

MINUTES of the Vernal City PLANNING COMMISSION

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

November 18, 2025

5:30 pm

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

Members Excused: Brittany Young, Ryan Balch

Alternates Present:

Alternates Excused:

Staff Present: Braeden Christofferson, Assistant City Manager; Matthew Tate, Building Official, Gay Lee Jeffs, Administrative Secretary.

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

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

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 provided a brief refresher for those in attendance regarding the ongoing discussions surrounding the City's sign ordinance. The matter had been remanded back to the Planning Commission for additional review, specifically concerning temporary event signage, off-premise signs, and the continued prohibition of billboards within city limits.

Mr. Christofferson reviewed the standards previously discussed for temporary event signage. Under the proposed language, temporary signs may be displayed up to twenty-one (21) days prior to an event and must be removed within seventy-two (72) hours following the event. The maximum allowable size for temporary signs is six feet by six feet (6' x 6'), or thirty-six (36) square feet, while banners may not exceed ten feet by three feet (10' x 3'), or thirty (30) square feet. These dimensions represent the upper limits, and smaller signs would remain permissible. Signs may be mounted on trailers or other mobile frameworks; however, only lightweight or horse-trailer-sized platforms are allowed. Semi-trailers, freight trailers, and similar oversized platforms would continue to be prohibited. All temporary event signs will be required to obtain a sign permit from the City, and staff will monitor and enforce removal deadlines.

Mr. Christofferson emphasized that the purpose of these changes is to maintain the City's existing prohibition on permanent off-premise advertising, including billboards, while allowing limited and controlled temporary signage that supports community events and local economic activity. The Commission then discussed whether businesses located on flag lots or other low-visibility areas should have a method for securing off-premise signage to maintain visibility. Staff explained that most high-visibility locations along Main Street have already been developed, and such requests are expected to be rare.

Commissioners discussed implementing a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) process as a potential solution. This would allow a business to propose an off-premise pole or monument sign while still requiring the sign to meet all existing standards for similar on-premise signage. Commissioners also discussed whether a proximity requirement should be included, such as limiting the sign to a reasonable distance—potentially within a quarter mile—of the business being advertised. Staff confirmed that current sign permits already exist and that adding a CUP requirement for off-premise signs could be easily incorporated into the ordinance.

Chair, Stephen Lytle opened the public hearing to receive public comment. There being no public comment, Chair, Stephen Lytle closed the public hearing.

Nick Porter moved to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council for the proposed temporary signage amendments, along with the addition of a Conditional Use Permit requirement for any off-premise business sign. Troy Allred seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Nick Porter, Samantha Chapoose and Troy Allred voting in favor.

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 discussed updates to the City's Additional Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations. Mr. Christofferson explained that the current code contains internal access dwelling unit provisions in a separate section, and the proposal consolidates all ADU regulations—internal, attached, and detached—into one unified chapter under Section 16.21.00. The purpose of this reorganization is to make the requirements clearer and easier for residents to locate and understand.

Mr. Christofferson outlined the proposed development standards, specifically highlighting minimum lot size requirements for ADUs. Under the draft language, ADUs would require a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet. Attached and detached ADUs would each require a minimum of 10,000 square feet. Mr. Christofferson also reported recent communication with ULCT, noting that the state may consider adjusting the statewide ADU minimum lot size to 6,000 square feet in the future. If adopted at the state level, the City would update its code accordingly.

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The proposal includes removal of outdated code sections and incorporation of revised language into the consolidated ADU chapter. As previously discussed in earlier meetings, ADUs would be permitted in mobile home subdivisions where infrastructure is compliant but would remain prohibited within mobile home parks.

Mr. Christofferson further reiterated that all ADUs must use the same utility connections as the primary dwelling, consistent with Utah State Code. Separate meters are not allowed, and ADUs cannot be subdivided, conveyed, or sold independently of the primary residence.

The Commission also reviewed Section H(3), which states that no more than one family, as defined by City Code, may occupy an ADU. Members discussed the City's current broad definition of "family," noting that while the clause is acceptable as written, it is largely precautionary and based on language used in other cities to limit potential liability. The Commission agreed to retain the provision.

Chair, Stephen Lytle opened the public hearing to receive public comment. There being no public comment, Chair, Stephen Lytle closed the public hearing.

