

CITY OF WARREN
PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING

Regular Meeting held on April 7, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.,

A Regular Meeting of the Warren Planning Commission was called for Monday, April 7, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., in the Warren Community Center Auditorium, 5460 Arden, Warren, Michigan 48092.

Commissioner's Present:

Delwar Ansar
Andrey Duzyj
Michael Holowaty
Syed Hoque
Sultana Chowdhury, Assistant Secretary
Mahmuda Mouri, Secretary
Merle Boniecki, Vice Chair
Warren Smith, Chair

Also present:

Ron Wuerth – Planning Director
Michelle Katopodes – Planner III
David Crabtree – Assistant Planner
Melissa Maisano – Administrative Secretary
Mary Michaels – Acting City Attorney
Christie Laabs – Communication Department

1. CALL TO ORDER:
Chair Smith – Calls the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

3. ROLL CALL:
All members present.

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

MOTION:

A motion was made by Commissioner Holowaty to approve the agenda, supported by Secretary Mouri. A voice vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES MARCH 24, 2025:

MOTION:

A motion was made by Secretary Mouri to approve the minutes, supported by Assistant Secretary Chowdhury. A voice vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

6. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:

Members of the audience who wish to address the Planning Commission this evening for a public hearing item may do so by first checking in with the court reporter at the right of the stage and will have three (3) minutes to speak.

- A. REQUEST TO VACATE PUBLIC UTILITY EASEMENT; vacate the existing north/south twelve (12) ft. public utility easement abutting Lots 19 through 22 of Curfu Subdivision, located between Murthum Avenue and Miller Drive; 31925 Van Dyke Avenue; Section 4; Nick Lavdas/Lavdas Self Storage, LLC (Robert Kirk/Kirk, Huth, Lange & Badalamenti, PLC); PEV250001.

PETITIONERS PORTION:

Mr. Robert Kirk – Good evening, Robert Kirk, 19500 Hall Road, Clinton Township. I'm here on behalf of Mr. Lavdas, who owns the old Pampa Lanes, that's going to be a Sheetz as you know, you approved the site plan there.

During our title work we found that there was an easement that ran behind the building, which we are not going to build on. It's a vacant easement, there's nothing there, so they want to go through and clean that off of the title before they proceed with any further construction. The easement where it stands right now will be behind the parking lot by the pond. We just want to clean up the title, so we want to move to vacate it and request your recommendation to City Council for that.

Secretary Mouri reads the following correspondence:

TAXES: Current.

ENGINEERING: Preliminary review of this site yielded no comments from the Engineering Division.

WATER: Attached are the sanitary and water maps for the properties on Van Dyke between Murthum and Miller Drive. If there is a 12' Easement, it looks as if water is clear. However, our sanitary is not clear and I would not suggest vacating the public utility easement, as we will need access to the sanitary manholes.

AT&T: AT&T does not object to the outright vacation of this utility easement.

COMCAST: Comcast has aerial facilities along the southern east/west easement. As long as the proposed north/south vacation doesn't cross into it, Comcast has no objections to the proposal. Please refer to the attached map for the location of Comcast CATV/FIBER facilities. Aerial cables are highlighted in orange for fiber and yellow for coax cable. Underground is highlighted in blue for fiber and green for coax cable. If we can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact us by email at ccutilityrequests@teamsigma.com.

MCPWO: The Macomb County Public Works Office (MCPWO) has reviewed the request to vacate the public utility easement at the address referenced above and have determined this request has no effect on any county assets and therefore have no objection to vacate the existing easement.

MDOT: It appears all work is outside of MDOT ROW, no concerns.

Mr. Ron Wuerth reads the recommendation of the Staff:

MOTION:

A motion was made by Commissioner Duzyj to approve, supported by Commissioner Holowaty.

COMMISSIONERS PORTION:

Commissioner Duzyj – First of all, Mr. Wuerth, did we catch this after all this? I'm glad we caught it, let's put it that way.

Mr. Ron Wuerth – Well there's nothing to catch, it's just part of the old plat. It was on the plan, the plan on your monitor, but that's an overlay that we've shown where this exists. And at the time that they came through, and that is Sheetz, they left it on the plan, there wasn't much thought about it. We questioned it they really didn't have a problem with it there at the time and so we approved the plan.

