



City of Othello
Planning Commission Meeting
December 15, 2025
Zuleica Morfin

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Alma Carmona called the meeting to order at 6:02pm

ROLL CALL

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

Remote: Jose Garza joined at 6:05pm

Vacancy: One Planning Commission position currently vacant

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

Attendees: Council member John Lallas, Council member Chris Dorow, Bob Carlson, Mike Livingston

PUBLIC INPUT

None

MINUTES APPROVAL

October 20, 2025, minutes approved. M/S Simmons/Sawyer

REPLAT OF SAND HILL ESTATES #6 MAJOR PLAT DEVIATIONS - RECOMMENDATION

A & Y Leasing LLC/Palos Verdes LLC has applied for the last phase of the Sand Hill Estates development north of Olympia Street. This phase includes two requests for deviations of street standards: 60' right-of-way width and a dead-end street longer than allowed by code. OMC 16.40 sets up the process for deviations.

The deviation for 60' instead of 66' right-of-way has been granted for previous phases of this development. The Public Works Design Standards for constructed street width were reduced in 2022, but the right-of-way standard was not reduced until after this plat came in. The extra 6' of right-of-way is not needed by the City and can be better used by the abutting property owner as part of their lot. Engineering/Public Works, Fire, and Planning staff were in agreement that the right-of-way width request is appropriate and recommended approval. Similar requests were approved for previous phases of the development. This discrepancy in the code has been corrected in the recently updated Subdivision Title.

The request for a long dead-end street is because this property was originally planned to be a series of apartment buildings, with access through the parking lots from 8th Ave to 11th Ave. After construction of the first two apartment buildings, the property owner decided not to build more apartments and to instead create individual lots similar to the previous Sand Hill Estates Phases. This created challenges, since now there is very little street access available for the remaining land. There is no location to bring a street north from Cascade Street without removing a recently-constructed house, since all lots along Cascade Street have been built on and sold. The property to the north is zoned Light Industrial and is owned by the City, which does not yet have a plan for this portion of the property.

Adams County Fire District 5, Engineering/Public Works, Building, and Planning staff were in general agreement that the current proposal is the best of a difficult situation. The 9th Avenue stub street was proposed by the developer as a result of these discussions. It provides a potential way to provide more connectivity to the location, depending on how the property to the north develops.

Staff recommended the following conditions:

1. The dead-end street shall be connected to the parking lot of the apartment buildings and the access easement shall be noted on the face of the plat. The easement for vehicle access may be vacated and access through the parking lot restricted at such a time as dedicated and improved access is provided through 9th Avenue to the existing City street system; however, emergency access and pedestrian access shall be maintained permanently.
2. Vehicle access north of the north boundary of the 9th Ave. stub shall be limited to emergency use only. At the north end of the street, the proponent shall place bollards or otherwise prevent unauthorized access using a method approved by the Public Works Director. Parking on the street stub may be restricted in order to maintain access in case of emergency.

Commissioners had discussed this issue at the last meeting and had no further comments on this topic. This deviation is justified by the nature of the surrounding development, with no access available to the south and the uncertainty of the development pattern to the north.

A Motion for approval of these deviations for the replat of Sand Hill Estates 6 with staff's recommendations was passed. M/S Simmons/Voorhies

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE- DISCUSSION OF TOPIC AREAS

The City of Othello has embarked on the process of updating our 2015 Comprehensive Plan and has hired SCJ Alliance as a consultant to help with this process. One of their first tasks was to review the checklists the Dept. of Commerce provides showing all requirements for Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations updates and to note where Othello doesn't meet the standard. There are two checklists: One for cities fully planning under the Growth Management Act, and one for cities who are partially planning. As a city in a partially-planning county, Othello is only required to meet the requirements for partially planning; however, many of the ideas for fully-planning cities support good planning in general and also help us maintain consistency with other jurisdictions across the state. While the checklists include both Comprehensive Plan topics and Development Regulation topics, for now we will look only at the Comprehensive Plan portion. Development Regulations (Zoning and other regulations) will be worked on at a later date.