Nick Porter moved to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council for approval of Ordinance 2025-031 as presented. The motion was seconded by Samantha Chapoose. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Nick Porter, Samantha Chapoose and Troy Allred voting in favor.

DISCUSSION – USE OF KINGSBURY CHURCH AS A TEMPORARY WARMING CENTER

Braeden Christofferson presented a proposal from Heart of the Basin, a local nonprofit organization, to utilize the Kingsbury Community Church, located at 65 East 100 North, as a temporary warming center during extreme cold weather events. The organization has partnered with Kingsbury Church and other statewide locations to support individuals experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. At present, Heart of the Basin provides hotel vouchers during Code Blue conditions, which occur when temperatures fall below 18°F as defined by state statute. The proposed warming center would operate nightly throughout the Code Blue season, expanding available services by offering on-site overnight refuge in addition to the existing voucher program.

The church property lies within the CC-2 Central Commercial Zone, where religious assembly uses are permitted. However, temporary overnight occupancy as an emergency shelter is not specifically addressed in the city's zoning code. Staff presented the item to seek direction from the Planning Commission on whether a conditional use permit (CUP) would be required for this use. Representatives from Heart of the Basin were present, including

Lindsay Garlick, 331 North Nelson Avenue, Roosevelt, Utah, spoke on behalf of the organization. Ms. Garlick handed out a packet to Commissioners that included a proposed

facility partnership and use agreement, a code of conduct, and background information on the nonprofit's operations. Commissioners asked questions regarding anticipated occupancy, operations, and facility logistics. Ms. Garlick clarified that the warming center would operate every day during the Code Blue season, and that the center would not utilize the basement, instead using a designated nursery area in the church. She noted that last season, UBAG served 237 individuals through hotel vouchers, and the warming center would help reduce that demand. She also explained that hotel vouchers are currently limited to 14 nights per family, which is often insufficient for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. By providing temporary shelter, Heart of the Basin hopes to extend support for those in need. Ms. Garlick indicated that the expected nightly occupancy would start around ten people and increase depending on need. She confirmed that at least two staff members would be present overnight to supervise the facility and ensure safety.

Ms. Garlick further noted that Utah State Code mandates emergency shelter access on Code Blue nights, during which local zoning laws are temporarily overridden. She emphasized that while legally zoning may not restrict the warming center's operation, the organization aims to provide refuge at temperatures above 18°F as well, reflecting a proactive approach to community need. She also offered to provide the relevant statutory documentation for staff and Commission review.

Building Official, Matt Tate, addressed technical concerns related to building code compliance. While the church is currently classified as an A-2 occupancy, risk category II, temporary overnight shelter use would be categorized as R-1, risk category IV. As a result, he recommended a coordinated inspection with the Uintah Fire District to verify ADA accessibility, safe egress routes, emergency lighting, fire protection measures, sanitation capacity, and installation of basic smoke detection equipment. Mr. Tate noted that Kingsbury Church is generally in good condition and that such temporary use is feasible with appropriate safety measures. Annual safety inspections were recommended to ensure ongoing compliance.

Commissioners expressed strong support for the warming center, noting the absence of a local homeless shelter and the critical need for cold-weather refuge. Commissioners discussed allowing the use without requiring a CUP, contingent on verification of State Code Blue requirements and building safety compliance. Commissioners also discussed potentially amending the zoning code to explicitly allow emergency shelters in commercial zones, reducing ambiguity in future applications.

The discussion concluded with direction for staff to review state statute, coordinate necessary safety inspections, and determine whether a CUP is required once legal and code considerations are confirmed. The Commission expressed appreciation for the nonprofit's efforts and emphasized the importance of ensuring the facility is both accessible and safe for overnight occupancy.

DISCUSSION – CHILDREN'S GYMNASIUM

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Braeden Christofferson discussed a request to establish a children's gymnasium for ages 12 and under in a CP-2 zone. The facility would include recreational activities such as bouncing, swings, and slides. Mr. Christofferson noted that while the City Code permits indoor recreation and gymnasiums, there is no specific provision for this type of niche facility, and there is no precedent in the City.

Examples from nearby cities indicate that similar facilities are generally treated as indoor recreation without requiring a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The Commission expressed no immediate concerns and agreed the use likely fits within existing code, with no CUP required at this time.

ADJOURN: There being no further business, *Samantha Chapoose moved to adjourn. Nick Porter seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote, and the meeting was adjourned.*

Stephen Lytle , Planning Commission Chair