

Town of Amherst
Planning Advisory Committee
Minutes

Date: April 7, 2026
Time: 4:30 pm
Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present Ronald Wilson, Citizen Representative, Chair
Paul Diamond, Citizen Representative, Vice Chair
Jim Lamplugh, Citizen Representative
Deputy Mayor Charlie Chambers
Councillor Terry McManaman
Councillor Dwayne Ripley

Staff Present Andrew Fisher, Director, Planning & Economic Development
Torben Laux, Planner
Marc Buske, Building Official
Emily Wainwright, Dangerous/Unsightly Premises Administrator
Sean Payne, Marketing & Communications Officer
Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk
Cindy Brown, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order.

1.1 Territorial Acknowledgement

The Chair gave the Territorial Acknowledgement.

2. Approval of Agenda and Acceptance of Minutes

2.1 Approval of the Agenda

Moved By: Jim Lamplugh

Seconded By: Councillor Ripley

That the agenda be approved as circulated.

Motion Carried

2.2 Acceptance of the Minutes - October 6, 2025

The Chair called for any errors or omissions in the minutes. There being none, the minutes of the October 6, 2025, meeting of the Planning Advisory Committee were accepted as included in the agenda package.

3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Clerk asked for nominations for the position of Chair. Councillor Chambers nominated Ron Wilson. The Clerk called for any further nominations, there being none, Ron Wilson accepted the position of Chair. The Clerk then asked for nominations for the position of Vice Chair. Councillor Ripley nominated Paul Diamond. The Clerk called for any further nominations, there being none, Paul Diamond accepted the position of Vice Chair.

4. Code of Conduct for Municipal Volunteers Policy

The Clerk reviewed the new Code of Conduct for Municipal Volunteers Policy and asked that the citizen representatives sign it as required.

5. 2 - 4 Industrial Park Drive

5.1 Staff Report

Emily Wainwright reviewed her report, included in the agenda package, regarding 2-4 Industrial Drive (PID 25037151). She presented her inspection report and reports from the Building Official, the Amherst Police Department and Amherst Fire Department showing the various structural and safety concerns with the building and surrounding property.

5.2 Owner / Representative Questions/Comments to PAC

The owner/representative of the property was not present.

Moved By: Councillor Ripley

Seconded By: Jim Lamplugh

That the Planning Advisory Committee order the demolition of the building located at 2-4 Industrial Park Drive (PID 25037151) within ninety (90) days of the date of this meeting, with all work to be completed by the property owner. Failure by the property owner to complete the required work will result in the Town of Amherst undertaking the demolition and disposal of contents to an appropriate solid waste facility or impound yard, with all costs incurred to be charged to the property owner's tax account.

Motion Carried

6. 1 Albion Street Development Agreement

6.1 Staff Report

Torben Laux presented the application from the YMCA of Cumberland for a Development Agreement on the property located at 1 Albion Street (PID 25009432) to permit the construction of a 24-unit and 12-unit apartment building.

Deputy Mayor Chambers asked why the YMCA wants to relocate their office space to the main floor of this proposed development, he thought they already had office space. Torben Laux answered they do; however, it is across the street. Deputy Mayor Chambers asked if there will be any place for children to play outside. Torben Laux answered that it is not in the proposal as is as there is limited space, however the YMCA is across the street from the proposal, adding that it has not yet been determined who exactly the clientele would be. Deputy Mayor Chambers suggested it may not be safe for children to cross Church Street to use the YMCA facility.

Jim Lamplugh asked what the proposed make-up of the two buildings is, for example how many bedrooms will be in the units. Torben Laux replied he believed one- and two-bedroom units. Jim Lamplugh said he is concerned with the number of units and accompanying number of parking spaces. Torben Laux answered that there is no requirement for parking spaces for development in the Downtown Zone. Jim Lamplugh said he realizes this, but shouldn't this proposal be considered residential which does require parking. He agreed with the Deputy Mayor Chambers that it may not be safe for children to have to cross Church Street to access the YMCA facility, and that he feels this is an option and not a solution to the lack of green/play space. He further asked if the YMCA must have the 12-unit being proposed as the property does not have a lot of space for parking.