The agenda packet included a chart of "Comprehensive Plan Potential Topics, Adapted from Dept of Commerce Periodic Update Checklist for Fully-Planning Cities". There was discussion about the following sections of the chart:

- Evaluate urban growth area size
Bob Carlson suggested to evaluate the growth area size. Also, the the definition of an "urban growth area" is specific to jurisdictions that are fully planning. Othello is not fully planning. He suggested using a different name to avoid confusion. Commissioners agreed to revisit this.
- Integrate county-wide planning policies (county currently has these only for housing but may develop more as they update their comp plan)
The county will most likely be updating their comprehensive plan and may have more policies. Commissioners will review this when it gets updated by the county.

- Updating future land use map
Will be included.
- Consider urban planning approaches that increase physical activity & reduce vehicle miles traveled
Not relevant to our small community, where everything is so close together.
- A consistent population projection throughout the plan which is consistent with the allocation of projected countywide population and housing needs
This is currently a problem with our current plans; they're supposed to be consistent and aren't.
- Where applicable, a review of drainage, flooding, and stormwater runoff in the area, and guidance for corrective actions to mitigate or cleanse discharges that pollute waters of the state
With Othello having a large city stormwater basin along Highway 26 and not discharging to surface waters, Commissioners agreed this was a low priority.
- Give special consideration to achieving environmental justice in goals and policies, including efforts to avoid creating or worsening environmental health disparities.
Commissioners did not feel this has been much of an issue.
- Reduce and mitigate the risk to lives and property posed by wildfires
Commissioners felt this could be a low priority, since our area is not at high risk for wildfires.
- Goals & policies for moderate density housing options, including duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes, within the urban growth boundary
Commissioner Rob Simmons felt that if they were going to be talking about housing needs this was something they would need to talk about as well.
- Consideration of the role of accessory dwelling units in meeting housing needs
The Planning Commission has worked on the ADU issue a lot but this issue has generally not been supported by the Council. Now that there has been a lot of turnover among Council members, this may be something that Commissioners should revisit. New Councilmember Chris Dorow recommended that Commissioners look at this in the context of what is needed for housing.
- Identify local policies and regulations that result in racially disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion in housing, including:
 - Zoning that may have a discriminatory effect
 - Disinvestment
 - Infrastructure availability
 Commissioner Jose Garza asked if this included schools. Commissioner Rob Simmons said the school district looks at racial and economic balance, and may reassign students from outside city limits to improve the balance. He also mentioned that he didn't feel that Othello's zoning created discrimination, it's more price that does.
- Adopted multimodal levels of service standards for all locally-owned arterials, transit routes, and active transportation facilities
Commissioner Daniela Voorhies mentioned that this would become especially important with the increased popularity of electronic bikes.
- Goals, policies, and programs that identify, protect, and enhance natural areas to foster resiliency as well as areas of vital habitat for safe passage and species migration.
Commissioners had varied perspectives on this issue, since there is a lot of habitat around but it has been decreasing. Commissioner Ruth Sawyer mentioned that burrowing owl populations have been declining. Overall, there was consensus to look at this issue.
- Goals, policies, and programs that address natural hazards, including drought, heat, smoke, and wildfire
Commissioners agreed that this issue should be considered.

CHAIR & VICE CHAIR FOR 2026

Chair Alma Carmona opened up nominations for Chair and Vice Chair.

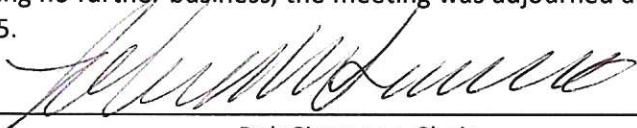
Commissioner Daniela Voorhies nominated Commissioner Rob Simmons for Chair. M/S

Voorhies/Martinez. No further nominations. Motion passed 6-0

Chair Alma Carmona nominated Commissioner Daniela Voorhies for Vice Chair. M/S Carmona/Garza. No further nominations. Motion passed 6-0

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm. Next meeting is Tuesday January 20, 2025.

 Date: 1/20/20
Rob Simmons, Chair

 Date: 1-20-26
Zuleica Morfin, Building and Planning Secretary