

# **TO THE PUBLIC AND RESIDENTS OF VERNAL CITY:**

Notice is hereby given that the **VERNAL CITY PLANNING COMMISSION** will hold a Regular Meeting on **Tuesday, November 18, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.** in the Vernal City Council Chambers at 374 East Main Street, Vernal, Utah.

## **AGENDA**

### **A. STANDING BUSINESS**

1. Welcome and Designation of Chair and Members
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes for October 14, 2025

### **B. PUBLIC HEARING**

1. Discussion to consider approval to amend the Vernal City Municipal Planning and Zoning Code Section 16.28.050 – Off-Premise Signs – Ordinance Number 2025-022 – Braeden Christofferson
2. Discussion to consider approval to repeal the Vernal City Municipal Planning and Zoning Code Section 16.20.308 – Dwelling, Internal Additional Unit (IADU) and add Section 16.20.100 - Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)- Internal Accessory Dwelling Unit (IADU) – Ordinance Number 2025-031 – Braeden Christofferson

### **C. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

1. Discussion – Use of Kingsbury Church as a Temporary Warming Center

### **D. ADJOURN**

# MINUTES of the Vernal City PLANNING COMMISSION

Vernal City Council Chambers - 374 East Main Street, Vernal, Utah

October 14, 2025

5:30 PM

**Members Present:** Stephen Lytle, Nick Porter, Troy Allred, Ryan Balch, Samantha Chapoose

**Members Excused:**

**Alternates Present:**

**Alternates Excused:**

**Staff Present:** Braeden Christofferson, Assistant City Manager; Matthew Tate, Building Official; Taylor Munguia, Planning Technician.

**WELCOME AND DESIGNATION OF CHAIR AND MEMBERS:** Chair Stephen Lytle welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM September 9, 2025:** Chair Stephen Lytle asked if there were any changes to the minutes from September 9, 2025. The minutes were approved with there being no corrections, *Ryan Balch moved to approve the minutes of September 9, 2025 as presented. Troy Allred seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Troy Allred, Nick Porter, Samantha Chapoose & Ryan Balch voting in favor.*

## **RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER APPROVAL TO AMEND THE VERNAL CITY GENERAL PLAN TO INCLUDE A WATER USE AND PRESERVATION ELEMENT – ORDINANCE 2025-024**

Braeden Christofferson explained that the purpose of the amendment and public hearing was to review and approve an update to the Vernal City's general plan addressing water use and preservation. The update was developed with input from several City Departments, including but not limited to Public Works and Planning, and was intended to ensure compliance with Utah Senate Bill 110. Gabby Blackburn a planning consultant from Sunrise Engineering presented the details of the plan, noting that it had been funded through a grant received over a year ago and must be implemented by December. Only three (3) other cities in Utah had completed similar plans, but Vernal City was reportedly on track and had prepared a more detailed and comprehensive document, including a zone meter study that exceeded state requirements. Ms. Blackburn reviewed the state's requested revisions, including the removal of certain graphics due to potential updates to conservation goals next year. An overview of the City's water supply was provided, referencing the 2024 CRS Engineers Water Rights Study. The City currently purchases about three-thousand five hundred (3,500) acre-feet of water per year, though it holds rights for up to five-thousand (5,000). Based on future growth projections, Vernal could experience a

**Vernal City Planning Commission Minutes**  
**October 14, 2025**

shortage of water by 2060 under moderate or high population growth. The agricultural section of the plan was also updated, though agriculture represents a small portion of total water use. The update encourages improved efficiency, the use of secondary water metering, and careful evaluation of annexations to manage irrigation conversions and reduce strain on the system. The state required additional information to be included, such as a list of private irrigation companies registered with the Department of Natural Resources. Another grant opportunity was identified that could help fund future plan updates. Mr. Christofferson asked whether any responses had been received from stakeholders and it was reported that none had been received. Most stakeholders have little concern since Vernal City manages its own water system, though all required coordination was completed.

Chair, Stephen Lytle, opened the public hearing to receive public comment. There being to public comment, Chair, Stephen Lytle closed the public hearing.

