
CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Poss called the regular meeting of the Lenexa Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, February 2, 2026. The meeting was held in the Community Forum at Lenexa City Hall at 17101 W. 87th Street Parkway, Lenexa, Kansas.

ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Chairman Chris Poss
Vice-Chairman Mike Burson
Commissioner Sunny Dharod
Commissioner Ben Harber
Commissioner Don Horine
Commissioner Jermaine Jamison
Commissioner Curt Katterhenry
Commissioner Cara Wagner
Commissioner David Woolf

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Scott McCullough, Director of Community Development
Stephanie Sullivan, Planning Manager
Tim Collins, Engineering/Construction Services Administrator
Andrew Diekemper, Assistant Chief – Fire Prevention
Steven Shrout, Assistant City Attorney
Dave Dalecky, Planner II
Jessica Lemanski, Planner II
James Molloy, Planner II
Noah Vaughan, Planning Specialist I
Gloria Lambert, Senior Administrative Assistant
Kyle Glazer, Economic Development Analyst

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 5, 2026 meeting were presented for approval. Hearing no changes or corrections to the minutes of the regular meeting, Chairman Poss entertained a motion to **APPROVE** the minutes as written. Moved by Commissioner Jamison, seconded by Commissioner Burson, and **APPROVED** by a majority voice vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **Request to continue to the March 2, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting: Lenexa Logistics Centre North Lot 9 — Consideration of a final plan for a new industrial building located west of Renner Boulevard at approximately 108th Street within the BP-2, Planned Manufacturing District. PL25-20F**
2. **Cherry Lane Lot 13A — Consideration of a final plat to combine parcels under common ownership at property located at 9560 Cherry Lane within the RE, Residential Estate District. PT26-09F**
3. **Stoneridge North, Third Plat — Consideration of a revised final plat for a single-family residential development on property located near the northwest corner of 83rd Street & Cedar Niles Road within the RP-1, Planned Residential (Low-Density) District. PT26-01FR**

Chairman Poss entertained a motion to **APPROVE** the Consent Agenda. Moved by Commissioner Burson, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, and carried by a unanimous voice vote.

REGULAR AGENDA

4. **Clear Creek Subdivision — Consideration of a rezoning and preliminary plan/plat for a single-family residential neighborhood located near the southeast corner of 86th Terrace and Clare Road. (Public Hearing)**
 - a. **Consideration of a rezoning from the AG, Agricultural District to the RP-1, Planned Residential (Low Density) District to allow a single-family residential neighborhood. RZ26-01**
 - b. **Consideration of a preliminary plan/plat for a single-family residential neighborhood in the RP-1, Planned Residential (Low-Density) District. PT26-01P**

APPLICANT PRESENTATION

Lindsay Hicks, president and CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Kansas City, presented a proposal for The Highlands at Clear Creek, a planned 50-home single-family neighborhood on nearly 17 acres off Clare Road. The development would include trail connections, pickleball and basketball courts, a playground, fencing, and landscape buffers, and would be rezoned to RP-1, Planned Residential (Low Density) District with a Class D subdivision that aligns with the Comprehensive Plan and surrounding community. Habitat plans to partner with two experienced local for-profit builders, Tommy Bickimer and Andy Homoly, and will pay all required development fees, totaling more than \$1.8 million. The proposed homes would range from 1,300 to 2,000 square feet and include multiple floor plans, Energy Star 3.1 efficiency, two-car garages, and outdoor living spaces on lots of at least 7,560 square feet. The neighborhood would operate under Habitat's Community Land Trust model, in which homeowners own their homes while the land is held by the trust under a 99-year ground lease to ensure long-term affordability. Home appreciation would be capped, Habitat would provide zero-interest 30-year mortgages serviced in-house, and housing costs would not exceed 30 percent of household income. The Land Trust would function similarly to a Homeowners Association (HOA), maintaining common areas, enforcing standards, and ensuring compliance with lease terms. The project would undergo a comprehensive environmental assessment of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and be built in phases over a five-to-six-year period. Habitat conducted multiple community engagement activities and outlined a rigorous homebuyer eligibility and counseling process to ensure financial stability and neighborhood fit. The presentation emphasized the growing need for affordable and attainable housing in Johnson County due to rising

home values and rents, positioning the project as a way to help working families achieve sustainable homeownership within the community. Ms. Hicks concluded by thanking the Board for the opportunity to present more detailed information about the project.

STAFF PRESENTATION

Community Development Director Scott McCullough presented Staff's analysis and findings regarding the rezoning and preliminary plat applications for the Clear Creek subdivision, also known as The Highlands at Clear Creek. He explained that the site, located near 86th Terrace and Clare Road, has a long history of planned development dating back to its annexation in 1986, with portions later acquired by the City for parkland and a regional stormwater facility. From the outset, excess land beyond park and stormwater needs was intended for private development, and no parkland or wetlands would be removed by the current proposal. Mr. McCullough noted that extensive planning has already occurred in the area, including infrastructure construction, trail connections, and alignment with the City's long-term vision for development pods surrounding the wetlands and future Centennial Park. He addressed concerns related to a recent sales tax vote, stating that City materials clearly showed which areas were intended for park use and which were planned for development, and that voters were not misled. He emphasized that the proposed 50-lot subdivision on approximately 17 acres is consistent with past planning efforts and reflects a lower density than originally envisioned. In reviewing the rezoning criteria, Mr. McCullough stated that the proposed RP-1, Planned Residential (Low-Density) District aligns with surrounding residential uses, is suitable given the area's transition from agricultural to suburban development and would not create detrimental impacts beyond those typical of single-family neighborhoods. He explained that utilities and infrastructure are available, traffic impacts are within the capacity of Clare Road, and a traffic study is not required because the project aligns with the Comprehensive Plan. Environmental concerns, including wetlands and threatened species, are not expected to be impacted, and stormwater will be managed by the City's existing regional system. Mr. McCullough concluded that the project conforms to the City's Comprehensive Plan, Vision 2040 plan, and parks and recreation master plan, all of which call for a diversity of housing types and recognize the need for attainable and affordable housing. Staff determined that denying the application would provide minimal public benefit while preventing realization of long-standing City plans and the applicant's housing mission, and therefore recommended approval of the rezoning and plat.

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Poss **OPENED** the Public Hearing and asked if anyone wished to speak on this item.

Sharon Lab, a resident of Lenexa who lives in the Timbers neighborhood, spoke in opposition to the proposal, stating that she does not want to see the park eliminated. She said the plan would "cram in a lot of houses in a small space," a contrast she found clear when compared to surrounding developments. She explained that when she and her family moved to the Timbers subdivision four years ago, they were drawn to the neighborhood's openness and reduced congestion, as well as the park and the ability to take bike rides through quieter areas. Ms. Lab acknowledged that she expected future development because her home backs up to undeveloped land but said she "didn't think it would look like this." She referenced the City's Comprehensive Plan, quoting its call to balance growth with "preserving the character of the City's established neighborhoods" and its goals of maintaining a high quality of life, creating complete neighborhoods, and building a unified sense of community and local identity. She stated that she does not believe this project meets those goals or promotes preserving "the integrity and character of our neighborhood community." She expressed concern that the proposal focuses on meeting "the minimum and oftentimes below the minimum standards," noting that front setbacks are reduced on 100 percent of the lots and side setbacks on approximately 90 percent. Ms. Lab pointed out inconsistencies between the written packet and the presentation, stating that the packet described one-and-a-half-story homes of 1,800 to 2,200 square feet, while other examples showed a first level of 1,152 square feet with a much smaller second level, which she described as "a loft on top of a one-story house."

She argued that this design allows more houses to fit on smaller lots and does not reflect the established character of nearby neighborhoods such as the Timbers, Arbor Lakes, and Clear Creek. Ms. Lab emphasized that surrounding developments are generally more open, with a mix of lot sizes ranging from minimum lots to 10,000 square feet, three-quarters of an acre, or more, and with many homes exceeding average size expectations. She concluded by saying she would not support a development of this nature, stressing that evaluating a plan involves more than meeting minimum numerical requirements, and asked the Planning Commissioners to reject the proposal in order to save the integrity and character of the community in Western Lenexa.

Scott Murray, a Lenexa resident since January 2000, spoke in opposition to the proposal and thanked the council for the opportunity to be heard. He explained that one of the main reasons he moved to Lenexa was the City's "open style," describing it as a community that did not focus on "how much we can cram into a small area for more dollars." He stated that this openness was a defining feature of Lenexa and that the current proposal does not align with that character. Mr. Murray argued that the development appears to be "just made to fit," with the design adjusted to force development onto a site that is not appropriate rather than selecting a site suitable for the development. He expressed concern that the plan relies on reduced spacing between homes, noting that setbacks would be decreased from approximately 70 feet to 62 feet, or "four feet on each side of each and every house." While that reduction may sound minor, he said it "makes a big difference in what the community comes out like." He added that he and his family live in the Timbers area and chose far West Lenexa specifically because of its openness, which they value deeply. Murray concluded by stating that this proposal represents the first serious attempt he has seen to change that character, suggesting it is being done primarily "to try to sell some land," rather than to preserve the qualities that originally drew residents to the area.

Jana LeBlanc, a resident of Clear Creek Estates who can see Parcel A from her front door, spoke in opposition to the proposed rezoning, disputing the finding that denying the application would not enhance the "health, safety, and welfare of current residents." She stated that this may have been true "before COVID," but emphasized that "it is not true now." She described the park and wetlands as essential to residents' well-being, calling it "heaven on Earth" in 2020 and stressing that it is "no longer 2018 when the plans to pilfer our park were drawn up behind our backs." Ms. LeBlanc explained that residents did not move west of K-7 for "30-minute rush-hour commutes," but for "the land, the exurban experience." She described how the wetlands support butterflies and bees that allow her garden and fruit trees to flourish and said she has seen "at least ten different mammals" in her backyard because of the existing ecosystem. She also noted that she bought her bike specifically to ride the trails through the wetlands. She referenced the park's appearance on the March 2025 cover of *Lenexa Town Topic*, which promoted "wide winding trails," "great wildlife spotting opportunities," and a "nature-focused destination," imagery she said helped secure public support for a sales tax. In contrast, she asked, "Where's the nature?" pointing out that current City drawings show it replaced by backyards and parking lots, leaving residents to "walk through backyards and parking lots to get what little is left of our park." Ms. LeBlanc warned that approving the rezoning would harm residents' mental health and quality of life, citing "five to seven years of construction noise, dust, debris, and traffic." She said homeowners are already selling at a loss and urged officials not to forget her comments "when the foundations of these houses start cracking," as she claims has already occurred in nearby developments.

Mary Leuszler addressed the Planning Commission to express concerns and opposition about the proposed Habitat for Humanity project on Clare Road, stating that she lives within a half mile of this project and emphasizing that she is a nearby resident. While affirming that she supports "helping families in need," she said the proposed location raises "serious questions that have not yet been adequately addressed." She questioned, "Who will be responsible for long-term maintenance, things like roofs, paint, and major repairs?" She also asked whether homeowners would have full ownership and accountability or whether "the city and taxpayers will be expected to step in over time," and what would happen if maintenance expectations were not met, "do they get kicked out or does that home remain an eyesore?"

