



MINUTES

Planning Commission Meeting

6:00 PM - Thursday, March 12, 2026

Board Chambers, 133 Convention Boulevard

Invocation

Led by Corey Scott

Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Bart Stafford

Call to Order

Chairman Stafford called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Roll Call of the Planning Commission Members:

Present: Commissioner Ledante Walker, Commissioner Brian Gehrki, Chair Bart Stafford, Alternate #3 Wallace Stone, Vice Chair Bill Lemond, Alternate #1 Ashley Campbell, and Commissioner Bill Vowell

Not Present: Commissioner Rick Ramick and Commissioner Janice M. Davis

Present But Not Seated: Alternate #2 Corey Scott

Consider Previous Minutes

Adoption of Minutes

Moved by Bill Lemond, seconded by Wallace Stone, to approve the February 12, 2026 minutes as presented.

Carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Commissioner Ledante Walker, Commissioner Brian Gehrki, Chair Bart Stafford, Alternate #3 Wallace Stone, Vice Chair Bill Lemond, Alternate #1 Ashley Campbell, and Commissioner Bill Vowell

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Bill Lemond, seconded by Ledante Walker, to approve the meeting's agenda as amended and presented.

Carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Commissioner Ledante Walker, Commissioner Brian Gehrki, Chair Bart Stafford, Alternate #3 Wallace Stone, Vice Chair Bill Lemond, Alternate #1 Ashley Campbell, and Commissioner Bill Vowell

Consent Agenda

Chairman Stafford asked Director Sellman to present the items on the consent agenda to the Commission.

1. ***MISC-26-032 - 4501 Central Ave. - Variance request from H.S.C. § 16-5-20(b) limiting the size of a single wall sign to 200 sq/ft.***

Commissioner Brian Gehrki recused from the consent agenda

Staff: Director Sellman

FINDING:

This application submission requirements of H.S.C. § 16-5-13 for sign variance consideration have been met. This variance request seeks relief the 200 sq/ft maximum size for a single wall sign for a new anchor tenant on the Uptown Hot Springs Mall property. The specific request is to allow one sign not to exceed 500 sq/ft in area. Per H.S.C. § 16-5-20(b) the maximum amount of allowable signage on the front (main) façade of this proposed building would be 2,284 sq/ft. The total area of the five proposed signs is 704 sq/ft. which is less than 1/3 of the 20% wall sign area maximum allowance. The requested variance appears to be reasonable considering the size of the front (main) building façade, the distance the building would be located from Central Avenue (Arkansas Highway 7) right-of-way, the posted 45 mph vehicular speed limit and the proportionality of the overall sign package proposal.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve wall sign variance MISC-26-032 allowing for one wall sign not to exceed 500 sq/ft in area as requested.

2. ***MISC-26-056 - Planning Commission Bylaws - Consider amendments to the planning commission bylaws.***

Staff: Director Sellman

FINDING:

Current planning commission bylaws were adopted on August 9, 2012 and are in need of updating. Planning Commission's authority to adopt bylaws is found in Arkansas Code section A.C.A. § 14-56-408. The primary goal for the amendments is to acknowledge current membership composition; to align rules of procedures with current meeting practice; to eliminate repetitious text; and to clarify text.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider amendments, discuss and adopt new bylaws.

Moved by Bill Vowell, seconded by Ledante Walker, to approve the consent agenda items with staff report findings and recommendations.

Carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Commissioner Ledante Walker, Chair Bart Stafford, Alternate #3 Wallace Stone, Vice Chair Bill Lemond, Alternate #1 Ashley Campbell, and Commissioner Bill Vowell

New Business

Chairman Stafford asked Director Sellman to present the items on New Business.

***Commissioner Brian Gehrki returned to the room. ***

3. ***RZ-26-022 - Corner of Fairmont Street & Delaware St. - Zoning change request from RN-5 to RN-3 for Lot 1, Block 22 in Forrest Hill Subdivision.***

Staff: Director Sellman

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN MAP FINDING:

This property's future land use classification of Residential Medium/ High is consistent with the requested RN3 (Residential Neighborhood 3) zoning.

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT FINDING:

Applicant successfully demonstrates that the standards for favorable consideration have been met. Planning Commission is able to establish a basis for recommending to the Board of Directors that the proposed change demonstrates compatibility with surrounding development and zoning and is consistent with the objectives of the zoning code. Additionally, the request implements the City's adopted Housing Strategy by enabling private in-fill housing development on now-vacant land served by water and wastewater infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION TO PLANNING COMMISSION:

Recommend that the Board of Directors adopt an ordinance to amend the zoning map by designating the subject property RN-3 (Residential Neighborhood 3 District) because the change demonstrates compatibility with surrounding development and zoning, is consistent with the objective of zoning code, implements the adopted Housing Strategy, and is consistent with the Future Land Use Plan Map designation.

