



Planning Commission

Work Session Minutes – March 2, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

0:10

A work session of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Mike Tomy and was held in-person in the Planning Conference Room on March 2, 2026 at 1:00 PM. The meeting was recorded and streamed on Facebook in accordance with City Policy.

ATTENDEES

Members in attendance: Mike Tomy, Chairman, Bill Bardenwerper, Vice-Chairman, Clinton Hallman, Kim McFann, Benjie Morillo, and Bill Suter.

Member Absent: Libby Anderson

Staff in attendance: Curt Freese, Community Development Department Director, Christopher Klement, Planner III and Nicolas Navia, Planner I.

DISCUSSION – CHAPTER 4 REVIEW

0:23

Mr. Tomy asked if there were any initial comments from staff. Mr. Freese referred to his memo that was sent out with the agenda and the email from Mr. Morillo regarding the definition of architectural vernacular. Today the schedule is to go over garages, patios homes, and affordability for affordable housing and lot diversity.

Mr. Tomy commented there is a discrepancy at the beginning part of Chapter 4 and at the end of Chapter 4 that he would like to discuss.

Public Comment

Paul Trask, 610 Bladen Street, referred to Adam Biery's presentation and hoped it was well received.

Public comment closed.

PC spoke about the Garages (single-family) issues. Mr. Bardenwerper went over his proposed revisions for the garage standards. Mr. Bardenwerper commented that Ms. Anderson felt the current garage standards should be retained, and were misapplied by previous Code Administrators.

Mr. Freese referred to Section 4.5.4.7.b (Garages). Mr. Bardenwerper suggested that the definition of the façade be clarified. Mr. Navia read the term for façade that now reads, *the vertical surface of a building*. Mr.

Freese felt Mr. Bardenwerper's draft was good and that it was a good compromise between the two sides. Mr. Freese added *the five feet and not including the porch*. The garage standards in 2.4.1 are not being done away with.

Public Comment

Paul Trask, 610 Bladen Street, said it's important to keep in mind that if the PC is talking about a large tract-development, the lots have not been configured yet. He referred to DR Horton. For example, a garage can be set back where it still is attached to the house, but its set back enough that one car can still be parked in front of the driveway without being in the garage. Eliminating the porch would be a terrible mistake, it's a critical item if the city is trying to create a walkable neighborhood. "Consider maybe wider sidewalks that encourages people to walk."

Public comment closed.

Mr. Bardenwerper referred to Section 4.5.4.B.2 as he would like his note added at the end of the newly inserted paragraph "2. Housing Model Diversity" to say: *"Building designs shall be considered similar unless they are distinguished by colors as well as some combination of uniquely designed entryways, porches, windows and roof lines, such that they plainly look different one from the other. Square footages (and massing) characteristics do not have to be different."*

Mr. Tomy suggested adding to Mr. Bardenwerper's notes *massing elements of* after the words *as well as*; also adding the word *characteristics* after the word *footages*. To summarize, the added sentence would say: "Building designs shall be considered similar unless they are distinguished by colors, massing elements of some combination of uniquely designed entryways, porches, windows and roof lines, such that they plainly look different one from the other. Square footage characteristics do not have to be different."

Mr. Bardenwerper suggested also making the same changes to 4.5. 5.B.4 and 4.5.6.B.4. The PC agreed to Mr. Bardenwerper's suggestion.

PC agreed in Section B. Garages to remove items c, f, g, h, and i.

PC agreed in Section B.a Garages to add a new sentence that says: *"Garages shall be placed behind the rowhomes/townhomes. Apart from occasional on-street parking, all parking, including garages and carports, if any, in new rowhome/townhouse developments shall be located in the rear of the rowhouses/townhouses and be accessed off a rear alleyway."*

PC agreed in Section B.e to add a sentence that says: *"Landscaping or appropriate buffering may be required by the Administrator or Planning Commission to accomplish this requirement."*

By referring to Section 4.5.7 Apartment House, Mr. Freese mentioned that he had previously met with the Housing Trust and discussed options for affordable housing. Recommendations included the following:

- 1) Reducing design standards for qualified workforce or affordable housing.
- 2) Making design standards administrative, instead of discretionary.
- 3) Considering a streamline approach, such as administrative approvals or a more expedient process for affordable/workforce housing.

