

REGULAR MEETING OF THE MISHAWAKA COMMON COUNCIL

March 2, 2026

Be it remembered that the Common Council of the City of Mishawaka, Indiana met in the Council Chambers of the New Mishawaka City Hall and via telephone on Monday March 2, 2026, at 6:00PM. The meeting was called to order by Council President Gregg Hixenbaugh. All were asked to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

City Clerk Debbie Ladyga-Block called roll.

Present: Mrs. Hazen (P), Mrs. Voelker (P), Mr. Carroll (P), Mr. Banicki (P), Mr. Emmons (P), Ms. Hahn (P), Mr. Mammolenti (E), Mr. Violi (P), Mr. Hixenbaugh (P)
P: Present E: Electronically Participating A: Absent

Members attending virtually do so by WebEx. Public that attends can participate by WebEx or observe meetings by YouTube or Facebook live. The Council meetings are also streamed live on Michiana Access on Comcast/AT&T U-verse Channel 99.

Minutes for the Regular Meeting on February 16, 2026, were approved as received from the Clerk's Office.

Clerk Block read the following petitions by title.

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| Petition No. 2026-03 | Vacation of Right-of-Way North of property located at 209 Towle Avenue. |
| Petition No. 2026-04 | Annex Right-of-Way extending Veterans Parkway North to Cleveland Road |
| Petition No. 2026-05 | Rezone from C-1 General Commercial District to R-1 – 822 W. Fourth Street |
| Petition No. 2026-06 | Vacate of 2.65 Acres of Right-of-Way – East side of Fir Road, North of University Drive, and South of Cleveland Road |
| Petition No. 2026-07 | Annex and Rezone to C-1 General Commercial – 15008 Grande Vista Drive |

Clerk Block read the resolutions by title and opened the public hearing.

RESOLUTION R2026-05

A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MISHAWAKA, INDIANA, MAKING A FINAL DETERMINATION AND CONFIRMING THE DESIGNATION OF AREAS WITHIN THE CITY OF MISHAWAKA, INDIANA, KNOWN AS 1121 AND 1025 WEST 11TH STREET AS AN ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION AREA FOR PURPOSES OF REAL PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT

**Confirming Real Property Tax Abatement for United Petfood Producers
(Petitioner requesting postponement on Resolution R2026-05 and Resolution R2026-06 to
March 16, 2026, meeting)**

The chair entertained a motion to postpone further public hearing on both **RESOLUTION R2026-05 AND RESOLUTION R2026-06** until their next regularly scheduled meeting of March 16, 2026. Clerk Block polled the Council on the motion to postpone.

Motion passed by majority roll call vote (summary: Yes = 9).

Yes: Mrs. Hazen, Mrs. Voelker, Mr. Carroll, Mr. Banicki, Mr. Emmons, Ms. Hahn, Mr. Mammolenti, Mr. Violi, Mr. Hixenbaugh. The motion passed 9-0.

RESOLUTION R2026-07

A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MISHAWAKA, INDIANA, APPROVING THE ISSUANCE OF TAX INCREMENT REVENUE BONDS OF THE REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF MISHAWAKA, INDIANA FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING FUNDS FOR THE COSTS OF CERTAIN LOCAL PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS IN OR SERVING THE AUTO MALL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA ALLOCATION AREA AND ALL MATTERS RELATED THERETO

Approving Tax Increment Revenue Bonds for Public Improvements Related to the Auto Mall Economic Development Area

Ken Prince, Director of Planning and Community Development for the City of Mishawaka, spoke in favor of **RESOLUTION R2026-07**. Mr. Prince stated they started the process in the fall working with Gurley Leep on the construction of the auto mall. Mr. Prince stated there were a couple of things happening and they started the process of creating a new economic development area in December through the Redevelopment Commission and they had brought that before the Council and that new economic development area had been created. Mr. Prince stated their financial advisor, Baker Tilly, had given them the presentation on the finances of the project, but he briefly wanted to summarize it that evening. Mr. Prince stated the city was in a partnership with Gurley Leep, so when they were originally looking to construct the auto mall, they needed to extend utilities. Mr. Prince stated they worked with the property owner adjacent to the Penn family to extend utilities to Cleveland Road which they needed to come from the south to do the extension. Mr. Prince stated they worked and they acquired right-of-way to extend the utilities and they needed to address improvements on Cleveland Road and the extension of Veterans Parkway, which would be around \$8 million worth of improvements to

