

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE PLAN COMMISSION
VALPARAISO, INDIANA
June 3, 2025**

The Plan Commission of the City of Valparaiso, Indiana, met on Tuesday, June 3, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in City Hall. Tim Warner called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Present were Diane Worstell, Vic Ritter, Harry Peterson, Sarah Litke, Tim Warner, Ellen Kapitan, and Max Rehlander. Also present were Bob Thompson, Attorney Mark Worthley, Seyi Aletan and Petitioners. Clay Patton and Matt Evans were absent.

Minutes

May 6, 2025, minutes were presented for approval.

Motion: Ellen Kapitan moved to approve May 6, 2025, minutes. Sarah Litke seconded the motion. Upon voice vote, the motion passed with a 7-0 vote.

New Business

RES25-001 (Public Hearing)

A petition filed by the Valparaiso Parks Department, 3210 N. Campbell St., Valparaiso, IN 46385. The petitioner requests approval of a resolution adopting a new recreation impact fee and ordinance as a replacement for the existing fee and ordinance. The proposed Recreation Impact Fee would apply to all new residential development within the Valparaiso municipal boundary.

Kevin Nuppnau - He was joined by Tristan Leonard and Chuck Lehman.

Chuck Lehman – The State has adopted a statute that allows for municipalities to have an impact fee ordinance. In this case it is for the recreational side and it applies to new residential construction. They did a 10-year growth projection. They looked at the level of service and the priorities. They formed an advisory committee that worked through the process with them. The Committee has representatives from real estate, builders and developers. They came up with a recommendation that was presented to the Park Board in the last part of May. The Park Board gave a favorable recommendation. This does need City Council approval. They worked with the Plan Department and City Administration to determine future growth. They used this to determine the current level of service. They determined what the impact costs are. They do the forecast for 10 years but the Ordinance can only last five years. Current deficiencies cannot be funded by impact fees. Future needs can be 100% funded by impact fees. They looked at all undeveloped parcels and their zoning. They determined if the parcels were developed what the increase in population would be. Their estimate for 2024 population of the City is 34,782. The 2034 population would be 43,362. They looked at Park inventory. There are a little over 700 acres of park land. Just infrastructure belonging to the Park can be used in the analysis.

They broke everything down to categories instead of listing as infrastructure. They recommended everything be accepted except facility complexes. These are major ticket items and impact fees will not play a part in funding those. Those will probably be a bond issue. Their recommendation is that after calculations the impact fee be \$2,687.00. They took the list of priorities and updated their unit costs and updated the population projections. Their recommendation to the City is that using the current model there will be no deficiencies. No impact deductions. The advisory committee felt that the single family would be the baseline so that represents 100%. Townhomes and duplexes would be added to that. Condominiums would be 90% of the 100% and apartments based on the number of bedrooms would be either 63% or 80%. The recommendation is not only the impact fee itself but also the suggested changes in the housing equivalency. When the last Ordinance was presented, it had a 2.5% annual adjustment. It was mentioned then that the average adjustment was 3%. That 3% has fallen short of inflation. The average has moved up to 5%. Some communities have gone to 8%. He presented a list of other communities and their impact fees. Valparaiso is in the top 10 on that list. Carmel is the highest in the State. They are at \$5,800 now and projected to be at \$8,000 in five years. They are much higher than the 5%. The recommendation is not only the impact fee itself but also the suggested changes in the housing equivalency.

Public Hearing

Seeing no one wishing to address the Commission Tim Warner declared the Public Hearing closed.

Questions/Comments from the Commission

Ellen Kapitan – She asked for an explanation of the impact fee as it is now.

Chuck Lehman - The current impact fee is \$1,598.00. Any monies coming in from that can be spent on the eight components. The fee is collected at the time building permits are pulled. It is a one-time deal on new construction.

Ellen Kapitan – Is this per permit?

Chuck Lehman – Per permit and it is applied to the housing equivalent.

Harry Peterson – This is the total park impact fee. It currently is \$1,598 and it is recommended to increase to \$2,687.00.

Chuck Lehman – That is correct. It started at \$1,448 and 2% was added yearly. We are doing this before the current one ends. They cannot start collecting on the new one until six months after it is approved.

Tim Warner – This has been an impactful line item for the parks. It has given them flexibility to do some new projects. They have done quite a bit of pathway development with impact fees.

