

**CITY OF OREM  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
March 19th, 2025**

The following items are discussed in these minutes:

- **CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS** — All items approved:
  - **3.1 Minutes** — Review and Approve the Minutes from March 5, 2025 Meeting -Approved
- **ACTION AND PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:**
  - **4.1 PUBLIC HEARING** Whitestone Estates —Ordinance amending Article 22-5-3(A) and the Zoning Map of the City of Orem by rezoning the property located generally at 710 West 2000 South from the Open Space (OSS) Zone to the Single Family Residential (R8) Zone
  - **4.2 PUBLIC HEARING**, continued from March 5, 2025 —Ordinance amending Articles 22-14-20(I) and 22-1-5(G) modifying requirements for the conduct of neighborhood meetings in advance of applications to the Planning Commission.

A recording of the meeting can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/livef-l0Ci3YiR1Fc?si=ieZ IflHJ€i4b7jiCb->

## **WORK SESSION**

Place: Orem City Council Chambers

At **4:39 p.m.** Chair Komen called the Work Session to order.

Those present: Mike Carpenter, Gerald Crismon, Rod Erickson, James (Jim) Hawkes, Madeline Komen, Britton Runolfson and Haysam Sakar, Planning Commission members; Gary McGinn, Development Services Director/Legal Counsel; Jared Hall, Planning Division Manager; Rebecca Gourley, Grace Bjarnson Associate Planners; Grant Allen, Matthew Taylor Senior Planners; Taggart Bowen, City Engineer; John Dorn Transportation Engineer; David Spencer, City Council Liaison.

### **Those excused:**

1. General Plan Update: Staff outlined the general plan timeline and presented the Introduction/Executive Summary, Land use sections for Commissioner discussion.
2. Discussion of Changes to the Home Occupation Business License Regulation: Postponed.

The work session concluded at 5:25 PM in preparation for the regular meeting.

## **REGULAR MEETING**

Place: Orem City Council Chambers

At 5:34 p.m. Chair Komen called the Planning Commission meeting to order. Britton Runolfson offered the invocation.

Those present: Mike Carpenter, Gerald Crismon, Rod Erickson, James (Jim) Hawkes, Madeline Komen, Britton Runolfson, and Haysam Sakar Planning Commission members; Gary McGinn, Development Services Director/Legal Counsel; Jared Hall, Planning Division Manager; Rebecca Gourley, Grace Bjarnson Associate Planners; Grant Allen, Matthew Taylor, Senior Planners; Taggart Bowen, City Engineer; John Dorn, Transportation Engineer; David Spencer, City Council Liaison.

### **Those excused:**

Agenda Item 3. Content Agenda: Chair Komen introduced the Consent Agenda items. Chair Komen asked if anyone had additional comments to make on the items, or if anyone would like to remove or continue any items. No questions, comments, or removals were posed. Chair Komen requested a motion on the Consent Agenda, which contains the following items:

*A complete video of the meeting can be found at [www.orem.org/meetings](http://www.orem.org/meetings)*

### 3.1 Review and Approve Minutes from the **March 19", 2025 Meeting**

Britton Runolfson motioned to approve the Consent Agenda. Rod Erickson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Action items and Public Hearings

##### **4.1 PUBLIC HEARING — Whitestone Estates — Ordinance amending Article 22-5-3(A) and the Zoning Map of the City of Orem by rezoning the property located generally at 710 West 2000 South from the Open Space (OSS) Zone to the Single Family Residential (R8) Zone (approximately 14.01 acres).**



Chair Komen asked Staff Member Jared Hall to introduce item 4.1

Item 4.1 is a request to rezone approximately 14.01 acres located at approximately 710 West 2000 South from the 055 (Open Space) zone to the R8(Single-Family Residential) zone.

The concept plan includes a 53-lot single-family subdivision with all lots exceeding the 8,000 sq. ft. minimum. The plan shows public roads, stubs, and typical subdivision features.

No civil engineering has been completed.

Staff noted that the 0S5 zone allows single-family homes on 5-acre lots, while the R8 zone allows them on 8,000 sq. ft. lots. Staff also confirmed that a trail is required through the area per the City's Transportation Plan.

Chair Komen asked if the Commission had questions for Staff. Commissioners asked questions about the trail alignment, zoning differences, and permitted uses.

Chair Komen invited the applicants to speak. The applicant's representative stated the concept plan includes only single-family homes—no townhomes or multifamily—based on community feedback.

Chair Komen opened the meeting to Public Hearing. Below is a list of the individuals that spoke and a summary of their comments.

