CITY OF FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS, ILLINOIS
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
September 08, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Sunyatta McDermott with (8 members) in physical attendance: Pat Herrington, Pat Wesemann, Linda Hoppe, Kelly Smith, Rich Baldwin, and Bill Hopkins. Also in attendance were Dallas Alley (Director of Land Use & Development), Madison Martindale (Recording Secretary), and Andrew Hoerner (Attorney). Absent was Janice Petroff and Ashley Hutchison

1. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

None

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of August 11, 2026, were approved as written. Kelly Smith 1st to motion, and Rich Baldwin 2nd to motion to approve last month's minutes.

3. PC CASES/PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. PC 07-26, *Special Use Permit* for a convenience mini mart, also identified by St. Clair County PIN(s) 03-29.0-400-117.
b. PC 08-26, *Special Use Permit* for a bar and gaming restaurant, also identified by St. Clair County PIN(s) 03-29.0-400-117.

Director Alley began by stating he would present an overview of the two cases on the agenda together as they were for the same property. Director Alley stated for PC 07, the proposal was for the mini mart side of the development located in a pre-existing strip center on Lincoln Trl. Director Alley noted surrounding landmarks of the building, such as Urban League to the East, Chuck Wagon to the West, Lincoln Trail to the front and Meckfessel to the rear. Director Alley notes the packet for the meeting shows a layout for a convenience store, the ingresses and egresses, coolers, storage, office areas, etc. Director Alley stated the intended use for PC 07-26 would be for the mini mart, while PC 08-26 would be classified as a bar and gaming restaurant. Director Alley noted because of the layout of the proposed building, it is classified as a bar. Director Alley noted several design choices for the building layout and stated there was a pre-existing business on the East end of the building and a proposal for a future business on the West end. Director Alley stated the building proposal had indicated parking spaces to the rear of the building as well, however, after consulting with the Public Works department it had been determined the space could not be utilized for parking spaces as it had not been used within the last year and was no longer grandfathered as such. Director Alley stated this was the first case presented to the Planning Commission since the adoption of the Lincoln Trail Great Streets Plan. Director Alley

stated the document had been approved by the Planning Commission as well as the Community Committee and City Council, and was deemed by the department of Land Use and Economic Development as a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan. Director Alley stated it was the responsibility of the Commissioners to determine what level of consideration the document is given in regard to future businesses along Lincoln Trail. Director Alley directed the Commissioners to a handout they had received from the Land Use and Economic Development Coordinator Ryan Jenkins regarding the Lincoln Trail Great Streets Plan, which they reviewed for approximately 2 minutes. Director Alley mentioned the Applicant provided a narrative in the packet along with the proposed business' hours of operation.

The owner of the property Bobby Patel of 247 Delta Rd, O'Fallon, IL 62269 was sworn in on behalf of the Applicant Brian Nickas who attended the meeting virtually. Mr. Patel stated he has been a member of the community for the last 14 years and had previously been associated with the BP Gas Station franchise within the city for 10-12 years. Mr. Patel stated he has been the owner of the strip mall where the proposed project would be located for the past 3 years. Mr. Patel stated the restaurant was intended to bring new foods to the city, namely Indian cuisines. Mr. Patel noted another Indian food restaurant that had recently closed in Swansea, IL due to health concerns, and stated the proposal would bring in revenue to the city. Mr. Patel stated he wished to add a convenience store to the West end of town for easy shopping where members of the community and neighborhood could come for easy access. Mr. Patel commented the building has been sitting vacant for some time and he wanted to make it into something nice.

Chairman McDermott opened the hearing to comments from the public.

Ken Sharkey of 130 Par Ave, Fairview Heights, IL 62208 was sworn in. Mr. Sharkey stated he was a member of the Saint Clair County Transit Department; however, he was nonrepresentative of his district in this instance. Mr. Sharkey stated the organization was partnering with the City of Fairview Heights to upgrade things on the West end of the City with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Sharkey stated the organization previously applied for an easement at the location of the proposed building for a bus stop, however they were unable to obtain it. Mr. Sharkey mentioned as a result of the inability to obtain the easement for the bus stop, his organization worked on other projects within neighboring cities. Mr. Sharkey stated he was looking forward to working with the City to improve it.

Susan Williams of 209 North Point Rd, Fairview Heights, IL 62208 was sworn in. Ms. Williams stated she was against the proposal and felt the West end of town was already disparaged. Ms. William stated there were enough mini marts, bars and a Dollar General in the area already so there was no need for another similar building. Ms. Williams noted the proposal did not fit the Comprehensive plan and stated when the Lincoln Trail Great Streets Plan had been presented to the Commission prior, this new proposal had not been mentioned.

