

**ESCALANTE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 7, 2026
REGULAR MEETING/ELECTRONIC MEETING – 6:00 P.M.
ESCALANTE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - 65 NORTH CENTER STREET**

Mayor Melani Torgersen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Escalante City Council Chambers.

Present at said meeting were Mayor Torgersen, Council members Sally Orme, Marlene Stowe, Chad Lyman, Ryan Cottam, City Attorney Barry Huntington and City Recorder Stephanie Steed. Council member Tara Woolsey was excused.

Also present were Bill Weppner, Margie Weppner, Julie Brugger, Chad Cottam and Jennifer Thomas.

Loren Pena joined electronically.

Mayor Torgersen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Council member Lyman moved to adopt the agenda as written. Council member Cottam seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Stowe, Lyman, Orme and Cottam voting aye.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF JUNE 16, 2026 MEETING

Council member Stowe moved to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2026 meeting as written. Council member Lyman seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Orme, Lyman, Stowe and Cottam voting aye.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

BILL WEPPNER

Mr. Weppner said he would like to commend the city workers for their efficiency in handling a recent water main break. Mr. Weppner said the community is lucky to have competent city workers.

PLANNING AND ZONING ITEMS

PLANNING AND ZONING UPDATES

City Recorder Steed said the Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing regarding the following Ordinances, during which there were no comments or questions from the public.

**ORDINANCE 2026-05 AMENDING PLANNING AND ZONING ORDINANCE
CHAPTER 10.36.070, 10.38.070, 10.40.070, 10.42.070, 10.44.070, 10.50.070 ADDING
LANDINGS AND WALKOUT PORCHES IN REAR CAN BE LOCATED WITHIN THE
REAR SETBACK, 10.50.020 TAKING OUT MULTI FAMILY DENSITY AND 10.50.055
ADDING DENSITY REQUIREMENTS FOR SHORT TERM RENTALS.**

City Recorder Steed explained Utah State Code 17-79-617 prohibits cities from restricting rear

setbacks on landings that are uncovered above ground and 32 square feet or less. City Recorder Steed said Ordinance 2026-05 addresses this new rule in all zones, takes out the density of multi-family dwellings in the Commercial/Residential Zones and adds the density requirements for short term rentals in the Commercial/Residential Zones. City Recorder Steed said the Planning and Zoning Commission has recommended Ordinance 20206-05 to the Council for approval. This item was discussed at length. **Council member Stowe moved to approve Ordinance 2026-05. Council member Lyman seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Lyman, Stowe, Cottam and Orme voting aye.**

ORDINANCE 2026-06 AMENDING PLANNING AND ZONING ORDINANCE CHAPTER 10.50 ADDING 10.50.045 ACCESS REQUIREMENTS AND 10.50.055 SETBACKS FOR COMMERCIAL USE WITH NO ACCESS OFF HIGHWAY 12.

City Recorder Steed explained Ordinance 2026-06. City Recorder Steed said the Planning and Zoning Commission has recommended Ordinance 20206-06 to the Council for approval. **Council member Orme moved to approve Ordinance 2026-06. Council member Cottam seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council member Orme, Stowe, Cottam and Lyman voting aye.**

ORDINANCE 2026-07 AMENDING PLANNING AND ZONING ORDINANCE CHAPTER 10.54.030 AND 10.02.050 STREET DEFINITION.

City Recorder Steed explained Ordinance 2026-07. City Recorder Steed said the Planning and Zoning Commission has recommended Ordinance 20206-07 to the Council for approval. Council member Lyman inquired if a sixty-eight-foot road with a right-of-way is sufficient, noting that most streets in town are 99 feet wide. This item was discussed at length. **Council member Cottam moved to approve Ordinance 2026-07. Council member Lyman seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Lyman, Cottam, Stowe and Orme voting aye.**

ORDINANCE 2026-08 PLANNING AND ZONING ORDINANCE CHAPTER 10.22.030 ADU DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS.

City Recorder Steed explained Ordinance 2026-08. City Recorder Steed said the Planning and Zoning Commission has recommended Ordinance 2026-08 to the Council for approval. **Council member Stowe moved to approve Ordinance 2026-08. Council member Lyman seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Stowe, Lyman, Orme and Cottam voting aye.**

SCHEDULED ITEMS

LOREN PENA - WEED CONTROL

Ms. Pena thanked the Council for the opportunity to address them. Ms. Pena said she owns the property at 225 South 100 West, which was previously the home of Nicole and Jacob Croft. Ms. Pena explained her neighbor to the east is Tammy Alvey, located at 61 West 200 South. Ms. Pena said she is bringing this matter to the council because Ms. Alvey has a very tall cypress tree that is completely dry, situated on her property right against Ms. Pena's fence. Ms. Pena said she would estimate the tree to be 50 to 60 feet tall, making it one of the tallest structures in town and a significant hazard for a lightning strike and subsequent fire. Ms. Pena explained last fall, she found two addresses for Ms. Alvey and sent a letter to each, requesting a chat about the tree, but both letters were returned as undeliverable with no forwarding address. Ms. Pena said she also

