PAROWAN CITY PLANNING AND ZONING MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6, 2025 – 6:00 P.M.
Parowan City Council Chambers
35 E 100 N, Parowan, UT 84761
Office: (435) 477-3331

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Jamie Bonnett (Chair), Weston Reese, Shane Williamson, Jerry Vesely, Councilman David Burton

ABSENT: Cecilie Evans (Alternate); Tracey Wheeler (Alternate); Mollie Halterman, Mayor; Keith Naylor, Zoning Assistant

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Dan Jessen, City Manager; Scott Burns, City Attorney; Callie Bassett, City Recorder

PUBLIC PRESENT: Cindy Laffon, John Dean, Lonna Leghart, Tricia Harris, David Mineer, Sr., Bob Whitelaw, Larry Zajac.

CALL TO ORDER
Jamie Bonnett called the Planning and Zoning Meeting to order on August 6, 2025.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS WITH ANY AGENDA ITEMS
Jamie asked if there were any declarations of conflicts with agenda items. Jerry Vesely responded that he had none, and no other commissioners reported any conflicts.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JULY 23, 2025
Jamie Bonnett noted that the commissioners did not receive the minutes from the July 23, 2025 meeting.

Shane Williamson moved to table the minutes from July 23, 2025. Jerry Vesely seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER COMMENTS REGARDING THE PROPOSED SHORT-TERM RENTAL (STR) CODE
Jerry Vesely moved to open the public hearing. Shane Williamson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dan Jessen provided an impact statement regarding the proposed Short-Term Rental (STR) code. He distributed a summary document to the public, noting that the complete wording was available through Callie at the city offices. He explained that the purpose of the code was to allow STRs while preserving rural character and housing supply, as well as to promote responsible ownership and accountability. Dan emphasized the importance of the code in establishing a balance between permitting STRs and protecting the city's character.

Dan outlined the key points of the proposed code:

- Zones where STRs would be permitted: A-1, R-1, R-1A, R-2, R-3, General Commercial-1, and Downtown Commercial-1 (when established)
- Areas prohibited: Highway Services-1, I-M zones, mobile homes, RVs, tents, or other temporary dwellings
- ADUs could be used as STRs within certain parameters
- Requirements included business licensing, registration for state and local transient room taxes, and non-transferable licenses that could be revoked for violations
- Operational rules included posting a Good Neighbor Policy, having a local contact person available to respond within 60 minutes, proper trash management, occupancy limits of 1 guest per 200 square feet of living space, minimum of 2 off-street parking spaces, discrete signage limited to 2 square feet, and noise restrictions
- A citywide cap limiting STRs to no more than 10% of total housing units
- Safety inspections required before license issuance and every two years thereafter
- Existing STRs with valid licenses would be grandfathered but must meet current rules
- Enforcement included fines of $250 for first violation, $500 for second, and $1,000 for third and subsequent violations, with possible license revocation after two violations in 12 months

Dan clarified that "monitoring services" referred to software that could scan booking websites to identify STR listings in the city. Jamie Bonnett opened the floor for public comment.

Larry Zajac offered comments on several technical aspects of the code during the public hearing. Firstly, he questioned the practicality of the 30–60-minute response window set for the local contact person, wondering if a 60-minute window alone would be more straightforward and easily understandable. Additionally, Larry pointed out that the R-E zoning designation was not listed as either allowed or prohibited for STRs in the code, seeking clarification on this omission. He also raised concerns about the noise and nuisance violation clause in the code, asking what specifically would be subject to revocation under those terms.

Further, Larry suggested using the term "platted" instead of "plated" when referring to subdivisions, as it seemed like a typographical error that could lead to confusion. He sought clarification on the safety inspection checklist, inquiring whether it needed to be approved and by whom, proposing that having a clearer understanding would benefit both property owners and enforcement bodies. Lastly, he recommended that emergency exit information be posted in each STR to ensure guest safety, emphasizing that the code should specify the exact way this information should be displayed, such as on a door or readily visible wall.