Ms. Leuszler raised concerns about increased traffic, parking, and neighborhood impacts on Clare Road, asking, "What covenants will they have? Will cars line the streets? What will fences look like?" She also questioned how the homes backing up to what remains of the park would affect the area, asking about "what kind of lighting will they have" and "what kind of dogs will they have." She expressed concern about transportation access, noting that the area is not on a bus route and asking, "without access to reliable transportation, how will residents realistically get to work?" She also cited potential impacts on schools, referencing "more than 80 new homes proposed in the different phases." Additionally, Ms. Leuszler raised questions about transparency and fairness in how families are selected for the homes, particularly those "lining the park," asking who would "get access to those beautiful lots." She stressed that "transparency is important" and that residents deserve assurance the process is fair and "not influenced by politics or connections." In closing, she asked the Board to reconsider whether this is the best location for the project, suggesting areas closer to job centers, existing apartments, and transit. She noted that Lenexa already has low-income housing options nearby and said that many residents "have worked our entire lives to afford our homes," expressing concern about long-term impacts on neighborhood character and property values.

Dan Wilkus, a resident of the Timbers Subdivision in Lenexa, spoke in opposition to the proposed development and identified himself as a licensed professional engineer in Kansas with more than 35 years of experience working with local, state, and federal agencies. He referenced his January 28 comment letter and stated that his remarks were based on the established "golden criteria" used to evaluate rezoning requests. Mr. Wilkus focused first on the potential detrimental effects on nearby property values. He cited a Duke University study that found evidence that neighborhood housing values decrease in the vicinity of low-income, government-subsidized community land trust developments, noting that the impact is "more significant in high-cost housing markets," which he said applies to the subdivisions adjacent to the proposed development. He challenged the applicant's claim that homes within the development should not be considered when appraising surrounding properties, arguing that if that were true, City staff would have stated unequivocally that "this development will not impact nearby home values." Instead, he said the Staff Report implies that "our property values will be negatively affected, and the City is aware of this." He then addressed public health, safety, and welfare, stating that denial of the application would be beneficial due to pending state legislation and the low appraised values of the proposed homes. Mr. Wilkus said the development is expected to contribute "little or nothing to property taxes," meaning Lenexa taxpayers, who he noted already pay some of the highest rates in the county, would be responsible for "covering the gap." He also criticized the Staff Report for not showing the full Phase One plat of the Timbers at Clear Creek, saying it makes the development appear farther away than it actually is. In reality, he stated, Phase One land runs "directly across the street" from the proposed site, and he asked the Board to consider requiring a minimum C dwelling classification for the project. Mr. Wilkus raised safety concerns related to smaller lots, shorter driveways, and increased street parking, stating that these conditions raise risks for pedestrians, "especially children," due to reduced visibility. He added that clustering of cars near City parkland could negatively affect the area's appearance. In closing, he argued that denial of the rezoning would result in only "limited financial impact to the landowner" while providing "significant community benefits," including preservation of potential parkland. He requested that the application be rejected, stating that the public health, safety, and welfare benefits, along with the detrimental effects on nearby property owners, "substantially outweigh any minimal adverse effects to the landowner."

William Ward, a long-time Lenexa resident who has lived in the city part-time since 1973 and full-time since 1978, spoke in support of the Habitat for Humanity project. He explained that he has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity for over 20 years, primarily in construction and reconstruction work, and that he also volunteered at the Lenexa and Martin City Restores. Before retiring in 2014, he volunteered most Saturdays, and he now volunteers three days a week. He has worked on Habitat houses throughout the Kansas City area, including Kansas City Missouri, Kansas City Kansas, and now Olathe, and said he has seen "firsthand the positive impact that Habitat can make." Mr. Ward expressed enthusiasm about

Lenexa's long-range goal to encourage affordable housing, calling it a priority that he believes has been "largely overlooked" in past, present, and proposed developments. He noted that affordable housing is a goal in Lenexa's Vision 2020 plan and has been echoed in subsequent Vision 2030 and 2040 documents, and he said that those plans ultimately support "single family affordability and starter homes," which he said is exactly what Habitat aims to provide. He acknowledged the opposition he has heard regarding the Clear Creek project and suggested that some residents "may not understand what affordable housing looks like," especially based on the plans and renderings. He encouraged the commission to visit Habitat's current 14-house development in Olathe to see an example, noting that they have "six houses under roof" and "three houses completed," with the first new owner moving in within the next week. Mr. Ward concluded by urging the Planning Commission to approve Habitat's Clear Creek project.

Dave Pack, a resident of the Colony Woods subdivision who has lived in his home for 35 years, spoke in support of the Habitat Humanity project and as the official spokesperson for the Good Faith Network, a coalition of congregations and neighbors advocating for value-driven solutions to Johnson County's housing crisis. He commended the City of Lenexa for considering the Habitat for Humanity project and urged the Planning Commission to approve the application. Mr. Pack stated plainly that "affordable housing does not appear by accident" and noted that while the market has produced many luxury units, it has not created homes that working families can reasonably buy. He explained that projects like this only happen when public leaders choose to use "public tools, land partnerships, and investment" to create outcomes, because the private market "will not deliver on its own." He emphasized that public dollars are not a giveaway but rather "a community decision to solve a community problem." He also highlighted that the Habitat development is designed to last because the homes will be placed in a community land trust, which he said ensures that affordability is not just a "one-time benefit for the first buyer." He explained that the land trust structure protects affordability "in perpetuity," so public and philanthropic investment continues to benefit future families. He described this as "stewardship." Mr. Pack further emphasized the workforce reality in Johnson County, citing data that about 45% of people who work in the county live outside it because they cannot afford to live where they work. He warned that when teachers, nurses, city employees, and service workers are pushed farther away, everyone pays the price in traffic, turnover, and weaker community ties. He concluded by urging the commission to "stay the course," trust the process, and approve the Habitat for Humanity application.

Renee Loya, who has lived in Lenexa for over 30 years, spoke in support of the Habitat for Humanity application as a member of the Good Faith Network. She urged the commission to be honest about the forces shaping public conversation, noting that opposition to the project often presents itself as concern for the environment, green space, wetlands, and planning standards, values many residents share. However, she said there is a "private campaign" organizing opposition through a Facebook group called *Neighbors Against Habitat for Humanity Lenexa*, which she said uses "a very different tone" than the public messaging. She also noted that similar language is increasingly appearing in the official public record, suggesting that "affordable housing brings crime" and that working families "cannot be trusted to maintain homes." Ms. Loya argued that this rhetoric reflects fear of diversity and a desire to protect Lenexa from "certain people," describing it as "the rhetoric of exclusion." She connected the current opposition to the county's history of redlining and restrictive covenants, which were used to deny investment and access to people deemed too risky, often justified by concerns about property values and neighborhood character. While she acknowledged that disagreement about land use and questions about process are legitimate, she emphasized that "when environmental language is used as a shield to disguise fear of people, we must name that." She countered the negative rhetoric by stating that Habitat families are like any other neighbors, following the same codes, paying taxes, and investing in the community. She said the project is not a threat to Lenexa's values, but "an expression of them." After 30 years in Lenexa, she said she believes the city is strongest when leaders make decisions with care and thoughtfulness, and she thanked the commission for their diligence and leadership.

Ali Haynes, a pastor in Johnson County and co-president of the Good Faith Network, spoke in support of the Habitat for Humanity project. She said she lives in Clear Creek Estates with her husband and their three children, directly adjacent to the park, and that her family uses it regularly. She expressed gratitude that the trails and ponds will remain and said her initial reaction to the project was not concern but thankfulness, because it offers working families the chance to live in a community that has become increasingly unaffordable. Ms. Haynes shared that her family bought their home when it was affordable but said that if they were trying to move into the area today, they simply could not afford it. She noted that her husband is a police officer and she is a pastor, and said they are raising children, paying bills, and building a life “just like the families Habitat will serve.” She emphasized that these families are not hypothetical, but “families like mine,” and that the area needs these homes to remain accessible. She also addressed safety concerns directly, saying that her family has always felt safe in the community and “will continue to feel safe when Habitat homes are built,” arguing that stable, affordable homeownership “strengthens safety” because families who are rooted in a place and have a stake in their homes and schools are a stabilizing force. She framed the project as a question of belonging, asking, “who gets to belong here? Who gets to be our neighbor?” She referenced a favorite scripture in which Jesus asks, “who’s my neighbor?” and emphasized that the answer is the one who shows compassion, “the Samaritan,” representing everyday workers like factory workers, nurses, teachers, pastors, and police officers. Ms. Haynes concluded by saying she is proud to live in the community and is ready to welcome these families, asking, “won’t you be my neighbor?”

Evangelos Brisimitzakis, who lives with his wife and three young children about a mile south of the proposed Habitat for Humanity development, spoke in support of the project while acknowledging that many neighbors have raised legitimate concerns. He said issues such as “sufficient policing to ensure neighborhood safety,” appropriate landscaping consistent with surrounding homes, and “trail realignment to ensure walking access to the surrounding green spaces is preserved” are reasonable and prudent concerns that should be addressed. However, Mr. Brisimitzakis expressed concern about what he described as “superficial and ulterior motivated arguments” being made in opposition. He challenged those critics directly, asking why they were opposing the project and suggesting that not everyone needs or can afford large plots of land. He argued that enforcing large-lot standards is wasteful of land resources and that housing density and compatibility are not problems for neighbors who are not required to move into their homes or even look at them. He also noted that parks and green space remain available nearby, pointing out that Black Hoof Park is less than three miles away. Mr. Brisimitzakis discussed the issue of property values, saying that as someone who has lived in the area for 13 years, he has seen property values rise “in my favor and at the detriment of younger and less advantaged families” who are trying to establish themselves in the community. He responded to concerns about wildlife by saying, “How about for the butterflies? Well, I like butterflies too, but gimme a break,” and argued that the project is not an attack on residents’ peace or serenity. Instead, he said it provides “much needed housing and socioeconomic diversity” and that the land has “sat unused for eight years,” so developing it would generate revenue and expand the tax base.

Reverend Jordan Stone, a Lenexa resident who said she loves living in the city, spoke to express strong support for the Habitat for Humanity project. She addressed a recurring argument she has heard from opponents that the opposition is about “preserving land from change.” She said she uses the park system frequently and cares deeply about it but argued that the property in question will be sold and developed regardless of who the developer is. She said the presentations make it clear that if Habitat for Humanity is not approved, “another developer will build here,” meaning homes will be built on the land “one way or another.” Reverend Stone said the real question is not whether the land will be developed, but “who those homes will serve.” She asked whether the site will become “another market rate development that only a small portion of our community can afford,” or whether it will become a neighborhood of “permanently affordable homes for working families.” She emphasized that these families contribute daily to Lenexa’s schools, businesses, churches, and community life. She said that choosing Habitat for Humanity is choosing development that prioritizes stability and long-term affordability, noting that Habitat builds high-

quality homes, partners with families who invest in equity, and ensures that homes “remain affordable for generations to come.” Reverend Stone framed the debate as a choice about whether Lenexa will make room for working families or continue on a path where rising housing costs “push people out.” She said she believes the community can grow “thoughtfully and compassionately,” welcoming new neighbors while planning responsibly for the future. She urged the Commissioners to support the Habitat project, to vote it in, and to help ensure that Lenexa remains a community where everyone has the opportunity to “call this place home,” including her and her family.

