



PLANNING COMMISSION

July 9, 2025

City Council Chambers at 38 West Center Street

Start Time: 7:00

Roll Call: Commissioners Debbie Greener, Vern Miller, Ardella Petersen, Steven Sautler, and Jill White were present.

Others Present: City Treasurer Mandi Buege, Dennis Marker via phone, Jim Sanders, Charlotte Christiansen

Invocation/inspirational thought Commissioner Sautler

Pledge of Allegiance Commissioner Greener

Public Forum

No public comment was made.

Public Hearing

Commissioner Greener acknowledged that the applicant did not receive a copy of the staff reports as required, and the commission can only move forward with the hearing if the applicant waives their right to have the report before the meeting.

Jim Sanders chose to continue with the public hearing.

Motion to open the public hearing made by Commissioner Sautler and seconded by Commissioner Miller.

The vote was unanimous

Rezoning of 79 acres from A-1 to R&C and R-2

Mr. Jim Sanders filed a rezoning request on behalf of Kirsten Sanders Candland, which acts as Trustee for their family property. The property is currently zoned A-1, which requires 40-acres per residential lot. They request rezoning the southeasternmost 10 acres along Highway 28 to accommodate a professional medical clinic coming to Gunnison, and the remainder of the property zoned R-2 for residential development by a future buyer.

Jim stated he has no immediate development plans. The sole purpose of the request is to facilitate the sale of the land, particularly the 10-acre parcel. IHC cannot make an offer or proceed without rezoning, as the current zoning does not permit the 10-acre purchase size. Jim stated he was open to only rezoning the 10-acre parcel to commercial, leaving the remaining 69 acres as A-1. He would defer further rezoning or development until additional interest emerges. Jim cited past rezoning approvals to facilitate sales, e.g., Stella Hill selling to Fierce for homebuilding.

Charlotte Christiansen has been working with IHC they are willing to purchase 10 acres (though would prefer less) for a medical clinic/office, but the sale cannot proceed until zoning allows it.

- **Property Search:** Charlotte detailed diligence in seeking appropriately zoned property throughout the valley for IHC over a year-plus with no available sellers.
- **Market Conditions:** No developers are willing to buy the entire 79-acre parcel due to infrastructure costs and upfront water requirements (approx. \$1.9M before development).
- **Competition:** Charlotte acknowledged potential competition with the existing Gunnison Valley Hospital but emphasized the demand and IHC's tenacity for a presence in the valley.

Jim hasn't been able to sell the 79 acres because of the gamble of our valley's infrastructure. This is the only piece of ground they have that would work to get IHC here. Jim stated, if the office space doesn't go with the Our Valley, Our Vision, neither does a sagebrush hill, and that's what it will stay.

Motion to close the Public Hearing made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner White.

The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Discussion

Some commissioners were supportive of permitting smaller parcels for residential use (potentially via R-2). Some objected to general commercial upzone/development without clear plans or supporting studies.

The Commission noted the presence of existing adjacent commercial properties (Valley Builders, Valley Furniture), which might support a limited rezoning argument. There are concerns about traffic safety with possible access onto Highway 28, referencing recent highway accidents. Additional concerns were raised about "opening the floodgates" and undermining the long-term vision if exceptions to the master plan are made without basis.

Any new buyer (IHC or otherwise) would be responsible for obtaining all further permits, rights-of-way, studies, and development plan submissions, even after rezoning and sale.

Commission consensus was that even for a 10-acre split, additional information was needed about basic development intent, access, and infrastructure plans showing ability to comply with standards.

A motion was made by Commissioner Greener to forward the request to the City Council with the recommendation to deny the rezoning request based on the following findings as noted in the staff report.

1. The Planning Commission is responsible for reviewing rezoning requests against the application standards found in Section 603 of the Land Use Ordinance

2. The applicant has not submitted development plans sufficient for the Planning Commission to reasonably determine if the standards of Section 603 are or can be met. More specifically,
 - how the rezone request will affect the overall well-being of the city,
 - the potential effects upon the public health, welfare and safety,
 - the potential effects on the interests of the city and its residents,
 - the infrastructure and service demands required if development should occur under the requested zones,
 - the compatibility of future developments with nearby and adjoining properties, and
 - the suitability of the properties for the uses and activities proposed.
3. The proposed medical office use on the subject property is not consistent with the preferred future land use of the property as shown in the adopted Our Valley Our Vision plan.
4. Applying the R-2 zone to the property before a development proposal is submitted, and before the city has the regulatory framework to establish open space requirements, may limit the potential of having open space and amenities in this area of the city as contemplated by the General Plan.
5. At any time, the applicant can return with more information as requested or needed and pursue the request again.

Second by Commissioner Peterson.

Roll Call vote

Steven Saulter yes, Jill white yes, Ardella Petersen yes, Vern Miller yes, Thomas Bore yes, Debbie Greener yes.

The vote is unanimous

Discussion and Possible Action Item

Home Occupation at 28 East 200 South – Aimee Gordon Massage and Art Therapy

Ms. Aimee Gordon, who lives at 28 East 200 South, would like to operate a private art studio and possibly conduct massage therapy from her home. This requires a business license as a Home Occupation.

Motion to approve the home occupation business license for Aimee Gordon with the conditions that the business owner continues to comply with all city business license requirements and fully complies with all home occupation standards of the city, made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner White.

The vote was unanimously approved

General Discussion and Staff Reports

No staff reports given.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Peterson and seconded by Commissioner Saulters.

The vote was unanimously approved

The meeting was adjourned at **8:30 P.M.**

Prepared by: _____

Mandi Buege
City Treasurer

Approved: _____

Debbie Greener
Commission Chair