compliance throughout the process.

Chairman Dunham noted that no one had signed up to speak in opposition, but two written submissions were submitted for the record.

The first, a letter from Joseph U. Meyer dated May 6, 2026, raised concerns about the adequacy of the parking study, arguing that it must be based on peak usage conditions rather than average availability. Mr. Meyer noted that the data was collected in February, a relatively slow period, and stressed the need for the study to account for land use context, planned development scenarios, and future parking demand forecasting, specifically referencing the Convention Center's potential expansion. He recommended that a qualified firm with extensive parking study experience, such as Walker Consultants, a national firm previously used by the City of Covington, conduct a comprehensive future parking demand forecast for the entire Downtown Riverfront district. Mr. Meyer urged the Planning Commission to withhold any final decision on the application until the Northern Kentucky Port Authority completes a proper parking study in collaboration with the City of Covington and the Convention Center. *The letter was entered into the record as **PC-26-0003-PF Exhibit 01.***

The second submission was an email from Judy Clabes regarding the lease-back arrangement for 70 parking spaces referenced earlier, which was part of the original lot purchase agreement. The email raised concerns about the pricing structure of the agreement, noting that it contains no inflationary adjustments, and addressed the market rate value of the spaces as the term progresses, as well as management and maintenance obligations placed on

KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026

the Port Authority. The submission included several attachments: a letter to Representative Lehman from Jennifer Kirchner, and the parking license agreement itself. *The email and its attachments were entered into the record as PC-26-0003-PF Exhibit 02.*

Next, Chairman Dunham called on Ms. Gretchen Landrum to speak neutrally on the project.

Ms. Gretchen Landrum, Executive Director and CEO of the Northern Kentucky Convention Center, raised several points for the record noting that no traffic impact study has been conducted in connection with the proposed building. She expressed concern about the proposed relocation of the parking garage entrance from River Center Blvd. to Madison Avenue, pointing out that the new entrance would be situated in close proximity to the TANK station, the Kenton County parking garage, a service alley, and directly across from the Convention Center's main entrance, which is also a designated loading zone. She encouraged these potential conflicts to be evaluated now, during the planning stage, while adjustments can still be made.

Regarding the Convention Center's own expansion plans, Ms. Landrum clarified that the planned expansion is not a traditional brick-and-mortar addition. Rather, the Convention Center is working with the City of Covington to acquire 1.7 acres to the south of the facility, known as Block P of the CCR development, to be designated as outdoor event space. She stated this decision was supported by studies conducted in 2019 and 2023, both of which concluded that outdoor event space, rather than additional interior space, was the primary need. She noted that without a 600-room hotel, the market does not support a traditional expansion, making the addition of hotel rooms critical to growing and maintaining market share. She stated the Convention Center currently generates approximately 35,000 hotel room nights per year, a figure projected to grow to 60,000 following planned modernization efforts.

Ms. Landrum concluded by emphasizing the importance of collaborative data sharing among all stakeholders in the area, urging that decisions be made based on a collective understanding of the full picture rather than individual datasets, in order to best serve the community and maximize the success of all projects in the region. She introduced Kevin Murphy, the Convention Center's board chairman, and asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Flem asked Ms. Landrum whether February is typically a peak period for the Convention Center, to which she confirmed it is not. When Commissioner Flem asked what timeframe would be more appropriate for a parking utilization study, Ms. Landrum recommended averaging data across the entire year, explaining that Convention Center activity varies significantly by season. She stated the first quarter is dominated by weekend sporting events such as cheerleading, dance, and gymnastics competitions. The second quarter brings state association meetings and other business events. Summer is the slowest period, as hotel capacity is already strained by leisure travel. Fall is an extremely busy period, compounded by Reds and Bengals game traffic, and activity remains strong through mid-December before picking back up in early January. She emphasized that the Convention Center's business is not consistent enough to rely on any single month for representative data.

Ms. Landrum also highlighted broader traffic and parking pressures in the area, noting the added demand generated by the Justice Center, with attendees arriving for early morning court appearances, and the general congestion on Madison Avenue during peak commute hours. Commissioner Flem noted the overlap between Justice Center visitors, university students arriving for 8:00 AM classes, and Convention Center attendees, all of whom would be competing for parking simultaneously. Ms. Landrum confirmed that Convention Center clients are typically on site by 7:30 a.m., with events running from approximately 8:00 or 9:00 a.m. through 4:30 or 5:00 p.m.

**KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026**

Ms. Landrum noted that for large events, the Convention Center already works with ABM, the operator of the Kenton County parking garage, to purchase available spaces and hires Covington police to manage traffic, given the narrow streets in the area. She stressed that communication and collaboration among all stakeholders is essential, and that the Convention Center already coordinates closely with parking partners on event attendance, drive-in versus hotel-based attendance, and overall parking needs. She concluded by noting that the area has already lost events due to parking constraints and urged that the collective parking situation be evaluated holistically rather than project by project, describing it as an opportunity for the entire area that must be addressed comprehensively.

Commissioner Vaughn asked whether any changes are being considered for ingress and egress at the parking garage. Ms. Landrum acknowledged the well-known congestion issue history and noted that one recent improvement was a change to the Scott Street exit, which was previously restricted to pass holders only but has since been updated with new equipment to allow two-way public egress. Commissioner Vaughn suggested that many downtown Cincinnati garages have adopted pre-registration and automated entry and exit systems to improve traffic flow, to which Ms. Landrum responded that she was not aware of the current status of that technology for the Kenton County garage.

Chairman Dunham asked about the timeline for the Convention Center's expansion. Ms. Landrum explained that the facility is scheduled to close July 1, 2027, with a target reopening of January 2029, though the exact timeline will be better defined once a construction manager is selected through an RFP process planned for late June or early July. She stated that the goal is to complete and reopen the modernized building as quickly as possible, even if the outdoor event space remains under construction.

Chairman Dunham then asked whether the Convention Center's expansion could include the acquisition of additional land for parking. Ms. Landrum explained that the site's grade makes below-ground parking construction impractical, and that building a parking podium with development on top would not achieve the outdoor amenity space the market study identified as the primary need. She noted that a visible concrete parking structure would detract from the streetscape along Madison Avenue and Third Street rather than serving as a community amenity. She also acknowledged that funding is a significant constraint, noting that while a partnership with the city to expand planned parking infrastructure could theoretically be explored, the financial resources are not currently available to pursue that option.

Commissioner Dicke asked whether the new IRS site development would include a parking podium. Ms. Landrum confirmed that the City of Covington has plans for a 663-space parking podium accessible from River Center Blvd., to be built beneath a land bridge in the area adjacent to the development. She noted that if a hotel is finalized for the site, it would need to utilize a portion of those spaces, as would the several remaining land plots still available for sale in the area. Ms. Landrum acknowledged that while the additional parking will help, it may not fully resolve the area's parking needs and reiterated her position that all stakeholders need to be engaged in a collective conversation to develop a comprehensive parking strategy for the area.

Commissioner France raised the question for the applicant of whether the parking study conducted by Compass is considered complete, noting that based on the evening's discussion, it appears the study may need to be revisited. Ms. Russell responded that the Port Authority's understanding is that the parking study meets all applicable code requirements, and that if it is determined otherwise, they would welcome that feedback and be

**KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026**

open to modifications. She also clarified that to her knowledge; there is no requirement for this project to conduct a traffic impact study.

Commissioner Dicke asked for confirmation that the current code's zero minimum parking requirement effectively discourages the addition of new parking in the district and Chairman Dunham confirmed that was correct.

There was nothing further and Chairman Dunham recessed the public hearing for Commissioner discussion. He reminded the Commission that as a public agency, the applicant is not subject to zoning regulations and is before the Commission solely because KRS 100 requires a Planning Commission review to determine consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. He noted that the Comprehensive Plan does not establish any parking requirements, nor does the zoning for the Downtown Riverfront district. While acknowledging the significant discussion around parking throughout the evening, Chairman Dunham noted that the Port Authority appeared well-prepared to address those concerns and would work with the city to resolve them. He concluded that the Commission's role is narrowly defined — to determine whether the proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan — and that nothing presented during the hearing suggested it was inconsistent with that standard.

Commissioner Simpson asked whether the Commission could include additional recommendations or caveats in its decision, referencing the conditions outlined in staff's report regarding proper integration of the development. Chairman Dunham acknowledged the question but noted that the Commission's formal role is limited to determining whether the proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and that the Port Authority was present and aware of the concerns raised throughout the hearing.