Now they've come back, and it's become a minor issue, but they'd like to clear it. I think primarily so other utilities won't use it behind the building itself and at the top of the rim of that detention pond. You can see it on your monitor in red that will be eliminated.

Commissioner Duzyj – I think it's a good idea that we are doing this now verses at a later date or otherwise. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair Smith – I’m glad this is before us tonight to eliminate any problems in the future.

Mr. Robert Kirk – Yes, we knew about it when we first got our title work, but we wanted to get through site plan then take care of it.

ROLL CALL:

The motion carried as follows:

Commissioner Duzyj.....	Yes
Commissioner Holowaty.....	Yes
Commissioner Ansar.....	Yes
Commissioner Hoque.....	Yes
Assistant Secretary Chowdhury.....	Yes
Secretary Mouri.....	Yes
Vice Chair Boniecki.....	Yes
Chair Smith.....	Yes

- B. REVISED SITE PLAN FOR A RESIDENTIAL TRIPLEX DWELLING BUILDING; located on the south side of 11 Mile Road, approximately 671.6 ft. west of Mound Road; 13-20-227-001 (11 Mile Road); Section 20; Ginkgo Property Group/MD Haque; PSP230026. Originally approved on August 21, 2023 as a residential fourplex dwelling building.

PETITIONERS PORTION:

Mr. MD Haque – Good evening, Warren Planning Commission Members, present fellow neighbors, and concerned residents. My name is MD Haque, I represent Ginkgo Property Group. We are the developer proposing the residential project located on the south side of Eleven Mile Road just west of Mound Road past 696 Service Drive.

This stretch of Eleven Mile is relatively quiet with minimal through traffic making it an ideal location for residential development. This area is predominantly residential although it’s currently zoned commercial. By proposing residential use, we are actually aligning more closely with the existing characters of the neighborhood effectively maintaining the status quo.

We’ve worked closely with the City of Warren Planning Department to ensure the best possible use for our land. Our proposal is for triplex and townhouse-style residential development. Each unit will feature three bedrooms, two baths, in-unit laundry and attached two-car garages plus, three additional parking spaces with a dedicated approach from Eleven Mile Road.

These modern well-designed homes will blend seamlessly with the surrounding neighborhood with ample parking and garage included. The development will not place any additional traffic burden on the nearby side street, moreover the project includes extensive landscaping and greenspace, enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the area and contributing positively to the City's appearance. Importantly, the building footprint covers only 24% of the lot, leaving generous space for recreational and landscape area for future residents.

This is a unique corner lot bordered north by Eleven Mile Road, to the west by Blackmar Avenue, to the east by a vacant parcel, and to the south by a 20-foot public alley. Because of this natural separation, our development will maintain ample distance from the neighborhood properties, ensuring that it does not obstruct anyone's existing views, space, access, or enjoyment of their property.

In fact, in August of 2023, this Commission approved a four-unit development on the same lot. What we are presenting tonight is a refined and improved version of the plan reducing it to three units to better align with feedback and community compatibility.

In summary, this proposed project is thoughtfully designed, architecturally appealing, well-suited to the location, and will transform an underutilized lot into a beautiful, vibrant, residential space. This development will not only increase the neighborhood safety, actively through occupancy, but it will also elevate property value and enhance the visual characteristics of the area. While we acknowledge that a few variances will be needed, tonight we are here respectfully requesting your approval to move forward with this exciting beneficial project. Thank you.

Secretary Mouri reads the following correspondence:

TAXES: Current.

ENGINEERING:

1. Site plan shall show the location of all existing and proposed underground utilities including their size, material type, connections, and discharge point in the vicinity of the project (Engineeringinforequest@cityofwarren.org).
2. Drive approach on Eleven Mile Road shall comply with the current City of Warren specifications.
3. Dumpster pad shall be minimum 8" concrete.

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4. Soil erosion and sedimentation control permit or waiver shall be required from Macomb County Department of Public Works.

AT&T: AT&T does not object to the revised plans. We do have facilities in the ROW, but they should not be affected.

