

Planning Commission Minutes

Meeting Held July 28, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Raad Joseph, Mr. Craig Daniels, Ms. Cary Farrow, Mr. Kim Robb, Ms. Delores Gibson, Mr. Nick Robinson, and Mr. Graham Osteen

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Ms. Brittany Powell, Ms. Jennifer Boyer, and Ms. Elizabeth Tucker

- I. **Call to Order** “Notice of this meeting has been made in accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws as Amended.”
- II. **Approval of Minutes for meeting held on May 26, 2026:** Mr. Raad Joseph made a motion to approve the minutes for meeting held on May 26, 2026. Ms. Cary Farrow made one correction, noting on Page 3 that the first paragraph refers to Maritime Quarter Overlay District and it should be Main Corridor Overlay District. With no other changes, the motion to approve the minutes was seconded by Mr. Kim Robb. The motion carried unanimously.
- III. **Public Input on Non-Agenda Items:** None
- IV. **Old Business:** None
- V. **New Business:**

A) Public hearing for PLZ-2026-0033. Text amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) for the City of Georgetown.: Mr. Nick Robinson noted these amendments were new to him, and he had not been personally informed nor consulted about the significant changes to the UDO, including the dissolution of the Community Appearance Board (CAB). He expressed concern as to why they were not given the opportunity to engage in any dialogue with staff regarding such changes. Ms. Jennifer Boyer explained this is a public hearing, and the purpose of tonight’s presentation was to discuss proposed amendments with the commission and the public. Ms. Jennifer Boyer proceeded to discuss each amendment. Within the Table of Contents, some sections would be identified as “reserved” rather than renumbering all affected sections within the UDO. The amendments to Article III sought to remove body modification definitions, as the city does not permit piercing and tattoo parlors in any zoning districts, making it unnecessary to

have the definitions in the UDO. Other amendments include removing language for the Community Appearance Board and updates to the related MCOD and UCOD Overlay Districts. **Ms. Cary Farrow** noted the definitions for body modifications were added to the UDO in November 2025. She said there is at least one tattoo parlor operating in the city at 1651 Church St. Ms. Boyer noted that if it does exist and is not non-conforming, then it is operating without proper permits and approvals. Ms. Farrow also noted a second tattoo parlor by the airport, but that the property was in the county. Staff will research the Church St property further and provide the commission with an update. Ms. Boyer stated that if the commission wants to permit these uses and allow the definitions to remain, then the commission should discuss where they want to allow such uses. Ms. Boyer discussed other amendments to definitions with regards to the MCOD and UCOD overlay districts.

Ms. Jennifer Boyer continued discussion, stating in Article V, amendments are proposed to the existing reduced lot width table to create a cross-reference to lots of record to provide clarification for existing lots that are less than 40 feet in length. Redundant language referencing variance requests were deleted, as there is already a variance procedure outlined in the UDO. In Articles VI and X, the word “vacation” was removed from short-term rentals to consistently reference “short-term rentals” in the use tables. For accessory dwelling units, the use table included a cross-reference to Section 1001. No changes were made to the language in Section 1001. In Article X, there are amendments to manufactured homes. By definition, a mobile home and manufactured home are defined as whether it meets HUD standards. Mobile homes are not permitted in the city. Manufactured homes are permitted conditionally in the R3 and R5 Districts; however, the R5 District requires a new manufactured home, to never be titled before, if replacing an existing mobile home or manufactured home. For existing vacant lots, the R5 restriction of a new manufactured home does not apply, per the current language. Staff seek to eliminate different standards between the R3 and R5 Districts, creating equality and allowing for an increase in flexibility. We’re seeking to make more homes be available and affordable. **Mr. Kim Robb** stated that if we eliminate the word “new”, then a previously owned manufactured home could be put on the property. If so, then we’re lowering our standards. **Ms. Jennifer Boyer** explained they are trying to equality within the standards. If manufactured homes are permitted in two separate districts, they should have the same requirements regardless of address. **Ms. Cary Farrow** asked if older manufactured homes are permitted in the R3 District, which Ms. Boyer