*Ryan Balch made a motion to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council for approval of the proposed amendment to the Vernal City General Plan, adding a Water Use and Preservation element. Troy Allred seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Troy Allred, Nick Porter, Samantha Chapoose & Ryan Balch voting in favor.*

**RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER APPROVAL TO AMEND THE VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND ZONING CODE SECTION 16.58.090 – MINOR SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS – ORDINANCE 2025-028**

Braeden Christofferson stated that the purpose of the ordinance update is to align with Utah Code and Uintah County's processes. The existing code was outdated, requiring surveys and metes and bounds descriptions. After consultation with the County Recorder's office and the County Surveyor, it was recommended that the City transition away from this method and instead allow plats to be recorded by reference to the subdivision. Additional updates included clarifying the process for recording subdivision plats. The new language placed responsibility for recording on the zoning administrator rather than the applicant, ensuring timely and consistent recording. Minor changes were made to section references and wording, primarily for clarity and alignment with county procedures. It was noted that these updates would simplify the process, reduce administrative delays, and save applicants significant costs, as metes and bounds descriptions are time-consuming and expensive to prepare. The commission briefly discussed the proposed amendment and staff clarified the changes.

Chair, Stephen Lytle, opened the public hearing to receive public comment. There being to public comment, Chair, Stephen Lytle closed the public hearing.

*Nick Porter made a motion to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council for approval of the proposed amendment to the Vernal City Minor Subdivision Regulations. Samantha Chapoose seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Troy Allred, Nick Porter, Samantha Chapoose & Ryan Balch voting in favor.*

**DISCUSSION TO CONSIDER APPROVAL TO AMEND THE VERNAL CITY PLANNING AND ZONING CODE SECTION 16.28.050 – OFF-PREMISE SIGNS –**

**ORDINANCE NUMBER 2025-022**

Braeden Christofferson explained that the purpose of the discussion was to refine the proposed ordinance, which had been remanded by the City Council for further review of provisions related to smaller signs and temporary event signage. Mr. Christofferson explained that the intent of the amendment was to create a balanced approach to off-premise advertising by allowing limited temporary signage for events while maintaining city aesthetics and safety standards. The proposed solution would introduce a temporary event sign permit for off-premise signs. This permit would be free of charge, it could be placed twenty one (21) days before the event, and would allow signs to remain up to three (3) days after the event. Code enforcement would monitor for compliance. The proposal outlined size limits for signs: a freestanding sign up to six (6') feet by six (6') feet or a banner sign up to ten (10') feet by three (3') feet. Signs could also be mounted on small trailers or other mobile frameworks with a permit, provided they were not placed on semi-trailers, freight trailers, or oversized box trucks. These restrictions were included to prevent large, unsightly displays that could detract from the City's appearance or reduce visibility for motorists. Commission members agreed the proposal provided a reasonable balance between flexibility and visual control. Minor typographical corrections were noted in the draft text. Discussion also addressed the potential for businesses without street frontage to advertise off-premise. While some examples were mentioned, it was agreed that this issue is not currently widespread within city limits. The commission discussed possible options, including monument signs or conditional use permits. It was concluded that off-premise business advertising was not an immediate concern and could be revisited in the future if needed. The commission requested that staff continue refining the ordinance language to present a final version for consideration at the next planning session in November.

**DISCUSSION PERTAINING TO ADDITIONAL DWELLING UNITS (ADUS)**

Braeden Christofferson began the discussion by explaining that the purpose was to introduce ADUs into Vernal City Code, align local regulations with state ADU standards, and explore ways to increase flexibility while maintaining neighborhood compatibility. Commission Members examined potential lot size, design, and utility standards for ADUs, noting the growing need for additional housing options in Vernal and throughout the Wasatch Front. The discussion emphasized that ADUs could help support multigenerational living and provide property owners with additional income opportunities. Zoning considerations were discussed at length, including whether ADUs should be allowed in manufactured home (MH) zones. It was noted that infrastructure such as roads, water, and sewer systems should meet city standards before additional density is permitted. The group clarified the difference between mobile home parks and individual MH-zoned lots and agreed that individual lots would be eligible for an ADU but a mobile home park would not be. The Commission also discussed owner occupancy requirements, noting that state law mandates one of the structures on the property must be owner-occupied. Regarding utilities, there was general agreement that separate utility connections should not be required unless a property is subdivided or sold separately. Parking requirements were considered important but should remain reasonable to avoid creating unnecessary cost barriers for property owners. The issue of short-term rentals was also discussed, with some members suggesting that establishing a minimum lease term, such as ninety (90) days, could discourage Airbnb-type uses. Enforcement challenges were acknowledged. Questions were