Speakers:

Applicant -Lance Levi, 212 Sunset Bay

Moved by Bill Vowell, seconded by Ashley Campbell, to approve the item with staff report findings and recommendation.

Carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Commissioner Ledante Walker, Commissioner Brian Gehrki, Chair Bart Stafford, Alternate #3 Wallace Stone, Vice Chair Bill Lemond, Alternate #1 Ashley Campbell, and Commissioner Bill Vowell

4. RZ-26-036 - Stover, Blair and Kent Streets - Zoning change request from RN-5 to RN-3 for approximately 2.29 acres of land.

Staff: Director Sellman

FUTURE LAND USE MAP FINDING:

This property's future land use classification of Residential Medium/ High is consistent with the requested RN-3 (Residential Neighborhood 3) zoning.

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT FINDING:

Applicant successfully demonstrates that the standards for favorable consideration have been met. Planning Commission is able to establish a basis for recommending to the Board of Directors that the proposed change demonstrates compatibility with surrounding development and zoning and is consistent with the objectives of the zoning code. Additionally, the request implements the City's adopted Housing Strategy by enabling private in-fill housing development on now-vacant land served by water and wastewater infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the Board of Directors adopt an ordinance to amend the zoning map by designating the subject property RN-3 (Residential Neighborhood 3 District) because the change demonstrates compatibility with surrounding development and zoning, creates no nonconformities because it is undeveloped, is consistent with the objective of zoning code, implements the adopted Housing Strategy, and is consistent with the Future Land Use Plan Map designation Residential Medium/ High.

Speakers:

Applicant - Lance Levi, 212 Sunset Bay

Pam Noble, 316 Stover St.

Moved by Bill Vowell, seconded by Ledante Walker, to approve the item with staff report findings and recommendation.

Carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Commissioner Ledante Walker, Commissioner Brian Gehrki, Chair Bart Stafford, Alternate #3 Wallace Stone, Vice Chair Bill Lemond, Alternate #1 Ashley Campbell, and Commissioner Bill Vowell

5. ***RZ-26-046 - 415 Quapaw Ave. - Zoning change request from C-N to RN-5 for approximately 0.17 acres of land.***

Staff: Director Sellman

FUTURE LAND USE MAP AMENDMENT FINDING:

This property's future land use classifications of Office Center is not consistent with the requested RN-5 (Residential Neighborhood 5 District) zoning. Therefore, a future land use plan map amendment to Residential Medium/High is recommended which would support the requested RN-5 (Residential Neighborhood 5 District) zoning. A future land use plan map designation of Residential Medium/High would be consistent with other nearby RN-5 (Residential Neighborhood 5 District) zoned properties to the west.

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT FINDING:

Applicant successfully demonstrates that the standards for favorable consideration have been met. Planning Commission is able to establish a basis for recommending to the Board of Directors that the proposed change demonstrates compatibility with surrounding development and zoning, would fulfil a demonstrated public need for housing and is consistent with the objectives of the zoning code.

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the Board of Directors adopt an ordinance amending the zoning map by designating the subject property RN-5 (Residential Neighborhood 5 District) because the proposed change demonstrates compatibility with surrounding development and zoning, would fulfil a demonstrated public need for housing, is consistent with the objectives of the zoning code, and is consistent with the In-Town Neighborhood Goals of the comprehensive plan; and by amending the future land use plan map to designate the property Residential Medium/High.

Speakers:

Applicant - Bob Kempkes, 274 Long beach

Moved by Bill Lemond, seconded by Ledante Walker, to approve the item with staff report findings and recommendation.

Carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Commissioner Ledante Walker, Commissioner Brian Gehrki, Chair Bart Stafford, Alternate #3 Wallace Stone, Vice Chair Bill Lemond, Alternate #1 Ashley Campbell, and Commissioner Bill Vowell

6. ***SPA-26-037 - 4436 Central Ave. - Large Scale Development Site Plan Amendment application for The Backyard project***

****Withdrawn by the Applicant and Will Not Be Heard****

Directors Report

Staff: Director Sellman

Applications for Boards and Commissions are due by March 20, 2026 and Board of Directors Interviews will be conducted on March 31, 2026.

Draft Sign Code work sessions for March 18, 2026 at 11:00a.m. with Planning Commission and March 25, 2026 at 11:00a.m. with Planning Commission and Sign Professionals.

Adjournment

Moved by Bill Lemond, seconded by Ashley Campbell, to adjourn the March 12, 2026 Planning Commission meeting.

Carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Commissioner Ledante Walker, Commissioner Brian Gehrki, Chair Bart Stafford, Alternate #3 Wallace Stone, Vice Chair Bill Lemond, Alternate #1 Ashley Campbell, and Commissioner Bill Vowell



Attest