Mark Lasley, a Lenexa resident who has lived in Johnson County for 35 years, spoke in support of the proposed Habitat for Humanity development, calling it both “reasonable and necessary.” He emphasized that affordable housing is a widespread issue and is “clearly an issue in Johnson County,” as evidenced by the rising costs of houses and townhomes that many working families cannot afford. He noted that the proposed homes would be part of a community land trust model, which would ensure they “stay affordable, not just for the first purchasers, but for those who come after,” and he described this as a responsible way to address affordability. Mr. Lasley said Habitat for Humanity is a respected organization with a strong reputation for building “attractive quality homes” and carefully selecting families who are ready for homeownership. He explained that although Habitat homes still require a significant investment, they are “far more realistic” for families with steady jobs who need a fair chance to get started and build equity. He stressed that homeownership helps build “responsibility, pride, and community connection” and he acknowledged that new projects often bring concern and said he had heard objections about potential decreases in property values, loss of the adjacent park, and fears of increased crime. He responded by stating that because the homes will be in a community land trust, they “cannot be used to compare against other real estate sales in the area for appraisal values,” so surrounding home values should not decrease. He also said the park “is not going to be impacted by this proposal,” and argued that the families purchasing the homes are “not dangerous criminals,” but rather “normal everyday people who work, raise families, and are looking for a stable home environment.” Mr. Lasley said the project aligns with Lenexa’s plans and values, referencing the city’s Vision 2040 goal of cultivating attainable housing. He urged the commission to approve the project, thanking them for considering a solution that “strengthens Lenexa” and calling it “an opportunity to do a very good thing for some deserving homeowners.”

Carmen Shelly spoke in support of the Habitat for Humanity project and shared her personal experience as a long-time Lenexa resident and educator. She explained that she and her husband have lived in Lenexa since 1987, when her parents helped them with a down payment and to pay points to reduce the 14% interest rate. She spent her entire teaching career in USD 232, the DeSoto School District where the Habitat homes are proposed, starting at De Soto High School in 1984. She later joined her husband on the faculty in 2000 and was on staff when Mill Valley High School opened. Ms. Shelly said that in 2000 they stretched their finances to move to a bigger home, but not within the Mill Valley attendance area. She noted that many district patrons may have assumed she could afford to live near where she worked, but she explained that “we just couldn’t afford a home near where we worked,” and she suggested that she might have been a candidate for a Habitat home herself. She addressed concerns about who Habitat homeowners might be, such as whether they will own cars or maintain their yards, by sharing that people like her own family did those things: they owned two vehicles, managed complex transportation schedules for their children, and took pride in their home, even winning a homeowners association “Yard of the Month” award. Ms. Shelly recounted a conversation with a business owner in the Mill Valley attendance area who was surprised to learn where she lived, saying, “You don’t live out by Mill Valley. I thought you would live in the school district where you taught.” She used this to illustrate that despite appearing similar to the families she taught, she and her husband could not afford to live in the community where they worked, even with two teacher salaries, master’s degrees, extra duty contracts, and summer jobs. Her remarks underscored her belief that affordable homeownership opportunities like Habitat are needed so that working families can live in the communities where they contribute.

Mark Mears, a Lenexa resident and longtime donor to Habitat for Humanity, spoke in support of the proposed project, describing it as the kind of “purposeful, responsible growth” the community should pursue. He said he gives to Habitat because the organization has created a proven model for sustainable success. Drawing on his experience as a business leader, he explained that lasting success comes when “purpose is paired with discipline,” and he said Habitat embodies that principle. Mears emphasized that the Habitat model is not “charity without standards,” but rather a rigorous partnership requiring “income verification, employment history, financial education, and meaningful sweat equity” from future homeowners. He said this approach is fair and creates attainable homeownership for working families, such as teachers, nurses, and city employees, who are being priced out of traditional housing options. He said these families are seeking “a fair path to stability, equity, and belonging,” and that Habitat’s model provides both responsibility and support needed for long-term success. He also praised the long-term thinking of the project, noting that the community land trust structure ensures the homes will “remain affordable, well beyond the first sale,” which he said protects future families and preserves neighborhood stability. He argued that this solution is designed for permanence rather than speculation. Acknowledging that growth raises questions, Mr. Mears said that “fear-based assumptions should not outweigh fact-based evidence,” and he highlighted Habitat’s long record of strengthening neighborhoods. He noted that Habitat is celebrating its 50th year and has built “62 million homes all over the world,” and he said that well-built, owner-occupied homes with clear standards will contribute to community value rather than diminish it. He concluded by urging the Planning Commission to approve the application, saying the decision would reflect confidence in shared values, sound planning, and a future where opportunity remains accessible for all residents.

Laurie Haynes, who has lived near the proposed Habitat for Humanity development in Western Lenexa for about 15 years, spoke with enthusiastic support of the project. She said the development aligns with Vision 2040, noting that it supports one of the plan’s main pillars, “diverse housing”, and also includes a second pillar, “protecting the natural environment.” She emphasized that the plan recommended by city staff protects the existing Clear Creek wetlands and trails. Ms. Haynes said the development fits well within the existing neighborhood, backing up directly to existing attainable workforce housing in Clear Creek Estates. She referenced Johnson County housing data showing that affordability is a strain for many residents, noting that roughly 40% of renters and 18% of homeowners are “housing cost burdened.” She said Habitat for Humanity would be an ideal neighbor because it provides stability for families, which she said leads to improved health, better child development, safety, and security. She explained that removing barriers to homeownership allows families to save for the future and invest in education, leading to long-term career growth and stability. She added that Habitat homes are well-suited to the income levels of teachers, firefighters, librarians, and city employees. She also praised Johnson County leadership for prioritizing affordability as a policy and said the project meets that criteria. Ms. Haynes concluded by expressing gratitude to Lenexa for its leadership in strengthening the community through diversity and affordable housing options.

Dave Hoffman, a Lenexa resident living in the Timbers of Clear Creek, spoke in opposition to the proposed development. He explained that he and his family moved to the area in 2021 after leaving a dense, compact neighborhood in Shawnee for the more open feel of the Timbers, noting that it “just felt completely different” from where they had previously lived. Mr. Hoffman addressed comments suggesting that teachers and librarians cannot afford to live in the area, pointing out that many such professionals, including his wife, already live in the Timbers. He said, “I don’t think there’s any rule that says teachers can’t live there,” and emphasized that some are doing so. He also challenged the idea that people must live close to their workplace, sharing that he commuted for years from Wyandotte County to Lenexa for his career at Deluxe Corporation and never felt he needed to live near his job. He said he opposes the project for several reasons but focused on density and neighborhood fit. He described the area as an established, low-density neighborhood with large lots, citing homes along 86th Terrace and 85th Terrace that he believes have been there since the 1970s. He noted that multiple subdivisions have grown around this area, all maintaining a low-density character, with the park in the center. While acknowledging that

the proposal does not take the entire park, he argued that “a significant portion” will be removed and that it will “drastically change the park” he walks “practically daily,” emphasizing that he walks there often since he is retired. He concluded by asking the commission to consider these reasons in their decision.

Lora Bernhardt, a Lenexa resident since 2017, spoke in strong support of the Habitat for Humanity project. She explained that her support is rooted in personal experience with how unaffordable housing can devastate families. She shared the story of a close friend in Kansas City with a serious medical condition, whose nephew helps care for her. Ms. Bernhardt said they are already barely making ends meet and that “if they had to enter today’s renting or housing market, they would not be able to afford it,” adding that they would be at “real risk of losing their home altogether.” She also highlighted the dramatic rise in housing costs, noting that when she bought her home in Oak Park in 2017, the median price was around \$225,000 to \$250,000, but today she has been told her property is worth \$400,000. She said that even with her IT programmer salary, she could not keep up with the pace of property value increases, and she believes many hardworking people face the same challenge. Addressing common fears about affordable housing, Ms. Bernhardt emphasized that Habitat homeowners are “working families, neighbors, people just like you and I who want stability and a place to call home.” She said the project reflects “the Lenexa that I want to live in,” one that plans for the future, makes room for working families, and responds compassionately to housing challenges. She urged the commission to support the Habitat for Humanity project to make homeownership possible for families being priced out of the community.

Barbara Isaacson, a Lenexa resident, urged the Commissioners to approve the Habitat for Humanity application. She emphasized that she speaks as someone who lives in the city and cares about planning for “the full range of people who make the city work, not just those at the highest income levels.” She said she repeatedly asks herself, “where are low- and middle-income workers supposed to live?” and warned that assuming these workers will simply move farther away ignores the realities of longer commutes, higher costs, and weaker community ties. Ms. Isaacson praised the Clear Creek proposal because it “does not push attainable housing to the margins.” She noted that City Staff has been clear that the site has long been designated for residential development and that the proposal aligns with the comprehensive plan, calling it “not a deviation from Lenexa’s vision, it’s an expansion of it.” She also highlighted that the Staff Report shows the project preserves existing parkland and trails, which she said demonstrates that the city does not have to choose between “environmental stewardship or housing opportunity.” Ms. Isaacson explained that Habitat’s model addresses concerns about concentration or stigma because these are “single family homes integrated into an existing neighborhood” and governed by standards, with long-term stability ensured through a community land trust. She urged the Commission to approve the application, saying it shows Lenexa is “willing to make room for teachers and service workers and families” as the City grows.

Jack Gregory, a Lenexa resident, spoke in strong support of the Habitat for Humanity project and urged the Commission to recommend approval to the City Council. He said he is encouraged that the City’s Comprehensive Plan values “diversity, not just homogeneity,” and promotes “attainable housing through diverse choices and creative housing choices.” He acknowledged that discussions often become “either-or” arguments, but he believes Staff has shown that the City can have both, approving the project while preserving what existing neighbors value. Mr. Gregory emphasized that Habitat is not a “fly-by-night organization,” noting its long record of work nationwide and the fact that many in the community have supported Habitat through churches and other groups. He argued that “evidence should supersede” speculation, and he highlighted the rigorous process Habitat homeowners undergo, including demonstrating the ability to pay, completing “sweat equity,” and undergoing training. He said this shows these families “want to be good neighbors” and are seeking to “build equity, not just pay rent the rest of their lives.” He also asserted that people deserve “the chance to live where they work,” noting that even city employees can struggle to afford housing in Lenexa, which he said is a sign of a housing market that has “outrun ordinary wages.” Finally, Mr. Gregory warned that fear often drives decisions and can be

used as a weapon. He urged the Board to respond with “hope,” basing the decision on evidence and “facts” rather than hostility, and to vote yes on the Habitat project.

