

## HIGHLAND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

### STUDY SESSION MEETING MINUTES

**MONDAY January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

The Highland Redevelopment Commission ("Commission", "RC") met in person at Town Hall on Monday January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026. The regular scheduled study session was called to order at 8:01pm by President, Alex Robertson.

**Roll Call:** Commissioners Phil Scheeringa, Commissioner Tom Black, Commissioner Alex Robertson, Commissioner Georgeff and Patrick Krull (non-voting) were present in person at Town Hall and Commissioner Doug Turich and were excused.

**Additional Officials Present:** Maria Becerra, Redevelopment Director and Attorney Reed

**Also Present:** Rohit Patel owner of Coach USA 8141 Indianapolis Blvd and via video Jordan Feldman and The Feldman Company doing a presentation on what they would like to design

Jordan Feldman spoke of designing a flexible space for small business, work and personal use. He gave some examples of what the front part could be used for. He also referred to them as man caves

Office/showroom space would be in front and storage space would be in back. This would cater to small business.

He gave some great examples of how this space could be used such as a granite or cross fit store

Someone asked How many units ?

Jordan Feldman answered that typically one unit could be 2500 sq. ft to 5000 sq. ft but it's meant for small operators where they can show their product and they use the back for a storage space.

Commissioner Scheeringa asked if Mr. Patel would be managing and who would be operating who rents there and prevent anything that would be considered undesirable

Mr. Patel answered yes and stated we already talked about the space and no fireworks shops and that there is a growing need it could be an incubator as well. He gave an example such as Purdue Calumet

Commissioner Robertson mentioned different transient types businesses that just need a smaller space

Mr. Patel mentioned the need for a cleaner space and at the higher end and they would control who rents the units

Jordan Feldman mentioned it's like creating a space for businesses like Dojos, karate, yoga or mediation

Commissioner Robertson asked about a use variance and would this be a permitted use . what's going into each of those spaces then would it require each of those individual use variances ?

Attorney Reed answered that he had thought about that property ,it would undoubtedly be a mixed use and we would do a plan use development making its own zoning ordinance . You can do everything but in that list. We can change the parking requirement we're going to change it to half of what the square footage is instead a huge parking lot with a lot of wasted space.

Mr. Patel gave an example of a Karate Dojo and stated that people are not coming during the day . The kids get off of school and are being shuffled around, doing a PUD or MUD however you define it is the avenue to go with. We want to make the business successful.

Attorney Reed brought up an Uncle who built Spec homes and the economy went bad and he would drive by it every day and said it looked like a big horse .I'm assuming you are thinking you build it they will come and I'm assuming the inside will be a blank slate.

Mr. Patel brought up Joliet Illinois and how they have these Auto Clubs and it's just for cars , it's like a man cave for car and I believe they had one where there was a picture there with a staircase , that's what we're talking about with the second mezzanine where they can hang around and play poker . That mezzanine creates kind of an image but it also a functioning space as well.

Jordan Feldman added it could also be a space for socializing .

Commissioner Krull mentioned that he and Commissioner Scheeringa have kids that play soccer at that's very similar and it's in Crown Point and it's very similar to that setup. at one point, he was looking to get out of that, and he had actually talked about, if we had renovated Lincoln Center, he would have leased a spot at a Lincoln Center. That it's basically, he turfed the whole thing and his offices are upstairs. So the parents go upstairs and there's some monitors set up, they could watch practice if they wanted. It's all individual training, and he has it has it broken down into different segments, so he's got I don't know 5 or 6 trainings going on simultaneously.

Mr. Patel mentioned It was brought up, and I don't mean to bring up something in the past, but even if somebody wants to start a pickleball association, Let's just say the Island Pickleball Association, you could convert this into Pickleball courts a couple of pickleball, indoor, where you have the high ceilings and you could play pickleball indoor in temperature-controlled as opposed to just having it outdoor. So, here we go. I think Tom remembers that.

