MINUTES OF THE BEECHER PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Thursday, August 20, 2026 - 6:00 p.m.

Beecher Village Hall, 625 Dixie Highway, Beecher, Illinois

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Schuitema called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Commissioners Barber (Left 6:52PM), Garder (Arrived 6:41PM), Hearn, Heim, Schuitema, and Serviss.

Members Absent: Commissioner Eich.

Staff Present: Administrator Mitchell, Public Works Superintendent Matt Conner, Deputy Clerk Heidi Demas, and Pete Isoue.

Guests: President Meyer and Trustee Tieri.

III. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JUNE 18, 2026 MEETING

The Commission reviewed the minutes of the June 18, 2026 meeting. No additions, deletions, or corrections were requested. Commissioner Serviss motioned to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2026 meeting. Commissioner Barber seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Barber, Hearn, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Heim.

Motion carried.

IV. RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC

None.

V. WORKSHOP: CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR A SPECIAL USE TO OPERATE A PARAMEDICAL TATTOOING BUSINESS IN THE B-3 BUSINESS DISTRICT AT 715 DIXIE HIGHWAY, AND CONSIDERATION OF WHETHER TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING FOR SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

The Commission considered a request for a special use to operate a paramedical tattooing business in the B-3 Business District at 715 Dixie Highway and whether to schedule a public hearing for September 24, 2026.

The petitioner explained that the proposed business would not provide conventional artistic tattooing. Services would include medical or restorative tattooing intended to camouflage keloid, surgical, and other scars and stretch marks, as well as areola reconstruction for individuals who have undergone mastectomies. The petitioner stated that she had received specialized certification and intended to seek referrals from surgeons and other medical providers.

Pete Iosue explained that tattoo establishments had been discussed during the recent zoning ordinance update. Although he had supported allowing them as a permitted use, the final ordinance classified them as a special use so each proposal could be reviewed through a public hearing. He stated that tattoo establishments are more common than in the past and that a reputable specialty provider could draw customers from outside the community.

Commissioner Schuitema asked whether any additional licensing or operational requirements applied. The petitioner stated that state licensing would be required, but the application could not be finalized until the business location was established.

The petitioner was advised that property owners within 250 feet would receive notice and that, following the public hearing, the Commission would make a recommendation to the Village Board.

Commissioner Barber motioned to schedule a public hearing for September 24, 2026. Commissioner Heim seconded.

AYES: Commissioners Barber, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

Motion carried.

VII. WORKSHOP – CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR A VARIANCE FROM THE FENCE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE TO PERMIT A FENCE TO BE LOCATED MORE THAN ONE FOOT FROM THE REAR PROPERTY LINE IN THE R1 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT AT THE PROPERTY COMMONLY KNOW AS 470 ORCHARD LANE, AND CONSIDERATION OF WHETHER TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING FOR SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

At the Commission's request, this item was taken out of agenda order. The Commission considered a request to permit a fence to be located more than one foot from the rear property line at 470 Orchard Lane. The petitioner was not present.

Staff explained that an existing row of bushes lie near the property line. The owner proposed placing a wrought-iron-style fence on the interior side of the bushes, approximately 11 feet from the property line, rather than removing the landscaping. The current ordinance generally requires fences to be located within one foot of a property line.

Discussion focused on continued access to and maintenance of the bushes, the possibility that a future neighboring fence could make the intervening area inaccessible, and the risk that future owners could misunderstand the property boundary. Commissioners noted that the open fence design would keep the landscaping visible, but they remained concerned about long-term maintenance and the effect of a later solid fence. Possible conditions discussed included requiring the open-style fence material to remain and providing sufficient access for maintenance.

The Commission also discussed whether the zoning administrator should receive greater authority to approve minor or practical deviations without requiring a full variance. Staff noted that the current administrative variance standard generally allows only a 10% deviation and would not cover the requested 11-foot setback. The cost of a public hearing was discussed, but Administrator Mitchell explained that the fee covers publication, legal drafting, and recording expenses and cannot simply be waived without the Village absorbing those costs.

Members concluded that this particular request presented enough long-term maintenance and property boundary questions to justify a public hearing. Staff agreed to ask the petitioner whether he wished to proceed immediately or wait while the broader zoning standards were reviewed.

Commissioner Barber motioned to schedule a public hearing at the zoning administrator's discretion, depending on whether the petitioner wished to proceed. Commissioner Heim seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Barber, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: none.

ABSTAIN: none.

Motion carried.

VIII. CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR A VARIANCE FROM THE FENCE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE TO PERMIT A FENCE WITHIN THE FRONT YARD AREA OF A CORNER LOT IN THE R-1A RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT AT THE PROPERTY COMMONLY KNOWN AS 1569 SAWGRASS, AND CONSIDERATION OF WHETHER TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING FOR SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

The Commission considered a request to permit a fence within the front-yard area of a corner lot at 1569 Sawgrass and whether to schedule a public hearing for September 24, 2026.

The petitioner explained that, because the property is a corner lot, the side of the lot is treated as a second front yard. The home is set substantially farther back than the neighboring home, and strict application of the ordinance would leave a large portion of the functional backyard outside the fence. She requested permission to extend the fence approximately 10 to 11 feet beyond the permitted foundation line while still remaining approximately 16 feet from the public sidewalk. The fence is needed in connection with a planned swimming pool. Following recent storm damage observed on solid vinyl fences, she stated that she was considering a white vinyl fence with spacing between the pickets to reduce wind resistance.