Hannah Jeffery, a Lenexa resident, spoke in support and as a parent and working professional who believes deeply in the kind of community the city is choosing to build. She shared that she is raising her two young daughters in Lenexa and, despite building a life through work, school, and community, has not been able to afford to buy a home in the neighborhood. She said this reality “tells a larger story about who has access to home ownership in our county.” Ms. Jeffery explained that she works as a job coach supporting individuals with developmental disabilities, and she emphasized that housing is not a side issue but the foundation that makes work, school, and community life possible. She highlighted that since 2018, the number of homes for sale under \$300,000 in Johnson County has declined by roughly 75%, and about 45% of people who work in the county now live outside of it. She said that even though she works with people who are often described as marginalized, she sometimes forgets that she fits the same definition, “I am a working parent,” she said, “doing everything right and still home ownership feels out of reach.” Ms. Jeffery stated her support for the Habitat for Humanity homes, saying these families are not “other” but “me,” and that they are parents and workers seeking stability, responsibility, and a long-term stake in the community they serve. She argued that the project “doesn’t subtract from the neighborhood, it adds,” noting that “the parks remain, the trails remain,” and that “more families get a foothold.” She concluded with a question rooted in hope and fairness: “Can I be your neighbor?”

Tommy Bickimer introduced himself as a Lenexa resident, business owner, Vice Chair of the Habitat for Humanity Board, CEO of Bickimer Homes, and founder of the Building Hope Foundation. As he spoke in support, he acknowledged that land use and neighborhood change naturally bring questions and strong opinions, and he said that “that’s a sign of a community that cares.” He shared that he, too, cares deeply about Lenexa and believes home ownership is part of the American dream but noted that it has become significantly harder to achieve. Drawing from two decades as a home builder, he said he has seen home prices rise rapidly, pricing out “teachers, nurses, city employees, young families raised in Johnson County.” Mr. Bickimer explained that his experience led him to start the Building Hope Foundation. He said that in 2024, he evaluated this specific property for Bickimer Homes and decided it was not the right fit, but that Habitat for Humanity was seeking land to support affordable home ownership. He said he saw an opportunity to align the City’s vision with Habitat’s mission in a thoughtful way. He clarified what the proposal is, and what it is not, emphasizing that the homes are “not giveaways.” He said Habitat homeowners qualify, “financially contribute, contribute sweat equity, and purchase their homes.” He noted that families must earn below 80% of the area median income (roughly under \$89,100 annually for a family of four) to qualify. He also insisted the homes will not be poorly built, describing them as “energy efficient, structurally strong,” and built to standards that meet or exceed many developers’ work. Mr. Bickimer stated that under the City’s Future Land Use plan, the parcel is not designated parkland and that the adjacent parcel will remain city parkland. He said the City has sought residential development on this parcel for many years. Acknowledging that change can feel uncertain, he argued the proposal represents a balanced approach that “respects the City’s Comprehensive Plan, preserves community character, and creates opportunities for responsible home ownership.” He concluded by saying the issue is not “us versus them,” but “what kind of community we want Lenexa to be,” and he expressed his full support for the project so that future generations might “have the opportunity to buy a home in Lenexa.”

Kevin Butler, a homeowner in Lenexa, Kansas, spoke in support of the Habitat for Humanity Lenexa affordable housing proposal, expressing deep admiration for Habitat’s mission and impact. He described how Habitat and similar nonprofit home repair organizations transform lives by providing safe, clean, and dignified housing, drawing on his own years of volunteer experience with local groups and the emotional gratitude he has witnessed from families helped by these efforts. Mr. Butler emphasized that the proposal is not about creating a low-income neighborhood, but about establishing a permanent, well-planned community of affordable, single-family homes for working families who are carefully vetted and supported on the path to homeownership. Reflecting on his upbringing in a working-poor family without access to

generational wealth or guidance on homeownership, he highlighted how powerful opportunity can be when paired with support. He concluded that Lenexa is stronger when teachers, first responders, healthcare workers, City employees, and young families can afford to live in the community they serve and urged approval of the proposal so Lenexa can continue to be a place of stability, opportunity, and belonging.

Talita Leikam spoke in support of the Habitat for Humanity proposal, sharing that she and her family deeply value Lenexa's amenities, including the recreation center, parks, and community spaces, which they regularly enjoy. Drawing on both personal and professional experience in community health, she described attainable housing as a pressing and urgent need in the area, noting how frequently she sees working adults, elderly residents who have worked their entire lives, people with disabilities, and young adults just starting out struggle to secure stable housing. Ms. Leikam also spoke from her own perspective as a healthcare worker married to a teacher, raising three children with a fourth on the way, while supporting aging family members who are trying to downsize, underscoring how difficult housing access has become for middle-income families. She praised Lenexa as a beautiful, thoughtfully designed, and well-maintained city that clearly prioritizes being welcoming and family-friendly, which is why her family chooses to spend so much of their time there. She concluded by expressing hope that the City will continue living out those values by supporting Habitat's proposed development and welcoming working families who want to put down roots in Lenexa, emphasizing that such efforts align with the community's long-standing commitment to inclusion and quality of life.

Robin Olson, a Lenexa resident of more than two decades, spoke in support of the Habitat for Humanity project, emphasizing her desire for the City to remain a place where working families can put down roots. A retired teacher of the deaf who continues to work as an American Sign Language and English interpreter, she shared that her professional background has given her a unique, firsthand view of Habitat's full process, from application through a family moving into their home. Ms. Olson noted that while much has already been said about Habitat's careful vetting, she wanted to highlight the extensive education component of the program, which she described as critical and often overlooked. She explained that families are required to complete classes on budgeting, mortgages, home maintenance, and basic repairs and landscaping, equipping them with practical skills, confidence, and pride in homeownership. She stressed that Habitat does not give away homes, but instead requires significant documentation, commitment, and partnership from future homeowners, preparing and supporting them for long-term success. She concluded by stating that the proposed Lenexa project represents attainable homeownership done right and urged strong support for the proposal.

Rob Carr, a native of Johnson County and a Lenexa resident of 28 years, spoke in support of the Habitat for Humanity project, grounding his remarks in both his faith and his four decades of experience in pastoral ministry. He explained that his perspective is shaped by long observation of how communities succeed or struggle, particularly around the question of who belongs. Mr. Carr described Habitat for Humanity as the gold standard in affordable housing partnerships, stating that the City could not ask for a better collaborator for this project. He emphasized that Habitat families are thoroughly vetted, financially qualified, and committed to hundreds of hours of sweat equity, qualities that consistently result in strong neighbors and engaged citizens. Addressing assumptions sometimes made about affordable housing residents, he noted that many people can recall times when their assumptions about individuals or groups proved to be wrong, and he affirmed that Habitat families clearly belong in Lenexa. Drawing on the City's long history of carefully selecting development partners, he reminded leaders that Lenexa has successfully partnered with quality developers across the City and now has the opportunity to choose another exceptional partner. He concluded by expressing pride in Lenexa and enthusiasm for supporting Habitat as a trusted and worthy partner in this effort.

Nachelle Kaughman, a Lenexa resident who also works in Lenexa City Center, spoke in support of the proposed Habitat for Humanity neighborhood at 87th and Clare. She shared that her professional

background in the nonprofit and humanitarian sector strongly shaped her understanding of what makes communities thrive, emphasizing that stable housing is not only a personal benefit but a foundation for healthy communities, improving outcomes in education, employment, and long-term civic engagement. Ms. Kaughman noted that wealth and stability are often built across generations and that homeownership remains one of the most reliable ways families can begin building that stability, a process Habitat supports responsibly through careful qualification, education, and long-term affordability. She also highlighted the proven success of thoughtfully planned, income-diverse neighborhoods, describing them as more stable, resilient, and aligned with Lenexa’s reputation for intentional planning. She pointed out that the project makes productive use of land that has been for sale for years, preserves existing park space, and creates homeownership opportunities for people who work in and contribute to the community. She concluded by urging approval of the proposal so Lenexa can remain a place where those who serve the City can also afford to live.

Michael Feingold, a Creekside Woods resident, spoke in strong support of the Habitat for Humanity proposal, drawing on his background in the Marine Corps and as a federal investigator. He shared his personal story of growing up without wealth after his father died of brain cancer, watching his mother work multiple jobs to keep the family afloat, and said a program like Habitat would have provided the stability his family desperately needed. Mr. Feingold criticized what he called Lenexa’s “facade of nicest niceness,” saying, “it is deeply ugly.” He also noted that some neighbors are quick to donate to charities but resist affordable housing when they have a chance to make a structural generational difference for a family like his. He recounted a conversation with a neighbor he recorded, referencing her as “Susan” quoting her saying, “They’re putting 50 Habitat for Humanity homes right there across from \$800,000 homes,” and when he asked her what the problem was, she replied, “I feel like there’s gonna be a problem with crime,” and then admitted, “It’s just because that comes with it.” He commented that affordable housing does not harm property values and can even increase them. He further stated that “It’s the paralegal, a single mother whose husband died, left her with three children working more than a full-time job just to keep stability in their lives.” Mr. Feingold highlighted that Habitat homes serve people who already support the community, City employees, policemen, firefighters, teachers, CNAs, EMTs and delivery drivers. He warned that dismissing these families implies “people who serve this community aren’t good enough to sleep in it,” and urged the Commissioners to “vote for the truth” rather than validate “Susan’s” fear.

Michelle Lancaster spoke in opposition of the Habitat for Humanity proposal and said she is “not as familiar with those technicalities or the nomenclature of your area,” but she understands the basics of traffic safety and the impact of “taking away current green space that is heavily used by Lenexa residents” and rezoning it into residential use in an area that is already overdeveloped. Ms. Lancaster noted the developer’s estimate that the project will take “five to six years to complete,” and shared that City Engineer Tim Green says it will add “an additional 500 vehicles per day” to and from the site. She also referenced plans to widen 83rd Street and add roundabouts between Clare and Gleason, which will “divert more traffic down 86 Terrace and to Clare” because Lewis Street will not be able to turn west. Ms. Lancaster warned that adding “500 plus additional cars each day during the construction for the next five to six years” could create serious safety issues. Ms. Lancaster said she sees the problems firsthand from her front porch, noting that Clare Road is already heavily used with “teens thinking that they’re on a drag strip,” bicyclists, semi-trucks, and families trying to access the park. She argued that the proposed access road would cross “either the trails or the entrance,” creating a safety hazard for pedestrians and park users. She asked whether a study has been done on “what type of impact 500 vehicles would have against hundreds of pedestrians coming in and out of the park,” and emphasized that children currently run or bike ahead of their parents because “it is safe to do so,” without having to worry about “a road in their path.” She asked, “Is this location so important? Is it worth the injuring of a child?” Ms. Lancaster said that “saving green space” is the top priority, noting that the city poll showed 59% support for preserving it, and argued that there are better locations for the project than a heavily used park. She acknowledged the rebuttal that “your trails will still be there,” but stressed that construction would remove

the “peace and quiet” that people value. She suggested Sar-Ko-Par Park as a better alternative because it has “plenty of green space for houses” and is better suited with nearby amenities like grocery stores, public transportation, and shops. In closing, Ms. Lancaster said many supporters “are not residents that have been directly affected in the neighborhood,” and will not have to deal with the construction for the “next five to six years.” She asked the City to deny approval and recommend a location that has not “already been promoted, perceived, and used as a part for the past decade.”