Commissioner Ryan supported Commissioner Simpson's point, noting that the Commission has previously included recommendations and suggestions in past public facility reviews. He said that given the concerns raised, it would be appropriate to include in the motion a recommendation for further study and evaluation of the project's full relationship to the surrounding area. Chairman Dunham agreed that while the formal motion must address consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, any Commissioner wishing to include additional recommendations or feedback as part of the motion was welcome to do so.

Commissioner Flem sought clarification on whether a finding of inconsistency with the Comprehensive Plan could consider broader concerns such as parking. Chairman Dunham responded that while parking concerns have been raised, the Comprehensive Plan does not require a project to accommodate maximum parking demand for the entire surrounding area, including future expansion plans of neighboring facilities. He noted that Covington's planning philosophy has actually trended toward reducing parking requirements, citing a previous case in which the city opposed a drive-through proposal specifically because they did not want any parking on the site at all. He pointed out that the city's approach encourages residents to live nearby and utilize public transportation and he concluded that the Comprehensive Plan does not support the level of parking scrutiny being discussed, and if anything, the regulatory trend has been moving in the opposite direction.

Commissioner Simpson clarified that the concern is not about requiring parking for everyone, but rather that the information presented does not provide a complete picture of the parking situation. He expressed that a more comprehensive study would allow for better-informed decisions going forward, and supported Commissioner Ryan's earlier suggestion that this recommendation be formally included in the motion rather than simply stated for the record. Chairman Dunham acknowledged the sentiment but reiterated that the motion must ultimately address whether the proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and asked whether anything presented during the hearing was specifically contrary to that standard.

**KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026**

Commissioner Ryan sought clarification that the proposed building includes a pedestrian sky bridge connecting to the Kenton County parking garage, meaning the facility is not self-contained in terms of parking and will rely on public parking resources. Chairman Dunham confirmed this and Commissioner Ryan concluded that by incorporating public parking into the facility's parking plan, the project necessarily implicates the broader parking situation in the surrounding area and he agreed with Commissioner Simpson that a more comprehensive study would therefore be warranted.

Commissioner Vaughn expressed support for the proposal, stating that in her view it is compliant with the Comprehensive Plan. While acknowledging the parking concerns raised, she noted that the availability of nearby public parking, even if not immediately convenient, does not render the project non-compliant. She empathized with students who may need to walk a distance in less-than-ideal conditions but expressed confidence that adequate parking exists within the surrounding area. She concluded by expressing enthusiasm for the opportunity the project represents for Kenton County and for Northern Kentucky University.

Commissioner Berling acknowledged that while the Commission is neither obligating the applicant nor is the code requiring a traffic study, this is a recurring challenge the Commission faces — often finding itself needing to approve projects without a full understanding of their traffic impact on the community. He suggested the Commission find a more proactive approach to addressing traffic studies earlier in the review process, rather than raising the concern at the point of a vote when it is too late to act on it. Chairman Dunham noted that Commissioner Darpel, who chairs the Subdivision Regulations Committee and was unable to attend this meeting, has identified this as one of the committee's two primary goals for the coming year. He acknowledged that historically the Planning Commission has not required traffic studies of applicants, recognizing the burden it places on them, and that the committee is actively working to find the right balance in determining when and how such studies should be required.

With no further clarifications needed, Chairman Dunham closed the public hearing and called for a motion. *Commissioner Simpson moved to approve **File No. PC-26-0003-PF**, finding the proposal consistent with the Comprehensive Plan based on staff's recommendation and public comment, with the additional recommendation that a more robust parking study be conducted and that continued collaboration among all partnering entities in the area be maintained. Chairman Dunham confirmed the motion addressed compliance with the Comprehensive Plan, and Commissioner Ryan seconded the motion.*

During Commissioner discussion, Commissioner Wichmann raised a concern about the apparent contradiction of recommending an additional parking study for a project located in a zoning district where the City of Covington actively discourages parking. Commissioner Simpson clarified that the recommendation for further study was not intended to advocate for additional parking, but rather to ensure the Commission had complete information — noting the study could just as easily conclude that no additional parking is needed.

Commissioner Flem supported Commissioner Simpson's position, stating that the available data is insufficient to provide a complete and accurate picture. Commissioner Heidrich questioned whether parking was even a point of contention with respect to the Comprehensive Plan, and suggested the Commission consider whether to formally include the parking recommendation in the motion or simply acknowledge it as part of the discussion record.

**KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026**

Commissioner Ryan characterized the recommendation as an advisory note rather than a binding requirement, comparing it to past public facility reviews where the Commission added comments on issues such as ingress and egress without holding applicants to any specific accountability. Commissioner Snyder stated that if the project is found to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the Commission should not simultaneously be calling for an additional study, as that implies the information presented is insufficient to support the finding.

Commissioner Simpson responded by pointing out that PDS itself had identified additional requirements to ensure proper integration of the development, questioning whether those conditions should also be considered necessary before a finding of consistency. Chairman Dunham clarified that PDS's recommendations are already on the record and do not need to be included in the motion itself.

After considerable discussion, Chairman Dunham called for a vote on *the motion as it stood — to approve File No. PC-26-0003-PF as consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, with the additional recommendation for a more robust parking study and continued collaboration among stakeholders. The motion had been made by Commissioner Simpson and seconded by Commissioner Ryan. A roll call vote found Commissioners Simpson, Ryan, Vaughn, Wichmann, Berling, Baumgardner, Bridges, DeAngelis, Dicke, Dunham, Flem, France, Heidrich, Herrmann, and Janes in favor; Commissioners Snyder and Martin were opposed and the motion carried.*

Chairman Dunham summarized the outcome, noting that the Planning Commission found the proposal consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, while making clear that concerns regarding a more thorough examination of the parking situation were clearly heard throughout the evening. He thanked all parties for their participation.

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Dunham introduced **FILE NUMBER: PC-26-0004-MA**

APPLICANT: Peak One Holdings LLC

LOCATION: 2325 Madison Ave; An area of approximately 0.29 acres located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Madison Avenue and West 24th Street, in Covington.

REQUEST: A proposed map amendment to the Covington Neighborhood Development Code changing the described area from Semi-Urban Residential (SU) to Auto-Urban Commercial (AUC).

SUMMARY: The property currently contains a legal nonconforming use (vehicle sales) and a legal minor vehicle service business. The applicant is wishing to bring the property into compliance.

Mr. Andy Videkovich, PDS Staff presented the map amendment request for the City of Covington to rezone an approximately 0.3-acre property from Semi-Urban Residential (SU) to Auto-Urban Commercial (AUC) and noted the site is located within the Urban Sub-area of the Comprehensive Plan, situated at the intersection of Madison Pike, Donaldson Avenue, and West 24th Street, on the east side of Donaldson Avenue north of I-75.

He next explained the site has a notable history in the context of the request and stated that while the property has historically been zoned residential, it has been used for auto sales for several decades, making that use legally non-conforming and when the City of Covington adopted a new zoning ordinance in 2020, it allowed minor vehicle repair as a conditional use within the Semi-Urban Residential zone. He clarified that the applicant subsequently obtained a conditional use approval from the Covington Board in 2025 for minor vehicle repair, making that use legally permitted on the site and pointed out that the auto sales operation continues to function as a non-conforming use. He explained that the rezoning request is intended to bring the property

KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026

into full compliance with the Covington Neighborhood Development Code and align it with its long-standing commercial use.

Next, he reviewed images of the site and the surrounding area pointing out that it reflects a mixed-use urban character where the property to the north along Madison Pike is also zoned Semi-Urban Residential, the area directly across West 24th Street is zoned AUC — the same classification being requested — and the property to the west is zoned Light Industrial. He stated the site itself is nearly entirely impervious surface, consisting of off-street parking and an existing 2,200-square-foot structure located toward the rear of the property and the remaining approximately 10,400 square feet is surface parking, with an existing access point on Donaldson Avenue. He stated the applicant is proposing to re-stripe 11 off-street parking spaces and has no plans to change site access.

Mr. Videkovich then reviewed the uses for the area and noted that the Auto-Urban Commercial zone accommodates a broad range of single and multi-tenant commercial uses that predominantly rely on auto-oriented access, including various vehicle-related uses as well as general commercial and office uses which is a broader classification than the current Semi-Urban Residential zone, which only permits minor vehicle repair as a conditional use.

Next, Mr. Videkovich provided Staff's full review of the 2024 Kenton County Comprehensive Plan and identified several areas of consistency that include the goals and objectives, Urban Sub-area, and Economy elements which all contain language supporting the strengthening and revitalization of the urban core through the redevelopment of underutilized properties and the support of existing businesses. He noted that the proposed rezoning would bring a long-standing commercial property into compliance with the Covington Neighborhood Development Code and allow it to be developed in a manner consistent with both its commercial history and the adjacent commercial properties in the vicinity.