COMCAST: Comcast has facilities in the area but no conflicts are anticipated.

MCPWO: The Macomb County Public Works Office (MCPWO) has reviewed the site plan for the project referenced above and have determined this site is not under the jurisdiction of MCPWO. This portion of 11 Mile Road is under the jurisdiction of the City of Warren. Should the City of Warren require a No-Objection letter from this office, please reach out to Wes Jonik at Wesley.Jonik@macombgov.org or 586-469-5961.

MDOT: This project is not adjacent to an MDOT road, no concerns.

Ms. Michelle Katopodes reads the recommendation of the Staff:
Amend Item 3 – A performance bond in the amount of \$13,500.00 be posted according to the estimated cost of \$450,000.00 by the petitioner.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Mr. Steve Hunyadi – Good evening, 26703 Blackmar Avenue. We are a residential area and within the last couple of years have started to see more families move into our neighborhood. We are seeing more young children that are out playing and it's a great revitalization for the neighborhood.

If you go one block east, you're at a commercial development, it's primarily medical but there's a lot of vacant property there. If you go east, on the other side of Mound, it's all commercial industrial. I'd like to keep this area residential, and I think that the proposal that's on the table right now supports that and supports our view.

As a resident in that area that's what I'm looking to do. As a resident in that area, I don't want commercial businesses in our neighborhood any closer than they are right now. So, if we have a chance to build our neighborhood back to where it should be and what we want it to be, I'd ask for your vote of confidence in this proposal. Thank you.

Mr. Allen Johnson – Good evening Honorable Board Commissions, my name is Allen Johnson, 26719 Blackmar. A Warren resident

since 1972, a Warren homeowner since 1985, and Warren homeowner on Blackmar since 2009. I'm in support of this project. If you check the records, it was zoned, I don't know if it currently is commercial. Commercial would not be an enhancement to the area, it would be a detriment. Any housing would be greatly appreciated especially in the City of Warren and as the previous neighbor stated it would be great for families to come in. Thank you.

Secretary Mouri reads the following letter into the record:

To City of Warren Planning Commission,

My name is Kamal Alturky, and I live at 26735 Blackmar Avenue, Warren, Michigan 48091. I received the notice regarding the proposed development at the corner of 11 Mile Road and Blackmar but was unable to attend the Planning Commission meeting. I'd like to take a moment to share my full support for the proposal.

That lot has been vacant for as long as I can remember. Although it's currently zoned commercial, I believe residential development would be a much better fit for our neighborhood. Our area is predominantly residential, and maintaining that character is important to many of us who live here.

A well-planned residential project would not only complement the surrounding homes but also improve the overall appearance and value of the area. I appreciate your time and hope the proposal is approved in alignment with the community's best interests.

Sincerely,
Kamal Alturky

MOTION:

A motion was made by Commissioner Holowaty to approve, supported by Commissioner Duzyj.

COMMISSIONERS PORTION:

Commissioner Holowaty – Good evening, I've driven by there many times, and I do think it would be a good use of this vacant land. I agree with the residents, they do not need any more industrial or small factories there. Do you have any problems with any of the recommendations that the Planning Department recommended to be done before building?

Mr. MD Haque – No problems. Just a few things that Michelle brought up, it’s scaling, we have to revise it, we’ll get that corrected. We have no problem building that fence.

Commissioner Duzyj – How many square feet are these units going to be?

Mr. MD Haque – Each unit will be roughly around 1,300 to 1,400 square feet.

Commissioner Duzyj – I think having this as a residential is ideal, especially for this area. I’m actually surprised it was zoned C-2. If I can make a comment to the residents that are here, you will probably get notice as far as the Zoning Board of Appeals to change the zoning from C-2 to residential. My suggestion would be to definitely attend that meeting because he can’t do it if it’s still C-2. I live at Eleven and Ryan, so I’ve been past this, God only knows, how many times. As a matter of fact, I used to stand on the corner of Eleven and Mound and wait for the Chicago Road bus to go to school in Hamtramck. With that being said, I think this is a terrific idea for the area, we don’t need any more commercial development in that area anyway. There’s enough noise from the freeway and Mound so I agree with the residents, and I commend you for doing this project in this area as a residential development. Thank you very much.