**Linda Brown** — Neighbor.

Opposed the rezone due to proximity to active rail lines and anticipated traffic and street parking impacts. Expressed concern for public safety and loss of open space.

**Linda Olsen** (on behalf of Carolyn Hargraves, Utah Department of Agriculture & Food).

Opposed the rezone and emphasized the agricultural, economic, and community value of Wilkerson Farm, warning against permanent loss of prime farmland.

James Brown Neighbor.

Opposed the rezone citing safety issues for children, proximity to freight trains, and incompatibility with the surrounding area.

Helena Kleinten — Resident.

Opposed the rezone, referencing House Bill 371 and advocating for agricultural conservation easements to preserve the land.

**John Cheney** — Resident.

Emphasized the economic and environmental value of local agriculture and requested preservation of the farm.

**Jennifer Young** — Resident.

Voiced concerns about stewardship and green space, citing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' agricultural land acquisitions for self-reliance.

**Romee Allen** — Resident.

Shared personal and family experiences with Wilkerson Farm and urged its preservation for future generations.

**John Bennion** — Conserve Utah Valley.

Opposed the rezone due to the site's agricultural productivity, soil quality, and community value.

**John Porter** — Neighbor.

Opposed the rezone, citing high Orem population density, traffic congestion, and loss of open space. Suggested conditions be added if Council considers approval.

**Heather Fry** — Resident.

Advocated for food security and preserving Orem's agricultural identity over additional residential development.

**Brook Peterson** — Resident.

Cited benefits of local farming, ecological value, and recreation use of the farm, asking the Commission to protect the land.

**Leanne Swanson** — Resident.

Opposed the rezone due to traffic, safety, and proximity to rail lines.

**Truman VanCott** — Resident.

Urged the Commission to follow the General Plan and avoid high-density development near rail lines, referencing Vineyard as a cautionary example.

**Pamela Moose** — Resident.

Raised concerns about pedestrian safety and the lack of safe crossings on 2000 South.

**Sheri Fong** — Resident.

Spoke about traffic impacts from both the proposed development and the gas station project nearby, asking for equitable treatment for Southwest Orem.

**Connie Porter** — Resident.

Opposed the project due to traffic concerns and the need for open space and family recreation areas,

Chair Komen closed the Public Hearing Session at about 6:15 P.M.

Chair Komen invited the applicant back up and asked if the Commissioners had any further questions *Yor* him.

Haysam Sakar asked how long the applicant had owned the property. The applicant explained they were under contract but had not yet purchased the site, as the sale was contingent on the rezone.

Jim Hawkes asked whether the applicant had purchased the Provo-side property. The applicant confirmed they had acquired the 10-acre parcel south of 2000 South, approved for 30 single-family homes.

Referencing earlier proposals, Jim Hawkes noted the original plan included townhomes and R6 zoning, which had drawn community opposition. He acknowledged the revisions but emphasized that R8 was still a significant shift from Open Space. He voiced concerns about approving a rezone without more information on traffic, safety, and environmental impacts.

Rod Erickson brought up train safety. The applicant said no safety measures had been planned yet for the Orem side but noted they had coordinated with UTA on the Provo side and expected a similar process. They anticipated fencing and sidewalk termination would be addressed in that review.

Jim Hawkes inquired about train schedules. The applicant confirmed the regular presence of FrontRunner trains, including early morning and evening traffic. They also noted that trains occasionally block the 2000 South crossing for extended periods.

Jim Hawkes raised follow-up concerns about how vehicles would circulate during those stoppages, especially for drivers caught between the crossing and Geneva Road. The applicant acknowledged the issue and expressed willingness to consider fencing, signage, and rerouting solutions during Site Plan review.

Jim Hawkes also voiced concern about losing farmland, calling the Orem parcel a rare and valuable agricultural space. The applicant responded that the Wilkerson Farm lease had ended, and the landowner had opted not to continue

agritourism or farming operations.

Chair Komen asked if the Commission would like to reopen the public hearing, and Commissioners said yes.

Chair Komen reopened the meeting to Public Hearing. Below is a list of the individuals that spoke and a summary of their comments.

**Sheri Fong** — Resident.

Ms. Fong stated that several neighbors had expressed interest in purchasing the land at its current OSS zoning and noted that a resident present had attempted to contact the landowner about this option.

**James Brown** — Resident.

Mr. Brown reported efforts to assemble funding to purchase the property but said those efforts had been declined by the landowner and current prospective buyers. He expressed that community members had offered to make the developers whole financially but were not given a target amount. He stated the farm had previously gone through a similar rezone effort and voiced frustration at repeated dismissal of community alternatives. In response to Commissioner questions, Mr. Brown confirmed the land was purchased in 2015 and zoned **055** at the time.

