

City of La Verkin

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La Verkin City Council Work Meeting Minutes Wednesday, April 1, 2026, 6:35 pm. 111 S. Main, La Verkin, Utah

Present: Mayor Kelly Wilson; Council Members: Amanda Barr, John Valenti, Scot Pectol, Micah Gubler, and Darren Prince; Planning Commission: Allen Bice, Kyson Spendlove, Matt Juluson, Sherman Howard, Richard Howard, and Christian Harrison; Staff: Kyle Gubler, Derek Imlay, Fay Reber, Brad Robbins, and Nancy Cline; Public: Amanda Pectol, Debra Howard.

Called to Order –Mayor Wilson called the work meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

2. Discussion regarding the downtown plan with Mixed-Use.

Brad explained that his guiding philosophy: "If you fail to prepare, prepare to fail." La Verkin is in a unique position with substantial development activity, particularly along the downtown corridor, similar to a fast-growing city Mr. Robbins previously managed. Two major planning efforts are ahead for the city: the downtown area and the "upper bench". The city should focus on controlling what it can, rather than attempting to control too much, which can be a common pitfall for municipalities. A well-designed plan and strategy should allow other elements to fall into place. He urged all participants to be candid and open during the discussion to ensure necessary work is accomplished. A proposed purpose and guiding principle for the downtown area were presented for feedback. As a starting point for discussion, Mr. Robbins presented a potential purpose statement and guiding principles for the downtown plan.

Proposed Downtown Purpose:

To promote the downtown as the heart of the community: its governmental, cultural, commercial, and social center.

To provide an environment for local history and culture to flourish.

To stimulate economic development and reinvestment.

To support economic activity compatible with the downtown character and scale.

To encourage high-quality development and establish flexible zoning regulations.

To create a pedestrian-friendly environment.

To preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods while accommodating new housing.

To identify and provide necessary upgrades to public facilities and infrastructure, leveraging the expertise of city staff like Derek and Kyle.

Proposed Guiding Principle:

"Downtown La Verkin should be the heart of the community for the establishment of mixed uses consisting of retail, housing, entertainment land uses with historic housing and commercial buildings as cornerstones. Cumulatively these features will create a vibrant downtown offering quality pedestrian-oriented village environment."

Councilman Gubler noted the need to define what the city considers to be "downtown." A key question was raised regarding the definition and boundaries of "downtown," noting a distinction between the commercial corridor and the historical Main Street. distinguished between two areas: the commercial "downtown" and the historical "Main Street" along the benches, which contained historical buildings and has a rural, residential culture. A distinguished between two areas: the commercial "downtown" and the historical "Main Street" along the benches, which contain historical buildings and have a rural, residential culture.

Councilman Valenti recalled previous discussions about creating transitional zones to potentially expand the downtown area along Route 9 before it becomes Main Street.

Mr. Robbins confirmed that defining the downtown area is a primary objective for the meeting. A prior UDOT corridor study highlights the significant economic development potential from high traffic volume on SR 9 and SR 17. He referenced a UDOT corridor study for SR 9 and SR 17. Key goals of the UDOT study included enhancing all modes of transportation, balancing travel demands with community goals and enhancing economic development. Current traffic volume is approximately 20,000 vehicles per day, with projections showing a doubling to 40,000 vehicles per day within

the next 25 years. He suggested that La Verkin is not currently capturing a significant portion of this traffic for economic benefit but could do so with a well-executed downtown plan. He discussed the boundaries and key hubs of the downtown area, identifying a split between economic development zones and historical areas.

Mayor Wilson defined the historical downtown as "the square" and the Wanless Park area, which are used for parades and activities. He stated that economic development should be concentrated along SR 9 and SR 17. A developer looking at property on "top of the hill" expressed interest in investing in Wanlass Park and potentially helping with the elementary school to create a city center.

Councilman Prince identified Wanless Park and the hot springs area near the bridge as two critical hubs that need to be connected via pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. He noted poor sidewalk conditions between the hot springs and their house, describing the path as a "roller coaster" and unsafe.