tried two phone numbers; one was disconnected and the other was a wrong number. Ms. Pena said she is now left with a tall, dry tree and a constant concern about fire from lightning, so she is asking if the town has any alternative ways to contact Ms. Alvey to discuss this matter. Mayor Torgersen said she went and looked at the tree and agreed it is a concern. City Attorney Huntington stated that if an expert confirms the tree is a safety or fire hazard, the City could send a letter and proceed onto the property to take care of it. Ms. Pena noted her primary intent was to see if Ms. Alvey would split the cost of bringing the tree down. Mr. Huntington explained that if the City handles it, it must follow a specific legal process, whereas doing it privately is a neighborly matter. Mayor Torgersen expressed nervousness about the tree's height, doubting it could be easily laid over. Mayor Torgersen inquired how that process works, and City Attorney Huntington explained that the City would place a lien on the property to recoup the cost if the owner cannot be found. City Attorney Huntington noted that the City first needs an authorized expert's backing to move the tree. Bill Weppner suggested speaking with Chief Porter and assessing the tree with Brent Pickering. **Council member Orme moved to have an expert opinion on the risk factor of the tree and move forward. Council member Stowe seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Lyman, Stowe, Cottam and Orme voting aye.**

LYNN YUNGHANS - SNOWBALL FIGHT EVENT AUGUST 8, 2026

Ms. Yunghans was not present.

Council member Lyman moved to postpone this item until the next meeting. Council member Cottam seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council member Orme, Stowe, Cottam and Lyman voting aye.

BILL WEPPNER - FLOATING WATER PICKUP FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Weppner said the fire department would like to purchase a floating water pickup device for \$1,002.00. **Council member Stowe moved to purchase the floating water pickup device for the Fire Department. Council member Orme seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Lyman, Cottam, Stowe and Orme voting aye.**

APPOINT PLANNING AND ZONING MEMBER

City Recorder Steed said Savannah Pickering has put her name in to be considered for the position of Planning and Zoning Member, which will fill the vacancy left by Tara Woolsey for a term of one and a half years. **Council member Lyman moved to appoint Savannah Pickering as a Planning and Zoning member to fill the vacant position. Council member Cottam seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Stowe, Lyman, Orme and Cottam voting aye.**

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

ADMINISTRATIVE

The Administrative department had nothing to report at this time.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Chad Cottam reported on water conservation efforts. Mr. Cottam said they are trying to conserve water without letting vegetation die. Mr. Cottam reported the well has been successfully keeping up with the water demand. Mr. Cottam explained that after learning about a power outage in Sevier County, where a well could not be run until a sufficiently large generator was located, the

Public Works Department is working to obtain a quote for a generator to power the City well, as there is currently no backup method to operate it if a local outage occurs. Mayor Torgersen asked Mr. Cottam to check with the County to see if they have one available, and Mr. Cottam noted that the well will need to be wired before a generator can be used.

Mr. Cottam reported the road chipping is completed on the north side of town, and they are exercising valves, which helped resolve a recent water break.

Mr. Cottam reported SC Broadband was here helping repair the sewer line following the discovery that fiber had punctured the lines during sewer line cleaning, and the operations went smoothly.

Mr. Cottam said mowing preparations for the 4th and 24th of July are currently underway and looking good.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

BILL WEPPNER

Mr. Weppner reported last Wednesday they had a propane training and the EMS also held a mass casualty training, which the Fire Department unfortunately missed due to a scheduling conflict.

Mr. Weppner reported that water is the biggest issue they face, but thanks to Council member Cottam, they can tap into the school well if needed. Mr. Weppner said Council member Cottam has also offered to fill trucks at the school well for the 24th of July Parade to spray water. Mr. Weppner said additionally, Ofland has offered access to their well on the west side of town, and he and Brent Pickiering will inspect it to determine what is needed. Mr. Weppner explained with the equipment currently being purchased, they will be able to draft water out of the Brown Brothers pit or from tankers. Mr. Weppner said the fire department was concerned three months ago but with the water being offered they are feeling much better now.

Mr. Weppner reported three of the four EMTs in Boulder have quit, impacting the Fire Department and the County Ambulance (506).

COUNCIL REPORTS

MAYOR MELANI TORGERSEN

Mayor Torgersen reported that the 4th of July celebration was small but successful, noting that the community potluck was well attended and it was a great weekend overall.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHAD LYMAN

Council member Lyman expressed his gratitude to the Public Works Department.

COUNCIL MEMBER TARA WOOLSEY

Council member Woolsey was not present at said meeting.

COUNCIL MEMBER RYAN COTTAM

Council member Cottam reported that the street chip seal work has been completed, and he expressed appreciation to the county for their assistance. Council member Cottam requested that Little Moqui Lane and the Old Airport road be added to the list for future chip seal.

Council member Cottam explained efforts are underway to finish the sidewalk along Main Street near the high school and the cemetery.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARLENE STOWE

Council member Stowe had nothing to report at this time.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALLY ORME

Council member Orme had nothing to report at this time.

UNPAID BILLS

Council member Orme moved to pay the unpaid bills. Council member Stowe seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Stowe, Orme, Lyman and Cottam voting aye.

Mayor Torgersen adjourned the meeting at 6:51 p.m.

/s/ Stephanie Steed
Stephanie Steed, MMC, UCC
City Recorder

Date minutes approved: 07212026