NEW ALBANY
COMMUNITY CONNECTS US

Council Minutes – Regular Meeting

July 7, 2026

Mayor Spalding called to order the New Albany City Council Meeting of July 7, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the New Albany Village Hall, 99 West Main Street, New Albany, Ohio. Staff attending were Deputy City Manager Adrienne Joly, Law Director Benjamin Albrecht, Deputy Finance Director Morgan Joeright, Police Chief Greg Jones, Development Director Jennifer Chrysler, Planning Manager Chris Christian, Planner I Kylie Blackburn, Public Service Director Ryan Ohly, Deputy Public Service Director Steven Mayer, Director of Strategic Initiatives Abbey Brooks, Communications & Marketing Specialist Adrienne Mayfield, and Clerk of Council Jennifer Mason.

Mayor Spalding led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:
The following Mayor/Council Members answered Roll Call:

Mayor Sloan Spalding	P
CM Marlene Brisk	P
CM Michael Durik	P
CM Kasey Kist	P
CM John McClelland	P
CM Matt Shull	P
CM Andrea Wiltrout	P

ACTION ON MINUTES:
Clerk Mason reported that the June 16, 2026, proposed minutes incorrectly referenced a kickball tournament rather than a pickleball tournament. The correction was made to the original document. Council adopted the June 16, 2026, regular meeting minutes by consensus.

Council adopted the June 23, 2026, special meeting minutes by consensus.

ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:
NONE

HEARING OF VISITORS:
NONE

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:
PLANNING COMMISSION (PC): No meeting.

PARKS AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD (PTAB): No meeting.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD (ARB): No meeting.

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS (BZA): No report.

SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD (SAB): No meeting.

INCLUSION DIVERSITY EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY IMPLEMENTATION PANEL (IDEA): No meeting.

CEMETERY RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD (CRAB): Clerk Mason reported that CRAB met to further consider the Rose Run 2/Veterans Memorial options presented by Deputy City Manager Joly and headstone recreation. The board moved to recommend that city council and city staff accept the architect's plans as presented with the following features: one arch overhead portal sign bearing the name "New Albany Cemetery;" a soft-mown border - pending identification of the grass - around the four corners of the historic cemetery rather than inset stone; and a recommendation against the optional mown path on the northeast border from the creek which they believed would lead to increased traffic through the headstones.

Council Member Durik asked and Deputy City Manager Joly explained that the board had concerns about delineating the boundaries of the historic cemetery area. They preferred the soft-mown border option. She described the project's planned retaining wall. The presented options were minimal changes to the site.

Council Member Durik asked if there was a fence option for around the cemetery. He wasn't clear how the tall grass would delineate and be part of the landscaping, and a fence required less regular maintenance. Deputy City Manager Joly answered that the designers looked at fencing, but the retaining wall was there and higher than the adjacent walkway. An additional fence might make the area appear inaccessible, which she did not believe was the intent of the CRAB. The arch defined the entrance to the cemetery. She anticipated the native grasses would be mowed once or twice a year to keep them from creeping in.

Clerk Mason reported the CRAB moved to recommend that city council and city staff recreate headstones for James Conkle, William Yantis, who died in 1872, William H. Yantis, who died in 1854, Amanda Yantis, Lorenzo Ulry, Reverend Joshua Montgomery, Suzanna Tanner Montgomery, Mary Ann "Molly" Olinger Kohn, and Sarah Sager Kohn. Clerk Mason indicated she would forward these names and the recommendation to City Manager Stefanov for contracting purposes.

Mayor Spalding asked and Clerk Mason responded that money to recreate the headstones was included in the midyear appropriations ordinance. Council Member Wiltrout asked and Clerk Mason replied that the estimated cost of approximately $15,000 was within the city manager's approved contracting authority. One of the recommended headstones could be recreated through a military veteran program at no cost. Mayor Spalding stated that some features not included would reduce the overall project cost. Deputy City Manager Joly confirmed that the cost impact of the recommendations could be absorbed within the approved Guaranteed Maximum Price, with any adjustments handled as a change order.

