



MINUTES
CITY OF ROCHELLE
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Monday, June 01, 2026 at 6:00 PM

City of Rochelle Council Chambers—420 North 6th Street, Rochelle, IL 61068

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Present were Commissioners Bowerman, Charnock, Hickey, McKibben, Myers, Tenggren and Wolter. Absent: None. Also present were Michelle Knight, Michelle Pease, Geoff Starr, Mayor Bearrows and City Attorney Dominic Lanzito.
- III. **APPROVE/ACCEPT MINUTES:** Myers moved, seconded by Charnock, **"I move the minutes of the March 2, 2026 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting as presented be approved."** Ayes: Bowerman, Charnock, Hickey, McKibben, Myers, Tenggren and Wolter. Nays: None. Motion carried 7-0.
- IV. **PUBLIC COMMENTARY:** Mayor Bearrows informed the Commissioners that Russ Barber resigned as an at-large member of the Planning and Zoning Commission and there are two available seats.
- V. **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:** None
- VI. **BUSINESS ITEMS:** PZC-02-26 Petition of Wheatland Tube, LLC for a proposed Variance of Code for a fabric covered hoop structure for the property located at 1600 Ritchie Court. Pease stated that a notice was published in the paper and property owners were notified. Motion made by Bowerman, seconded by Hickey, **"I move the Planning and Zoning Commission open the Public Hearing regarding the proposed variance of code for a fabric covered hoop structure for the property located at 1600 Ritchie Court."** Ayes: Bowerman, Charnock, Hickey, McKibben, Myers, Tenggren and Wolter. Nays: None. Motion carried 7-0. Chairman Wolter requested public testimony be sworn for those who were speaking. The petitioner is seeking a variance of Section 104.11 of the 2021 International Building Code as amended and adopted by the City of Rochelle. Section 104.11 of the 2021 IBC reads as follows:
"[A] 104.11 Alternative materials, design and methods of construction and equipment.
The provisions of this code are not intended to prevent the installation of any material or to prohibit any design or method of construction not specifically prescribed by this code, provided that any such alternative has been approved. An alternative material design method of construction shall be approved when the Building Official finds that the proposed alternative meets all of the following:
1. The alternative material, design or method of construction is satisfactory and complies with the intended provisions of this code,
 2. The material, method or work offered is, for the purpose intended, not less than the equivalent of that prescribed in this code as it pertains to the following:
 - 2.1. Quality.
 - 2.2. Strength
 - 2.3. Effectiveness.
 - 2.4. Fire Resistance.
 - 2.5. Durability.
 - 2.6. Safety.

Where the alternative material, design or method of construction is not approved, the Building Official shall respond in writing, stating the reasons why the alternative was not approved." The variance request is to replace "the Building Official" as it appears in Section 104.11 with "the City Council". The purpose of requesting a variance is to allow the petitioner to construct a proposed 33,000 square foot fabric-covered hoop structure. The fully enclosed structure will be forty-eight (48) feet tall, one hundred ten (110) feet wide, and two hundred ninety-one and one half foot (291.5) long. The intended use of the proposed fabric building is a drive-through loading area for trucks to load finished goods. The operation runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with approximately 50 employees working in this area across 3 shifts. The property is zoned I2, General Industry and is 34.9 acres.