Julie Becker spoke in opposition to the proposed location of the Habitat for Humanity project, emphasizing that her concern is not with Habitat itself, but with building on Centennial Park. She described the park as “just a trail through nature,” made up of grass and beautiful wetlands that are heavily used by thousands of neighbors. Ms. Becker stressed that the land is “not idle” or unused and will continue to be impacted by the City’s recent park tax increase, which led residents to expect “great upgrades and changes,” not the loss of parkland. She said many neighbors were “shocked and upset” to learn in December that the City planned to give this land away. Ms. Becker stated, “Do you know what a trail through a subdivision is called? A sidewalk. It’s not a park,” explaining that the trail would be bordered by homes and increased activity, particularly during school hours. She noted that hundreds of school-aged children currently use the trail daily as a safe place to run and walk away from traffic, roundabouts, and exhaust fumes, allowing them to enjoy fresh air and natural scenery. Speaking as a parent, teacher, and coach, she said this benefit alone is critically important to her and the community. She added that many residents jog, walk their dogs, or simply walk themselves on the trail, and shared that for her personally, “it’s my prayer retreat.” Ms. Becker said she has spent countless days praying on the trail for the land, questioning why property residents are paying for as a park would be converted into a subdivision with traffic, fumes, and the removal of natural space. She said her prayers led her to continue showing up, praying, and bringing neighbors together, noting that “six subdivisions are using this” and “thousands are praying and paying for a park, not another subdivision sidewalk.” In closing, Ms. Becker said residents want what was promised with the park tax increase, “more parkland and upgrades, not the destruction of our park.” She referenced Vision 2040, stating it clearly prioritizes “more green space” and “safe walking trails,” and said that is what the community was promised.

Angela Buzard spoke against the proposal, explaining her family’s strong connection to the park property, noting that her home backs up to the park and that its presence was a major reason her family chose the location seven years ago to raise their children. She described how her family regularly walks the trails, fishes in the ponds, and observes wildlife, even keeping binoculars by their back windows, saying the park is “a regular part of our lives” and an integral part of the neighborhood’s sense of community. Ms. Buzard acknowledged that affordable housing is a real and important issue in Johnson County and Lenexa, sharing that she has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in the past and believes deeply in its mission. As a public servant living in a modest home, she emphasized that she supports affordable housing and the use of public funding to help promote it. However, she stressed that her concerns are not about affordable housing itself, but about the site selection and the loss of what she described as a beautiful and valuable community asset. Ms. Buzard explained that the park property is not simply undeveloped land, but a critical piece of green infrastructure that the City has heavily invested in to mitigate flooding for nearby homes, including her own. She praised Lenexa’s leadership and innovation in stormwater management and asked that the same level of foresight be applied to determining the highest and best use of this unique property for the benefit of the entire community. She noted that while similar parkland may never be available for purchase again, land suitable for residential development will remain available as the City continues to grow westward. In closing, Ms. Buzard said the most detrimental aspect of the proposal is the conversion of designated parkland into residential development. On behalf of her family, she asked the Planning Commission to deny the application and to pause development plans for the park property in order to allow time for meaningful community engagement, given the project’s scale and the significant public investment already made in the site.

Jeff Potter, a resident of the Timbers of Clear Creek and a 33-year Lenexa taxpayer, spoke in opposition to the proposed development at the park site, while emphasizing that he is not opposed to affordable housing. Mr. Potter thanked City staff, elected officials, and fellow residents for their time and dedication, and expressed appreciation for the community members who stayed late to advocate for preserving the park. He stated that affordable housing is needed and that all individuals deserve a place they can afford to live but stressed that his comments were about “saving our park, a park we love and enjoy,” not rejecting housing. Mr. Potter explained that Lenexa’s parks and trails are a major reason he and his family moved within the city multiple times and ultimately built their “forever home.” He said those decisions were made based on affordability and the City’s promise to preserve parkland, noting that residents were told the park in question would remain primarily as it is. He expressed frustration that, despite voters approving a three-eighths cent sales tax increase to maintain and beautify parks, the City is now considering taking parkland away. While acknowledging changes Habitat has made to the proposal, he said the project still does not fit the area, comparing it to “flip flops with a tuxedo,” and cited a lack of supporting infrastructure. Addressing claims that opponents are motivated by fear or hiding behind the park, Mr. Potter said, “We are not here to hide behind our park. We are here to stand up for our park.” He rejected the idea that residents simply do not want the project “in their backyard,” and challenged decision-makers to consider what they are willing to support in their own neighborhoods. He said residents value Lenexa’s parks deeply and have demonstrated that commitment through their votes and tax support. Mr. Potter concluded by saying he wants to continue liking Lenexa as a longtime resident and does not want to become “a former citizen that used to like Lenexa,” thanking the City for the opportunity to speak.

Tracy Aspinwall spoke in opposition to the proposal, focusing on three main concerns: zoning consistency, landscaping and tree preservation, and impacts to the Clear Creek Trail. Ms. Aspinwall stated that the applicant is requesting RP-1 zoning, but the proposed lot dimensions more closely resemble RP-3 standards, effectively increasing density beyond what RP-1 allows and beyond what surrounding neighborhoods were built to expect. She emphasized that if the project is labeled RP-1, it should meet RP-1 minimums, including 80-foot lot widths, 30-foot front setbacks, and 8,000-square-foot minimum lot sizes, noting that anything less is inconsistent with the zoning designation. Ms. Aspinwall next addressed landscaping and tree preservation, explaining that the development borders two major public edges, Clare Road and Clear Creek Wetlands Park. She requested a Type 3 buffer along Clare Road and a Type 2 buffer along the park where lots face the public trail to maintain compatibility with both the neighborhood and the park. She also highlighted the mature tree line along West 86th Terrace on the north property line, stating that the proposed fencing, with gaps every 50 to 60 feet, would fragment this buffer. She asked that the applicant be required to provide a tree survey and a tree preservation plan to protect the existing old-growth trees. Finally, Ms. Aspinwall spoke about the Clear Creek Trail, calling it the most important issue for residents. She described it as a high-traffic public trail used daily and noted that the City’s long-range plan envisions extending it across Clare Road. She said the current proposal would remove more than 500 feet of existing trail, reroute it into areas not designed for the required width, and create multiple unsafe crossings, including at a subdivision entrance with three lanes of traffic and an added turn lane. She concluded by respectfully requesting that the development be redesigned to preserve the existing trail alignment and maintain uninterrupted and safe public access, thanking the commissioners for considering the concerns of the Clear Creek community.

Cathy Steinberg, a resident of the Timbers, thanked the body for the opportunity to speak and expressed opposition to the proposed project. Ms. Steinberg stated that while she supports affordable housing, it must “make sense” and be located in areas with adequate infrastructure and resources. She argued that rezoning the park would “alter and destroy the established development patterns of the area” and that the project is “not compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods.” Ms. Steinberg raised concerns about infrastructure, noting that the streets are not designed for increased traffic, local schools are already at capacity, and there is no public transportation serving the area, stating, “No buses come out there.” She emphasized the lack of nearby services, explaining that grocery stores are “three and a half miles away”

and that there are no pharmacies or essential resources to support future residents, including disabled families shown in the project presentation. She questioned the long-term viability of the project, asking, “How do you force grocery stores to open in the community? You can’t,” and warned that residents would face hardships that could impact surrounding neighborhoods and create future tax implications. Ms. Steinberg suggested that affordable housing be placed closer to City Center, where existing resources are available, citing areas such as Sar-Ko-Par Park with multiple grocery stores and schools experiencing declining enrollment. She stated that such locations would better support families and help revitalize aging communities. In closing, Ms. Steinberg addressed comments regarding “coded language,” identifying herself as a first-generation immigrant Latina and stating that assumptions about her community are harmful. She emphasized that the Timbers is a diverse, inclusive neighborhood and concluded that such claims “diminish us as immigrants.”

Kaylen Simpson-Porto, a Lenexa resident, spoke in support of the proposed Habitat for Humanity project on behalf of herself, her husband Chris, and a friend who was unable to attend. Ms. Simpson-Porto stated that she and her husband moved to Lenexa in October 2023 and were drawn to the city’s strong sense of community, reflected in its parks, public facilities, and community events. Ms. Simpson-Porto expressed support for the Habitat for Humanity proposal, citing the organization’s “long and proven record of success,” including strong outcomes for families and no foreclosures in the last ten years. She emphasized that Habitat homes are permanent, owner-occupied residences that provide long-term stability for families and neighborhoods and described the project as a “sustainable, common-sense solution” to the housing crisis. She noted that although she and her husband both work within minutes of their home, they cannot afford to purchase a house in Lenexa, leaving them and many others facing the choice between continuing to rent or moving out of the city to become homeowners. Ms. Simpson-Porto stated that more people who work in Lenexa pay sales tax in Lenexa, and contribute to the City should be able to live there. Addressing opposition comments, Ms. Simpson-Porto acknowledged community concerns but encouraged residents to research the full details of the project, stating that many fears, such as impacts to home values and damage to parks and wetlands, have been addressed and that the park would not be affected. She urged residents to “welcome a little discomfort” for the greater good and to consider families who need modest support to thrive. In closing, Ms. Simpson-Porto stated that she wants Lenexa to be a place for all people, where those who work and serve the community can also be neighbors. She concluded by urging approval of the project, stating, “Yes, welcome to my backyard. I support you.”

Christina Wallace addressed the Planning Commission with technical concerns regarding the proposed development. Ms. Wallace spoke against the Habitat for Humanity proposal and requested a reduction in density from 50 lots to 35 lots on 17 acres, stating that the current proposal places RP-3–sized lots adjacent to R-1 acreage lots, creating the densest stretch of housing in the development backing directly onto acreage. She argued this configuration is incompatible and inconsistent with the City’s long-standing vision for medium-density development, noting that a similar concept was considered in 2018 and “didn’t fit then and doesn’t fit now.” Ms. Wallace stated that a 35-lot layout would be compatible with surrounding developments, citing the Timbers subdivision across the street, which has 35 homes on 17 acres, and Twin Creeks at Enclave, where 50 homes were approved on 32.6 acres. She asserted that the current proposal is a repackaged version of a previously rejected concept and does not align with established development patterns in western Lenexa. Ms. Wallace also raised concerns regarding landscaping and buffering, noting that trails function as arterial corridors and that the current plan lacks adequate landscape buffers between homes, fences, and trails. She stated that additional buffering is needed to maintain the park-like character of the area. Regarding safety, Ms. Wallace identified two primary issues. First, she expressed concern over the proposed trail realignment, stating that relocating the trail would require children to cross three lanes of traffic, including a turn lane, to access future trail connections, which she described as unsafe. Second, she cited emergency access concerns, pointing to Lot 1 at the main entrance of the development and stating that the configuration would not safely accommodate multiple emergency vehicles responding to an incident. In closing, Ms. Wallace questioned the inclusion

of a lengthy staff justification document, stating that a “50-page justification” was unnecessary for a technical review and urged the Board to focus on the technical deficiencies of the plat when making its decision, stating that “there are some errors here.”

