

MINUTES
City of Glenwood Springs Planning and Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting
March 24, 2026
City Hall Council Chambers
101 West 8th Street
6:00 PM

1. Roll Call

Present: Kyle Jones (seated by motion), Patrick Corcoran, Amy Connerton, Joy White, John Houghton, Connie Geiman

Also Present: Community Development Director Trent Hyatt, Senior Planner Emery Ellingson, Long Range Principal Planner Jim Hardcastle, Community Development Technician Joel Asplund, City Attorney Karl Hanlon

Motion:

Motion to seat Commissioner Kyle Jones, carried unanimously by voice vote.

2. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Receipt of Minutes

Motion:

Motion to receive the minutes of February 24, 2026, was made by Commissioner Amy Connerton.

Commission Questions & Discussion Included:

The visibility of tracked changes and the appropriate level of detail for minutes.

Community Development Director Trent Hyatt elaborated that the issue was found and resolved since first published.

City Attorney Karl Hanlon elaborated that changes in the level of detail for meetings should be discussed with City Council before being made.

Outcome:

Commissioner Patrick Corcoran and Commissioner Connie Geiman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

4. Comments from citizens for items not appearing on the agenda

No public comments offered in person or online.

5. New Items

a. Planning File CDA-000027-2026 Code Amendment: Section 070.41.100 Exterior Lighting & Section 070.41.110 Signs

Presenter: Emery Ellingson, Senior Planner

Emery Ellingson presented updates to the lighting and signage standards, noting:

- Proposed regulation of correlated color temperature (CCT) for outdoor lighting, recommending a maximum of 3000K across all lighting districts.
- Clarification and expansion of rules for illuminated sign curfews, aligning Glenwood Springs with similar “dark sky–aligned” communities.
- Adjustments to gas station canopy lighting, reducing allowable maximum illumination from 25 foot-candles to 20.
- Comparisons made with Breckenridge, Flagstaff, Moab, and Nucla as examples of communities with strong dark-sky policies.

Commission Questions & Discussion Included:

- Discussion of legal nonconforming signs, noting that existing signs would remain allowed until replaced or modified.
- Safety vs. nuisance lighting concerns.
- Impacts on business owners and cost considerations.
- The need for shielding residential light fixtures and enforcement challenges.
- Desire for clear language on when signs may be turned back on (e.g., upon business opening).
- Public education as a tool to achieve voluntary compliance rather than strict regulation.
- Duration of amortization periods (initial proposal: 15 years; adjusted to 5 years after discussion).
- Whether changes position the city for potential Dark Sky certification (answer: not automatically).
- Interaction with public safety and existing city streetlighting (not part of this code change).

Public Comment:

No public comment received in person or online.

Motion:

Commissioner Connie Geiman moved to recommend **approval** of Planning File **CDA-000027-2026**, with the following additions:

1. Establish a **10:00 PM sign curfew** or one hour after closing, whichever is later.
2. Signs shall remain off **until business reopens**.

3. Add a **15-year amortization period** for existing illuminated signs to comply.
4. Recommend that the City conduct a **public education campaign** regarding dark-sky values and lighting practices.

Commissioner John Houghton moved to **amend the approval to a 5-year amortization period** with Commissioner Connie Geiman approving the amended time frame.

Outcome:

Motion was seconded by Commissioner John Houghton and approved by hand vote unanimously (digital vote system malfunctioned).

b. Planning File no. CDA-000026-2026 Code Amendment: Section 070.50.000 Landscaping, Screening, and Fencing

Presenter: Jim Hardcastle, Long-Range Principal Planner

Jim Hardcastle introduced a comprehensive set of amendments to clarify intent of code, ease of use, and remove errors regarding landscaping, screening and fencing:

- Cleanup of outdated or unclear language.
- Compliance with **State Senate Bill 24-5 (SB5)** regarding drought-tolerant landscaping, water conservation, and restrictions on non-functional turf.
- Integration of new **Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code** requirements, including vegetation spacing and defensible-space rules.
- Clarifications to street tree placement, mechanical equipment screening, and acceptable plant lists.

Major Components Presented:

- Updated exemptions for small-scale residential projects.
- Restrictions on **artificial turf** except in limited functional areas.
- Required spacing for trees based on mature canopy spread.
- New requirements for vegetation near structures (e.g., no plantings within 5 feet, 10-foot canopy separation).
- Stronger requirements for refuse enclosure screening.
- Use of city and county plant lists (drought-tolerant, non-noxious species).

Commission Questions & Discussion Included:

- Concern about interpretation of tree-maintenance requirements for homeowners.
- Clarification that new standards apply **only when development permits are triggered**, not to existing private yards.
- Street tree spacing conflicts between city standards and wildfire resiliency rules (40-ft canopy trees and 30-ft spacing requirement).
- Request for further staff review on aligning tree spacing with wildfire standards.

- Discussion of existing city practices, such as waterline projects replacing problem street trees.
- Conversation on short-term rentals, auditing, and legal nonconforming status (arose during commissioner comments but relevant to applicability discussions).

Public Comment:

No public comment received in person or online.

Motion:

Commissioner John Houghton moved to recommend **approval** of Planning File **CDA-000026-2026** with staff’s findings, **plus an amendment directing staff to re-evaluate street tree spacing standards** (Table 40.6 in the staff report) to ensure consistency with wildfire code (10-ft canopy separation requirement).

Outcome:

Motion seconded by Commissioner Connie Geiman and approved unanimously by digital vote.

6. Commissioner Comments

Commissioners discussed a variety of community topics, including:

- Short-term rental audits and enforcement of buffer zone regulations.
- Access to STR listings and monitoring tools.
- The city’s turf-replacement rebate program and community use of drought-tolerant landscaping.
- Questions about ignition-resistant vegetation categories.
- General appreciation expressed for collaboration among commissioners and staff.

7. Director Comments

Director Trent Hyatt expressed:

- Appreciation for the Commission’s dedication, thoughtfulness, and willingness to tackle complex policy topics.
- Recognition of Commissioner Gregory Cowan for his service.
- Notice of upcoming application reviews, possible appeals (including a tax-related short term rental case), and future code projects.
- Updates on anticipated water-use conditions, noting the contingencies and water reserves.

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:15PM.