MINUTES OF THE
CREST HILL PLAN COMMISSION

The August 13, 2026, Plan Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Thomas, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the City Center, 20600 City Center Boulevard, Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

Roll call indicated the following present: Chairman Bill Thomas, Commissioner Ken Carroll, Commissioner Gordon Butler, Commissioner Marty Flynn, and Commissioner Jeff Peterson.

Also present were: Community Development Director Dan Ritter, and City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi.

Absent were: Commissioners John Stanton and Cheryl Slabozeski.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Chairman Thomas asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the Plan Commission meeting held on July 9, 2026, for Commission approval.

(#1) Motion by Commissioner Carroll seconded by Commissioner Butler, to approve the minutes from the Plan Commission meeting held on July 9, 2026.
On roll call, the vote was:
AYES: Commissioners Carroll, Butler, Peterson, Flynn, Chairman Thomas.
NAYES: None.
ABSTAIN: None.
ABSENT: Commissioners Stanton, Slabozeski.
There being five (5) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC HEARING: Chairman Bill Thomas presented the Public Hearing and Consideration of petitions Preliminary and Final Plat of Subdivision, SU-26-7-8-1, and V-26-6-8-1, a request of the City of Crest Hill seeking special approvals from the Crest Hill Subdivision, Zoning Ordinance, and City Code to subdivide the Subject Property into four (4) Lots; Special Use for an outdoor entertainment plaza and public park/ playground in the B-3 Business Service District; and Variations request from Table 2 Zoning Districts and Standards for non-residential uses in the B-3 Business Service District, and Section 8.3-8 Permitted Obstructions in Yards of the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance; located on the proposed 3.1 acre, B-3 Business Service District zoned property known as the City Center Plaza, at 20590-20660 City Center Boulevard, Crest Hill.

Chairman Bill Thomas asked if the paperwork was in order. City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi stated that the necessary paperwork was in order.

Chairman Thomas asked for a Motion to Open the Public Hearing for Preliminary and Final Plat of Subdivision, Case Numbers SU-26-7-8-1, and V-26-6-8-1.

(#2) Motion by Commissioner Peterson seconded by Commissioner Flynn, to open a public hearing case number SU-26-7-8-1, and V-26-6-8-1.
On roll call, the vote was:
AYES: Commissioners Peterson, Flynn, Carroll, Butler, Chairman Thomas.
NAYES: None.
ABSENT: Commissioners Slabozeski, Stanton.
There being five (5) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The Public Hearing was opened at 7:04 p.m.

Chairman Thomas stated that the subject of the hearing is to discuss the request from the City of Crest Hill for special use for an outdoor plaza and public park/ playground referred to as Crest Hill Commons for the property located at 20590-20660 City Center Boulevard. Chairman Thomas asked Community Development Director Dan Ritter to present the specifics on this case.

Community Development Director Ritter presented the request on behalf of the City of Crest Hill. He explained that the application encompasses three related components: a preliminary and final plat of subdivision, a special use permit for an outdoor entertainment plaza and public park/playground, and variations request necessitated by the unique nature of the proposed internal lot 4 configuration.

Director Ritter described the subject property as a 19.33-acre property currently zoned B-3 Business Service District, which includes the recently completed City Hall and Police Department complex (completed in 2023), and the vacant land to the north and west of the Municipal Complex. The proposed plaza will be located between the White Oak Public Library (constructed in 2013) and the City Hall. The property was part of the original Menards Subdivision platted in 2007, the commercial development of which has not materialized to the scale originally anticipated. Director Ritter noted that the site is geographically central to the community, making it a logical location for a civic gathering space.

The project has been formally named **Crest Hill Commons** by the City Council, and is intended to serve as a centralized, all-inclusive outdoor public plaza for the community — including walking paths, a music band shell/amphitheater, a playground, event space for markets and concerts, and related amenities. Director Ritter emphasized that the intent is to create a community gathering destination for residents in Crest Hill.

Regarding the plat of subdivision, Director Ritter explained that the single large parcel would be divided into four lots: Lot 1 (remaining undeveloped land to be planned in the future), Lot 2 (City Hall and Police Department), Lot 3 (the overall Crest Hill Commons plaza parcel), and Lot 4 (an internal lot to be transferred to the Lockport Township Park District for a public park/playground). An Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the Lockport Township Park District (Resolution #1250) is already in place. Director Ritter acknowledged that carving out an internal lot without traditional frontage or setbacks is atypical, but is justified given that both owners are public entities and the arrangement is intended to be permanent, with appropriate easements in place.