PUBLIC RECORDS COMMISSION: No meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS:
NONE

SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING OF ORDINANCES:
ORDINANCE O-18-2026
Mayor Spalding read by title read by title AN ORDINANCE TO ACCEPT THE EXPEDITED TYPE 1 ANNEXATION OF 9.6 +/- ACRES FROM JERSEY TOWNSHIP, LICKING COUNTY TO THE CITY OF NEW ALBANY.

Deputy City Manager Adrienne Joly stated this ordinance would accept approximately 9.6 acres of land was contiguous with New Albany's corporate boundaries. The annexation petition met all statutory requirements under the Ohio Revised Code and was proceeding under the expedited Type 1 process. The city already had a road maintenance agreement with Jersey Township dating to May 2016 for the relevant portion of roadway. The Licking County Board of Commissioners approved the petition on April 2, 2026, and the required 60-day waiting period had been satisfied.

Mayor Spalding opened the Public Hearing. Hearing no comments or questions from the public, he closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Spalding moved to adopt the ordinance. Council Member Wiltrout seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes to approve Ordinance O-18-2026.

ORDINANCE O-19-2026

Mayor Spalding read by title AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NEW ALBANY BY AMENDING THE ZONING MAP TO REZONE 22.6+/- ACRES OF LAND GENERALLY LOCATED TO THE SOUTHEAST OF AND ADJACENT TO STATE ROUTE 161, FROM AGRICULTURAL (AG) AND LIMITED OFFICE CAMPUS DISTRICT (L-OCD) TO INFILL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (I-PUD) FOR AN AREA TO BE KNOWN AS "BEECH INTERCHANGE SOUTHEAST EXPANSION ZONING DISTRICT" AS REQUESTED BY MBJ HOLDINGS LLC, C/O AARON UNDERHILL, ESQ.

Planner I Kylie Blackburn stated this was a rezoning of 22.6 acres containing the 9.6 acres recently annexed under Ordinance O-18-2026 from Agricultural (AG) and Limited Office Campus District (L-OCD) to Infill Planned Unit Development (I-PUD), to be known as the Beech Interchange Southeast Expansion Zoning District. Neighboring uses and zoning districts contained Limited General Employment (L-GE) and I-PUD designations. The Planning Commission (PC) reviewed the application at its June 15 meeting, and recommended approval. The proposed zoning text contained a similar list of permitted, conditional, and prohibited uses as other comparable zoning districts. The proposed setbacks included a zero-foot pavement setback and 25-foot building setback along SR 161; a minimum pavement setback of 25 feet and a minimum building setback of 50 feet from the right-of-way on Worthington Road; a minimum pavement setback of 25 feet and minimum building setback of 50 feet along the easter boundary; and a 25-foot setback along the western boundary. City staff had worked with MKSK and The New Albany Company to establish a landscape standard document to ensure cohesive development in the area, and the zoning text also contemplated a new roadway identified in the Engage New Albany Strategic Plan. The ordinance was appropriate given the envisioned employment and manufacturing uses for the area as outline in the strategic plan.

Tom Rubey, director of planning, The New Albany Company, stated that one of the conditions of the PC was the completion of an updated traffic analysis for the entire zone. This referred to not just the area being rezoned, but the full extent from Beech Road on the west to the eastern corporate boundary. Mr. Rubey and city staff had met the previous week to establish the parameters of that analysis, and the study was currently underway through engineering firm EMH&T for review by the city traffic engineer and city engineer.

Mayor Spalding opened the Public Hearing. Hearing no comments or questions from the public, he closed the Public Hearing.

Council Member Brisk moved to adopt the ordinance. Council Member Kist seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes to approve Ordinance O-19-2026.

ORDINANCE O-21-2026

Mayor Spalding read by title AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 1165.07 OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING CODE OF THE CITY OF NEW ALBANY CODIFIED ORDINANCES AND A TECHNICAL AMENDMENT TO CHAPTERS 745.04, 1105.02, 1129.03, 1131.03, 1135.04, 1137.04, 1141.02, AND 1169.11 OF NEW ALBANY CODIFIED ORDINANCES TO CORRECT REFERENCES TO CHAPTER 1165.07 AS REQUESTED BY THE CITY OF NEW ALBANY.

