

Planning Commission of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 8, 2025
6:30 PM

Call to Order

The Peachtree City Planning Commission met Monday September 8, 2025 in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Chairman Scott Ritenour called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Vice Chairman Kenneth Hamner and Commissioners Andrew Kriz and Robert Halverson were present, as was Commissioner Jack Allen, filling the unexpired term of Christopher Jenkins. Also in attendance were Planning and Development Director Shayla Reed, Senior Planner Lora Hooks, Recording Secretary Martha Barksdale, and IT Specialist Elijah Brewer.

Pledge of Allegiance

Announcements

None

Presentations - None

Public Comment

None

Agenda Changes

Kriz moved to move item #3 from Old Agenda items to #1 under that heading. Allen seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Ritenour said the public comments period would not be part of the meetings until there was clarification from staff on how it should be conducted.

Minutes

1. Planning Commission Meeting August 25, 2025

Allen moved to approve the August 25, 2025 Planning Commission meeting minutes. Kriz seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Agenda Items

1. Consider a Text Amendment to the Sign Ordinance, Chapter 66, for revisions to roof sign regulations

Reed reviewed what had been discussed at a prior meeting, pointing out discrepancies in the current Code regarding roof signs. Section 66-5 said roof signs were prohibited, but Section 66-15 then said no sign should extend above the eave line or the top of parapet wall. Webster's Dictionary defines a parapet as a low wall at the edge of a platform, roof, or bridge.

She showed two examples, one that showed a sign that would clearly be prohibited because it was atop the roof and the other showed a sign affixed to the top of the parapet wall, which is questionable. A sign high on the parapet wall was appealing to businesses because it could be seen from a distance, Reed pointed out.

Staff was proposing to add a definition of a parapet wall in Section 66-3 as a low protective wall or barrier extending above a roof, balcony, or platform as an integral part of a wall that extends above a roof structure of a building. Section 66-15 was proposed to be edited to say that for any building used primarily for retail or service commercial, office/institutional, or industrial purposes, no part of a wall or building sign shall extend above the eave line or along a parapet on the wall to which it is attached.

Halverson said he was glad the language covered an extension of the wall used to screen equipment.

Kriz said his concern was the word "or" in Section 66-15 and thought they should break those restrictions into two parts to make it clear that both were prohibited.

"Coping" was another term for eave line, Halverson noted, and might be clearer. Reed read the dictionary's definition of "eave line," and the Commissioners agreed to add "coping" in parentheses.

They then discussed the wording. Halverson said he was fine with whatever made it easiest for staff to explain to applicants. The intent was that no signs would be permitted on the wall above the eave line or coping. Reed said a parapet could be several heights, and she thought the words "to which it was attached" were important.

Hooks suggested getting rid of the word "along." Kriz said the point was that the sign couldn't be along the top of the parapet wall. It could be on the wall, but below the eave line. Reed said they could make it so that the sign had to be below the roof, but Halverson pointed out that it was difficult to determine where that was when it was behind a wall.

Kriz noted that a sign at Westpark Walk, atop a parapet, was the reason this had come up and was what they were trying to prohibit. He said they could just say signs were not allowed at all on parapets. Reed commented that many big box stores extended their walls greatly above the roofs to give their signs a better chance of being seen.

Kriz suggested saying signs were prohibited: 1) above an eave line or 2) upon a parapet.

Ritenour asked if they wanted to recommend no signs on parapets? Roof signs were not permitted at all, but a parapet was not the roof, it was an extension of a wall. There had to be a line of demarcation, he said, asking Halverson if there was one. Halverson said a parapet was defined as the piece of wall above the roof line and was shown on an architectural plan.

Halverson's concern was that it would artificially inflate the height of the building. Hooks pointed out that most developers didn't look into signage regulations until well into the building process.

Kriz said he thought it should say no signs above the eave line or upon the parapet wall. Hooks suggested using "nor" instead of "or." Halverson said the main issue was to prevent signs from projecting above the top of the building.

Halverson moved to recommend Council approve the text amendment to Section 66-15 based on staff's recommendations. Kriz seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Consider a Text Amendment to revise land use regulations for Cosmetic Tattooing and Microblading

This was referred to them by City Council at the request of the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce. Council had requested the Planning Commission create two proposed amendments: one that recommended support of allowing cosmetic tattooing and microblading and another that recommended prohibiting those businesses.