Commissioner Black answered yes he did

Commissioner Krull added That's kind of like what this guy did, because he put garage doors in, and in the summer he ended up what used to be parking he curved the section of the parking lot and then in the summer, he leaves the door open and lets the breeze come in and he has indoor-outdoor trainings.

Jordan Feldman mentioned we've seen pickleball. Now in Miami we have paddle ball. That became a big thing indoors. We've seen the soccer like you mentioned. We've seen batting cages. The indoor batting cages, all kinds of stuff. I mean there's so many things that have gone on in here that it's really it's unlimited.

Commissioner Scheeringa added I mean obviously we're not voting on anything tonight but this is the best idea you brought forward. It's unique, it seems like a need for the area in my eyes. It's a tough space.

Attorney Reed mentioned It's funny when you drive down Whitcombe Street, south of 30 on your way to the courthouse by the Lexus dealer there are several other places, there are those places where office in front, pole barn in the back only about half of those are businesses. People sometimes just want to buy it, I want to keep my cars, my boats, I want to put furniture, all my hobbies there, you know what I mean? It's kind of you know and those things are sold before they're ever built.

Mr. Patel stated what's happened in Northwest Indiana with all the movement with Illinois. Spaces like this spec bill, we're talking about new construction. there's a lot of people that are rehab places and it's limited, and then you're fighting that thing. You're, you know, it's an old building, you got old mechanicals, you got old things, you got this and it's with this we're talking about new construction. you're looking at catering to people and then kind of having control over the type of things that you're doing in there, you know and I think that that's what kind of makes this a good project and It's hard to raise a ceiling later.

Jordan Feldman added it's expensive

Commissioner Georgeff added it sounds like a winner to me.

Commissioner Black stated having a good plan now to talk about the PUD

Attorney Reed stated it shouldn't be that hard to design, customize it and say we're only going to park it at this level per square foot instead of you know the high level. We're going to not say, here's what can go in there. You just put a list of really undesirable, you know, things that either very high traffic, problematic businesses, tobacco stores. That's fine. Porno stores, cash for gold, payday loans.

Mr. Patel stated this is the gateway to this community, and I think I've always expressed to you is that when I bought this property and when I brought things to you at the original, we are not trying to build junk here. We're not trying to build things that are going to not withstand time but you have to understand the site has challenges. All the things that you've brought to me in terms of I cannot control the traffic on Indianapolis Boulevard. All we can do is to work together and this kind of space everybody's not going to their space at the same time.

so I think with this I don't want to say no to a restaurant. I mean, we don't want to go back and forth, because last go-around, we spent a considerable amount of time and a considerable amount of money to bring something to you which was very credible. We want to see this work.

Commissioner Scheeringa wanted to make clear that it was not this council

Mr. Patel said No

Attorney Reed do you envision the development the property you currently own and then go moving north onto the lots that the town owns ?

Mr. Patel answered Our intention, I think I spoke to a couple of people on the board and Councilmen and I have desire to do that.

Attorney Reed stated you might want to see how that goes and then if it's a big success, then you could theoretically

Mr. Patel answered well we would like to see that road connect but this wouldn't prevent us, correct, Mitch and Jordan This wouldn't really because by the time you build it, and when you get going on it, you know. We shouldn't have an issue but we'd like to see I think it just behooves the town's best interest to connect to the light.

Jordan Feldman added I think you want connectivity to that light. I mean you don't want a separate entrance.

Mr. Patel answered John, to be very clear, yes there is interest but you know we do know we did get the soil borings, which I asked for the town to kind of proceed with trying to see what not a lot of it is usable. You know, there's going to have to be work done. There's been a lot of things that have be a lot of non-compactable soil or Non-compactable soil with, you know, ours remaining the bait shop. Things were dumped there and that in itself is something that it wasn't an EPA study but it was just a soil-boring study at this point. There's work to be done but we'd like to be part of that. We think that it would only make sense

Attorney Reed mentioned there's a sign out there that we lease. A small little block and I don't know how small it is but it could be Phil? Wasn't there a barrier or was it I think it would have to go around the pump station.

