CITY OF BEND

City Hall
710 NW Wall Street
Bend, OR 97701

MEETING MINUTES

Bend Planning Commission

Monday, August 10, 2026 5:30 p.m. Regular Meeting

The hybrid meeting started at 5:30 p.m., in-person and online.
The public was invited to watch online at: **www.bendoregon.gov/planningcommission**

1. Roll Call:

- Margo Clinton – Chair
- Nathan Nelson – Vice Chair
- Suzanne Johannsen
- Erin Ludden
- Katie Schnur
- Scott Winters

Commissioners Present: All Commissioners were present except Chair Margo Clinton and Commissioner Scott Winters.

Staff Present: Ian Leitheiser, City Attorney; Colin Stephens, Community Development Director; Renee Brooke, Planning Manager; Amy Barry, Principal Planner, Kim Voos, Sign Code Administer.

2. Visitors:

The Chair opened the floor for comments on non-agenda items. Attendees were encouraged to fill out a speaker slip and approach the podium, or raise their hand online, to provide comments.

No public comment was given.

3. Legislative Public Hearing

3.1 PLTEXT20260207 Sign Code Update

Amendments to Bend Municipal Code Chapter 9.50 Signs, to simplify sign definitions; streamline permit and review processes for exempt and temporary signs; remove certain restrictions and increase sign area for building signs; increase height allowed for projecting

signs; clarify locational standards for freestanding signs; and allow electronic sign components for freestanding signs for public and institutional uses in residential zones and Sign Districts 4 and 5.

Staff: Amy Barry, Principal Planner, abarry@bendoregon.gov

Kim Voos, Sign Code Administer, kvoos@bendoregon.gov

Principal Planner Amy Barry and Sign Code Administer Kim Voos gave their presentation on the proposed Sign Code amendments. Key changes include expanding permit exemptions for small-scale signs; creating a one-time registration process for banners; allowing portable signs for businesses with alley store front entrances; revising sign area calculations for multi-tenant and multi-unit residential developments; increasing allowable sign area in Sign District 5; and providing additional flexibility for projecting signs and illuminated signs. Other revisions consisted primarily of minor edits and clarifications to the general requirements section. No written public comments had been received prior to the hearing.

Commissioner Ludden asked whether a sign that would otherwise be restricted could use a small solar-powered light for nighttime visibility. Voos explained that a small, shielded solar light mounted above the sign and directed downward at the sign face would qualify as external illumination and would be allowed in any sign district. Although solar-powered lighting devices are exempt from permitting under the applicable code provisions, they must still meet shielding requirements.

Commissioner Johannsen asked whether there are standards governing the display of the American flag. Voos responded that such standards, including the content of a sign, are not regulated through the City's Sign Code. The only provisions related to flags in the code involve defining what constitutes a flag based on its physical characteristics, such as its shape and method of attachment to a flagpole.

Commissioner Schnur asked for clarification regarding the term "projecting sign." Voos explained that a projecting sign is a double-sided sign mounted perpendicular to a building and is designed to be visible from both directions of travel.

Commissioner Ludden asked about sign height allowances for buildings taller than 40 feet. Voos explained that for buildings that are three stories or more, or more than 40 feet in height, projecting signs may be installed up to 38 feet. For buildings that are one or two stories tall, or do not exceed 40 feet in height, the maximum sign height remains 24 feet. Staff noted that the 24-foot limitation was increased during a previous code update to align with wall sign standards.

Vice Chair Nelson opened the public testimony portion of the hearing. No public testimony was provided.

Vice Chair Nelson closed the public hearing at 5:55 p.m. and the Commissioners deliberated.

Commissioner Ludden expressed support for the proposed Sign Code amendments and agreed that the updates were appropriate and responsive to the community's evolving needs. Commissioner Johannsen commented that Bend's sign regulations have contributed positively to the community's visual character over time and noted that the effectiveness of the code is often most apparent when compared to areas with fewer sign regulations. Vice Chair Nelson observed that the proposed amendments would provide increased flexibility while improving organization and usability of the code. No concerns or objections were raised during deliberations.

Commissioner Johannsen moved to recommend that City Council adopt an ordinance amending the Bend Municipal Code Chapter 9.50 Signs, as contained in Exhibit A, along with the findings contained in the Staff Report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ludden. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Ludden was nominated to bring the recommendation of the Commission to the City Council on September 2nd.

6. Approval of Minutes:

The Planning Commission approved the June 22, 2026 meeting minutes.

7. Neighborhood Commercial Sites Working Group:

Vice Chair Nelson provided an update on the formation of the Neighborhood Commercial Sites Working Group, reporting that outreach to Neighborhood Districts resulted in three applicants representing the Orchard District, Old Farm District, and Summit West District. Nelson recommended appointing all three to the working group, which received full Commission support. The group is expected to begin meeting in late August or early September, likely twice per month for two to three months. Vice Chair Nelson made a motion to nominate Commissioner Ludden and Commissioner Johannsen to be part of the Neighborhood Commercial Sites Working Group. The motion passed unanimously. Planning Manager Brooke clarified that absent Commissioners had also been invited to express interest, but none had done so.

8. Communications:

8.1. Reports from Planning Commissioners

Vice Chair Nelson announced that the work for the Growth Plan would be coming soon.

8.2. Report from Planning Manager

Renee Brooke, Planning Manager, reported that the August 24 meeting will be canceled and provided a brief update on recent City Council actions related to items previously reviewed by the Planning Commission. She announced that Commissioner Bob Gressens resigned from the Planning Commission due to relocation out of the area. Kevin

Simoneaux, a Planning Commission alternate, was confirmed by City Council at its most recent meeting. Commissioner Simoneaux will join the Planning Commission at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

8.3. Report from Community Development Director

Colin Stephens, Community Development Director, had nothing to report.

8.4. Report from City Attorney

Ian Leitheiser, City Attorney, had nothing to report.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Maggie St. Onge

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