Mr. Bardenwerper referred to his submitted notes. He also referred to affordable housing submittals. He stated that such specific applicants would present their project(s) as being “affordable” housing but when the tax credits are not received those housing projects would actually not be “affordable” after all.

Public Comment

Paul Trask, 610 Bladen Street, said he’s not sure about the tax credits side but he is familiar with the financing side. When an applicant has a construction loan and reaches a certain percentage of filling it up, they then can roll it into a HUD backed financing model. And the more affordable units that are provided in the development, the lower the HUD rate is going to be fixed for 30 or 40 years. He agreed with Mr. Bardenwerper as there shouldn’t be a compromise. He stated there should be more focus on accessory dwellings.

Public comment closed.

PC took a five-minute break.

Mr. Freese referred to the three handouts (page 23 of 73, page 11 of 77) and Libby Anderson’s email. Mr. Tomy clarified that this would be discussed at the time when PC would proceed with discussing changes to Chapter 2, however, this was not the time to address it yet.

Public Comment

Paul Trask, 610 Bladen Street, felt the code has stepped on the toes of the Milner and the conservation/preservation goals of the Beaufort Historic District in some respects. As far as diversity or housing types in the Historic District, in Mr. Trask’s opinion it’s not a good idea to allow a broad cross-section of these different housing types other than single-family. He referred to the Bladen Street Redevelopment Overlay and the small townhouse project that was being proposed to be built behind the Herban Market. He also referred to the older apartments/townhomes on The Point that seemed to have blended in well over a period of decades. Also, the townhouses on King Street blended in well.

Public comment closed.

After going over the major items, PC agreed to move on to review the rest of Chapter 4. Mr. Tomy commented on the *offsets* that are present throughout the chapter, especially in comparing the very first to the last part. The offset in the first part has been corrected to 18 inches whereas the offsets in the last part of the chapter still are at 24 inches. He prefers 24 inches.

PC agreed in Section 4.3.1.A to change the word *village* to *city/town*.

PC agreed in Section 4.3.1.a.c to add “*respects the historical context and/or*” after “Encourage architecture that”, and before “blends harmoniously with the natural surroundings and neighboring development”.

PC agreed in Section 4.3.1.C to change the title from *Findings* to *Lowcountry Vernacular*.

Mr. Morillo went over his email that discussed the definition of Lowcountry Vernacular in Section 4.3.1.C and suggested adding his information to this section. He said the language highlighted in red was what already existed and the words highlighted in blue represented his suggested changes/additions. The PC agreed.

PC agreed in Section 4.3.2.J.d to add a new paragraph to say, *maximizing air flow through single room wide floor plans*.

Mr. Bardenwerper referred to Section 4.4.A Common Yard and asked if the word *common* is the correct term. PC agreed to change to *Front*.

PC asked staff to go over and come up with better sketches in the tables in Section 4.4 and 4.5

PC agreed in Section 4.5.H – Large Footprint Building, in the chart, to change the footprint size notation back to “greater than 20,000 square feet” for districts T4, T5, RMX, IC, LI.

PC agreed in Section 4.5.J – Gas/Fuel Station, in the chart, to add “& Car Wash” to the rubric title as well as add the specific description “Car washes feature pull-through lanes in which customers may or may not exit their vehicles.”

PC agreed to add to Section 4.5 (Chart): “**K. Drive-Thru Facilities:** This is a commercial building type that includes a vehicular lane along a portion of the building to serve the public through a drive-thru window or other area in which customers do not leave their vehicles.” Applicable to districts T5 and RMX. The addition of a specific Sketch and Plan to be complemented by staff.

PC agreed to add/amend prior addition to Section 4.5 (Chart): “**L. Civic Buildings:** This is a civic, institutional or religious building in which program, massing, and height vary. For religious buildings such as churches, heights and frontages are to be determined by the Code Administrator.” Applicable to districts T3, T3-N, T4, T4-N, T4-HN, T5-UC, T5-DC, RMX, IC.

PC agreed to strike paragraph “**C. Local Design Quality.** (...)” from Section 4.5.1 General.

PC agreed in Section 4.5.3.B – Special Requirements to amend number 2 – Number allowed from “2” to “1” per lot, and to add “an additional ADU may be allowed as a Special Exception (see Section 9.13).” (remove: “except in T3-S where 1 per lot is permitted.”