**Helena Kleinlen** — Resident.

Ms. Kleinan stated that the Wilkersons were not seeking replacement land for agriculture due to the rarity of the soil on the current site. She noted that while more land would become available for housing along Lakeview Parkway, the proposed site was uniquely suited for farming.

**John Cheney** — Resident.

Mr. Cheney reiterated the value of the agritainment provided by Wilkerson Farm and emphasized that it was the last location of its kind in the Provo-Orem area.

Chair Komen closed the Public Hearing at about 6:32.

City Attorney Gary McGinn advised that, as the hearing had been reopened, the applicant must be given the opportunity to respond.

Applicant Representative declined to offer further comments and confirmed that the Wilkerson Farm lease had been terminated and the owner had no plans to renew it.

Commissioner Mike Carpenter stated that the city needed diverse land uses and criticized ongoing reductions in agricultural zoning. He highlighted the site's proximity to industrial land and train tracks as additional concerns and called for preserving food-growing capacity within the city.

Jim Hawkes acknowledged public concerns about Wilkerson Farm and noted national issues of agricultural overproduction. He expressed concern about safety and traffic impacts and concluded that the proposed rezone was not a good fit.

Haysam Sakar emphasized the need for a clearer General Plan before making further rezoning decisions and supported a temporary moratorium on changes.

Rod Erickson expressed concern about losing agricultural land but also emphasized property rights. He noted the land was purchased as OS5 but questioned whether it's fair to block any future changes. He pointed out that the Provo side has already been approved for development and said the effort to preserve the farm may be too late. He stated he wasn't eager to see the land developed but was unsure whether denying the rezone would achieve meaningful preservation.

Britton Runolfson stated the Planning Commission's role was to make zoning-based recommendations and affirmed that the land had been intentionally zoned as OS5.

Commissioner Britton Runolfson made a motion to forward a negative recommendation on the proposed rezone from **0S5** to R8. Mike Carpenter seconded the motion.

Rod Erickson and Haysam Sakar stating they would have preferred to continue the item.

Chair Komen stated that this decision comes down to values and long-term land use priorities for Orem. She emphasized that once farmland is gone, it's gone forever. While the property owner has requested a rezone, the Commission's role is to decide whether that change is appropriate at this time.

Chair Komen called for a vote.

**PC Action:** Britton Runolfson made a motion to forward a negative recommendation on the proposed rezone from OS5 to R8. Mike Carpenter seconded the motion.

Those voting Yes: Britton Runolfson, Jim Hawkes, Mike Carpenter, Gerald Crimson, Madeline Komen

Those voting No: Rod Erickson  
Those abstaining: Haysam Sakar

The motion passed 5—1, with 1 abstention. A negative recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council.

Chair Komen called a short recess before proceeding with the agenda.

#### **4.2 PUBLIC HEARING, continued from March 5, 2025 —Ordinance amending Articles 22-14-20(I) and 22-1-5(G) modifying requirements for the conduct of neighborhood meetings in advance of applications to the Planning Commission.**

Jared Hall presented the item, explaining that the proposed ordinance would amend sections of the zoning code that govern how neighborhood meetings are conducted prior to an applicant submitting materials to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Hall reviewed prior discussions and noted the proposal includes provisions such as prohibiting neighborhood meetings on the same night as City Council or Planning Commission meetings, requiring templates for meeting minutes, and providing simple rosters for attendees to write brief comments. The Commission also discussed whether to include comment cards.

Commissioners expressed concern about accountability and civility at neighborhood meetings. Commissioner Britton Runolfson described a recent meeting for the Wilkerson Farm project as lacking civility and suggested recording meetings and posting them online. Other commissioners agreed that better behavior might result from knowing a meeting would be public. Commissioner Haysam Sakar questioned the overall purpose of neighborhood meetings and whether they are legally required. Jared Hall confirmed that the meetings are required only by Orem's ordinance, not by state law.

The Commission discussed the need for residents to have clear opportunities to comment, even if they cannot attend a meeting. They supported including instructions on notices with staff contact information and options to email or leave voicemails. Staff confirmed this could be implemented.

Mr. Hall presented a draft template for neighborhood meeting notices, which includes a project description, a vicinity map, applicant contact information, and space for a concept plan. Commissioners expressed support for the template and discussed the possibility of increasing the required mailing radius for notice distribution. Following the discussion, the group reached a general consensus to require a 2,000-foot radius for zone change applications, a 1,000-foot radius for commercial developments, and to maintain a 500-foot radius for minor subdivisions and lot adjustments.