Kyle clarified that historical events like parades will continue to use Main Street, as the city has control over it, unlike the state-controlled SR 9.

Brad defined the economic downtown was discussed, roughly circling the area where SR 17 and SR 9 intersect, down to "two hundred."

Mayor Wilson pointed out multiple undeveloped or developing properties were pointed out as opportunities, including the three-acre Kelly Guymon property (reportedly in escrow) and the Squires property across from Hot Springs. The hot springs are becoming a significant destination, attracting visitors who stay at local Airbnb's (like the Silos) and attracting people visiting the national park. The initial focus for a defined downtown area is proposed to be centered on State Street, rather than Main Street.

Commissioner Harrison discussed the difficulty of connecting the two hubs of State Street and Main Street due to the non-commercial and poorly connected areas between them, specifically around 100 South.

Councilman Prince noted the mayor's preference for focusing development on State Street. It was suggested that north of 200 North on Main Street could be a wise area for development as it is largely empty.

Commissioner Bice discussed a walkable downtown should be hubbed at 500 North and State Street, with Main Street serving as a key corridor for alternative transportation. The concept of "downtown" was equated with walkability, distinct from the broader commercial district, with a suggested center at 500 North and State Street, extending down to Wanless park.

Kyle anticipated that Main Street would naturally attract bicyclists and other forms of transportation as a safer alternative to the highway.

Councilman Valenti noted that Main Street has sufficient width for bike lanes, though parking issues and property intrusions exist. He suggested this might make some larger properties on Main Street favorable for mixed-use development, potentially improving accessibility and frontage.

Commissioner Spendlove noted that A past UDOT corridor study indicated a willingness to slow traffic and add parking on State Street, which conflicts with some previous local planning ideas. Speaker 10 referenced a UDOT corridor study that included surprising designs for parallel and diagonal parking, indicating UDOT's intent to slow traffic. This suggests UDOT is willing to work with the city on its downtown "feel" despite the need to move 40,000 vehicles per day. A previous local idea involved a one-way loop to open up more territory for businesses. This was connected to a prior plan to move city offices to the elementary school property to facilitate one-way traffic downtown. Concerns were raised regarding traffic management and the aesthetic challenges of developing State Street.

Councilman Valenti commented the study showed a one-way loop plan would have resulted in three stoplights within a single block on SR-9.

Mayor Wilson mentioned the past improvement, a turning arrow at a stoplight, was cited as critical for preventing traffic from backing up the hill and blocking Main Street access.

Councilwoman Barr noted that the many private properties on the east side of State Street pose a challenge to creating a cohesive, beautiful downtown, as development must contend with potentially unkempt areas like those with "dead trees."

Brad debated the definition of "downtown," contrasting the quiet, residential Main Street with the commercial potential of State Street. Speaker 1 differentiated between the "economic corridor" (the highway/State Street) and the community-focused "downtown" (Main Street), noting that the city's lack of a traditional downtown is a "blessing and a curse" as it offers a clean slate.

Councilwoman Barr found the term "downtown" confusing when applied to a residential area with houses.

Councilman Valenti highlighted that Main Street is currently entirely residential and therefore not inherently walkable for commercial purposes.

Brad framed the core question as whether to focus economic development on State Street and maintain Main Street as a separate community center.

Commissioner Richard Howard used Springdale as an example of a town where the economic corridor and Main Street are one and the same, expressing a desire to preserve the quiet, park-like feel of the city's own Main Street. There is a strong desire to proactively plan for development to preserve Main Street's character and avoid undesirable outcomes seen in past projects.

Councilman Gubler expressed urgency to plan for Main Street's future, prompted by a recent public hearing on R-110 zoning, which could lead to a large section from 200 North to "one less" becoming triplexes. The sentiment is that developers will maximize what ordinances allow, and the negative impacts are often only realized after construction is complete. "The Fields" development was used as an example where the end result, while nice, did not fit the area and surprised the council, despite being compliant with ordinances.

