



City of Othello
Planning Commission Meeting
October 20, 2025
Zuleica Morfin

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Dorow called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Chris Dorow, Ruth Sawyer, Rob Simmons, Alma Carmona, Maria Martinez

Remote: Daniela Voorhies, Jose Garza

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

Attendees: Council member John Lallas, Council member Angel Garza, Bob Carlson, Mike Livingston

PUBLIC INPUT

None

MINUTES APPROVAL

August 18, 2025, minutes approved. M/S Sawyer/Carmona

SUBDIVISION UPDATE - OMC TITLE 16 – PUBLIC HEARING & RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL

When property is divided, state law requires that it be done through the subdivision process. 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 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.

Chapter 16.29 DESIGN STANDARDS

Bob Carlson provided comments to staff. Most of them were correcting typos, but he also suggested there be sections for utilities of storm water and irrigation, to match the other utility sections. A small section will be added addressing those utilities.

Chapter 16.44 Violations

A violation of the subdivision ordinance would normally be handled by the City Attorney not the Code Enforcement Officer because this is not a building code violation or a nuisance.

The planning commission felt they have accomplished updating the subdivision code by simplifying it and making the process smoother but also creating opportunities for developers to utilize additional opportunities.

Public hearing was opened at 6:10pm

Ecology/Wetlands

There was a comment letter from the Washington Dept. of Ecology. Chair Chris Dorow asked for the definition of wetlands. The State standard of wetlands is water for a certain length of time, wetland vegetation, and soils showing that they've been saturated. Whether there are potential wetlands on a site is something that gets reviewed whenever a project comes in and is covered in Title 13, so this doesn't need to be included in the subdivision code.

16.10.040. Boundary line adjustment submittal standards

The language in this section will be changed to "A fee adopted by resolution of the City Council" so that it is more consistent with the other language in this code.

16.29.100 Street widths and public utility easement

60 feet of right-of-way for neighborhood streets was added back to this section because the public works design standards is still 66 feet. Projects for the last few years have been granted deviations to allow 60' right-of-way. In order to reduce the need for a developer to request a deviation, the Municipal Code should show that 60' is the width until the public works design standards are updated to show 60'.

16.29.180 Alleys—Standards

The public works standards don't have a width for commercial and industrial alleys. The 25 feet alley width in commercial and industrial zones that was originally crossed off will be left in for now.

16.29.210 Blocks—Length

Commissioners asked that this section be pointed out to the Council.

16.29.230 Blocks—Crosswalks

Commissioners thought a raised and ADA accessible crosswalk was the best way to slow traffic but might also be expensive if it's done after the development as opposed to adding it as part of a development. Council member Angel Garza said concrete is more expensive than asphalt so it would depend on what material you are using to raise the crosswalk. It was pointed out that if the crosswalk is raised, then people won't park there.

Public testimony was opened at 6:52pm. Chair Dorow called for those in support, those neutral, and those opposed to the changes proposed to the subdivision code. Hearing none, the public testimony was closed at 6:52pm.

Ms. Henning noted that there are still some comments coming in on the draft. The Public Works Director is still reviewing the draft, and the Department of Commerce scheduled a meeting with her tomorrow to discuss the draft. She did not expect major edits, only slight wording changes. She asked the Commission if they were comfortable making a recommendation at this point, knowing that there are changes still to be made.

Public hearing was closed at 6:56pm.

Motion to recommend adoption of the updated subdivision code, acknowledging that there might be slight edits. M/S Martinez/Carmona

SAND HILL ESTATES 8 MAJOR PLAT LAYOUT- PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

Palos Verdes LLC is proposing to not continue building apartments after the 2 current buildings, and to instead finish out their property with more single-family lots. Due to the street pattern that has been

created for the proposed apartment development, this results a long dead-end street. This is not allowed by OMC 16.29.050, which limits dead-end streets to 700' and 20 dwelling units. The preliminary proposal is over 1000' and 30 lots, which could potentially be developed with more than one unit each. The developer is proposing to maintain secondary access through the apartment parking lot, but with speed bumps to discourage through traffic. This proposal has been discussed with Fire, Building, and Public Works/Engineering. The developer is also considering a street stub to the north, for possible future connectivity, although there is no street connection proposed at this time, and it is unknown how the property to the north will be developed (it is zoned light industrial and is owned by the City). Commissioners along with Council member Angel Garza discussed the street-stub and fencing of the apartments in the future. The proposed street stub could also be access for a future ballfield if it were to be developed. Bob Carlson asked Council member Angel Garza what would keep the access through the cul-de-sac open if the apartments were sold. Some sort of agreement would have to be made not allowing the new owners to close off the opening in the cul-de-sac. This topic was for discussion only, no decisions were made since there is no application yet.

ADAMS COUNTY HOMELESS HOUSING PLAN

All counties in the state are required to have a 5-Year Homeless Housing Plan. Adams County has not had one before now. The WA Dept of Commerce had some funds for Coordinated Low Income Housing Planning (CLIHP) that we were able to use to pay for preparation of a Homeless Housing Plan, along with some other housing planning services (County-Wide Planning Policies on Housing, Land Capacity Analysis for housing). We contracted with Hope Source for the Homeless Plan. A Task Force has been meeting monthly to work on this plan. At this point, there is a draft plan which will be presented to the Adams County Board of Commissioners at a public hearing Nov. 12 at 6:00 PM in the Othello District Court Room.

Commissioner Rob Simmons asked for the definition of affordable housing in dollar amount. Low income is less than 80% of the median income of the area, and moderate income is 80% to 115%. Another definition is that affordable is no more than 30% of their income for housing and utilities.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm. Next meeting is Monday November 17, 2025.

Alma Carmona

Date: 12-15-25

Alma Carmona, Chair

Zuleica Morfin

Date: 12-15-25

Zuleica Morfin, Building and Planning Secretary