The Commission expressed support for aligning neighborhood meeting notice distances with public hearing notices, which are governed under a separate ordinance section.

Gerald Crimson raised the example of University Mall to show how large-scale commercial projects affect a broad area. Commissioners agreed that greater distances are justified for such projects.

Mr. Hall stated that based on the feedback received, he would make final changes and return with a revised draft.

**PC Action:** Mike Carpenter moved to continue the item to the April 16th, 2025 meeting. Haysam Sakar seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Closing Comments:** Gary McGinn provided an update on the upcoming open house for the new City Hall (tentatively scheduled for April 27 or 28) and announced a joint Planning Commission and City Council work session tentatively scheduled for May 13, 2025.

**Adjournment:** Chair Komen called for a motion to adjourn. Vice Chair Carpenter motioned to adjourn; Rod Erickson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the Regular Session adjourned at 6:51 PM.

Reviewed and Approved: April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Family City USA

Founded in 1919 and named after Walter C. Orem, the City was initially known for its fertile orchards and farmlands. Originally called "Provo Bench", Orem has evolved from its agricultural roots into a vibrant and thriving city, and the commercial hub of Utah County. Meanwhile, Orem has earned accolades as one of the best places to live and raise a family. As Orem plans to manage growth and development, the General Plan will provide a framework for evaluating and understanding proposed changes and will help Orem continue to be "Family City USA."

### History Overview

The need for a reliable water system led to Orem's incorporation, with residents issuing bonds to address the area's water shortage. Unlike many Utah towns, Orem developed through homesteads along major roads rather than clustered city blocks. The construction of the Geneva Steel plant in the 1940s spurred industrial growth on the west side, transforming Orem from an agricultural community to an employment hub. The plant operated until the early 2000s and is now part of a redevelopment project in Vineyard City. Cultural growth in Orem was significantly influenced by the Sharon Community Educational and Recreational Association (SCERA), established in 1933, which fostered a strong sense of community and inspired other cultural organizations like the Hale Centre Theatre. Orem became the commercial center of Utah County, thanks to the State Street retail corridor and significant population growth. The city's zoning ordinance in 1946 designated the entire State Street corridor for commercial use, attracting numerous businesses. For more detailed history, please see Appendix A.

### Structure of the Plan

The Orem General Plan serves as the City's official guide for growth, development, conservation, and land use. The General Plan helps to provide consistency to land use decision making: while it avoids designating specific locations for developments, it establishes overarching policies and procedures that ensure informed decision making over time. Required by the Utah Municipal Land Use, Development, and Management Act (LUDMA), the General Plan is arranged in elements. The plan includes mandatory elements for land use, transportation, and moderate-income housing, with room for additional elements tailored to the City's needs. The plan includes the following elements:

1. Introduction: Details the plan's purpose and provides a brief historical overview of Orem.
2. Land Use: Strategies for balanced, orderly development.
3. Redevelopment: Plans and programs to address historic preservation, redevelopment of land including housing sites, business sites, industrial sites and public building sites.

Promote events to foster a sense of connectedness and engagement in the community. Enhance pedestrian connections around the City Center, Library Hall, and City Park to improve safety during large public events.

**Community Focused Government.** The City is focused on providing government services that promote the community. Some of the implementation strategies for this priority include:

- Seek to align City Staff and the Mayor and Municipal Council with the residents of the City of Orem.
- Foster transparency and openness in City operations.
- Promote community involvement.
- Seek opportunities for the community to come together through activities and service.

**Thriving and Balanced Business Environment.** Orem City enjoys a strong economic foundation, and recognizes the importance of protecting and enhancing the environment that has allowed it to thrive. The city will seek opportunities to allow the business community to evolve and grow stronger. Some of the implementation strategies for this priority include:

- Seek opportunities to strengthen the Orem Business Alliance.
- Create opportunities for local and smaller businesses to locate and grow in Orem, exploring incubator space opportunities, business development programs, and commercial development plans that complement the areas in which they are located.
- Streamline the business license application process while strengthening the rigor of the review.
- Foster connections with Utah Valley University that will create an environment of commercial innovation in Orem.

**Dependable Infrastructure.** Infrastructure is crucial to the planning of the City. Orem is committed to investments in infrastructure that supports the City's goals for the future. Some of the implementation strategies for this priority include:

- Support timely updates to the Master Transportation Plan prioritizing traffic solutions for existing neighborhoods and business rather than for pass-through commuters.
- Include in-depth review of the impacts to existing public infrastructure of proposed development.
- Provide more effective connections to improve both the residential and business communities.
- Support efforts to improve the connection and availability of trails, public, and active transportation options in Orem.
- Defining and expanding Orem's trail system through the implementation of the Orem Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan.
- Pursue the adoption of an Active Transportation Master Plan.
- Continue efforts to reduce water consumption in new-build and redevelopment projects.
- Study the feasibility of implementing requirements for Low Impact Development (LID) techniques and systems in site planning and development.

