

WALLSBURG TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

January 20, 2026 - 7 pm

1. **Call to Order** 7:05PM
 - a. Roll Call: Carrie Mecham, Tammy Graham, Spencer Foster, Alisha O’Driscoll, Dennis Phillips, Sam Hicken
2. **Consent Calendar:** Be it hereby moved that the following consent calendar items stand approved:
 - a. Agenda of the January 20, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting
 - b. Minutes of the November 25, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting

Alisha O’Driscoll explained that the recording for the last meeting was lost and these notes are from memory. If anyone has anything to add/change please let her know and they can be updated. Carrie Mecham called for comments/questions. None heard.

Motion: Tammy Graham Second: Dennis Phillips Vote: Unanimous

Tammy Graham asked if we have heard back from anyone from the last meeting. Alisha O’Driscoll said she hasn’t, we just left it at if you are interested in moving forward, let us know.

3. **Agenda Items:**
 - a. **2026 OPMA Training – Information and Discussion Only**
 - i. Spencer Foster with MAG (Mountainland Association of Governments) will complete the annual OPMA (Open and Public Meetings Act) training with the Wallsburg Town Planning Commission and Clerk.

OPMA Training is required for boards and councils each year to learn how to run meetings. To run meetings appropriately and transparently. Citizens have a right to know what you’re doing and what decisions you are making on their behalf. Transparency is the rule of the act, so your citizens can be informed. The exception to the rule is Closed sessions. All public bodies are subject to OPMA (any board, council, committee that is making decisions for the Town). If it feels questionable, slow down and make sure you’re doing things right- just to be safe.

Anytime the majority (3 of 5) members get together to discuss Town business, counts as a meeting. One on one phone calls or face to face discussions are fine. 3 or more needs to be a public meeting- this includes texts and emails. 1 or 2 committee members and a group of citizens is fine. Just 3 (the majority) or more. You can do a notice of quorum for unofficial meetings- Town Hall cleanup, Walkthroughs, etc. Quorum means simple majority, in a public body of 5- 3 have to be present to take action during a meeting. Can still hold a meeting with 2, but not action can be taken. Chance meetings at non-Town related activities and social gatherings do not count- just don’t talk about town business. If a discussion begins, one needs to just walk away and catch up with one of the others later. Sam Hicken asked why the majority matters. Spencer Foster explained that if the majority are discussing and making up their mind about something beforehand or behind closed doors it can be seen as sneaky/not transparent to the public.

Emergency meetings can be held when immediate threat to safety, property, etc and do not require 24 hour notice like regular meetings. Not generally used by Planning Commissions. You can not do normal business during emergency meetings. Very rare, not commonly used. Do not use as a convenience tool.

Electronic meetings allow council members to call in to meetings, but it must be open to the public to hear and participate. Alisha O’Driscoll commented that the Town Council does not want to do electronic meetings, if the public wants to be involved, this is a small enough community that they can come in person.

Closed meetings can only occur for specific reasons- discussion of character, competence, physical or mental health of an individual; collective bargaining; pending or imminent litigation; purchase of real property; security systems; criminal misconduct; certain procurement discussions. Cannot: take action in closed meetings; make appointments (to positions or councils); make final decisions; wandering off topic. Just discuss, don’t decide.

Annual meeting schedules need to be decided on at the first of the year and posted.

Written minutes and recordings of all open meetings must be given public access.

Notices need to be added to the Public Notice Website, at least 24 hours in advance, and in two physical locations (meeting site and/or one other public place).

Minutes must have date/time/place; roll call; substance of all matters discussed; record of votes taken; name of commenters; anything else that a member requests to be entered into the minutes. Public body should be happy with the minutes. Minutes are retained permanently by under GRAMA act.

Recordings must be complete and unedited. Must be properly labeled with date, time, and place of the meeting. Lost recordings happen, just do your best and add a disclaimer to the minutes, etc. Recordings are kept for 3 years, but the State public notice website will keep them forever. Minutes and recordings need to be posted on the Public Notice Website within 3 days of approval. The OPMA act is enforced by the State records committee. Can be subject to fines for non compliance, courts can get involved. Reputational damage is done when not done correctly.

GRAMA and OPMA go together regarding electronic communications during meetings. Minutes, Recordings are all public records and can be requested by anyone, anytime. Side conversations during meetings, about things that are not on the agenda, and not during reports – can violate OPMA. Texts and emails during meetings can be GRAMA requested.

Best practices are to ask questions early, when in doubt- notice the meeting. Use staff and counsel for help as needed. Put as little in writing as possible- only those things that are essential.

b. Upcoming To-Do List, Priority List – Information and Discussion Only

- i. Discuss upcoming items, things to research, make a plan for development code revisions.

Carrie Mecham called for items to discuss. Alisha O’Driscoll commented about working through Chapter 5 with Spencer Foster’s help. Spencer Foster mentioned working on a Google Drive for Planning Commission to access during meetings and won’t have to carry around printed binders. Carrie Mecham asked about network reliability. Alisha O’Driscoll said it is great. Spencer Foster commented that Google Drive is stored on the cloud and should be good. Spencer Foster and Alisha O’Driscoll will work on the Google Drive in the meantime.

4. Commission Member Reports (questions, general discussion, assignments)

None heard.

5. Schedule Next Planning Commission Meeting

- a. Schedule Next Meeting – Skip February Meeting unless something comes up. March 17th at 7:00PM
- b. Call for Agenda items for next Planning Commission Meeting - Spencer Foster will work on Chapter 5 revisions.

6. Adjourn

Motion: Tammy Graham moves to adjourn

Second: Dennis Phillips Vote: Unanimous

Time: 7:47PM