



# City of Hudson, Ohio

## Meeting Minutes - Draft

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Monday, April 27, 2026

6:00 PM

Hudson City Hall  
1140 Terex Road

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### **Joint session of the Architectural and Historic Board of Review, Board of Zoning and Building Appeals, and Planning Commission to conduct board training**

#### **1. Call To Order**

Solicitor Pitchford called the meeting to order.

#### **2. Roll Call**

Architectural Historic Board of Appeals: Ms. Sredinski, Ms. Marzulla, Mr. Brown

Building Zoning Board of Appeals: Ms. Bronstein, Mr. Jones, Mr. Scott, Ms. Norman, Mr. Kahrl

Planning Commission: Ms. Norman, Mr. Nystrom, Mr. Innamorato, Ms. Obert

Staff: Mr. Hannan, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Pitchford, Mr. Sugar, Mr. Griffith, Ms. Rodack

City Council: Dr. Weinstein, Ms. D'Eramo, Mr. Brezovec, Dr. Goetz, Dr. Bird, Mr. White

#### **3. Introductions (6:00pm)**

Council President Dr. Bird thanked the Board and Commission members, along with City staff and City Council members, for their attendance. He outlined the purpose of the meeting, emphasizing the importance of developing a clear understanding of each Board's responsibilities, the distinct contributions they make to the city, and the opportunities for enhanced collaboration. Dr. Bird noted that this meeting is intended to serve as the foundation for ongoing education and continued engagement among the Boards.

**This matter was discussed**

#### **4. Onboarding Discussion (6:10pm)**

The meeting continued with a discussion led by Solicitor Pitchford regarding City processes and the responsibilities of Board and Commission members. Topics included the importance of properly maintaining all public records, adhering to the Open Meetings Act, and understanding conflict-of-interest and ethics requirements. Staff also addressed common questions new members may have about their respective Boards or

Commissions. Solicitor Pitchford then invited feedback on how to improve these processes.

Ideas presented included ensuring meetings are conducted in an orderly manner using Roberts Rules of Order; providing flow charts that outline the steps an applicant follows; and ensuring Council Liaisons and Board Chairs have a strong understanding of procedures. Suggestions also included reviewing applications and identifying potential issues prior to meetings; offering case studies with commentary from the Solicitor highlighting effective practices and areas for improvement; and asking Council interview candidates whether they have watched a meeting and what observations they have about its conduct.

Additional recommendations emphasized interviewing prospective members before a seat becomes vacant to support continuity; improving access to information on past precedents and institutional practices; clarifying what applicants are told about submission requirements; and providing illustrative examples of typical cases, along with case numbers for further research. Members also suggested creating a chairperson's packet to assist new Chairs, encouraging outgoing members to pass along their knowledge, and adding a "Guide to Public Participation" on the City's website to help residents understand meeting procedure and expectations.

### **This matter was discussed**

## **5. Powers and Duties (6:30pm)**

Solicitor Pitchford explained that all Boards and Commissions operate in a quasi-judicial capacity with corresponding legal obligations. He emphasized that each body places testimony on the record, meaning information presented at a meeting may be used by a court in future proceedings. He noted that transcripts may be requested by a court, that evidence outside the record cannot be considered, and that Boards or Commissioners may request expert information from staff or applicants. Applicants, he clarified, have the obligation to provide sufficient evidence to meet their burden of proof. Pitchford further explained that the Land Development Code grants Boards and Commissions the authority to call for expert testimony, and that while members may possess professional expertise, they are not permitted to act as expert witnesses. He also noted that each Board and Commission maintains its own administrative rules and outlined the responsibilities of each Board.

The Architectural and Historic Board of Review (AHBR) is responsible for reviewing the architectural characteristics of new structures, alterations, additions, fences, signs, and demolitions. The AHBR typically considers approximately twelve applications per meeting and meets twice per month. Many cases are brief-often less than ten minutes-and meetings generally conclude around 9:00 p.m. Solicitor Pitchford noted that staff comments are frequently addressed before the meeting; however, many applicants arrive unaware that they are expected to be prepared to respond to those comments. He also explained that the AHBR may request an opinion from an outside architect, while architects serving on the Board do not provide professional testimony-that role is fulfilled by the Historic Consultant.