Councilwoman Barr noted observing as an outsider, believed the original vision for that project was lost through a series of small, incremental changes. The discussion addressed the encroachment of commercial development on residential areas and the challenge of managing lots with legacy zoning.

Councilman Gubler expressed concern about the lack of a buffer zone between commercial and residential areas, citing new motels on 300 as an example of commercial creep.

Councilman Valenti noted the town has progressively down-zoned from R-1-14 to R-1-8, leaving many older homes on lots much larger than their current zoning allows. Owners of these large, legacy-zoned lots want to utilize their property, creating pressure for development like duplexes. It was suggested that zoning could be used to manage the appearance of new development by increasing setbacks or controlling home sizes. Current zoning allowances and land use patterns present challenges and opportunities for future development. The recent approval of "casitas" on 10,000 sq. ft. lots effectively allows two homes on such properties, which could be another avenue for managing density. He observed that the center of town is mostly sub-developed, while the edges (gorge side, hills) have larger lots that may or may not be developed in the future.

Kyle reminded the group that the city has already officially designated Main Street as the "active transportation corridor" in partnership with five counties. The availability of grant money for a comprehensive downtown and corridor plan was raised.

Brad confirmed that grant money may be available for creating a formal plan for both the downtown corridor and the "Topside" area. He asked if the city would be interested in pursuing such a plan to consolidate the ideas being discussed.

Mayor Wilson noted the D.R. Horton development on the "STLA property" presents a significant, though potentially fraught, opportunity for a planned community. He announced that D.R. Horton plans to present a planned community development for the property and the city will need to decide on their proposal. This developer's homes in Long Valley start at \$350,000, offering financing, but the housing is more like condo units.

Brad endorsed D.R. Horton as a developer with the resources to execute a large, cohesive plan, which is an advantage over piecemeal development.

Councilwoman Barr cautioned that D.R. Horton has a reputation for declining quality as the company has grown, advising that the city should be "leery."

Brad continued on the pros and cons of the D.R. Horton development, including amenities and affordability. He clarified that D.R. Horton would likely manage the overall plan but subcontract specific parts, like commercial development, to specialists.

Councilman Prince praised the D.R. Horton development in Long Valley for its trails, pools, and walkable, family-friendly amenities.

Councilman Gubler questioned the affordability, citing his daughter's purchase of a 900 sq. ft. fourth-floor apartment for \$400,000, highlighting that developers must maximize profit.

Councilman Prince outlined significant financial challenges facing the city, including raising water rates, a \$100,000 irrigation deficit, and poor road conditions. It was stated that the city cannot continue to tax citizens more and must find ways to generate revenue from visitors and new development. The urgent need for new revenue streams was linked to the necessity of smart development. The goal is to get the "twenty thousand people" passing through to stop and spend money.

Mayor Wilson contrasted this with the Midwest, where home prices are lower, but property taxes are significantly higher to fund city services.

Brad grappled with the strategic choice between maintaining a rural feel or embracing density to create a unified city.

Councilman Prince noted the county has committed substantial funds mentioned as \$30k for a downtown plan after a state grant was not received.

Councilwoman Barr warned that if the city doesn't define its own "cool" downtown, the new development "Up top" will create one for them, leaving the current area behind.

Commissioner Bice explained the General Plan is being reworked and presents two conflicting directions:

1. Maintain a rural, low-density feel "down here" while concentrating high density "up there."
2. Unify the city by allowing more density "down here" to potentially create more affordable housing. The area "down here" is seen as the logical place for immediate development, while "up there" is a longer-term project with a large developer. The discussion concluded by emphasizing the need for a formal plan to guide development, with a focus on State Street.

Brad stated that high land values will inevitably dictate higher density. He framed the final question: Does the city want a formal plan, or will it continue with piecemeal development?

Councilman Valenti recalled a previous idea of having storefronts on Route 9 with residential stories above as a form of mixed-use to be considered in a corridor plan.