Mr. Patel answered the preference would be to be in front of that pump station to go across

Commissioner Georgeff stated I think we talked with Derek one of our town engineers it is possible to go behind it. there's some difficulty in overcoming the elevations back there and stuff, but up front and connecting it I don't remember if we determined an approximate cost or anything to that but If we gave you access to it you'd be interested in putting them in then right?

Mr. Patel answered We could discuss it as I said you know, we're motivated.

Commissioner Scheeringa asked what do you think this would come down to us as increasing value of the property? what do you see as that increase? Is it a 5 million development , a 10 million development ?

Jordan Feldman answered and said it was a little soon but it's going to be a strong development I mean we have to see how many square feet we can get in here and then we have to do our own analysis on the, you know what mez we can get in here. We have to figure out square feet. So that's really going to be determinative based on what kind of lot coverage we would you know come through with the PUD what kind of parking ratio we would need we just have to figure out what you would allow us to do.

What we think is a reasonable sort of parking ratio, we'll figure out and try to present and look I know you have one of your members here is on the fire so he understands the turning ratios, what a fire truck needs so maybe we'll come up with that kind of idea as well. We want to do it in obviously a proper way. Where we can get it approved with, you know, it's always fires as a key component in our design, and, you know, we built over 4 million square feet of you know, self-storage, and we've been involved with retail, multifamily, so, you know, we're very sensitive to that. So, really, it's going to end up being the parking ratio is critical, and then the FAR you know, what kind of lot coverage and then you know, obviously paving and drainage. Those are critical points.

So it's really going to be what would be allowed to do here in terms of those ratios it's a real project. I mean, it's the idea is to spend money, make it nice, you know, they're real buildings, it'll be real tenants, it's you know, it's real. It's not some junky buildings going on site, like, you know, some metal, you know, tin can warehouse we're talking about it's a real project. It brings tax revenue it's a drill.

Commissioner Scheeringa asked what are you looking from us? Obviously, we can't vote on anything tonight, but are you just basically looking for our interest?

Mr. Patel answered obviously to have you look at it, and you guys have support of it, you know, having his we'd like to see it, you know, go in a way that everybody's supported, right? This is a collaborative type of a process but we would like to see it fast-tracked, you know in terms of if we could skip something to get to a PUD quicker and I think John needs to provide some assistance with that, whatever that process is.

Attorney Reed stated They're somewhat cookie cutter. I mean, you just, you know, you have to fill it's a fill in the blanks more or less. How much parking per square foot, what businesses, what businesses are, you know, outlawed there, whatever and then you kind of want to define what are major, modifications and minor modifications.

A major modification requires the entire process to go. It's just like a zoning change. You got to notify the public, plan commission, I mean you got to go through the whole rigmarole. A minor A minor change is just one meeting one boat. Hey, we want to take out three parking places over here because we're going to put this but a major mod is I want to build another 50,000 square feet and if you define all that up front, it's not bad. I mean they're not that long. The tougher part would probably be the engineering. For the light, the road, all that kind of stuff.

Commissioner Scheeringa asked Is this project contingent on getting out of that light ?

Jordan Feldman answered I would think that the amount of traffic coming in and out of here. I want to say wouldn't need the light, but I mean, the light would certainly be a plus. from both I'm assuming the light is a plus. From the review standpoint, if we can get out of that light.

Commissioner Scheeringa commented if that engineering and that getting the permissions for the light from INDOT and all that kind of stuff may take some time, it wouldn't stop you from going through this right now. Having the south going south enter and then having to go south to exit.

Commissioner Krull added I'm trying to remember how the terminal functioned. I don't think there's one-way in.

Mr. Patel added There are two curb cuts on that property and I kind of approached INDOT already, and INDOT doesn't control curb code. Once they're there they don't remove curb cuts. , legally we have that position to keep them but it's the town's prerogative to say, look, no, we really don't want you to have it now to do this. You know, let's just say we were going to do something that just was like a deal killer but I'm going to speak for Mitch and Jordan. I think we could move forward having both curb cuts right now without getting to the light.