Currently, the Zoning Ordinance did not define tattoo parlors but restricted them in General Commercial (GC) districts. Reed said a definition would be added. Also, the Zoning Ordinance did not mention cosmetic tattooing, microblading, or body art, and, therefore, a business license could not be granted to these businesses. They were, however, mentioned in the Health and Sanitation chapter of the City's code.

During discussion at a prior meeting, the Commissioners asked staff to research distance requirements used by nearby communities for these businesses. She had provided examples. Also, staff had provided zoning maps to show GC and Light Industrial (LI) districts. Reed said LI was very close to GC in three areas: at the SR 54/74 intersection and Huddleston Road, at Crosstown Road and SR 74, and along Senoia Road in Kedron Village.

She went over staff's suggestions for language if they would like to send this to Council, either to restrict or permit. Definitions were necessary, and she provided them for tattoo, cosmetic tattooing, microblading, and body art. Staff also asked if they would want to see these businesses placed in LI as a conditional use. The conditional use would say they could be no less than 5,000 feet from another similar use. It said every application must be accompanied by a survey showing this requirement had been met.

Also, Reed said, Council had not asked them to look at tattoo parlors, so they still would be restricted. She added that staff had recommended LI for the other uses, but the Planning Commission could recommend they be allowed in other zoning districts, if desired.

She went over the language if the Planning Commission wanted to restrict these uses. It began with definitions and added these three uses to what was currently in the code.

Allen asked if all three uses were lumped into one category, so that, for instance, one cosmetic tattooing business had to be a mile away only from another cosmetic tattooing business or did they all three have to be a mile away from each other. Reed said it could be however the Planning Commission wanted it, but staff had placed them all as one use to make enforcement easier.

Why was tattooing prohibited in GC? Hamner asked. Reed said she did not know.

Hamner asked why 5,000 feet was chosen as the buffer between these businesses? Reed explained that the areas where GC and LI abutted were about a mile apart. This basically limited it to no more than one per village. Hamner added that Commerce had just a 500-foot buffer, and Fayetteville had no buffer.

Fayetteville tied microblading to cosmetology and required Board of Health studio permits. He asked Reed if there was anything like that in this proposal, and she said there was not, but added that Fayetteville duplicated the language that was used in Chapter 42 of Peachtree City's Municipal Code. Reed clarified that Chapter 42 had no relevance in Peachtree City right now since the uses mentioned therein were not allowed per the Zoning Code.

Kriz said they would want to make sure these businesses had the appropriate permits. Ritenour said that might be more of a matter for City Council because that fell under the Municipal Code, not the Zoning Code.

What about parcels with multiple businesses? Halverson asked. Reed said it was 5,000 feet to the next parcel, not between businesses.

Hamner said it was interesting that this was not allowed in GC. He saw cosmetic tattooing as different from regular tattooing. Reed noted that Council was asking them to discuss if cosmetic tattooing should be separate. Maybe it should be treated as other cosmetic businesses, Hamner suggested. Reed said the Planning Commission could recommend it be allowed in other zoning districts. Hamner asked what the other Commissioners thought.

Kriz noted that there seemed to be a need in the community for cosmetic tattooing and microblading, and Ritenour noted that right now, nothing was allowed. Opening up LI for cosmetic tattooing would at least bring it into the city. The Planning Commission could recommend Council consider allowing it in GC, though.

Allen supported the distance requirement, saying he had lived somewhere that did not regulate the number of these types of businesses, and it was not good. Hamner

said he wondered if they were treating cosmetic tattooing fairly or were they stigmatizing it because it was a form of tattooing. Ritenour mentioned the proximity of liquor stores in Fayetteville as an example of oversaturation.

Hamner said it came down to how they viewed cosmetic tattooing. Allen said his concern was not that they had these businesses, but oversaturation.

Halverson asked if they applied the 5,000-foot distance requirement, how many of these businesses could be allowed in Peachtree City? Reed said she had calculated that there could possibly be two in the 54/74-Huddleston Road area, and one each in the other two villages for a total of four at most. Halverson said he wasn't concerned about oversaturation.