Planning Manager Chris Christian stated that city staff had reviewed Chapter 1165.07, which governed home occupations, to evaluate whether those regulations remained appropriate given how residents currently conducted home-based work. The review identified 2 primary amendments as warranted, the removal of the restriction prohibiting home occupations from being operated within accessory buildings on a property, while retaining the existing limitation that if a home occupation is conducted within the primary dwelling, it remained confined to no more than 15% of the primary dwelling unit's floor area; and the elimination of an antiquated list of examples of permissible home occupations. The post-COVID era had seen a significant broadening of what constituted work-from-home, and the old list was no longer inclusive of the many occupations now conducted from residential properties. Additionally, several cross-references throughout the codified ordinances were corrected to properly reference this section.

Mayor Spalding appreciated staff revisiting this section of code in response to community members' questions. While the city was primarily residential in character and neighbors' preferences for a quiet community should be respected, the amendments appropriately reflected the realities of modern work-from-home activity while retaining meaningful limitations.

Mayor Spalding opened the Public Hearing. Hearing no comments or questions from the public, he closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Spalding moved to adopt the ordinance. Council Member Durik seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes to approve Ordinance O-21-2026.

ORDINANCE O-22-2026
Mayor Spalding read by title AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND APPROPRIATIONS FOR CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY OF NEW ALBANY, STATE OF OHIO, DURING THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2026, AND TO AUTHORIZE TRANSFERS AND ADVANCES FROM THE GENERAL FUND.

Finance Director Bethany Staats stated this was the city's routine midyear review of the 2026 budget, adjustment of appropriations based on updated project schedules, operational needs, and revenue projections. The ordinance also authorized one transfer and two advances from the General Fund, both of which were expected to be repaid as revenues became available. Overall, General Fund appropriations would increase by $6,060,000, representing an increase of approximately $434,000 from the first reading. Approximately 90% of the $6 million figure was attributable to large advances and transfers, one-time expenses, and revenue-based expenditures. The remaining 10% represented continuing operational increases. The specific additional items since the first reading included: the PermitHub software, health reconciliation, funding for tornado siren testing, and property real estate taxes for the former Discover property, which were expected to be reimbursable depending on when those taxes were exempted. The Builder's Escrow Fund would also be receiving appropriations, which functioned as a pass-through account collecting and disbursing money from contractors in advance of planning review and inspections, and therefore did not represent a net city expense. Additional appropriations were also made for capital equipment, specifically furniture at 7815 Walton Parkway, and within the Capital Improvement Fund for the Bevelhymer-Walnut roundabout project. All changes since the first reading were relatively minor, primarily reflecting additional operational appropriations associated with continued development activity, pass-through costs, and facility needs, and none of the revisions materially changed the overall financial position or purpose of the ordinance.

Mayor Spalding opened the Public Hearing. Hearing no comments or questions from the public, he closed the Public Hearing.

Council Member Wiltrout moved to adopt the ordinance. Council Member Durik seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes to approve Ordinance O-22-2026.

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES:

ORDINANCE O-23-2026

Mayor Spalding read by title AN ORDINANCE TO DECLARE THE IMPROVEMENT TO CERTAIN PARCELS OF REAL PROPERTY TO BE A PUBLIC PURPOSE, EXEMPT 100% OF THAT IMPROVEMENT FROM REAL PROPERTY TAXATION, REQUIRE THE OWNERS OF THOSE PARCELS TO MAKE SERVICE PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES, PROVIDE FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE APPLICABLE PORTION OF THOSE SERVICE PAYMENTS TO THE LICKING HEIGHTS LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION CENTERS OF LICKING COUNTY (C-TEC), PROVIDE FOR THE DEPOSIT OF THE REMAINDER OF THOSE SERVICE PAYMENTS INTO A MUNICIPAL PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT TAX INCREMENT EQUIVALENT FUND, SPECIFY THE PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS THAT DIRECTLY BENEFIT THOSE PARCELS, AND APPROVE AND AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTION OF ONE OR MORE TAX INCREMENT FINANCING AGREEMENTS.

Economic Development Manager Sara Zeigler stated that the ordinance would amend the Oak Grove 2 Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district to include the approximately 9.6 acres that had just been annexed and rezoned. The TIF was classified as non-school, meaning it would not negatively impact the Licking Heights School District or the Career & Technology Education Centers of Licking County (C-TEC). The purpose of the TIF was to capture the incremental increase in the value of the land and improvements to contribute toward qualified public infrastructure projects. The city had entered into supplemental agreements with Jersey Township for the funding of fire and EMS services.