serve the Gurley Leep development there. Mr. Prince stated the city had a desire on top of that because obviously Gurley Leep did not need to construct Veterans Parkway going north and they also did not need to do many of the road improvements that were needed long term on Cleveland Road. Mr. Prince stated the city had a desire to do about \$11 million in public improvements to extend Veterans Parkway, which opened up property and also better facilitated traffic movement in the overall area not just for the Veterans Parkway but for Gurley Leep and those that used Cleveland Road on a regular basis. Mr. Prince stated they originally investigated with Baker Tilly regarding the ability to finance the improvements through a traditional mechanism of using tax increment financing and going out for bid for financing the project. Mr. Prince stated to determine the feasibility study of that the costs of financing were prohibited based on going out to the market because there was not established assessed value with Gurley Leep. Mr. Prince stated at that point in time, they worked with Gurley Leep and created a development agreement and they were very appreciative of Gurley Leep for being good corporate citizen for even considering the proposal. Mr. Prince stated they agreed to take on the financing of the project that would be paid back through the taxes that they were paying on the auto mall project to fund the public improvements that they were looking to make. Mr. Prince stated they would be lumping the improvements that Gurley Leep needed and the public improvements that the city desired into three separate projects that were being funded from the bonds anticipated for the project that they were asking the Council to act on that evening. Mr. Prince stated first project was the extension of utilities from their current point at the roundabout on Veterans Parkway that existed to serve the fieldhouse and that would be extended all the way to Cleveland Road. Mr. Prince stated the second project would be the improvements necessary on Cleveland. Mr. Prince stated Cleveland needed to be widened and there was a traffic signal that got installed and a designated right-out turn lane for Veterans Parkway that had to be done at that intersection. Mr. Prince stated the third portion of the project was the construction of Veterans Parkway itself that would extend from its current terminus all the way to Cleveland Road. Mr. Prince stated at the end of the project, in addition to having an auto mall with an excess of over \$100 million investment, they would have completed the improvements that they thought would vastly improve the circulation and development potential of the area. Mr. Prince stated with him that evening were representatives from Baker Tilly, Barnes & Thornburg, who prepared the resolution in front of the Council that evening, and also representatives from Gurley Leep available to answer any questions on the auto mall which had started construction and the representative of Baker Tilly could represent the financial information if Council would want it regarding the resolution. Mr. Prince stated on behalf of the Administration, they were thankful for those who participated, specifically Gurley Leep and what they were doing to accelerate the project. Mr. Prince stated if Gurley Leep had not done what they did for the project, the city would have essentially been waiting for three years to do the exact same thing, because they would have waited for the development to be constructed and then they would have had to put the project out to public bid and they knew construction inflation was greater than typical inflation. Mr. Prince stated they knew that they would be chasing themselves regarding the financing of the project, because of the ever-escalating costs. Mr. Prince stated he was happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Hixenbaugh stated in the intervening period of time since they last considered the project, he heard a couple questions from members of the community with regard to what he viewed to be a misunderstanding of the city's role in the process, so he wanted to predicate his question with

