



**MINUTES OF THE SPRINGDALE PLANNING COMMISSION WORK MEETING ON
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2026, AT 5:00 PM
AT THE CANYON COMMUNITY CENTER,
126 LION BOULEVARD, SPRINGDALE, UT 84767**

The meeting convened at 5:00 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Jennifer McCulloch, Commissioners Rich Swanson, Terry Kruschke, Paul Zimmerman, Kashif Bhatti, Mellisa LaBorde, and Jorge Hernández from Zion National Park.

EXCUSED:

ALSO PRESENT: Town Manager Thomas Dansie, Director of Community Development Niall Connolly, Associate Planner Eugenia Akiyom, and Deputy Town Clerk April Raddatz recording. See the attached sheet for attendees.

Approval of the Agenda:

Motion made by Rich Swanson to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Paul Zimmerman.

Vote on Motion:

Swanson: Aye

Kruschke: Aye

McCulloch: Aye

Zimmerman: Aye

Bhatti: Aye

LaBorde: Aye

The motion passed unanimously.

General Announcements:

Niall Connolly, Director of Community Development, announced that the sub-group tasked with the Virgin River Management Plan implementation project, which consisted of Mr. Bhatti, Mr. Kruschke, and staff, had resumed its activities. The group had been temporarily paused and is now actively working on strategies concerning the Virgin River Management Plan and the riparian zone.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest: There were no declared conflicts of interest.

A. Discussion/Non-Action Items

1. Discussion about potential changes to the Land Use Code that will be necessary following adoption of

the Wildland Urban Interface Zone. Staff Contact: Eugenia Akiyom

Staff Presentation:

Principal Planner Eugenia Akiyom noted that the Planning Commission had previously reviewed amendments to Title 10 to resolve discrepancies between the Town's land use ordinance and the State of Utah's Wildland Urban Interface Code (WUI). Ms. Akiyom detailed the revisions concerning exterior materials and landscaping, confirming that language was added to clarify that exemptions applied exclusively to properties located entirely or partially within the WUI zone.

Commission Questions and Discussion:

Mr. Swanson inquired about the proposed amendments to section 10-15B-4 of the Town Code concerning replacement vegetation within the WUI Zone. He questioned whether the language permitted unrestricted tree removal on private property and proposed an exemption specifically for defensible space areas. Mr. Kruschke concurred with the recommendation to restrict the exemption to defensible space.

Ms. McCulloch noted that properties located within the hazard area contain significant fire fuel loads; there should be existing mitigation efforts. Mr. Kruschke recommended that the proposed language include specific exemptions for common areas within homeowners' associations.

Mr. Swanson asked whether the replacement of trees would be required on private property if the removal occurred more than 20 feet from a residence. Mr. Connolly directed attention to the established Town Code provisions regarding construction and grading activities.

Mr. Zimmerman questioned whether the requirement for a 2-to-1 tree replacement ratio should still be considered. Ms. McCulloch addressed the complexities associated with such a modification and raised questions regarding the portions of the Town that are situated within the hazard zone. Mr. Connolly clarified that the WUI zone was primarily located within the Anasazi Plateau, noting that due to lot sizes within the Anasazi Subdivision, instances where trees are located outside of the defensible space were unlikely. He added that a few properties on Valley View Drive are in the WUI zone; those parcels are more traditionally platted. He emphasized that the determination of defensible space was contingent upon various factors.

Mr. Kruschke expressed concern regarding developers needing to calculate defensible space based on building materials; he noted that this process would present a complication.

Mr. Kruschke said that the WUI zone primarily encompasses the Foothill Residential area. He noted that existing requirements for 80% open space in the Foothill Residential effectively restricted the removal of vegetation. He contrasted this with Valley Residential areas, where a greater degree of vegetation removal is allowed. Mr. Connolly clarified that the adopted WUI zone covers smaller areas of the Anasazi Plateau and Valley View Drive. He explained that each zone has specific landscape requirements; the WUI zone, which includes Foothill Residential properties, already mandates 80% landscaping.

Ms. McCulloch asked the Planning Commission if they were satisfied with the revised ordinance language and suggested scheduling a Public Hearing. The Planning Commission agreed.

2. Discussion about potential changes to section 10-18 of the Code to improve water efficiency in landscape. Staff Contact: Niall Connolly

Staff Presentation:

Mr. Connolly noted that this item is a continued discussion that the Planning Commission had in a previous meeting on landscaping and water efficiency. He added the direction the Planning Commission made previously. He noted that he had created a table listing the various points and potential next steps. He suggested the Planning Commission work through the table one item at a time.

