



City of Othello
Planning Commission Meeting
March 16, 2026
Zuleica Morfin

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rob Simmons called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Rob Simmons, Ruth Sawyer, Daniela Voorhies, Donald Burks, MD

Excused: Chad Robbins (ill), Maria Martinez and Jose Garza (both attending leadership conference)

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

Consultant: Aren Murcar (SCJ Alliance)

Attendees: Council member Chris Dorow, Council member Alma Carmona, Council member Kelli Camp, Bob Carlson, Mike Livingston, Genna Dorow

PUBLIC INPUT

Gina Dorow, who is representing Terra Gold Farms as a facilitator, informed commissioners she would be attending future meetings as a resource for any questions or discussions about their land development plans and intended uses. She also stated that Terra Gold Farms is committed to thoughtful growth that benefits both the community and local economy. They're focused on collaboration, transparency, and sustainability throughout the development process.

MINUTES APPROVAL

February 17, 2026, minutes approved with a correction to the spelling of Commissioner Robbins' name on p.2. M/S Voorhies/Burks

March 2, 2026 special meeting minutes approved. M/S Sawyer/Burks

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE – GOALS & POLICIES

The next step in our Comprehensive Plan Update is to review Goals and Policies from the existing Plan and determine which to keep, modify, or delete. Aren Murcar explained that a common way to do goals and policies is to have a cross-referenced table with all goals and policies in the plan.

Commissioners reviewed the document in the packet with existing goals and policies that were identified as needing discussion to determine which to keep as-is, which to modify, and which to delete.

Current Goal Statement

1.1.1 The City of Othello vision should be revisited regularly as new council members join the city council.

Planning Commission notes:

- Set a time frame
- Similar to a corporate strategic plan
- Regularly, at least every 2 years

- “Revisit” could be interpreted as either remind everyone what is in the vision to make sure we are staying on track, or it could suggest reviewing to see if changes need to be made

1.1.2 Promote a service delivery system visible to users, accessible to all, and centrally located.

Planning commission notes:

- Too vague
- Transparent and efficient but could be covered in other goals and policies
- Website is hard to use
- Question about whether vague statements can get the city into trouble. Aren Murcar said he didn’t think so
- Gives flexibility, but might be better covered in other goals and policies
- Commissioner Ruth Sawyer- Had to look up what delivery system is. It feels like it isn’t being accomplished currently. More confusing to leave it in.
- OK to remove

1.1.3 Promote an annexation strategy that ensures requests for expansion results in development projects; effective and efficient service delivery; and that do not place undue burden on city tax-payers for the expansion of city services.

Planning commission notes:

- Commissioner Daniela Voorhies- Likes keeping statement about “undue burden”
- City can be better facilitators
- Change verbiage “we support and encourage, annexations that will result in development projects”

1.2.3 Development adjacent to transportation corridors, gateways, or intersections of concern, should be responsible for contributing to the development of gateway features.

Planning commission notes:

- Council member Chris Dorow- Burdensome is always bad
- Discussion about whether this was meant as addressing just aesthetics
- Aren Murcar- Recommends removal
- Remove

1.5.2 Annexation areas will automatically be zoned for high-density (R-4 or as amended) residential unless the annexation is accompanied by a land use application and a zone change request for a specific zoning district.

Planning commission notes:

- Keep in mind not everyone wants to live in high density
- Leave a little open for the developer to decide
- We don’t need to list a specific zone, it is based on the Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan
- Remove

1.6.3 In order to prevent premature rural-density development within the growth area, lots created in the county after the CP is adopted should not be considered for services provision unless they are annexed prior.

Planning commission notes:

- Needs to be consistent with the resolution on service extension outside city limits
- Will revisit

1.7 Create an attractive development atmosphere where commercial and industrial opportunities can provide local economic growth.

Planning commission notes:

- Possible conflict with 7-1 through 7-3, preservation of agriculture
- Anne Henning- Prime agricultural land shouldn't be in the city or the growth area
- Keep

2.2 Develop an Othello growth area that provides adequate land designated for residential development.

Planning commission notes:

- The growth area has already been designated. Change this to "Evaluate" instead of "Develop"
- Review at least every 10 years

3.4.1 Minimize the impacts to existing infrastructure by requiring development to add a minimal number of taps into city main.