that but to underscore what Mr. Prince had shared with them, Mr. Hixenbaugh asked if it was in fact the case that was in front of them that evening in terms of the sale of the bonds, nor any of the prior actions that they took would involve a direct investment on the part of the City of Mishawaka in the Gurley Leep Development and if that was accurate. Mr. Prince stated that was accurate. Mr. Hixenbaugh stated the benefit that would accrue from the sale of the bonds and the prior actions that they had taken, as Mr. Prince indicated, would allow for the Council to keep the commitments they had made with regard to prior developments in that general vicinity in terms of infrastructure, but also to prepare the area for future development and asked if that was a pretty accurate summary of it. Mr. Prince stated it was and he wanted to clarify that they had a plan in place and they were looking to act upon and implement the plan, but they would not be renegotiating a commitment if the project had to wait for a period of time. Mr. Prince stated they knew it would be a gradual development and this would help them implement the plan sooner rather than later. Mr. Hixenbaugh stated they had made significant investments as a community in that area of Mishawaka and asked if that was correct. Mr. Prince stated that was correct and between the wellfield, the existing infrastructure on Veterans Parkway, and the Mishawaka Fieldhouse, they were all huge investments for the city. Mr. Hixenbaugh asked if Mr. Prince would agree with him that by virtue of the proposal and the investments they made, if the resolution were to be approved, they further maximized the value of the investment that they had made in the community and the development of that general area. Mr. Prince stated yes. Mr. Hixenbaugh stated, with the way that the sale of the bonds was structured and the relationship was structured, his understanding was that under no version of the facts would there be additional city or Redevelopment Commission funding that would be pledged to the repayment of the bonds and asked if that was accurate. Mr. Prince stated yes and he wanted to emphasize that was why he made the comment that Gurley Leep was such a great citizen that if for some reason that auto mall development did not generate enough tax revenue to pay the bonds, the city was not at risk at all and Gurley Leep would be at risk regarding the loan that they were making that would be paid back with the tax revenue from the project. Mr. Hixenbaugh thanked Mr. Prince.

Mr. Carroll asked Sam Schrader, Baker Tilly, to approach the podium and if he could reiterate the same thing he mentioned in the last meeting with regard to the funding so he could be sure he would be able to vote on the matter. Mr. Carroll stated the bonds would not be for retail sale and asked if that was correct. Mr. Schrader stated he did not think there was anything that would prohibit Gurley Leep from selling their bonds on the second market after they had already purchased them, however they would run into the same obstacles that Baker Tilly would be running into if they were selling the bonds on the open market where there was that same risk in the assessment not having occurred and there being a single taxpayer. Mr. Schrader stated they had not had that direct conversation with the Gurley Leep team to know if that were their intent, but there was nothing saying that they could not do that. Mr. Carroll asked if as a part of the process, there would not be any financial firms involved as distribution partners since this would be a sale directly to Gurley Leep. Mr. Schrader stated not to their knowledge, no.

Mrs. Voelker thanked Mr. Schrader for his explanation at their last meeting, because it really was a bit complicated and different from how the city had financed the big projects like this in the past and she appreciated him explaining everything in layman's terms. Mr. Schrader the Council's patience with him throughout the process.

Question was called for at 6:17PM for **RESOLUTION R2026-07 Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote (summary: Yes = 9).**

Yes: Mrs. Hazen, Mrs. Voelker, Mr. Carroll, Mr. Banicki, Mr. Emmons, Ms. Hahn, Mr. Mammolenti, Mr. Violi, Mr. Hixenbaugh. The resolution passed 9-0.

Clerk Block read the following proposed ordinances by title and opened the public hearing.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2026-04

AN ORDINANCE ANNEXING CONTIGUOUS TERRITORY TO THE CITY OF MISHAWAKA, INDIANA, AND PROVIDING ZONING CLASSIFICATION THEREFORE

**Annex and Establish Zoning as R-1 Single Family District – 55660 Fir Road
Public Hearing – No Vote**

Mark Weaver, Northbridge Valley LLC at 2010 Went Avenue in Mishawaka, spoke in favor of **PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2026-04**. Mr. Weaver stated they were proposing a villa type of residential development at the parcel in question. Mr. Weaver stated they owned the parcel north and south of the listed address and had been recently able to acquire the additional one, which they would make all contiguous. Mr. Weaver stated they planned on developing city services such as water, sewer, and stormwater. Mr. Weaver stated they would be individual villas, and the lot sizes would range from 8,500 square feet to a little over 11,000 square feet.

Mr. Violi asked if both lots were going to conform to city regulations for roads and sewer. Mr. Weaver stated yes.

Ms. Hahn asked if the villas would be owner occupied. Mr. Weaver stated yes.