137 raised about existing setback standards, particularly rear setbacks, with interest in reviewing  
138 whether current requirements could be adjusted to allow for more flexibility. Mr. Christofferson  
139 also discussed the concept of “subordinate dwelling units,” a new housing model being explored  
140 in other Utah cities, which could help inform Vernal City’s future housing policies. Staff  
141 concluded that they would develop draft language for a new ADU ordinance, consult with the  
142 building official regarding setback and spacing standards, and present the proposed draft for  
143 further discussion at the November meeting. The overall goal is to create clear, practical, and  
144 affordable ADU regulations that address local housing needs while maintaining neighborhood  
145 integrity.

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147 **DISCUSSION IN REGARDS TO VETERANS DAY**  
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149 The Commission discussed scheduling the November meeting in consideration of Veterans Day.  
150 Members considered meeting the week before or after the holiday. After discussion, consensus  
151 was reached to hold the meeting on November 4, 2025 instead of the regularly scheduled date of  
152 November 11, 2025.

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154 **ADJOURN:** *There being no further business, Samantha Chapoose moved to adjourn. Nick*  
155 *Porter seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote, and the meeting was*  
156 *adjourned.*  
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Stephen Lytle , Planning Commission Chair



## **Vernal City Planning Commission Staff Report**

**Prepared By:** Braeden Christofferson

**Date:** 11/18/2025

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### **Public Hearing Items**

#### **Motion to consider approval to amend the Vernal City Municipal Planning and Zoning Code §16.28.050 – Off-Premises Signs**

**Type of PC Decision:** Legislative

**Review Trigger:** Planning Commission and City Council Direction

**Location / Code Reference:** VCMC §16.28.050 – Off-Premises Signs

#### **Discussion**

The Planning Commission previously considered multiple options for regulating off-premises signs, including a complete prohibition (“nuclear option”) and restricted allowance in the I-1 Industrial Zone. While there was strong consensus to prohibit billboard-type structures, City Council directed the Commission to revisit allowances for smaller-scale signage that could support community events and local businesses.

Following discussion with the City Manager, staff is proposing the introduction of temporary event off-premises signs as a narrowly defined allowance. This approach maintains the City’s overall prohibition on permanent off-premises signs, while creating a limited, reasonable pathway for event-related visibility.

#### **Context and Background**

Concerns raised by City Council included:

- The need for businesses and organizations to advertise short-term community events.
- Preventing a return of large, permanent billboards and oversized off-premises signage.
- Balancing aesthetics, safety, and economic vitality by allowing controlled, temporary signage.

The proposed amendment addresses these concerns by specifying time limits, size restrictions, and physical standards for permitted temporary event signs.

#### **Analysis**

The proposed ordinance amendment would establish the following standards for Temporary Event Off-Premises Signs:

- **Permit Requirement** – Signs must be authorized through a temporary sign permit issued by the City.

- Duration – Signs may be displayed up to 21 days prior to the event and must be removed within 72 hours (3 days) after the event.
- Size and Format – Allowed sign dimensions include:
  - Maximum freestanding board sign: 6 ft. x 6 ft.
  - Maximum banner sign: 10 ft. x 3 ft.
- Mounting Options – Signs may be installed on trailers or other mobile frameworks, provided that:
  - Trailers must be of lightweight or horse-trailer size.
  - Semi-truck trailers, large freight trailers, or similar oversized platforms are prohibited.
- Placement – Signs must be located outside of required clear vision areas and rights-of-way, and must have written consent of the property owner.
- Prohibited Features – No digital/electronic changeable copy, flashing, or illuminated off-premises event signs.

By adopting these standards, the City can preserve its prohibition on permanent off-premises advertising while accommodating legitimate community needs for event promotion.

