



Planning Commission Minutes

Note: Anyone wishing to speak at any Planning Commission meeting is encouraged to do so. If you wish to speak, please rise and, after you have been recognized by the Chair, give your name and complete address for the record. You will then be allowed to speak. Please note the public testimony may be limited by the Chair.

May 12, 2026
REGULAR MEETING
Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Verner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Civic Center Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street.

Commissioners Present:

Lisa Verner
Jay Lininger
Eric Herron
Russell Phillips
John Maher

Staff Present:

Brandon Goldman, Community Development Director
Derek Severson, Planning Supervisor
Carmel Zahran, Deputy City Attorney
Michael Sullivan, Executive Assistant

Absent Members:

Kerry KenCairn
Susan MacCracken Jain

Council Liaison:

Jeff Dahle (absent)

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Staff Announcements:

Community Development Director Brandon Goldman made the following announcements:

- Assistant City Attorney Carmel Zahran was introduced and welcomed as a resource for the Commission, noting that the City Attorney's office intends to follow Planning Commission meetings on an ongoing basis.
- Author Greg Coulter will present on homelessness and housing resources at Southern Oregon University May 13th 2026, at 11:00 AM and 6:30 PM.
- The Oregon Land use Board of Appeals (LUBA) remand of 231 Granite Street was noted: LUBA found the city's approval of a variance for a driveway grade exceeding 18% was not supported by code, and remanded the decision back to the City. The applicant had not yet determined whether to proceed via remand or new application, but the matter may return before the Commission.

2. Advisory Committee Liaison Reports – None

III. CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes





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Commissioners Herron/Maher m/s to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioners Maher, Lininger, Phillips, Herron, and Verner: AYE. Motion Passed 5-0.

IV. PUBLIC FORUM – None

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

PLANNING ACTION: PA-T1-2026-00297
SUBJECT PROPERTY: 40 N Main
OWNER: Pacific Rental Properties LLC
APPLICANT: LaNier Land Consulting, LLC
DESCRIPTION: A request for a ‘similar use’ interpretation of the Land Use Ordinance (LUO) with regards to the distinction between “private” and “public” parking lots.
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGNATION: Downtown; **ZONING:** C-1-D; **MAP:** 39 1E 09 BB; **TAX LOT:** 10,000

The applicant was not present. After a brief discussion, the Commission voted to proceed with the hearing, noting that attendance is not required and the meeting had been properly noticed.

Ex Parte Contact

All Commissioners disclosed site visits except for Commissioner Lininger, though he noted his knowledge of the site. No ex parte contact was disclosed.

Staff Presentation

Mr. Goldman stated that the application sought a determination that a privately owned, fee-based parking facility open to the general public constitutes "public parking" as a similar use under AMC 18.1.5, and that staff had elevated the matter to a Type 3 legislative process due to its significant citywide policy implications. Staff’s position, concurred with by Assistant City Attorney Zahran, was that the distinction between public and private parking turns on ownership and operational control – not public accessibility. Under this interpretation, a privately owned, commercially operated parking lot remains a private use regardless of whether the public may pay to access it. Staff stated that the code expressly permits public parking (government-owned/operated) as an outright use in all zones, while private parking is only permitted as an accessory use tied to a primary development. Staff further noted that Ashland’s downtown planning history, dating to 1967, reflects a deliberate policy to discourage standalone surface parking lots in the downtown core.

Chair Verner closed the Public Hearing at 7:30pm.





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Deliberations and Decision

The Commission concurred with staff's analysis and supported denial of the interpretation, though it raised the question of whether the Commission should also recommend that City Council investigate creating a new land use category for private paid parking.

Commissioners Maher/Lininger m/s that the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council deny the requested similar use interpretation and affirm that privately owned, fee-based commercial parking facilities do not constitute "public parking" as contemplated by the Ashland Land Use Ordinance, do not qualify as a similar use, and are not permitted as a primary use under the Ashland Land Use Ordinance. Commissioners Maher, Lininger, Phillips, Herron, and Verner: AYE. Motion Passed 5-0.

Commissioners Phillips/Herron m/s to recommend that City Council investigate allowing private paid parking in the City of Ashland and potentially creating a new primary land use category for that purpose.

AMENDMENT: Commissioners Herron/Phillips m/s to amend the motion to broaden the recommendation to include fee-for-service parking in a variety of configurations – including subsurface, surface, and parking integrated within mixed-use building envelopes. Amendment Vote: Commissioners Maher, Lininger, Phillips, Herron, and Verner: AYE. Amendment Passed 5-0.

AMENDED MOTION: Commissioners Maher, Lininger, Phillips, Herron, and Verner: AYE. Motion Passed 5-0.

VI. OPEN DISCUSSION – None

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

*Submitted by,
Michael Sullivan, Executive Assistant*