

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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

July 14, 2026

5:30 pm

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

Members Excused:

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 JUNE 9, 2026: Stephen Lytle Chair asked if there were any changes to the minutes from May 12, 2026. The minutes were approved with there being no corrections, *Troy Allred moved to approve the minutes of June 9, 2026 as presented. Hailee Todich seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Samantha Chapoose, Troy Allred, Brittany Young, and Hailee Todich voting in favor.*

RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE VERNAL CITY PLANNING AND ZONING CODE, SECTION 16.06.010 – ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURES – ORDINANCE #2026-19

Braeden Christofferson explained that the proposed revisions incorporated feedback received during previous discussions. The amendments replaced ambiguous language to improve clarity and more clearly distinguished rezoning applications from General Plan amendments and other zoning-related actions. Mr. Christofferson further explained that the proposed amendments referenced a section that had not yet been added to the City Code, as it was the next item on the meeting agenda. The next agenda item would provide more detail into the specific application types and the processes for each of them. The revisions of this section removed the language pertaining to development agreements and instead referenced any applicable provisions of Utah State Code.

Chair, Stephen Lytle, opened the hearing to the public. There being no public comments the hearing was closed.

Samantha Chapoose moved to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council to amend the Vernal City Planning and Zoning Code, Section 16.06.010 – Administration and Procedures – Ordinance #2026-19. Troy Allred seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Samantha Chapoose, Troy Allred, Brittany Young, and Hailee Todich voting in favor.

RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE VERNAL CITY PLANNING AND ZONING CODE, ADDING CHAPTER 16.07 – AMENDMENT TO ZONING MAP – SECTIONS 16.07.010, 16.07.020, 16.07.030, 16.07.040, 16.07.050, 16.07.060, 16.07.070, 16.07.080 AND 16.07.090 – ORDINANCE #2026-20

Braeden Christofferson presented the proposed amendments, explaining that they incorporated revisions discussed at previous meetings and were intended to clarify the rezoning process while aligning the City's procedures with Utah State Code. Several changes were reviewed, including revised language clarifying that amendments to the Official Zoning Map, including changes to zoning district boundaries, classifications, or shapes, would be processed under the procedures established in this chapter. The revisions further distinguished rezoning applications and procedures from other land use actions.

Mr. Christofferson then highlighted revisions to Section 16.07.050(E), which consolidated language regarding infrastructure, utilities, traffic access, parking, public safety, public services, environmental conditions, and similar concerns into a single provision. He explained that while these issues could be identified and discussed during the rezoning process, the specific studies, engineering, design requirements, capacity determinations, and mitigation measures would be addressed during subsequent stages of development review, including preliminary plat and site plan review. The intent was not to remove these topics from consideration but to clarify that the appropriate technical review and resolution would occur during later phases of the development process. Mr. Christofferson also noted the addition of language required by Utah State Code providing that if the Planning Commission failed to make a timely recommendation on a rezoning application, the City Council could proceed with consideration of the application without a recommendation from the Commission.

Following the presentation, Hailee Todich expressed concern regarding the proposed language in Section 16.07.050(E), stating that it appeared to reduce the weight given to public concerns and limit the Planning Commission's ability to deny a rezone based on issues such as infrastructure, traffic, public safety, or environmental impacts. Ms. Todich questioned what grounds would remain for denying a rezoning application if those considerations were deferred to later stages of the development process.

In response, Mr. Christofferson explained that rezoning establishes only the permitted land use and does not authorize development. An example was provided of a property along Highway 40 that might be annexed and rezoned for commercial use before utilities, roads, and other infrastructure existed. Requiring all infrastructure improvements before rezoning could unnecessarily prevent future development, whereas the rezoning allows the development process to begin, after which the required infrastructure and technical improvements would be reviewed and required through the City's established development review procedures. It was further explained that if the necessary improvements could not be completed, the project would not be permitted to move forward through subsequent approval stages.