The petitioner explains their practical difficulties or exceptional hardships by stating: "If the proposed 33,000 square foot structure adhered to the strict application of the codes referenced, the structure would then significantly hinder the facility's ability to grow, shrink, and adapt to the frequently changing needs of the operation of the facility. A structure conforming to a traditional prescriptive construction type as defined in Section 602 of the IBC would result in an unwise allocation of very limited resources given the intended use of the proposed fabric-covered hoop structure. The fabric-covered hoop building adheres to the requirements set forth by section 104.11 of the IBC for alternative materials, design and methods of construction and equipment therefore a hardship is created if the proposed building were required to adhere to strict application of the reference sections even though the building meets the required design standards. Practical difficulties that would be experienced from strict application of the referenced codes include vastly increased facility downtime due to construction duration and material lead times." The petitioner provided structural design which met the required 30-pound snow load, anchoring and additional requirements set forth by the code. Attorney Lanzito provided a brief history of the development agreement with the petitioner. Mack Llanas with Fehr Graham was present to represent the petitioner, Wheatland Tube. Mr. Llanas explained the intended use of the covered structure was to keep the finished product out of the weather and for tarping trucks. He stated that a traditional built building would be above and beyond what is needed for the use of the building, also stating that the downtime and lead time for a traditional building would hinder productivity. Commissioner Hickey questioned the petitioner's statement that if they were to strictly adhere to the codes, "the structure would then significantly hinder the facility's ability to grow, shrink and adapt to the frequently changing needs of the operation of the facility." Mr. Llanas's explained that the proposed structure could absorb a change in production and there is an immediate need. Commissioner Tenggren inquired about the distance between the proposed hoop structure and the current building, expressing concerns with water runoff and more specifically snow and ice collection. Mr. Llanas stated that there will be a drainage system that will drain to the storm water detention. Building Official Starr stated that smaller canopy type covers will be between the large canopy structure and the existing building. Commissioner Bowerman and Commissioner Tenggren asked about the number of bollards and expressed concern about the safety of the structure should a forklift of semi hit the structure. Commissioner Tenggren asked about the Fire Department and safety precautions. Mr. Llanas stated that a fire lane is required and he assured the Commission that a dry fire suppression system will be installed. Commissioner Wolter asked if there were any other public who wished to speak or testify. There were none. Motion made by Bowerman, seconded by Charnock, **"I move the Planning and Zoning Commission close the Public Hearing."** Ayes: Bowerman, Charnock, Hickey, McKibben, Myers, Tenggren and Wolter. Nays: None. Motion carried. 7-0.

Findings:

1. Is the proposed variance in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning ordinance?
Yes: 6 No: 1
Explanation: **Petitioner has not demonstrated a true hardship other than a financial burden.**
2. The plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances and thus strict enforcement of the zoning ordinance would result in practical difficulties, or impose exceptional hardships, due to the special and unusual conditions that are not generally found on other properties in the same zoning district?
Yes: 5 No: 2
Explanation: **The ability to "grow, shrink and adapt" was not addressed.**
3. The property cannot yield a reasonable return if permitted only under the conditions allowed by the zoning ordinance?
Yes: 4 No: 3
Explanation: **Financial burden is not enough of a reason.**
4. Is the proposed variance detrimental or dangerous to public health?
Yes: 1 No: 6
Explanation: **Concern regarding bollard design & spacing – not enough info., possible bldg.. collapse.**
5. Will the proposed variance impair property value in the neighborhood?
Yes: _____ No: 7
Explanation: _____
6. Will the proposed variance impede the normal development of the surrounding properties?
Yes: _____ No: 7
Explanation: _____
7. Will the proposed variance:

- (a) impair light and air to adjacent property;
- (b) congest public streets;
- (c) increase the risk of fire;
- (d) substantially diminish property values within the vicinity; or
- (e) endanger the public health?

Yes: _____ No: 7

Explanation: _____

Based on the findings above, the Planning and Zoning Commission hereby recommends to the Rochelle City Council that the Petitioner be granted a variance for the Subject Property, with the following conditions attached thereto, in addition to the requirements of the Rochelle Municipal Code:

The Location and size of all bollards to be approved, signed and sealed by a structural engineer.

Motion made by Myers, seconded by McKibben, **“I move the Planning and Zoning Commission recommend to the City Council that it Approve the proposed variance of code for a fabric covered hoop structure for the property located at 1600 Ritchie Court, based on the report of findings.”** Ayes: Bowerman, Charnock, Hickey, McKibben, Myers, Tenggren and Wolter. Nays: None. Motion carried. 7-0.

VII. DISCUSSION ITEMS: None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: Motion made by Bowerman, seconded by Charnock, **“I move to adjourn the regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission of June 1, 2026.”** Motion carried by voice vote 7-0. The Planning and Zoning Commission adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Michelle Knight
Community Development Specialist