



Planning & Zoning Board Work Session Minutes

April 28, 2026 at 12:00 PM

Chapman Room
401 S. Park Avenue

Present

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

Absent

Vashon Sarkisian

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

1. Meeting Called to Order

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

2. Discussion Item (s)

a.

- Traffic concerns surrounding Fairbanks/Denning/Kentucky
- Upcoming agenda items

Mrs. McGillis began discussion with a focus on the 860 West Fairbanks Avenue project, which had been tabled at the Board's April 7, 2026, regular meeting. The project was deferred to allow revisions to the architectural design to incorporate additional building articulation and to develop streetscape plans for Holt Avenue. The applicant provided revised plans addressing these points, including a streetscape plan that added 13 parallel parking spaces along Holt Avenue, with dimensions carefully designed to maintain pedestrian safety through a nine-foot-wide sidewalk and an eight-foot landscape buffer. The articulation of the buildings was enhanced by recessing the middle sections of the larger buildings to break up the facade, while the smaller buildings retained their original articulation to avoid awkward tenant space configurations. The overall building width is 61 feet, and although the Orange Avenue Overlay code requires articulation every 36 feet, the design balances code requirements with practical tenant space considerations.

The discussion then shifted to traffic concerns, particularly related to Kentucky Avenue west of 860 West Fairbanks Avenue. Neighbors had expressed worries about traffic

congestion and proposed closing Holt Avenue, which the Board rejected. Instead, a revised proposal suggested making Holt Avenue a right-in, right-out street to prevent southbound left turns onto Denning Drive. However, this solution was questioned for its effectiveness, as it might not alleviate traffic backups and could potentially create new issues by redirecting traffic to other streets like Orange Avenue. Public Works Director Charles Ramdatt and Transportation Planner Jason Sartorio provided expert insights, noting that the Denning and Fairbanks intersection is one of the most challenging in the city due to the lack of dedicated left-turn lanes, causing significant backups during rush hours.

The city is actively negotiating with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to acquire properties to facilitate the construction of left-turn lanes at this intersection, which is expected to improve traffic flow significantly. The timing of traffic signals is also under review to optimize vehicle movement. Despite residents' perceptions of morning traffic congestion, data collected by city staff indicated that backups primarily occur in the evenings. The city committed to conducting ongoing traffic studies, including license plate surveys to understand cut-through traffic patterns, and promised to share findings with stakeholders and propose solutions as needed.

Concerns about potential unintended consequences of traffic restrictions were raised, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that maintains neighborhood safety while allowing reasonable access. The addition of 13 parking spaces along Holt Avenue was seen as a positive step to enhance the street's character and pedestrian experience, potentially reducing cut-through traffic by making the street feel narrower and more urbanized.

Mrs. McGillis then began discussion about a conditional use application for a car wash at Aloma Avenue and Lander Road, located on two parcels previously occupied by a bank and a self-service car wash. The site is zoned commercial but borders a single-family residential neighborhood, raising concerns about cut-through traffic, noise pollution, and stormwater management. The applicant proposed measures to mitigate these issues, including preserving two significant live oak trees, installing a six-foot concrete wall with a ten-foot landscape buffer along the residential boundary, and adjusting driveway access to right-in, left-out only to reduce neighborhood traffic.

Operational hours were proposed to end at 8 p.m. to minimize noise, with non-essential lighting also to be turned off at that time. The site plan includes 17 parking spaces and 16 vacuum stations, with conditions requiring employees to park on-site to prevent overflow into neighboring areas. The stormwater management plan features underground systems and a naturalized pond design to handle runoff effectively. The Board discussed concerns about vehicle stacking during peak times and the potential for illegal turns, emphasizing the importance of clear signage and design to minimize disruptions.

Landscape plans were reviewed, highlighting the preservation of specimen trees and the need for continuous understory planting along the residential buffer to enhance visual and noise screening. The applicant held a community meeting with limited attendance, and staff incorporated neighbor feedback into the conditions. The Board expressed a desire to ensure that the car wash operates in harmony with the surrounding neighborhood, balancing commercial activity with residential quality of life.

Finally, Mr. Lewis began discussion about a lot split application in the Virginia Heights East Historic District, involving a corner lot at Stirling Avenue and Glencoe Road. The proposal aims to preserve an existing historic home and detached garage while creating a new buildable lot behind it. The lot split requires a variance for lot width, as the existing lot width is below code minimums, but the lot area meets requirements. The applicant also seeks to acquire additional land from a neighboring property to meet size requirements.

The Board discussed the interpretation of the Comprehensive Plan and zoning code regarding lot size and width variances, with some debate over whether both dimensions must meet median neighborhood standards or only the dimension for which a variance is requested. The historic preservation aspect was emphasized, with conditions requiring approval from the Historic Preservation Board and limiting the size of the new home to ensure it fits the neighborhood character.

Concerns were raised about the panhandle-shaped lot extension used to meet area requirements, with some Board members expressing discomfort with this approach. The applicant intends to preserve the historic home intact, including the pool and detached structures, which influences the lot configuration. The Board acknowledged the emotional and complex nature of the request, balancing preservation goals with zoning compliance.

3. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:14 p.m.

ATTEST:

/s/ Mary Jean, Recording Secretary