

City of Stanwood
Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission
May 11, 2026 | 6:30 PM

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Hosterman call the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Attendance:

Commissioners Present:

Eric Warnat

Richard Craig

Patrick Hosterman, Chair

Doug Standish

Gabrielle Braley

Rachelle Pedersen

Absent: Melissa Toner

Staff Present:

Patricia Love, Community Development Director

Audrey Rotrock, Planner

Also know to be present: Kat Klass & Nicholas Mirra with Maul Foster Algoni

Public Requests and Comments: None

3. Public Requests and Comments

4. Approval of Minutes

a. April 13, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the April 13, 2026 Planning Commission meeting were unanimously approved.

5. Unfinished Business

a. Climate Change Public Outreach Strategy

In 2023, House Bill 1181 amended Washington's Growth Management Act, requiring local governments to include a Climate Change and Resiliency Element in their comprehensive plans. This Climate Element must integrate goals and policies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, enhance resilience to climate impacts, and address localized climate risks and vulnerabilities. Resilience-focused goals and policies will help the City prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate-related impacts, while GHG emissions reduction goals and policies are intended to reduce emissions from transportation, energy use in buildings, and other sources. HB 1181's requirements place equal emphasis on climate planning as is required for traditional elements like transportation and land use.

The City received a grant from the Washington State Department of

Commerce to draft a Climate Element in compliance with state law and has hired Maul Foster & Alongi and BHC to support this effort.

The Planning Commission will act as the advisory committee guiding Climate Element development. Responsibilities will include reviewing technical analyses, considering public input, and providing input and recommendations for goals and policies. Planning Commission involvement will primarily occur during regular Commission meetings, with the possible addition of one focused work session on the Climate Element in summer 2026.

Maul Foster Alongi presented an overview of the strategy.

Commissioner Questions & Comments

- Are there quantitative goals we're trying to reach besides 2 goals per category? A certain GHG target maybe? Or reducing traffic going to Camano Island?
 - How do we control traffic coming from elsewhere or on the highway?
 - Building codes could be something we look at, but we'd have to decide what level of remodel would trigger incurring new standards.
- We should focus on what's realistic. There are hazards Stanwood can't do anything about, like sea level rise or wildfires.
- Does the City's existing policies on floodplains already cover us for that hazard?
 - Patricia: Yes, likely.
- How we measure all this will be important.

Discussion portion comments

- What are the top 3 long-term priorities the Climate Element should focus on to help Stanwood remain safe and livable over time?
 - Traffic on state highways; energy usage in buildings; lighting controls or building management.
- What climate-related challenges or opportunities could affect Stanwood's land use, infrastructure, or community services?
 - Remediation for drought; what's our Plan B if the wells run dry?
 - We already work a lot on flooding resilience.
 - Encouraging heat pumps to combat heat and smoke, or requiring A/C in public buildings.
 - What if the water tower empties out?
 - Patricia: We have 3 wells and an untouched 4th well; we've had conversations about water rights with Ecology; we're very conscious of our water supply.
 - Interested in getting the survey results to direct answers to these

questions.

- Should we look at potential for wildfire here, and requirements re: trees around homes?

b. Permitted Use Matrix and Development Standards - Continued Public Hearing

The Planning Commission began its review of the permitted use codes in late 2025 with a general introduction into early 2026.

- November 2025: General approach and chapter structure
- January 2026: Permitted Uses Table and Comprehensive Plan Policy Discussion
- February: Reorganized Formatting and Categorization of Permitted Uses
- March: Permitted Uses and Definitions
- April: Opened Public Hearing

This meeting will continue the Planning Commission's permitted use discussion reviewing the entire code including definitions, matrix uses and associated use standards.

Commissioner Questions & Comments

- Staff moved overnight parking into the Parking Standards portion of the code.
- Council has suggested requiring certain sections of the Downtown Mixed-Use Zone to be restaurants and retail spaces and allowing uses such as salons and learning centers (for example) on the second floor or behind.
 - Commissioners say this could be prohibitive, and to consider allowing these in certain circumstances with administrative conditions.
 - There should be a balance of uses downtown.
- The Commissioners unanimously agreed to move the Permitted Use Matrix and Development Standards forward to City Council and closed the public hearing.

6. New Business

a. Sign Code Update

In continuation of our Municipal Code Update project, work on the Sign Code is starting. On March 31, a virtual and in person open house was held to hear from the public on likes and dislikes regarding the signs in the City. The open

house events were not well attended. As an additional effort to obtain public comments, an online public survey was issued where 321 responses were received.

Sign codes play an important role in aesthetics of a City. They regulate the size, placement, lighting, and design of signs to ensure that businesses can effectively communicate with the public without creating clutter or hazards. The overall goal of sign codes strikes a balance between economic visibility and public interest.

Commissioner Questions & Comments

The Planning Commission reviewed the sign survey results and generally agreed with the feedback received. Key comments and recommendations are summarized below by sign type and topic area:

- **Feather Banners**

- Recognized the benefit and visibility of feather banners for businesses.
- Recommended limiting the number permitted per site or improving enforcement of existing standards.
- Suggested restricting or prohibiting feather banners along the Twin City Mile corridor.

- **Temporary Signage**

- Supported allowing temporary signage for businesses and events.
- Expressed concern that temporary signs can create visual clutter.
- Recommended stronger enforcement and consideration of standards that balance business needs with federal law requirements.

- **Home Occupation Signs**

- Requested further review of home occupation signage regulations.
- Recommended evaluating:
 - What types of signs should be allowed;
 - Appropriate locations for signs; and
 - Maximum sign size standards.

- **Commercial Window Signs**

- Supported keeping window signage to a minimum.
- Emphasized maintaining visibility and reducing visual clutter.

- **Off-Site Signs**

- Discussed potentially allowing off-site signage.
- Recommended careful consideration of:
 - Sign size limitations; and
 - Setback requirements.

- **Flags**

- Recommended removing all references to flags from the sign code.
- **SR 532 Corridor Signage**
 - Discussed treating signs along SR 532 differently than signs on Main Street.
 - Suggested considering an increased sign height allowances with greater setbacks in exchange for additional height.
- **271st Street Right-of-Way Signs**
 - Recommended providing an exception for signs located within the right-of-way along 271st Street.
 - Noted that the unusually deep right-of-way in these areas creates unique constraints for property owners.
- **General Enforcement**
 - Commissioners repeatedly emphasized the need for improved code enforcement across all sign types to ensure standards are effective and consistently applied.

7. Miscellaneous Business

8. Recent Council Action on Commission Items

9. Upcoming Items

10. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned: 8:05 p.m.