Councilman Prince strongly advocated for planning, using Hurricane as a negative example of a "pass through" town and aspiring to an "Ancestor Square type" town where people stop and walk. The final statements clarified that this vision is focused on the economic development of State Street. The discussion addresses the aesthetic and functional relationship

between State Street and Main Street, considering historic preservation versus modern development. He suggested beautifying State Street with elements like improved light posts.

Commissioner Juluson proposed creating a distinct separation between State Street and Main Street to prevent urban spillovers. It also raises the question of whether to maintain an "old style" aesthetic on Main Street, which would involve refurbishing old homes into businesses, or adopting a more modern look. It is noted that development choices on State Street will inevitably influence Main Street.

Brad suggests that with the new UDOT plan, the city could likely apply for funding to upgrade State Street's landscaping and aesthetics, similar to improvements seen in Hurricane.

Kyle noted that UDOT's current stance is that the city must provide its own funding for such beautification projects, but that a designated plan is a prerequisite for any action.

Commissioner Spendlove emphasized the urgency of planning for State Street improvements, such as better landscaping, wider sidewalks, and space for lamp posts, while undeveloped fields still exist. The current state is considered unsafe for pedestrians.

Derek confirmed that the city's construction standards are being updated to require 8–10-foot sidewalks to create more walkable space and distance pedestrians from traffic.

Kyle Lovelady added that if landscaping and lighting plans are codified, future developers will be responsible for paying for these improvements as part of their projects.

Councilman Prince recalled a point made by Brad about another city where one area developed a cohesive, economically sound plan while another area did not, resulting in a "hodgepodge" and "terrible" outcome.

Brad reinforced this concern, stating that without a plan, the city will be forced to accept whatever development comes its way. He proposes focusing economic development efforts and planning on State Street first, with Main Street as a secondary priority. This is met with general agreement. He outlined the necessary components of this future State Street plan: Redefined development standards. A re-evaluation of the streetscape and circulation. New infrastructure requirements. A fiscal approach for development. An economic development strategy for marketing the plan. Community outreach.

The group reviewed a specific proposal for the Vita plex property, involving the redevelopment of an "eyesore" building into a modern hotel with detached units.

Brad introduces the project, explaining that the current building has been vacant for years. The developer, Jacob Ruesch, initially proposed "log cabin" style units, which he rejected as not fitting the area's evolving aesthetic. Ruesch then presented a more modern design for the detached units, which he believed is a significant improvement that complements the city's direction. He expresses concern about rumored unacceptability of this type of development and challenges the group to consider the alternative: the existing derelict building remaining indefinitely.

Commissioner Richard Howard compared the proposed units to the "Flintstone Village" development, which turned out better than expected, suggesting these could be similar.

Brad confirmed he advised the developer to emulate the quality of other recent successful projects and seeks feedback from the group to determine if the project can proceed. The discussion details the new, more rigorous approval process that the Vita plex/Ruesch project would be subject to.

Kyle Gubler emphasized the need for standards to ensure the final product matches the proposed design.

Brad confirmed the developer would be required to follow the new "precise plan" requirement, which mandates detailed submissions for design, streetscape, and site plan for approval.

Derek provided a key update on the city's process. He and Kyle Lovelady have stepped back from initial reviews of commercial projects. Brad has been put in charge of meeting with commercial applicants, guiding them through the precise plan and architectural standards. This change aims to leverage Brad's external perspective and expertise, as he authored the architectural and design criteria, to ensure a better final product before it reaches the Planning Commission. The proposed development would consist of a hotel in the main building with detached units. The Planning Commission will review and approve the complete site plan, landscaping, and signage, which the developer must then build exactly as approved. The conversation returns to specific development requirements, including sidewalks, landscaping, and the hotel-use classification of the proposed Ruesch project.

Mayor Wilson stated that codifying the 8–10-foot sidewalk requirement for State Street is a priority, so all new projects must incorporate it. He notes this may eventually require purchasing property in some areas.