Council Member Wiltrout asked and Manager Zeigler answered that the anticipated uses were business related, including warehouse and logistics operations; it would not be a data center.

Mayor Spalding set the ordinance for second reading at the July 21, 2026, council meeting.

ORDINANCE O-24-2026

Mayor Spalding read by title AN ORDINANCE TO ACCEPT A 21.601 ACRE GENERAL WARRANTY DEED AND A 0.192 ASSIGNMENT OF AN EASEMENT FROM THE LICKING COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS.

Deputy Public Service Director Steven Mayer stated this ordinance accomplished administrative clean-up. In 2008, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) had purchased property in and around the Beech Road and Worthington Road intersection in connection with the construction of the interchange. Following completion of that project, ODOT issued the city a Letter of Abandonment in 2010 stating that the property was the city's to own and maintain. It had recently been discovered that, while the city had been treating the property as its own since that time, the legal title had never been formally transferred. The Licking County Board of Commissioners, who remained the legal owners, had recently approved a resolution transferring the relevant section of roadway, along with a highway easement at the end of Lucille Lynd Way, to the city.

Mayor Spalding set the ordinance for second reading at the July 21, 2026, council meeting.

ORDINANCE O-25-2026

Mayor Spalding read by title AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE SUBMISSION TO THE FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF A MUNICIPAL PETITION FOR ANNEXATION OF 6.24 +/- ACRES FROM PLAIN TOWNSHIP TO THE CITY OF NEW ALBANY.

Deputy Public Service Director Steven Mayer stated in May 2024, council had approved a resolution authorizing the city manager to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with Franklin County and Plain Township for the construction of the new roundabout at the intersection of SR 605 and Walnut Street, which had recently been completed. That intergovernmental agreement contained a provision requiring the city to annex the roundabout property upon its completion. Once the city formally accepted the roundabout, it would assume maintenance responsibility in perpetuity. This ordinance authorized the city manager to submit an annexation petition. While the city typically pursued Expedited Type 1 annexations, this parcel was owned by Franklin County, which required a different statutory process that would originate with the city and then proceed to the county.

Council Member Shull asked and Deputy Director Mayer clarified that the county was still maintaining it, as there were a few remaining punch list items that had not yet been resolved City code allowed the city engineer to accept infrastructure, similar to the subdivision process, and formal acceptance hadn't yet occurred He anticipated formal acceptance and the annexation would occur around the same time.

Council Member Shull asked about maintenance of the roundabout landscaping, noting that the grass had been approximately four feet tall at times. Deputy Director Mayer was aware of the issue and reported that, as of that morning, all the grass at that location had been cut down and was back down to approximately four inches. The city had been actively communicating with the county on maintenance matters as the annexation and acceptance process proceeded. Council Member Shull noted that he had received resident feedback regarding the height of grass at the SR 605 and Walnut intersection as well. Deputy Director Mayer confirmed that had been addressed that morning as well.

Mayor Spalding set the ordinance for second reading at the July 21, 2026, council meeting.

ORDINANCE O-26-2025
Mayor Spalding read by title AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT A TAX BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF NEW ALBANY, OHIO FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2027 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Finance Department Deputy Director Morgan Joeright stated this legislation authorized the adoption of the 2027 tax budget, as required by the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and the Franklin County Budget Commission. Franklin County used the tax budget to establish the local need for property tax revenue derived from inside millage. Other Ohio counties had eliminated this requirement and used other tools to determine applicable amounts. The tax budget enabled the city to remain compliant with ORC 5705.30 as applied by Franklin County. It was used to illustrate the city's need for the additional inside millage the city had previously requested and received, which was estimated to generate approximately $848,000 in the General Fund, and the companion resolution to formally request that millage would be considered later that evening. Deputy Director Joeright noted that while 2027 and 2026 estimates reflected an increase in income tax revenue, they remained conservative to account for continued unknowns related to withholding, potential income tax refund liabilities, and the unpredictability of individual net profit taxes. Expenditure estimates were similarly conservative and accounted for increased operational costs as staff and projects continued to grow, in addition to maintaining substantial transfers to capital funds, funds held for future liabilities, and certain operating funds. Staff would monitor and update the estimates through a more in-depth analysis during the 2027 budget development process in the fall. The tax budget was required to be approved by July 15 and submitted to Franklin County by July 20, and the ordinance therefore needed to be adopted that evening by emergency measure to meet the ORC deadline.

