

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Wednesday, July 8th, 2026, 6:00 pm

Providence City Office Building, 164 North Gateway Dr., Providence Ut

To view the video recording of the meeting please visit our YouTube channel found [HERE](#).

HR. MIN. SEC. above the agenda items are time stamps of the YouTube recording.

Call to Order: Robert Henke

Chair Roll Call of Commission Members: Robert Henke, Bob Perry, Michael Fortune, Julie Martin, John Petersen & Joe Chambers.

Staff Present: City Manager Ryan Snow, Community Development Director Skarlet Bankhead and City Recorder Ty Cameron

Pledge of Allegiance: Robert Henke

- **Item No. 1 Approval of Minutes:** The Planning Commission will consider approval of the minutes of June 10th, 2026. [\(MINUTES\)](#)

- Chair Henke called for approval of the minutes of the last meeting.

Motion to approve the minutes of June 10th, 2026.- Julie Martin. 2nd- Michael Fortune.

Vote:

Yea- Robert Henke, Michael Fortune, Julie Martin, John Petersen & Joe Chambers.

Nay-

Abstained-

Motion passes, minutes approved.

1 MIN. 30 SEC.

Public Comments: Citizens may express their views on issues within the Planning Commission's jurisdiction. The Commission accepts comments: in-person, by email providencecityutah@gmail.com , and by text 435-752-9441. By law, email comments are considered public record and will be shared with all parties involved, including the Planning Commission and the applicant.

- Chair Henke opened the public comment period for matters not related to the agenda items and confirmed that no comments had been received by mail or email. No members of the public came forward with non-agenda comments.
- Prior to formally closing public comments, Commission Member Joe Chambers addressed the commission on a procedural matter stemming from the June 10 meeting. Chambers had distributed a memo to commission members clarifying the distinction between a motion "not to approve" and a motion "to disapprove" a rezone request. He explained that at the June 10 meeting, a motion to approve the mixed-use rezone had failed on a 2-to-3 vote, after which he had attempted to make a motion to disapprove, which was challenged as out of order by an audience member. Chambers had since researched the matter and concluded that these are in fact two distinct motions, not simply two sides of the same coin, and wanted the commission to be mindful of that distinction in future proceedings.

- Chair Henke appreciated the clarification and added that the City Council, for its part, had continued the item at its own meeting because not all council members were present to vote. A brief colloquy followed between staff and the commission regarding quorum rules: it was noted that a body of five members requires three for a quorum, and that a majority of that quorum — two members — can technically carry a motion, though he acknowledged that bodies often choose to wait for fuller attendance on significant matters. Chair Henke agreed, noting the commission had made that same choice previously.
- Public comments were closed.

Public Hearings:

6 MIN. 20 SEC.

- **Item No. 2 PCC 10-8-1 Code Amendment Public Hearing:** The Planning Commission will take comments and questions from the public regarding proposed code amendments to increase the maximum building height allowed for the specific use of "Indoor Commercial Recreation" or "Fitness Center" from the current standard of 50-foot limit to a maximum of 65 feet within both the Commercial Highway District (CHD) and the Commercial General District (CGD).

- Chair Henke opened the public hearing on the proposed code amendment to increase the maximum building height for the specific uses of "Indoor Commercial Recreation" or "Fitness Center" from 50 feet to a maximum of 65 feet within both the Commercial Highway District (CHD) and the Commercial General District (CGD).
- Alex Bearson, came forward. While noting that his primary interest that evening was the Alder Farms item later on the agenda, he offered a comment relevant to this amendment: he encouraged the commission to consider extending any increased building height allowance to the Mixed Use (MXD) zone as well. He explained that mixed-use zoning creates a more effective planning environment by pairing commercial development with residential, which in turn provides commercial tenants with a built-in customer base. He expressed the view that allowing greater height in the mixed-use zone would broaden the scope of mixed-use development without meaningfully diminishing the function of highway commercial zoning, and indicated that his group intended to formally request such an amendment to the mixed-use zone regardless. No other public comments were offered.
- Chair Henke closed the public hearing.

Legislative – Action Item(s):

9 MIN. 10 SEC.

- **Item No. 3 PCC 10-8-1 Code Amendment:** The Planning Commission will review, discuss and may make a recommendation to the city council regarding proposed code amendments to increase the maximum building height allowed for the specific use of "Indoor Commercial Recreation" or "Fitness Center" from the current standard of 50-foot limit to a maximum of 65 feet within both the Commercial Highway District (CHD) and the Commercial General District (CGD). ([ANALYSIS](#))

- Chair Henke invited Community Development Director Skarlet Bankhead to present on the proposed code amendment before opening discussion.