Reed stated that they recommend language both to restrict and permit these uses to City Council.

Kriz moved to recommend to City Council that they consider a text amendment to revise land use regulations for cosmetic tattooing and microblading as recommended by staff. Allen seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Ritenour thanked everyone for their consideration and work on this, saying text amendments were not easy.

3. Consider a Text Amendment to the Land Development Ordinance, Article XI - Vegetation Protection and Landscape Requirements

Reed said they had previously discussed this as a City-initiated text amendment to provide regulations on the planting of native plants while prohibiting the planting of invasive species. In addition to the materials included in the Commissioner's meeting packets, Reed proposed removing Callery Pear from the existing list of recommended small tree plantings for public property following the guidance of Urban Forestry Program Manager Bob Werner.

Werner said he had looked over the amendment, and it seemed in line with what other municipalities were doing and the lists of recommended and prohibited plantings was accurate.

Hamner had several questions for Werner, beginning by asking what advantages native plants provided over non-natives. Werner stated that there were many, among them that natives did not spread rampantly as invasive plants were prone to do, and also that they were compatible with native wildlife.

Allen clarified that not all non-natives were invasive, which Werner said was correct. Hamner said natives required less use of pesticides, insecticides, and fertilizer once established, and Werner agreed. He also agreed that native species would be more cost-effective over non-natives for those reasons.

Another Hamner question explored how adopting a list of native species like Athens-Clarke County had done would give staff clearer standards and make landscaping plans easier to enforce. Werner said he believed he would be in charge of enforcement, and it would be easier if everyone used the same guidelines.

Were native plants reasonably accessible to landscapers in the area? Hamner asked, and Werner said they were available at most providers. Hamner also talked with Werner about how using native plants would give Peachtree City landscapes a more unified character compared to the generic ornamentals often seen elsewhere.

Allen said he agreed with a ban on invasive plants and also agreed that the City should use only native plants. However, he didn't understand what right they would have to stop a private developer from putting non-natives on their property. He referred back to the previous Planning Commission meeting, when they okayed a landscape plan for a hotel. That plan utilized a variety of non-native ornamentals to give an Asian garden effect. If the plants were non-invasive and the owner was maintaining them, what right did the City have to say no? Allen asked.

Kriz clarified that this was a change to the ordinance to remove Callery Pear and a proposal to add Division 6 to Article 11 to regulate and list native and non-native plantings. Reed said that was correct, noting it came from a request from City Council that staff review and determine where to place in the Code. The new language mirrored what was used by other municipalities.

There was an enforcement section in Division 6 that allowed the City to take action against invasive species when they were found on a property in the City limits. Kriz stated there was an ability for the City to pass along the costs of removal if the property owner failed to correct the violation. There was also a list of native species, with a notation that other native and non-native species could be proposed if the applicant provided a written justification for their use.

Reed said that provision was included because the question came up about what would happen if the trees on the list were not available. This would give the City the authority to decide in that event that was the case.

Kriz asked how the lists of natives and non-natives were developed, and Reed said they were based on lists from other cities in the area. Werner remarked that he had reviewed and approved the lists.

Ritenour noted that the hotel Allen had mentioned would be able to put forth their plan with a request to use other species. Kriz then pointed out that there was a list of permitted native trees and prohibited non-natives, but no list of permitted non-natives. A developer would have to provide a rationale for using non-natives.

Over the past few years, the Planning Commission had been trying to encourage applicants to use native plants. He thought it was fine to allow the use of non-natives if staff approved. As an incentive for the use of natives, Kriz suggested offering to reduce the Tree Fund contribution requirement if a plan consisted of more than 50% natives.

Halverson recalled that one of the applicants with the hotel had said the native species were not readily available. Werner said that was not correct; natives were available. Halverson said he wanted to make sure they were not putting a hardship on developers.

Halverson referred to a line in the text amendment that said the City could come onto the property and remove the invasive species, saying that seemed aggressive to him. He wanted to see escalating fines for violations, rather than going on someone's property. Ritenour said that was standard language for a homeowners association (HOA).

