

MINUTES
ONTARIO PLANNING COMMISSION
DECEMBER 10, 2025

The Ontario Planning Commission met in regular session on December 10, 2025, at 4:03 p.m., in the Municipal Building with Jill Knight presiding. Present during roll call were Commission members Jill Knight, Diane Wolfe, Service-Safety Director Adam Gongwer, and Mayor Kris Knapp; Engineer Mark Rufener, Law Director Andrew Medwid, and Clerk of Council Cathy VanAuker.

The minutes of the regular Planning Commission meeting of November 12, 2025 were presented for approval. Hearing no corrections, the minutes were approved as presented.

The first item to come before the Commission was three variance requests submitted by Evan Machado for Ohio Health Children's Hospital.

Adam Yaracs, Project Manager with ICAM Architecture, Cleveland, and Larry Pole, Project Architect with IKAYAM, Chagrin Falls, came forward to explain the project and building height variance requests.

Building Height

- The project is a new 3-story building shared between Ohio Health and Nationwide Children's Services.
- Draft renderings were displayed. Floor plan layouts and materials are still being considered.
- The proposed building location is in the parking lot in front of the existing Ohio Health Medical Office Building.
- The main drop-off area will have a canopy and a drop-off lane for patients and visitors to the building.
- The current code maximum building height is 50'. The proposed building would have a first floor height of 15', the second and third floors are 14', totaling 43', and the parapet would add a couple of feet at 47'. The additional 11' screen wall on the roof would conceal the mechanical system and extend the height to 58'. Eventually, they would like to use the extra height for signage on the side of the screen. The height would not be extended due to signs.

Nick Ovens, EMH&T Inc. Civil Engineer, New Albany, came forward to explain the variance requests for the parking spaces and drop-off area.

Parking Spaces

- The parking space variance request is to reduce the length from 20' to 18'.
- The intent is to add more efficiency in the parking lot because it will be used for both the new building and the existing medical facility. Additional staff parking is to the north.

- The parking area is currently spread out with islands. The 18' design is the typical industry standard seen in most municipalities and across other Ohio Health facilities.
- An area for compact parking or an area for larger vehicles is not normally seen.
- Engineer Rufener said 20' is the standard in this area but may be different in the Columbus area.
- This is a shared parking area. The standard for Ohio Health parking spaces is to neither underserve or grossly overserve with unneeded parking.
- Staff parking is behind the building.

Drop Area Area

- The request is to allow the drop off area adjacent to the building to serve dual purpose as a visitor drop-off and for deliveries.
- The area would be 3-cars wide to have sufficient room
- The Fire Department's only concern was to ensure permanent parking would not be allowed near the drop-off area.
 - A signage consultant is used during projects for code compliance, directions inside the building and ample signs outside the building.
- Director Gongwer suggested a sidewalk along W. 4th Street between the two driveways and possibly extending the sidewalk to the check-in area.

Miscellaneous Discussion

- Hours of operation for the Walk-in Clinic are approximately 8 am – 8 pm.
- This is an outpatient facility: primary care, women's health, and pediatrics.
- No outpatient surgeries.
- No overnight stays.

At 4:22 p.m., the public hearing was opened for (1) Section 1141.01, 4' variance for the maximum height of building from 50' to 54', (2) Section 1141.19, 2' variance for parking space length from 20' to 18', and (3) Section 1141.20, designated drop-off area adjacent to the building to serve dual purpose as visitor drop-off and loading/unloading of deliveries. Notice of Public Hearing letters were mailed to adjoining property owners.

- Tom Wiffeman, representing First Federal Savings & Loan Bank, voiced concern if the traffic flow would increase at the entrance close to the bank. Drive-thru customers use the same drive when exiting the bank property and asked if the drop-off area would impede that flow.
- Engineer Rufener said a traffic study is being done and they will know more when completed.
- The drive will have two lanes.
- The drive is on Ohio Health's property.

At 4:27 p.m., hearing no one else who wished to speak, the Public Hearing was closed.

Mrs. Wolfe moved to approve the 4' variance request to increase the building height from 50' to 54', second by Mrs. Knight. Four members voted aye, zero nay, and the motion passed. Four members cast their votes aye, zero nay, and the motion passed.

Mrs. Wolfe moved to approve the variance request to reduce the parking space length from 20' to 18', second by Mrs. Knight. Four members voted aye, zero nay, and the motion passed. Four members cast their votes aye, zero nay, and the motion passed.

Mrs. Knight moved to approve the variance request for the designated drop-off area to serve dual purpose as a visitors drop off and for loading/unloading delivers, second by Mrs. Wolfe. Four members cast their votes aye, zero nay, and the motion passed.

At 4:30 p.m., with no further business to come before the Planning Commission, Mrs. Wolfe moved to adjourn, second by Mrs. Knight.

Jill Knight, Chair

Date