

March 2026 Zoning Committee Special Meeting Minutes

North Linden Area Commission

Prepared by Ben Keith 2026-03-12

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Meeting Attendance

Called to order at 18:07

Members in attendance:

- Ben Keith
- Michelle Dranichak
- Carol Perkins
- Nathaniel Wilkins
- Kurt Dagefoerde

Quorum.

Audience: 2

Agenda

As on the website: <http://eepurl.com/jBkMvg>

Minutes

None considered at this meeting.

March 2025 minutes were received; February 2025 minutes are prepared but not quite publication-ready.



Business

No business. No demolition permits, graphics variances, zoning variances, special permits, or rezonings were scheduled for this month.

Upcoming business

DEMO2608478 / 3043 McGuffey Road

Permit portal link: <https://portal.columbus.gov/Permits/urlrouting.ashx?type=1000&Module=Building&capID1=26CAP&capID2=00000&capID3=007WN&agencyCode=COLUMBUS&HideHeader=true>

- Parcel 010-083759-00 <https://audr-apps.franklincountyohio.gov/redir/Link/Parcel/01008375900>
- Zoned: R-3 Residential
- Application filed: 2026-03-04
- Application received: 2026-03-05

Owner seeks to demolish a shed.

GC26-009 / 2956 Cleveland Avenue

Application: <https://portal.columbus.gov/Permits/urlrouting.ashx?type=1000&Module=Zoning&capID1=26LAC&capID2=00000&capID3=00257&agencyCode=COLUMBUS&HideHeader=true>

- Parcel 010-076513-00 <https://audr-apps.franklincountyohio.gov/redir/Link/Parcel/01007651300>
- Zoned: R-4 Residential
- Application filed: 2026-03-09
- Application received: 2026-03-10

Variances requested:

- 3377.08(B)(1), Illumination and special effects, to allow an automatic changeable copy graphic in the R-4, Residential District
- 3376.09(A)(1), Permanent signs for other uses in residential districts, to increase the portion of a ground sign displaying automatic changeable copy from 50 percent to 75 percent.

Other business

State of the City Address

Mayor Ginther delivered the 2026 State of the City address on Tuesday, March 10, at 6 p.m. Watch the event recording on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKej9kBAUag>

Notes from discussion:

- Housing is still an issue.
- Ginther is putting together a thing to deal with domestic violence, which has been the topic of discussion at many recent Area Commission meetings.

Impact of Data Centers

City Council's Public Utilities and Sustainability Committee held a hearing on the impacts of data centers on Wednesday, March 11, at 5:30 p.m. Watch the recorded hearing recorded on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E59h4-u_7tY

No one from the Zoning Committee attended or watched the recording.

Columbus Housing and Opportunity Plan Workshop

On Wednesday, March 11, the City of Columbus held a hearing at the Linden Community Center on housing and opportunity, "to hear from residents about their thoughts on segregation, housing affordability, and opportunity in your neighborhood and around the City."

Zoning Committee Chair Ben Keith attended. His notes:



Commissioner Keith notes on workshop

The “segregation” mentioned in the hearing advertisement is what you can see when you look at a dot-density map of population in Columbus, colored by Census self-reported race and ethnicity: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=30d2e10d4d694b3eb4dc4d2e58dbb5a5>



The segregation can be calculated as a “racial dissimilarity index”, which in this workshop compared the racial composition of a block group to the racial makeup of the county. The index determines how far from the county’s average composition an individual block group is. Columbus’ aggregate dissimilarity index is 0.668, which is lower than the average Metropolitan Statistical Area in the Northern or Midwestern areas of our country, but higher than the average Southern MSA. Columbus has been trending less dissimilar over time, since the ’70s when all three had a dissimilarity index above 0.91, but the “ideal” that places are aiming for is in the 0.1-0.6 range.

There were a series of maps showing the dissimilarity index for specific racial categories for every block group in the area, comparing that to what the racial dissimilarity indexes would look like if members of that category were uniformly distributed across the county based on the average home price in a block and the family’s purchasing power. These income-based maps showed that there isn’t really a cost-based reason for the stark ethnic grouping we see in the dot-density maps. There is some other cause for this sort of racial clustering. One of the questions for discussion in small groups was: Why do you think that clustering happens?