confirmed. Ms. Farrow said she was wary of the changes, and she didn't want to trigger another lawsuit. Ms. Boyer noted the verbiage has been discussed with the city attorney. **Ms. Cary Farrow** asked about the inspection processes and if an engineer would still need to sign off. Ms. Boyer noted that the proposed amendments would not change any building code requirements for a manufactured home, inspections would still take place, and that all the homes must be appropriately flood and wind rated. If a home is to be placed in a flood zone, the property owner will still need to ensure it is compliant with the city's flood and FEMA's regulations. **Mr. Nick Robinson** then asked why we would lower our standards. Ms. Boyer stated we want to ensure equitable standards. Manufactured homes could still be brand new. Mr. Robinson wanted to understand the rationale behind the changes, as one district requires brand new manufactured homes, creating an anomaly. Ms. Boyer reiterated the standards should be the same regardless of address in the city. Mr. Robinson suggested only new homes should be permitted, thus improving the standards. **Ms. Cary Farrow** asked if an age limit would be appropriate, quoting campsite rules. She was unsure of the life cycle of a manufactured home, but suggested manufactured homes be permitted if not over a certain age. **Chairman Raad Joseph** expressed concern about older homes coming in, where the city would have to deal with property maintenance issues within a shorter period of time. He asked if homes could be moved if over a certain age. He referenced an instance where the manufactured homes could not have been moved because of their age. **Ms. Cary Farrow** asked if anything in the R3 District would be grandfathered, to which Ms. Boyer confirmed.

In Article X, the word "vacation" was removed from the short-term rental language. Additional amendments include removing fees for annual registration, as fees are listed in the city's fee schedule. The fee schedule is adopted yearly by City Council. The same applies in Article XI for horse-drawn carriages. In Article XVII, exemptions are proposed for city-owned signs that are essential for public services. The exemption would not exclude any sign placed in the historic district, still requiring ARB review. The exemption would apply to both temporary and permanent signs. **Ms. Cary Farrow** noted that if the sign ordinance is not good enough, then let's change the sign ordinance to make standards whatever they need to be for the city to comply without being exempt. Ms. Boyer stated there could be unique situations, to which Ms. Farrow said the city could go to the BZA for a variance. Further amendments including removing language for deposits for political signs and special real estate events. **Ms. Cary Farrow** asked for the rationale. Ms. Boyer noted that

we cannot legally charge for these types of signs. **Mr. Kim Robb** thought this would create an additional burden on staff. Ms. Boyer said the city could still require signs to be removed; we cannot charge the fee, so there is no additional burden. **Chairman Raad Joseph** expressed concern for signs staying up for weeks after elections. They need to be removed. Ms. Boyer said signs on private property can remain. The main issue is that many of the roads in the city are owned by the state. Therefore, SCDOT has the responsibility to enforce removal of the signs; the city does not have jurisdiction to remove the signs. Ms. Boyer noted additional amendments to non-conforming signs. This amendment seeks to remove the requirement that a sign must be removed when a business changes or ceases to exist, as this is a content-based regulation. She also discussed the Public Service Zoning District does not have sign regulations. The proposed amendments seek to allow signage similar to that of the residential districts. Article XVIII, Ms. Boyer noted a proposal to exempt off-street parking requirements for city-owned properties. **Ms. Cary Farrow** asked if all municipal uses could be exempt, applying to all county-owned properties in the city. Ms. Farrow asked if the county exempted themselves for their municipal properties within the county, to which Ms. Boyer said she was unsure of the county's requirements. In Article XIX, the fee schedule was referenced for the tree protection regulations. **Chairman Raad Joseph** asked if he had to pay a fee to cut down a tree on his property. Ms. Boyer affirmed, stating there is a \$5.00 fee per tree for all tree investigation permits.