We could do that now because as we're building. it's going to take time. It's going to take time to get tenants it's going to get time to take that and we know ultimately it's in the town's best interest to get there and the building season's a couple months away.

Jordan Feldman stated I can't imagine it working with one curb cut. I think you need both curb cuts, which makes sense and I think the goal would be ultimately to get to the light. I don't think you need the light to make a successful project but the light would be great because then you get a left turn in and a left turn out.

Commissioner Krull stated it's dependent on traffic If you're doing it at 5 in the afternoon it's a pain , if you're doing it at 10 in the morning not so bad.

Mr. Patel added the traffic between that light to the next light understand, I'm not a traffic engineer but the traffic light that's by the Casey's and the traffic light that's by the Pilot That's not a very a big span. So when you look at the amount of traffic that happens. The fast traffic we talk about, that accident, it's mostly people that are not paying attention, right? It's not just speed-related. it's of sometimes there is where people are zooming through that, but those two lights are pretty close.

So having the two curb cuts to get out of that property safely It can be done. For a bus, it was much more difficult and in this type of business you won't see I would pretty much guarantee a bus coming out of here or going into here.

Attorney Reed added You could probably retime those lights to make it so you've got more of a gap too.

Commissioner Scheeringa stated I'm super intrigued very impressed. I think it looks great. I'd love to see you proceed and give us more.

Both Jordan Feldman and Mr. Patel thanked him

Mr. Patel asked if there were any questions and he feels that this is a good project

Jordan Feldman stated I'm just thinking out loud, maybe the plan would be, why don't we try to put something on get the civil engineer, draw a design maybe kind of give sort of a layout that we think would be a workable, site plan and kind of we'll think through initial parking ratios, turning radius, things like that that might be typical and why don't we start that as just a conversation point, and just kind of get it on there just so we can all look at something and say here's the site.

This is how we're going to have flow around the site, this is how we're going to handle the fire safety portion of it and just tell you why and this is why we think the parking works this way, and just give you the logic behind it, and maybe that's a starting point of this looks good and why don't we tweak it here, tweak it there and then these are the uses we don't want and we could kind of formulate a PUD.

It's kind of like what Rohit said, it's collaborative. This is almost just like a private-public partnership, really we want to try to work with you and figure out how to get it approved and make it a successful project that everyone's proud of.

Commissioner Scheeringa asked if they could have something ready in a month for the next study session

Jordan Feldman yes we could have something together in a month.

Attorney Reed stated he could have PUD with fill in the blank for all the basic things.

Commissioner Scheeringa stated when you said batting cages you had me.

Jordan Feldman also brought up gun ranges but he didn't know how anyone felt about .

Commissioner Scheeringa that is really no place around with batting cages that you have to go all the way to Schererville .

Mr. Patel stated So there's a need in terms of sporting how big it is in Northwest Indiana. it could be even volleyball, you know? You think about at the height of those ceilings and which we know volleyball is really big. Growing. You know, and gymnastics, you know, with Patty's All-American Studio.

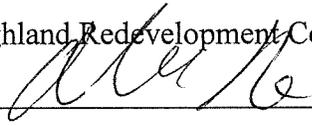
You know people that have that space and that's the biggest thing, is that people the committal of to try to buy a space, that's where the point I was trying to make with O'Hara's is that he kept moving around because he was trying to fight that perfect space to buy but there is no perfect space to buy in that lane, and that's where this caters towards and most people don't want to get committal with trying to buy something.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm

The next Redevelopment Study Session will be on February 9<sup>th</sup> , 2026 immediately following the Town Council Plenary meeting and Study Session at the Town Hall located at 3333 Ridge Rd.

DULY PASSED AND RESOLVED by the Highland Redevelopment Commission, Highland, Lake County, Indiana, this 23rd day of February 2026, having passed by a vote 4 in favor and 0 opposed.

Highland Redevelopment Commission

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

~~Secretary~~ 