Maria Scott of 115 Bountiful Dr, Fairview Heights, IL 62208 was sworn in. Ms. Scott stated people walk through the area with pets and children almost daily. Ms. Scott stated cars already speed through the neighborhood adding to the chaos and high traffic. Ms. Scott stated the proposal would worsen the issue and noted the traffic is increased when school is in session nearby. Ms. Scott stated she felt the proposal was unneeded

Frank Kurtz of 112 Meckfessel Dr, Fairview Heights, IL 62208 was sworn in. Mr. Kurtz stated he has been a life-long resident of the city. Mr. Kurtz stated his family has owned their home since 1959, and he watched the building as well as the neighborhood grow around them. Mr. Kurtz commented on the

traffic issues and noted the stop sign at Meckfessel and North Point Rd had been knocked down over the weekend for the 5th time in the past year. Mr. Kurtz stated the building itself was deteriorated and if nothing would be done to the outside to improve it, the proposal would just be another bar within the City.

Joyce Walton of 216 Vale Dr, Fairview Heights, IL 62208 was sworn in. Ms. Walton stated she has lived in the city for 30 years. Ms. Walton stated she felt the city was declining. Ms. Walton stated she was worried about thieves entering the neighborhood with additional traffic flowing through the neighborhood. Ms. Walton stated she has epilepsy and has concerns for her personal safety.

Mr. Patel approached the podium and addressed the public's comments and concerns. Mr. Patel stated he believed the traffic for the project proposal would be a nonissue and there were three to four businesses along Lincoln Trl that were closed. Mr. Patel stated the building was just sitting and looked nasty. Mr. Patel stated he wanted to bring something better to the city. Mr. Patel argued the use of the word "bar" to describe the proposed use was inaccurate and the proposal was more of a restaurant.

Chairman McDermott closed the open hearing

Commissioner Herrington asked Director Alley how many gaming spots existed within the city. Director Alley replied there were at least 16. Commissioner Herrington stated he knew of distance restrictions for gaming parlors from schools and other gaming facilities. Director Alley stated the location of the proposal met the requirements from other gaming parlors and schools. Commissioner Herrington asked if the convenience store side of the property would be selling liquor. Director Alley stated the applicant intended to sell liquor as well as tobacco.

Commissioner Wesemann mentioned the Lincoln Trail Great Streets Plan, and stated there had been a lot of public input on the subject. Commissioner Wesemann stated the public requested a gathering place that was also unique, specialty shops, and an outdoor dining area. Commissioner Wesemann stated she felt the proposal was not representative of the Lincoln Trail Great Streets Plan and that the plan should take precedent.

Commissioner Herrington referred to one of the public testimonies, noting the applicant had no intentions to alter the outside of the building to fit in with the envisioned plan. Commissioner Herrington stated he would consider the application if the building was made to fit in the plan. Commissioner Wesemann suggested the Applicant could collaborate with Director Alley to come up with ideas to make the building's appearance fit with the long-term plan. Commissioner Hopkins commented he did not see a way to redesign the building's appearance so that it would fit with the plan. Director Alley stated there are transitional steps to follow that are recommended to help buildings adjust to match the Lincoln Trail Great Streets Plan. Commissioner Wesemann stated if the Applicant returned with architectural design changes to the outer appearance of the building, she would reconsider the application. Commissioner Wesemann stated the commission is setting the precedent for what is acceptable in regard to the Lincoln Trail Great Streets Plan.

Commissioner Herrington stated he was also concerned with the inside of the building. Commissioner Herrington stated the proposal on the application reminded him of another business in the city that was a convenience store and restaurant. Commissioner Herrington stated he felt the comprehensive plan was trying to break away from that style of business and focus on more eclectic businesses.

Commissioner Smith stated there was a nearby gas station close to the location of the building that could be used for liquor and tobacco purchases. Director Alley referred to a line within the hand out of an analysis of the Lincoln Trail Great Streets Plan given to the Commission at the start of the meeting. Commissioner Herrington read the line aloud and agreed with it. Commissioner Wesemann commented some businesses do not fit in certain areas in the city, however, they could fit elsewhere. Commissioner Wesemann stated this was not the first time the residents of the city stated their input on proposed businesses and the plan for future developments within the city. Commissioner Herrington commented the people have decided what they want in their neighborhood and noted no public comments were in favor of the application.

Chairman McDermott explained the legal process for the motion to approve the application.