- 87 • Director Bankhead emphasized an important nuance of the amendment that she felt warranted

88 clear articulation: the proposal does not constitute a blanket increase of the building height limit

89 from 50 to 65 feet. Rather, it preserves the standard 50-foot height limit but carves out a specific

90 exception — applicable only to buildings housing a permitted indoor commercial recreation or

91 fitness center use — allowing a maximum height of 65 feet within the CHD and CGD districts.

92 Critically, this exception is further restricted so that any portion of a building structure exceeding

93 the standard 50-foot height may not encompass more than 35 percent of the total building

94 footprint. Director Bankhead stressed that this is a use-specific, footprint-limited exception, not a

95 general upzoning of building height.
- 96 • Commission Member Joe Chambers raised the question of whether there was any reason not to

97 simply allow 65 feet across all commercial uses, noting that the commission relies on staff for

98 professional guidance. Director Bankhead responded that when building heights were originally

99 set, there was significant public concern about tall structures in the community, and that

100 sentiment persists even with current heights in the 45-to-50-foot range for condominiums and

101 townhomes. She noted that staff tends to stay close to existing code unless directed otherwise but

102 acknowledged that if the commission felt commercial areas could support greater height, the

103 public feedback on that would ultimately come back to the commission, not staff.
- 104 • Ryan Snow offered context on the fire safety dimension, noting that building height has

105 historically been a concern relative to fire department ladder truck capability. He confirmed that

106 in preparing this amendment, staff had consulted with the fire department, which responded that

107 it had no objection to 65 feet and possessed the equipment to handle it. He framed the existing

108 height limits as rooted more in tradition and caution than in any current operational mandate.
- 109 • A brief side discussion touched on construction methodology — Commission Member

110 Chambers noted that stick-frame construction is generally limited to three stories, with anything

111 taller typically requiring concrete or steel — though this was acknowledged as background

112 context rather than a formal finding.
- 113 • Director Bankhead reiterated that her role as staff is to present a framework grounded in existing

114 code, while the commission's role is to layer in judgment about aesthetics, public reaction, and

115 the broader character of the city. She indicated that a broader height increase for commercial

116 zones would not necessarily be problematic given the fire department's clearance, but that any

117 such broader change would carry public pushback that the commission would need to weigh.
- 118 • The applicant, Thor Cummings, then addressed the commission. He framed his remarks around

119 the three most likely public objections to the amendment and explained how the proposed

120 language was specifically drafted to address each. First, regarding the concern that opening the

121 door to 65 feet would allow any developer to build to that height: the amendment is expressly

122 limited to indoor fitness center and indoor commercial recreation uses. Second, regarding

123 concerns about a 65-foot building blocking mountain views or casting large shadows: the 35-

124 percent-of-footprint restriction keeps the taller portion to a small fraction of the overall structure.

125 Third, regarding traffic and parking impacts: the amendment is limited to the CHD and CGD

126 zones, which are specifically designed to accommodate higher traffic volumes.
- 127 • Mr. Cummings then identified the specific project motivating the request: a climbing gym. He

128 explained that to achieve a world-class, Olympic-caliber facility capable of attracting

129 competitive athletes, an interior climbing height of 55 to 60 feet is needed. After accounting for

130 structural steel, lighting, and HVAC systems within the roofline, a 65-foot exterior building

131 height is the minimum necessary to achieve that interior clearance. He noted that the facility

132 would be larger than the existing climbing center in the Cache Valley area, which he identified

133 as intentional — the goal is to create a destination facility that stands apart.

- A conceptual sketch submitted by the applicant was referenced to illustrate what a stepped roofline would look like. The taller portion of the structure — representing approximately 33 percent of total square footage — was shown reaching 65 feet, stepping down to roughly 29 to 35 feet for the remainder of the building, well below the existing 50-foot standard. The applicant confirmed there would be no rooftop features or occupiable spaces atop the roof. Interior plans include a U-shaped mezzanine running around the perimeter inside the building to accommodate additional climbing walls and workout equipment.
- Bob Perry and Michael Fortune both expressed satisfaction with the applicant's responses. Fortune noted he had driven past the existing Cache Valley climbing facility and was interested to learn the proposed facility would be larger.
- Commission Member Fortune then raised the suggestion — prompted by Alex Bearnson's earlier public comment — that the commission schedule a study item to examine the question of building height in the Mixed Use zone. He expressed interest in understanding what the current maximum heights are in that zone, what the implications of a 65-foot allowance might be, and whether six-story buildings could result. He was careful to note that he did not want to include a mixed-use height recommendation as part of the current motion, preferring that the question be studied first given the more sensitive nature of mixed-use zoning, which can appear in locations beyond the highway commercial corridor and can more directly affect mountain view corridors. Director Bankhead confirmed that she had already been in contact with Alex Bearnson regarding proposed changes to the mixed-use code and would bring a fuller package forward — incorporating height and other elements — once that work was ready. Chair Henke added that he would find it useful to include examples from other cities that have addressed similar questions.
- Commission Member Fortune moved to recommend approval of the proposed code amendment to the City Council.

