

Sanpete County Planning Commission Work Meeting

August 04, 2026 5:00 P.M.

Sanpete County Courthouse, 160 North Main, Room 302, Manti, Utah

Attendees: Planning Commission Chair Cody Harmer, Board Members: Claudia Jarrett, Gene Jacobson, Justin Atkinson, Jo-Anne Riley and Rick Allred. Also in attendance is Sanpete County Deputy Clerk Heather Pyper and Sanpete County Zoning Administrator Heidi Sorensen.

Board Member Dallin Carter resigned.

I. Discussion of updates to Land Use Matrix and Definitions.

Mr. Harmer welcomed attendees to the August Planning and Zoning work meeting, noting a full agenda to address. The Commission turned to the first agenda item regarding the updated land use matrix and definitions. Mr. Harmer asked Mr. Jacobson to confirm that the yellow-highlighted entries represented newly added definitions, which Mr. Harmer noted looked appropriate for inclusion in the code. Mr. Jacobson explained the color coding in the packet, noting that updates from the prior meeting were changed to green. Mr. Jacobson added that when comparing the 2019 and 2023 ordinances using AI tools, discrepancies emerged because the 2019 code did not feature matching uses across agricultural, R1, and R2 zones. To help determine whether to adopt the 2019 code, 2023 code, or create a new version, Mr. Jacobson added data from surrounding rural counties (Sevier, San Juan, and Millard) highlighted in yellow. Mr. Jacobson noted that while Sanpete County would not base decisions strictly on other counties, the data offers useful context (such as adult daycare facility permissions). Mr. Jacobson also noted that certain counties, such as Emery, could not be indexed by the tool due to website coding structures. The Commission discussed locating the specific list of state-code-required definitions sent in the packet, which Mr. Jacobson confirmed were derived from state requirements and provided in the previous month's materials. Addressing the extensive nature of the matrix, Mr. Harmer proposed that members take the comparison sheet home to review line-by-line, make notes, and return the following month to compare feedback systematically. Commission members reviewed the sheet's structure, confirming that the orange and green pages outlined old names, new names, definitions, 2023 standards, 2019 standards, and surrounding county standards. Mr. Jacobson confirmed that approved updates automatically populate through the system for eventual legal review and public hearing. The Commission discussed the balance of conditional use permits (C) versus permitted uses (P). Members noted that the current matrix contains a high volume of conditional uses, which creates administrative burdens for Ms. Sorensen in writing conditions and incurs a \$700 permit fee for applicants. The Commission achieved consensus to use the comprehensive comparison matrix sheet for homework before the next meeting. Members will review each land use entry and note whether items should be permitted, conditional, or excluded. Staff and members briefly discussed online access to county land use ordinances. Ms. Sorensen and members noted that while updated 2023 land use ordinances are posted on the official Planning and Zoning web page, older 2019 documents or outdated third-party links still surface in online searches. Ms. Pyper confirmed that searching directly for the Sanpete County Planning and Zoning page directs users to the correct files. The Commission formally tabled further line-by-line discussion of the land use matrix until the next monthly meeting, keeping members Justin and Jo-Anne updated on the assignment as the meeting transitioned to remaining agenda items.

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II. **Discussion of the Land Use Ordinance Section 14.94.040 (Nuisances Specified) to incorporate noise regulations in the Buffer Zone.**

Mr. Harmer introduced the topic and asked Ms. Sorensen to report on county deputy attorney Wes's legal review of the draft presented the previous month. Ms. Sorensen explained that Mr. Mangum recommended adopting Ephraim City's noise ordinance directly for all designated buffer zones across Sanpete County. She noted that Mr. Mangum suggested this unified approach so the county does not have to track or adopt individual ordinances for each municipality—or handle gaps where neighboring cities lack noise regulations altogether. Ms. Sorensen confirmed that Ephraim's ordinance includes full definitions and procedural enforcement mechanisms that can be integrated into Sanpete County's code. Commission members confirmed that copies of Ephraim's noise ordinance were distributed and uploaded to the shared Google Drive. Mr. Harmer noted that using a single, comprehensive municipal standard would simplify enforcement and that Ephraim's standard is likely equal to or stronger than other surrounding municipal codes. Members discussed how annexation boundaries interact with the ordinance, noting that properties annexed into a city would automatically fall under that city's specific municipal rules. Mr. Harmer raised a concern regarding the measurement standard in the draft, noting that it relies on decibel meter readings (or other standards adopted by the health department). Mr. Harmer observed that requiring decibel measurements can make proving a violation difficult, whereas an animal or reasonable person standard might be easier to administer. Members reviewed the specific decibel levels outlined in the document and acknowledged that while the numbers reflect standard national thresholds, relying strictly on decibel meters might complicate initial complaints. Mr. Harmer suggested incorporating a reasonable person standard alongside decibel readings. Members clarified that this language would be integrated directly into Sanpete County's existing nuisance ordinance (Section 14.94) as a designated noise subsection, preserving existing fee schedules, notification procedures, and administrative appeal steps. Commission members reviewed procedural rules for filing complaints, noting that the last paragraph of the draft requires written complaints accompanied by audio or video proof. Members discussed how decibel readings would function during legal disputes or court appeals. Commission member Rick shared a personal experience from his gravel pit operations, noting that after a neighbor complained, he purchased a decibel meter for \$150 to demonstrate that background traffic noise exceeded the noise generated by his crusher, successfully resolving the issue. The Commission debated whether the burden of proof for decibel readings should fall on the complainant, the defendant, or the county enforcement officer. Members agreed that residents filing complaints should not be required to purchase expensive decibel meters for routine issues like barking dogs, but acknowledged that objective decibel measurements are valuable if a case proceeds to court or an administrative appeal. Mr. Harmer researched and listed key factors of the reasonable person standard for noise, including time of day or night, volume and intensity, duration and frequency, ambient background noise levels, locality characteristics, and whether the noise is a single event or recurring. Commission members agreed that incorporating both reasonable person criteria and decibel guidelines provides a balanced framework. The Commission then systematically read through the proposed text to adapt it specifically for Sanpete County buffer zones. The policy declaration language was updated to state that excessive or unnatural noises are prohibited to protect the health, safety, and comfort of residents within the future annexation