Ms. Jennifer Boyer continued discussion, to include the removal of language referencing the Community Appearance Board (CAB) in Article XXI. Article XVI would be repealed in its entirety. Ms. Boyer stated the commercial corridor districts would not be eliminated. Instead, projects would be reviewed administratively. She referenced how CAB was established, and that current language permits the CAB to review projects, grant variances, and hear appeals regarding its decisions. **Ms. Cary Farrow** expressed concern about eliminating due process, expressing concern regarding how residents would express concern about a project. Ms. Boyer noted that if there is a disagreement with staff's decision on its application of the ordinance, a property owner can appeal the decision to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). **Ms. Cary Farrow** clarified that if an applicant appeals to CAB, and they don't like CAB's decision, then they can appeal to the local court. Ms. Boyer affirmed, noting it is the same procedure as appeals to the BZA. **Ms. Cary Farrow** stated that when she read the ordinance she did not see where the UDO states the proper appeal

process. Ms. Boyer noted that Section 2404 identifies the powers of the BZA, which applies to the entire UDO. **Mr. Kim Robb** stated these proposed amendments would now allow a project to be administratively reviewed and not go before the CAB, and that any appeals would go before the BZA. Ms. Boyer affirmed. **Mr. Nick Robinson** asked for the rationale to eliminate CAB and who asked for it to be eliminated. Ms. Boyer said there has been discussion with the administration, and the proposal is based on a collaborative decision. Staff are proposing a more streamlined process. It would reduce the total number of city boards. Projects that come before the city can be reviewed administratively, currently, if they are not in an overlay district. It is not uncommon for municipalities to allow administrative reviews of projects that also fall within an overlay district, so long as they meet the design requirements. **Mr. Kim Robb** stated the public would no longer be aware of projects. Mr. Robb wanted to know how the public would comment on all projects coming before the staff. **Mr. Nick Robinson** stated this decision has been made with no public input. Ms. Boyer stated no decision has been made. This proposal is before the commission tonight, and the public, for discussion during this hearing. The hearing was advertised, as required. **Mr. Raad Joseph** noted that major amendments like this should come before the commission first as workshop, before proceeding to a public hearing. Ms. Boyer said they will do that going forward on future amendments. **Ms. Cary Farrow** noted that Section 2126 now says “reserved”. Ms. Boyer stated that any appeals would follow the BZA process already outlined in Section 2404.1. Ms. Boyer said she can incorporate language into this section to cross-reference the BZA appeals process.

Ms. Jennifer Boyer continued the discussion, noting that Article XIII references procedures for building permits, but lacks clarity on zoning permits. Building permits cannot be issued by a zoning administrator; only a certified building inspector. These amendments seek to provide clarity. Article XIV, Section 2404 references uses not defined, but similar to other uses in a district, one can apply for a special exception. Ms. Boyer said this requirement would be removed. The city wants to be clear on what uses are permitted; therefore, all permitted uses should be listed in the appropriate use table. If a use is not defined, then someone could propose a text amendment. **Ms. Cary Farrow** suggested this would be an undue hardship. Ms. Boyer noted that uses should be defined to mitigate possible use variances. New uses can be created and added over time, which is why amendments can be made to the UDO. Article XV, review procedures for ARB. The current language states the city must place

an ad in the newspaper, but FOIA only requires a 24-hour notice to be posted. This amendment seeks to remain consistent with state law. Article XVIII, procedures for development applications. The city requires final plats to be recorded within 15 days of signature. This does not follow the county's policy of 120 days, creating confusion for both applicants and county staff. It places an undue hardship on county staff to know if a property is within the city limits. This proposal would create consistency with the county's requirements. Article XIX, Sections 2900 – 2902 have duplicative language. It appears Section 2902 was carried over from the land development regulations when the UDO consolidation occurred. Per State law, amendments to zoning text and the zoning map may be made at any time. However, recommendations from the Planning Commission are to be made within 30 days, not 60 days. **Ms. Cary Farrow** verified the different times. Ms. Boyer affirmed, noting that is what the proposal seeks to eliminate. Ms. Farrow referenced Section 6-29-1150 of SC state law, which permits 60 days. Ms. Boyer noted this section is in reference to land development regulations, not amendments to the zoning text and zoning map. Section 6-29-760 of SC state law applies to zoning text and map amendments. **Mr. Kim Robb** stated he felt this amendment eliminated the very process we are discussing. Ms. Boyer said that the language in the two sections are duplicative, except for the time period in which the Planning Commission must submit its report. Section 2900 states any amendment to the zoning map or zoning text would still come before the Planning Commission for its recommendation. A public hearing would still be held with the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission's recommendations would be given to City Council, and City Council would have two readings. If the City Council made different recommendations than that which the Planning Commission considered, the proposed changes would come back to the Planning Commission for further consideration. Section 2902 was referenced in the old land development ordinance, but was no longer applicable with the UDO consolidation. **Mr. Kim Robb** said he believed Section 2902 applied to the Planning Commission, not Section 2900. Ms. Boyer reiterated the process is not being eliminated. Section 2900 and 2901 would apply, and no changes would be made to the text and map amendment process.