### **Compliance with State Code & General Plan**

- Consistent with Utah Code §§10-9a-512 and 10-9a-513, which authorize municipalities to regulate or prohibit off-premises signs, provided the regulations are content-neutral.
- Aligns with the Vernal City General Plan goals to promote local business vitality and community events while protecting scenic and gateway corridors from visual clutter.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends approval of the ordinance amending §16.28.050 – Off-Premises Signs, to maintain the prohibition on permanent billboard-type signs while allowing temporary event off-premises signs under the following conditions:

- a. Permit required.
- b. Display allowed up to 21 days before and 72 hours after the event.
- c. Maximum sizes: 6' x 6' board or 10' x 3' banner.
- d. Signs allowed on lightweight/horse-sized trailers; semi-trailers prohibited.
- e. Signs must be placed with property owner consent and outside rights-of-way.
- f. No digital, illuminated, or flashing features permitted.

## **2. Recommendation to consider approval to amend the Vernal City Municipal Planning and Zoning Code by adding Section §16.20.100 – Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), combining existing Internal Accessory Dwelling Unit (IADU) standards with new provisions for Attached and Detached ADUs.**

**Type of PC Decision:** Legislative

**Review Trigger:** Planning Commission and Staff Review

**Location / Code Reference:** Repeal §16.20.308; Enact §16.20.100 – Additional Dwelling Units (AADUs, DADU, IADU)

### **Discussion**

This amendment consolidates and modernizes Vernal City’s standards for Additional Dwelling Units (ADUs) by combining existing Internal Accessory Dwelling Units (IADUs) with new standards for Attached (AADUs) and Detached (DADUs).

The proposed section creates a single, comprehensive regulation that supports affordable housing, encourages efficient use of existing infrastructure, and preserves neighborhood character. While staff reviewed several comparable ordinances from other Utah communities, the proposed language was developed specifically for Vernal City because its concepts best reflect the type of balanced growth and neighborhood integrity the City seeks to achieve.

The new regulations will complement the City’s existing IADU allowances and expand opportunities for homeowners to create small, well-regulated additional dwellings—whether internal, attached, or detached—while maintaining shared ownership and unified utility service.

### **Context and Background**

At its October 14, 2025 meeting, the Planning Commission directed staff to prepare a unified ordinance that:

- Combines IADU provisions with new AADU and DADU standards.
- Permits Additional Dwelling Units in residential zones where infrastructure meets City standards.
- Prohibits ADUs within mobile home parks but allows them on individually owned MH-zoned lots that meet City infrastructure requirements.
- Requires owner occupancy of either the main dwelling or the Additional Dwelling Unit.
- Prohibits subdivision or separate sale of any ADU from the principal dwelling or lot.
- Requires all ADUs to share the same utility connections as the primary dwelling.
- Retains manageable parking standards and affordability.
- Restricts rentals to long-term occupancy (minimum 90 consecutive days).

This approach aligns with the City’s Moderate-Income Housing goals by increasing housing diversity, supporting multigenerational living, and improving housing affordability without altering the single-family character of residential areas.

### **Analysis**

The proposed ordinance will:



**1. Create a unified Section (§16.20.100 – Additional Dwelling Units)**

Consolidates internal, attached, and detached units into a single framework that complements existing IADU provisions and establishes new rules for DADUs and AADUs.

**2. Clarify Eligibility and Zoning**

- Permitted in RA-1, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, and MH zones (with compliant infrastructure).
- Prohibited within mobile home parks.

**3. Strengthen Ownership and Utility Rules**

- Additional dwellings cannot be subdivided, conveyed, or sold separately.
- All units must utilize the same utility connections as the primary dwelling; separate meters are prohibited.

**4. Define Development Standards**

- Lot Size: IADU – 6,000 sf minimum; AADU/DADU – 10,000 sf minimum.
- Design Compatibility: Similar roof form, materials, and color to the primary dwelling.
- Height: 25 ft maximum or equal to primary dwelling, whichever is less.
- Setbacks: Per §16.24.160 or base zoning district.