The public hearing was closed for **PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2026-04** at 6:21PM. Mr. Hixenbaugh stated pursuant to Indiana law; the Council would be taking final action on the matter at their regularly schedule council meeting on March 16th.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2026-05

AN ORDINANCE ANNEXING CONTIGUOUS TERRITORY TO THE CITY OF MISHAWAKA, INDIANA AND PROVIDING ZONING CLASSIFICATION THEREFORE

**Annex and Establish Zoning as C-1 General Commercial and Rezone from C-4 Automobile-Oriented Commercial to C-1 General Commercial – NW corner of McKinley & Fir Rd – 1550 E. McKinley
Public Hearing – No Vote**

Angela Smith, Jones Petrie Rafinski offices located at 325 South Lafayette Blvd in South Bend, IN, spoke in favor of **PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2026-05**. Mrs. Smith stated she was present on behalf of Granger Community Church with a two-part petition. Mrs. Smith stated the

first part of the petition looked at the properties already within the City of Mishawaka that were along McKinley that would involve a rezoning from C-4 to C-1. Mrs. Smith stated the other portion included the annexation of the portion of the property that was north of that. Mrs. Smith the area along McKinley, was unique in that some of the properties were split between county and city and this would bring that and the next property to the north into the City of Mishawaka and bring it under the common zoning ordinance of C-1 to allow for the mission's campus for Granger Community Church. Mrs. Smith stated the site plan included was a preliminary site plan that showed the reuse and the expansion of the Hub Cap Annie building and then the development of some amenities on the property. Mrs. Smith stated the detailed use of the property was still under consideration as the church would really like to have some outreach into the community to find out the community needs to figure out the programming, but it would include things such as a food pantry, potential classes and educational things and events on the property. Mrs. Smith stated she had John Payne, Executive Director of Granger Community Church, with her that evening if the Council had any questions specific to the project on that accord. Mrs. Smith stated she was happy to answer any other questions.

Mr. Hixenbaugh thanked Mrs. Smith for her presentation. Mr. Hixenbaugh stated Granger Community Church had obviously been successful in their current location a bit further to the north in Mishawaka. Mr. Hixenbaugh stated one of the challenges of their success was the traffic at certain peak times in and out of that location and he knew they took the affirmative step to secure private security, or they at the very least did at one point in time, to help with the traffic flow. Mr. Hixenbaugh stated as exciting as the proposal was, the proposed location would be even more difficult if they had the same type of traffic concerns, which was certainly a problem of success, but a problem nevertheless in the location. Mr. Hixenbaugh asked if there was anything else Mrs. Smith could tell the Council with regard to traffic control with the caveat that this was preliminary and the final site plan was not in front of them. Mrs. Smith stated this was not intended to be a place where worship services would be held and this would be more of a community service kind of building or community center, so it was not intended to have large crowds. Mrs. Smith stated there were a couple of things they were doing to help improve the area. Mrs. Smith stated first of all, the Hup Cap Annie property was one giant curb cut onto McKinley and the proposed plan would create a single entrance off of McKinley in accordance with the City of Mishawaka standards and then a secondary entrance/exit onto Fir Road which could be controlled by a gate or security if need be. Mrs. Smith stated they had been working closely with the City of Mishawaka, and she wanted to add that the petition did include a portion owned by the city's Redevelopment Commission at the corner which would be developed theoretically in conjunction with Granger Community Church.

Mr. Violi asked for the pickleball courts and the walking trails if they would be open to the public at all times or if there would be fencing around them. Mr. Violi asked what their preliminary plans for something like that would look like. Mrs. Smith stated they were showing a security fence around the site at that time, and the intention was to keep it as a controlled facility and not open to the public, but they could be when there were staff on site. Mrs. Smith stated this was not intended to be staffed seven days a week, so the church could hold a function where they

would be doing something for the youth and the parents as well. Mr. Violi asked for clarification if there were planned events through the church, which would be when it could be open to the public and asked if that was correct. Mrs. Smith stated yes and the church felt it was important, especially back near the pond, to keep that whole area as secure from the general public as possible just for liability reasons.

Mrs. Voelker thanked Mrs. Smith for her presentation and stated this was exciting as she knew they had people in the community that could use help from a mission standpoint. Mrs. Voelker asked if Mrs. Smith could explain the fact that the property was owned by the city and was going to be developed through the Redevelopment Commission. Mrs. Smith stated she would let Ken Prince address that part.

