



Planning Commission

Work Session Minutes – March 16, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

5:23

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 16, 2026 at 2:05 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, Libby Anderson, Clinton Hallman, Kim McFann, Benjie Morillo.

Member late: Bill Suter.

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

DISCUSSION – CHAPTER 2, 3, AND 4 REVIEW

5:55

Public Comment

Paul Trask, 610 Bladen Street, referred to the suggestions he sent regarding Section 2.6.3 (Two-Story Height Requirements) and Section 2.5.1 (in Building Placement and Orientation). He said, “the change to frontage build out with patios were not included the draft”. He feels it would be a mistake if there is some provision adjustment in the case of the side; don’t give that flexibility to the developer. Ms. McFann asked Mr. Trask where this information would fit best into the Code. He said, “on page 4.5.9”. Mr. Hallman said the change that Mr. Trask referred to was made in Section 4.5.9.8.2.

Public comment closed.

Mr. Freese started the discussion and went over Chapter 2, Section 2.5.1A.1.d. Alternate Entrances, Section 2.6.3 Two Story Height Requirements, and Section 2.5.9 Lot Diversity and the changes that were made from the last worksession and stated the blue and red colors are new information.

Mr. Freese stated Section 2.6.3.C is new information.

Mr. Tomy referred to Section 2.6.3.A to change word *should* to *shall* in the sentence that says *Buildings*

located near Significant Intersections should that above item #1. The PC agreed to not to change the word should.

Mr. Tomy referred to Section 2.6.3.A.3 and suggested changing the word *Active* to *Activate*.

It was also agreed by the PC in Section 2.6.3.A, under item #4, to *remove* the first paragraph.

Ms. McFann also suggested *putting 2.6.3.B before* the sentence, *Buildings located near Significant Intersections should:*.

Ms. McFann suggested to label the title of 2.6.3.B *Requirements*.

PC agreed in Section 2.6.3.A to change the word *Intent* with *Applicability: Specific to Zones T4-N and T5-UC:* and make the description of *Intent* as a separate paragraph.

Ms. McFann suggested adding the word *Requirements* after the word *Building* in Section 2.6.3.C and then having the sentence “*Buildings located near Significant intersections should:* be on its own line after Section 2.6.3.C.”

All agreed to remove the words *Specific to Zones T4-N and T5-UC under the new labeled Section 2.6.3.D*.

All agreed in Section 2.6.3.C – Building Requirements to *add a #5 and put the information regarding Architectural elements there*.

All agreed in Section 2.6.3.C to *add the title 2.6.3.D – 2-Story Building Standards* as its own title.

All agreed to change the title of Section 2.6.3.E back to the original title for *Alternative Single-Story Building Form*.

Ms. Anderson suggesting adding to Section 4.6.1.H – Outdoor Display of Merchandise a new item as:

1. Architectural elements intended solely to simulate an additional story without providing meaningful building depth, usable space, or architectural articulation shall not be used to satisfy the two-story requirement.

Ms. McFann referred to Section 2.6.3.E.7 – Architectural Massing #7 (page 2 of 2) and suggested *removing* the word *steeply*.

Ms. McFann referred to Section 2.6.3.E – Alternative Single-Story Building Form and the word *forecourt* in the first paragraph *should be removed*. Mr. Morillo felt it’s okay for the word *forecourt* to be left in this section.

Chapter 4:

Mr. Freese referred to the handout for Section 4.5.9 – Liner Buildings and went over the changes.

All agreed in Section 4.6.1.H – Prohibited Uses to add the word *maintenance* before the words *service functions*.

All agreed after the paragraph under Section 2.6.3.E – Alternative Single-Story Building Form to add the wording *See Specific to Liner Buildings: see Section 4.5.9 for additional requirements*

Section 3.6.2.C – Bed and Breakfast

Mr. Freese went over some potential changes to the Bed and Breakfast ordinance that would make it consistent with the state statute. Numerous citizens believe that the use should not be allowed in T-4 (Historic District area). Now it's a Special Exception that would have to be applied and approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBOA).

Mr. Tomy commented that he heard from a legal standpoint that the City has the right to create its own regulation and the City doesn't have to comply with the State; city could override the State. The PC should be able to decide what's right for them versus the State's requirement. Beaufort has a different tourist component than other places. Ms. McFann stated she had heard various opinions at presentations by citizens at City Council Worksessions arguing about the State Laws and a lot of it had to do with special uses such as events and expanding the concept of Bed and Breakfast as being a hotel. Mr. Bardenwerper referred to the State Statute Sec. 6-29-60. He clarified that the City's regulation did not come in compliance with the State and now the City is trying to bring it into conformance. Mr. Freese referred to the current lawsuit. Staff made a note to clarify owner/innkeeper/proprietor.

Public Comment

Suzanne Ramm said she and her husband are the owners of The Cuthbert House and they do have a Special Use Permit in the T4-HN District. Our Inn is the only one that has 10 rooms. The Anchorage and the Rett House have more than 10 rooms. Ms. Ramm said, if The Cuthbert house was grandfathered in because the State Statute was created in 1998.

Mr. Tomy asked about the legal issue of whether or not our mandate is compliant with State Law or additional restrictions on what the State Law is. Mr. Tomy asked for clarification on this.

Mr. Scarborough, 1207 Bay Street said he served in the South Carolina General House and referred to the Bed and Breakfast Laws for Charleston, South Carolina. The City of Charleston and Arthur Ravenel asked Lyn McOnnell, a Charleston Senator, to write the Bed and Breakfast Laws. He said South Carolina law states that you as a city can be more restrictive but you cannot be less restrictive than what the State Law allows. He referred to the Special Exception clause and asked the PC to consider that when ownership changes that the new owner has to have a new review.

Ms. McFann said this issue can be also handled by getting their Business License because the license cannot be transferred to a new owner.

Public comment closed.

Chapter 2: Lot Diversity

Mr. Freese went over the new section for Lot Diversity and stated from previous discussions that it was agreed to restrict this to just a few districts (T4-N RMX IC T5-UC).

PC agreed to rename the title of this section to *Lot & Development Diversity*.

Mr. Freese he hopes at next PC Worksession to have all of these changes done and then to approve at the next PC's regular meeting. The next PC worksession will be April 6, at 1:00 pm

The Worksession ended at 2:54 pm.