Kristy Baughman, Executive Director of United Community Services of Johnson County (UCS), spoke in strong support of Habitat for Humanity’s proposed attainable housing development in Lenexa. Ms. Baughman stated that UCS works countywide to understand housing needs and strengthen systems that help families remain stably housed and have long partnered with the City of Lenexa on housing solutions. Ms. Baughman presented data illustrating the growing housing affordability challenges in Lenexa. She stated that between 2019 and 2024, home values increased by 53%, with the median home price rising from just over \$360,000 to more than \$550,000. During the same period, she noted a 70% decrease in rental units under \$1,000 per month and a 240% increase in rentals over \$2,000 per month, making it increasingly difficult for households to save for homeownership. She further noted that between 2013 and 2023, Lenexa added 27% more housing units, yet the percentage of homeowners declined by 5%, demonstrating that increased housing supply has not translated into increased access to homeownership. Ms. Baughman stated that Habitat’s proposal addresses this gap by providing attainable, single-family homes that will remain affordable over time through Habitat’s shared equity model. Ms. Baughman emphasized that housing stability directly affects health, education, and economic opportunity and described the proposal as a thoughtful, community-centered solution aligned with Lenexa’s needs. On behalf of UCS, she urged approval of the project. In closing, Ms. Baughman underscored the importance of allowing people to live near where they work, sharing that proximity strengthens community connections, civic engagement, and relationships between residents and those who serve the community. She stated that enabling workers to live in Lenexa enhances the City’s overall sense of community.

Kevin Cauley spoke in opposition, addressing the Planning Commission and thanking them for their time. Mr. Cauley, a Lenexa homeowner since 2007 and a current resident of the Timbers, stated that his comments were focused on planning considerations, not on who would live in the proposed development. Mr. Cauley raised concerns regarding the deviations requested by the applicant, particularly as they relate to lot size and housing class compatibility. He referenced comparison neighborhoods included in the staff packet and stated that Sunset Canyon included deviations only for Class E homes, with average lot sizes of approximately 10,000–11,000 square feet, while Class D homes in that area were not subject to the same deviations. He stated that Stone Ridge North and Enclave at Twin Peaks were not appropriate comparisons, as those developments consist of higher housing classes and cannot be directly compared to Class D housing. Mr. Cauley also referenced Cedar Crest, stating that the introduction of smaller Class D homes in later phases negatively affected the neighborhood’s character and integrity. Mr. Cauley expressed concern that the proposed development includes Class D homes on lots as small as 7,500 square feet, which he stated is inconsistent with surrounding R-1 neighborhoods and with the established character of the Timbers and Cedar Crest, which are primarily Class B and C neighborhoods. He emphasized the importance of maintaining compatible lot sizes and housing character and urged the Commission to consider average lot sizes when evaluating the proposal. Mr. Cauley concluded by requesting that, if development proceeds, lot sizes and housing types remain consistent with the existing neighborhood character.

John Lanham, a resident of Prairie View at Creekside Woods, spoke in opposition to the proposed plan. Mr. Lanham stated that he lives approximately a five-minute walk from the site and that proximity to the park was a primary reason he and his family chose to move to the area. He described his family as active users of the park and emphasized its importance as a community amenity. Mr. Lanham requested that the plan be rejected, stating that the proposed location is not well suited for the development and that other locations in Lenexa would be more appropriate. He expressed concern that the area lacks nearby amenities, such as grocery stores and services, and stated that this would be challenging for future residents as well as existing neighbors. While acknowledging Habitat for Humanity’s mission and noting

that he has volunteered on Habitat homes in the past, Mr. Lanham stated that the proposed development differs from his prior experience with Habitat projects. He expressed concern about the use of park-adjacent land and the density of the homes, stating that they do not match the spacing or character of surrounding neighborhoods and would be placed next to significantly higher-valued homes. Mr. Lanham concluded that, although he supports the goal of providing attainable housing, he does not believe this site is a good fit for the project and encouraged the City to consider an alternative location to achieve the same objectives.

Lisa Rohrbaugh, a 13-year resident of Creekside Woods just south of the land under discussion, spoke in support of the proposed Habitat for Humanity housing development. She reiterated many of the points previously raised, emphasizing the “good things about Habitat for Humanity” and the thoughtful planning and work that has gone into the project. She said she was “delighted to know that it was always planned to be housing,” and agreed with those who believe the park will not be negatively affected, noting that “the best of the park is yet to come.” As a frequent walker and trail user, she emphasized that some complaints focus on “50 houses,” while no one complained when 77 houses were added to her own neighborhood in recent years, and the City has consistently kept up with growth in roads and schools. She stated that the project is “about meeting a real and growing need in our community,” noting that Johnson County needs affordable housing and that this is a great location for it. She stressed that Habitat for Humanity is not a speculative developer and that she trusts Habitat more than many for-profit developers because it is a nonprofit with a long-proven track record. She also highlighted the importance of sweat equity, saying that Habitat developments “have consistently shown positive outcomes” and that studies and local experience demonstrate Habitat homes do not decrease surrounding property values, and often strengthen neighborhoods by replacing vacant or underused land. She noted that Habitat works closely with local codes and design standards and that the proposed development reflects thoughtful planning, appropriate density, quality construction, and attention to infrastructure. She concluded that approving the development would send a clear message that Lenexa recognizes the housing challenges facing working families and supports smart, mission-driven solutions, and Ms. Rohrbaugh respectfully urged support for the project.

Mark Rohrbaugh, who spoke in support of the Habitat project to his north and who lives in Creekside Woods with a backyard that abuts the property in question from the south and whose deck has a clear view of the silo with a tree growing up through the middle in the park. He noted that they will be about as close as neighbors to the proposed site as you can get and said he “100% supports the Habitat project.” He emphasized that “no one is losing a park,” and that “nobody’s entitled to that land” or has a “God-given right to control what’s done on that parcel of land.” Responding to concerns, he stated that the development is not the park, and it will not remove the trails or remove the wildlife. He criticized opposition from residents of the Timbers, saying “they make me think, Jesus Christ, glad I don’t live in the Timbers.” He explained he does not know his lot size, but believes it is “smaller than what is being proposed here,” and suggested that opponents “just don’t like the idea that somebody’s gonna have a smaller house than theirs as a neighbor.” He also said he was shocked when one speaker described the project as “flip flops on a tuxedo,” stating “I’ve been in the Timbers and it ain’t all that.” He added that those against the project “are not being truthful with you,” and said it was his job to “stand up and call it out when I see it.” He appreciated the opportunity to be heard and to “call out garbage when we hear it in our community.” (At this time Chairman Poss had to intervene when an audience member and the speaker engaged in unruly comments and behavior.) Mr. Rohrbaugh continued and said it is “a fine development” that he and his family will be happy with. He praised Staff for doing “an outstanding job of laying it out in the beginning,” and said that supporting the project “is the way forward” as the community looks for diversity, and Ms. Rohrbaugh respectfully urged support for the project.

Julie Shepherd, a 25-year resident of Lenexa who has lived in five different homes in the City and has studied zoning and planning before each move, spoke in opposition to using the 17-acre parkland for the Habitat for Humanity development. She noted that when she planned to build her current home, she

checked Lenexa maps and found that the land was originally projected as housing development, with the green area shown as parkland, and that the plan has changed over the last six years. She said she was there to talk about the nature surrounding the park and described the land as “extraordinary,” full of native natural grasses. She explained that cost sharing for planting native grasses opens in March and is gone in two months, and despite trying for three years she has not been able to access it. She emphasized that her backyard is full of native plants and that the 17 acres are “all natural grasses,” including little blue stem, tall blue stem, and “tons of milkweed.” She challenged claims that milkweed is not present, saying she “was literally driving down the road, saw the milkweed, turned my car around and went and saw it,” and noted the presence of caterpillars and monarch butterflies, adding “the plant is nearly extinct” and that she has seen “more than a hundred of these in that 17 acres.” She questioned why Lenexa would “tear out 17 acres of natural grasses to put in 50 houses with driveways” and pointed out that parked cars and petroleum runoff would affect the watershed, increasing algae in the wetland areas. She said residents deserve “a true park to enjoy, to see true nature,” and clarified that she is not opposed to Habitat for Humanity itself but is opposed to using this “particular 17 acres of complete native soil,” and Ms. Shepherd thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to speak.

Patricia Smithson, a longtime Lenexa resident of the Century Two Estates area, spoke in support of the Habitat for Humanity development at Clear Creek. She explained that she has lived in her home for 22 years, having purchased it in 2004 as a single parent and single-family homeowner. Drawing on her long experience in the community, she emphasized her positive history working with Lenexa city staff, particularly on projects related to Flat Rock Creek. Ms. Smithson highlighted her collaboration with City stormwater staff member Ted Semadeni, describing him as “phenomenal to deal with.” She shared a personal anecdote about learning why invasive honeysuckle needed to be removed along the creek, recalling that when she expressed concern about hummingbirds, she was reassured: “We’re gonna replace it with a plant that will still attract hummingbirds.” She said this interaction reflected the city’s care for both the environment and the community. She expressed pride in Lenexa as a “forward thinking, welcoming community” and stated that the proposed project aligns with values the City already claims, “responsible growth and housing options for people at different stages.” Reflecting on the city’s growth, she noted that when she first moved to Lenexa, areas like Highway 7 were largely undeveloped, and she praised the City for the progress it has made, including amenities such as the Lenexa Rec Center. Ms. Smithson also spoke positively about city maintenance and planning, calling staff efforts “very impressive,” and said she is proud to live in a community that “plans for the future and cares for all its residents.” She referenced her participation in Vision 2040 and encouraged continued community involvement in City Planning processes. She concluded by respectfully asking the Planning Commission to support the project, expressing confidence that the City would be conscientious in its execution.

Marvin Kohler, a resident of the Timbers subdivision, spoke in opposition to the proposed development, stating that he and his wife, a teacher, are a working family who deliberately chose Lenexa for its safety, schools, and quality of life after viewing 69 homes, including in Overland Park, and purchasing their home nine years ago. He emphasized that “we moved here because of safety, because of the schools,” and expressed concern that the project would bring conditions he associates with low-income housing he deals with “every single day” near 2nd and Lydia in Kansas City, Missouri, including homelessness that he fears could move into nearby park space. Mr. Kohler questioned the need for the project, citing that there are 1,935 homes for sale in Johnson County at the price his family paid, and warned that the proposal resembles dense housing he previously lived next to in Omaha, saying, “It looks exactly like what you’re trying to do in my backyard.” He also raised safety and infrastructure concerns tied to the upcoming World Cup, referencing recent meetings with Kansas Transportation Secretary Reed about K-10 traffic and with Kansas City, Kansas Mayor Watson, whose “number one concern is safety,” and stated that despite assurances from Habitat for Humanity, “I deal with it every single day,” concluding by asserting that comparisons to other regions are misplaced because “Lenexa is not Minneapolis.”