Larry's input highlighted the need for precise language and practical measures in the code, aiming to prevent ambiguities and ensure clear communication of expectations to STR operators.

Bob Whitelaw, a seasoned operator of nightly rentals for 17 years, raised several concerns during the public hearing. He began by stating that Parowan is not a destination like Brian Head but rather serves as overflow lodging and a less expensive option for visitors. Bob expressed concern that the regulations might be excessive for Parowan's limited STR market.

A significant point Bob emphasized was the lack of input from current STR owners in drafting the regulations, a sentiment echoed by several speakers at the hearing. He criticized the committee for crafting regulations without sufficient feedback from those who have direct experience managing STR properties. According to Bob, it is crucial to understand the unique challenges and dynamics faced by

STR owners in Parowan, a community distinct from larger vacation rental markets like Brian Head. He suggested that the committee appeared to have a narrow focus when creating these regulations, potentially overlooking practical insights and valuable lessons that current STR managers and property owners could offer. He advocated for a more inclusive process, engaging current operators and providing them the opportunity to share perspectives, thereby contributing to a regulatory framework that truly accommodates the specific needs of the Parowan community.

In terms of specifics, Bob was particularly concerned about the potential financial burden the proposed fees could impose. He mentioned that fee structures like those in Brian Head could be challenging for STR operators in Parowan, where the market dynamics differ significantly. Additionally, he found the 200 square feet per person occupancy limit too restrictive, especially given the nature and layout of many STR properties.

Bob also raised questions about how the code treated various types of accommodations like tiny homes, yurts, and other similar structures, advocating for clarity in how these should be regulated. He questioned the implications of the code on existing accommodations, such as bed and breakfasts and hotels, and whether these would need to adhere to the new regulations or if they were classified separately.

Another concern was the practicality of prohibiting "events or parties" without specified means for approval. He questioned what this would mean for families who might gather for birthdays or other social functions and suggested that clearer guidelines were necessary.

Lastly, Bob critiqued the proposed 300-foot spacing between STRs, arguing that it could unfairly limit the potential for STR operations in certain parts of Parowan, especially where properties might naturally cluster due to existing zoning and real estate patterns.

Tricia Harris, addressing the commission as the Parowan and Brian Head Area Chamber Director, voiced her support for small businesses while expressing specific concerns regarding elements of the proposed Short-Term Rental (STR) code. Emphasizing the vital role that STRs play in the community, she highlighted several points that she believed warranted consideration. Firstly, Tricia pointed out the potential financial strain that the proposed higher licensing fees and mandatory biennial safety inspections could impose on residents who operate STRs. These establishments are often not run by large corporate entities but by local families, retirees, and individuals striving to make a living. The added expenses, she warned, could push these small, locally-operated short-term rentals out of the market.

Tricia argued that economic benefits from STRs extend beyond the property owners themselves, noting that these rentals significantly contribute to Parowan's economy by supporting local businesses such as restaurants and shops, and generating sales tax revenue. She asserted that any rise in operating costs could lead to a reduction in the number of available rentals or force landlords to increase prices for visitors, thereby affecting the influx of tourists. This not only impacts local businesses that benefit from visitor spending but also reduces the city's revenue from lodging taxes and associated economic activities.

Additionally, Tricia raised concerns about the proposed occupancy limit of 1 person per 200 square feet of living space. She argued that this restriction was particularly challenging given Utah's cultural norms, where large families are common, and gatherings for holidays or reunions often involve many family members. She illustrated this concern by describing how the proposed limit would constrain a typical

3000 square foot home to accommodate only about 15 people, thereby complicating family reunions and gatherings which are significant in maintaining familial and cultural ties. She suggested a more flexible standard of 1 person per 150 square feet to better align with actual family usage patterns.

Tricia also stressed the importance of STRs in helping local families preserve and maintain ancestral homes, which might otherwise become financially unfeasible to keep in the family. She pointed out that for many Parowan natives, these short-term rentals represent a vital means of offsetting maintenance costs while retaining ownership of their family heritage properties. Such community-centric businesses also create local jobs, Tricia emphasized, as owners often hire residents for property management, maintenance, and cleaning services, offering meaningful and flexible employment opportunities in the area.