### 33 CITIES IN UTAH COUNTY

City	Rank	2024 Pop.	2020 Pop.	Density (/mi <sup>2</sup> )	Area (mi <sup>2</sup> )	Type
Alpine	18	10,308	10,268	1,297	,7.9	City
American Fork	7	40,215	33,550	3,543	)11.3	City
Benjamin	26	)798	886	193	8.5	CDP
)Bluffdale	12	19,665	17,364	1,770	11.1	City
)Cedar Fort	29	414	426	19	21.3	Town
(Cedar Hills	19	9,732	)10,003	1,3,570	2.7	City
Eagle Mountain	4	61,037	)44,616	1,1,196	51.0	)City
Elberta	30	321	318	289	1.1	CDP
Elk Ridge	20	4,989	)4,732	1,706	(2.9	City
(Fairfield	32	155	)162	6	)26.1	(Town
)Genola	21	1,629	1,551	118	13.8	Town
Goshen	25	965	)976	1,168	;0.8	Town
Highland	11	20,496	19,380	)2,360	8.7	City
Hobble Creek	31	264	174	123	2.1	CDP
)Lake Shore	23	1,305	1,020	)190	6.9	CDP
Lehi	2	94,684	76,854	3,121	30.3	City
Lindon	16	11,817	11,485	)1,415	8.4	City
Mapleton	15	)14,487	11,466	)1,086	13.3	City
Orem	3	)94,548	98,432	)5,079	18.6	City
Palmyra	27	620	551	)93	6.6	CDP
Payson	10	(24,969	21,307	1,897	13.2	City
PleasantGrove	8	37,146	37,738	4,042	9.2	City
Provo	1	112,756	115,103	)2,704	41.7	City
Salem	17	11,171	9,386	924	12.1	)City
Santaquin	13	)18,742	13,901	1,777	10.5	)City
SaratogaSprings	5	57,278	38,294	2,454	23.3	City
SpanishFork	6	46,492	42,750	)2,770	16.8	)City
)SpringLake	28	)527	470	322	1.6	)CDP
'Springville		35,516	)35,334	2,471	14.4	City
Sundance	33	55	)28	)39	1.4	(CDP
Vineyard	(14	15,030	12,908	3,111	4.8	)CDP
)WoodlandHills	22	(1,583	1,535	)616	2.6	City

ITEM 4.1 Planning Commission 3-1 9-25 PUBLIC HEARING - Whitestone Estates, Rezone

Proposed alternative motions suggested by John M. Porter (citizen):

( Motion / or AMENDED motion of APPROVAL )

"I move (or I move to amend the motion) that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of APPROVAL to the City Council for the request to amend Article 22-5-3(A) and the Zoning Map of the City of Orem by rezoning the property located generally at 710 West 2000 South from the Open Space (OSS) Zone to the Single Family Residential (R8) Zone (approximately 14.01 acres), subject to the following recommended conditions:

1. Developer to install traffic signal controls at 750 West (developer's responsibility to obtain approval from Provo);
2. Developer to install pedestrian crosswalks at intersections on 2000 South;
3. 700 West to be right in / right out ONLY.

( Motion / or AMENDED motion of DENIAL )

"I move (or I move to amend the motion) that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of DENIAL to the City Council for the request to amend Article 22-5-3(A) and the Zoning Map of the City of Orem by rezoning the property located generally at 710 West 2000 South from the Open Space (OSS) Zone to the Single Family Residential (R8) Zone (approximately 14.01 acres), subject to the following recommended conditions in the event the City Council does not choose to follow the recommendation of the Planning Commission:

1. Developer to install traffic signal controls at 750 West (developer's responsibility to obtain approval from Provo);
2. Developer to install pedestrian crosswalks at intersections on 2000 South;
3. 700 West to be right in / right out ONLY.

CHECK WITH LEGAL COUNSEL TO DETERMINE IF THE BELOW LANGUAGE IS ACCURATE:

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER provides that after the main motion is made, seconded and is being discussed, a member can move to amend the language of the main motion. The motion to amend requires a second, a discussion, and a majority vote. If the amendment is approved, the main motion as amended is voted on. If the amendment is not approved, the main motion, without change, is voted on.

