

Johnstown Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 1, 2026

CITY OF JOHNSTOWN PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, September 1, 2026

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The following members of Planning Commission were present for roll call:

Chairman Carthew and Commissioners Buday, Grandinetti, White, Shirt, Deater, and Hamacek.

In addition, Art Martynuska, City Manager; John Rutledge, Economic Development Director; Melissa Stiles, Laurel Municipal; and Barry Polster, Executive Director, Johnstown Regional Partnership were present.

PUBLIC COMMENT (AGENDA ITEMS):

Chairman Carthew noted the public present were associated with the first action item and they would speak then.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Shirt motioned to approve the Minutes of the August 4, 2026 Planning Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. White. A roll call vote was taken:

Planning Commission:

Kate Deater - YES

Ian Shirt - YES

Michael Hamacek - YES

Michael Grandinetti - ABSTAIN

Donald Buday - YES

James White - YES

James Carthew - Chairman - YES

The motion passed.

ACTION ITEMS:

Chair Carthew introduced the topic of the new construction of a steel building for Flood City Youth Fitness Academy (FCYFA). He asked if the City had an opportunity to review the plan with regards to zoning. Mr. Rutledge replied Dave Williams reviewed all of the information. Chair Carthew asked Ms. Stiles if Laurel Municipal received any

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correspondence. She confirmed she had not received anything yet. Chair Carthew asked Oscar Cashaw and Jeffery Wilson from FCYFA to present the project.

Mr. Cashaw, owner and operator of FCYFA, explained the proposed project, noting the multipurpose building would be used as a gymnasium in addition to other activities for youth. He provided details of the current building occupied by FCYFA, which is mainly being used for educational purposes and lacks space for recreational activities. He noted FCYFA has the support of the community at large including a number of foundations. He also stated some of the drawings of the project were slightly delayed but would soon be submitted. Chair Carthew noted Mr. Cashaw could work with the City and, in turn, Ms. Stiles from Laurel Municipal to review his documents.

Mr. Wilson, program director at FCYFA, provided details as to why FCYFA needed the new building. He shared FCYFA is located in a part of downtown with a lot of business such as a car dealership, Wessel & Company, and Sargent's Court Reporting. FCYFA is a part of the fabric of what is happening in the downtown area. He stated FCYFA has grown and picks up between 150 and 220 children every day, year-round. He shared the new building would be a space for children to play in addition to parent engagement meetings and performances by the children in FCYFA's programs. He also mentioned various educational programs and meal programs at FCYFA. He shared current issues with their current space, particularly for recreation.

Mr. Hamacek suggested there may be other land in the surrounding neighborhood FCYFA may be able to acquire. He also commented on the importance of spending time outdoors. Mr. Cashaw explained efforts to purchase additional properties along Union Street, but was unable to do so. He noted FCYFA is content with its property.

Mr. Wilson shared how FCYFA had been able to take local children on various trips to locations like the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, National Aquarium, Sandcastle, and DelGrosso's. He also noted, when the weather is appropriate, outings are planned locally to places like Roxbury Park.

Mr. Grandinetti asked if FCYFA was connected to or in partnership with any school districts. Mr. Wilson replied FCYFA has a good relationship with local schools. He also noted Governor Shapiro looks at FCYFA as a model for after-school programs. He shared part of the partnership with the school allows tutors at FCYFA to look at a child's grades and help form a plan to help the child overcome their shortcomings.

Mr. Cashaw explained FCYFA helps to make behavioral changes in both children and parents. Mr. Wilson added additional details regarding how children become leaders at FCYFA.

Mr. White asked what the timeline was for the project. Mr. Cashaw noted, once the permit is received, he anticipated excavation to be done by November 1, 2026. Mr. White noted the only thing lacking was the site plan. Mr. Cashaw expected the site plan by September 11, 2026.

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Chair Carthew thanked Mr. Cashaw and Mr. Wilson for the positivity brought to the community through FCYFA. He reviewed the requirements needed to follow through. He noted there were criteria the site plan needed to follow, and the City could provide a checklist to follow thereby minimizing the review time.

Chair Carthew stated he would be willing to entertain a motion for approval. Mr. Hamacek asked about the setbacks needed for the site. Chair Carthew stated the setbacks would be part of the site plan review.

Mr. Grandinetti motioned to conditionally approve the project pending review and submission of the site plan and Laurel Municipal's review of the zoning ordinance. Mr. Buday seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken:

Planning Commission:

Kate Deater - YES

Ian Shirt - YES

Michael Hamacek - YES

Michael Grandinetti - YES

Donald Buday - YES

James White - YES

James Carthew - Chairman - YES

The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. White raised the topic of the comprehensive plan, inquiring if anyone started putting together the committees to execute the plan. Mr. Rutledge stated an RFP was put out for a Zoning Board solicitor. He added he is knee deep in demolitions and housing acquisitions. Mr. White acknowledged the work being done by Mr. Rutledge but questioned if the Planning Commission should work on developing committees, citing his concerns that the comprehensive plan will not be executed. Mr. Rutledge agreed with the planning commission working on subcommittees. Mr. Martynuska stated such actions would need to be approved by City Council who appoints most Board and Commissions.