The Planning Commission (PC) serves as an advisory body to City Council and holds hearings on Conditional Use and Site Plan applications. The PC typically meets once per month, with meetings often running until approximately 11:30 p.m. Agendas generally include one to three applications, along with an advisory case most months.

The Board of Zoning and Building Appeals (BZBA) hears administrative appeals without taking new evidence, basing its decisions on the Findings of Fact established by the originating Board. The BZBA is also responsible for hearing variance requests under the Land Development Code.

**This matter was discussed**

## 6. Code of Conduct Discussion (7:00pm)

Solicitor Pitchford instructed Board and Commission members that they should not discuss any case outside of the public meeting. Members may request information from City staff, but not substantive information related to the merits of a case. He also advised members not to post anything on social media that pertains to an application or case. Ms. Norman added that if a quorum of a Board were to form on social media and a majority of members engaged in discussion, it would constitute a violation of Sunshine laws.

Dr. Bird then presented a PowerPoint outlining that the Boards and Commission will be informed of the new Code of Conduct, which is currently in draft form. He reviewed the relevant sections of the Ohio Revised Code regarding disruptions during hearings and highlighted best practices from the International City/County Management Association, noting that governing bodies set the standard for expected behavior. He also reviewed the Hudson City Council Code of Conduct and Robert's Rules of Order, emphasizing that personal attacks are not permitted and that the presiding officer is responsible for maintaining decorum.

He further stated that any concerns about City staff should be brought to the City Manager rather than raised during a public meeting.

Dr. Bird explained that a progressive process will be used when behavioral issues arise. A discussion followed regarding how civility is defined, with Dr. Bird noting that this is a topic currently being addressed. He distinguished between individuals who act with nefarious intent and those who simply make honest mistakes. Additional discussion focused on the importance of maintaining the appearance of impartiality, the tone and choice of language used during meetings, and the need for civility not only within individual Boards and the Commission but between them.

Solicitor Pitchford noted that various codes of conduct will be reviewed to assist the Boards and Commission in fostering a culture of civility. Mr. Kahrl added that in his professional counseling practice, he encourages individuals to focus on discussing issues rather than character.

**This matter was discussed**

## 7. Findings of Fact Discussion (7:30pm)

Solicitor Pitchford noted that City Council's new 2025 appeals process, along with the requirements of the Land Development Code (LDC), requires each Board to develop Findings-of-Fact for appeal cases. He reviewed the purpose of Findings-of-Fact, explaining that they document the approval or denial of a case and provide the reasoning behind that decision.

It was further noted that the LDC requires the Boards and Commission (PC) to prepare written Findings-of-Fact for every decision—a practice that has not been followed in the past. A discussion then took place regarding how

each Board feels about preparing Findings-of-Fact for all decisions. Solicitor Pitchford stated that he will make a proposal to City Council to require Findings-of-Fact only when a decision is appealed. This led to an in-depth discussion, including: how delayed Findings-of-Fact may affect an applicant’s right to a timely appeal; what materials, beyond the LDC, may be considered in a remanded case; the unfamiliarity of Findings-of-Fact for many non-lawyers; the need to distinguish between opinion and fact; the challenges posed when LDC codes are not fully consistent with one another; the possibility that failing to write Findings-of-Fact could jeopardize an applicant’s right to appeal; how Findings-of-Fact should be determined and documented; and the BZBA’s typical practice of conducting an oral review of Findings-of-Fact, which creates a record that staff can later use to prepare a written version.

A sample video of a verbal BZBA Finding-of-Fact was reviewed as an example of how Boards and the Commission may approach them in the future.

Further discussion followed regarding situations in which a Board is not unanimous in its reasoning, the specific standards required for each type of appeal, and the amount of time needed to prepare Findings-of-Fact solely for appealed cases. Members also discussed that, in an approved decision, the appellant must identify the alleged errors made by the Board, and that the AHBR may need to provide more specific detail when an appeal is made to the BZBA.

**This matter was discussed**

**8. Adjournment (8:00pm)**

Solicitor Pitchford invited all attending to convey ideas or thoughts to himself, Mr. Hannan, or any City Council meeting.

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**Joe Campbell, Executive Assistant**

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