



City of Othello
Planning Commission Meeting
July 21, 2025
Zuleica Morfin

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Dorow called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Dorow, Daniela Voorhies, Ruth Sawyer, Rob Simmons, Jose Garza, Alma Carmona, Maria Martinez

Staff: Community Development Director Anne Henning, Building and Planning Secretary Zuleica Morfin

Attendees: Council member John Lallas, Bob Carlson, Gil Alvarado

PUBLIC INPUT

Gil Alvarado, who represents AJ & Jodie Ochoa, came to the Planning Commission meeting to share an idea they had for the property the Ochoas own south of their office by Sage Hills Veterinary clinic. They are considering a commercial land use designation (C-3) and not into anything that was multifamily or high density as they were not trying to move people on to Broadway Ave. between buildings. The thought of what would go there was something like a big box rental, big box store, or big box appliance. These uses would be different from the type of commercial they are thinking about for their property north of Main Street across from Walmart. This information was presented to commissioners as an introduction to a concept of what they had in mind, before they go through the formal process of submitting an application for a Comprehensive Plan amendment.

MINUTES APPROVAL

June 16, 2025, minutes approved. M/S Simmons/Carmona

SUBDIVISION UPDATE - OMC TITLE 16 - DISCUSSION

When property is divided, state law requires that it be done through the subdivision process (with a few specific exceptions). Each jurisdiction sets local subdivision standards based on state requirements. Othello Municipal Code **Title 16: Subdivisions** is our version of that. This code is in need of a major update. There are many provisions that don't match up to current practice or actually conflict with other sections of the code. In addition, the Title is long, confusing, and overly complicated. Most sections of the Title have not been updated since initial adoption in 1995. The intent of updating the Subdivision Title is to streamline the process, organize it better, make it easier to understand, and eliminate discrepancies. This title is complicated to work on because the chapters are so interrelated, requiring a lot of time and effort by both staff and the Commission to understand the issues and try to solve them in the best way possible. The Commission has done a considerable amount of work on this title already, but it has been spread over several years.

Commissioners discussed sections of Chapter 16.29 DESIGN STANDARDS.

16.29.210 Blocks—Length

~~In general, blocks shall be as long as is reasonably possible consistent with the topography and the needs for convenient access, circulation, control and safety of street traffic, and type of land use~~

~~proposed, but ordinarily,~~ Residential block lengths shall not exceed ~~six~~ twelve hundred feet or be less than three hundred feet. Residential blocks longer than 600' may be allowed when a mid-block multi-use pathway is provided through the block, and a raised crosswalk is provided for the mid-block crossing. The face of the plat shall specify which abutting owner(s) is(are) responsible for service and maintenance of the mid-block path. For the safety and visibility of path users, a mid-block path shall be a straight line, such that the entire path is visible from both ends. Block length shall be measured from the edges of the lots, not including right-of-way.

Commissioners thought the new language for a straight-line path was acceptable. They discussed that lighting would be beneficial but thought that would be asking too much of the developer. Council member John Lallas suggested adding the width of a pathway and suggested it be at least 8ft wide. Discussion that the right-of-way for the path should be 15' to match the required crosswalk width. The portion of the path not required to be hard surface could be gravel. Discussion that the City should maintain these paths. Could be plowed with a pickup. Ms. Henning mentioned there should be bollards to prevent vehicle access from the neighborhood, that detail could be included in the Public Works Design Standards.

16.29.280 Tree planting.

Street planting plans in compliance with OMC 17.74 ~~duplicate~~ must be submitted with the application to the commission and receive its approval before planting is begun. Care of any trees that are planted by the subdivider will be the responsibility of the adjacent landowner.

City Council direction has been that the developer should not be required to install landscaping for single-family subdivisions; it should be up to the homeowner to install the landscaping. Ms. Henning suggested removing this section about the tree plan. Commissioner agreed to remove it seeing that it made no sense to keep it when developers aren't required to put in trees.

Commissioner Alma Carmona made a motion to leave the tree planting plan in the subdivision section. M/S Carmona/Martinez. Motion failed 2-4 with Sawyer, Voorhies, Simmons, and Garza opposed. The tree plan requirement will be removed.

Chapter 16.17 UNIT LOT SUBDIVISIONS.

This was a chapter drafted to comply with 2023 state requirements. Now in 2025 the state says small cities like Othello don't need to adopt it. Commissioners all agreed to not include this.

Chapter 16.09 DEFINITIONS

Commissioners went through the changes Ms. Henning drafted in this chapter. Commissioners didn't have any concerns regarding the changes.

16.05.090 Legal lot.

Our current code says that a lot must be platted to get a building permit. This has been the way to get improvements such as sidewalks. This does create a problem with development when someone has an unplatted lot, and then it must be taken to City Council. City Council then needs to adopt a resolution allowing them to build on unplatted property. The goal was to define it more clearly and make the process easier. Ms. Henning suggested requiring that the improvements be finished by the time the building permit was finished to make it an easier process. Ms. Henning will work on this and get some input from the city attorney.

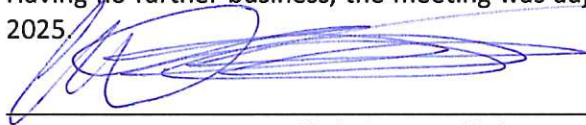
DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

Commissioner Rob Simmons asked Ms. Henning for how to find information about the projects listed in the report. Ms. Henning showed the Building and Planning page of the City website under Land Use Notices where the public hearing information is posted regarding annexations and other projects.

There are 430 individual rental units that are now licensed with another 104 in the process and some landlords are under enforcement to get their rental license. Commissioner Alma Carmona took notice that the rental numbers have gotten a lot smaller.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:43pm. Next meeting is Monday August 18, 2025.



Chris Dorow, Chair

Date:

8/18/25



Zuleica Morfin, Building and Planning Secretary

Date:

8/18/25