PC agreed in Section 4.5.4.B.2 – to include language pertaining to requiring some sort of “**Housing Model/Lot Diversity**”. Final language to be discussed at next PC work-session.

PC agreed in Section 4.5.4.B.3 and B.4 to insert new language pertaining to “General Architectural Design” and “Lowcountry Design Elements”.

PC agreed in Section 4.5.4.B to strike “5. Four Sided Architecture”, but instead and further to insert more detailed requirements regarding “5. Elevation”, “6. Corner Lots”, “7. Garages” (hereby taking over Mr. Bardenwerper’s drafted language without including front porches, and to include a definition of “façade” at the end (excluding a front porch). Lastly, “8. Front Yard Landscaping” concludes the list of extended Special Requirements (all or some to be inserted into Sections 4.5.5 – 2-3 Unit House, Section 4.5.6 – Rowhome/Townhouse, and Section 4.5.7 – Apartment House).

PC agreed to remove the terms *stoop* and *forecourt* from Section 4.5.7.B.1.

PC agreed to remove the terms *arcade* and *forecourt* from 4.5.8.B.1.

PC agreed in Section 4.5.8.B.12 - Wall Articulation to add “*at 24 inches*” after the words “*stepping of the wall plane*” and then to delete the words “*and/or landscaping accomplishing the same effect*”;

PC agreed in Section 4.5.9.B.4 (Liner Buildings) to remove this sentence: “Required in RMX: Attached or detached liner building shall be required in the RMX zoning district”.

Moreover, PC agreed to more detailed “Special Requirements” in Section 4.5.9.B (Liner Buildings), to include “Parking”, “General Architectural Design”, “Lowcountry Design Elements”, “Depth” as well as “Liner Building Special Architectural Requirements”.

PC agreed in Section 4.5.10 – Large Footprint Building to amend and specify in more detail “B. Special Requirements” as including “1. The allowed frontage types”, “2. Parking Location”, “3. Liner Buildings”, “4. Height”, “5. Size”, 6. Entrances”, “7. Location”, “8. General Architectural Design”, “9. Lowcountry Design Elements”, and “10. Large Footprint Buildings Special Architectural Requirements”.

PC agreed in Section 4.5.10.B.8 – General Architectural Design, replace the word *quality* with *Lowcountry Vernacular*.

PC agreed in Section 4.5.9.B.10.a to add after the word *plane*, *at 24 inches*.

PC agreed in Section 4.5.9.B.10.f to add a note after 12’, (*consider different depth*).

PC agreed in Section 4. 5.9.B.10.h to remove this paragraph.

PC agreed in Section 4.5.9.B.14 to add a note as item #14, *to allow for side entry on building facing courtyard or similar layouts*.

PC agreed in Section 4.5.10.B.5 – Size, to remove the first sentence.

PC agreed in Section 4.5.12 to delete the word *landscape features* after the word *building*.

PC agreed in Section 4.6.3 to amend the title to “**Specific to All Districts (SEE 4.2.2)**”

PC agreed in Section 4.6.3 – **A. Building Materials and Details** to add language as to exempt “Light Industrial” from these requirements.

Public Comment

Paul Trask, 610 Bladen Street, asked if the two story is still a requirement in significant intersections? This is a problematic issue and has not worked in Beaufort yet. Mr. Trask said, “under two stories the façade facing problem should be activated for pedestrians to include but not limited to an activated plaza 24 feet in depth. He also talked about the location of a patio and entrance ways. He proposed that the city maintain a 75% frontage buildout but the city might permit a 60% or a 65% frontage buildout if its accompanied by a side patio or a side plaza which would accomplish the same goal. Mr. Trask said he could get with Adam Biery and get a draft of a red line on this and submit it to back to the PC. Mr. Tomy said this would be good and should be submitted to Mr. Freese.

Public comment closed.

PC agreed in Section 4.5.11.C to add a note, *Include Section for Lowcountry Vernacular.*

PC agreed in Section 4.5.11.C.2 add after the words *such as, brick, cast stone.*

The next worksession will be March 16, which is the PC's regular schedule meeting, but there are no agenda items. The worksession will start at 2:00 pm. Next meeting PC would like a clean version and a red lined version.

The Worksession ended at 3:20 pm.

3:25:40