



Mayor Mike Zita

# CITY OF NORTON

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## PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES Tuesday, January 13, 2026 - 6:00 pm

### Roll Call:

Ralph Dowling  
John Conklin  
Marion Peterson  
James Lada  
Kaitlin Witzberger

### Also Present:

Samantha Owen, Secretary  
Bill Braman

Mr. Dowling called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

### I. PC APPLICATION PC-2 Replat of Major Subdivision

3879 Brookside Drive, PPN 46-02112  
Property Owner – Catherine George

Mr. Braman explained that this applicant has navigated down a long path. Normally with a lot split, planning commission doesn't have to take action but since it's already been subdivided for the Nash Heights, there's a replat of another lot split and a filing of a replat that's when planning commission views, it and then sends it off to council. The applicant has come a year ago and discussed the possibility of being able to parcel off a portion of her property in hopes of her brother being able to be close to her. In that we discovered that the utilities ran north and south on Brookside but did not carry through on Wooddale. So, our first obstacle was to see if we can make sure that she can have sewer. Through that process, it was determined that she needed an easement through her property to get through to this extra parcel and we would need Barberton to sign off on that. She went down that path. That's all approved. Next step was to send it off, get it surveyed and send to our engineer for the lot split. He determined that he would not sign off until the variance for the depth of the property was granted. We went through the BZA process and variance was granted for the depth. She now has sent that off to the engineer and he's signed off. The replat was come back to us now for this process for the replat. It was asked by Mr. Lada how the property is zoned and it is R1. Mr. Lada asked if it would remain as R1. Mr. Braman stated that this was originally zoned R1 because of septic and water. Now that sewer has ran through there as a utility it could be viewed as an R2 or R3 even because of the lot size. He further explained that it would stay an R1 with this variance and technically there are lots in that allotment that are much smaller than what she has been granted the variance for. Those were just there long before the zoning was in place. Those would already be legal non-conforming after the replat, going about it the right way. It was asked if this board would see the plans for the new

build. Mr. Braman said this falls under a new home construction at that point and our engineer will have to review it once she submits the new home plans. Mr. Conklin asked, "Do you expect there now to be a rash of these lot splits in Nash Heights because everybody's going to see an opportunity to split their property?" Mr. Braman responded, "She was probably more of a unique property being on a corner. Her address shows as being Brookside, but her side yard would be the corner of Wooddale. Her property depth was very deep, which would allow her to be able to even do this split and the second parcel now is going to be on Wooddale." He went on to tell the room that he did not feel as though others would want to do this. Mr. Conklin explained that he asked this because of the parcel behind her, the parcel across the street from her on Wooddale, and the parcel behind that would all have an opportunity to do a lot split if they so choose based on what she's being granted. Mr. Lada had the same concern but he was more concerned with the easement, "but where the easement is, it's right along the road so you can't build anything there anyway. If you want to put a yard shed or a garage or house extension, it's not going to be in that space ever. I think city should remember this and just be aware that there may be others that want to sell off a larger portion of their lot or section of their lot and then we'll have to look at it individually rather than setting a precedence set for the future." He went on to say, "just a warning, I'm just concerned about setting the stage for others that we'll have to look at these individually rather than as we did it once and we can do it again". Mr. Braman said, "I think the key to it is ingress and egress. It just opens it up to corners would be my guess. Then you need that easement for utilities because, keep in mind, when sewer came in it just went north and south on those streets. There are a few streets that it cut down. And I'll be honest there's probably not too many people that will do the process start to finish as what she has done. She's been very vigilant, very thorough in her process and it's a long process. Not easy, and not cheap."

Catherine George, of 3879 Brookside Drive stood up and stated "The main reason I'm doing it is my brother was diagnosed with Parkinson's beginning of last year. So, their house they live in now has got nothing but steps which is not good for him. Since I don't use that portion of the yard for anything we thought that if they could build there it would save them from having to buy land and building another house that would be a handicapped accessible house because he might eventually end up in a wheelchair. So that was why we were looking at splitting the lot. It would save them some money. They had looked at maybe redoing their house and it costs almost as much as a new house would cost."

Mr. Lada asked if her home was on septic currently. Ms. George said no. The easement doesn't interfere with the current sewer and the tie in for the sewer is up towards the north part of the lot – not where they would use the tie in for theirs as theirs is on the south side of the lot. Mr. Braman reminded everyone that in that allotment there there's no exception, all homes must have sewer. That was part of the order. All properties in that allotment were forced to hook up to sewer – it was not an option. Mr. Dowling added, "With the size of the lot you have now, you couldn't put septic in anyways."

Mr. Conklin made a motion to approve PC application PC-2 for a final replat of a major subdivision for 3879 Brookside Drive. Ms. Witzberger seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0 and will move on to City Council.