Gene Spiess, a 50-year resident of the 86th Terrace area, spoke in opposition to the proposed project, expressing concern about the loss of wetlands and trails that Lenexa previously celebrated as part of its Wetlands Project. He stated that residents have long enjoyed this area as “a gift through their tax dollars,” and warned that it is being jeopardized by development interests suggesting that the west wetlands and trails are not needed. While acknowledging that “people do need comfortable and affordable housing,” Mr. Spiess said nearby residents should receive “some type of compensation for this degradation.” He also raised concerns about increased traffic on Clare Road and 86th Terrace, which he said are already used “as a Speedway,” and about overcrowding in DeSoto schools serving students from Lenexa and Shawnee. He emphasized his pride in Johnson County’s parks and recreation system, noting that it provides amenities “that Wyandotte County does not,” and concluded by stating that there is “surely other property available for this project.”

Jackie Steinhoff, a resident of the Timbers neighborhood, spoke on behalf of Kurt Narron, sharing remarks that she and Mr. Narron shared opposing the proposed Habitat for Humanity development near Clear Road and Clear Creek. She stated clearly that their comments were “not in opposition to affordable housing, nor to Habitat for Humanity’s mission,” but instead focused on concerns about process integrity, equal application of city standards, and stewardship of public land. Ms. Steinhoff asserted that while Staff’s packet addressed zoning and platting criteria, it failed to address several material issues raised by residents, including the waiver or alteration of prior land disposition standards that had required all three parcels to be purchased together and limited development intensity relative to surrounding neighborhoods, without explanation of how equal treatment is being ensured. She further raised concerns about what she described as an unequal application of development standards, noting that the packet refers to deviations as routine but provides no comparative analysis showing that similarly situated private developments received the same flexibility. She cited public record emails showing coordination between City Staff and the applicant prior to neighborhood engagement and formal review, stating that this timing reasonably contributes to a public perception that key elements of the project were shaped before the public process. She also questioned public asset stewardship, emphasizing that the land is adjacent to planned park space that will not be finalized until at least 2027; while rezoning and sale of the land would be permanent, and noting that the packet does not analyze impacts on long-term park planning. Finally, she argued that because Johnson County funding for the project is not site-specific and Habitat developments could occur elsewhere, pausing or reconsidering this location would not halt affordable housing but would allow the City to better balance housing goals with fairness, transparency, and long-term public benefit, concluding by respectfully asking the Planning Commission to consider whether moving forward or pausing for additional review would better serve the City and public trust.

Kevin Hobbs, a resident of the Reserve who lives adjacent to the path leading into the park, spoke in support of the proposed Habitat for Humanity project. He shared that he initially opposed the development after hearing it described as “an environmental disaster,” noting that he chose his home because he loves the wetlands behind it and did not want to see them lost. However, after doing his own research and listening to the presentations, he stated that he had changed his mind and is now “all for the Habitat for Humanity project,” calling it “a great thing for this neighborhood.” Mr. Hobbs expressed concern about what he described as “classist things” being raised in opposition, particularly arguments about transportation, and said he believes Habitat has already addressed this by requiring residents to have proper transportation as part of their program. He went on to say he would even support expanding affordable housing efforts to other areas of Lenexa, including locations near AdventHealth on Prairie Star, along 83rd Street, and through revitalization of older areas near Costco. While emphasizing that protecting the environment is critical, he stated that “building quality and affordable housing for our neighbors is crucial,” and respectfully urged the Planning Commission to approve the project, adding that supporting it aligns with community values and “probably what Jesus would want to do,” even though he does not consider himself a religious person.

Jessica Brooks, a nearby resident, spoke in support of the proposed project, emphasizing that “our kids need homes” and drawing on her professional and personal experiences as a nurse, foster parent, and adoptive parent. She shared that she has treated patients in the emergency department who were not ill but had “nowhere else to go,” describing them as “someone’s kid with no place to sleep, no door to lock behind them,” and stating, “That kid deserves a home.” Ms. Brooks recounted fostering a 14-year-old boy who told her the bed in her home was the first real mattress he had ever slept on because his family could not afford one, despite having lived in Johnson County their entire lives, repeating, “That kid deserves a home.” She also described another child who panicked at the idea of a camping trip because his life experience had taught him that a tent meant no food and explained that her own adopted daughter experienced homelessness and housing instability as a toddler and preschooler, the effects of which continue into her life today. Ms. Brooks stated that the project is about “stability, dignity, and giving our fellow humans, and someone’s kid, a fair chance to experience safety and to thrive,” and urged the Planning Commission to support the project as an opportunity to positively change life trajectories by partnering with Habitat for Humanity to develop land that has long been earmarked for development.

Katie Ingram, a Lenexa resident, nurse, mother, and homeowner since 2019, spoke in support of the proposed Habitat for Humanity project, explaining that although she and her family were fortunate to buy when they did, they would likely be unable to afford a suitable home in Lenexa today given current housing costs, even with two working parents and stable jobs. She stated that she sees every day, both at work and in her own neighborhood, how a stable home affects a family’s health, well-being, and ability to thrive, and how damaging it can be when that stability slips out of reach. Drawing on her experience as both a nurse and a mother, she emphasized that home stability directly impacts physical health, emotional security, and long-term opportunity. Ms. Ingram noted that while homeownership brings pride, security, and stability, it has become increasingly unattainable for many people who keep the community running, including teachers, first responders, nurses, and caregivers who are being priced out of the areas they serve. She stressed that these are not people asking for handouts, but hardworking members of the community, and said that Habitat for Humanity offers one of the few dignified, permanent solutions by providing affordable homes that allow families to build equity and stability. She explained that when families gain access to stable housing, children perform better in school, parents have room to save and care for their health, and neighborhoods become stronger and safer. As a parent raising children in Lenexa, she said it matters deeply to her that those who teach, protect, and care for her children can afford to live alongside them, and she urged support for the project.

Cecilia Tapia, a resident of Timbers Phase Seven who moved to the neighborhood in July 2023, spoke in opposition to the proposed project, explaining that she chose her home after reviewing approximately 40 locations specifically because of the park and wetland across the street, which she described as “a precious wetland that can’t be replaced.” Identifying herself as an environmentalist who believes in climate change, she emphasized that public servants must “follow all the rules for everybody all the time,” arguing that fairness and public trust are undermined otherwise. Ms. Tapia raised a series of regulatory and legal concerns, citing Kansas statutes related to conflicts of interest (KSA 75-4304), public trust protections for park property (KSA 12-1301 and 12-1302), and Clean Water Act Section 404 permitting through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for any dredging or filling of wetlands, noting that adjacent wetlands could be impacted by disturbance and silting. She also referenced Lenexa’s Unified Development Code protections for natural resources and argued that a traffic impact study is required due to the size of the proposed development and the fact that access is via a two-lane road. Ms. Tapia further cited research linking green space to mental health benefits, including a 2019 Nature Magazine study and attention restoration theory, stating that green space helps reduce stress and cognitive fatigue. She concluded by asserting that the site has long been designated as public open space in the City’s master plan and that moving forward would require a comprehensive plan amendment, stating that the City “can’t arbitrarily change the vision for the city.”

Kevin Schulte, a pastor at Pathway Community Church in Olathe, spoke in support of the proposed Habitat for Humanity project, drawing on his direct experience working with Habitat on the Pathway at Heritage development near 159th Street and Black Bob in southern Johnson County. He described attending the celebration of the first homeowner in that project and witnessing a powerful emotional response, including an individual who “openly began to weep” as he reflected on seeing anger and division replaced by joy and unity through the collaborative effort of many people and groups. Mr. Schulte said this kind of project offers “tangible goodness and beauty” that renews hope, strengthens neighborhood bonds, and brings collective joy and vibrancy to a community by walking alongside families to create better futures for them and their children. He noted that even after working on the project for years and studying its impacts, he was personally surprised by the depth of its ripple effects. He praised Habitat for Humanity’s homes as “absolutely beautiful” and described the organization’s staff as knowledgeable, accessible, committed, and passionate about affordable housing, emphasizing that such projects change the trajectory of lives, health, and education, and offering to give tours of the completed homes in southern Johnson County to illustrate the quality of the development.

Chairman Poss entertained a motion to **CLOSE** the Public Hearing. Moved by Commissioner Burson, seconded by Commissioner Jamison, and carried by a unanimous voice vote.

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Chairman Poss opened deliberations by clarifying that the Planning Commission’s consideration is limited to the applicable review criteria, noting that issues such as who the applicant is, who purchases or rents property, incentives, or the sale of city-owned land fall under a separate City Council process and are not within the commission’s authority, a point he raised in response to public comments that extended beyond the body’s purview. He then asked City Staff to address concerns raised about pollution and the function of the wetlands constructed around 2014/2015. Tim Collins responded by explaining that the wetlands were intentionally designed as a regional facility serving multiple developments, including St. James Academy, future commercial areas, Creekside Woods, and the subject property, with a dual purpose of flood protection and water quality improvement. Mr. Collins stated that wetlands collect and contain pollutants within the system, and that ongoing maintenance by City crews, including Ted Semadeni’s team, involves removing and replacing plants and soils when they become laden with contaminants. Chairman Poss acknowledged the explanation, summarizing that the wetlands operate in stages to capture pollutants such as oil and roadway runoff, with vegetation and soils helping to “clean” the water before it is discharged downstream and ultimately reaches larger waterways, and thanked Mr. Collins for addressing the concern.

Commissioner Burson asked for clarification on whether the proposed development would remove any portion of the existing wetlands, stating, “This development does not at all remove one square inch of the wetland, is that correct?” Tim Collins confirmed, “That is correct.”

Chairman Poss asked Scott McCullough to address questions regarding the trail network and how its alignment may change under the proposed development, noting that the configuration appeared to be somewhat in flux. Mr. McCullough responded that the trail currently exists and generally follows the green dashed alignment shown, but because of the new local street serving the subdivision, the trail would be relocated slightly to the south. He explained that, as this is a preliminary plat, the alignment is still conceptual, but the intent is to shift the trail farther from the property line, route it south of the new roadway, and adjust the crossing point along Clare Road. Mr. McCullough stated that the revised crossing would be positioned to avoid the turn lane and would cross only two lanes of traffic, noting that while the trail currently crosses Clare Road at one location, it would be moved farther south under the proposed plan.

Commissioner Horine asked Scott McCullough to clarify public comments suggesting that the proposed development represented more than a one-class step down in housing classification from surrounding

neighborhoods. Mr. McCullough explained that the standard requires a project to be no more than one classification lower than the adjacent residential classification, and that applying this standard requires examining the specific plats and phases of the surrounding Timbers subdivision, which has developed over more than 20 years. He noted that the adjacent homes are classified as Class C, as indicated on their recorded plats, while nearby tracts, such as amenity and City-owned parcels, do not carry housing classifications because they are not residential lots. Based on the applicable adjacent Class C designation, Staff determined that the appropriate classification for the project is Class D, which meets the requirement of being no more than one class step down.

Commissioner Horine then asked about density concerns raised during public comment, and Mr. McCullough explained that residential zoning districts are defined by both use and intensity, with the RP-1 District allowing up to 3.5 dwelling units per acre, and that developments within this range are considered compatible regardless of whether they are built at lower or higher densities within the district.

Commissioner Horine questioned the applicant about the projected five- to six-year timeline. Lindsay Hicks explained that approximately 18 months would be devoted to infrastructure, followed by phased vertical construction of homes in groups, typically around 15 homes at a time, to align with funding sources.