Mr. Videkovich explained that while the proposed map amendment is not consistent with the recommended land use map, which designates the site and the block to the north along Madison Avenue for residential use, the area to the south is identified for commercial uses and the area to the west for industrial uses. He pointed out that Madison Avenue is classified as an arterial street, with the remaining surrounding streets classified as local streets and there are no DSA or flood hazard areas on the site.

He went on to review KRS 100 which states a map amendment must either agree with the Comprehensive Plan, demonstrate that the existing zoning is inappropriate and the proposed zoning is appropriate, or reflect major unanticipated changes of an economic, physical, or social nature. On that basis, he stated Staff provided a favorable recommendation, finding the request generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan through its alignment with the goals and objectives, Urban Sub-area, and Economy elements. He stated that even though it does not align with the recommended land use map, the rezoning will bring the existing business into compliance and provide the property owner with additional operational flexibility, including signage rights afforded to commercial properties.

He also noted that the submitted development plan meets the requirements of the Covington Neighborhood Development Code, with one noted exception: the proposed parking spaces lack dimensional details, which will need to be confirmed for compliance and any future expansions or accessory structures will need to meet applicable code requirements and may trigger the need to bring other aspects of the site, such as lighting and landscaping, into conformance. He reminded the Commission that Covington's 21-day rule applies, meaning

KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026

the Planning Commission's recommendation will become final unless an appeal is filed within 21 days requesting that the City make the final decision. He then offered to answer any questions.

Chairman Dunham asked about outdoor tire storage requirements and Mr. Videkovich confirmed that all storage must be kept within an enclosed building. Chairman Dunham then raised a broader concern about the implications of rezoning the property to Auto-Urban Commercial and while acknowledging the intent is to bring the existing business into compliance, he expressed concern that approval of the AUC rezoning would open the property up to the full range of uses permitted within that zone, not just vehicle sales and repair. Given that the site is surrounded by residential properties on portions of the block, he was concerned that the rezoning could inadvertently allow less compatible uses, such as a vape shop, to move in at a later date. Mr. Videkovich agreed this was a valid concern, noting that while the Covington Neighborhood Development Code treats the approved development plan as binding, minor adjustments are permitted, and once a property is rezoned it becomes difficult to deny other uses within the same zone, as the code treats all permitted uses within a zone as having a similar impact on land use. He also confirmed for Chairman Dunham that proper public notice was provided in accordance with KRS 100, including notification of all adjacent property owners and the posting of signs on the property. He clarified that no feedback was received from neighboring property owners.

Commissioner Flem asked what the consequences would be if the property were not rezoned. Mr. Videkovich explained that the existing business would simply continue operating as a non-conforming use, meaning that any changes the owner wishes to make — even minor ones such as adding signage — would be held to residential zone standards rather than commercial standards. He added that while the owner could seek board approval for such requests, it adds an extra step to any future improvements or modifications.

Commissioner Berling followed up by asking whether any modifications to the site would trigger a requirement to bring the property into compliance with the Neighborhood Development Code. Mr. Videkovich confirmed that depending on the scope of the proposed work, modifications could trigger additional compliance requirements - for example, adding a storage building could require the installation of landscaping that is not currently present. He noted that the specifics would depend on the details of whatever is proposed.

Commissioner Flem also inquired about the property to the northeast of the site and Mr. Videkovich identified it as a property consisting of off-street parking.

There were no further questions and Chairman Dunham noted the following attendees signed up to speak:

FOR

Mohammad Mohammad, property owner/applicant [2325 Madison Ave, Covington, KY]

Ms. Kaitlin Bryan, representing the City of Covington [Regulatory Services Manager & Historic Preservation Specialist]

Mr. Mohammad Mohammad, representing Peak One Holdings for the property at 2325 Madison Avenue, appeared on behalf of the applicant and deferred largely to staff's presentation while offering to answer questions.

Chairman Dunham asked about the intended use of the site. Mr. Mohammad explained that a new tenant has come in to operate an auto service business, and that the primary purpose of the rezoning request is to bring the long-standing commercial property into conformity and provide greater flexibility for current and future

KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026

tenants. He stated the planned operation will consist of light mechanical work and tire sales, though Mr. Mohammad was uncertain whether the tires would be new, used, or both. He stated no exterior improvements or building expansions are currently planned.

