

MINUTES of the Vernal City PLANNING COMMISSION

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

March 10, 2026

5:30 pm

Members Present: Stephen Lytle, Troy Allred, Brittany Young, Hailee Todich, Samantha Chapoose, Aaron Bancroft

Members Excused: Ryan Balch

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, February 10, 2026: Stephen Lytle Chair asked if there were any changes to the minutes from, February 10, 2026. The minutes were approved with there being no corrections, *Samantha Chapoose moved to approve the minutes of February 10, 2026 as presented. Brittney Young seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Troy Allred, Brittany Young, Hailee Todich, Samantha Chapoose, and Aaron Bancroft voting in favor.*

PRESENTATION OF THE UTAH WELL BEING SURVEY

Katie Flaniken presented information regarding the Utah Wellbeing Survey. Ms. Flaniken explained that the survey is conducted in partnership with Utah State University as part of the Utah Wellbeing Project and is available to Vernal residents ages 18 and older. Participation is voluntary, anonymous, and limited to one submission per individual. The survey is offered in both English and Spanish and is mobile-friendly. It was explained that the City receives this data at no cost and that the survey is part of a statewide initiative involving over sixty (60) communities, allowing for comparative analysis. The data collected can be used to support planning efforts, grant applications, infrastructure decisions, and community programs. Ms. Flaniken reviewed key findings from the 2024 survey, which included four hundred ninety one (491) respondents. Reported personal wellbeing averaged 3.6 out of 5, while community wellbeing averaged 3.12 out of 5. Top concerns identified by residents included affordable housing, youth opportunities, water supply, and public safety. Respondents also indicated concerns about population growth occurring too quickly and economic growth progressing too slowly. Katie also highlighted underrepresented groups in the prior survey, including adult males, renters, individuals without degrees, and unmarried residents, and noted efforts to increase participation among those groups. Outreach

efforts for the current survey were discussed, including social media campaigns, partnerships with community organizations, local media, QR code distribution, and engagement at community events. Ms. Flaniken encouraged members of the public to participate in and promote the survey to increase community response, emphasizing that higher participation leads to more accurate and useful data. The presentation concluded with appreciation for the Commission's time and support.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE TRESTLEWOOD PRELIMINARY PLAT FOR PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 1700 W 750 S (PARCEL#:04:031:0008) & 1787 W 319 S (PARCEL #:04:133:0029)

Braeden Christofferson presented the proposed Trestlewood subdivision, explaining that the project is planned as a residential development intended for a 55+ community. The development includes approximately sixty eight (68) units designed as fourplex buildings, with a density of approximately 5.91 units per acre, which is below the maximum allowed in the R-4 zone. The project includes internal circulation and two access points including one connection to Aggie Boulevard. Mr. Christofferson noted that all zoning, setback, and infrastructure requirements had been reviewed and met. It was also explained that a small portion of land had been annexed to facilitate access to Aggie Boulevard. The annexation process has been completed and approved including coordination with the State and recording with the County. The Commission asked questions regarding the canal crossing for the access road. Staff indicated that the developer had coordinated with the County and Public Works to construct a culvert or bridge structure, which was already largely completed.

Chair, Stephen Lytle, opened the hearing for public comment.

Jacob Speirs, 2795 W 1500 N, inquired about the relatively low density of the proposed development within the R-4 zone, specifically questioning why the density was lower than what is permitted within that zoning designation.

Branden Kirk, PO Box 275, Stockton, UT, the applicant for the proposed Trestlewood Subdivision, responded that the development was intentionally designed at a lower density to better align with community needs, with a focus on providing housing opportunities for existing residents rather than higher-density or workforce housing.

Chair, Stephen Lytle, closed the hearing for public comment.

Brittney Young moved to approve the Trestlewood Preliminary Plat for properties located at 1700 W 750 S (Parcel#:04:031:0008) & 1787 W 319 S (Parcel#:04:133:0029). Troy Allred seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Troy Allred, Brittany Young, Hailee Todich, Samantha Chapoose, and Aaron Bancroft voting in favor.

RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE VERNAL CITY PLANNING AND ZONING CODE, SECTION 16.58.120 LAYOUT AND ACCESS – ORDINANCE NUMBER 2026-05

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Braeden Christofferson introduced the amendment, explaining that it would increase the maximum number of units allowed on a single access from twenty five (25) to thirty (30) for single-family, two-family, and townhome developments. The change is intended to align City standards with Uintah County and the International Fire Code. Mr. Christofferson also noted that the Fire Authority would retain final discretion to require fewer units or additional access if safety concerns warranted it. The Commission had a discussion that included concerns regarding increased density, traffic, and overall neighborhood safety. Some members expressed a preference for maintaining lower density and multiple access points to preserve community character and reduce congestion while others noted the benefits of consistency with state and international standards.

Chair, Stephen Lytle, opened the hearing for public comment.

Riley Todich, 1284 West 250 North, expressed concern that increasing the limit from twenty five (25) to thirty (30) units would reduce safety, stating that allowing more units on a single access point could lead to overcrowding and increased risk.

Jacob Speirs, 2795 W 1500 N, spoke in support of the amendment, noting that aligning with state and international standards is generally beneficial and well-researched. He also stated that limiting development can create barriers to housing availability and affordability.

Branden Kirk, PO Box 275, Stockton, UT, provided additional perspective, explaining that site-specific constraints such as lot size, layout, and access can already limit development potential. He noted that increasing the unit allowance provides flexibility, particularly for properties that are landlocked or otherwise constrained, and does not necessarily result in overcrowding.

Chair, Stephen Lytle, closed the hearing for public comment.

Additional discussion with Commission members and City Staff emphasized that zoning regulations, lot size requirements, setbacks, and infrastructure standards would continue to regulate overall density and design regardless of the proposed change. The Commission also discussed broader considerations related to housing, including the need for affordable housing, efficient land use, and maintaining the character of the community.

Samantha Chapoose moved to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council to consider amending the Vernal City Planning and Zoning Code, Section 16.58.120 Layout and Access – Ordinance Number 2026-05. Troy Allred seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Troy Allred, Brittany Young, Samantha Chapoose, and Aaron Bancroft voting in favor. Hailee Todich was against.

RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE VERNAL CITY PLANNING AND ZONING CODE, CHAPTER 16.45 MX MIXED USE ZONE – ORDINANCE NUMBER 2026-06

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Braeden Christofferson began the discussion on the proposed ordinance amendment by explaining that the intent of the MX zone is to encourage integrated developments that combine residential and commercial uses within the same structure. It was noted that the current code contains ambiguities that could allow developments to be entirely residential or entirely commercial, which is inconsistent with the original purpose of the zone. The proposed amendments clarified that mixed-use developments must integrate both residential and commercial uses within the same building rather than allowing them as separate structures. Additional changes included refining permitted uses, removing ambiguous or inappropriate uses, and establishing clearer development standards. Mr. Christofferson also proposed reducing the maximum residential density from approximately forty to fifty (40–50) units per acre to thirty five (35) units per acre to better align with surrounding zones. Parking requirements were revised to require two (2) spaces per residential unit in addition to applicable commercial parking, improving clarity and functionality. The amendments also addressed shared parking areas and removed unclear provisions related to special assessment areas. During Commission discussions questions were raised regarding parking designation between residential and commercial uses. While it was noted that parking would be required, there was discussion about whether spaces should be specifically designated. City Staff explained that shared parking arrangements are often regulated through development agreements and that designating spaces could create enforcement and legal challenges. Additional discussion addressed the removal of “row housing” as a listed use. Mr. Christofferson clarified that the term was removed due to ambiguity and overlap with other housing types and that density standards would instead regulate development intensity. Samantha Chapoose noted that the original intent of the MX zone was to support mixed-use development along corridors such as Main Street, encouraging commercial activity at street level with residential units above.

Chair, Stephen Lytle, opened the hearing for public comment. There being no public comment the hearing was closed.

Samantha Chapoose moved to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council to consider amending the Vernal City Planning and Zoning Code, Chapter 16.45 MX Mixed Use Zone – Ordinance Number 2026-06. Brittney Young seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Troy Allred, Brittany Young, Samantha Chapoose, Hailee Todich, and Aaron Bancroft voting in favor.

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

Stephen Lytle , Planning Commission Chair