Paul Diamond noted the sidewalks shown along Crescent Avenue in the renderings and asked if sidewalks will be installed as well as crosswalks for pedestrian safety, and who would be responsible for such, the developer or the Town.

Ron Wilson added that in the proposal the building is adjacent to the sidewalk, and he is worried about pedestrian safety. He asked if the Town would install sidewalks and crosswalks for pedestrian safety, as this proposed development would likely see an increase in pedestrian and vehicular traffic in this area, especially if the YMCA relocates their offices, and further people may be required to park along Crescent Avenue and Fullerton Street. He agreed that although there may not be requirements for parking in the Downtown Zone he feels this location is on the peripheral of the zone and the number of parking spaces should be looked at further.

Jim Lamplugh asked if any of the concerns could be addressed. Andrew Fisher replied that it would be reasonable for the Town to extend the sidewalks in the area as it is in the Downtown Zone and a walkable downtown is desirable, and that the Traffic Authority could do a review for traffic control and pedestrian safety. He added that the development agreement stipulates landscaping between the two proposed buildings, and that he would like to see the YMCA encourage and permit residents to use the YMCA facility.

Paul Diamond said that there should be crosswalks on Crescent Avenue, that there will be an assumed increase in traffic and deliveries. He added he would like to see designated street parking along Crescent Avenue that would help with speed reduction in that area.

Ron Wilson said that the Traffic Authority has the overall say and he feels that since the public has brought forward this concern that a traffic review in this area should be part of the recommendations to the developer.

Deputy Mayor Chambers said although he is in favor of recommending this application to Council, he is concerned with the lack of parking and green space.

Councillor McManaman agreed with Deputy Mayor Chambers that he is in favor of the application however he is concerned about the lack of parking and would like to see a traffic study.

In trying to address some of the concerns raised, Andrew Fisher noted that room count between the two proposed buildings is 6 studio apartments, 14 one-bedroom units, 12 two-bedroom units and 4 three-bedroom units. He reiterated that required parking spaces in the Downtown Zone is exempt for a reason, which is to promote pedestrian traffic, and further noted as this application is for supportive housing the demand for parking is assumed to be less than typical market rental units.

Jim Lamplugh asked if this proposal could go forward with just the 24-unit building, he would like to see other options, further asking what the demand and feasibility is of having two buildings.

Councillor Ripley said he is concerned as a downtown business owner and on behalf of other downtown business owners that this development will attract more nonsense in the downtown core, and that parking is a real issue for him. He further asked if there has been any discussion around purchasing the building next to this proposal for additional parking. Andrew Fisher answered nothing substantial.

Deputy Mayor Chambers asked if the parking lot across the street at the old St. Charles Church (Holy Family, 63 Church Street) could be used for additional overflow parking.

Ron Wilson reminded everyone that the Planning Advisory Committee should follow the established policies in the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw.

Paul Diamond said he believes an increase in parking spots may price someone out of living there and he would rather see more green space on this site than parking. Jim Lamplugh appreciated this perspective and feels it would be an easier decision if we had public transportation.

Moved By: Jim Lamplugh

Seconded By: Councillor McManaman

That the Planning Advisory Committee defer a decision to a future meeting and request additional information and/or changes to the proposal, specifically regarding the parking situation, the need for the 12-unit building, and the intensity of use on the sight.

Motion Carried

6.2 Public Participation Opportunity Summary (Including written submissions from the Public)

Information item only.

7. Municipal Planning Strategy / Land Use Bylaw Update

Andrew Fisher gave an update on the approval of the new Municipal Planning Strategy / Land Use Bylaw from the Province, noting the amendments they required to be made regarding wind turbine requirements and usage.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting.

Natalie LeBlanc
Municipal Clerk

Ron Wilson
Chair