Then there was discussion of other metrics:

- Locations of concentrated areas of poverty
- Racial make-up of concentrated areas of poverty (majority White in University District, majority Black in areas of Linden and Northland, the South Side, mixed in Greater Hilltop and Franklinton)
- Locations of subsidized households
 - public housing: basically nonexistent
 - Low-Income Housing Tax Credit: Concentrations in Downtown, Near East, South Linden, Italian Village, Greater Hilltop
 - Section 8, and other subsidies: Near East and Italian Village, parts of Northeast and Linden near Westerville Road
 - Housing Choice Vouchers: Far South between Corr Road/Scioto/270, South East around Blacklick Estates
- Homeownership rates vs rental rates: Lower in Columbus than in Franklin County, the MSA, or Ohio, but: 52.1% for White, 31.1% for Black, 45.7% for Asian, 30.5% for Latino.
- Primary cause of lower homeownership rates among non-White non-Latino ethnic groups: lower mortgage origination rates, caused by not having enough savings for down payments. 94% for White, 94% for Multiple ethnicity, 90% Asian, 88% Other, 86% Latino, 84% Black.
- Map of homeownership rates: basically a map of where apartments are, though there were some surprising-to-me pockets of rental housing in non-apartment areas of Linden and the South Side
- Map of mortgage origination rates: basically an ethnic map of the area
- Map of households spending >30% income on housing: strong correlation with the “win-win” areas where you pay Columbus taxes but attend a suburban school district. This indicates that families are willing to financially burden themselves in order to get their kids to better schools.
- Maps of where median household income is changing vs where different ethnicity population levels are changing: If income is going up and that ethnicity’s population is decreasing, is that a sign of gentrification?
- Map of Opportunity Scores: proximity to jobs, transportation, schools: Compare this to where affordable housing is being built, and you’ll see that most isn’t being built in areas with lots of “opportunity”

The meeting wrapped up with these discussion questions:

- Was there anything that surprised you in the data above?
- Given that the data shows incomes and home prices are not the primary reason for segregation, why do you think segregation persists?
- What factors do you think are contributing to a tightening of housing affordability?

- What ideas do you have to improve fair housing awareness, education, and compliance?
- What solutions do you think would
 - reduce segregation?
 - expand opportunity?
 - reduce concentrations of poverty?
 - improve affordability and access to homeownership?
 - improve overall prosperity in Columbus?
- What do you think the City of Columbus could do to realize those solutions?
- What other factors (e.g. state policies, federal funding, private actions) might help or hinder your proposed solutions?

Committee responses:

Dranichak notes: Saw some houses where the house was for sale, but the land wasn't for sale. Curious thing. Possibly related to how some developers maintain deed-restricted affordability on those houses?

Dagefoerde: Comments on example of closing-cost/down-payment assistance.

Dagefoerde and Dranichak note that many rented properties are converting to sold.

Mentioned during the discussion of displacement was the PBS documentary "Flag Wars", about Near East Side of Columbus. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_Wars



Touch Base Meeting

NLAC Chair Carol Perkins and Zoning Committee Chair Ben Keith will meet on Friday, Mrch 13, at 10 a.m. with BZS, will report back.

There will also be a webinar for all area commissions and major civic associations on March 31 at 6:30 p.m.

Next phases of Zoning Code Update

The Zone In team will not attend the March NLAC meeting.

Zach Klein meeting

Mr. Wilkins took his wife Sarah to the meeting at Northern Lights meeting. Focus was on code officer talking about stuff demolished; Mr. Wilkins talked about effects of that demolition. He wants to focus on safety factor in this neighborhood. Complains about uneven sidewalks; broken slabs that pose a tripping hazard to to visually-impaired people. Complains about potholes.

Sarah: Sidewalk quality complaints.

Keith: Do you send those photos to 311?

Answer: Yes.

Wilkins: Recently boarded-up properties on Arlington Avenue. I'm curious why they're being boarded up instead of repaired. Want the City to have a voice of multiple-disability impaired people in housing development.

Keith: Suggests that Mr. Wilkins talks to Shannon Hardin's office, to advocate for this policy in the housing bond spending.

Crosswalk noisemakers: Sarah thinks they should say how much time is left.

Upcoming

As in the agenda.

Announcements

As in the agenda.

Closure

Keith moves to close; all in favor.