Public Comment:

1. **Mr. Burt Shell** spoke against dissolving the Community Appearance Board (CAB). He asked the Planning Commission to consider not approving the text amendments. He said all CAB members do not support the text amendments to eliminate CAB, and that the amendments to dissolve CAB

were not brought before the CAB for discussion. He emphasized CAB's importance in supporting the residents in the city. Mr. Shell said the board's main purpose is to review applications for building, signage and other development, ensuring compliance with city design standards, and helping maintain a cohesive, attractive, functional urban environment. Other functions include reviewing signs for design regulations in the commercial corridors and preserving the character for areas by balancing development needs with community goals. The CAB's work helps shape the identity of the city's aesthetics and overall vitality. Mr. Shell refers to the professional experience of its CAB members, including his 40+ years in design build construction, a professional architect, a real estate professional, a master arborist and owner of a successful tree service business, a business entrepreneur, and an electrical engineer who is also a business owner and former BZA chairperson. Mr. Shell said the CAB performs its duties as representatives of Georgetown citizens, and we should not limit decisions to staff. Now is not the time to eliminate any board as the city navigates other important decisions.

2. **Ms. Kim Shell** said she thought the proposed amendments conflict with the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Shell referenced Page 124, point #12 of the Plan, with the objective to revise and modernize the zoning ordinance. The goal is to review and update the design overlay districts guidelines, including the historic district, UCOD, and MCOD. Responsible parties designated are the planning department as well as associated boards and commissions. These boards and commissions are the Planning Commission, Architectural Review Board, and the Community Appearance Board. All boards should have input on these decisions. Ms. Shell said the MCOD District used to encompass S. Fraser St. This was split in 2015 to create the UCOD. The UCOD is a critical district in the city, and she felt it would be irresponsible to leave decisions in this district to staff. Ms. Shell stated she believed the city does not have staff capable of this responsibility. The CAB has this capability. Therefore, the amendments would conflict with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. With staff turnover, and a massive dump of UDO material in 2025, she believed this was done before the new administration took place. This is happening, again. Ms. Shell also referenced the city's website for UDO updates, noting it references the ARB kick-off meeting in April. She said it was not well-advertised nor well-attended. Ms. Shell asked if someone could explain to her who makes these decisions, what is the role of the consultant, and

when UDO amendments will start to include public engagement. Ms. Shell said the Planning Commission cannot understand all these changes. Ms. Shell then referenced Chapter 17 of the City Code, stating the Planning Commission shall hold all public hearings on all text and map amendments pursuant to SC code. She did not believe this was done. Section 2903 of the UDO states the Planning Commission or City Council shall hold a public hearing. She wanted the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing before anything goes to City Council. She felt that how the City Council becomes involved in the process impacts the politics involved with policy related to the city. She believes the process should differentiate between important changes versus administrative changes like typos. The lack of public engagement should be enough to encourage the Planning Commission to deny these amendments. **Ms. Jennifer Boyer** provided clarification regarding the ARB kick-off meeting. Ms. Boyer affirmed the meeting was held in April. The purpose of this kick-off meeting was to gain insight so the consultant could start writing the ARB design guidelines for the Historic Buildings Zoning District. Staff are awaiting a first draft from the consultant. Once the first draft has been submitted, additional public meetings will be held to discuss the proposed amendments. The consultant will also seek to have a kick-off meeting with CAB to address the UCOD and MCOD design standards. Ms. Boyer noted that the April kick-off meeting was advertised on the city's website, social media, and posted in the newspaper. Staff tried to encourage everyone in the historic district to attend the meeting, noting they could sign up for updates and submit written comments if they could not attend the meeting. She agreed there was not a large turnout at the kick-off meeting, hoping more would attend once we begin to review the draft regulations. **Ms. Cary Farrow** asked if the format of the meetings would be similar to what the county, separating into groups for discussion. Ms. Boyer was not aware of how the consultant would proceed, but she would pass along the request. Ms. Boyer noted that the city's website would be updated as we move forward, and information will be pushed out on our social media sites and news blasts. Ms. Boyer read the language in Section 2903, noting that public hearings are held with the Planning Commission. Public hearings, such as tonight's, are advertised in the newspaper and posted at the site of the meeting. The public hearing agenda and agenda packet are also posted online. Additional postings are required to be placed on affected properties if the amendments involve a proposal to change to the zoning map. Public hearings are not typically held at city council meetings, even though state

