

CITY OF ALAMOSA
Planning Commission Minutes
March 26, 2025
6:00 PM

Any person needing reasonable accommodation to attend or participate in a public meeting, please contact the Alamosa City Clerk's office by telephone (719) 589-2593, by email cityclerk@ci.alamosa.co.us, in person at 300 Hunt Avenue, or by mail at POB 419, Alamosa, CO 81101.

Minutes of the Meeting

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order on March 26, 2025 at 6:00pm. By Chairman Mark Manzanares. Present were the following members: Mark Manzanares, John Adams, and Ralph Symbleme. Members absent: Reyna Martinez and Sandra Ortega. Staff Present: Rachel James, Deacon Aspinwall, Captain Brandon Bertsch and Beata Ramza.

Agenda Approval: M/S/C

Motion to approve agenda as presented - Symbleme/Adams - Motion Passes

Approval of the Minutes: M/S/C

Motion to approve 02/26/2025 minutes as presented- Adams/Symbleme - Motion Passes

Public Comments: None

Regular Business:

- A. Request to Convert a Non-Conforming Residential Use to a Conforming Use
 - a. Subject property is 529 Alamosa Ave constructed in 1921 in the Commercial Business Zone. Technically Lawfully Non-Conforming. If someone wants to expand the nonconforming use they need to go through a conditional use permit to convert it to conforming. The applicant wants to add an accessory dwelling unit which requires conformity before being allowed. The property has been established for a long time and the use and proposed expansion meet our housing action plan. The site also meets the other standards. Staff recommends approval of the conversion of the site from non-conforming to conforming use with no additional conditions. The planning commission makes a final decision and the City Council ratifies the decision.
 - b. Elverado Gaxiola - 529 Alamosa Ave - I don't have a use for the large backyard. I was thinking of putting a second house for renters. All the utilities are right there so it should be easy to set up.
 - i. People on Behalf of Application -
 - 1. Valerie - 527 Alamosa Ave - I live north of the property. It has been a quiet neighborhood. I was concerned about it staying that way. Elverado said it would be monitored closely by a developer with background checks. My husband says he doesn't want it. But Gaxiola has the land and if it could be helpful to the housing in the community and be for students it could be good.
 - ii. People Against Application - None
 - c. Questions from Commissioners
 - i. Symbleme - Will this be a separate unit? Gaxiola - Yes separate.
 - d. **Motion made to approve the request as presented by Symbleme, seconded by Adams - All approve motion passes.**
- B. Proposed Code Amendment for Form-Based Code Changes in the Established Neighborhood Zone

- a. Aspinwall Presentation - We are trying to fill gaps in our code. We have a restriction that limits the amount of units(8) in a multifamily dwelling in the established neighborhood(EN) zone. This is a barrier to housing. The hope is the proposed form based code can increase types of housing by lifting restrictions without negatively affecting the look and feel of the community. Form based code is more about how the building fits into the neighborhood rather than its exact use, however land use still matters and will be taken into account. It will be a stand alone section of code for an administrative review process that would only apply to EN zones. The applicant can request to bring the topic to the planning commission similar to a variance rather than an administrative review.
- b. Questions -
 - i. Manzanares - It would be like an appeal process? Aspinwall - No more like an alternative review upon request.
 - ii. Manzanares - So then it could have a public comment? Aspinwall - Yes.
- c. Public Comment -
 - i. Richard Hubler - 2069 Mullins Ave - I am the County Planner. Form based codes are an urban thing and we don't get to do them in the county. The form based code is newer, 1980s and I do think the recommendations would be really good. I think it's a good thing to give yourselves more flexibility. Being able to evaluate each application individually is good too.
- d. **Motion made to approve the form based standards as presented by Adams, seconded by Symbleme - All approve motion passes**

C. Code Amendment Clean-Up Discussion on Security Fences

- a. There are some exemptions for fences specifically for security fences such as for wireless telecommunications stations and other security purposes. We were approached by a specific circumstance where we thought the code should be amended because going through a variance process will take too long. There is a state statute that this specific use we were approached by has security needs to be provided. We would modify the code so that the admin can approve barbed or razor wire in more than just the industrial zone for these security needs.
- b. Questions
 - i. Manzanares - What counts as a security need? Aspinwall - It is not just anything it is based on state guidance, other governing body authority like homeland security, protecting critical infrastructure, and if harm can be caused like electrocution. A disgruntled neighbor or a storage unit does not count.
 - ii. Symbleme - When entering Monte Vista the old car dealership was purchased by the federal government and they put up special glass and fencing, would this help stuff like that? Aspinwall - We would ask the folks for specific reasons why they need the extra security and any formal guidance about it. We are willing to protect critical infrastructure but not just asset protection.
- c. **Motion to approve the cleanup of the security fencing code as presented by Symbleme, seconded by Adams - All approve motion passes.**

Other Business:

- A. Staff Updates
 - a. Thank you for attending the CRHDC groundbreaking on Monday.
 - b. The downtown hotel is moving forward. The courthouse is doing great; they are on schedule and might be able to offer tours soon. Hunt Ave design is on hold as we work with the utilities. Centurylink and Xcel have a lot of stuff in Hunt Ave. Looking to construct one block in 2026. And looking for funding for the rest of the street. Received a grant to fix alleyways as well. Hopefully,

they will have fun elements in them like lights and art to revitalize it. It will be the alleys between Edison and State Ave south of the Main St buildings.

- c. We will be starting our comprehensive plan process early 2026. It will be a big one because it needs to update water, housing, parks & recreation, downtown, and climate resilience all with the comp plan. Thinking about doing a downtown periphery zone. The north side of Fourth Street, the first three blocks south on State Ave, historic south Main Street on Eighth St, and all the property on 6th and Main from college to downtown. It's zoned all over the place and please think about how you might envision the code to help breathe life into those areas.
- d. A couple of small subdivisions and a lot of grant work. Our department has been helping with various aspects of the predevelopment for the Boys and Girls Club Early Childcare Center. They are working on a final donation push to finish funding it.
- e. The housing rehab program is taking shape. It was in the housing action plan and we got a technical assistance grant to help fix existing housing. We have lots of neighborhoods with multi generational housing where they may own the house but maintenance projects are not affordable. We can mark houses as unsafe and demolish homes but that's not really what we want. The grant is paying for a firm from New York to help us and it will probably be a multi pronged approach.
- f. The school district has their designs and we will be meeting about the storefront space soon. They will try to expose the historic windows. That way it's going to look like a storefront. Still working on their traffic studies.

B. Code Enforcement Updates

- a. We have been having issues with people living in campers. We are dealing with trap houses or campers on the south side more especially since getting more strict on the homeless situation. We are issuing NOVs on a regular basis.
- b. We have eleven individuals at the homeless camps. We have individuals who are appealing trespass processes for the camp. Have seen an uptick in homeless foot traffic in downtown and the levee. We are giving 48-72 hour notices for them.
- c. Code officers will be busy with weed enforcement soon. Last year it took all three of them on a regular basis. We are going to try to streamline that better.
- d. Question -
 - i. Manzanares - Several years ago there would be bike patrol, but the officers didn't want to wear helmets, would that be an option again? Bertsch - I liked bike patrol and we could get to calls faster. We timed it once. I think we had an incident with an officer where he got injured. That's more on the patrol side so you'd have to talk to George.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beata Ramza

Recording Secretary