



BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

May 27, 2025 1:15 PM

1. Call to Order

Chair Yeater called the meeting to order at 1:15 pm

2. Roll Call - **Present**

Chair Justin Yeater

Vice Chair Louisa Andersen

Commissioner Erik Briscoe

Commissioner Jeff Carlson

Commissioner Brian Franzen

Commissioner Larry Modlin

Commissioner Christian Schulte

Absent

None

3. Approval of the agenda

There were no changes to the agenda

Motion: Vice Chair Andersen

Second: Commissioner Franzen

Vote: Agenda approved 7-0

4. Approval of Minutes

Minutes for 1/14/25, 1/28/25, 2/11/25, 3/11/25 and 3/25/25 Planning Commission Meetings.

There were no changes to the minutes.

Vice Chair Andersen would like to see a more detailed discussion of the topics addressed and the issues raised. Discussions often occur just prior to voting, which should provide valuable context for the Council to consider.

Motion: Vice Chair Andersen

Second: Commissioner Franzen

Vote: Minutes approved 7-0

5. Staff Report

Brian McBroom (Director of Community Development) said thank you for their patience regarding the Planning Commission minutes. The Department did not intend to fall this far behind, and they don't anticipate this issue recurring. Mr. McBroom continued by saying they have trained additional staff and are exploring new technology to produce more timely and detailed minutes. Mr. McBroom said this should address Vice Chair Anderson's concerns, and he agreed that City Council benefits from understanding the Commission's decision-making process.

Secondly, Mr. McBroom shared that the East and West sub-area plans are progressing well, having begun about a month ago with extensive background research. Commissioners can expect updates with reports in July.

Mr. McBroom also shared that the evening's City Council work session included a presentation on potential funding methods for the Civic Campus Project. While no decisions were set to be made, it would offer a valuable overview for those interested in Greeley's built environment and Greeley community.

Lastly, Mr. McBroom shared that they are about a month into intensive meetings with the Water Valley Company regarding the planned unit development (PUD), including the 100-Acre Entertainment District and an additional 700 acres in West Greeley. The formal PUD submission is expected next month, possibly for Planning Commission review in July. Staff and the developer are actively collaborating to resolve details before submission, which should expedite the review process.

Chair Yeater asked if Mr. McBroom knew if the PUD would be presented all at once or be broken up into smaller pieces. Mr. McBroom answered that the initial plan is to create one PUD covering about 820 acres — the 100-acre city-owned entertainment district and the surrounding 720-acre Cascadia project, included in a pre-development agreement approved by City Council on April 15. Mr. McBroom continued by saying, although the city owns the entertainment district, Water Valley Company will act as the fee developer, handling its land use process. They've requested to combine it with the larger surrounding PUD, which the city supports as long as it doesn't delay the entertainment district, which is on a tight timeline.

6. Adjournment

Chair Yeater adjourned the meeting at 1:24 pm

Workshop

7. Small Business Land Use Center, Katelyn Puga

Katelyn Puga (Planner III) began her presentation by introducing herself and Tina Close (Engineer III) and the item as published. Mrs. Puga started by saying this plan was first introduced to City Council a year ago, and this initiative aims to support small businesses through the development review process. Mrs. Puga provided an overview of the program, along with its goals and objectives, highlighted the challenges small businesses face, and explained how the resources are designed to help them succeed and open in the City of Greeley.

Tina Close (Engineer III) began her portion of the presentation by sharing case study information, including that they saw several small businesses struggle with unexpected development requirements. Mrs. Close highlighted how complex and confusing the process can be without proper guidance.

Mrs. Puga finished her presentation and asked the commission for questions. Commissioner Modlin asked if there would be a central city contact who could quickly refer them to the right experts. This ensures timely answers and prevents delays, a common issue we've seen with systems like e-Trakit. Mrs. Puga answered that Tina and she are currently acting as project managers for small business cases, but they are training staff to provide the same exceptional service. Mrs. Puga continued by saying the goal is to centralize all inquiries through one webpage, email, and contact person, who will coordinate with departments to provide clear answers, offering more points of contact than usual to streamline the process.