Kevin Nuppnau – An estimated \$300,000 to \$350,000 a year is collected in impact fees to the parks. Over the past several years they have used that money for funding for the skate park, the Valparaiso Dog Park, as well as pathway segments to connect new developments to the current system. The new categorization allows them a little bit more flexibility. But there are still restrictions they have to stay within according to State statute. He is asking for suspension of the rules tonight.

MOTION: Vic Ritter moved to suspend the rules on RES25-001. Sarah Litke seconded the motion and so approved with a 7-0 roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote:

Diane Worstell – Yes
Sarah Litke – Yes
Vic Ritter – Yes
Tim Warner – Yes
Harris Peterson – Yes

Matt Evans – Absent
Clay Patton – Absent
Ellen Kapitan – Yes
Max Rehlander – Yes

MOTION: Harry Peterson moved to send RES25-001 to the City Council with a favorable recommendation. Vic Ritter seconded the motion and so approved with a 7-0 roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote:

Diane Worstell – Yes
Sarah Litke – Yes
Vic Ritter – Yes
Tim Warner – Yes
Harris Peterson – Yes

Matt Evans – Absent
Clay Patton – Absent
Ellen Kapitan – Yes
Max Rehlander – Yes

Rules and Procedures

Bob Thompson – There is no vote on this tonight. He has sent proposed changes to the Commission. Matt Evans talked to him about if the President is not present then the Vice President runs the meeting. He is asking for procedure of appointing a temporary Vice President. Bob put in the rules that the Executive Secretary for the Commission shall be the Director. That way they don't have to vote on it all the time.

Tim Warner – He thinks Matt's thoughts were if a conflict of interest arose, this might be a necessary action.

Bob Thompson – He had it happen once at the County where the President and Vice President both were not able to attend a meeting. In that case a simple majority vote was taken to appoint a temporary president to run that meeting. He asked the Commission to look over the changes and let him know if they have any questions. They will discuss it in July.

Attorney Mark Worthley – He understands the concern about being an officer of the board for a discussion that they are going to be recusing themselves from. There is nothing that says you have to do more than not vote and not discuss. Administering the function of calling for the vote is not something that any of the people on the Board need to be worried about if they feel they have a conflict of interest on a particular agenda item. He doesn't think the rules need to be amended.

Max Rehlander – He thanked Bob for taking the time to put together the new rules and procedures as well as taking the time for the detailed comments on the former rules. It was a great learning experience.

Report from Valparaiso Economic Development Commission

Bob Thompson – VU is going through a bond. They need a government agency to be the conduit for this process. VU went before the Valparaiso Economic Development Commission and presented their case. By State statute they have to prepare a report and present it to the Plan Commission and the City Council. All the Plan Commission is required to do is review the report and accept it. No action is required.

Ellen Kapitan – She asked for an explanation of why this goes to the Plan Commission.

Attorney Mark Worthley – They want to have the Plan Commission make sure it does not conflict with the UDO.

Bob Thompson – The idea is to make sure what they are proposing is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. There is no action. It is just a presentation of the report.

MOTION: Harry Peterson moved to accept the VEDC report. Sarah Litke seconded the motion and so approved with a 7-0 voice vote.

Bob Thompson – There is an advertisement out for doing the Unified Development Ordinance and updating it. He is just asking for qualifications right now. He is still looking at how they are going to go forward with the Comprehensive Plan. There is going to be a big focus on updating the UDO.

Ellen Kapitan – Is there a timeline?

Max Rehlander – Part of the analysis is going to be do we need to take a whole comprehensive look at the UDO. That involves Planning, Engineering, Building, Utilities, Parks, Plan Commission. Or in the short term do they look at one section that they know hasn't been updated in 15-20 years and tackle it in pieces.

Bob Thompson – First they need to decide on a consultant. Then they need to develop a scope of work detailing what they want them to proceed with. He does want to do an update to the Comprehensive Plan. It will probably be more in-house than by the consultant. His goal is to have a document of 50-70 pages. He wants a usable document.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: Vic Ritter moved to adjourn the meeting. Sarah Litke seconded the motion. Upon voice vote the motion passed with a 7-0 vote.



Matt Evans, President



Bob Thompson Executive Secretary

Next Meeting: August 5, 2025