



PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Notes May 6, 2026

<u>Commissioners present:</u>	Kathryn Schulte-Hillen, Gary Walvatne, Kris Kachirisky, Liz Dietz, and David D. Jones
<u>Commissioners absent:</u>	Tom Watton
<u>Staff present:</u>	Community Development Director Steve Koper, Senior Planning Erica Smith, Management Analyst Lynn Schroder
<u>Council Liaison:</u>	Carol Bryck

The meeting video is available on the [City website](#).

1. Call To Order and Roll Call

Chair Schulte-Hillen called the meeting to order at 6:05pm. Management Analyst Schroder called the roll.

2. Public Comment related to Land Use Items not on the Agenda

None.

3. Approval of Meeting Notes: 01.21.2026, 02.04.2026, 02.18.2026, 03.04.2026, 03.18, 2026, and 04.15.2026

Commissioner Walvatne requested that the February 18, 2026 meeting notes be updated to include his comments referencing the Community Development Code related to DOGAMI (Department of Geology and Mineral Industries) historic landslide maps. Commissioner Jones requested that the meeting links be corrected. Commissioner Jones moved to update the 02/18/26 meeting minutes per Commissioner Walvatne's comments for approval at a later meeting and update the meeting links in the other meeting minutes. Commissioner Dietz seconded. **Ayes: Walvatne, Jones, Schulte-Hillen, Kachirisky, Dietz. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. The motion passed 5-0-0.**

4. Introduction of Senior Planner Erica Smith

Senior Planner Smith introduced herself as the new senior planner, sharing her background and enthusiasm for community planning.

5. Presentation of Oregon League of Cities Good Governance Award

Community Development Koper announced that the city received the Good Governance Award from the League of Oregon Cities in recognition of its extensive public engagement efforts for its Waterfront Vision Plan. The good governance award highlights progressive and innovative city operations and services across Oregon. West Linn was selected for its comprehensive and community driven approach to long term planning along the Willamette River.

6. Discussion: Planning Docket

Community Development Koper presented the proposed 2026-2027 Planning docket. He noted that the planning department has 5.15 employees, including the Community Development Director, 3 planners, a Management Analyst, and 3/20ths of an Administrative Assistant. Personnel make up approximately 80% of the department's total operating budget. Approximately \$430,000 is allocated over the 2025-2027 allocated for professional and technical services.

The Planning Department continues to operate with a small staff and a limited budget while managing a wide range of development applications and long-range planning projects. Looking ahead, Koper wanted to better align the annual docket process with City Council priorities and budget.

The Planning Department is responsible for development review, public service, long-range planning, and required reporting. The department meets all legally mandated timelines and provides timely, accurate, and legally defensible findings, recommendations, and conditions of approval in response to applicant-initiated development applications. The team responds to public and developer inquiries and supports several community advisory groups, including the Planning Commission, Historic Review Board, and Economic Development Commission. In support of sustainable growth and a vibrant community, the department advances long-range planning initiatives that reflect City Council and community priorities, as well as evolving legal requirements and best practices.

Several major initiatives are underway, including the Vision 43 project, which is progressing toward public meetings and anticipated adoption in late summer 2026. Koper also emphasized that the Housing Production Strategy will extend beyond the initial set of projects and will require additional actions in the years ahead. Additionally, the City's Transportation System Plan update is overdue and will require dedicated resources to ensure alignment with regional planning cycles. Koper also highlighted that upcoming FEMA model code requirements may soon become mandatory, creating compliance risks for the City if they are not addressed in a timely manner.

Parallel to the CDC-established docket process, the West Linn City Council sets City priorities each year. For the Planning Department, current priorities include implementing the Waterfront Vision Plan and advancing the Vision43 project. In addition, the Council has launched a long-term, community-driven initiative—Framing Our Future—to understand which services residents value most and to determine how the City can sustainably fund those services in the years ahead.

Koper presented a new one-year docket structure designed to align with the current budget, legally mandated and compliance requirements, Council priorities, and project dependencies or sequencing needs, including projects that rely on the completion of other work. Unprioritized projects are moved to an appendix. At some point, the unprioritized project can be reviewed to determine priority or removal, with the understanding that newly prioritized projects would need to have a funding source. Koper cited resource constraints and staffing limitations as ongoing challenges that influence timelines and capacity. Finally, Koper referenced upcoming legislative changes that will affect public involvement expectations and overall planning practices.

Commissioners discussed the need to review the list of unprioritized projects and community engagement in the planning process. Dietz supported prioritizing the Rosemont Road code amendment request as a conditional use, noting emergency access would be a consideration. Commissioners agreed. Commissioner Walvatne expressed support for prioritizing updates to CDC Chapter 32 and updating the tree code.

7. Planning Commission Announcements

Chair Schulte-Hillen asked about the codification neighborhood association plans. Commissioners discuss the importance of reviewing neighborhood association plans to strengthen community involvement and to ensure consistency with broader planning goals. Commissioners requested a memo detailing the status of neighborhood association plans, including which plans have been adopted and codified, and what it would take to move them forward.

Commissioner Walvatne asked about the status of the Icon Lot 7 memo. He moved to add a discussion on

the memo at the next work session meeting. Dietz econded. **Ayes: Walvatne, Jones, Schulte-Hillen, Kachirisky, Dietz. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. The motion passed 5-0-0.**

8. Staff Announcements

Koper noted that the Tannler/Blankenship development will come to the Planning Commission sometime this summer.

9. Adjourn

Chair Schulte-Hillen adjourned the meeting at 8:00pm.