Commissioner Franzen asked how these grants would be funded. Mrs. Puga answered by saying they are exploring funding options, but the program is designed to remain valuable even without it. Mrs. Puga continued by saying they have created useful written resources and clear communication points to support small businesses, knowing their time is money. Don Threewitt (Deputy Director of Community Development) added that the idea behind this program is to better support people that are new to land development who struggle with the complex process. Since planners and engineers can't advocate or design for them, they saw the need to connect these applicants with design professionals early on. Mr. Threewitt continued by saying this led to the creation of the micro grant program, that city staff has always adapted to applicants' needs, but this formalizes that approach—encouraging staff to slow down, guide newcomers through the process, and meet them where they are. Mr. Threewitt added the micro grant is a small, supportive part of the overall program, funded as a pilot through the department's existing budget. He said they expect only a few participants during this trial phase, as the grant complements the main program.

Mr. McBroom added that tonight's presentation to City Council is timely, as it aligns with the start of the 2026 budget process. If this program proves more successful than expected, it could lead to a future budget request—either later this cycle or for the 2027 budget.

Vice Chair Andersen asked if this will be accessible on the website at some point. Mrs. Puga answered yes, once the website content freeze is over. Vice Chair Andersen asked how the public would go about accessing this. Mrs. Puga answered by saying they would go to the City website, noting that they want to have two key resources. First, a Concept Questionnaire; a form that businesses can fill out with details about their project, property, and plans that would have a dedicated link to submit directly to staff. This helps staff understand where they're at and provide tailored feedback more efficiently, reducing the need for back-and-forth. Mrs. Puga

continued, noting that the second resource would be a Development Review Guide, which would be a comprehensive guide explaining each type of development review process, what's required, and what to prepare (e.g., plans, site improvements like landscaping or sidewalks). It would be designed to help businesses anticipate and navigate requirements they might not initially consider.

Vice Chair Andersen asked how these businesses would go about hiring these professionals for these projects. Mrs. Puga answered by saying during this pilot phase, they would offer clear guidance on what questions businesses should ask to ensure their consultant is qualified—such as whether they're licensed, familiar with Greeley, and understand local permitting requirements. They will not direct them on who to hire but offer helpful pointers.

Commissioner Modlin expressed support for the project, emphasizing the importance of businesses selecting qualified contractors and expressing hope that adequate funding will be available to ensure its success.

Commissioner Carlson asked a question regarding the grant awards, would they be flat amounts, or are they reimbursable up to a ceiling of these amounts. Mrs. Puga answered that they would be reimbursable up to those amounts. Mr. Threewitt added more information by saying this program is intentionally modest in funding—meant to be a small boost to help businesses connect with a design professional and prepare strong development review applications. It will not be a comprehensive funding source but complements other larger programs like SBA (Small Business Administration) loans and economic development incentives.

Chair Yeater wanted to echo his support for the program. Many of them have benefited from both the information shared here in the Planning Commission meetings and the staff's assistance on their own projects. Community Developments customer service and support for entrepreneurs are truly commendable—thank you.

8. Poudre River Restoration Initiative Update, Victoria Leonhardt

Victoria Leonhardt (Senior Urban Transportation Planner - Public Works & Transportation Department) began her presentation by introducing herself, Brian Hathaway, (Water Quality & Regulatory Compliance Manager) Peter Perez (Director of Emergency Management) and the updated item as published.

Commissioner Modlin asked how consideration is given to drought conditions where the river no longer floods naturally, runoff is reduced or absent, and the river carves a single channel. How are restoration efforts maintaining and irrigating these areas to preserve them as functional floodplains. Ms. Leonhardt answered by saying the goal isn't to actively irrigate the floodplain, but to preserve the space for potential flooding rather than maintain it to a specific standard. Commissioner Modlin also asked about weed maintenance in those areas. Ms. Leonhardt did not have the answer to that question.

Vice Chair Andersen asked if the gravel mining would be curtailed. Ms. Leonhardt answered by saying gravel mining is important, but the key question is how to allow it without severely impacting the floodplain—possibly through reclamation or other alternatives. It's something

their department has discussed. Vice Chair Andersen also asked about the water storage at the gravel pits. Ms. Leonhardt answered by saying that it is a major challenge we've seen in the Poudre River Restoration initiative—sealed water storage pits are at risk of flooding due to their location, putting that infrastructure in jeopardy. It's an important consideration they would look at. This plan is not looking to create liability or limit property use, the goal is to find long-term solutions that allow continued, profitable use of the land while improving outcomes.

