City of Durham
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
July 14, 2026

A. **CALL TO ORDER.**

Planning Chair Susan Deeming opened the meeting at 7:04 PM at Durham City Hall.

B. **ROLL CALL.**

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

Commissioners absent: Vice Chair Matt Winkler and Commissioner Krista Bailey.

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

C. **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES.**

The Commission considered the June 9, 2026, Planning Commission meeting minutes. With no corrections offered, Commissioner Saab moved to approve the minutes as presented, and Commissioner Frazell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

MO 071426-01

D. **PUBLIC FORUM.**

Chair Deeming opened the public forum. No members of the public were present, and no testimony was received. Chair Deeming closed the public forum.

E. **SIGN PERMIT REQUEST #481-26 FOR SUITE 245 AT 17400 SW UPPER BOONES FERRY ROAD - IMPACT WEST.**

The Commission considered Sign Permit Request #481-26 for a wall sign identifying Impact West at Suite 245, 17400 SW Upper Boones Ferry Road. Staff reported that GISI Marketing Group submitted the application on behalf of Impact West and had previously manufactured signs considered by the Commission for nearby businesses. The Commission found the sign consistent with the applicable size, placement, and illumination requirements and expressed no concerns regarding the proposal.

Commissioner Saab moved to approve Sign Permit Request #481-26 as proposed, and Commissioner Mast seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

MO 071426-02

F. **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS / REPORTS / STAFF UPDATES.**

Commissioner Frazell asked how the Commission would like to proceed regarding fences discussed at the previous meeting. Chair Deeming noted the Development Code would soon be updated, and no formal complaint was received. Commissioners agreed to address fence standards and procedures during the Development Code update.

The Commission discussed improving public awareness of permit requirements, particularly for newer residents who may not realize they live in Durham or understand City regulations. Commissioners supported recurring newsletter reminders encouraging residents to contact City Hall before replacing fences, removing trees, constructing decks, or undertaking similar work.

Commissioner Mast suggested supplementing the newsletter with social media or other communication methods. City Administrator Parente said the newsletter remained the City's primary communication tool, while Washington County alerts served emergency needs. He noted that social media would

require staff capacity, create moderation and public-record considerations, and might receive limited participation. Printed newsletters are mailed to every household, while approximately 40 people receive the digital version.

Commissioners discussed the Comprehensive Plan's community-engagement goals and expressed interest in exploring low-cost methods of strengthening community connections. Suggestions included surveys, newsletter outreach, online feedback, neighborhood gatherings, park events, runs, potlucks, art projects, and other simple activities that could become recurring traditions. Commissioners noted that prior City surveys, including the Metro Local Share survey, demonstrated that newsletter and online outreach could generate useful feedback. The Commission agreed to continue researching community-engagement ideas for discussion at a future meeting.

City Administrator Parente reported that the contract planner was leaving sooner than expected. He had contacted planner Laura LaRoque and the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments regarding potential services. A blended approach could provide flexibility for development reviews and larger projects such as the Development Code update.

Staff reported that the new tree-removal permit process was working but still required refinement, particularly in coordinating arborist reviews and communicating decisions. Routine dead-tree applications take longer than before, while more complex applications were generally being resolved faster. City Administrator Parente said the $150 permit fee for most tree removal permits was below the City's arborist cost of about $250 per hour. However, when there are multiple applications, several trees can be reviewed during one visit to minimize arborist billable hours. Staff had received little feedback from residents beyond concerns about higher fees. He also reported that longtime City Arborist Trevor March had retired from SavATree the week prior.

City Administrator Parente reported that City Council adopted the budget for the coming fiscal year.

Chair Deeming asked whether the revised Durham Estates middle-housing plans would return to the Commission. City Administrator Parente explained that state law requires administrative review and gives the Commission no discretionary role. The developer currently holds two valid townhouse approvals, one covering seven lots and another covering all nine lots. City Administrator Parente stated they would need to select which to pursue.

The Commission discussed state middle-housing requirements allowing multiple units or cottage clusters on property previously zoned for single-family housing. City Administrator Parente said the requirements reduced local discretion and may stress public services, like streets, water, sewer, and other cause other issues as populations grow with insufficient infrastructure in place. Commissioners acknowledged the need for more housing while discussing affordability, neighborhood compatibility, infrastructure capacity, and increased density.

City Administrator Parente also reported that residents had organized and agreed to maintain an additional dog-waste receptacle in the Durham Park off-leash area. Commissioners expressed appreciation for residents who volunteer to collect litter and dog waste in the park, as well as those who take other steps to care for the community on their own time.

G. **NEXT REGULARLY SCHEUDLED MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION.**

The next regular meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for September 8, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

H. **ADJOURN.**

Chair Deeming adjourned the meeting at 8:16 PM.

Approved:

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Susan Deeming, Chair

Attest:

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Jordan Parente, City Administrator/Recorder