Planning Commissioner Smith introduced the following resolution and moved for its adoption:

RESOLUTION PC 07-26

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING FINDINGS OF FACT RELATING TO DENIAL OF A SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR A MINI MART, BAR, AND GAMING RESTURANT AT
10218 LINCOLN TRL

WHERE AS, Brian Nickas, hereinafter referred to as the "Applicant," applied for a Special Use Permit for a mini mart, bar and gaming restaurant at parcel number 03-29.0-400-117; commonly known as 10218 Lincoln Trl; and

WHEREAS, the Fairview Heights Development Code requires that major modifications to a site development plan in B4 Retail Business District be approved as a special use;

WHEREAS, the Applicant has properly applied for a Special Use Permit.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THIS PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS, ST. CLAIR COUNTY, STATE OF ILLINOIS that the Findings of Fact relating to the request are as follows:

1. That the Applicant appeared before the Planning Commission for a public hearing pursuant to Section 14-10-8 of the City of Fairview Heights Development Code on September 08, 2026, and that said public hearing was properly advertised, both of which are incorporated by reference.

2. That the subject property is zoned "B4" Retail Business District.

3. That the Applicant's special use permit for a mini mart, bar and gaming restaurant shall be denied, based on the following criteria.

    - That the proposed use will not be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
    - That the proposed use will not be consistent with the Lincoln Trail Great Streets Plan.

The motion for the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Commissioner Hopkins upon vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor thereof: None

and the following voted against the same: Herrington, Fowler, Wesemann, Hoppe, McDermott, Smith, Baldwin, and Hopkins.

and the following abstained: None

and the following were absent: Ashley Hutchison

whereupon said resolution was declared duly passed and adopted by the Fairview Heights Planning Commission this the 8th day of September 2026.

Sunyatta McDermott

Planning Commission Chairman

ATTEST:

Dallas Alley

Land Use Director

Planning Commissioner Baldwin introduced the following resolution and moved for its adoption:

RESOLUTION PC 08-26

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING FINDINGS OF FACT RELATING TO APPROVAL OF A SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR A MINI MART, BAR, AND GAMING RESTURANT
10218 Lincoln Trl

WHERE AS, Brian Nickas, hereinafter referred to as the "Applicant," applied for a Special Use Permit for a mini mart, bar and gaming restaurant at parcel number 03-29.0-400-117; commonly known as 10218 Lincoln Trl; and

WHEREAS, the Fairview Heights Development Code requires that major modifications to a site development plan in B4 Retail Business District be approved as a special use;

WHEREAS, the Applicant has properly applied for a Special Use Permit.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THIS PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS, ST. CLAIR COUNTY, STATE OF ILLINOIS that the Findings of Fact relating to the request are as follows:

4. That the Applicant appeared before the Planning Commission for a public hearing pursuant to Section 14-10-8 of the City of Fairview Heights Development Code on September 08, 2026, and that said public hearing was properly advertised, both of which are incorporated by reference.

5. That the subject property is zoned "B4" Retail Business District.

6. That the Applicant's special use permit for a mini mart, bar and gaming restaurant shall be denied, based on the following criteria.

    - That the proposed use will not be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
    - That the proposed use will not be consistent with the Lincoln Trail Great Streets Plan.

The motion for the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Commissioner Fowler
upon vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor thereof: None

and the following voted against the same: Herrington, Fowler, Wesemann, Hoppe, McDermott, Smith,
Baldwin, and Hopkins.

and the following abstained: None

and the following were absent:
Hutchison

whereupon said resolution was declared duly passed and adopted by the Fairview Heights Planning Commission this the 8th day of September 2026.

Sunyatta McDermott

Planning Commission Chairman

ATTEST:

Dallas Alley

Land Use Director

4. **OLD BUSINESS**
   None

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

   None

6. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
   Director Alley stated there will be four cases at the next upcoming meeting, a rezoning, a new business where Lotawata Creek was, and two cases for the old nursery on Old Collinsville Rd. Director Alley stated he would be temporarily unavailable for two weeks in September and to contact Ryan Jenkins if anyone needed assistance. Director Alley mentioned the upcoming Tree Lighting Ceremony/Winter Festival coming the first weekend in November. Director Alley noted several developments within the city were making good progress and the department had some potential new developments coming.

7. **ADJOURNMENT** – The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully,

Dallas Alley
Director of Land Use and Development
DA/MM

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Fairview Heights Planning Commission will be on October 13, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the basement of the Fairview Heights Public Library, 10017 Bunkum Rd, Fairview Heights, Illinois.