Kyle Lovelady clarified the sidewalk resolution is being drafted and will be presented for a vote.

Brad affirmed the developer can be required to include the wider sidewalk and high-quality, drought-tolerant landscaping similar to other successful local projects.

Kyle Lovelady clarified the project's business model: The main office and lobby will be in the original building. The detached units are an extension of the hotel, not short-term rentals. This use (transient lodging via standalone units) is permitted in the General Commercial and Commercial Retail zones.

Councilwoman Barr questioned the hotel use, suggesting long-term rentals for locals would be more beneficial for housing.

Brad argued that when dealing with an existing, unattractive structure, it is pragmatic to work with a developer willing to invest in significant improvements, as the city has limited power to force demolition or redevelopment. Potential issues with the proposed site plan for the Ruesch project are raised, including parking and circulation.

Commissioner Spendlove expressed concern that the plan, with 23 parking stalls for 23 units, does not account for employee parking and may have inadequate turnaround space for service vehicles like trash trucks. He noted the current design does not meet code requirements.

Brad acknowledged that, suggesting that the developer may need to reduce the number of units to comply. He clarifies that the current plan is a preliminary concept presented to gauge the council's general approval of the direction.

Key Decision: The group grants preliminary approval to continue working with the developer on the modern hotel concept for the Ruesch property, with the understanding that the final plan must meet all code requirements. - **Rationale:** To encourage the redevelopment of derelict property and achieve a higher-quality outcome than leaving it as is. The group affirms the value of the revised, more structured pre-application process for new developments.

Councilman Gubler asked for clarification on the new workflow, confirming that developers now go through city staff (Brad) for extensive review before reaching the Planning Commission. He compared this favorably to the process in Springdale, where thorough vetting ensures projects are "ready and can be approved" by the time they reach the commission, saving time. He supported this proactive approach, stating that as the city has grown, having a clear vision and preparing developers beforehand will help the city achieve its desired outcomes.

Kyle Lovelady described his department's initial role as simply checking a box to confirm permitted use before handing the project off for detailed review.

3. Discussion regarding preliminary concept design.

Derek explained the conceptual development plan for a property that was presented, proposing commercial zoning adjacent to high-density residential, which then transitions to lower-density housing. The proposed plan was developed in consultation with Micah and is intended to align with the SR-9 corridor study. The plan features a commercial section (orange), a high-density residential section (pink, possibly R-36), and a transition to R-18 before reaching 100 West. The rationale is that high-density residential developments pay for their own road infrastructure, unlike lower densities, which can become a financial burden on the city. This model is seen as a good transition, placing high density behind commercial areas while buffering existing single-family homes (R-18) and promoting a walkable downtown. This discussion was initiated to provide directions to developers, as the city is receiving many proposals. The goal is to establish a clear path forward to avoid losing developers or receiving fewer desirable projects later. For this specific property, the proposed concept is considered a good fit and aligns with previous city studies. Concerns were raised about the impact of high-density development on the historical "Main Street feel" of the area around 100 West.

Commissioner Sherman Howard expressed hesitation about sacrificing single-family residential areas, even for smaller lots, to high-density stacked housing, feeling it pushes back the historical character of the area.

Derek noted that the character of the area had already changed significantly with the allowance of the Hot springs project. The argument was made that to create a uniform look La Verkin development must be considered across the board, not just pushed to Interstate Rock property. He stated that progress that benefits all citizens, such as developments that pay for their own infrastructure and reduce the need for city funds for road repair, is a higher priority than maintaining the area's previous state. The idea presented was reiterated as a conceptual starting point.

Debra Howard, A local resident voiced neighbors' opposition to the proposed high density and questioned the inflexibility of zoning once it is set. A neighbor from 100 West and 300 South stated that residents in that area are not in favor of condensing that much housing into existing family neighborhoods. She proposed modifying the plan to reduce the encroachment into residential areas, citing concerns about traffic congestion from a large number of townhouses on 300 South and 100 West.