Mayor Spalding opened the Public Hearing. Hearing no comments or questions from the public, he closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Spalding moved to declare an emergency to waive the second reading and 30-day waiting period. Council Member Shull seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes to declare an emergency to waive the second reading and 30-day waiting period.

Mayor Spalding moved to adopt the ordinance. Council Member Shull seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes to approve Ordinance O-26-2026.

<u>READING AND PUBLIC HEARING OF RESOLUTIONS:</u>
RESOLUTION R-21-2026
Mayor Spalding read by title A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE OAK GROVE II COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA TO ADD APPROXIMATELY 9.6 +/- ACRES TO THAT AREA, CONFIRMING THE DESIGNATION OF A HOUSING OFFICER AND THE CREATION OF A COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA HOUSING COUNCIL AND TAX INCENTIVE REVIEW COUNCILS, AND TO EXPAND THE OAK GROVE II ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ZONE TO ADD THAT AREA.

Economic Development Manager Sara Zeigler stated that the resolution would amend the Oak Grove 2 Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) to include the approximately 9.6 acres which had been the subject of the annexation and rezoning actions that evening. The CRA program was a statutory program locally administered by the city that granted communities the ability to offer real property tax abatements for qualifying economic development projects. The amendment to the CRA area did not automatically entitle any property owner to incentives, and council would be required to approve each individual CRA agreement if pursued.

Mayor Spalding opened the Public Hearing. Hearing no comments or questions from the public, he closed the Public Hearing.

Council Member Kist moved to adopt the resolution. Council Member Shull seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes to approve Resolution R-21-2026.

RESOLUTION R-22-2026

Mayor Spalding read by title A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA AGREEMENT WITH LPC COMMERCIAL INVESTMENTS LLC, AND MAKING RELATED AUTHORIZATIONS.

Law Director Albrecht explained this item would be handled differently than typical legislative matters due to a recent change to public records law enacted by the state legislature, which became effective in March. The legislative change had made certain information submitted to a political subdivision in connection with economic development assistance confidential and not a public record, and added potential criminal liability under Ohio ethics law. A subsequent legislative amendment had been adopted and would become effective in September, narrowing the confidentiality provision to apply only to individualized compensation or payroll information. Staff would not be presenting any confidential project information that evening. Instead, a representative from the company would present to council.

Dan Reidy, vice president, Lincoln Property Company, stated that this was Lincoln's second project in New Albany. Their first project was located approximately one mile to the west of the subject site. The subject site was an assemblage of approximately 106 acres consisting of several recently annexed homes. The company was planning a 1.2 million-square-foot multi-building industrial campus to be developed in 2 phases. Target industries for the proposed campus included manufacturing, research and development, life sciences, and logistics and warehouse development. Total investment across both phases was estimated at approximately $160 million, with an estimated 600 to 1,200 employees at full build-out. Construction of phase 1, consisting of three buildings on the western portion of the site, was anticipated to commence later in 2026, with delivery of those buildings expected in late 2027.

Mayor Spalding opened the Public Hearing. Hearing no comments or questions from the public, he closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Spalding moved to adopt the resolution. Council Member Wiltrout seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes to approve Resolution R-22-2026.

RESOLUTION R-23-2026

Mayor Spalding read by title A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A SECOND AMENDMENT TO LEASE AGREEMENT FOR OFFICE SPACE AT 7815 WALTON

PARKWAY.

Deputy City Manager Joly stated the resolution would authorize the city manager to sign a second amendment to the lease agreement for the city's office space at 7815 Walton Parkway, increasing the leased premises by 1,248 square feet. The additional space was a small former training room previously retained by Red Roof Inn. The additional space would provide one additional conference room, two workstations, five offices, and much-needed storage space. The amendment would not change the original 7-year lease term, five-year renewal option, or early termination clause. The base lease rate would also remain unchanged, adjusted only for the additional square footage, bringing the total to 17,716 square feet. The landlord committed to $5,000 toward tenant improvement costs for finishing the space. The additional space would accommodate growth of the administrative staff and the Strategic Initiatives Department, and associated costs had been included in the midyear appropriation amendment adopted earlier that evening.