law does allow public hearings to be held with either the Planning Commission or City Council. She referenced the process previously discussed with reference to Sections 2900 – 2902. Ms. Boyer also referenced the updates to the overlay districts in the Comprehensive Plan. There are inconsistencies between the Comprehensive Plan and the UDO. The Comprehensive Plan mentions that the MCOD is to have review and permitting to go before the Zoning Administrator and any variances would go before the CAB. However, the UDO requires all work to go before the CAB before permits can be issued. For the UCOD, variances would go to CAB. The UDO requires nearly all work in the UCOD to go before the CAB. The Comprehensive Plan does not identify the review of designs, only the variance procedure. Historically, CAB was initially started out as only an appeal board. **Mr. Craig Daniels** asked if we're still waiting on the consultant. Ms. Jennifer Boyer affirmed. He then asked if we wait on the consultant's report, will it change any of these recommendations. Ms. Boyer said the consultant is looking at the design criteria. The consultant's purpose is to create clear language and regulations to meet the city's vision. Ms. Boyer also noted it will be important for the consultant to define what is acceptable, and eliminate any subjective language.

Motion: Chairperson Raad Joseph asked if the Planning Commission was required to vote on all the amendments presented tonight. Ms. Jennifer Boyer stated the commission could identify what changes are acceptable, and staff would take those recommendations to City Council. **Mr. Kim Robb** stated he would not be in favor of recommendations to eliminate CAB. He made a motion to approve everything except any reference to the CAB. **Ms. Cary Farrow** said she is not comfortable with that motion, as there were some issues that needed clarification. Ms. Jennifer Boyer said staff could come back to the commission next month with those additional answers. **No second was made.**

Mr. Nick Robinson said the commission had not been previously notified of any of the changes proposed tonight. He asked if staff could inform the planning commission on all matters. Ms. Boyer said other amendments will be made to the UDO in the future, and we will bring them to the Planning Commission in a workshop setting. Mr. Robinson said he wants the commission to be made aware of who is making any changes, get status updates on all matters before the city, and be informed on everything else before the city. Mr. Robinson stated the moratorium is now being extended

and asked about the updates to the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Boyer stated the Comprehensive Plan is legal and valid; no changes are proposed at this time; however, we are looking to continue with updates to the UDO. Mr. Robinson stated the basis of moratorium was to improve the Comprehensive Plan and that it is unlikely to be achieved in the next three months. **Chairperson Raad Joseph** noted the prior administration gave them updates all the time. He stated that the commission feels like they're just waiting around for something to come before them.

Chairperson Raad Joseph made a motion to defer action on the proposed amendments until next month so the Planning Commission can have more discussion. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kim Robb. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

VI. Matters of Information:

- A) Staff presented three plats to Chairman Mr. Raad Joseph provided signature as matters of information. The plats were described as routine administrative items that did not require Planning Commission action. The plats presented included: two plats which each created an additional lot, and a plat moving a lot line to accommodate a fence that was over a property boundary. No new utilities or infrastructure will be created. After review, Chairman Mr. Raad Joseph executed all plats, signing and dating the plats.

VII. Commission Discussion:

- A) **Farewell to outgoing Commissioner Graham Osteen:** The commissioners and staff offered a farewell tribute acknowledging his service and contributions to the Planning Commission.
- B) **Introduction of Elizabeth Tucker:** Ms. Elizabeth Tucker was introduced as the new Deputy City Administrator.

VIII. Adjournment: With there being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted By:

Jennifer Boyer
On behalf of Brittany Powell

Board Secretary