



City of Durham
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
January 13, 2026

A. CALL TO ORDER.

Planning Chair Susan Deeming opened the meeting at 7:01 PM at Durham City Hall.

B. ROLL CALL.

Commissioners present: Planning Chair Susan Deeming, Commissioners Patricia Saab, Andrew Mast, and Cheri Frazell.

Commissioners absent: Vice Chair Matt Winkler Commissioners Forrest Boleyn and Krista Bailey.

Staff present: City Administrator Jordan Parente and Administrative Assistant Wyatt Bean.

Visitors: Chris Little, Jim Shelman, Rosemary Shelman, Robert Tamura, Val Tamura, and Susan Moliken.

C. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES.

The Commission reviewed the prior meeting minutes. A clarification was discussed regarding language describing the approval of a leaning ash tree, specifically whether the minutes sufficiently reflected that the tree's lean was part of the Commission's consideration. Staff confirmed the language could be amended to clarify this point. Following the motion by Commissioner Saab and second by Commissioner Mast, the minutes were approved unanimously (4-0).

MO 011326-01

D. PUBLIC FORUM.

Chair Deeming opened the public forum and invited comments on items not listed on the agenda. No members of the public wished to speak, and the public forum was closed.

E. TREE REMOVAL REQUEST 840-25 - 843-25 SHELMAN 7932 SW KINGFISHER WAY.

The Commission considered four tree removal requests that came before the Planning Commission on December 2nd, 2025, under the wrong permit type. Staff explained that, following review, the remaining trees had been reclassified and are being brought before the Commission for consideration under the correct permit types. The new applications include an arborist report addressing the health and condition of the two Big-leaf Maple trees.

The Commission reviewed the applicable Type B permit criteria, discussing tree condition, neighborhood character, and mitigation. Commissioners expressed concern regarding canopy loss but acknowledged that the applicant had provided the requested arborist documentation. Mitigation options were discussed, including the number, placement, and species of replacement trees. The applicant expressed willingness to plant mitigation trees that would be appropriate for the site and avoid future conflicts. After discussion, the Commission reached consensus that one mitigation tree would be required as a condition of approval.

Commissioner Frazell moved to approve Tree Removal Permits 840-25, 841-25, 842-25, and 843-25 with the condition that one mitigation tree be planted, either a Crepe Myrtle or a tree from the City's approved mitigation list, as discussed. Commissioner Saab seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

MO 011326-02



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F. SIGN PERMIT 478-25 GISI #130 17300 SW UPPER BOONES FERRY RD.

The Commission reviewed a sign permit application for GISI Marketing. City Administrator Parente explained that the sign differed from the prior installation in size and materials, triggering Planning Commission review. The Commission confirmed that the proposed sign met size and lighting requirements under the code.

Discussion focused on visual consistency within the office park, particularly the sign's background material and color relative to the building façade and neighboring signs. Commissioners expressed a desire for the sign to blend with the building rather than visually stand out due to contrast.

Commissioner Mast moved to approve Sign Permit 478-25 with the condition that the sign background be color-matched to the building façade and that final materials be approved by staff. Commissioner Saab seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0)

MO 011326-03

G. TREE REMOVAL REQUEST 835-25 - 837-25 TAMURA 7867 SW WHITFURROWS CT.

The applicants presented a request to remove three Douglas fir trees located in close proximity to their home, citing concerns related to drainage, root intrusion, sewer line impacts, and potential structural damage. Residents in attendance expressed concern that losing the canopy of these trees may increase the wind vulnerability to trees remaining on neighboring properties.

Commissioners discussed the importance of balancing tree preservation with legitimate property safety concerns. Several Commissioners noted that while proximity to structures and grading issues were raised, the record lacked an arborist report providing professional evaluation of tree health, structural risk, and alternative mitigation measures. The Commission agreed that expert analysis was necessary before approving removal and expressed a desire to holdover the requests to the next Planning Commission meeting. However, due to the 60-day decision timeline and the absence of an arborist report, City Administrator Parente advised that denial with an opportunity for resubmittal would be the cleanest procedural option.

As such, Commissioner Frazell moved to deny Tree Removal Permits 835-25, 836-25, and 837-25. The motion included a request that Mr. Parente consider waiving application fees if the applicants reapply within 30 days with an arborist report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mast. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

MO 011326-04

H. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS / REPORTS / STAFF UPDATES.

Commissioners discussed the idea of hosting a community gathering or picnic to foster neighborhood connections, potentially in conjunction with the City's 60th anniversary. Staff said July 4th had been proposed for such a celebration. Staff also provided updates on the Durham Estates development, the municipal tree ordinance, upcoming Planning Commission training, and anticipated development code and sign ordinance updates. Commissioner Frazell also noted the possibility of revisiting long-term planning priorities, including review of the City's Comprehensive Plan, as the roles and responsibilities of the Planning Commission continue to evolve.



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I. NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION.

The next regular meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for February 10, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., with an Elected and Appointed Official Training before the meeting, starting at 6:00 p.m.

J. ADJOURN.

Chair Deeming adjourned the meeting at 8:40 PM.

Approved:

Matt Winkler, Vice Chair

Attest:

Jordan Parente, City Administrator/Recorder