Lonna Leghart, an STR property owner, expressed appreciation for the commission's diligent work, acknowledging the effort and attention to detail involved in crafting the new regulations. During the public hearing, she sought clarification on several key points affecting STR owners. Firstly, she inquired whether property owners would be limited to listing their properties on just one booking platform, seeking clarification as she had received conflicting information from various management companies. She also asked about the timeline for the implementation of the new code, expressing a need to plan accordingly, as she and her husband are not in town full-time and want to ensure compliance with all the new requirements.

Lonna raised questions regarding where owners could access the details about the inspection requirements, noting its importance for preparation and compliance. In terms of safety regulations, she sought specific instructions on how emergency exit information should be displayed within STRs, advocating for clear guidance to ensure adherence while considering different possible display methods. Furthermore, she expressed curiosity about the administration of the proposed 300-foot radius between STRs and whether there might be considerations or exceptions for different property types or owner scenarios.

Overall, Lonna's comments highlighted a desire for clarity and actionable guidance in the code, underscoring the importance of practical implementation details for owners working to adhere to the new regulations.

Hearing no further comments, Shane Williamson moved to close the public hearing. Jerry Vesely seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPOINT NEW PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR AND CHAIR PRO-TEMPORE

Jamie Bonnett stated that she wished to step down as chair but remain on the commission, and recommended Shane Williamson as chair and Jerry Vesely as pro tempore.

Councilmember David Burton noted that Jerry Vesely had been involved with planning and zoning longer than anyone else, and voiced his opinion that Jerry would make an excellent chair. Jerry expressed appreciation but declined the chair position due to personal circumstances, though he indicated willingness to serve as pro tempore.

When asked, Shane stated he would be happy to serve as chair if that was the commission's desire.

Jamie Bonnett moved to appoint Shane Williamson as the new chairman and Jerry Vesely as chair pro tempore. Jerry Vesely seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

RECOMMENDATIONON ON SHORT-TERM RENTAL CODE

Dan Jessen addressed questions raised during the public hearing:

- He clarified that fees had not yet been set and would likely be established by City Council resolution. This was a concern expressed during the public comments, and Dan emphasized that setting fees through a resolution offers flexibility as they can be adjusted annually or as needed, unlike codified fees which require more cumbersome legal procedures to change. He invited the public to submit letters with their opinions on fees to the city clerk, which would aid in the discussion with the City Council.
- He explained that while the inspection form would not be codified, it would be made available to STR owners. Larry Zajac had suggested that owners should be aware of the inspection checklist to prepare properly, ensuring compliance and avoiding surprises. Dan assured that the form would be shared well in advance of any inspections.
- The city would work with existing STR operators to come into compliance rather than being punitive. Dan noted that as new regulations are phased in, the city would allow a grace period to support owners adjusting to the new requirements, recognizing that many are residents working hard to sustain their properties in line with the new code.
- He estimated the implementation would take 1-2 months if approved, although this timeline was tentative depending on the commission's decisions and any additional public hearings or discussions required.
- He noted there was no current restriction on booking platforms and none planned, a response to Lonna Leghart's query during the public comments. The city does not intend to limit how owners market and list their properties.
- The city estimated approximately 70 STRs currently operating in Parowan. However, this number could change as more properties come to light. This estimation helps gauge the percentage of STRs in relation to the city housing units and helps enforce the proposed 10% cap.