Planning commission notes:

- Unclear what the intention was.
- Possibly remove "taps" and replace with connections

3.5.4 Explore the option of providing industrial wastewater services by the city or in partnership with other entities.

Planning commission notes:

- Genna Dorow- You don't want industrial wastewater going into your domestic system
- Would need a separate industrial wastewater system

3.7-3.7.7 on Animal control issues

Planning commission notes:

- Aren Murcar- Hasn't seen animal control in a comp. plan before
- Too specific for a comprehensive plan
- Remove

4.4.2 The city wants to create an impression of Othello from the highways. The city wants to be seen as a pleasant place with remarkable landmarks and gateways.

Planning commission notes:

- This concept should move to the economic development section

4.4.3 Areas of the city directly visible from a state highway must be maintained in a manner that reflects the city in a positive way to the traveling public on the highway.

Planning commission notes

- This should be addressed by our code enforcement program
- Remove
- The city could purchase and develop parklands

5.1.2 Prioritize infrastructure development in advance of need. Anticipate needs and coordinate city infrastructure with economic development opportunities.

Planning commission notes:

- Not appropriate for existing residents to subsidize developers
- Could be a shared cost
- Re-word, maybe “Consider” instead of “Prioritize”

5.1.7 Maximize the existing short line railroad that serves Othello to facilitate additional intermodal transportation options for new and existing industry.

Planning commission notes:

- Important to keep this

5.2.1 Position Othello industrial development areas to support the city with little or no impact on areas planned for residential and retail/ commercial development.

Planning commission notes:

- Buffers
- Keep

5.2.4 Facilitate food processing equipment manufacturers to foster horizontal expansion of and support for the food processing industry.

Planning commission notes:

- Horizontal development has already been done
- No longer relevant

5.2.5 Encourages distribution, logistics, and fulfillment centers, capitalizing on the abundant regional transportation system in the Othello region.

Planning commission notes:

- Add data centers
- Keep

5.3.10 Work with the Othello area Chamber of Commerce, Adams County Development Council and local business owners to have annual “shop locally” campaigns to reduce retail leakage.

Planning commission notes:

- Already accomplished
- Remove

5.3.11 Actively participate in economic development efforts including partnerships, recruiting efforts, and attendance of conventions.

Planning commission notes:

- Remove

5.3.12 Facilitate diverse residential growth that results in an increase in moderate- and upper-income population levels to support retail expansion and recruitment.

Planning commission notes:

- Doesn't fit Othello
- Remove

5.5 Develop a sense of place to increase civic/community involvement and expand visitor traffic and tourism in the Othello region.

Planning commission notes:

- Vision work was more specific
- Good to keep as a goal
- Expand on it

5.5.3 Foster expansion of the Othello beautification projects to include all points of entry into Othello, First Avenue, and Broadway Avenue.

Planning Commission:

- Keep
- Beautification Committee still active and looking for new members
- Explain what the projects are. Lighting? Gateways?

5.7.3 Serve as an anchor member of an Othello Community Roundtable to collect and share critical information about ongoing projects and activities.

Planning commission notes:

- Keep this idea but update the wording
- Promote community efforts that share critical information about projects

4.a. Each general – use park should have no more than half its area developed with formal facilities.

Planning commission notes:

- Important to have open space for unprogrammed activities. Keep

7.1 Protect prime agricultural land from development.

Planning commission notes:

- Set buffers for Ag.
- Keep

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm. Next meeting is Monday April 20, 2026.

Robert M. Simmons, DC
Robert M. Simmons, DC (Apr 24, 2026 19:57:52 PDT)

Rob Simmons, Chair

Date: Apr 24, 2026

zuleica morfin

Zuleica Morfin, Building and Planning Secretary

Date: April 24, 2026







2026.03.16.Minutes

Final Audit Report

2026-04-25

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