Kyle Lovelady framed it as an opportunity for existing R-1-4 zone homeowners to have a buffer (like multifamily housing) between their properties and commercial developments, such as the hot springs parking lot. The economic reality of development was highlighted: high land costs make developing large, single-family lots (R-1-4) financially unfeasible for developers, often resulting in the land remaining undeveloped. It was noted that while R-16 was once a workable zoning option, it is becoming less due to rising property expenses.

Debra Howard asked how to prevent zones from being constantly revisited if a property fails to develop.

Kyle Lovelady replied that such changes can and will happen and it's the City Council who ultimately change zoning.

Councilman Micah shifted to the strategic placement of high-density housing and the principles of a healthy community mix. It was suggested that placing high-density housing directly behind commercial properties on State Street seems like the most logical location if high density is necessary.

Debra Howard countered that this specific location is the first turn into the main residential area of La Verkin and that much density would overcrowd it.

Amanda Pectol, a resident, A key point was raised about the need to create a "village in La Verkin," which requires a mix of housing types, not just multifamily. She stated that a healthy, successful community structure consists of a gradient: commercial, followed by high-density, then lower-density, and finally larger single-family homes. This mix helps avoid creating "crime corners" associated with homogenous high-density areas.

Debra Howard asked if the plan was limited to townhomes or if it could include 3-4 story apartment complexes.

Kyle Lovelady clarified housing types and a future road access point near the property under consideration. that the conceptual plan shown actually depicts more units than currently permitted under R-36 zoning. Under R-36, a base lot is 6,000 sq. ft., with each additional unit requiring another 4,000 sq. ft. The meeting's purpose is to decide on a future plan, as current zoning is restrictive. For example, the largest apartment complex that can be built is a fourplex. The city currently lacks zoning for duplexes/triplexes (if removed from R-110) or larger apartment complexes. The core question is for the city to define what it "wants to be when it grows up" regarding development.

A future access road at 200 South was discussed, which would provide another connection to the highway from the north side of the property. It was clarified that this is 200 South and is not currently a road.

Commissioner Richard Howard drew an analogy between undeveloped property and Hiroshima before the atomic bomb, suggesting it is a prime, "clean slate" area for significant development that is inevitable. While expressing initial reluctance ("swallowing rocks"), Speaker 11 agrees with the concept of a planned development with wide streets, sidewalks, and State Street access, viewing it as a better alternative to unplanned growth. Key concerns are raised about the proposed townhomes, specifically the high density, lack of detailed plans, potential for insufficient green space, and the impact of more children in the area.

Debra Howard agreed that development should be done "right" but objects to the currently proposed density, fearing it will eliminate the small-town "La Verkin is my home" feeling.

Brad summarized the sentiment, confirming that the group is generally aligned on the concept, even if the details like density are not yet agreed upon. Discussion shifts to specific design strategies to improve the concept, focusing on open space, mixed-use buildings, and building height.

Councilman Prince proposed incorporating multi-use buildings along the commercial front to potentially create more open space elsewhere in the development, suggesting residential units could be placed above retail.

Mayor Wilson suggested another method for creating open space would be to remove a section of the planned residential units from the concept drawing, which currently shows no open space.

Brad noted that developers typically propose the maximum possible density, and it is the city's role to "peel back" the proposal in collaboration with residents.

Debra Howard expressed concern about how quickly the development transitions to high density from State Street and reiterates a preference for commercial development along the main road. A clear objection to buildings being three or four stories high, with a desire for new structures to fit the scale of the existing neighborhood. Any townhome development must include dedicated open space.

Councilman Gubler stated the group needs to provide the developer with guidance on the details if they are in agreement on the general concept.

Commissioner Bice added that the city should be "jealous" of its commercial areas and be cautious about allowing vacation rentals on State Street, noting the fire department would likely prevent it anyway due to access limitations.

Derek clarified that their initial concept for the high-density portion involved single-level units, not stacked multi-story buildings.

Councilman Gubler confirmed their understanding was also that the high-density component would consist of single-level units.