**5. Require Owner Occupancy and Parking**

- Owner occupancy required for one of the dwellings.
- IADU: three (3) total off-street parking spaces.
- DADU/AADU: one (1) per bedroom, up to two (2).

**6. Prohibit Short-Term Rentals**

- Minimum lease term of ninety (90) consecutive days.

**7. Administrative Process and Enforcement**

- Reviewed and approved administratively by the Planning Department.
- Notice of compliance recorded at the County Recorder's Office.
- Violations subject to revocation and Title 1 enforcement.

**Compliance with State Code & General Plan**

● **Utah Code Compliance:**

Implements §§10-9a-505.5 and 10-9a-530 by establishing owner-occupancy, shared utility, and subdivision prohibitions.

● **General Plan Consistency:**

Advances housing and affordability objectives in Vernal's General Plan by providing regulated flexibility while maintaining neighborhood integrity.

● **Infrastructure & Utility Coordination:**

Aligns with the **Vernal City Engineering Standards (2016)** to ensure all ADUs rely on existing service laterals without duplicating or oversizing municipal systems.

## Potential Code Changes

**Red** = Removed Code | **Green** = New Code

### Removal of Section 16.20.308 Dwelling, Internal Additional (IADU) Addition of Section 16.20.100 – Additional Dwelling Units (AADUs, DADU, IADU)

(Note: Only new code is shown since no prior section exists.)

#### ~~Section 16.20.308 Dwelling, Internal Additional (IADU)~~

- ~~A. An IADU may only be created in relation to a primary single family dwelling.~~
- ~~B. One (1) additional parking space must be created to support the IADU so that the minimum number of parking spaces for a single family dwelling with an IADU shall be three (3).~~
  - ~~1. The parking space supporting the IADU must be surfaced in either asphalt, concrete, masonry pavers or gravel.~~
- ~~C. The minimum lot size for an IADU shall be six thousand (6,000) square feet.~~
- ~~D. Current fire egress requirements concerning bedroom window egress must be met at the time an IADU is created.~~
- ~~E. An IADU may not be created or maintained within a manufactured home as defined in this title.~~

#### Section 16.20.100 - Additional Dwelling Units (AADUs, DADUs, IADUs)

##### **A. Purpose.**

The purpose of this section is to establish uniform standards for internal, attached, and detached additional dwelling units within Vernal City. These provisions are intended to:

1. Encourage a range of attainable and flexible housing options that complement established neighborhoods and support intergenerational living;
2. Promote efficient use of existing infrastructure and public services;
3. Provide opportunities for residents to age in place and for homeowners to maintain long-term investment and stability in the community;
4. Preserve the single-family character and livability of residential zones; and
5. Comply with Utah Code §10-9a-530 and related housing provisions.

##### **B. Applicability.**

1. Additional Dwelling Units are permitted in the RA-1, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, and MH zones, provided that:
  - a. The property is owner-occupied; and
  - b. All public infrastructure and access meet Vernal City engineering standards.
2. Additional Dwelling Units are prohibited within mobile-home parks.
3. Each Additional Dwelling Unit shall remain accessory to a single-family dwelling located on the same lot.
4. An Additional Dwelling Unit shall not be approved on a lot that contains more than one principal dwelling.

##### **C. Definitions.**

1. **Internal Additional Dwelling Unit (IADU):** A self-contained dwelling unit created wholly within the existing footprint of a single-family dwelling, including attached garages or basements.



2. **Attached Additional Dwelling Unit (AADU):** A self-contained dwelling unit constructed as a physical addition to the principal dwelling and sharing a common wall or roof.
3. **Detached Additional Dwelling Unit (DADU):** A self-contained dwelling unit that is structurally separate from the principal dwelling but located on the same lot.
4. **Owner Occupancy:** The property owner resides in either the principal or the additional dwelling as their primary residence.

#### **D. Prohibited Subdivision and Sale.**

1. An Additional Dwelling Unit may not be subdivided, conveyed, or sold separately from the principal dwelling or lot, whether by condominium conversion, metes-and-bounds description, or other means.
2. All Additional Dwelling Units shall remain under common ownership with the principal dwelling.