Mayor Spalding opened the Public Hearing. Hearing no comments or questions from the public, he closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Spalding praised the landlord, Daimler Group, Inc., for their flexibility in working with the city. He invited members of the public to visit the city's workspace, noting its size and convenient location near Village Hall. He also acknowledged Red Roof Inn as a good partner.

Council Member Brisk moved to adopt the resolution. Council Member McClelland seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes to approve Resolution R-23-2026.

RESOLUTION R-24-2026

Mayor Spalding read by title A RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE FRANKLIN COUNTY BUDGET COMMISSION TO GRANT THE .74 MILLS IN AVAILABLE INSIDE MILLAGE TO THE CITY OF NEW ALBANY.

Finance Department Deputy Director Morgan Joeright stated this was companion legislation to O-26-2026. Franklin County required this resolution for New Albany to receive the additional 0.74 mills of available inside millage, projected to generate approximately $848,000 in the General Fund in 2027. Once approved, the resolution would be filed with Franklin County along with the tax budget.

Mayor Spalding opened the Public Hearing. Hearing no comments or questions from the public, he closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Spalding moved to adopt the resolution. Council Member Shull seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes to approve Resolution R-24-2026.

RESOLUTION R-25-2026

Mayor Spalding read by title A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH THE NEW ALBANY-PLAIN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER DISCOVER SITE FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT AND MUNICIPAL PURPOSES.

Deputy City Manager Adrienne Joly stated this resolution would authorize the city manager to enter into a lease agreement with the New Albany-Plain Local School (NAPLS) district for the development and operation of an athletic campus, in conjunction with planned city park space and community amenities on the same acreage. The city had purchased just under 50 acres of the former Discover site at 6500 New Albany Road East at the end of 2025 to support long-term community needs. Under the proposed agreement, the school district would use the property to construct and operate athletic facilities, while the city would enhance the overall site with complementary community park space. The lease term was 50 years, and the city manager and city attorney had been working diligently with the school district to finalize the agreement. Deputy City Manager Joly referenced a phasing diagram, noting that phase 1 would focus on the school district's ball fields on the southern end of the site. The city planned to present a concept for the public spaces at the first meeting in August so council could consider the first phase of city improvements as close as possible to the school district's phase 1 work.

Council Member Kist asked how the approval process would work between the school district and the city for phase 1 and subsequent phases, and who would have final say over the language governing those improvements. Law Director Albrecht answered that the agreement contemplated ongoing coordination between the parties for each phase of improvements. There was a general framework governing how development would proceed, and if improvements were not completed within a specified timeline, rights would revert to the city. Under the agreement, the school district generally had the right to make improvements in areas not earmarked for city use as generally discussed and agreed upon between the parties.

Council Member Wiltrout asked and Law Director Albrecht clarified that the school district's development rights applied to areas not designated for city improvements, and that the arrangement would evolve over time, with the school district having a right of first refusal on several of the areas. There were no specific timelines for individual phases, as a great deal depended on funding availability and the school district's capacity to complete certain improvements.

Council Member Kist expressed appreciation for the current strong working relationship between the city and the school district, but expressed concern that in the future, a different dynamic could exist, and he wanted to feel confident a clear process was in place. Law Director Albrecht responded that the agreement included a timeline. The school district would have a 5-year period in which to make their improvements, with the ability to request an additional 5-year extension to track down funding. There were soft timelines, so the property didn't sit undeveloped. There were rights for the city to use the space while the school district waited to develop it. City uses planned for phases 1 and 2 did not require school approval.

Council Member Brisk asked and Law Director Albrecht confirmed that the school board had not yet approved the lease but there was a school board meeting that week. The agreement became effective immediately upon full execution.