The Commission discussed the need for subcommittees to execute the comprehensive plan. Chair Carthew emphasized the importance of a strategic plan. Mr. Rutledge noted reaching out to multiple entities to work on a strategic plan; however, he had not heard back from anyone. Mr. Rutledge explained his work regarding housing, noting he uses the comprehensive plan as a reference. Mr. White commended Mr. Rutledge for his work; however, he recommended the Planning Commission take on some responsibility in conjunction with the City.

Mr. Hamacek commented a subcommittee may be able to keep a better eye on the big picture for a certain area given Mr. Rutledge has so much. Mr. Rutledge shared how DCED is looking at neighborhoods when cleaning up blight.

Discussion continued on what the committees may be able to help with including looking at funding opportunities. It was noted the committees should primarily consider creating a plan and making recommendations for the City. Mr. Grandinetti suggested the Planning Commission should pick three priorities and come up with a consensus to present to Mr. Martynuska and Mr. Rutledge.

Chair Carthew stated, at the prior meeting, the Commission discussed having each member review the comprehensive plan and come up with their priorities. Mr. Martynuska suggested if the Commission proposed areas of focus, then funding streams could be explored and plans could be built from there. It was noted starting with small items could help get funding for projects, as it would show the City is capable.

Discussion returned to the purpose of the committees. The importance of collaboration was emphasized. Mr. Polster commented the Commission should also be aware of the strategic plan being developed by Vision Together. Mr. Polster also stated the City's strategic plan and Vision Together's strategic plan should be separate but should also collaborate. It was suggested the Commission should contact people from the original advising committee for the comprehensive plan to see if they were interested in continuing the process. Mr. Buday noted, at the end of the day, everything will come back to funding. Mr. Martynuska explained the purpose of the strategic plan stage in determining what goals are attainable and how funding can be pursued.

Chair Carthew finished the discussion by stating all Commission members should review the comprehensive plan and determine their individual priorities so the discussion could continue at the next meeting. He would reach out to personnel from the steering committee and see if they had any interest in having a strategic planning meeting to establish subcommittees.

NEW BUSINESS: None

REPORTS:

1. Laurel Municipal

Chair Carthew thanked Ms. Stiles for her monthly log and asked if there were any highlights to be highlighted. Ms. Stiles reported Mom's House had their permit and started construction on their building. Chair Carthew asked whether there was any information regarding the proposed property renovations on the planned smoke shop at the corner of Main Street and Walnut Street. She reported she had not received any plans. Chairman Carthew hoped some of the flashing signs would be minimized.

Mr. Buday commented the Alcove had been sold as well as the 7-11 on Fairfield Avenue. Mr. Hamacek asked about a property on Adams Street, noting he did not see a permit for the work being done.

Mr. Grandinetti commented caution needed to be taken in trying to regulate aesthetics with regard to the smoke shop. Chair Carthew explained his research of guidelines regarding aesthetics and facades related to Johnstown being designated a historic district.

Chair Carthew asked Ms. Stiles to provide a checklist to FCYFA. Mr. White asked if there were floodplain guidelines FCYFA should follow. Ms. Stiles noted there were electrical guidelines that the project engineers were already aware of.

Mr. Grandinetti asked for clarification on permits under the Uniform Construction Code (UCC). Ms. Stiles explained permit designations under UCC guidelines. She offered to provide a zoning permit list.

2. Department of Economic and Community Development

Mr. Rutledge reported on working on demolition, particularly preparing State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) packages. Chair Carthew asked about the number of properties. Mr. Rutledge replied the number of properties was originally in the 90s; however, some people submitted remediation plans. He also noted there was a priority list and then a secondary list to be made. Chair Carthew asked if DCED had the funding to cover all of the properties. Mr. Rutledge replied not all would be funded through the City, and he was working with JRA on what his funding would not cover.

Mr. Rutledge elaborated on demolitions, property acquisitions, and rehabilitation. He noted the properties on the top priority list were unsafe to do anything with. He discussed exploring how to work with partners to rehab properties that are not as far gone. He explained different programs being used to assist City residents with owner occupied homes as well as assisting people in becoming homeowners.

Mr. Polster commented the buildings demolished by the City, JRA and private citizens over the last several years was hard to visualize as they had not been mapped. He suggested the information should be put on neighborhood maps so the impact could be seen. Mr. Rutledge shared there was an intention to put a layer on the GIS map. With UPJ back in session, he planned to look for an intern. He also planned to hire another addition to his staff at the beginning of 2027.

PUBLIC COMMENT - NON-AGENDA ITEMS: None

RECESS/ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.