The requested variations relate primarily to Lot 4 (proposed public park/playground), which — as an interior lot — does not conform to the standard B-3 zoning requirements for lot area, lot coverage, and setbacks, and variations from Section 8.3-8 Permitted Obstructions in Yards, of the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance that allow open fencing to be located in required front and side yard setbacks and recreational structures and accessory structures in required front, side, and rear yard setbacks on all lots. Director Ritter noted that staff does not recommend specific conditions for approval given that the applicant is the City of Crest Hill itself.

Director Ritter outlined a phased construction schedule. Phase 1, for which the City Council provided preliminary direction on Monday, August 10, 2026, includes grading, underground utilities, concrete flatwork, and parking lot construction on the southern portion of the site. Subsequent phases would add irrigation, pedestrian lighting, pathways, landscaping, the playground equipment installation, and ultimately the plaza structures and shelters. The goal is to complete sufficient site work in the current season (2026) to establish ground cover, enabling use of the site as early as the following year (2027).

Director Ritter also noted that the Lot 1 parcel and adjacent commercial out-lots to the west along Weber Road would be subject to future sub-area planning as part of the City's comprehensive plan, which is nearing completion. The City is also currently working on a bike/pedestrian path plan. In the interim, Lot 1 can serve as supplemental parking for large events, and Menards has previously cooperated in making its parking lot available for public events.

No members of the public came forward to comment.

Chairman Thomas asked for a motion to close the public hearing.

(#3) Motion by Commissioner Peterson seconded by Commissioner Butler, to close the Public Hearing case number SU-26-7-8-1, and V-26-6-8-1.
On roll call, the vote was:
AYES: Commissioners Peterson, Butler, Carroll, Flynn, Chairman Thomas.
NAYES: None.
ABSENT: Commissioners Stanton, Slabozeski.
There being five (5) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:31 p.m.

Chairman Bill Thomas stated that he was excited about this project. He has been driving around, looking at places, and looking over the paperwork. Chairman Thomas shared observations from his visits to Brent Hassert Park, which he found impressive in its amenities, but noted that on recent visits the facility appeared unoccupied. He raised the question of whether the community needs another playground given the proximity of that regional facility, and suggested that a marketplace or vendor stall concept — similar to developments he observed in Batavia — might yield a more immediate community benefit as a first priority.

Chairman Thomas also emphasized the importance of vehicle barrier protections — such as knee walls and bollards — at all pedestrian access points throughout the Public Plaza, referencing incidents of vehicle intrusion at other public spaces in the region.

Director Ritter clarified that the playground is not part of Phase 1 and would be installed in a later phase alongside the pathway system, power infrastructure, and event amenities. He explained that the playground's inclusion is intended to make the space family-friendly — particularly during events such as markets, concerts, and movies — and that the Lockport Township Park District's involvement has been specifically aimed at avoiding duplication of Hassert Park's regional-scale features. The Crest Hill Commons playground is envisioned as a complementary, event-supportive amenity rather than a destination park.

Director Ritter confirmed that the current plan incorporates knee seat walls along the front of the plaza facing City Center Blvd., serving both as seating, aesthetic elements, and vehicle barriers, with defined entrance points that could also allow the space to be fenced off for ticketed events if desired.

Commissioner Peterson expressed support for including the playground, noting that providing a child-friendly space is among the first considerations for families attending events.

Chairman Bill Thomas asked for a motion to approve petitions Preliminary and Final Plat of Subdivision, SU-26-7-8-1, and V-26-6-8-1.

(#4) Motion by Commissioner Carroll seconded by Commissioner Flynn, to recommend to the City Council the conditional Approval of the petitions Preliminary and Final Plat of Subdivision, SU-26-7-8-1, and V-26-6-8-1.
On roll call, the vote was:
AYES: Commissioners Carroll, Flynn, Butler, Peterson, Chairman Thomas.
NAYES: None.
ABSENT: Commissioners Slabozeski, Stanton.
There being five (5) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The Plan Commission recommends City Council's conditional approval of the Preliminary and Final Plat of Subdivisions to subdivide the subject property into four (4) lots; a Special Use for an outdoor entertainment plaza and public park/ playground known as Crest Hill Commons in the B-3 Business Service District, multiple variations from Table 2, Zoning Districts and Standards for Non-Residential uses in the B-3 Business Service District, and Section 8.3-8 Permitted Obstructions in Yards of the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance; subject to the project being implemented in substantial conformance with the application documents referenced in the August 13, 2026, Plan Commission Staff Report for petitions for Preliminary and Final Plat of Subdivisions Case # SU-26-7-8-1, and Case # V-26-6-8-1.

This recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council; keep in mind that the Plan Commission is a recommendation body only. The City Council will tentatively hear this case at the August 24, 2026, Workshop and the September 8, 2026, City Council meeting for final consideration.

Chairman Bill Thomas presented the Public Hearing and Consideration of petition TXT-26-1-8-1, a request of the City of Crest Hill seeking approval of text amendments to Chapter 15.12 Sign Code of the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances.

Chairman Bill Thomas asked if the paperwork was in order. City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi stated that the necessary paperwork was in order.

Chairman Thomas asked for a Motion to Open the Public Hearing for petition TXT-26-1-8-1.

(#5) Motion by Commissioner Peterson seconded by Commissioner Butler, to open a Public Hearing and Consideration of petition TXT-26-1-8-1.
On roll call, the vote was:
AYES: Commissioners Peterson, Butler, Carroll, Flynn, Chairman Thomas.
NAYES: None.
ABSENT: Commissioners Stanton, Slabozeski.
There being five (5) affirmative votes. The MOTION CARRIED.

The Public Hearing was opened at 7:45 p.m.

Chairman Thomas stated that the subject of this hearing is to discuss the proposed Text Amendments to Chapter 15.12 Sign Code to update and modernize the current Sign Code regulations. This topic was reviewed at length in the July 9th, 2026, Plan Commission meeting and City Staff is now ready to make their recommendations. Chairman Thomas asked City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi to present the specifics on this case.

City Planner Ghaznawi noted that the proposed text amendments to Chapter 15.12 of the Sign Code had been presented in detail at the July 9, 2026, Plan Commission meeting. The substance of the amendments has remained largely consistent, with one modification made in direct response to Commission feedback from the prior meeting.

The sole change from the previously presented version concerns the proposed maximum wall sign area. The existing Sign Code permits wall signs up to 15% of the total wall area of a tenant space/ building — a standard City Planner Ghaznawi and Director Ritter described as difficult to calculate consistently by the sign contractors and the City Staff. The July proposal replaced the current requirement with a ratio of 1.5 square feet of sign area per linear foot of store frontage. In response to the Plan Commission's recommendation that this ratio was insufficiently permissive for visibility, the revised proposal increases this ratio to 2.0 square feet of sign area per linear foot of store frontage, which staff characterized as a reasonable middle ground between the prior two requirements.

Director Ritter emphasized that the overall intent of the proposed text amendments is twofold: to improve the aesthetic quality and design standards of signage along the City's commercial corridors and the community overall, and to simplify and clarify the regulations for both applicants and staff. He noted that the percentage-of-wall-area standard is uncommon among peer communities and creates calculation burdens, while the linear footage approach requires only a tape measure. Director Ritter acknowledged that no code could anticipate every circumstance and committed to returning to the Plan Commission with further adjustments if real-world application reveals any unintended outcomes or challenges.

Chairman Thomas inquired about the Plan Commission concern about the brightness of signs and if applicable provisions were added in the updated Sign Code. City Planner Ghaznawi confirmed that provisions addressing the brightness of electronic, digital, and LED signs have been incorporated by reference to the performance standards of the Zoning Ordinance (Section 8.5) and applicable electrical codes, in response to the Plan Commission's request from the prior meeting.

Chairman Thomas acknowledged the improvements reflected in the revised proposal and noted the timeliness of updated sign regulations given emerging development activity along the Weber Road corridor (from Caton Farm Road to Renwick Road) and the Broadway corridor, where new sign standards would apply to incoming businesses and could influence reinvestment by existing businesses.

No members of the public came forward to comment.

Chairman Thomas asked for a motion to close the public hearing for Case # TXT-26-1-8-1.

(#6) Motion by Commissioner Flynn seconded by Commissioner Carroll, to close the Public Hearing case number TXT-26-1-8-1.
On roll call, the vote was:
AYES: Commissioners Flynn, Carroll, Butler, Peterson, Chairman Thomas.
NAYES: None.
ABSENT: Commissioners Stanton, Slabozeski.
There being five (5) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:55 p.m.

Chairman Bill Thomas asked for a motion to approve the requests of the City of Crest Hill for approval of text amendments to Chapter 15.12 of the Sign Code of the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances Case # TXT-26-1-8-1.