Motion by Commission Member Michael Fortune to recommend to the City Council approval of the proposed code amendment (PCC 10-8-1) to increase the maximum building height for the specific use of Indoor Commercial Recreation or Fitness Center from the current 50-foot limit to a maximum of 65 feet within both the Commercial Highway District (CHD) and the Commercial General District (CGD), as specified in the staff report, including the restriction that any portion of a structure exceeding 50 feet shall not encompass more than 35 percent of the total building footprint. Seconded by Commission Member John Petersen.

Vote:

Yea- Robert Henke, Michael Fortune, Julie Martin, John Petersen & Joe Chambers.

Nay-

Abstained-

Motion passes.

Study Items(s):

31 MIN. 35 SEC.

- **Item No. 4 Alder Farms Development Rezone Request:** The Planning Commission will review and discuss a request to rezone parcels 02-090-0008, 02-090-0009 & 03-002-0016, located in the areas of 890 and 850 W 300 S and 515 S 850 W here in Providence. Applicant seeks to rezone parcels from Life

Cycle Residential (LCR) to Mixed Use (MXD). Only action taken on this item will be to move it to a public hearing. [\(ANALYSIS\)](#)

- Chair Henke introduced the study item, noting that the only action available under this item is to vote to advance it to a public hearing. Director Bankhead presented the staff report.
- Director Bankhead walked the commission through the statutory framework: Utah Code requires that before the City Council acts on a land use regulation change, the Planning Commission must hold a public hearing and make a recommendation. The report incorporated references to the general plan, moderate income housing considerations, use charts and area regulations comparing the Life Cycle Residential (LCR) and Mixed Use (MXD) zones, sensitive area review, and a family impact analysis.
- Regarding the general plan context, Director Bankhead noted that the parcels in question sit on the outer edge of what the general plan identifies as the Providence City core — an area envisioned for mixed use, higher densities, and attached housing, where uses may be arranged horizontally or vertically and commercial activity is oriented toward a five-to-ten-minute walkable catchment. She acknowledged that when the general plan was assembled, this property had only recently been annexed and rezoned to LCR, so it did not appear in the framework map as planned for anything specific. The LCR zone was itself conceived not from developer pressure but from community members who wanted to remain in Providence after their children had grown, seeking smaller homes within proximity to family — a concept staff termed a "life cycle" of housing types from starter homes through senior living. The LCR zone carries a density floor of four units per acre and a maximum of 12 units per acre.
- The Mixed-Use zone, by contrast, is designed to encourage a transition between zones and stimulate economic development by combining retail, commercial, office, and residential uses in a pedestrian-friendly environment. No single land use may exceed 50 percent of a mixed-use development, and residential is required. Density maximums are 33 units per net acre for vertical development and 25 units per acre for horizontal development. Director Bankhead was explicit that moving from LCR to MXD more than doubles the allowable maximum density, and while she presented this as a factual distinction rather than an objection, she noted it was important for the commission to understand the difference. She also cautioned that higher density, while supportive of moderate-income housing goals, does not guarantee affordability, as market forces ultimately set unit prices.
- Director Bankhead noted that the property contains wetlands, open waterways, and a higher groundwater table, all of which would need to be addressed during the subdivision process regardless of which zone is applied. A family impact analysis — prepared with AI assistance — concluded that the proposed rezone is not anticipated to have a direct impact on family health, stability, or formation, with any specific impacts being contingent on future site design decisions.
- A mapping discussion arose when it became apparent that one of the three parcels — parcel 03-002-0016, a small triangular piece — was difficult to locate on the maps due to flood plain overlays obscuring it. Director Bankhead noted that this small triangle should logically be rezoned in concert with the adjacent parcels if the commission decides to move forward, as its sensitivity and location make it a natural part of the same area. Alex Bearnson confirmed the triangle's location.
- John Petersen requested a clearer map to help orient himself. Ryan Snow provided a verbal description of the site's surroundings for the benefit of the record, identifying nearby landmarks including Judge's Car Wash, a Zions Bank, a farm property, and Miller's gas station currently under construction. He identified 300 South in Providence — equivalent to 1700 South in Logan

— as the relevant road corridor and noted that the Blackstone development sits to the immediate south of the subject parcels. Mr. Snow confirmed that a UDOT-funded paved trail is planned along the west and south side of the area.