Ms. Todich acknowledged the explanation but remained concerned that the proposed wording could be interpreted as minimizing legitimate public concerns or providing developers with grounds to argue that infrastructure, environmental, and public safety issues could not be considered during rezoning decisions. Mr. Christofferson responded stating that the City Council retained the authority to require a development agreement when appropriate and explained that the proposed language specifically allowed those concerns

to be identified during the rezoning process while clarifying that the technical resolution of those issues belonged in later phases of review.

Stephen Lytle and Samantha Chapoose shared their perspectives in agreeance with Mr. Christofferson. Ms. Chapoose stated that the proposed language provided reassurance that public concerns would continue to be addressed during the development process. Mr. Lytle commented that technical matters such as traffic studies, infrastructure design, and environmental analysis were better evaluated by qualified professionals rather than serving as the basis for Planning Commission decisions during the rezoning process. Ms. Chapoose agreed, noting that the Commission's role was to identify concerns while allowing the appropriate technical review to occur during subsequent stages of development.

Chair, Stephen Lytle, opened the hearing to the public. There being no public comments the hearing was closed.

Mr. Christofferson provided additional clarification by describing the multiple stages of the City's development review process, including preliminary plat review, master site plan review, engineering review, and bonding requirements. Additionally, it was explained that each phase provided opportunities for the City to require corrections and improvements before development could proceed and emphasized that projects could not advance until applicable standards were satisfied.

Samantha Chapoose moved to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council to add to the Vernal City Planning and Zoning Code, Chapter 16.07 – Amendment to Zoning Map – Sections 16.07.010, 16.07.020, 16.07.030, 16.07.040, 16.07.050, 16.07.060, 16.07.070, 16.07.080, and 16.07.090 – Ordinance # 2026-20. Troy Allred seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Samantha Chapoose, Troy Allred, and Brittany Young voting in favor. Hailee Todich voted against.

RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE VERNAL CITY PLANNING AND ZONING CODE, SECTION 16.42.080 – R-3 AND SECTION 16.44.080 – R-4 – SPECIAL PROVISIONS – ORDINANCE #2026-21

Braeden Christofferson began by explaining that the proposed amendments were the same as those previously discussed regarding the limitation that studio and efficiency dwellings could comprise no more than twenty five percent (25%) of a multifamily development. Mr. Christofferson also addressed the previously discussed requirement that multifamily developments containing more than twenty (20) units provide usable common amenities. The twenty (20) unit threshold was retained as it provided a balance between allowing higher density development while ensuring residents had access to functional common spaces. It was noted that existing landscaping requirements already allowed amenities such as pocket parks, playgrounds, benches, and other usable open areas to be incorporated into required landscaping plans, minimizing the impact on developable space while still providing additional benefits for residents.

Brittany Young expressed continued concern that the twenty (20) unit threshold could increase development costs and potentially discourage the construction of lower-income housing. Mr. Christofferson responded stating that higher density developments could still be accommodated within the R-4 zoning district and emphasized that the required amenities were intended to be modest, usable spaces rather than large parks. It was further explained that the proposed standard could be revisited in the

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future if it was determined to negatively impact development or create unintended consequences for developers. The Commission discussed the differences in density between the City's residential zoning districts and acknowledged that most current developments would not be affected by the proposed requirement because they did not exceed the twenty (20) unit threshold.

Chair, Stephen Lytle, opened the hearing to the public. There being no public comments the hearing was closed.

Samantha Chapoose moved to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council to amend the Vernal City Planning and Zoning Code, Section 16.42.080 – R-3 and Section 16.44.080 – R-4 – Special Provisions – Ordinance #2026-21. Hailee Todich seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Samantha Chapoose, Troy Allred, Brittany Young, and Hailee Todich voting in favor.

RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE VERNAL CITY PLANNING AND ZONING CODE BY AMENDING SECTION 16.58.110 – AMENDED PLATS, AND ADDING SECTIONS 16.58.112, 16.58.114, 16.58.116, AND 16.58.118 – ORDINANCE #2026-22

Braeden Christofferson stated that the proposed amendments were primarily housekeeping revisions intended to align the City's code with Utah State Code and provide clear procedures for various types of subdivision modifications. The existing code addressed subdivision amendments in a single section but lacked guidance for processes such as subdivision vacations, boundary line adjustments, boundary line establishments, lot combinations, and lot consolidations. Working with the Uintah County Recorder's Office and Uintah County Surveyor's Office, staff developed more comprehensive procedures outlining application requirements, plat preparation standards, and the appropriate process for each type of subdivision amendment, making the code more organized, user-friendly, and consistent with state requirements.

During the presentation Mr. Christofferson also identified several revisions to the draft ordinance based on additional recommendations from the County Recorder and County Surveyor. The legal description requirements would be revised to reference the original subdivision and any subsequent amendments. Parcel numbers would be removed from the required plat information because parcel numbers change when amendments are recorded, making them unsuitable as permanent references. Instead, the revised language would require lot numbers, boundary dimensions, acreage, and square footage to be shown on the amended plat. Stephen Lytle inquired why parcel numbers are to be removed. Mr. Christofferson explained that the Recorder's Office requested the removal of parcel numbers to avoid inconsistencies in recorded documents. Mr. Lytle acknowledged that surveyors may have differing opinions regarding the proposed procedures but expressed support for adopting standards consistent with the guidance of the County Recorder and County Surveyor.

Chair, Stephen Lytle, opened the hearing to the public. There being no public comments the hearing was closed.

Brittany Young moved to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council to amend the Vernal City Planning and Zoning Code, Section 16.58.110 – Amended Plats, And Adding Sections 16.58.112, 16.58.114, 16.58.116, and 16.58.118 – Ordinance #2026-22 with the changes proposed during the meeting. Samantha Chapoose seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle,

Samantha Chapoose, Troy Allred, Brittany Young, and Hailee Todich voting in favor.

RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE VERNAL CITY PLANNING AND ZONING CODE, SECTION 16.16.050 – PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT – SUBMISSION OF PLANS AND DOCUMENTS – ORDINANCE #2026-23

Braeden Christofferson introduced the proposed amendments by stating that they were primarily administrative updates intended to bring the City's code into compliance with Utah State Code and modernize application procedures. He noted that state law no longer allows the City Council or Planning Commission to serve as the final plat approval authority, making the Zoning Administrator the designated land use authority for final plats. The amendments would also replace outdated requirements for multiple paper copies of engineering drawings and preliminary plats with digital submissions, while still allowing paper copies to be accepted and digitized by City staff when necessary. Additional revisions updated application requirements and terminology to ensure consistency with current state law and City procedures.

Chair, Stephen Lytle, opened the hearing to the public. There being no public comments the hearing was closed.

During Commission discussion, questions were raised regarding the City's authority to approve final plats and whether paper submittals would continue to be accepted. Mr. Christofferson explained that the Planning Commission would continue to review and approve preliminary plats, while final plats would remain an administrative approval after all required engineering, infrastructure, and development standards had been satisfied. He further clarified that although digital submissions were preferred for efficiency, applicants who were unable to submit digital documents could still provide paper copies, which City staff would digitize as needed.

Samantha Chapoose moved to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council to amend the Vernal City Planning and Zoning Code, Section 16.16.050 – Proposed Development – Submission of Plans and Documents – Ordinance #2026-23. Troy Allred seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Samantha Chapoose, Troy Allred, Brittany Young, and Hailee Todich voting in favor.

RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE VERNAL CITY PLANNING AND ZONING CODE, SECTION 16.24.160 – OFF-SITE IMPROVEMENTS – ORDINANCE #2026-24

Braeden Christofferson explained that the proposed amendments stemmed from previous discussions regarding requests to waive curb, gutter, and sidewalk requirements for certain development projects. It was noted that, following those discussions, staff sought to create a more consistent administrative process that would eliminate the Planning Commission's role as the variance authority for these requests, thereby reducing subjectivity and the potential for legal challenges. Mr. Christofferson explained that the amendments were also intended to address situations involving industrial properties, where existing infrastructure often does not include curb, gutter, sidewalks, or storm drainage improvements. Under the proposed revisions, requests for exemptions, modifications, deferrals, or alternative compliance would be reviewed administratively by the Zoning Administrator in consultation with the Public Works Director,

allowing technical decisions to be made by the appropriate staff based on engineering and infrastructure considerations.

Mr. Christofferson further explained that the proposed ordinance replaced the existing "substantial justice" standard with more clearly defined administrative procedures. Any approved exemption, modification, deferral, or alternative compliance arrangement would be documented through written findings of fact to establish the basis for each decision. He also discussed the distinction between an exemption, which would permanently remove the requirement for an improvement, and a deferral, which would postpone the requirement until a later time. During the presentation, Mr. Christofferson identified revisions to the draft ordinance clarifying that approval authority would rest with the Zoning Administrator, in consultation with the Public Works Director, rather than the City generally.

During Commission discussion, commissioners expressed support for the proposed amendments, stating that the revisions created a clearer and more objective process while removing unnecessary subjectivity from the Planning Commission's responsibilities. Brittany Young questioned whether the proposed procedures applied only to industrial properties. Mr. Christofferson clarified that the ordinance would apply citywide, although exemptions would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis according to the circumstances of each project. Applicants would continue to have the ability to pursue a formal variance through the City's designated variance authority if they believed an administrative decision was inappropriate. Additionally, Mr. Christofferson explained that staff had recently identified an existing provision in the City Code exempting projects involving additions of less than forty percent (40%) of an existing structure from off-site improvement requirements, further clarifying how the ordinance would be applied.

Chair, Stephen Lytle, opened the hearing to the public. There being no public comments the hearing was closed.

Samantha Chapoose moved to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council to amend the Vernal City Planning and Zoning Code, Section 16.24.160 – Off-Site Improvements – Ordinance #2026-24. Hailee Todich seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Samantha Chapoose, Troy Allred, Brittany Young, and Hailee Todich voting in favor.

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE THE CROWN ESTATES AMENDED 8, 9, AND 11 SUBDIVISION AMENDMENT FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1460 WEST 210 SOUTH, PARCEL # 05:010:0108 – 2026-020-SUB

Braeden Christofferson presented the proposed subdivision amendment and displayed a map of the property to illustrate the requested changes. The applicant was seeking to divide an existing one (1) acre lot into two (2) half acre lots, requiring a subdivision amendment because the property was located within an existing recorded subdivision. The property would remain within the R-1 zoning district and no zoning changes were proposed. The new lots would have separate access points, with one lot taking access from 1500 West and the other from 210 South.

Mr. Christofferson also reviewed the proposed utility and easement arrangements, explaining that utilities would be extended from 210 South to the rear lot through a utility easement because it was the most

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practical service location. The property was subject to an existing canal easement along 1500 West, which would require coordination with the canal company. The proposal had been reviewed by the City's utility staff, the County Recorder's Office, and the County Surveyor, with no outstanding concerns other than finalizing the required utility easement prior to development.

Samantha Chapoose moved to approve The Crown Estates Amended 8, 9, And 11 Subdivision Amendment For Property Located At 1460 West 210 South, Parcel # 05:010:0108 – 2026-020-SUB. Brittany Young seconded the motion. The motion passed with Stephen Lytle, Samantha Chapoose, Troy Allred, Brittany Young, and Hailee Todich voting in favor.

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

Stephen Lytle, Planning Commission Chair