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zones (also referenced as city buffer zones). Commercial and public disturbance noise categories covering commercial or industrial sounds, defective mufflers, amplified music, and miscellaneous noises (such as animals, machinery, and gunfire) were reviewed. The legal phrasing in Section D was refined to clarify that identified noise categories are determined to be a nuisance that may be unlawful and may be abated by the proper authorities in Sanpete County. Default timeframes defining Day (7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.) and Night (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.) were reviewed, with members agreeing to maintain those standard hours. Structural code references were updated to align with county code, directing zone designations and nuisance provisions to Section 14.94 of the Sanpete County Land Use Ordinance. Technical definitions for noise sources, noise disturbances, intermittent noise, impulse noise, and continuous noise were reviewed. To address ongoing public complaints regarding dog barking, members agreed to add dog barking alongside gunshots under the classification for impulse and intermittent noise sources. Definitions for emergency vehicles, emergency work, mufflers, responsible parties, and host responsibilities regarding private gatherings or events were also reviewed. The Commission discussed whether the newly adapted definitions should be added to the general land use code definitions or kept within the specific noise ordinance section. Ms. Sorensen stated she will check with Mr. Mangum to ensure proper placement. Following the line-by-line review of the text, the Commission agreed to forward the adapted buffer zone noise ordinance to county legal counsel for final formatting and review prior to scheduling a public hearing. The Sanpete County Planning and Zoning Commission continued its regular work meeting, proceeding with the detailed line-by-line review and adaptation of the proposed buffer zone noise nuisance ordinance. The Commission examined the administrative definitions and fee structures. Mr. Harmer and members clarified that the term premises encompasses properties where noise disturbances, parties, or gatherings occur, and that host includes property owners, leaseholders, occupiers, or event organizers (including parents/guardians of minors). The Commission agreed that service fees specified in the chapter are calculated to cover administrative enforcement costs, updating the text to specify Sanpete County enforcement officer costs rather than municipal police department costs. Addressing sound measurement methodologies, the Commission reviewed Section 9.30 regarding sound level meters and weighted scales. To ensure enforcement flexibility and avoid placing an undue burden on residents to acquire decibel meters, the Commission amended the provision. The updated text incorporates a reasonable person standard accompanied by audio and/or video recordings as an alternative or supplementary measurement method alongside standard ANSI guidelines, removing references to governing health department testing requirements. The Commission adjusted the geographical applicability throughout the text, replacing municipal terms with city potential annexation zone (aka buffer zone) to ensure the ordinance applies strictly within designated county buffer zones surrounding municipal boundaries. The Commission reviewed the Exempt Uses and Activities section, approving standard exemptions for safety signals, warning devices, emergency pressure relief valves, authorized emergency vehicles, emergency repair work, lawful holiday fireworks, and temporary activities permitted by law. The Commission examined the Use Zones and Permitted Noise Levels section. The Commission agreed to strike all non-applicable commercial and industrial zone classifications from the table, restricting the zone designations strictly to RA1 and RA2 within the buffer zones. The Commission verified daytime (85 dBA) and nighttime (55 dBA)

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threshold limits for continuous and intermittent sound. In response to concerns raised regarding agricultural operations within buffer zones, the Commission discussed protecting traditional farming practices. Mr. Harmer noted that active agricultural production (such as late-night baling) must not be subject to noise citations. The Commission agreed to insert an explicit exemption under the exemption section stating that, pursuant to the Sanpete County General Plan, standard agricultural production activities and related equipment operations are exempt from the noise ordinance. The Commission addressed ongoing complaints regarding animal noise. The Commission agreed to integrate a specific definition for animal noise, defined as frequent, habitual, or repetitive noise caused by animals (such as barking or howling) that creates an unreasonable disturbance and listed dog barking alongside gunshots under the impulse and intermittent noise examples. The Commission reviewed violation penalties, administrative appeals, and service fee collection timelines. Service fees and penalties will reference the official consolidated Sanpete County fee schedule in Section 14.94. The payment timeline was adjusted from 3 business days to 10 business days following the issuance of a violation notice. Administrative appeal language was updated to designate the Sanpete County Justice Court as the hearing body for contesting notices of violation or service fees.

III. Discussion of Private Landing Strip Ordinance.

Tabled

IV. Discussion of Solar Energy Facilities Ordinances.

Tabled

V. Other business (if necessary)

Ms. Sorensen requested guidance on drafting a separate ordinance for private landing strips following a recent public hearing. The Commission identified key regulatory items to develop for the landing strip draft, including minimum property line setbacks, parcel requirements (whether landing strips must be contained within a single parcel or can cross parcel boundaries, noting applicability is limited to Agricultural and Sensitive Lands zones with 5-acre minimums), neighbor notification procedures, and FAA/airspace overlay considerations regarding neighboring properties. Mr. Harmer and other members agreed to gather sample ordinance language from other counties and state guidelines regarding private airstrips to review at the next monthly work meeting. With all agenda items addressed, the work session concluded and transitioned to the regular meeting.