Commissioner Wichmann asked whether the tenant would also be selling vehicles. Mr. Mohammad confirmed that the tenant is in the process of obtaining a dealer license, and that once obtained, the vehicle sales use would be covered under the conditional use permit already in place for the property.

There were no further questions for the applicant and Chairman Dunham called on Ms. Kaitlin Bryan for comments.

Ms. Kaitlin Bryan, Regulatory Services Manager for the City of Covington, provided context supporting the rezoning request. She noted that the property has appeared before the Board of Adjustments twice in the last three years, with the owner having to pay approximately \$500 each time simply to obtain approval for routine matters such as new signage — activities that would be permitted by right in a commercial zone. She attributed the situation to the 2021 zoning map update, which designated the site for residential use despite its decades-long commercial history, creating an ongoing hardship for the property owner. Ms. Bryan said that the map amendment would simply make day-to-day operations more practical.

Chairman Dunham raised his earlier concern about what other uses could be permitted on the site under the AUC zone, citing examples such as a vape shop or fast-food drive-through. Ms. Bryan clarified that retail uses, including a vape shop, are actually already permitted in the current Semi-Urban zone, meaning the rezoning would not create new exposure to that type of use and a fast-food drive-through would be unlikely given the existing building's design with automotive service bays, as it would require complete demolition and reconstruction.

Commissioner Wichmann sought clarification on whether the existing conditional use permit would cover the new tenant. Ms. Bryan confirmed that the conditional use permit was obtained by the property owner, not the tenant, and therefore carries over to the new tenant since the use remains the same.

Chairman Dunham asked further on whether the City would have the ability to deny a future permitted use if the site were redeveloped after rezoning. Ms. Bryan acknowledged that outright denial of a permitted use would be difficult but noted that if the building were demolished and the site rebuilt from scratch, a 30-foot buffer yard requirement between the commercial zone and adjacent single-family residential properties would be triggered, providing a degree of protection for neighboring residents.

Commissioner France asked whether a fence would be required as part of the buffer yard or if the code allowed for other options. Ms. Bryan explained that various combinations of buffering measures are available, and that any reduction from the required 30-foot buffer yard would require a variance from the Board of Adjustments, which would involve notifying all neighboring property owners and holding a public hearing. Commissioner France noted that under the current rezoning, there is no immediate requirement to install a fence or buffer between the commercial property and the adjoining residence. Ms. Bryan confirmed this, adding that the property is pre-existing non-conforming and that the owner of the adjacent property to the north has been in contact with the applicant and has not raised any concerns.

**KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026**

Mr. Mohammad then added that the current SU zoning limits wall signage to four square feet, requiring a variance for anything larger — a significant practical obstacle for attracting and retaining tenants. He also noted that under the non-conforming use rules, if the property were to sit vacant for a period of time without a qualifying tenant, the non-conforming status could be lost entirely, forcing the owner to restart the approval process with no guarantee of success. Given that the property has operated as an auto-related commercial use for over 40 years and is physically designed for that purpose, he emphasized the importance of formalizing that status through the rezoning.

Chairman Dunham then recessed the public hearing for Commissioner discussion. Commissioner Simpson provided additional context, noting the property has operated as an auto-related commercial use for nearly 50 years. He described the surrounding area as already largely commercial in character, with a liquor store, Dixie Chili, and other commercial uses extending north along Madison Pike, an auto loading facility and autobody shop to the south, and a railroad track and large industrial building nearby. He noted that while residential uses are present across the street, the site is effectively buffered by four lanes of traffic on Madison Pike and additional lanes on Donaldson Avenue and expressed support for the rezoning. Commissioner Flem echoed Commissioner Simpson's observations regarding the auto-related businesses to the south.

Hearing no further concerns, Chairman Dunham returned to the public hearing, and with no clarifications needed from staff, closed the public hearing, and called for a motion. *Commissioner Flem moved to approve File No. PC-206-0004-MA, a map amendment request by Peak One Holdings LLC for approximately 0.25 acres, finding it generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan based on the facts and considerations contained in the staff report and testimony presented at the hearing; seconded by Commissioner Simpson. A roll call vote found Commissioners Flem, Simpson, Snyder, Vaughn, Wichmann, Baumgardner, Bridges, DeAngelis, Dicke, Dunham, Flem, France, Heidrich, Herrmann, Janes, Ryan, Martin, and Berling in favor; none opposed and the motion carried.*

Chairman Dunham announced that the decision will become effective in 21 days if no appeal is filed and instructed anyone wishing to have the decision reviewed by the City of Covington should submit the appeal form available at the back of the room. He concluded by thanking Ms. Bryan for her helpful comments and feedback during the hearing.