Councilman Prince suggested that creating and presenting renderings of different concepts would make it much easier for the public to understand and provide feedback. Using visual renderings and conducting community outreach would improve the development planning process.

Councilwoman Barr emphasized the need for proactive community outreach to invite residents, including neighbors of those present, to planning commission meetings.

Commissioner Harrison supported this, referencing the successful use of multiple design options for the Wanless Park redesign, which allowed the community to choose their preferred direction.

Councilman Pectol articulated that a concept like this signal to developers that the community is "open for business" and willing to be flexible and creative to meet both community and investor needs.

Debra Howard acknowledged that recently passed ordinances have clarified zoning, which will help the process.

1. Discussion regarding amending title 10 Chapter 6B removing Two Family Dwelling from the list of permitted uses in the R-1-10.

Derek explained that an analysis was conducted on R-1-10 zoned properties to identify which ones met the size requirements for a duplex. The current requirement is 16,000 sq. ft. for a duplex, which must be a single connected structure. 72 properties met this criterion. They also analyzed a hypothetically increased requirement of 20,000 sq. ft., which reduced the number of qualifying properties to 43. The purpose was to visualize which properties had the potential for duplex conversion. A de facto moratorium was placed on duplexes in this zone.

Kyle Lovelady reported having to stop conversations with interested parties about duplexes since the issue went to the Planning Commission, noting they previously averaged 2-3 calls per week on the topic.

Fay explained the legal strategy for pausing duplex applications is explained, citing the "pending ordinance doctrine" over a standard moratorium. He outlines the city's concern: preventing a rush of applications for duplexes that would gain "vested rights" once word got out that the ordinance might change. A vested right means an application must be considered under the law in effect when it is submitted.

Two options were available to prevent this:

1. Moratorium: An ordinance that halts applications for up to six months. This requires demonstrating a "compelling countervailing public interest" and is subject to legal challenges.
2. Pending Ordinance Doctrine: This alternative was chosen. By drafting an ordinance, advertising a public hearing, and holding the hearing, the city legally prevents new applications from gaining vested rights while the ordinance is actively being considered.

This "hurriedly drafted" ordinance was intentionally presented to the Planning Commission and City Council without prior discussion to enact the protection quickly, which is why it caught them off guard. He clarified that there is no strict time limit on the pending ordinance, as long as the city is "actively engaged in good faith" in considering the changes and does not let it languish.

Derek asked where we go from here.

Commissioner Bice asked if there was a time frame.

Fay replied there is no time frame, but they need to be in good faith working on it.

Commissioner Spendlove expressed confusion about the motivation to abandon the duplex option, stating a need for a full understanding before making any recommendations.

Commissioner Harrison echoed this, asking directly: "Are we anti-duplexes on these lots? And why are we anti-duplex on these lots if we are?"

Counselman Valenti introduced an alternative path for consideration: instead of duplexes, could the code be modified to allow larger lots (e.g., 16,000 sq. ft. in R-1-10) to be subdivided into R-1-8 lots, which would still permit two separate structures. He notes that under current code, a 20,000 sq. ft. lot in an R-1-10 zone is restricted to a single home, and changing this on a plot-by-plot basis is not feasible.

Councilman Prince described a high-density model seen in downtown St. George where single lots were developed with two small homes plus a back garage with a rental unit above, creating four classy, independent units on one lot. Commissioner Sherman Howard questions the consistency of pushing for higher density in some areas while simultaneously blocking duplexes, suggesting duplexes could help relieve density pressure.

Commissioner Harrison observed that most of the properties identified as eligible for duplexes already have houses on them. It would require a significant investment to tear down an existing home to build a duplex, making it unlikely that every eligible property owner would do so.

Commissioner Bice pointed out that many of the identified lots are long and thin, making duplex development with proper parking and access infeasible under current code.