The Commission discussed several aspects of the code that needed revision:

- Changing the response time for local contacts from "30-60 minutes" to simply "60 minutes", recognizing that having a clear and singular expectation helps eliminate confusion and provides consistency for enforcement.
- Removing the 300-foot spacing requirement between STRs in favor of the 10% citywide cap after discussion revealed that it would better address community concerns without unfairly limiting available properties in clustered areas.
- Researching fire code standards regarding occupancy calculations, as commissioners wanted to ensure that occupancy limits were both safe and sensible, considering various property layouts and usage scenarios. The inquiry into standards would help address concerns like those raised by Tricia Harris regarding families and their space needs.
- Addressing concerns about parking requirements and enforcement, ensuring the code effectively minimizes neighborhood impact while remaining feasible for property owners to comply with. Bob Whitelaw's suggestion to include parking instructions in the Good Neighbor Policy was noted as a potential approach.
- Considering whether to change the occupancy limit from 1 person per 200 square feet to 1 person per 150 square feet based on feedback from the public, promising to revisit this aspect after further research to find a balance between safety, practicality, and cultural norms.

Shane Williamson emphasized that the commission was not looking to punish small businesses but needed to protect Parowan's character as a residential community in line with the city's "Rural Done

Right" vision. He highlighted that as a planning body, they must consider future growth and changes in the community's nature, aiming to uphold the city's core identity even amidst new developments. Dan added that the code was proactive and intended to establish reasonable regulations before STRs became too prevalent, rather than trying to address problems after they arose. He reiterated that crafting a responsible code now would help prevent issues, like those faced by more tourist-centric areas such as Brian Head, maintaining a balance between growth and community well-being.

Jamie Bonnett moved to table the short-term rental code discussion and bring it back to the next meeting. Jerry Vesely seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ON FENCE ORDINANCES

Dan Jessen explained that the City Council had requested the Planning Commission review fence ordinances in Chapter 15 of the city code. Recent issues had highlighted inconsistencies and ambiguities in the current requirements, particularly regarding which party is responsible for building a fence when commercial and residential zones abut. He presented several questions for consideration, such as whether the responsibility lies with the entity developing next to an already established property or if the last party to undertake development is obligated to install the fence. This detail highlighted complex scenarios, such as raw land that is zoned residential but used for commercial purposes, making the determination of responsibility challenging.

Another key issue discussed was the timing of fence requirements: whether fences are mandated when land is developed versus when zoning changes occur. The ambiguity in existing code has led to situations where new developments, such as a property rezoned from commercial to residential abutting existing storage units, create conflicts regarding fence responsibilities. Dan also illustrated a situation where a house surrounded by commercial development had no enforced fence requirement, exemplifying the need for clearer guidelines.

Height requirements also came under scrutiny, particularly how they align, or fail to align, with standard masonry block dimensions. For example, the current requirement of a seven-foot-high masonry fence is impractical due to the standard block dimensions that typically result in heights of either six feet eight inches or seven feet four inches. Commissioners discussed the possibility of standardizing fence heights to better match these dimensions, with a preference expressed for a height of seven feet four inches.

There were additional discussions on inconsistencies for different types of fences, such as the distinction between masonry and tight board fences. Dan noted that RV parks have special screening requirements that may conflict with other sections of the code, which require screening to be at least six feet high but allow for flexibility in materials like walls, fences, and hedges. This has led to scenarios where uncertain enforcement leaves gaps in city aesthetics and safety, such as an RV park planning to use hedges for screening purposes.

Jamie Bonnett suggested that the "last to build" should bear the responsibility for fencing, while Weston Reese recommended a distinction between zoned land and developed land in determining responsibilities. These distinctions are critical in areas where zoning transitions, such as a parcel being repurposed from commercial to residential use.

To provide clarity and consistency, Dan proposed that elements from Cedar City's code could be adopted, which offer more precise definitions and guidelines regarding "site obscuring" fences. This idea was well-received, with several commissioners expressing interest in standardizing definitions and processes based on examples from nearby jurisdictions. Dan committed to sending the Cedar City code

to commissioners for reference and intended to research more comprehensive definitions of "site obscuring" fences. He noted that discussions would continue in future meetings to work towards an updated code that effectively addresses these concerns.

REPORTS
No reports were given.

PUBLIC COMMENT
No additional public comments were made.

ADJOURN
Weston Reese moved to adjourn the meeting. Jerry Vesely seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Callie Bassett, City Recorder

Date Approved: 8/20/2025