Council Member Shull asked and Law Director Albrecht explained that the lease designated areas for use by the school. Until the school had the funding and ability to make their improvements, the city had the ability to use the land. The school had the 5-year period and could ask for extensions, and the agreement stated they "shall not be reasonably denied." At that point, the city could evaluate how long the project had been on hold and what the city's uses and plans were, and perform a risk assessment based on that information. The city had the ability to deny an extension at some point, if it chose to do so.

Council Member Shull asked about the conflict resolution provisions in the lease, noting that the agreement appeared to move quickly from a good-faith discussion between the superintendent and city manager to potential contract breach, and asked whether an additional step, such as engagement of both governing bodies or an arbitration, could be added before reaching that threshold. Law Director Albrecht answered an additional step could certainly be proposed and added, however, historically the relationship between the city manager and superintendent had been strong and limiting the agreement to those individuals kept there from being too many "chefs in the kitchen." He and City Manager Stefanov and the superintendent and the school's attorney were comfortable with the existing framework

Council Member Shull asked and Law Director Albrecht explained that the issue of naming rights had received considerable attention during negotiations. The school district had its own naming rights policy to which it was bound, and the city similarly had guidelines related to signage, flags, and banners, as well as a city sponsorship policy. The city's initial positions on naming rights had involved the city seeking unilateral veto rights, to which the school district had shared their own policies and frameworks. Both he and City Manager Stefanov had reviewed the school district's policy and were comfortable with the alignment between the parties' positions.

Council Member McClelland, noting his prior experience on the school board, stated there was some flexibility in the school's naming policy, but it was a well-developed, fairly strict, had been debated at length, and specifically addressed the appropriateness of corporate sponsors and individual naming rights in a school environment. The policy included provisions allowing the school district to remove a name if circumstances made it problematic. He added that, while phase 1 was fully funded through the bond approved by voters, a high school-caliber stadium, which would be more costly than the middle school stadium originally contemplated, had not yet been fully funded, which was why naming rights were relevant to these discussions. The multipurpose turf field shown in blue on the phasing diagram would require fundraising, and if the school district chose not to fund it within the five-year period, that space would be available for the city to use.

Council Member Brisk asked whether the naming rights provisions in the lease would protect the city if a conflict arose, given that the language relied heavily on good-faith discussions. Law Director Albrecht acknowledged that the language did not carry a high degree of enforceability in isolation but indicated that if parties reached an impasse, the mechanism would be a potential breach of contract proceeding. In a scenario where the school district was the tenant funding its own improvements, the city's ability to override those decisions might be limited, and such a scenario would provide a degree of cover for the city. Law Director Albrecht maintained that the parties remained well aligned on the issue as of the current date.

Council Member Wiltrout expressed concern about the generally informal nature of the "good faith" language throughout the agreement and asked whether there were formal check-in points built into the lease so that council would be informed of any delays or developments before the five-year period elapsed. Law Director Albrecht confirmed that during the initial build-out phase, monthly progress reports were contemplated. The cooperative agreement between the parties would also create regular mechanisms for discussing maintenance efficiencies and shared services, which would provide additional opportunities for ongoing communication.

Mayor Spalding added that, as each party approved annual budgets, budget discussions alone would necessitate ongoing conversations about the site, and the liaison structure between the school board and city council would provide additional communication channels. Council Member Wiltrout indicated she was comfortable with the agreement as presented, given those assurances.

Mayor Spalding opened the public hearing.

Mike Klein, 6839 Grinsley Lane, wanted to acknowledge the extensive work that school officials had put into the agreement. He stated, as of that morning, the lease was on the school board's agenda for the following Thursday. In the past, as far back as approximately 2010, joint meetings between the city and school district had been held and could be convened again if necessary. He expressed strong support for moving forward now, emphasizing that New Albany students would continue to face two seasons without a home athletic field. He asked both bodies to set aside any differences and act in the best interests of the students and families.

Mayor Spalding noted that the deliberate and careful process undertaken by both bodies was itself a tribute to the complexity and significance of the agreement. He was ready to move forward.

Hearing no further comments or questions from the public, Mayor Spalding closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Spalding moved to adopt the resolution. Council Member Wiltrout seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes to approve Resolution R-25-2026.

COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:
NONE

REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:

A. Council Representative to MORPC: Mayor Spalding reported there was a Public Policy Roundtable scheduled for the following Tuesday to discuss bills recently passed by the general assembly.