Finally, Commissioner Horine asked about the involvement of a private builder. The applicant clarified that a private builder would assist in constructing some of the more than five housing types within the development, working alongside Habitat rather than building unrelated homes.

Commissioner Harber thanked residents for their participation and shared his perspective as a lifelong Lenexa resident, noting that Lenexa's housing challenges mirror broader trends across Johnson County. Drawing on his work with the Johnson County Commission on Aging, he explained that housing affordability pressures are being driven largely by rising appraisals and appreciation that are pushing homes into higher price cohorts, rather than by the removal of lower-priced housing. He cited recent data showing modest growth in the \$300,000–\$500,000 range but sharp increases in higher price brackets, including double-digit growth above \$500,000 and significant increases in homes priced over \$1.1 million. He emphasized that inventory below \$350,000, where many property tax relief programs and first-time buyers are concentrated, is rapidly disappearing, with little incentive for owners to sell and few new homes being built at those price points. Commissioner Harber noted that while apartments are often discussed as a solution, many residents oppose additional apartment development, raising the question of where working residents will live as prices continue to rise. He shared an anecdote from a recent meeting in Topeka in which a Lenexa-area State Representative told him he could not afford to buy a home in Lenexa and was renting instead, underscoring the scope of the issue. He encouraged a broad-minded approach to housing policy, expressed appreciation for staff's work on the plan, and concluded by sharing his positive past experiences with Habitat for Humanity projects, recalling that future homeowners were actively involved in building their homes and took great pride in them.

Commissioner Dharod asked about access to the proposed 50-lot development, specifically whether having a single access point was adequate for traffic flow and emergency response. Mr. McCullough explained that 50 lots is the maximum allowed for a subdivision with one access point and that the proposal meets all city standards for traffic distribution and emergency access, with confirmation from the fire prevention chief.

Commissioner Dharod inquired whether use of a Community Land Trust would limit the City's ability to enforce property maintenance codes. Mr. McCullough stated that it would not, noting the City would enforce codes with the land trust as it would with any other legal property owner.

In closing, Commissioner Dharod reflected on the Planning Commission's responsibility to apply the zoning code and review criteria, stated that the Staff Report demonstrates the application fits within the established framework and complies with the Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map, and parks and recreation plan, and indicated his support for the development.

Commissioner Wagner emphasized the importance of maintaining buffers between trails and fence lines, particularly preserving existing mature tree lines, and encouraged a carefully considered plan to protect that vegetation. She also asked whether a traffic study had been completed or would be required. Mr. McCullough explained that no traffic study was requested because the City's arterial and collector street network was designed to align with the Comprehensive Plan, and developments that conform to that plan are presumed to be adequately accommodated. He noted that Clare Road is expected to handle the anticipated traffic volumes based on existing modeling.

Commissioner Wagner concluded that, after reviewing the rezoning in relation to the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map, the proposal met the applicable criteria and stated that she was in favor of it.

Commissioner Katterhenry asked how long affordability requirements would remain in effect when homes are resold. Lindsay Hicks explained that under the ground lease structure, resales must be to income-qualified families, ensuring the homes remain affordable in perpetuity through the same vetting process. Commissioner Katterhenry acknowledged the explanation and noted that many of his other questions had already been addressed. He then raised the issue of whether other City-owned land might be available for this type of development. Staff responded that such considerations were outside the scope of the Planning Commission's role, which is to evaluate applicant-driven proposals based on adopted codes.

Commissioner Woolf asked several questions about the proposed development, focusing on the park and trail interface, including whether there is potential to add landscaping buffer between the trail and the new fence line, or whether the trail might be shifted slightly south to accommodate shrubs or trees. Mr. McCullough responded that it was a possibility and noted that detailed park programming and design is planned in the coming years, which could address that buffer. He also explained that the City's trail plan includes trails through similar corridors, often close to backyards, and that the concept could be explored further during park planning.

Commissioner Woolf asked about the type of trail crossing that would be installed, noting that current crossings like the one near Mill Creek Elementary are marked by yield signs. Mr. McCullough said crossings are determined by traffic warrants and envisioned a more formal crossing in the future, potentially including features like a raised median and a defined landing zone.

Commissioner Woolf concluded by noting that the park, at 40 acres, would be the third largest in Lenexa, about 80% the size of Sar-Ko-Par Park and twice the size of Mill Creek Park, and would represent a substantial amenity to the area, compared to the original plan for a 15-acre park.

Commissioner Jamison reviewed his notes and observed that both proponents and opponents agreed there is a need for attainable housing. He stated that, considering the Comprehensive Plan and the community's vision for the future, he supports the proposal because he believes it aligns with what the City's residents have requested and makes sense within the broader plan.

Commissioner Burson, who noted that he served on the Comprehensive Plan committee for years, explained that the parcel and proposed park had been extensively discussed through that process and that the proposal aligns with the community's long-term planning. He pointed out that, according to the City of Lenexa's parks website, the area is not currently listed as a park but as a trail system, and is only

a future planned park, though he acknowledged that residents may feel differently. He said he had listened carefully to comments from nearby residents and observed that many who spoke live in the Timbers and had seen the land transition from open fields to residential development over time; he noted that development has historically occurred as Western Lenexa evolved from farmland to neighborhoods. He emphasized that the Planning Commission's role is to determine whether this expected growth conforms to the Unified Development Code and other standards, and he expressed full agreement with the Golden Criteria as outlined by staff, praising the Staff Report for its detail. Commissioner Burson then shared his own experience living in a previously undeveloped area, describing how his home was built on a former sod farm and how the surrounding area has since developed into a diverse community with homes, apartments, businesses, and amenities. He highlighted that he enjoys the City's parks and trails, noting that many existing trails run close to backyards without buffer zones and that he finds this acceptable. He concluded that this land will be developed and that the Planning Commission's responsibility is to ensure it is done in a way that supports the City's overall growth and diversity; therefore, he stated he is in support of the plan.

Chairman Poss began by thanking everyone for the meeting and noting that the discussion remained respectful. He acknowledged that land-use issues can be emotional and shared that the trailway under discussion has been his family's "adopt a spot" area for six years, during which they have regularly picked up trash, and that he has long anticipated eventual housing development there based on the future land use plan. He emphasized that, while he understands residents' concerns about green space, he approached the matter from his role as a Planning Commissioner and focused on the zoning request. Chairman Poss stated that the proposed density falls within the RP-1, Planned Residential (Low-Density) District zoning classification, with the applicant requesting 2.9 dwelling units per acre compared to the 3.5 allowed by code, and that RP-1 aligns with the suburban residential character of adjacent properties and the Future Land Use Map. He said he agreed with the City Staff's analysis of the Golden Criteria, including criteria one, two, three, and ten regarding traffic, and noted that as a local resident he does not consider traffic in the area to be problematic. Chairman Poss also concurred with the Staff's assessment of the preliminary plan and plat, finding the requested front yard setback reductions reasonable and similar to recent approvals, and describing the proposed lot width and lot area reductions as acceptable, with the small lot area differences being negligible in a community of Lenexa's size. On landscaping, he acknowledged valid questions about buffering and suggested the possibility of moving the trail slightly south but noted potential constraints such as the Evergy power line easement and planting restrictions. He also urged the applicant to respect and preserve the mature tree line on the north side where possible, recognizing that development and utility grading may limit what can be saved.

MOTION

Chairman Poss entertained a motion to recommend **APPROVAL** for rezoning property from AG to RP-1 for **Clear Creek Subdivision** located near the southeast corner of the intersection of 86th Terrace and Clare Road.

Moved by Commissioner Burson, seconded by Commissioner Jamison, and carried by a unanimous voice vote.

Chairman Poss entertained a motion to recommend **APPROVAL** of the preliminary plan/plat for Clear Creek Subdivision located near the southeast corner of the intersection of 86th Terrace and Clare Road for a single-family residential development with the following deviations:

1. Deviations from Section 4-1-B-6-F of the UDC to allow a reduction to the front yard setback, lot width, and lot area as described in the Deviations section of the Staff Report.

Moved by Commissioner Burson, seconded by Commissioner Jamison, and carried by a unanimous voice vote.

5. Proposed Amendment to the Unified Development Code — Regulations related to drinking establishments. UDC26-01 (Public Hearing)

STAFF PRESENTATION

Stephanie Sullivan presented the staff report and noted that a public hearing is required for the proposed text amendment. She summarized that the current code classifies a drinking establishment as a special use in the City Center (CC) and Planned Mixed Use (PMU) Zoning Districts, which requires review by the Planning Commission and City Council. The proposed amendment would change drinking establishments from a special use to a permitted use in those districts, eliminating the need for a special use permit process. Ms. Sullivan noted that the Code includes supplementary use regulations that would still apply, including setbacks from schools and residential areas, permit duration, noise, trash, outdoor activity, and licensing, and that special use permits can be revoked if issues arise. She pointed out that the CC and PMU Zoning Districts cover a relatively small area of the City, with only one PMU property located near the northeast corner of Prairie Star Parkway and Renner Boulevard, just south of City Center. She concluded by stating that Staff recommends holding the required public hearing and recommends approval of the text amendment to change drinking establishments to a permitted use in the CC and PMU Districts.

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Poss **OPENED** the Public Hearing and asked if anyone wished to speak on this item. Hearing no comments from the public, Chairman Poss entertained a motion to **CLOSE** the Public Hearing.

Moved by Commissioner Jamison, seconded by Commissioner Horine, and carried by a unanimous voice vote.

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioner Burson expressed surprise that there is only one area zoned Planned Mixed Use (PMU) in the City and confirmed with Ms. Sullivan that this was correct, noting it was a relatively recent rezoning of the former Kiewit site, now occupied by Rally House. Ms. Sullivan clarified that the City has many Planned Unit Developments (PUDs); however, PMU zoning is rarely used. Mr. McCullough added that mixed-use concepts are often implemented through PUDs rather than PMU zoning.

Commissioner Horine followed up by asking whether the PMU zoning would allow Rally House to open a bar, and Ms. Sullivan explained that under the proposed amendment a drinking establishment would be a permitted use, whereas currently it would require a special use permit.

Commissioner Harber asked whether the PMU zoning covered undeveloped portions of the former Kiewit site, and Ms. Sullivan responded that only the developed area is zoned PMU.

Commissioner Burson then questioned why PMU was included in the ordinance change. Mr. McCullough explained that City Center District and Planned Mixed Use District are considered sister districts with similar intended uses and development goals, and that including PMU allows consistency and accounts for future mixed-use areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan, such as along Ridgeview Road north of K-10.

MOTION

Chairman Poss entertained a motion to recommend **APPROVAL** of the Text Amendment to Sections 4-1-B-22, 4-1-B-28, and 4-1-B-29 of the Unified Development Code relating to regulations for drinking establishments as drafted within the Staff Report.

Moved by Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Horine, and carried by a unanimous voice vote.

STAFF REPORT

Staff had no additional information to share with the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Poss ended the regular meeting of the Lenexa Planning Commission at 11:26 p.m. on Monday, February 2, 2026.