Brian Hathaway (Water Quality & Regulatory Compliance Manager) added to Ms. Leonhardt's comment by saying any regulations developed within the scope of the Matrix project will undergo legal review and be vetted by both CWCB and FEMA to ensure compliance with all applicable standards.

Chair Yeater asked who currently manages the river and whether the City of Greeley would be responsible for changes in the river's flow and impacts on downstream users as a result of the restoration project. Mr. Hathaway responded that this question goes beyond his area of expertise.

Chair Yeater shared where to locate the state statute regarding river regulation enforcement, including the specific code number.

Chair Yeater asked if anyone from the City has spoken with the Division of Natural Resources to ask what the city can do with this project. Ms. Leonhardt answered that she believes Leah Hubbard (Deputy Director of Water Resources) has a good relationship with them and could reach out but feels it's too early. For an augmentation plan or approval, they need clear, specific project details—which they don't have yet at this stage of the Poudre River Restoration initiative.

Commissioner Briscoe shared that this has been educational, but he needs a clearer idea of what the proposed projects look like, what they involve, who they affect, and whether they impact vacant land, public land, or private landowners, and how this will take shape over time.

Chair Yeater asked where they were in this process. Ms. Leonhardt answered by saying they developed a preliminary design and received input from multiple City of Greeley departments and a steering committee of external partners. We're now refining the concept based on feedback from local property owners.

The clerk notified the group of a chat message from an online participant. Sean Chambers (Director of Water & Sewer) stated division of water resources, State Engineers Office guides the use storage and right to water supplies. Mining requires mineral rights, and both mining and site reclamation are permitted and regulated by the Colorado Division of reclamation, mining, and safety.

9. Affordable Housing Land Use Center, Don Threewitt

Brian McBroom (Director of Community Development) introduced the item with a few remarks to help frame the presentation.

Mr. McBroom's first remark was that the City is currently developing a Housing Strategic Plan as an update to past affordable housing policies. Informed by the 2023 Housing Needs

Assessment, the plan will address all housing types needed for Greeley's long-term growth, with a focus on refining affordable housing policy.

Referencing a question (if the goal is to encourage affordable housing everywhere) that Chair Yeater asked prior to the meeting, Mr. McBroom added that, no, the Housing Strategic Plan will aim to establish clear benchmarks for the amount of affordable housing that is appropriate for the City of Greeley. Tools such as the Affordable Housing Land Use Center will then serve as mechanisms to help achieve the goals outlined in the plan.

Mr. McBroom continued, saying it's also important to distinguish between market-rate housing that happens to be affordable and "Affordable Housing" as defined by state law, which involves more complex financing and targeted affordability strategies. These tools will support the implementation of the city's housing goals.

Mr. McBroom concluded by noting the definition of "Capital A" Affordable Housing. Affordable Housing refers to developments that meet the state's definition and use specialized, complex financing reserved for such projects. Because of this complexity, only a small number of developers with expertise in this niche typically pursue them.

Don Threewitt (Deputy Director of Community Development) began his presentation by expressing his gratitude to get those questions out of the way to move straight into productive discussion. Mr. Threewitt continued his presentation as published.

Commissioner Franzen asked if the area median income covers Greeley, Greeley & Evans, or all of Northern Colorado. Mr. Threewitt answered that they generally look at the metropolitan statistical area (MSA) for what is determined as the area median income, and that it is published annually by HUD.

Commissioner Modlin asked if there is a specific timeline for these applications. Mr. Threewitt said they would fall underneath the normal timeline for the permitting process.

Mr. McBroom entered a comment regarding a legislative update from the state session regarding construction and defect litigation that they will get put together and bring to the Commission in the next month or so.

Workshop concluded at 2:48 pm

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Justin Yeater

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Justin Yeater – Chair

Signed by:

Brian L McBroom

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Brian McBroom – Community Development Director