Ken Prince, Director of Planning and Community Development for the City of Mishawaka, spoke in favor of **PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2026-05**. Mr. Prince stated with regard to the corner, the property was a former brake shop that the Council approved for acquisition and they had acquired it. Mr. Prince stated the realtor had reached out to them when a previous sale on the property fell through and they identified it as a long-term need, not an immediate need because of the widening of McKinley and the desire to do a multi-use trail on Fir Road. Mr. Prince stated if you took the right-of-way out on both sides, that property was small and they deemed it undevelopable. Mr. Prince stated in the long term when Granger decided to submit the annexation and rezoning petition, they asked that their property be included into the petition with a long-term goal that would be acted on separately to deed the property to Granger Community Church to take it over for their perpetual maintenance because they had deemed it not developable from a development standpoint when they removed the right-of-way as it would be too small and the curb cuts would be too close either to Fir or McKinley to make the property functional. Mr. Prince stated that was a separate disposal process that they had to go through but for now, they just asked to be part of the rezoning petition to clean up the entire area, which Granger was kind enough to include in their petition. Mr. Prince stated in terms of the property itself, they were not actively working to deed it to Granger because they wanted the property clean before they entered into any such discussion. Mr. Prince stated the former building was gone, the parking lot was gone as they had been working on it and there was continued environmental remediation as well as monitoring wells being put there. Mr. Prince stated they worked closely with the state and the state used state brownfield funds to help clean up the property and with that, they wanted to make sure that any time they would go then to deed the property to Granger, they could convey exactly what was done on the property and that further mitigation was not required as part of the deeding of the property. Mr. Prince stated he was happy to answer any questions the Council had.

Mrs. Voelker asked regarding the multi-use trail to eventually be done on Fir Road mentioned by Mr. Prince if the plans for that would remain in place if the Granger Community Church project went through and the annexation went through. Mr. Prince stated yes and part of the reason the property was too small for redevelopment was because they were taking property off of McKinley, making McKinley wider and Fir wider to make that happen.

Mr. Violi asked if they would give the city access to the road when the widening of McKinley came to the forefront. Mr. Prince stated they had not worked through the disposition process, but ideally, they would work some kind of trade regarding the property but that was separate and he did not want to bog down either their plans or the city's plans as part of that and at some point in time they would have those discussions.

The public hearing was closed for **PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2026-05** at 6:31PM. Mr. Hixenbaugh stated pursuant to Indiana law; the Council would be taking final action on the matter at their regularly schedule council meeting on March 16th.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Hixenbaugh stated pursuant to their council rules, the Council had collaborated with Mayor Wood with regard to the scheduling of the annual State of the City Address. Mr. Hixenbaugh stated through that process, they had identified Thursday April 30th at 6PM in the Council Chambers as mutually agreeable time for that. The chair entertained a motion to change the date of the Mayor's State of the City Address to Thursday April 30th at 6PM in the Council Chambers. Mr. Carroll moved the motion and with a second from Mr. Violi, Clerk Block polled the Council on the motion.

Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote (summary: Yes = 9).

Yes: Mrs. Hazen, Mrs. Voelker, Mr. Carroll, Mr. Banicki, Mr. Emmons, Ms. Hahn, Mr. Mammolenti, Mr. Violi, Mr. Hixenbaugh. The motion passed 9-0.

Mr. Carroll announced Thursday March 12th the 2nd District meeting would be held at 7PM at the Blair Hills Pool Complex and the guest speaker would be Matt Lentsch, Executive Director of Development and Governmental Affairs and Director of Mishawaka Utilities.

ADJOURNMENT 6:33PM

Deborah S. Block /s/
Deborah S. Block, IAMC, MMC, City Clerk

Gregg A. Hixenbaugh /s/
Gregg A. Hixenbaugh, President

These minutes are a summary of actions taken at the Mishawaka Common Council meeting. The full video archive of the meeting is available for viewing at www.youtube.com/@cityofmishawaka635 for as long as this media is supported.