Chair Smith – I’m glad we finally have something that’s going to be looking nice on that corner and I’m glad that the neighbors are good with it. Good luck with your project.

ROLL CALL:

The motion carried as follows:

- Commissioner Holowaty..... Yes
- Commissioner Duzyj..... Yes
- Commissioner Ansar..... Yes
- Commissioner Hoque..... Yes
- Assistant Secretary Chowdhury..... Yes
- Secretary Mouri..... Yes
- Vice Chair Boniecki..... Yes
- Chair Smith..... Yes

7. CORRESPONDENCE:

Updated Planning Department Fee Schedule; approved by City Council on March 25, 2025.

MOTION:

A motion was made by Assistant Secretary Chowdhury to receive and file, supported by Commissioner Holowaty.

ROLL CALL:

The motion carried as follows:

Assistant Secretary Chowdhury.....	Yes
Commissioner Holowaty.....	Yes
Commissioner Ansar.....	Yes
Commissioner Duzyj.....	Yes
Commissioner Hoque.....	Yes
Secretary Mouri.....	Yes
Vice Chair Boniecki.....	Yes
Chair Smith.....	Yes

8. OLD BUSINESS:

SITE PLAN FOR NEW 37TH DISTRICT COURTHOUSE BUILDING; DOWNTOWN CENTER, GATEWAY NEIGHBORHOOD; located on west side of Kennedy Circle, between Common Road and Court Street; 8300 Common Road & 29900 Civic Center Drive; Section 10; City of Warren DOA Police & Court (Tom Bommarito); PSP230010. **Approved on May 8, 2023. Petitioner is requesting a two (2) year extension to May 8, 2027.**

PETITIONERS PORTION:

Ms. Annette Gattari-Ross – Good evening, Planning Commission, my name is Annette Gattari-Ross, I am the 37th District Court Administrator/Magistrate. We were before the Planning Commission in May of 2023, the Architect from BKV presented a beautiful presentation with a building and all the details. The architects have been working hard, we’ve been through the predesign and the design development stage. So, once we reached that stage, then there was the estimation of cost, and we are working with the City, the financing is something that is always a challenge.

It’s a very expensive endeavor for the Planning Commissioners that were here when they gave the presentation. Everything was considered making sure that the building was designed for safety, security, the building is obsolete, to make sure that it’s accessible to

everybody, the current building has many, many challenges. All those considerations were addressed and right now we are working with the City and bond counsel to figure out how we can finance the building, so we need some more time to do that. That's why we are asking for an extension of the site plan. We have support from the Administration, City Council, and the residents, it's always been positive, everybody wants to do it, we just have to figure out how to pay for it.

Chair Smith – Any recommendations?

Mr. Ron Wuerth – My recommendation is to approve it.

MOTION:

A motion was made by Commissioner Duzyj to approve a 2-year extension, supported by Commissioner Ansar.

COMMISSIONERS PORTION:

Commissioner Duzyj – Who's got the plans for this, do we have a copy of the plan at the Planning Department?

Mr. Ron Wuerth – We have a file and plans that were approved by the City here.

Commissioner Duzyj – So stopping in and taking a look at that is not a problem?

Mr. Ron Wuerth – No.

ROLL CALL:

The motion carried as follows:

Commissioner Duzyj.....	Yes
Commissioner Ansar.....	Yes
Commissioner Holowaty.....	Yes
Commissioner Hoque.....	Yes
Assistant Secretary Chowdhury.....	Yes
Secretary Mouri.....	Yes
Vice Chair Boniecki.....	Yes
Chair Smith.....	Yes

9. BOND RELEASE:
None at this time.

10. NEW BUSINESS:
None at this time.

11. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

Mr. Steve Hunyadi – Steve Hunyadi, 26703 Blackmar Avenue. I spoke earlier, I just wanted to say thank you very much to the Commission Members for approving this. It really does keep our neighborhood a neighborhood and that's what we are looking to do. We have families that are moving in with kids. Thank you very much.