(#7) Motion by Commissioner Peterson seconded by Commissioner Butler, to approve the requests of the City of Crest Hill for approval for text amendments to Chapter 15.12 of the Sign Code of the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances Case # TXT-26-1-8-1.
On roll call, the vote was:
AYES: Commissioners Peterson, Butler, Carroll, Flynn, Chairman Thomas.
NAYES: None.
ABSENT: Commissioners Stanton, Slabozeski.
There being five (5) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The Plan Commission recommends City Council's approval of the proposed text amendments to Chapter 15.12 Sign Code of the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances, subject to the proposed text amendments being implemented in substantial conformance with the application documents referenced in the August 13, 2026, Plan Commission Staff Report for Case # TXT-26-1-8-1.

Our Recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council; keep in mind that the Plan Commission is a recommendation body only. The City Council will tentatively hear this case at the August 24, 2026, Workshop and the September 8, 2026, City Council meeting for final consideration.

OTHER BUSINESS: Director Ritter provided the following updates to the Plan Commission:
Hillcrest Shopping Center — New Tenants: Two new businesses are preparing to open at Hillcrest Shopping Center. (1701 N Larkin Ave, #800D) Swig Drinks, a specialty beverage concept and the first Illinois location of the brand, will be occupying the former Smoothie King space and is in the soft-opening and staff training phase, with a grand opening event planned. The business operates under the existing special use approval previously granted for that drive-through location. Additionally, Acapulco Bakery, a local area bakery with an existing location in Shorewood, will be opening a second location in the same shopping center (1701 N Larkin Ave, #600). Director Ritter noted that the shopping center ownership has also made recent investments in property maintenance, including repainting, signage repairs, and parking lot repaving at the Route 30 entrance.
Seasons at Crest Hill (Apartment Complex): Director Ritter reported that the building permit for this development is on the verge of issuance, potentially as soon as the following day, and that site work is expected to commence shortly.
QuikTrip (Former City Hall): The QuikTrip project is awaiting a final disconnect approval from ComEd, after which the former City Hall structure will be demolished, and underground utility work will commence under the previously approved permit.
GIS Consortium: The City is transitioning its geographic information system services to the GIS Consortium, a cooperative serving approximately 60 Chicagoland communities. This will provide both public-facing tools — including interactive maps for zoning, taxing districts, and utility information — and internal staff tools for more accurate data and improved operational decision-making. The transition is expected to be complete with a public website launch anticipated around mid-September.
Building Inspector Recruitment: The Community Development Department is actively recruiting a new building inspector, with interviews anticipated to start within the next one to two weeks. Director Ritter noted that code enforcement and property maintenance will be a significant focus for the new hire, particularly in the City's older residential and commercial areas.
City Website Redesign and Domain Transition: The City's website is being redesigned with a modernized layout and will transition from the cityofcresthill.com domain to **cresthill.gov**, consistent with security best practices for local governments. The existing domain will redirect to the new address for at least six months. New business cards and updated contact information for staff and officials will follow.
1693 Plainfield Road (Former HOBO/Handy Andy Site): Director Ritter reported that the property owner is advancing a plan to demolish the majority of the existing building — retaining only the O'Reilly Auto Parts portion — and redevelop the remainder of the site into approximately three commercial out-lots along Plainfield Road. Director Ritter indicated there is active interest in at least two of the proposed out-lots. This redevelopment will require a Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning process and will come before the Plan Commission at a future meeting.
September Plan Commission Agenda: Director Ritter advised that the September meeting will include three redevelopment-related special use cases, primarily involving properties along the Route 30 and Broadway corridors, as well as a general discussion of updates to permitted and

prohibited uses in the zoning ordinance. Topics for the use discussion will include the potential prohibition of data centers, uses that may be overrepresented in the community, and areas where current regulations may be unnecessarily restrictive.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

There being no further business before the Commission, a motion for adjournment was in order.

(#8) Motion by Commissioner Carroll seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to adjourn the August 13, 2026, Plan Commission meeting.
On roll call, the vote was:
AYES: Commissioners Carroll, Peterson, Butler, Flynn, Chairman Thomas.
NAYES: None.
ABSENT: Commissioners Stanton, Slabozeski.
There being five (5) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

As approved this 10 th day of September, 2026.
As presented X
As amended_______

Bill Thomas

BILL THOMAS, COMMISSION CHAIRMAN