



City of Independence Minutes

Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, February 2, 2026

1. **Call to Order.** Chair Chappell called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. **Roll Call.**

Present: Commissioner Jose Oliveros
Commissioner Rebecca Jay
Commissioner/Chair Corby Chappell
Commissioner Sally Coen
Commissioner Alex Paraskevas
Commissioner John Southgate—Started meeting via Zoom by phone.
Arrived in person to the meeting at 8:20 PM

Absent: Commissioner Patrick Fugeman, Excused

City Staff Present: Fred Evander, City Planner
Gerald Fisher, Public Works Director
Myra Russell, City Recorder

3. **Minutes.**

3.1. **Regular Meeting 01/05/2026.**

Action:

Commissioner Jay moved to approve minutes with correction to Commissioner Jay's motion; Commissioner Paraskevas seconded. Discussion: Commissioner Jay wants wording of her motion changed. Commission approves minutes with this change.

Roll call vote. Motion 5-0-0

Ayes: Jose Oliveros, Rebecca Jay, Corby Chappell, Sally Coen,
Alex Paraskevas

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

4. **Visitors/Public Comment.** None.

5. **Unfinished Business.** None.

6. **New Business.**

6.1. **Public Hearing - Park System Master Plan.**

Chair Chappell read the hearing script regarding how the meeting would be conducted. State Law Required Statements read.

- Declaration of Conflicts of Interest, Ex-Parte Contact, Bias: None
- Public Hearing opened at 7:03 pm by Chair Chappell.
- Staff Report as submitted in the agenda packet was reviewed by Planner Evander for the Parks System Master Plan update. The update includes a detailed inventory of various park lands, cost estimates of likely projects and a prioritized list of projects to pursue. The plan primarily focuses on existing parks. There are recommended code changes relating to park dedications. Evander covered the public outreach. Consultant Matt from Greenworks presented a slide show to give a high-level overview of the process. Consultant Matt from MIG talked about recommendations for land dedications for future parks in the PSMP. The consultants checked in with the Parks Board several times during the process and the Parks Board recommended moving the PSMP forward to the Planning Commissions for review.
- Discussion: Commissioner Jay noted some confusing labeling on some of the charts regarding the ages in the demographic numbers. The consultants will take a look to see if there is conflicting information and correct if needed. She also had questions about tree succession, salmon habitat and a path at Mt. Fir Park. The consultants explained that their inventory process started in October 2024, so some changes may have been made between now and then. PW Director Fisher addressed questions about ADA accessibility improvements, confirming that a project to upgrade the Mt. Fir parking lot and provide ADA-accessible access from F Street was identified, though specific sidewalk recommendations for the garden area were not included in the current plans. This would be part of the project refinement design. Commissioner Jay asked how to see where SDC funds were being used in Parks. Fisher said it is in the annual Budget document each year.
- Further questions from the Commission. None
- Objections or testimony received: None
- Public Testimony: None
- Discussion: Staff Response to testimony-Evander noted that recommendations for the recreation element is incorporated. They were added to the comprehensive plan so they can be adopted.
- Hearing closed at 7:50 PM.

Action:

Commissioner Coen moved to forward a recommendation of approval on LA 2026-02 to the Independence City Council; Commissioner Paraskevas seconded. Discussion: None

Roll call vote. Motion 5-0-0

Ayes: Jose Oliveros, Rebecca Jay, Corby Chappell, Sally Coen, Alex Paraskevas

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

6.2. **Discussion - More Housing, Same (Great) Neighborhood - Infill Code Draft.**

Planner Evander and Consultant Matt Hastie presented info that had been discussed at the joint planning commission and city council work session last week. This idea would expand types of housing that can be added to existing

neighborhoods, look at design and development standards, and try to address necessary infrastructure for infill housing. Matt Hastie presented the proposed code amendments, which include reducing minimum lot sizes, allowing a wider range of middle housing types, and improving standards for small and infill housing projects. The team also discussed allowing cottage clusters and procedures for middle housing land division. The group discussed challenges with cottage cluster developments, particularly regarding window design standards and front door orientation. They explored how to handle lots with street frontage and courtyard access, with Matt suggesting flexibility for units with street frontage while maintaining design standards. The discussion highlighted the need to balance practical functionality with aesthetic considerations, especially regarding window placement and entrance orientation. The group also discussed state requirements for developments with 20 or more units, including updates to make standards clear and objective, and incorporating recent state legislation. Commissioners were encouraged to submit typos and additional comments to staff via email in the next couple of weeks to be incorporated into the next draft in a couple of months.

6.3. Discussion - Upcoming Projects in 2026.

- Infill Code continuation
- Administrative code update to accommodate state land use procedures
- Park dedication standards
- FEMA flood information that was postponed from last year
- Usable Park space, usable public space
- Sidewalk Cafe permitting
- Signage, sandwich boards, enforcement

7. Other Discussion/Information Items.

- Commissioner Oliveros asked about new items coming out of the current legislative session. Evander wasn't sure yet but was invited to a housing rulemaking committee. He's excited to have a voice at the table for mandates that the state may force on small communities.
- Video: Acoustic Engineer Fixes NYC Subway, Parks and Buildings to Limit Noise | WSJ Pro Perfected. Commissioners watched an 8-minute video about acoustic engineering in cities. Discussion of sound in our city, including train and traffic. The higher the speed and volume of traffic increases the volume of sound.
- Introduction of John Southgate, the newest planning commissioner.

8. Adjournment. Action:

Commissioner/Chair Chappell moved to Adjourn; Commissioner Coen seconded.

Discussion: None

Roll call vote. Motion 6-0-0

Ayes: Jose Oliveros, Rebecca Jay, Corby Chappell, Sally Coen, Alex Paraskevas, John Southgate

Nays: None

Abstentions: None
Chair Chappell adjourned the meeting at 9:00 pm

Minutes submitted by:
Myra Russell, City Recorder