B. Council Representative to Joint Park District (JPD): No report.

C. Council Representative to New Albany-Plain Local Schools (NAPLS): Council Member Wiltrout reported Superintendent Jason Fine would be attending upcoming events to meet more people. NAPLS recognized the Boys Baseball team for winning the state championship. The school heard a Plain Township update and Ruscilli Construction presented a Campus Master Plan update. Elementary school construction was progressing on schedule. The Tech Hub and Athletic Hub projects were also underway. Baseball and softball facilities were projected to be open no later than February 2028. The Transportation Hub was being paused until they found a suitable site. Casey Cosgray, the new assistant superintendent for teaching and learning, was welcomed. The board also discussed a college direct admission data-sharing program. Former board president Debbie Kalanosky praised the departing board member, John McClelland.

D. Council Representative to Plain Township: Council Member Durik reported the township approved operating expenses.

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICIALS:

A. Mayor Spalding: Mayor Spalding thanked staff for taking on celebrating America 250. Mayor Spalding recognized Independence Day Grand Marshals Police Chief Greg Jones and City Manager Joe Stefanov. Many community members expressed appreciation for the opportunity to publicly thank both officials for their years of dedicated service. Chief Jones expressed appreciation for the recognition and praised the work of the city's events team.

B. Clerk of Council: Clerk Mason asked council to watch their emails for scheduling of the Capital Projects Workshop in September and the Budget Workshop in November. She asked council members to inform her of any known absences or conflicts, particularly around Thanksgiving. Mayor Spalding praised Clerk Mason for performing in the Independence Day parade.

C. Finance Director: No report.

D. City Manager: No report.

E. City Attorney: No report.

POLL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

Kirk Smith, 6830 Central College Road, was hoping for updates on The Hamlet. Community Development Director Jennifer Chrysler explained that The Hamlet developers had previously presented to council in connection with two plat section approvals and gave an update. They had committed to returning in the future with updates, but the date wasn't determined. It might happen when the last section was platted and presented, after they went through the engineering process. Council had raised questions about the commercial mix and development, and the developers had indicated that certain elements were still being worked on. Mayor Spalding stated there would be future public hearings associated with The Hamlet's ongoing development. He wouldn't be surprised to hear that council or members of the public had additional questions on the commercial and retail parts of the development. He committed to try to make sure that Mr. Smith was noticed if and when those agenda items appeared on a council meeting agenda.

Mr. Smith also raised a concern regarding heavy truck traffic on Central College Road. He took a count that day and, over approximately a 25-minute period, he observed 14 dump trucks traveling up and down the road. The soil trucks were starting to increase. He asked whether Central College Road had become a primary east-west route for construction dump trucks in New Albany. Mayor Spalding answered Central College Road was a public road and the city did not have the right to restrict access, absent a weight limit restriction tied to a bridge or similar feature. The east-west connectors north and south of SR 161 experienced heavier use when motorists diverted, particularly based on the time of day. Mayor Spalding asked and Mr. Smith answered that he did his count at 7:30 a.m. Director Ohly stated city staff would monitor the traffic pattern on Central College Road. He acknowledged the high volume of development activity in and around the city and noted that the city's traffic was dynamic, with routing patterns often following the path of least resistance, changing in response to accidents, construction activity, and shifting commute patterns. If a consistent pattern was identified, staff would monitor that and do their best to help out.

POLL FOR COUNCIL COMMENT:
NONE

EXECUTIVE SESSION:
Mayor Spalding moved that council go into executive session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 121.22(G)(1) pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 121.22(G)(1) for discussion regarding appointment of public officials. Council Member Durik seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes to go into executive session at 8:02 p.m.

Mayor Spalding moved that council come out of executive session and resume the regular meeting. Council Member Wiltrout seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes come out of executive session and resume the regular meeting. Council resumed the regular meeting at 8:19 p.m.

OTHER BUSINESS:
NONE

ADJOURNMENT:
With no further comments and all scheduled matters attended to, Mayor Spalding moved and Council Member Shull seconded to adjourn the July 7, 2026, regular council meeting at 8:19 p.m.

ATTEST:

Jennifer H. Mason, Clerk of Council

Sloan T. Spalding, Mayor

21 July 26
Date