

Planning Commission Minutes  
May 5, 2026

Docket Item #10  
Planning Commission Public Hearing  
June 2, 2026

Consideration of approval of the Planning Commission minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of  
May 5, 2026.

---

**\* \* \* M I N U T E S \* \* \***

**ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION**

May 5, 2026 7:00 P.M.

**Council Chamber**

4850 Mark Center Dr. Rm 1305, Alexandria, Virginia 22311

Members Present:

Melissa McMahon, Chair  
Stephen Koenig, Vice Chair  
Vivian Ramirez  
Robert Dubé  
Holly Lennihan  
Jody Manor  
Susan Fitter Harris

Members Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Paul Stoddard  
Kendra Jacobs  
Christina Brown  
Margaret Cooper  
Maya Contreras  
Sam Shelby  
Catherine McDonald  
Abigail Harwell  
Rob Kerns

Department of Planning & Zoning  
Department of Planning & Zoning  
Office of the City Attorney  
Department of Planning & Zoning  
Department of Planning & Zoning  
Department of Planning & Zoning  
Department of Planning & Zoning  
Department of Planning & Zoning  
Department of Planning & Zoning

## **#1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Planning Commission Public Hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. All members were present at the Call to Order.

Chair McMahon read the following instructions:

“Welcome to the May 5, 2026 Planning Commission Public Hearing. I am Melissa McMahon, Chair of the Alexandria Planning Commission.

Before we begin, I have just a few announcements about participating in tonight’s meeting.

If you wish to speak on a Docket Item and have not already signed up to do so, please fill out Speaker Form online by following the “Sign Up to Speak” hyperlink on the cover page of this evening’s Public Hearing Docket or in person by filling out a hardcopy speaker form, which can be found on the tables located immediately outside the Chambers, and providing it to Ms. Jacobs, who has her hand raised.

Please note, comments from the public are limited to 3 minutes per speaker, except for applicants and their representation. To make your public comment through the Zoom application, please click on the "Raise Hand" button located on the Zoom taskbar once you hear your name called, to let staff know you need to be unmuted. If you are dialing into tonight’s meeting via phone, please press \*9 to execute the “Raise Hand” function once you hear your name called upon to make your statement, followed by \*6 to toggle the unmute function.

For those here in person, please step up to the podium located at the front of Chambers when your name is called and identify yourself by first and last name.

The City encourages and welcomes public comments from all residents on Planning Commission matters. In keeping with that principle, and with the principle of inclusiveness, this is a reminder of the shared expectation that the content and tenor of public comments always be civil and respectful. Thank you for honoring those principles.

A reminder to all, including Commissioners, staff, and speakers in the Chambers, please speak directly into the microphone to ensure all can hear you clearly.”

Item #3 was removed from the Consent Calendar. Item #4 was deferred from consideration due to a noticing issue.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

- #2** Development Special Use Permit #2026-10005  
5050 Mark Center Drive  
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for an extension of a previously approved Development Special Use Permit and Site Plan to construct a multi-unit building with Special Use Permit requests for a parking reduction and penthouses to exceed 15 feet in height; zoned CDD #4/Coordinated Development District #4.

Applicant: Mark Center Residential LLC represented by Ken Wire, Attorney

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Harris, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of Development Special Use Permit #2026-10005 on the Consent Calendar.

**#3 Zoning Ordinance Subdivision cases are heard by the Planning Commission, placed on the City Council docket for information, and heard by City Council only upon appeal.**

Subdivision #2026-00001

411 Clifford Avenue

Public hearing and consideration of a request for a Subdivision to re-subdivide an existing lot into two lots with a variation to floor area ratio; zoned R-2-5/Residential.

Applicant: Teresa Elaine Lustig represented by Duncan Blair, Attorney

**SPEAKERS**

Ashley Preston, 409 Clifford Avenue, spoke in opposition of the request. She was concerned about the limited street parking and traffic congestion in the neighborhood. She mentioned an adjacent business with an SUP whose workers use street parking instead of the lot. She also explained that people will park on the street and walk to the metro to commute to D.C.

Duncan Blair, attorney, represented the applicant. He explained the general nature of the request and mentioned that the applicant will provide off-street parking for the additional unit that is intended to be added.

**DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Lennihan explained that she supported the additional density the proposal would create but did not understand architecturally how the second unit would connect.

Commissioner Harris asked if the new development would receive the additional FAR should the existing dwelling be demolished. Staff clarified the additional FAR would not continue with new development.

Chair McMahon agreed with staff analysis and explained the proposed lots would be in character with surrounding development. She also explained that while parking challenges brought up by Mrs. Preston were not pertinent to the subdivision application, she understood the issue and asked staff to speak to parking and traffic control in this area. Director Stoddard responded that he would follow up with Department of Transportation and Environmental Services as well as SUP staff to understand what is and can be done to address these issues.

Commissioner Ramirez recommended the city also investigate the impact the new metro station has had on street parking and the residences nearby.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

This item was pulled from the Consent Calendar and heard before Docket Item #5. On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to close the public hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Lennihan, the Planning Commission voted to approve Subdivision #2026-00001. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- #4 Special Use Permit #2026-00013  
404 A East Alexandria Avenue  
Public hearing and consideration of a request for Special Use Permits to construct a single-unit dwelling on a vacant substandard lot and for a lot without frontage on a public street.; zoned R-2-5/Residential.  
Applicant: Eric Teran and Daniela Gross

### **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to defer Special Use Permit #2026-00013 due to a noticing issue. The motion carried on a vote of 6-1.

- #5 Development Special Use Permit #2026-10003  
1609 Cameron Street (Parcel Address: 1501 Cameron Street) - Old Town Pool Replacement  
Public hearing and consideration of a request for a Development Special Use Permit and Site Plan for demolition and reconstruction of a public pool facility with a Special Use Permit request to operate a Congregate Recreational Facility; zoned: POS / Public open space and community recreation zone.  
Applicant: Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities, City of Alexandria

### **SPEAKERS**

None

### **DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Dube spoke in favor of the project and asked staff about the construction timeline. Deputy Director of Recreation, Plans & Cultural Activities Jack Browand stated the hope is the project would be on a two-year timeline, completing by the Summer of 2028.

Chair McMahon encouraged the project to increase the amount of shade available on the deck area, spoke in favor of the universal changing rooms and lockers outside of the changing room. The Chair asked staff how the project will get to net zero energy for the building, Deputy Director Browand responded stating that at this point in the design process, RPCA has the funding to equip the bath house with solar panels to achieve net zero. Considering the project is still 6 to 9 months away from construction, if at the time of acquisition, the solar panels are not affordable with the current budget, there is an option to place solar plans through a negotiated power purchase agreement.

Commissioner Lennihan spoke in support of the project.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a motion by Commissioner Lennihan, seconded by Vice Chair Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Development Special Use Permit #2026-10003 as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

**#6** Zoning Text Amendment #2026-00002  
Beekeeping Zoning Regulations

A) Initiation of a Zoning Text Amendment; and B) Public Hearing and consideration of text amendments to Zoning Ordinance Articles II (Definitions) and VII (Supplemental Zone Regulations) to define beekeeping and beekeeping equipment, allow beekeeping as an accessory use, allow beekeeping equipment as permitted accessory structures, and establish requirements for beekeeping and beekeeping equipment.

Staff: City of Alexandria, Department of Planning & Zoning

**SPEAKERS**

John Scott, 116 East Randolph Avenue, expressed reservations with the proposed regulations. He found that they would be difficult to enforce without additional staff training.

Joshua Byrnes, 5324 Taney Avenue, acknowledged a potential need for beekeeping regulations but suggested staff conduct additional outreach.

Antoinette Burnham, DC Beekeepers Alliance, suggested that zoning might not be the best way to regulate beekeeping. She also encouraged staff to conduct further outreach with beekeepers and suggested a regulation based on neighbor consent.

Jennifer Penoso spoke in opposition to the proposal. She thought the rules might inhibit safe swarm management and found the community outreach to be inadequate. She raised questions about how the rules would apply to hives kept on nonresidential properties and also suggested staff conduct additional outreach.

Robert Yochem mentioned that Washington, DC and Maryland's beekeeping regulations are not enforced by planning staff. He also answered questions from the Planning Commission about these jurisdictions' beekeeping rules and enforcement.

**DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Harris asked staff about what prompted staff to recommend the text changes. Staff replied that City Council added it to Planning and Zoning interdepartmental work plan after a resident raised issues with a neighbor's beekeeping at a public hearing. Commissioner Harris also asked staff to clarify how the Code of Virginia's rules and recommendations apply. She also asked whether the City has the authority to regulate beekeeping. Deputy City Attorney Zechman-Brown explained that the City has authority to regulate the location and number of structures under its Zoning Ordinance.

Commissioners Lenihan and Dube asked staff about enforcement and whether special training or protective equipment would be necessary. Staff explained that the proposed regulations would not require additional training or equipment as compliance would be easily observable.

Chair McMahan asked staff why Arlington County did not have beekeeping regulations. Staff did not research why Arlington County does not regulate beekeeping. Chair McMahan recognized the uniqueness of the proposal, finding that staff generally does not recommend updates to the Zoning Ordinance after an isolated incident. She suggested that staff gather more information about the residents' complaint.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Lennihan, the Planning Commission voted to defer consideration of Zoning Text Amendment #2026-00002. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Discussion Item: Substandard Lots and Outlots Zoning Text Amendment**

Sam Shelby gave a presentation regarding Substandard Lot and Outlot Zoning Regulations.

Vice Chair Koenig inquired into the eligibility threshold requirements for lot compliance. Sam Shelby confirmed that lots must either meet 90% of requirements or be similar to more than 50% of the lots in the block face. Vice Chair Koenig further inquired into whether there were cases that did not come to hearing because they were too substandard. Sam Shelby confirmed that was the case. Vice Chair Koenig discussed the utility of substandard lot regulations in the face of current housing goals. He discussed whether a lot that otherwise meets development standards should be required to obtain a Special Use Permit on the basis that it is substandard for the zone. He speculated whether this could be considered a relief from standards as evaluated by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Chair McMahon expressed surprise that the Infill Taskforce had not simplified this process further, noting the number of cases that sought relief from Substandard Lot requirements without requesting Lot Modifications. She noted other jurisdictions having a process for de minimis conditions and whether there could be an administrative process for Substandard Lots depending on how closely they align with the requirements. She expressed that sometimes limitations on developing properties are related more to alignment with regulations than impact on their surroundings.

Commissioner Dubé asked about a recent inquiry to develop a lot that did not meet the minimum requirements for a substandard lot and what alternatives there are for the homeowner. Sam Shelby noted that lot consolidation was a potential option for the property owner.

Commissioner Lennihan clarified to what standard the 90% of lot requirements is held. Sam Shelby answered that the lot must meet 90% of lot size, lot frontage, and lot width respectively. She further inquired whether a combined lot could be developed with an Accessory Dwelling Unit. Sam Shelby confirmed yes, pending compliance with other lot development criteria.

Chair McMahon inquired into how not counting attic floor area correctly creates a building with unintended bulk. Sam Shelby answered that not counting the floor area of the attic leaves more developable floor area in the rest of the dwelling, increasing bulk. Commissioner Lennihan further inquired into how zoning definitions change the interpretation of attic space for development.

Vice Chair Koenig discussed that these considerations regarding individual adjustments to individual properties are more a matter for the Board of Zoning Appeals than Planning Commission consideration. Commissioner Lennihan expressed concern that each individual approval may be used to set precedent for future substandard lots.

Commissioner Harris inquired into the inventory of lots that would be impacted by new substandard lot regulations and how it will be organized. Chair McMahan advised keeping it high-level to prevent discussions of individual lots from impacting larger regulations.

### **Commissioners' Reports, Comments & Questions**

Commissioner Dubé delivered an update from the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

Commissioner Manor delivered an update from the Waterfront Commission.

Commissioner Harris discussed her future involvement in the Eisenhower West / Landmark Van Dorn Implementation Advisory Group.

Chair McMahan delivered an update on requests to Board and Commission member changes and the Transportation Commission.

### **Planning & Zoning Director's Report**

Planning Director Paul Stoddard highlighted the Planning & Zoning Community Meeting Series and upcoming projects.

### **MINUTES**

- #7 Consideration of the April 7, 2026 Planning Commission Public Hearing minutes.

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Lennihan, the Planning Commission voted to approve the minutes from the April 7, 2026 Planning Commission Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

- #8 **ADJOURNMENT**

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 9:41 p.m.