12. PLANNING COMMISSION BUSINESS:

A) Planning Director's Report:

Mr. Ron Wuerth – This is just the usual, going through the last couple of weeks of my activities. Part of last week I wasn't here, I was pretty ill. We've had a couple of events; I was at the City Council Meeting in which they didn't ask for my opinion, they just approved the fees automatically so there was no problem with that.

We had a meeting on March 26th, and that was about a conditional rezoning on the corner of Dequindre and John B, that's down on the southeast corner of the City. It was an old flea market, if you look in the Master Plan it's part of the redevelopment area proposal. We had quite a discussion with, we believe, the new owner and we'll see how that works out. I hope this person does get it rezoned we can do a lot in that corner of Warren.

I attended GIS-type work with the staff in the morning and the afternoon of the 3rd, that was pretty interesting. We are going to move forward with that, rapidly, in the Planning Department. On the 4th, there was a discussion about rezoning with conditions all together and the procedure process, we did that with Ms. Michaels. It's not disjointed, it's just where things fall. There's an agreement involved, there's this, there's that, so we want to make it clear and make it clearer for the public when they come in for this type of rezoning.

That's basically all I have other than I did pass out to the Commission this response letter. It came out I believe on the 10th to the Planning Commission from a Sharkey Haddad of the Chaldean Commerce group and they had an opinion about the Planning Staff. It took me a while to get around to this and I apologize for that. I wanted to answer his questions, I don't usually do this, but this was directed directly to you all and not to me. It involves myself and it

involves my staff and your staff for that matter. So, I'd like to read this, if I'm allowed to. Is it okay for me to read this, Mr. Chair?

Chair Smith – Go ahead, Mr. Wuerth, thank you.

Mr. Ron Wuerth:

RE: Letter received by the Warren Planning Commission members related to the March 10, 2025 Planning Commission meeting from Sharkey Haddad, Special Projects Manager, Chaldean American Chamber of Commerce.

The above-mentioned letter dated Sunday, March 9, 2025 at 8:37 PM was also cc'd to the Mayor, City Council, Treasurer, City Clerk, Eric Hawkins, several known Chaldean Americans, Senator Paul Wojno, and Sarmad Abdal of MSN.com. The purpose, in my opinion, of this letter was to totally discredit the entire Planning Staff. I have broken down the two paragraphs into the complaints that were rendered, four in the first paragraph and three in the second, as follows, with comments:

1. *Due to a clear failure amongst Planning Staff to share the necessary materials with the public, residents, and business owners in advance of the March 10, 2025 Planning commission meeting.*

ANSWER: The Planning Staff has been well trained to answer questions and share “necessary materials” with the public, including residents, business owners, politicians, ethnic groups, and the governor. Most information is available to the public and is provided by the Planning Staff. However, two types of information are not available to the public.

First, the site plan may be viewed at our public counter with a member of the Staff present. Anyone may view the document; however, copies of the plan are not available to the public due to the strict laws regarding the subject of copyrights. No pictures may be taken and no copies are made for the public. These are the rules unless the owner or designer of the site plan

releases the site plans to the public after receiving written approval.

The second type of information not available to the public are requests for the findings and recommendations relating to the proposed changes on a property. This document is considered a fluid document because it represents a product of the Planning Staff's professional research and results of a decision to approve or deny a site plan. The findings and recommendations only become available to the public when the Planning Commission votes to approve or deny such request. When the meeting is adjourned, the findings and recommendations become available to the public but only through a FOIA request.

2. *Planning Staff refused to share any information and staff reports with the public.*

ANSWER: This statement of requests was answered in No. 1 in detail.

3. *Not providing information, this is not common practice in the Planning field and amongst other municipal Planning Departments throughout the state (including Mohamed Ayoub, Director of the Westland Planning and Building Department).*

ANSWER: I have had this discussion with leaders of many municipal Planning Departments. Once I explain that respecting copyright laws and not releasing a private product of the Planning Staff until the Planning Commission has issued their decision on the issue, then, and only then, is the information released, unlike the practice of other municipal Planning Departments.

4. *This lack of transparency directly undermines the integrity of the Planning process and prevents the community from being adequately informed, educated, and prepared to participate in discussions that impact the community.*

ANSWER: The Planning Staff procedures are extremely transparent and therefore increase the integrity of the

Planning Staff beyond what other municipal Planning Department procedures are performed.