## **II. Old Business**

Mr. Braman updated the commission on the Ken Ganley project. They'll come with a final for a phase one. It's going to be going on existing pavement so there's no water issues. They're finalizing some things with Mr. Binsley. This project with the water issues could take upwards to a year which is why they'll get this building part of it built, be able to start that and then still work on their next phase.

Mr. Dowling asked if there is any new business coming up. Liberty Free Will Baptist Church is coming forward with a preliminary site plan to build a big gymnasium/activity center onto their church. Mr. Braman said there potentially could be a couple things on the agenda but we haven't got a final say yet.

Mr. Dowling also brought up the citizens housing board. Mr. Braman said last week it was discussed and Mr. Dodson's on it. He's the point person of that. Some small discussion of this board was had. There are members who are appointed and representatives. Mr. Dowling wanted to make sure that this board was addressed since the new City Administrator has started and he is on it as well.

Mr. Conklin asked if the Comprehensive Plan has been released yet. It was discussed that council approved it in December. Mr. Dowling said he was also watching for it and the plan was good, but the implementation was needing addressed and he doesn't know who else would do those things other than Mr. Braman. Mr. Braman admitted that plan should be a part of what I push the ball forward on and I think we are in the right mindset. He went on to say that he feels our council does a wonderful job of seeing the importance of it and sees that when you spend money to look towards the future it's important to stand by it. "I think council agrees with that, our administration agrees with it and it all comes down to money. A lot of it is moving of utilities (sewer and water) that plays a big part of it and I know everybody's on the same page with that. So, hopefully we're doing the right things here to make sure those things still happen. We're in a good place. I'm confident that the vision will eventually come. Unfortunately, you may not see all the results when it's time to develop a new plan but it's a long-term plan and as long as we stick to that long-term plan, which is I think we're doing things right because not much changed from 2006 of our last one to what we did here. Everybody's wishes of what they think should be where and how we should move forward are happening. Maybe not at a pace of what we all want, but they're still happening." Mr. Dowling responded, "I think some of the balance that I thought was targeting areas to say, 'well, this should be business or residential', 'this should be industrial', and maybe makes it a little bit easier when people come down and want to make a change that may make things a little bit easier." Mr. Braman said, "I think maybe one thing that will go hand in hand with this would be the zoning code update, which is will be coming this year. As long as we can match what we put in the comprehensive plan, I think then you're starting to gain more and more street cred because you're matching what you're putting in place. I don't think before it matched well. A lot of things were outdated; now if we catch it up together then I think we've made progress." Members asked for a copy of the comprehensive plan and our office will send that digitally.

Mr. Dowling was a member of the comprehensive plan review board and said, "Nobody's going to be happy no matter what you do. Some say 'I don't want that in my area', 'I don't like this', 'why are we growing?', 'We need more business but not in areas where I can actually see the business'. I think that was a lot of what they were just trying to say. We're going to have a




logical plan and then once you approve that, then we're not going to have a lot of people complaining, why was this industrial, why was this B3. I think that was really a lot of the stimulus to get this thing done.” Mr. Braman said, “Again, the key to residential neighborhoods to commercial growth is sewer and water. And unfortunately, the costs of putting in a septic system are probably higher now than what moving to sewer could be. Nobody wants to have that conversation. Those are the tough conversations. Everybody tenses up because they think it's going to affect them being made to tie in and what that expense is if their septic's working. Those are things that we just have to work out and the plan shouldn't reflect that though. We still need a good plan and those other things I think we can put on the backs of city council.” Mr. Dowling agreed. Mr. Conklin added, “The last comprehensive plan, if I remember correctly, when we tried to do the other parts, they referendum it”. This is when the city went with no zoning code. Mr. Braman said, “We don't want that. That's not a good process for us. We will be very vigilant in see the zoning code through its updates are, slow and thoughtful.” Mr. Dowling said, “I'll go back through because I've been doing a running list of conflicts in the codes. Sheetz is an example because I looked up service stations and it requires you to have your premium and your regular pricing on the sign or you get fined so many/so much per day.” Mr. Braman said, “Yeah. and that's s just the progress of being outdated.”

### **Consideration of Minutes**

There were two typing errors noticed which will be corrected. It was also needing to be confirmed if Mr. Sierko said “extension” or retention basin” on page one. Mr. Conklin made a motion to approve the minutes from December 9<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Lada seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0 with one abstention.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:30PM

*Respectfully submitted,*

  
Samantha Owen, Secretary

Approved:

  
Ralph Dowling, Chair

1/27/24  
Date

Note: These minutes are not verbatim. A full recording is available on the city website.