



Planning Board Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2026
City Hall – 6:30 PM.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Launderville at 6:30 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Attendance

Lucille Launderville
Stephanie Hanson
Sharon Zakszeski
Chris Sekula
Carrie Moffett (late)

Absent

David Van der Vossen (excused)

Nicole Morgan, Development Services Director
Suzanne Price, Zoning Technician
Tanya Shannon, City Clerk
Commissioner Sherwood, Board Liaison
Commissioner Ausborn

3. Approval of Agenda

Chair Launderville requested amendments to the agenda: to remove the Final Draft of the Imagine 2040 Comprehensive Plan from the agenda until the August meeting and to add an update on the Highway 87 100-acre project under New Business. Ms. Zakszeski moved to approve the amended agenda, and Ms. Hanson seconded.
Vote 4-0; Motion Carried.

4. Potential Conflict of Interest/Association Disclosure

No member indicated any conflict or association with any item on this evening's agenda.

5. Public Comment

1. Judith Jeffries – Spoke on the need to protect red-cockaded woodpecker habitat, urged updating habitat maps collaboratively, and volunteered to assist.

2. Dana Whitt(on behalf of Kendall Fincher, YMD Builders) – Submitted a prepared statement strongly supporting a text amendment to remove the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) approval requirement for residential tree-clearing permits. Cited lost revenue, impacts on property taxes, job creation, and alignment with neighboring municipalities.
3. Travis Cruse – Supported a text amendment, emphasized the need for clear answers for builders and investors, and noted economic impacts after 30 years in the community.
4. Tony Witt – Supported streamlining the process and using local staff instead of federal delays.
5. Ashley Turner – Spoke in favor of a text amendment, challenged claims of widespread tree devastation on single lots, highlighted builders’ efforts to preserve trees, and urged alignment with county practices.
6. Guy Mastroianni – Commented on the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, suggested the need for a formal town vision statement, and asked about public input.
7. Chris Berlin – Local builder supporting the staff-recommended amendment and reliance on local staff expertise.

6. Approval of the Minutes

Ms. Sekula moved to approve the May 14, 2026, minutes, and Ms. Hanson seconded. **Vote 4-0; Motion Carried.**

7. Old Business

~~Final Draft: Imagine 2040 Comprehensive Plan~~

A. 100- acres Development on Highway 87

Ms. Morgan reported:

- No major site plan submitted (only a concept sketch).
- Properties subdivided; clearing permits were issued for green lots.
- Two-year deadline to submit master site plan ends August 22, 2026.
- Potential fines: \$2 per sq. ft. of disturbed area (max \$30,000).
- Tree permits were obtained; other agency permits (DEQ, stormwater, etc.) would be required for full development.
- Enforcement history and collection challenges discussed.

8. New Business

A. Text Amendment (TX-2026-01) - UDO Article 7, Part IV – Landscaping, Buffers, and Tree Protection

Ms. Morgan presented a text amendment to remove the City as intermediary between property owners and USFWS for tree-clearing approvals on residential lots.

Key Background:

- Long-standing process (since 2017) involving color-coded parcels (green/blue/red) and basal area calculations.

- Recent USFWS staffing changes, communication breakdowns, and shift to the IPaC (Information for Planning and Consultation) system caused major delays and a current halt on clearing permits.
- Builders and residents reported significant impacts on construction, jobs, and the local economy.

Proposed Changes (Summary):

- Exempt single-family, two-family residential construction and accessory structures (subject to plot plans) from city-issued clearing permits.
- Retain city tree ordinance requirements for significant trees on development applications.
- Require location, size, and species of significant trees on plot plans.
- Maintain compliance with all federal/state regulations (including Endangered Species Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act).
- In-house policy: Add notifications on zoning permits regarding potential USFWS requirements for pine trees ≥8 inches DBH.

Discussion: Extensive debate on balancing environmental protection, tree preservation, economic impacts, builder practices, stormwater/flooding benefits, and liability. Suggestions included adjusting significant tree definitions, mitigation ratios, and notifications.

Ms. Sekula moved to approve Text Amendment (TX-2026-01), UDO Article 7, Part IV – Landscaping, Buffers, and Tree Protection, as presented with the included in-house permit notifications. Ms. Zakszeski seconded the motion. **Vote 5-0; Motion Carried.**

A motion was made by Ms. Hanson to approve Option A for the Plan Consistency and Reasonableness Determination, with a recommendation for approval to the Board of Commissioners. Seconded by Ms. Zakszeski. **Vote 5-0; Motion Carried.**

B. 2-1 – Plot Plan Requirements

A second text amendment was proposed to revise plot plan requirements, mandating that surveyors identify significant trees and their locations for single-family homes and accessory structures, with the potential for mitigation payments to a tree management fund. Ms. Morgan explained that a corresponding update would require surveyors to show significant trees on plot plans for new residential construction (with exceptions for accessory structures).

Proposed Language:

~~(1) Table containing the size, and species of all trees >7.9 inches DBH. Location, size, and species of all significant trees (all trees at least 24" DBH & dogwoods, American hollies, & live oaks at least 8" DBH)~~

1. *Proposals for accessory structures may, in lieu of ~~including the table on the plot plan~~ requiring that the plot plan include the location, size, and species of all significant trees, include a separate hand-drawn sketch of the size and species of all significant trees >7.9 inches DBH proposed for removal in relation to the location of the proposed structure.*

A motion was made by Ms. Hanson to approve the Text Amendment (TX-2026-02) – UDO Article 9, Section 9-2-1 – Plot Plan Requirements, and seconded by Ms. Sekula. **Vote 5-0; Motion Carried.**

A motion was made by Ms. Hanson to approve Option A for the Plan Consistency and Reasonableness Determination, with a recommendation for approval to the Board of Commissioners. Seconded by Ms. Sekula. **Vote 5-0; Motion Carried.**

With no further comments, Chair Launderville requested a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Ms. Zakszeski to adjourn and seconded by Ms. Hanson. ***Vote 5-0; Motion Carried.***

Adjournment – 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Tanya Shannon, City Clerk