CITY OF JOHNSTOWN PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, October 6, 2026

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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

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

Commissioner Grandinetti was absent from the meeting.

In addition, John Rutledge, Economic Development Director; Dave Williams, Residential Construction Coordinator; and Melissa Stiles, Laurel Municipal were present.

PUBLIC COMMENT (AGENDA ITEMS): None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Hamacek motioned to approve the Minutes of the September 1, 2026 Planning Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Deater. A roll call vote was taken:

Planning Commission:
Kate Deater - YES
Ian Shirt - YES
Michael Hamacek - YES
Donald Buday - YES
James White - YES
James Carthew - Chairman - YES
The motion passed.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Approve the lot merger of five properties zoned as R-2. The five properties proposed for merger are: 90-1009. -102.000, 90-009. -101.000, 90-009, -121.001, 90-009. -121.000 and 90-009. -103.000.

Chair Carthew explained the proposed lot merger was for properties. He noted the packet included correspondence from the Cambria County Planning Commission, who found the proposed lot merger consistent with the intent and purpose of the land use goals within the county's comprehensive plan.

Mike Harnett, Land Surveyor, explained the property owner owned a house on one of the parcels and collected multiple parcels over the years. The owner wanted to merge all of parcels into one. All of the parcels are empty with the exception of the one with the house.

Chair Carthew noted both the City and the county were okay with the lot merger.

Mr. Hamacek motioned to approve the lot merger. The motion was seconded by Mr. Buday. A roll call vote was taken:

Planning Commission:
Kate Deater - YES
Ian Shirt - YES
Michael Hamacek - YES
Donald Buday - YES
James White - YES
James Carthew - Chairman - YES
The motion passed.

REPORTS:

1. Laurel Municipal

Melissa Stiles, Laurel Municipal, reported on a permit issued for the Public Safety Building for renovations. Regarding 500 Main Street, she stated the apartments above were renovated; however, the only part of the commercial space included in the renovation permits was the fireproofing of the ceiling. If someone chooses to rent the commercial space, permits would be needed.

Chair Carthew asked if there had been any progress with the Flood City Youth Fitness Academy building following last month's meeting. Ms. Stiles reported Laurel Municipal received the drawings from the engineers. A couple of changes were needed; however, step permits were started to allow the footers to be dug and the foundation poured. Once the addendum letter is received from the engineers, the rest of the building can be completed.

The property at 142 Walnut Street was discussed. Ms. Stiles provided a summary of permits and stop work orders. It was noted permits were not needed to seal the parking lot or paint the exterior. Ms. Stiles stated she was waiting for details from the project engineer. Mr. White asked if fines would be issued if the stop work orders were ignored. Ms. Stiles stated fines were possible; however, she had been in contact with the engineer and was informed they were working on finishing the necessary drawings.

Lucky 13, a new barbeque restaurant at the old B&L Winery location on Broad Street was briefly discussed. It was noted all inspections had been passed and the restaurant would be opening the following day.

Mr. White asked if a permit had been issued for an electronic sign near the hospital. Ms. Stiles stated she spoke to Bishop McCort regarding the sign and it would have to be removed. It was noted the only sign permit issued was for a sign to hang on the gym, not on the adjacent property. Chair Carthew asked if Bishop McCort was considering submitting a variance. Ms. Stiles replied a variance was an option if Bishop McCort wanted to pursue it.

Mr. Hamacek mentioned the Woodvale neighborhood used their $10,000 to construct a pavilion on City property without a permit.

OLD BUSINESS:

Chair Carthew started the discussion regarding the Comprehensive Plan. He noted at the prior meeting, the Commission discussed looking at the plan and determining what each member would be interested in pursuing. He also noted he emailed steering committee members and had about ten people responded who might be interested in continuing work on the plan. He reviewed pillars from the plan including housing, jobs, environment, and mobility.

Mr. Rutledge recommended in creating the groups, rather than having 20 to 50 priorities listed, the list should be minimal and ideas could be grown. He added once the strategy is decided, then funding can be looked at. Mr. Hamacek agreed problems needed to be addressed before funding is considered. Mr. Rutledge stated within the plan, each section had recommendations on who should be involved, noting each of the groups should include residents.

Discussion continued regarding how the committees should be formed, who should be involved, and what guidelines there should be. Chair Carthew stated he would discuss logistics of determining interest with Mr. Rutledge including electronic communication. Mr. Rutledge added he would also attend community group meetings.

Mr. Rutledge suggested starting with one pillar such as housing, putting the group together, and then forming other groups based off of the first group. He stated he would like to see the same reports and structure for each group. He offered to create a Google poll that could be sent out to interested parties to determine what each person was interested in working on.

Mr. Hamacek stated one of the biggest problems is the need to build the tax base of the City back up. He noted while the non-profits are needed, they do not pay taxes. He added if other businesses are brought into empty buildings, then jobs will go up and the taxes will help the City. He also noted that housing was a big need if people were brought in for jobs. Mr. White commented housing had already been started, and he saw the second priority as being economic development.

Discussion circled back to forming the committees. Mr. Rutledge echoed his earlier comments regarding community groups. Mr. White suggested speaking directly with the leaders of the groups as being possible designees to the committees so a direct line exists between the community groups and the committees.

Chair Carthew stated the action plan would be for communication to be sent out to everyone, find out where interests lie, and then work on establishing groups. It was noted any suggestions or interests from the Commission could be sent to Mr. Rutledge.

Lia Carson shared she collects information from around the City and would be willing to volunteer to help share information. Chair Carthew asked for her contact information so she could respond to the email communications regarding committees.

Mr. Rutledge commented people may want to get involved once they start seeing other people reporting on certain things. He added information can also be posted to social media and the website, potentially generating interest. Discussion ensued regarding the connections and overlap between the six pillars of the Comprehensive Plan. It was noted some idea may require various funding sources while others may not require any funding.

Mr. Shirt exited the meeting at 5:47 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS: None

PUBLIC COMMENT - NON-AGENDA ITEMS: None

RECESS/ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m.