THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE
NORTH CAROLINA

Planning & Zoning Commission
6/3/2026
DRAFT ACTION MINUTES

These action minutes are intended to provide the reader with an overview of the committee meeting and actions taken during the meeting.

For detailed information on this meeting, please refer to the meeting recording, also located on the commission web page, ashevillenc.gov/pzc, or contact Will Palmquist with any questions.

Present: Chair Geoffrey Barton, Vice-Chair Jason Seickel, Jonathan Anzollitto, Jane Margaret Bell, Lindsay Broughel, Brenton Faircloth, Anna Zuevskaya

Absent: None.

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
Planning & Zoning Commission Land Acknowledgment Chair Barton read the PZC Land Acknowledgement: "As we are gathering today as the Planning and Zoning Commission, the body tasked with reviewing and advising on appropriate land use in the city of Asheville, it is fitting to acknowledge the storied history of this land. We occupy the Land of the Cherokee people, who have stewarded and been in relationship with these mountains and waterways from time immemorial. This land is occupied through violence, oppression, coercion, broken treaties, and forced relocation. Please join me in expressing respect and gratitude for the present-day Eastern Band of Cherokee, the Cherokee Nation, the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee, and all of our Indigenous neighbors, as well as the past and present marginalized community members, as we seek to join in the healing of the indelible trauma that is embedded in this land."	
Approval of minutes from the 5/6/2026 meeting	Chair Barton requested that the approval of the May 6th minutes be postponed until the next meeting to give commissioners more time to review.
Will Palmquist, Principal Planner with Planning & Urban Design, updated the Commission on recent actions taken by City Council on items previously forwarded by the Commission: • **Caribou Commons (Conditional Zoning):** Request for 100 dwelling units was denied unanimously at the May 12 City Council meeting. • **116 Sweeten Creek Road Apartments (Conditional Zoning):** Request for 126 dwelling units was approved and adopted unanimously by City Council. Mr. Palmquist delivered a standing status update on the ongoing UDO review:	

- The project is currently in the secondary evaluation and interview phase for the Request for Proposals (RFP). Staff are conducting a second round of screening to narrow the pool of consultant teams.
- Selection is anticipated within the coming weeks, targeting contract approval at the July City Council meeting and a projected project start date in late July.
- The overall timeline dictates that the project will span the remainder of 2026, 2027, and 2028.

A request to rezone the property located at 819 Patton Ave from Residential Multi-Family Medium Density (RM-8) to Highway Business (HB).	**Motion:** Continue to the July 1 PZC meeting. **Motion made by:** Commissioner Faircloth **Motion 2nd by:** Commissioner Broughel **Vote:** Motion passes 7-0 (Motion made at 20:12)
A request to consider a zoning text amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), Chapter 7 of the Asheville Code of Ordinances, to eliminate minimum off-street parking requirements, increase the maximum allowed size of accessory dwelling units, and permit duplexes as an allowed primary use in all residential and certain mixed-use zoning districts.	**Motion:** Continue to the July 1 PZC meeting. **Motion made by:** Vice-Chair Seickel **Motion 2nd by:** Commissioner Bell **Vote:** Motion passes 7-0 (Motion made at 1:54:09)

Stephanie Monson Dahl, Director for Planning & Urban Design, introduced the Anti-Displacement and Affordable Housing (ADA) initiative. Ms. Dahl outlined a coordinated timeline showing a draft support resolution tracking for City Council review in parallel with regulatory additions to protect vulnerable neighborhoods.

Chris Collins, Assistant Director for Planning & Urban Design, provided a presentation on the proposed zoning text amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO):

- **Duplex Entitlements:** Broaden authorized zones to include all standard residential single-family districts (RS-2, RS-4, RS-8) and select mixed-use fields, expanding duplex-allowable acreage to 92% citywide. Introduces a "two-unit town home" framework to drop interior side setbacks and minimum lot size width bounds across shared vertical walls, enabling separate property conveyance and affordable homeownership.
- **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs):** Expand max dimensions from 70% of primary structures / 800 sq ft up to 90% / 1,200 sq ft (whichever is less). Eradicate off-street parking construction mandates for ADUs. Allow one ADU on duplex parcels and institute a strict 25-foot universal height cap.
- **Off-Street Parking Minimums:** Eliminate off-street parking minimum mandates citywide for all categories except hotels situated inside the Central Business District (CBD). Streamline and simplify maximum allowable parking caps. Local evaluation data of recent projects proves developers consistently build parking space totals that exceed minimum baseline standards based on market demand.

The Commission discussed the proposals:

- *Duplexes:* Strong consensus supporting homeownership opportunities modeled after historical Habitat for Humanity projects. Suggested exploring an overhaul of standard underlying lot sizes during subsequent regulatory suites in late fall.

- *ADUs:* Recommended replacing "gross square feet" with "heated living area" to prevent garages/patios from penalizing livable footprints. Encouraged a multi-tiered approach similar to Hendersonville rules to prevent small primary homes from facing structural restrictions. Concerns were raised over uncontrolled stormwater runoff from increased unmitigated private property footprints.
- *Parking:* Noted neighbor feedback showing anxiety regarding overflow street parking, but emphasized the market metrics back up the change. Highlighted NC House Bill 369 as an indicator that state laws may soon outlaw local parking minimum options universally.