Councilman Gubler clarified the issue came to his attention from resident complaints about a subdivision (Chaco Ridge) where duplexes were built as allowed by the R-1-10 ordinance, but not as part of a deliberate plan. His primary concern is whether duplexes are part of a conscious plan for the city's future or just an overlooked allowance in the ordinance. He specifically questions whether the community wants a large, key property like the "Mangum property" on Main Street to become all duplexes. He notes that interest in the change has come from realtors, not residents.

Commissioner Harrison clarified that a single large lot, as it currently stands, could only have one duplex unless it is first subdivided, a process which would require separate approval.

The group discussed the implications of duplex zoning, using the Chaco Ridge development as an example, and the potential effects of changing minimum lot sizes. If a project like Chaco Ridge had gone through the standard approval process, it would have been difficult to deny as it would have already been zoned.

Councilman Valenti noted that if the option for duplexes in Chaco Ridge had been removed, the developer likely would have subdivided the lots into smaller, 8,000 sq. ft. parcels and built more individual buildings, achieving a similar density. Chaco Ridge, which was identified as being near 100 North/100 East where the road turns to dirt

Councilman Prince added that allowing duplexes in the downtown area was a "travesty" and that work/live units would have been a better fit. He would like to see the live work zone there.

Councilwoman Barr asked whether to keep the minimum lot size for duplexes at 16,000 sq. ft., raise it to 20,000 sq. ft., or disallow them entirely.

Kyle Lovelady concern was raised that increasing the minimum property size would incentivize property owners to split lots or use flag lots to maximize density, potentially turning a single-house lot into four units (e.g., two lots, each with a primary house and a casita).

Derek said that the night's discussion had successfully identified the group's desired direction for the Planning Commission to review.

Fay outlined the formal process: The Planning Commission will review the issue, which may take multiple meetings, and then make a recommendation to the City Council (approve as is, approve with changes, or deny). The City Council will make the final determination.

Councilman Gubler noted their primary concern is the vision for State Street and Main Street, specifically a large parcel on Main Street that could significantly change the character of the street if developed under current rules. The desire is to support housing affordability with duplexes in general, but the specific parcel on Main Street is an "alarm."

Commissioner Harrison questioned whether there is a way to specifically address the development of that one parcel to encourage a more commercial or work/live use without broadly affecting duplex allowances elsewhere.

Councilwoman Barr noted that control ultimately lies with the property owner. The property in question is owned by two different siblings, with a fence line separating the portions. The northern section is owned by one brother and the southern section by another.

2. Mixed Use

Brad made key decisions regarding a long-standing mixed-use ordinance, focusing on its structure, requirements, and timeline for approval. The group has been working on a mixed-use ordinance for a long time and needed to resolve several key questions. Key Questions Addressed: Should the ordinance be a standalone zone or an overlay zone? If there is an overlay, which zones should it apply to (e.g., tourist commercial, retail commercial)? Should it have property size limitations?

Mayor Wilson added that the owners of the property across from Davis Market are waiting to see what the city decides to do with that zoning.

Councilman Gubler clarified that the difference between "live/work" (one building with combined uses) and "mixed-use" (a property with separate commercial and residential buildings) was clarified.

Derek replied that the proposed mixed-use ordinance allows for a maximum of four stories, with the bottom floor required to be commercial. The minimum height for the commercial ground floor in the mixed-use zone will be set to 15 feet. Rationale: This accommodates mechanical systems and provides a more open, spacious feel, a practice learned from St. George's experience. It was confirmed that the ordinance draft explicitly disallows vacation rentals. Get the revised mixed-use ordinance on the Planning Commission agenda for the meeting after next, aiming for City Council review by the first meeting in May.

The group discussed the details of the mixed-use zone that would have a public hearing. The height of ceilings, how many stories are allowed and what the mix will be.

The group decided they liked the open work meeting to sit around a table and have both commissioners and council to make decisions together and have an overall plan.

Mayor Wilson closed the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

B. Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

May 4, 2026
Date Approved

ATTEST: Nancy Cline
Nancy Cline
City Recorder

Kelly B. Wilson
Mayor Kelly B. Wilson

