

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES



HYBRID/REMOTE AND IN-PERSON AT THE MILL

August 18, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 PM by Chair Janice Huxford

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Janice Huxford, Vice-Chair Jennifer Davis, Commissioner Bruce Morton, Commissioner Mike Duerr, Commissioner Nathan Packard, and Council Liaison Ryan Donoghue (remote)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner Connor Davis, Commissioner Murika Matz. Commissioner Duerr moved, and Commissioner Morton seconded, a motion to excuse Commissioner Matz's absence and make Commissioner Connor Davis's absence unexcused. The motion passed unanimously.

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Manager Christi Schmidt, Principal Planner David Levitan, Administrative Assistant Dawn Erickson

OTHERS PRESENT: Intern Ella Barnard, Intern Cameron McTee

Chair Huxford called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: As noted above.

Guest business: None. Planning Manager Schmidt welcomed interns Ella Barnard and Cameron McTee, who introduced themselves to the Commissioners.

Approval of Minutes: The August 4, 2025 meeting minutes were approved as written. Commissioner Morton made the motion, and Commissioner Packard seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Items: Principal Planner Levitan provided an update on the proposed revisions to the LSMC STEP Housing Code Language, with draft language provided in the packet. He reviewed some of the information presented on May 21 and June 2, 2025, and pointed out highlights and rationales behind the draft code language. He also reviewed some examples of regulations in other Puget Sound cities.

In an overview of the draft language, Principal Planner Levitan highlighted the following staff recommendations:

- Allow for outright permitted uses (as opposed to requiring a CUP)
- Require a Type I permit and process accordingly
- Require individual sites to be separated by at least 500 feet

- Public notice required to adjacent neighbors, similar to STRs
- Site Management Plan must provide contact information, analyze parking and include an Operations and Safety Plan

He then requested feedback from the Commissioners.

Regarding separate approaches for emergency housing and supportive housing:

After discussion regarding:

- A sufficient buffer distance for health and safety,
- The effects of potential concentration within a neighborhood/area,
- Clarification that the buffer is between *facilities*, and applies only to emergency housing types,
- Whether one housing type will likely need more defined regulations. Principal Planner Levitan stated that the more long-term residents in permanent supportive housing typically need more comprehensive services, which lends itself to needing less regulation than emergency housing
- Should the city consider buffers between facilities, schools, parks, marijuana-related businesses, etc.? Principal Planner Levitan said the city could exceed the state recommendation for buffers related to marijuana-related businesses if a nexus could be provided.

Commissioners were comfortable with separate approaches for emergency and supportive housing types, except Chair Huxford, who said she feels that having separate approaches causes more unnecessary ambiguity. The majority favored a buffer, although the size was not agreed upon.

Due to land use development standards and fire codes, maximum occupancy was considered a non-issue for the Commissioners.

A public notice discussion centered on whether public notice requirements for emergency housing should be treated similarly to Type I or II applications. Principal Planner Levitan explained that Types II through IV permits only require a 300-foot radius for public notice; requiring a larger radius would need to be linked to a health/safety rationale. Commissioner Packard said he would be willing to exceed the 300-foot radius for emergency-type housing and later added that he would like to see more than adjacent neighbors notified. Commissioner Duerr agreed that the 300-foot radius could be increased, and Chair Huxford favors a Type II process for emergency housing. Commissioner Jennifer Davis stated she is comfortable with the requirements proposed. Commissioner Morton favors public notice for immediate neighbors. Commissioner Matz suggested, through written comments, that the facility owner/operator should be required to attend the public meeting.

Management Plan renewal frequency was discussed, with Commissioner Morton favoring no renewal requirements unless management deviates from the operational plan, or for a code violation or safety event. Principal Planner Levitan said staff could build a section detailing what would lead to permit revocation, avoiding the necessity for renewals. Commissioner Duerr views the renewal process as a way to verify that the operational plan is still being followed as outlined initially. Planning Manager Schmidt stated that the STR renewal process is just one sheet, typically processed in one week, and is a declaration that the information is true and accurate. Commissioner Matz favors a semi-annual renewal requirement, unless maximum occupancy limits are reached. Commissioner Packard quoted the “substantive change” measure in the proposed language, saying it is too subjective. Principal Planner Levitan noted the city must evaluate the occupancy (including any staff) for fire code and parking. Commissioner Jennifer Davis

asked how the safety and operational plans are evaluated. Principal Planner Levitan stated the plans would need to be reviewed by the building team, the planning team, the police, and the fire department. The Municipal Code would also require a traffic evaluation, but the city can waive impact fees to subsidize the program. Planning Manager Schmidt pointed out information handed out earlier this evening that applies to this issue.

Commissioner Reports:

Chair Huxford stated she had met with the mayor and will meet with the Public Works Director to discuss traffic management, specifically a three-way stop at the Machias Cutoff. Commissioner Packard expressed concern about the number of e-minibikes on the streets, citing it as a safety hazard. Planning Manager Schmidt stated that this has become a prevalent topic at planning conferences, and some jurisdictions regulate e-bikes, etc.

Director's Report

Planning Manager Schmidt suggested taking it to the City Council to determine whether to have exemptions for public use and public benefits. She also said that staff will have a quarterly report for the commissioners at the next meeting. She also reminded the group that meetings are moving to Wednesday, effective 9/3/25. Principal Planner Levitan told the Commissioners that the city is working on a pre-approved ADU plans project and hopes to pool resources with other jurisdictions to defray costs. He also advised the Commissioners that the draft of the BAS review for the CAO update is expected tomorrow, so the results and recommendations can be discussed at the next meeting.

Adjourn: Motion by Commissioner Duerr, with a second by Commissioner Packard, to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully,

Dawn Erickson, Administrative Assistant