A request to **rezone** the property located at 99999 Deaverview Rd from Residential Multi-Family Medium Density (RM-8) to Residential Multi-Family High Density (RM-16).

Motion: Recommend approval
Motion made by: Commissioner Broughel
Motion 2nd by: Commissioner Anzollitto
Vote: Motion passes 7-0 (Motion made at 2:22:40)

Will Palmquist, Principal Planner with Planning & Urban Design, explained that this is a straight rezoning with no specific plan attached. Staff found it compatible with the Future Land Use Map (Residential Neighborhood classification) and surrounding city/county districts. The shift alters internal density limits and drops minimum lot guidelines from 4,000 sq ft down to 2,500 sq ft. Staff recommended approval.

A request to conditionally rezone the property located at 3862 Sweeten Creek Rd from Residential Multi-Family High Density (RM-16) to Residential Expansion - Conditional Zone (RES EXP-CZ).

Motion: Recommend approval with conditions
Motion made by: Vice-Chair Seickel
Motion 2nd by: Commissioner Anzollitto
Vote: Motion passes 6-1 (Commissioner Faircloth “nay”) (Motion made at 3:11:47)

Sam Starr-Baum, Urban Planner III with Planning & Urban Design, described the project scope: 5 separate buildings containing 130 dwelling units, with 100% of units committed as affordable at or below 80% AMI. The terrain contains a localized wetland stream requiring dedicated tree canopy preservation on the northeast edge. Vehicle planning includes 200 parking spots. Requested technical allowances seek to drop sidewalk minimums to 6 feet with an 8-foot planting strip, and adjust street tree setbacks to 40 feet from the right-of-way to avoid clearance conflicts. Staff recommended approval.

The applicant team for the project consists of Jesse Swords (Attorney), Rob Sessoms (Atlantic Housing Foundation Developer), Andrew Ackley (Civil Engineer), and Sean Sains (Landscape Architect). Detailed engineering steps including grading balances, retaining walls inside property boundaries, and a culvert-supported land bridge crossing. Stated they would evaluate potential parking reductions between now and the City Council hearing. Confirming voucher criteria, the developer verified they accept housing authority vouchers on all units, with no specific set-aside caps.

Public comment centered around concerns with flooding and stormwater runoff, the massing of the multi-family building, and overall traffic impacts that the project may cause on the surrounding neighborhood.

Commissioners debated structural storm limits. Commissioner Broughel requested that the developer engineer systems to withstand a 100-year storm standard rather than municipal baselines to protect down-gradient properties post-Helene. Commissioner Faircloth voiced opposition, stating that the Sweeten Creek thoroughfare has hit a structural tipping point of dangerous traffic generation without funded state expansion timelines. Staff agreed to adjust the draft project conditions to ensure lease/ownership-neutral phrasing.

A request to rezone the property located at 3 S. Tunnel Rd from Urban Place (UP) to Regional Business (RB).	**Motion:** Recommend disapproval **Motion made by:** Vice-Chair Seickel **Motion 2nd by:** Commissioner Anna Zuevskaya **Vote:** Motion passed 4-3 **Yay**: Chair Barton, Vice-Chair Seickel, Commissioners Anzollitto and Zuevskaya **Nay**: Commissioners Faircloth, Bell, and Broughel (Motion made at 4:49:13)

Vaidila Satvika, Urban Planner III with Planning & Urban Design, presented the rezoning request, delivering a staff recommendation for disapproval. The subject properties were intentionally rezoned to Urban Place in 2022 to transition regional commercial blocks into mixed-use, walkable town centers supporting residential density. Shifting the site back to Regional Business fails to align with the Town Center Future Land Use design guidelines and undercuts city planning goals.

Jesse Swords, on behalf of Asheville Mall Capital Holdings LLC, argued that the current Urban Place rules are economically unworkable. He pointed out overly restrictive standards across dense alphabetical subsets (e.g., rigid dimensions for lobbies, building block constraints, maximum 200-foot block lengths, and mandatory top-floor step-backs). Mr. Swords asserted that the housing mandate and the 10% commercial mixed-use mandate on residential projects stifle redevelopment. He presented historic aerial imagery showing that substantial modernization occurred successfully under the previous Regional Business zoning (e.g., Barnes & Noble and Whole Foods expansions), which enforces standard UDO tree canopy and open space rules without unworkable form mandates.

The Commission debated whether the Urban Place designation represents a functional tool or an overly idealistic code causing commercial deterioration. Staff clarified that straight rezoning transfers control away from the city, opening the site to auto-oriented uses and standard big-box layouts. Complexities regarding parcel geometry were analyzed, noting interior "islands" like Dillards and the former Sears site are controlled by distinct entities or bound by old legal settlement exclusions. Some commissioners favored the rezoning to jumpstart economic investment in an underperforming corridor, while others argued that abandoning Urban Place on a critical 42-acre center violates the core principles of the Comprehensive Plan.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.