The Commission reviewed the site layout, the neighboring building line, the sidewalk distance, and the visibility triangle. Pete Iosue explained that corner lots are treated as having two front yards primarily to preserve visibility at intersections. He stated that the proposed location did not appear to interfere with the vision triangle and that the unusual placement of the home created a practical difficulty. Commissioners noted that the requested location would remain considerably farther from the sidewalk than the minimum distances typically considered in prior cases.

Staff clarified that, under the current ordinance, the fence could not extend forward of the applicable foundation line without a variance. The petitioner was advised that owners within 250 feet would be notified, that she or a representative should attend the public hearing, and that the Commission would make a recommendation to the Village Board after the hearing.

Commissioner Barber motioned to schedule a public hearing for September 24, 2026. Commissioner Heim seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Barber, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

Motion carried.

IX. CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR A VARIANCE FROM THE MINIMUM FLOOR AREA REQUIREMENTS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE TO PERMIT THE CONSTRUCTION OF 1,499-SQUARE FOOT HOMES IN THE R-1A RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT AT THE PROPERTIES KNOWN AS 648 AND 652 PENFIELD STREET, AND CONSIDERATION OF WHETHER TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING FOR SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

The Commission considered a request to permit the construction of 1,499-square-foot homes in the R-1A Residential District at 648 and 652 Penfield Street and whether to schedule a public hearing for September 24, 2026.

Dennis Dooley of Vulcan Builders appeared on behalf of the request. Dooley stated that he had previously built in Beecher and wished to return to new-home construction with an emphasis on entry-level housing. He explained that he had acquired the two Penfield Street lots after reviewing the surrounding neighborhood and had not initially realized that the R-1A district required a minimum 2,000-square-foot home.

Dooley stated that a permit application had already been submitted for 648 Penfield and that buyers, who are current Beecher residents and empty nesters, were interested in the proposed home. The design includes a nine-foot basement, rough plumbing for future finished space, stone accents, and other features intended to provide a quality product while keeping the initial sale price within an entry-level range. He proposed using a similar but reversed and visually differentiated plan at 652 Penfield. Dooley stated that increasing either home to 2,000 square feet would substantially increase engineering and construction costs and place the homes outside the intended market.

Chairman Schuitema disclosed that he had previously met with the applicant at the request of Village officials to hear the proposal but emphasized that he held only one vote and had made no commitment on behalf of the Commission.

Commissioners reviewed the lot dimensions, driveway grade and utility considerations at 652 Penfield, surrounding development, and lot coverage. It was noted that the proposed structure would cover approximately 17% of the lot, leaving room for future outdoor improvements. Iosue explained that the minimum floor-area standards had been carried forward from the prior zoning ordinance to avoid creating nonconforming properties and stated that he did not generally object to smaller homes.

Commissioner Heim expressed concern that reducing the minimum by more than 500 square feet could establish an undesirable precedent, particularly because newer development elsewhere in the Village had complied with the existing standard. Other commissioners noted that many homes in the immediate Penfield area are smaller and stated that the proposed homes could fit the character of that location. Dooley responded that redesigning the home would add significant cost after he had already invested in engineering and permit preparation and reiterated that the proposed sale price was intended for the entry-level market.

Commissioner Heim motioned to schedule a public hearing for September 24, 2026. Commissioner Barber seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Barber, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

Motion carried.

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION - POTENTIAL ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

The Commission returned to the agenda item concerning possible amendments addressing driveway width; minimum floor-area requirements; fence requirements for corner lots; fence setbacks from side and

rear property lines; zoning certificates; administrative variance standards; shipping and portable storage containers; and maximum lot coverage.

Staff explained that, since adoption of the revised zoning ordinance, several practical issues and areas of unclear language had arisen through day-to-day administration. Iosue recommended reconvening the prior zoning review committee to evaluate each issue in detail and return to the full Commission with specific recommendations. Commissioners agreed that a smaller working group would be more efficient than attempting to resolve the numerous topics during the regular meeting.

By consensus, the prior zoning review committee will be reconvened with staff and Iosue to review the listed issues and develop proposed recommendations for later consideration by the full Commission.

No formal motion was required.

X. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next regularly scheduled Planning and Zoning Commission meeting will be held Thursday, September 24, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. Public hearings approved during this meeting are expected to be scheduled for that date, subject to completion of the required notices and filings.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

President Meyer reported that no new activity had occurred regarding the proposed cannabis business. She stated that public works continued to address storm-related cleanup and resident concerns.

Superintendent Conner reported that the State had declared the affected area a disaster area, allowing the Village to begin pursuing possible governmental reimbursement of up to $250,000, subject to county and state eligibility thresholds and documentation requirements. Superintendent Conner is also evaluating whether certain losses should first be submitted through the Village's insurance coverage.

The Commission discussed the former gas station property, reporting that an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency environmental review would be required because of the property's proximity to a Village well house. The owner was expected to remove the underground tanks and canopy, although the long-term plan for the property remains unknown.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Heim made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Gardner seconded.

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Heidi Demas
PZC Secretary