



# **Planning Commission Training**

Running Meetings, Making Motions & Applying the  
Grantsville Land Use Code

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# The #1 Rule

## Follow the code. Not opinions.

1. Personal preference  $\neq$  legal standard
2. Public opposition  $\neq$  legal reason to deny
3. Decisions must be based on ordinances + evidence



# Running a Meeting

1. Staff report
2. Applicant
3. Public comment
4. Close hearing
5. Commission discussion
6. Motion



# After Public Hearing Closes

1. Do NOT go back to the public
2. Do NOT ask new questions to audience
3. Keep discussion at the dais
4. Use staff for clarification
5. Once closed = decision mode

# What Good Discussion Looks Like

1. “What section of code applies?”
2. “Does this meet the standard?”
3. “What evidence supports that?”
4. Good example:
5. “Does this meet §17.40 traffic standards?”
6. Bad example:
7. “I don’t like this for the neighborhood”
8. Stay anchored in code + facts

# Asking the Right Questions

1. Ask questions that:
2. Tie to code sections
3. Clarify evidence
4. Identify impacts
5. Examples:
6. “What standard addresses lighting?”
7. “What evidence supports traffic concerns?”
8. “Can conditions mitigate this?”
9. If your question isn’t tied to code, it’s probably not relevant.



# Making Motions

Every motion needs 4 things:

1. Action (approve / deny / continue)
2. Application name
3. Findings (why) Conditions (if any)
4. Example (Approval):
5. “I move to approve CUP-2026-01 based on findings in the staff report and subject to conditions 1–5.”

# Denying an Application

1. A denial MUST include:
  2. Specific code section
  3. Clear failure to meet standard
  4. Evidence in the record
  5. Example:
    6. “I move to deny CUP-2026-01 because it does not meet §17.40.060 regarding traffic safety, based on the traffic study.”

No code = no defensible denial

# Example 1 – Conditional Use Permit (Auto Repair in Commercial Zone)

Scenario:	Good Discussion	conditions limiting hours of operation, requiring screening along the residential boundary, and compliance with noise standards in Title 17.”
1. Zone: C-G (General Commercial)	1. “What section of code addresses noise impacts?”	
2. Use: Auto repair shop (conditional use)	2. “What are the hours of operation limits in this zone?”	
3. Concerns: Noise, hours, adjacent residential	3. “Are there buffering or screening requirements?”	Bad Motion
	4. Strong Motion (Approval) “I move to approve CUP-2026-02 for an auto repair use in the C-G zone, based on findings in the staff report and subject to	1. “I don’t think this fits the neighborhood.”
		2. Why it fails: No code, no findings, no evidence

# Example 2 – Denial (Insufficient Access / Traffic Safety)

## Scenario:

1. Small subdivision off narrow road
2. Staff identifies failure to meet access standards

## Strong Denial

1. “I move to deny Preliminary Plat 2026-

01 because the application does not meet access requirements under §17.xx regarding minimum roadway width and emergency access, as identified in the staff report and supported by the engineering review.”

## Weak Denial

1. “The road feels too dangerous.”
2. “Feels” = not defensible
3. Must tie directly to code + evidence

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# Example 3 – When You MUST Approve

## Scenario:

1. Single-family home in residential zone
2. Meets all setbacks, height, and use standards

## Key Moment:

1. Even if neighbors oppose it... You cannot deny it

## What to Say

1. “Does this meet all applicable standards?”
2. “Is there any code basis for denial?”

## Motion

1. “I move to approve the application as it complies with all applicable standards in Title 17.”

# Enforcing the Code

1. You do not rewrite code during meetings
2. You apply it as written
3. Conditions must be:
  4. Tied to code
  5. Related to impacts
  6. Reasonable
7. If it meets code → approval is required
8. If not → findings must explain why

# LIVE PRACTICE SCENARIO

Situation: CUP for small event center

## Scenario 1 - “The Loud Neighbor Case”

Neighbors say:

1. “Traffic will be terrible”
2. “It will ruin our neighborhood”
3. “We don’t want it”

## Scenario 2 –“Make the Motion”

1. CUP meets all standards
2. Minor lighting concern

## Scenario 3 – “Can You Deny This?”

1. Permitted use (by right)
2. Meets ALL standards
3. Public strongly opposed

# Navigating City Code

Step-by-step:

1. Identify the zone
2. Check use table (permitted vs conditional)
3. Go to specific standards section
4. Look for objective criteria
5. Always ask:
6. “Where is that in the code?”

# Navigating State Law

Key concepts from Utah law:

1. Must follow plain language of ordinance
2. If unclear → interpret in favor of application
3. Must base decisions on substantial evidence
4. State law protects property rights—don't overreach

# The Biggest Mistakes

1. Denying based on public opposition
2. Adding random conditions
3. Going off-topic in discussion
4. Not stating findings
5. “I just feel like...” decisions
6. These are what get cities sued

# Simple Decision Framework

Use this every time:

1. What does the code require?
2. Does the application meet it?
3. What evidence supports that?
4. Can impacts be mitigated?

That's your entire job

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# Final Takeaway

Your job is not to decide what you like.

Your job is to apply the law correctly.

1. Follow the code
2. Stay in your lane
3. Make clear motions
4. Build a record

Do that, and your decisions will hold up.