The Planning Staff, utilizing the guidelines of the State of Michigan Planning Enabling Acts, performs our duty of notifying the public withing 350 ft. of a proposed change (300 ft. is the minimum distance) well in advance of the date of the public hearing. The public has plenty of time to become educated and be prepared to participate in the discussions of a proposal.

5. *One of the core responsibilities of any Planning body is to ensure that the public has the opportunity to review, understand, and provide meaningful input on proposals before decisions are made.*

ANSWER: The response to No. 5 is answered in No. 4.

6. *The failure to make these materials available contradicts the fundamental principles of Planning – public engagement, education, and informed decision-making.*

ANSWER: These accusations may be considered ridiculous. Our Planning Department provides more forums and chances for public hearings on all Planning-related subjects than most, if not all, municipal Planning Departments in the State of Michigan. Most municipalities want to utilize administrative approvals to circumvent public hearings and eliminate the public voice.

7. *Without access to relevant documents, residents and stakeholders are left in the dark, unable to offer constructive feedback or raise legitimate concerns.*

ANSWER: The Planning Staff provides, perhaps, more information to the public than most municipal Planning Departments. Planning Staff leadership has and will meet with concerned persons prior to a public hearing to help persons better understand a perceived situation.

The responses to the questions, many being redundant and focusing on information not provided until after a public hearing, become available to the public for their review. Always remember that the Planning Commission abides by “Robert’s Rules of Order”, the Commission’s Bylaws, the Zoning Ordinance, the Master Plan (2021), the “Open Meetings Act”, and the State of Michigan Planning and Zoning Enabling Acts to guide us all to extremely well-informed decisions.

I am extremely proud of the Planning Staff’s professionalism in working through the process and procedures that all lead us to the right decisions and recommendations. We then pass on this information to the Planning Commission for their well-informed decision making for the City of Warren.

Mr. Ron Wuerth – This was my response to this letter received, and we’ve gotten maybe one in the past 30 years that they said I’ve been here; I’ve been here longer, and I hope to continue to do the type that I expect of myself and I expect of my staff for this City. So, with that if you have any questions regarding this, I’d be glad to answer them.

MOTION:

A motion was made by Commissioner Holowaty to receive and file, supported by Commissioner Duzyj.

COMMISSIONERS PORTION:

Commissioner Holowaty – I commend you, Mr. Wuerth, on this professional letter and I commend the staff for their professionalism. As one of the newcomers on the Planning Commission, the paperwork I get every week is professionally done. I know that a lot of the information is available ahead of time, I know when it’s up for rezoning I know the people are notified. So, I commend you for all your hard work, thank you.

Commissioner Duzyj – Nice job, well done, well said. This is appropriate, and I appreciate you taking the time and the effort to write this because this really is important to do especially after a full house screaming for everybody’s head and not knowing what the heck they are talking about.

On number 3, the Director of the Westland Planning and Building Department, it's one department, does this mean he's the director of both?

Mr. Ron Wuerth – He directed this letter.

Commissioner Duzyj – I'm surprised they have a Planning Department and a Building Department and one department runs them both.

Mr. Ron Wuerth – They do, they are a small City on the west side of southeast Michigan, and I'll say this, he likes to make his contacts to other places with his company phone.

Commissioner Duzyj – Fair enough, I understand, nice job.

Mr. Ron Wuerth – You're welcome.

Chair Smith – Thank you for putting the letter together and allowing us to retain our position in what we do without being discriminated against.

Mr. Ron Wuerth – Thank you very much, I just think we are the best.

Chair Smith – That was a motion by Commissioner Holowaty, supported by Commissioner Duzyj to receive and file. A voice vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

B) Planning Commission Discussion and Concerns:

None at this time.

13. CALENDAR OF PENDING MATTERS:

None at this time.

14. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION:

A motion was made by Commissioner Duzyj to adjourn, supported by Commissioner Holowaty. A voice vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Warren Smith, Chair

Mahmuda Mouri, Secretary

Meeting recorded and transcribed by
Mary Clark - CER-6819

E-mail: maryclark130@gmail.com

APPROVED

Mary Clark CER-6819
April 7th, 2025