#### **E. Utilities.**

1. All Additional Dwelling Units shall utilize the same utility connections as the principal dwelling for culinary water, sanitary sewer, electric, and natural-gas service.
2. Separate meters, service laterals, or independent utility accounts are prohibited.
3. Any required upgrades to existing service lines shall be the responsibility of the property owner and installed in accordance with Vernal City Engineering Standards (2016).

#### **F. Development Standards.**

1. **Lot Size:** Minimum 6,000 square feet for IADUs; 10,000 square feet for AADUs and DADUs.
2. **Setbacks:** Shall comply with § 16.24.160 (Accessory Buildings and Structures) or the base-zone standards, whichever is more restrictive.
3. **Height:** Shall not exceed 25 feet or the height of the principal dwelling, whichever is less.
4. **Design Compatibility:**
  - a. AADUs and DADUs shall utilize exterior materials, colors, and roof forms that are consistent with or complementary to the principal dwelling.
  - b. Detached units shall include similar window and door proportions and roof pitch.
5. **Fire and Building Safety:** All Additional Dwelling Units must comply with adopted building, fire, and health codes, including egress requirements for sleeping rooms.
6. **Floodplain and Sensitive Lands:** Units within mapped flood or sensitive-land areas must meet applicable provisions of Titles 8 and 12.

#### **G. Parking Requirements.**

1. A single-family dwelling containing an IADU shall provide a total of three (3) off-street parking spaces.
2. AADUs and DADUs shall provide one (1) off-street parking space per bedroom, up to a maximum of two (2).
3. Parking surfaces shall consist of asphalt, concrete, masonry pavers, or gravel.
4. All parking shall be located outside required front-yard setback areas unless otherwise approved by the Planning Department.

#### **H. Occupancy and Use.**

1. Either the principal dwelling or the Additional Dwelling Unit must be owner-occupied at all times.
2. Short-term rentals (less than ninety [90] consecutive days) are prohibited.

3. No more than one (1) family, as defined in § 16.04.030, may occupy an Additional Dwelling Unit at any time.

#### **I. Flag Lots.**

Detached Additional Dwelling Units are prohibited on flag lots unless otherwise approved through the subdivision process and compliant with all access and utility standards.

#### **J. Administrative Procedure.**

1. Applications shall be reviewed administratively by the Planning Department.
2. Submittal requirements include:
  - a. Completed application form;
  - b. Scaled site plan showing structures, driveways, and parking;
  - c. Floor plans demonstrating compliance with building and fire codes; and
  - d. Proof of owner occupancy.
3. Upon approval, the City shall record a **Notice of Compliance** with the Uintah County Recorder identifying the property as containing an approved Additional Dwelling Unit.

#### **K. Enforcement and Revocation.**

1. Failure to maintain owner occupancy, shared utilities, or long-term rental compliance constitutes a violation of this Title.
2. Violations are subject to enforcement under Title 1, including revocation of approval and daily civil penalties.
3. Upon revocation, continued occupancy of the Additional Dwelling Unit is unlawful.

#### **L. Relationship to Other Uses.**

This section does not modify or supersede § 16.20.310 (Dwelling, Mixed Use Accessory). Mixed-use dwellings within commercial or mixed-use zones remain governed by that section.

#### **M. Re-evaluation Upon Transfer of Ownership.**

When a property containing an approved Additional Dwelling Unit is sold or otherwise transferred, the new owner shall submit verification of continued owner occupancy and compliance with this section within sixty (60) days of the transfer. Failure to do so shall render the prior approval void, and continued occupancy of the Additional Dwelling Unit shall be unlawful until a new administrative approval is granted.

#### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission forward a positive recommendation to the City Council for approval of Ordinance No. [TBD], repealing §16.20.308 and adopting §16.20.100 *Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)* to establish unified, enforceable standards that:

- prohibit separate subdivision or sale of ADUs,
- require shared utility connections with the principal dwelling, and
- provide affordable, well-regulated housing flexibility across Vernal's residential zones.