- Alex Bearnson then addressed the commission. He indicated that a conceptual plan for the broader property had been submitted approximately 18 months to two years prior, though the commission acknowledged that for purposes of a rezone hearing, the applicant is not required to present detailed development plans. Alex spoke to his development philosophy, expressing a preference for master-planned, clustered development over what he described as a cut-and-paste approach. He noted that while the highway commercial zone is effective at generating tax base from frontage parcels, a mixed-use zone better accommodates an owner with multiple acres of deeper land, enabling coordinated planning of retail and residential simultaneously.
- Mr. Bearnson offered a preliminary vision for the site: a restaurant or small market on the riverfront, retail along the Black Hawk frontage road, and residential townhomes or condominiums set back from the commercial areas. He referenced the forthcoming UDOT-funded trail across the river as a significant amenity that would enhance the attractiveness of the site, and expressed enthusiasm about the potential for a walkable, trail-connected mixed-use development. Director Bankhead clarified for the record that when Mr. Bearnson referenced clustering creating more density, he meant density concentrated in specific areas rather than an increase above the MXD zone's density caps — the overall unit count would remain bound by the 25-or-33-units-per-acre maximums, but clustering allows open space to be preserved in other areas of the site.
- Commission Member Martin raised a question about the family impact analysis language noting that the Mixed-Use zone does not establish a minimum open space or children's play area requirement in the same way LCR does. Director Bankhead explained that the mixed-use code draws from both commercial design standards and multifamily and single-family attached design standards, and that open space and play area requirements embedded in those codes will be applied through the site plan review process. The commission will have meaningful input into how those elements are incorporated when development plans come forward.
- Commission Member Martin moved to advance the item to a public hearing.

Motion by Commission Member Julie Martin to set a public hearing for the Alder Farms Development Rezone Request to consider the applicant's request to rezone parcels 02-090-0008, 02-090-0009, and 03-002-0016 from Life Cycle Residential (LCR) to Mixed Use (MXD), as presented by staff. Seconded by Commission Member Michael Fortune.

Vote:

Yea- Robert Henke, Michael Fortune, Julie Martin, John Petersen & Joe Chambers.

Nay-

Abstained-

Motion passes.

Election of New Chair and Vice Chair.

1 HR. 20 SEC.

- **Item No. 5 Election of new Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning Commission:** The Planning Commission will nominate and vote on a new chair and vice chair. **(PLANNING COMMISSION BYLAWS)**

- Chair Henke opened the floor for nominations for a new Chair.
- Commission Member Fortune nominated Julie Martin to serve as Chair of the Planning Commission. Commission Member John Peterson seconded the nomination.
- No additional nominations were offered, and nominations were closed. The commission voted unanimously in favor.

Motion to nominate and elect Julie Martin as Chair of the Planning Commission. Nominated by Commission Member Michael Fortune, seconded by Commission Member John Peterson.

Vote:

Yea- Robert Henke, Michael Fortune, Julie Martin, John Petersen & Joe Chambers.

Nay-

Abstained-

Motion passes, Julie Martin is the new chair.

- Commission Member Henke opened nominations for Vice Chair.
- Julie Martin nominated Bob Perry, noting that with her assuming the chair role, Perry would transition from his alternate status to serve as a voting member. Commission Member Joe Chambers seconded the nomination.
- No additional nominations were offered. The commission voted unanimously in favor.

Motion to nominate and elect Bob Perry as Vice Chair of the Planning Commission. Nominated by Chair Julie Martin, second by Commission Member Joe Chambers.

Vote:

Yea- Robert Henke, Michael Fortune, Julie Martin, John Petersen & Joe Chambers.

Nay-

Abstained-

Motion passes, Bob Perry is the new vice chair.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Joe Chambers. Second by John Petersen.

Vote:

Yea- Robert Henke, Michael Fortune, Julie Martin, John Petersen & Joe Chambers.

Nay-

Abstained-

Motion passes, meeting adjourned.

Next meeting scheduled for August 12th @ 6 pm.

Minutes approved by vote of Commission on _____ day of _____ 2026.

I swear these minutes are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Ty Cameron, City Recorder.