Allen asked what Werner's response would be in the case of something like the hotel where nothing was invasive, just not native. He said he would meet with the applicant and staff to make a decision. Allen said he didn't want them to make decisions without good reasons. Reed replied that they would look at the trees that were requested and research their lifespans and other factors as well as determine what plants from the approved list were similar. Allen said he was just trying to prevent an arbitrary "no."

Hamner thanked everyone for the work they had done on this. Adopting a list of invasive plants was a first step, he said, adding that the Land Development Ordinance (LDO) called for the use of native plants in landscaping. However, without a list of natives and non-natives, those goals couldn't be met. He said natives provided support for wildlife and required less irrigation and fewer chemicals. They were resilient to climate factors and were also fiscally responsible choices because of less maintenance and longer lifespans.

Having a native species list would create a more unified and attractive appearance across the City and make staff approvals easier, Hamner stated, quoting local landscaper Warren Elwell. He said Peachtree City could depart from bland landscapes to showcase natives such as serviceberries and Georgia oaks.

He acknowledged the concern about flexibility, saying they didn't have to be rigid and could make exceptions where needed. Hamner said the use of natives would matter most on commercial developments and public property. He cited the influence of former Commissioner Ray Liotta in developing this amendment and noted that Werner had approved it as well. Residents also wanted to see invasive species banned.

This amendment would prohibit invasive species on all landscape plans, adopt a

native species list for Peachtree City modeled on the Athens-Clarke County, and require native plants where feasible on commercial and public landscapes. Hamner said it was more than banning harmful plants; it was about choosing landscapes for the future that were resilient, sustainable, and distinctly Peachtree City.

Ritenour said he agreed with Hamner's points, and he also wanted to give landscapers the chance to use other plants if there was good reason. One specimen tree would be acceptable, but his concern would be mass plantings of non-natives. The amendment needed language to cover that circumstance, he noted, and they could mark that up and send it back to staff with those changes. Hamner said he could do that.

Kriz asked how they wanted to proceed? Reed said the amendment was ready for Council, but it could be held back. Kriz said they could send it to Council but ask them to add language regarding the use of non-natives.

Ritenour said he would rather postpone it and add the changes themselves to provide the best document they could to Council.

Kriz said section 1135 talked about invasive plants and tree species, but there were no definitions. He suggested they add a sentence referring to section 1137, where the list was.

He also thought they should allow landscapers to make a case for the use of non-natives, but there should be incentives for the use of natives. He said he was looking forward to the additional edits.

Ritenour asked if they wanted to consider incentives, and the other Commissioners agreed. Kriz noted that a lot of developers presenting landscape plans didn't really have a vision, and maybe incentives would encourage them to use natives.

Ritenour agreed, saying most just used plants that were common and less expensive. He noted that the hotel was a unique proposal, and he didn't want to discourage creativity.

Hooks noted that sweet gum was on the native list and asked Werner if that would be considered invasive. Werner agreed that it should be removed from the list because they didn't want people planting them. The Commissioners asked that it be removed.

Ritenour suggested they redline the proposed amendment and send it back to staff for reconsideration at the September 22 meeting. Hamner agreed to incorporate their suggestions and create the final proposal for discussion at the next meeting.

Ritenour asked him to add in an incentive, and Hamner said he would check on what other cities were doing.

Kriz moved to postpone consideration of a text amendment to the Land Development Ordinance, Article XI - Vegetation Protection and Landscape Requirements to the September 22 Planning Commission meeting to incorporate changes provided by Hamner and to be discussed at that meeting. Hamner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

New Agenda Items - None

Public Hearings - None

Member/Staff Topics

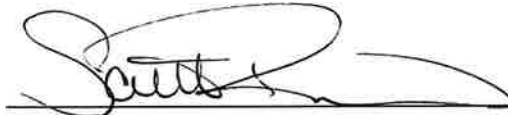
Reed said she needed to conduct training with Allen and the new Commissioner who would start in October. She said Halverson had trained with her already, and she wanted the others to have this opportunity. Ritenour mentioned that he had found the State's training courses valuable, and Reed agreed. She said they were budgeted and available to all members.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Kriz moved to adjourn at 8:13 p.m. Allen seconded. Motion carried unanimously.



Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary



Scott Ritenour, Chairman