# Discussion Items

## 1. Discussion – Use of Kingsbury Church as a Temporary Warming Center (“Warming the Basin”)

**Type of PC Decision:** Legislative

**Review Trigger:** Planning Commission and City Council Direction

**Location / Code Reference:** C-2 - Central Commercial Zone

### Background

Warming the Basin, a local nonprofit organization, has expressed interest in utilizing the Kingsbury Community Church, located at 65 East 100 North, as a temporary warming center during extreme cold weather events.

Currently, the organization provides hotel vouchers to assist individuals experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity when temperatures reach Code Blue levels (18°F or below). The proposed change would expand those efforts to include the operation of a warming center providing overnight refuge during those same emergency events.

The Kingsbury Church is situated within the C-2 Central Commercial Zone, where religious assembly uses are allowed. However, the proposed use introduces a new element—temporary overnight occupancy for emergency shelter purposes—which differs from typical church or assembly functions.

This discussion item is being presented to the Planning Commission to obtain feedback and guidance regarding the appropriate zoning classification, potential permitting process, and safety or operational considerations for such an emergency facility.

### Project Summary

The proposal would allow temporary overnight shelter operations during declared Code Blue events. This may require coordination with local services, and ensure safe use of the church facility when activated.

**Proposed location** - Kingsbury Community Church 65 E 100 N

**Existing Use** - Church / Religious assembly

**Proposed Use** - Temporary Warming Center during code blue events

**Operation Period** - Winter months; activation only during extreme code ( $\leq 18^{\circ}\text{F}$ )

**Zoning:** C-2 - Central Commercial Zone

The proposal would allow for temporary overnight shelter operations during declared Code Blue events.

### Analysis

#### A. Zoning and Use Classification

The C-2 Central Commercial Zone is intended to support a mix of commercial, public, and institutional uses. Churches and religious institutions are listed as permitted or conditional uses within the zone depending on the specific context and intensity of use.

However, temporary overnight shelters or warming centers are not specifically identified within the

permitted or conditional use table in the zoning code. This creates ambiguity as to whether such a facility should be treated as:

1. An accessory use to a religious institution, or
2. A social service or temporary housing use requiring a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) or Temporary Use Permit.

## **B. Building and Fire Safety**

Because the proposed activity would involve temporary overnight stays, it may trigger a separate building occupancy classification (e.g., Group R or I per building code). Before any activation could occur, coordination with the Building Official and Fire Marshal would be required to verify:

- Egress and fire safety compliance
- Heating and ventilation safety
- Restroom and sanitation accessibility
- Occupant load and emergency exit requirements

## **C. Operational Considerations**

Staff anticipates the following coordination would be necessary before any warming center activation:

- Establishment of activation protocols in partnership with Uintah County Emergency Management.
- Coordination with Vernal City Police, Tri-County Health, and Building/Fire Departments.
- Clear volunteer management and safety plan during activation periods.

## **D. Legal and Liability Review**

Given the nature of the use, the City Attorney should review whether the proposed operation requires:

- A formal indemnification or hold harmless agreement between the City, the church, and Warming the Basin; and
- Confirmation of insurance coverage for liability during emergency activations.

## **Staff Recommendation**

This item is presented **for discussion only**. No formal action is requested at this time.

Staff requests Planning Commission feedback on the following points:

1. Whether the proposed use of the Kingsbury Church as a temporary warming center should be treated as a conditional use within the C-2 zone;
2. Whether a temporary use permit process would be more appropriate given the limited duration and emergency-only nature of the operation;
3. Whether the City should consider a future text amendment to define and regulate “warming centers” or “emergency shelters” within the Vernal City Code; and



4. Any additional conditions, safety standards, or coordination measures the Commission believes should accompany future applications of this nature.

### **Next Steps**

If the Commission is supportive of the concept, staff will:

1. Prepare a zoning interpretation and proposed permitting pathway (CUP or Temporary Use).
2. Coordinate internally with Building, Fire, and Police Departments to establish operational and safety standards.
3. Work with the City Attorney to draft necessary legal agreements or insurance provisions.
4. Return to the Planning Commission with potential ordinance language or a draft policy framework.

### **Attachments**

A. Vicinity Map – Kingsbury Church (65 E 100 N)

B. C-2 Zone Permitted and Conditional Use Table (Excerpt from VCMC Title 16)