With no further public hearing items, Chairman Dunham moved on to committee reports and stated the Executive Committee had nothing significant to report, having met recently in preparation for the budget with no other pressing matters on the horizon. The Direction 2030 Implementation Committee, reported on by Commissioner Simpson, noted that the housing study is in its final stages, with a completed draft nearing completion and a presentation for Commission review expected soon. The Z21 Committee, reported on by Commissioner Bridges, had nothing to report.

Chairman Dunham moved on to Commissioner Reports and Commissioner Ryan announced that this would be his final meeting as a Kenton County Planning Commissioner, after approximately 18 to 20 years of service under three different mayors and through multiple appointments. He shared that he had received an email the previous day requesting a possible change in his appointment and, not wishing to be an impediment to the city's wishes, chose to step down with seven months remaining on his term. He noted his departure as a retirement rather than a resignation. He reflected warmly on his tenure, recalling that he never sought a position on the Planning Commission and was caught off guard by his first appointment — finding a box of books and binders on his front porch before anyone had even called to notify him. He expressed that despite

**KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026**

the unexpected start, serving on the Commission had been a genuine honor. He extended his gratitude to current and past Commissioners, staff, and directors, offering special thanks to staff members Steve, Cody, Patrick, Andy, and Pamela, as well as Michelle, and Nicole, whom he called his financial tutor. Commissioner Ryan closed by emphasizing that his decision to retire was made out of respect for the Commission and a desire to avoid any conflict between the city and the Commission. He expressed his deep appreciation for the experience and wished the Commission well.

Chairman Dunham expressed sincere regret at Commissioner Ryan's departure, praising him as an outstanding Commissioner over nearly two decades of service. He highlighted Commissioner Ryan's contributions as Treasurer, describing the role as a significant amount of additional work, and commended his reliability, sound judgment, and selfless character — noting that Commissioner Ryan was stepping down at someone else's request despite having no obligation to do so. He stated that it had been an honor to serve alongside him and called him a valued friend who would be greatly missed.

Commissioner Ryan added that the Commission's modest compensation — \$1,000 per year for executive committee members and \$50 per meeting for Commissioners — makes clear that service on the Planning Commission is motivated purely by a desire to give back to the community rather than financial or political gain. He reflected on his broader community involvement, including founding the Park Hills Tree Board and serving as a founding member and first Vice President of the Northern Kentucky Community and Urban Forestry Council, which remains active 30 years later. He expressed pride in that legacy and assured the Commission that he remains available should his services be needed.

Commissioner Snyder offered tribute, noting that she has worked alongside Commissioner Ryan for 25 years and will greatly miss the wealth of knowledge and impartial perspective he brought to the Commission. She also took the opportunity to address what she described as misinformation about the Planning Commission's role, clarifying that the Commission is not a board and that its members, while representing specific cities, serve the entire county and are committed to the best interests of all citizens regardless of jurisdiction. She expressed disappointment in the circumstances surrounding Commissioner Ryan's departure but stated her pride in the manner in which he is leaving, with his head held high.

With no further committee reports or legal counsel updates, Mr. Videkovich took a moment to thank Ms. Langfels for stepping in for Matt Smith and to extend staff's appreciation to Commissioner Ryan for his years of dedicated service and best wishes for the future.

Under new business, Commissioner Ryan requested that staff for the Commission notify the city of his vacancy so the position can be filled, as he would not be communicating that information himself.

During public comment, Mr. Ben Bach of Independence commended the Commission for its adherence to the rules and the law as written. He directed the Commission's attention to KRS 100.324, the statute governing public facility reviews, noting that the Commission's role is specifically to advise the referring body on whether a project is in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan — not to approve or disapprove it outright. He further noted that if the Commission finds a project inconsistent, it is required to state its reasons in writing and suggest changes that would better accomplish the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, implying that there is a spectrum of response available rather than a simple yes or no determination. Chairman Dunham acknowledged it was a valid and helpful point, consistent with the guidance the Commission had already received.

**KENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 07, 2026**

With no further public comments, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Ryan; seconded by Commissioner Snyder, and the meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

APPROVED:

Chair _____

Date _____

DRAFT