



PLANNING & ZONING MEETING MINUTES

November 25, 2025, at 7:30 PM

Work Session

1. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Town of Alpine Planning & Zoning Commission was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairperson Melissa Wilson.

2. Roll Call

Present:

- Melissa Wilson, Chairperson
- Rachael Stewart, Commissioner
- Dan Schou, Commissioner

Staff Present:

- Gina Corson, Planning & Zoning Administrator
 - A quorum was present. It was noted that this was a **work session**, not a regular meeting.

3. General Discussion – LUDC Issues & Priorities

Gina explained that the purpose of the work session was to identify and discuss major concerns within the LUDC, particularly those that repeatedly arise during permit and site plan review and should be addressed before the next building season.

The Commission acknowledged that issues are somewhat “piecemeal” and do not always share a single theme, but agreed it is still helpful to work through the compiled list.

4. Trash Ordinance vs. LUDC

- The Commission revisited the previously drafted trash ordinance.
- Gina reported that the ordinance had been scheduled for the Town Council but was pulled from the agenda and has not moved forward.
- Commissioners clarified that:

- A trash ordinance is separate from the LUDC and functions as a standalone enforcement tool (fines/penalties).
 - If the ordinance is adopted, the LUDC may need to be amended to remove or cross-reference existing trash language, to avoid duplication and conflicts across zoning districts (R-1, MRC, commercial, etc.).
 - Gina agreed to send the ordinance back to Town Council and seek further direction.
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5. LUDC Major Concerns – Key Themes

a. Definitions (Top Priority)

The Commission agreed that definitions are one of the main problem areas in the LUDC:

- Frequent issues arise around:
 - Site plan
 - Floor area
 - Impervious surface
 - Accessory buildings/uses
 - Non-conforming structures
- Better, clearer definitions would reduce ambiguity and inconsistency in decision-making and help applicants understand requirements.

The Commission agreed that updating and expanding definitions should be a top priority and is a relatively achievable early “win.”

b. Impervious Surface / Paving of Yards

- Discussion centered on the intent behind the impervious surface concept: prevent people from paving entire yards and creating a “sea of pavement.”
- Dan noted examples from Teton County/Town of Jackson, where impervious surface regulations took years to develop and include acreage thresholds and different calculation methods for small vs. large parcels.
- The Commission agreed:
 - The long-term goal is to avoid over-paving and large, parking-lot-style frontages, but
 - A full impervious surface standard may be a larger, longer-term project, likely better suited for the future LUDC consultant.

6. Non-Conforming Structures and Decks

The Commission spent significant time discussing non-conforming structures, particularly decks:

- Current LUDC language:
 - Indicates that non-conforming structures may be enlarged/expanded by up to 20%, and
 - Also states that if a non-conforming structure is substantially removed, it must come into conformance.
- Real-world scenarios:
 - Existing decks built before the current setbacks that now encroach into the setbacks.
 - Homeowners needing to repair or replace failing decks.
 - Cases where strict interpretation would mean “if it comes down, it stays down,” leaving owners unable to safely repair.

Key points:

- Some commissioners felt that if a deck is being rebuilt in exactly the same footprint, and it has existed for decades, it is reasonable to allow it as a repair, even if technically non-conforming.
- Others emphasized that if work goes beyond simple repair (e.g., enlarging, moving, or altering the structure), it should be brought into conformance with current setbacks.
- Concern was expressed about inconsistency:
 - If a “hard line” is applied to decks, the same logic might need to apply to houses that are non-conforming.
- The Commission discussed the existing 20% expansion rule, and how it could be interpreted or exploited (e.g., “I’m just expanding, not rebuilding”).
- **General consensus:**
 - The LUDC language regarding non-conforming structures and decks is confusing and needs clarification.
 - There should be a clearer distinction between repair in-place vs. expansion or relocation, and how that affects conformance requirements.
 - This topic should be flagged as a significant issue for the consultant and further Commission work.

7. Accessory Buildings / Structures

- The Commission briefly discussed accessory buildings (garages, pole barns, workshops, sheds) and the requirement that they be located on the same lot as the primary structure.
- Gina noted she had flagged this section previously, but could not recall the original specific concern; it may have been related to:
 - Location of accessory structures in front vs. behind the primary dwelling,
 - Application on irregular or multi-frontage lots.
- This item was left with a note to revisit and clarify as part of broader definition and siting standards work.

8. Curb Cuts / Driveway Approaches

- The Commission discussed the idea of a maximum curb cut width to avoid very wide driveway approaches that visually resemble parking lots and create safety and plowing issues.
- Considerations:
 - Some subdivisions already limit driveway width to the width of the garage.
 - Public Works concerns include plowing efficiency and protection of infrastructure in the right-of-way.
 - Desire to avoid “sea of pavement” frontages.
- The Commission agreed this is not an immediate critical issue but is a good topic for later refinement, potentially focusing on:
 - Limiting paved width at the approach, while still allowing gravel/crushed rock areas for parking larger vehicles.