Mr. Connolly discussed the lawn rebate program offered by the Washington County Water Conservancy District. He explained that participation required adherence to specific general standards within the town's ordinances. Mr. Connolly noted that should the Town choose to adopt these standards, Conservation Manager Doug Bennett would collaborate with staff during the ordinance drafting process to ensure acceptance by the Conservancy District.

Commission Questions and Discussion:

Ms. McCulloch inquired about the water efficiency standards and examples provided in the meeting packet. She observed that while the proposed ordinance language aligned with those standards, certain requirements appeared irrelevant for Springdale.

Mr. Connolly answered that, in order for residents to have access to this specific program, the standards need to be adopted. He noted that the Town could adopt relevant standards as deemed necessary. Ms. McCulloch mentioned using the standards as more of a guideline.

Mr. Kruschke followed up regarding the Board of Trustees for the Washington County Water Conservancy District having the ability to authorize certain exceptions. Mr. Connolly answered if there were exceptions, they could be defined in order to still meet the Conservancy District's standards.

Mr. Kruschke observed functional grass and adding an allowance of functional grass for events. Ms. McCulloch agreed. Mr. Kruschke suggested if a new commercial development wants to justify a grass area, they need to provide information on what functions and intentions will occur on the grass area. He suggested limiting the size. Ms. McCulloch and Mr. Swanson commented on the complexity of limiting the size. Mr. Kruschke suggested a percentage based on function.

Mr. Zimmerman said a functional reason for grass could be heat reduction. Ms. McCulloch suggested adding further non-limiting language to the functional grass definition. Mr. Zimmerman proposed a requirement for grass areas to have functional use, such as benches and other amenities. Mr. Kruschke suggested commercial properties to define a functional use, provide features for such use, and low water usage.

Mr. Bhatti added that grass provides a food resource to wildlife. He asked whether functional grass would impact local wildlife. Mr. Kruschke noted that native grass should not be restricted because of the wildlife. Ms. McCulloch and Mr. Swanson agreed.

The Commissioners discussed sprinkler systems and water-efficient options, as well as improving enforcement. Mr. Kruschke and Mr. Zimmerman discussed adding more specificity that discusses sprinkler systems, smart controllers, and deep watering stakes. Mr. Swanson requested staff research irrigation systems and provide that information in a future Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Kruschke recommended limiting artificial turf colors and adding requirements for UV protection and permeability. Ms. McCulloch emphasized the importance of prioritizing material quality alongside color specifications. Mr. Zimmerman added heat resistance tolerance. Mr. Kruschke agreed and noted that different turfs have different airflow characteristics. Mr. Connolly confirmed that staff would research appropriate material standards.

The Planning Commission circled back to sprinkler systems, smart controllers, and deep watering stakes. Ms. McCulloch noted drip irrigation, automated irrigation systems, and ground coverings to help the soil surface.

Mr. Swanson asked who will be impacted by the potential revisions. Mr. Kruschke answered that these are focused on new development. Mr. Connolly noted that landscaping revisions on existing properties are encouraged to talk to Staff for compliance. Mr. Kruschke suggested requiring detailed irrigation plans.

Mr. Swanson brought attention to water use requirements for St. George regarding low water usage and recirculating hot water systems. Mr. Connolly said that if the Planning Commission wants to implement this, it would come with the rebate program.

Ms. McCulloch talked about adjusting irrigation schedules. Mr. Kruschke suggested discussing the reliability of the irrigation system and balancing with restrictions of use. Mr. Connolly stated that this topic may come back at a later time depending on the practicality and reasonableness of making adjustments.

Mr. Kruschke recommended making changes to the ordinances, then compare to the Water Conservancy District's Lawn rebate program. Mr. Zimmerman and Ms. McCulloch agreed.

B. Adjourn

Motion made by Rich Swanson to adjourn at 6:45 PM. The motion was seconded by Terry Kruschke.

Vote on Motion:

Swanson: Aye

Kruschke: Aye

McCulloch: Aye

Zimmerman: Aye

Bhatti:

LaBorde: Aye

The motion passed.

Kyndal Sagers, Town Clerk

APPROVAL: _____ **DATE:** _____

An audio recording of the public meeting is available on the Utah Public Notice Website at <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/files/1472279.mp3>. For more information, please call 435-772-3434 or email springdale@springdale.utah.gov.

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