



# Planning & Zoning Board Work Session Minutes

**March 31, 2026 at 12:00 PM**

City Hall Commission Chambers  
401 S. Park Avenue

## **Present**

Alex Stringfellow, David Bornstein, Jason Johnson, Bill Segal, Charles Steinberg, Michael Dick, Vashon Sarkisian

## **Absent**

None

## **Staff Present**

Director of Planning & Zoning Allison McGillis, Asst. Director of Planning & Zoning/Zoning Official John Harbilas, Planner II Nicholas Lewis, Planner I Corinna Lundgren, Administrative Coordinator Mary Jean

## **1. Meeting Called to Order**

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m.

## **2. Discussion Item (s)**

a. Discuss upcoming agenda items:

- Text change to PQP zoning district to allow single-family development as a permitted use
- 860 W Fairbanks Ave Conditional Use

Mrs. McGillis began discussion by providing a brief update on the application for 436 North Knowles Avenue, which had been approved at the last Planning & Zoning Board meeting on March 3, 2026. The hearing item then went before the City Commission on March 25, 2026, and was denied. She explained that in cases such as this one, applicants have a time restriction on when they can reapply with something different, or the commissioner(s) that voted no could bring the item back up for reconsideration. Otherwise, the project cannot move forward.

Mrs. McGillis continued discussion with an overview of two key agenda items slated for the upcoming Planning & Zoning Board regular meeting on April 7, 2026. The first item involves a proposed text amendment to the Public-Quasi-Public (PQP) zoning district, which currently governs city-owned properties such as schools and churches. The amendment seeks to permit single-family residential development within this zoning category, a change prompted by a collaborative initiative between Habitat for Humanity

and Orange County Public Schools. This partnership aims to develop affordable housing on the former Orange County Technical College site located behind Whole Foods. The site is currently occupied by the Orlando Gifted Academy, which is expected to vacate by 2027, allowing the project to proceed thereafter. The plan involves subdividing a northern portion of the property into five single-family lots, each approximately 60 feet wide by 80 feet deep, adhering to R1A zoning standards for setbacks and lot dimensions. Habitat for Humanity's representative, Jeff Briggs, elaborated on the organization's history and mission, emphasizing their unique approach of involving high school students as volunteers and their focus on providing affordable, owner-occupied housing primarily for public school employees such as teachers and cafeteria workers. Mr. Briggs highlighted the challenge of land costs in the area and noted that this project would secure building opportunities for Habitat for Humanity for at least three to five years. Parking provisions include driveways sufficient for two cars, though garages are typically not included to keep costs down. The zoning text change was carefully crafted to allow only detached single-family homes, preventing multifamily or apartment developments without further zoning amendments. This approach aims to preserve the PQP zoning designation while enabling the Habitat project, with no current plans from the county for the remainder of the parcel. The discussion also touched on the financial and logistical challenges of extending infrastructure such as roads, water, sewer, and electric services to support the development, which Habitat for Humanity would need to fund through ongoing fundraising efforts.

The second agenda item concerns the redevelopment of the southern portion of the former RV dealership site at the southeast corner of Fairbanks Avenue and Denning Drive. This property, along with the northern portion, falls within the Orange Avenue Overlay (OAO) district. A development plan for the northern parcel was previously approved, and the current proposal seeks to extend similar zoning and development standards to the southern parcel under the underlying C3 commercial zoning. The project envisions a one-story commercial development featuring retail and restaurant spaces, with internal courtyards and parking located behind the buildings. A community benefit agreement accompanies the project, stipulating that no building exceeds three stories, no parking garages be constructed, and that existing mature oak trees at key intersections be preserved. The agreement also restricts vehicle sales, service, and rentals on the site. The developers have committed to donating portions of the property along Fairbanks to accommodate a turn lane at the Denning intersection and to upsizing a stormwater pond on the northern parcel to manage runoff effectively. Additionally, they plan to sell a small parcel to the city at an affordable price for potential affordable housing development.

The design of the southern parcel includes wide sidewalks, landscaped planters, and outdoor seating areas to enhance pedestrian experience. Access points are limited to side streets, avoiding direct entry from Denning to maintain traffic flow and safety. The buildings will feature brick facades, fabric canopies, and bronze storefront systems,

with rooftop equipment concealed by parapets to maintain aesthetic appeal. The project complies with updated design standards adopted for the downtown and Orange Avenue areas, ensuring appropriate materials and glass coverage. Parking calculations indicate the development will provide more spaces than required, accommodating retail, restaurant, and future office uses. The restaurants, capped at three, plan to serve alcohol and require a minimum number of seats to meet state licensing requirements. The developers have accounted for this in their parking plan, which includes a buffer to prevent spillover parking into neighboring areas.

Stormwater management involves a dry pond on the southern parcel and a larger wet pond on the northern parcel, designed to meet new city regulations requiring separate dry and wet storage. The landscaping plan includes preserving key trees as mandated by the community benefit agreement, though some landscape islands will be narrower than standard to fit parking and circulation needs. Utility infrastructure such as transformers and fire department connections are strategically placed and screened with landscaping to minimize visual impact. The project timeline anticipates concurrent development of both northern and southern parcels, pending approvals and coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for road improvements, including the turn lane on Fairbanks.

The discussion also addressed concerns about the long-term vision for the area, emphasizing the importance of creating pedestrian-friendly streetscapes and considering future redevelopment east of the site. Suggestions included exploring options for on-street parking to support nearby recreational facilities and enhance walkability. However, the preference is to maintain parking within the development to avoid spillover issues. The existing sidewalks along Fairbanks and Denning were noted, with some areas being narrow but generally providing pedestrian access. The developers' commitment to preserving mature trees and landscaping was reiterated, with conditions of approval ensuring these elements are maintained.

A brief discussion touched on the aesthetics of stormwater ponds, with a call for more naturalistic designs rather than the typical square, engineered ponds. While recognizing the balance between engineering requirements and design, a desire was expressed to improve the visual quality of these features to better integrate with the community. The city has adopted internal policies encouraging naturalistic pond designs, though no formal zoning code changes have been made to enforce this.

Towards the end of the work session, a Board member expressed concern about the accuracy and completeness of information provided to the City Commission regarding Planning & Zoning Board decisions. The Board member emphasized the need for transparent and thorough communication to ensure that commission members and the public receive a clear understanding of the Board's deliberations and outcomes. This comment reflects a broader desire for accountability and clarity in the city's planning

processes.

### **3. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:53 p.m.

ATTEST:

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/s/ Mary Jean, Recording Secretary