9. Permit Application & Expiration / “Meaningful Work”

- Gina raised a concern about differences between:
 - The IBC/IRC “meaningful work” concept (permits remain valid as long as meaningful work continues), and
 - The Town’s current LUDC requires formal extensions after specified time periods.
- The Commission expressed concern about the subjectivity of “meaningful work” and the potential for inconsistent interpretation and disputes.
- **Consensus:**

- Avoid subjective language such as “meaningful work” in favor of clear time-based rules.
- Keep the Town’s current approach of fixed permit durations and defined extensions, rather than adopting vague language.
- Gina will review and compare the exact building code language on application validity and bring back suggested clarifications for the LUDC.

10. Temporary Use vs. Temporary Structure Permits

- The Administrator noted that the Town currently has a “Temporary Use Permit” application, but the LUDC does not clearly define or regulate temporary uses; instead, there is a definition for “temporary structures.”
- Practical issues:
 - Tents, seasonal structures, and fireworks stands are currently being processed inconsistently (often under minor construction rather than as temporary structures).
- Proposed direction:
 - Reframe the permit as a “Temporary Structure Permit” rather than “Temporary Use.”
 - Add a dedicated temporary structure section to the LUDC that:
 - References the definition,
 - Identifies when a temporary structure permit is required (events, seasonal structures, construction support structures, etc.), and
 - Aligns the application form with the code language.

Gina will locate the current application and bring it back for revision.

11. Site Plan Definition & Expectations

- The Commission agreed that the term “site plan” needs a clearer definition and expectations, including:
 - Plan view is currently 2D versus 3D
 - Suggested it becomes 3D with 30 ft above ground level
 - Location of structures, decks, driveways, utilities, easements, etc.,
 - When more detailed or civil-level plans are required.
- It was suggested that:

- The site plan definition should be updated in the LUDC.
 - The application forms reference or include the definition so applicants understand what is required.
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12. Certificate of Placement – Footings vs. Foundation Walls

- The Commission clarified that the Certificate of Placement should be tied to footings, not foundation walls.
 - There had been confusion in the existing documents about whether the survey verification was required at the footing stage or after wall construction.
 - **Direction:**
 - Update the language so that the Certificate of Placement is clearly required after footings are placed and before further vertical construction.
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13. Portable Toilets & Dumpsters on Job Sites

- The Commission discussed whether to require portable toilets and dumpsters for construction projects.
- **Points raised:**
 - New construction typically generates significant on-site activity and waste.
 - There are recurring issues with trash blowing from sites and a lack of sanitary facilities.
 - Remodels vary widely in intensity; small interior projects may not reasonably warrant a porta-potty, while large additions might.
- **General consensus:**
 - All new construction should be required to have both a dumpster and a portable toilet on site.
 - For remodels and smaller projects, requirements could be imposed on a case-by-case basis, especially when:
 - There are neighbor complaints, or
 - The scope of work is substantial.
 - Any future code language should be mindful of:
 - Not becoming overly burdensome for very small projects,
 - Using terms such as “properly maintained” for facilities without trying to micro-regulate service frequency.

This is flagged as a policy area to further refine.

14. Wood Foundations & Continuous Stem Walls

- The Commission discussed whether wood foundations should be allowed.
 - Consensus:
 - Permanent structures on permanent foundations should not use wood foundations.
 - Wood foundations may be appropriate for temporary or movable structures (e.g., skids, sheds) but not for permanent buildings.
 - The Commission also noted this ties into the broader requirement for continuous stem walls and foundation standards, which should be clarified in the LUDC.
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15. Retaining Walls in Setbacks

- The Commission discussed whether retaining walls should be treated as structures and not allowed in setbacks, especially large structural walls (e.g., tall concrete walls).
 - Distinction was made between:
 - Large structural retaining walls, and
 - Small, decorative landscape walls of limited height.
 - These could be regulated by encroachment permits in certain cases.
 - **Direction:**
 - Add retaining walls to the structure definition, and
 - Clarify in the LUDC that significant structural retaining walls are generally not permitted in setbacks, with potential exceptions or height thresholds for small decorative walls.
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16. Steep Lots and Civil Plans

- The Commission briefly discussed the idea of requiring civil or engineered site plans for lots with steeper grades (e.g., more than 4% or some other threshold).
- This would provide better information on:
 - Grading, drainage, and access,
 - Potential retaining structures,
 - Impacts on neighboring properties.

- This was flagged as an item for further development and potential inclusion in the consultant’s scope.

17. Role of Consultant & Value of Ongoing Work

- Gina noted her concern about investing time in detailed LUDC work if a consultant will be hired soon to overhaul the code.
- **The Commission agreed that:**
 - Even if a consultant is hired later, the Commission’s ongoing work identifying issues and documenting local concerns is valuable.
 - The compiled list of issues, discussions, and local preferences will provide an important starting point and guidance for any consulting firm.

3. Adjournment

Motion: Commissioner Schou moved to adjourn.

Second: Commissioner Stewart.

Vote: All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Next Meeting: Work Session- December 23, 2025, 7:00 PM

Regular Meeting-December 9, 2025, 7:00 PM

Melisa Wilson, Chairman

Date

Gina Corson, Acting Planning & Zoning Administrator

Date

Prepared and Transcribed By:

Gina Corson, Acting Planning & Zoning Administrator

Date

** Minutes are a summary of the meeting **

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