

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2026
Hybrid Meeting – Council Chambers/Zoom Teleconference

COMMISSIONERS:

Present: Tyler McKlosky (Chair), Stephanie Bailey, Joe Morrison, Tiffiny Mitchell, Wayne Wright (Vice Chair), Paul Fontenot

Absent: Annette Stewart

STAFF:

Principal Planner Jim Fisk, Associate Planner Connor Dahlquist

1. CALL TO ORDER: Commissioner McKlosky called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no members of the public present in the chamber or attending remotely. No public comment was given.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 3, 2025: Commissioner McKlosky asked if the other commissioners reviewed the minutes from the February 3, 2025 meeting and if anyone had any concerns or proposed amendments. Seeing none, a motion was entertained to approve the minutes. Commissioner Morrison moved to approve the minutes and Commissioner Wright seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

A. DISCUSSION: Landscaping (Attachment)

Principal Planner Fisk opened the discussion with an overview of the scope and purpose of the proposed landscaping code update. He reminded the Commission that this topic was first introduced in November and reiterated that Public Works is continuing work on a citywide tree canopy inventory, which is expected to inform portions of the update once completed. Principal Planner Fisk summarized the key topics previously discussed, including open space requirements, invasive species control, and buffer and fencing standards, particularly in the context of ensuring equal treatment of middle housing and single detached homes as required under House Bill 1110. Principal Planner Fisk reported that since the Commission's last meeting, staff met with the City Council Land Use Committee in February. The Committee provided clear direction to exempt both single-family and middle housing from landscaping standards, and the updated draft code reflects this direction.

Commissioner Mitchell expressed appreciation for the updates to the plant material and installation standards in POMC 20.128.050. Commissioner Mitchell asked how staff determined the numerical standards in the draft code, such as percentages and height thresholds. Principal Planner Fisk explained that the figures were derived from previously adopted residential design standards and are consistent with existing code.

Commissioner Mitchell raised a second question regarding POMC 20.128.070, specifically Section (3) addressing Surface Parking Lot Landscaping. Commissioner Mitchell expressed concern that the term “urbanized” is too vague and could result in arbitrary interpretation. Commissioner Mitchell also asked how fence-related code enforcement is applied. Principal Planner Fisk responded that enforcement is complaint-driven, with investigations initiated when a complaint is received.

Commissioner Fontenot expressed support for the proposed fencing standards and for the removal of noxious weeds. Commissioner Fontenot also suggested that alternatives to turf grass be considered as required groundcover, noting that native plantings may offer better stormwater benefits.

Commissioner Morrison asked when landscaping requirements are triggered and whether personal landscaping on an existing property would require compliance. Principal Planner Fisk explained that land disturbing activity permits are required for certain levels of ground disturbance, which can include landscaping work; however, the landscaping standards in POMC 20.128 apply primarily to new development.

Commissioner Wright acknowledged that many local HOAs maintain their own landscaping standards and suggested that the City consider aligning its requirements to avoid conflicts. Commissioner Wright also noted the importance of ensuring that landscaping regulations do not limit the functionality of lots or constrain development potential.

Commissioner Mitchell asked for clarification on how the City could address the re-emergence of noxious weeds after the bonding period concludes. Principal Planner Fisk stated that while the City’s current authority focuses on new development, staff could look to Kitsap County’s noxious weed program as a model for potential long-term approaches. Principal Planner Fisk continued by elaborating on several topics previously discussed. Principal Planner Fisk explained that the section addressing grass and turf is intended to identify when turf is considered appropriate, rather than to promote turf as a default standard. Principal Planner Fisk also noted that fence standards in the draft code function as design standards applicable to specific building types. Given the direction to exempt single-family homes and middle housing from landscaping requirements, staff may reconsider the placement of these fencing provisions within the code.

Commissioner Wright emphasized the importance of drainage management and proper forest stewardship in landscaping standards, particularly near active open space areas where trees could pose potential hazards. Commissioner Wright expressed concern regarding the potential for windstorms to damage landscaping installations that lack adequate buffer space or proper installation practices.

Commissioner Fontenot reiterated the importance of supporting natural habitat and encouraged the incorporation of indigenous plant species into landscape requirements to improve ecological function and sustainability.

B. DISCUSSION: Permitting and Development Approval (Attachment)

Principal Planner Fisk reintroduced the proposed amendments to Port Orchard Municipal Code Title 20 to establish an administrative review process for Final Plats. Principal Planner Fisk reminded the Commission that the purpose of the update is to streamline review procedures and bring the City's process into compliance with state law. Principal Planner Fisk reiterated prior discussion regarding the benefits of administrative review, including improved processing timelines.

Principal Planner Fisk stated that since the last Planning Commission meeting, staff met with the City Council Land Use Committee. The Committee directed staff to proceed with creating a preliminary administrative final plat approval process. The packet provided to the Commission includes a draft of proposed amendments to POMC Chapters 20.22, 20.80, 20.90, and 20.98. Principal Planner Fisk explained that the future steps will include drafting the ordinance, issuing a SEPA determination, and completing public noticing prior to a public hearing.

Commissioner Mitchell expressed support for streamlining the final plat process, noting that the public has an opportunity to comment during the preliminary plat stage.

Commissioner Fontenot requested clarification regarding the state law that the proposed amendments are intended to comply with. Principal Planner Fisk explained that state law allows City Council to delegate final plat approval authority to staff and prohibits holding a second public hearing for the same project. Principal Planner Fisk noted that eliminating the second hearing would ensure compliance and prevent scheduling conflicts that can delay development.


Commissioner Fontenot expressed concern that removing the final plat hearing could limit public opportunities to comment but acknowledged that enhanced public outreach may address that concern. Principal Planner Fisk provided an overview of the noticing and public outreach process.

Commissioner Wright recalled a zoning change in the McCormick Woods area and asked for clarification of that process. Commissioner Wright also raised concerns regarding the platting process, potential environmental impacts, and opportunities for public input. Principal Planner Fisk provided context on the zoning changes and explained the distinction between zoning updates, which occurred through the Comprehensive Plan process and implementation of House Bill 1110, and plat review, which evaluates compliance with standards in place at the time of application. Commissioner Wright emphasized concerns regarding platting, stormwater, and critical areas in the McCormick Woods area.

C. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Principal Planner Fisk announced that McCormick West Division 15 received approval from the City Council.

ADJOURN: Commissioner McKlosky adjourned the meeting at 6:47 pm.



Tyler McKlosky, Chair



Nick Bond, AICP, Community Development Director

