



TOWN OF BOWLING GREEN PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES

Thursday, June 18, 2026
6:00 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

Commissioners Present: Chair Matthew Benjamin, Vice-Chair Lisa Gattie, Commissioner Scott Seigmund

Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Jeff Voit, Commissioner Lauren Griemsman

Staff Present: Darla Odom, Planner; Jeffrey Smith, Administrative Assistant/Deputy Clerk

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

1. May 21, 2026 Minutes
 - Vice-Chair Gattie motioned to approve the May 21, 2026, Planning Commission minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Chair Benjamin and was approved unanimously by all members present.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-PUBLIC HEARING PLANNING COMMISSION/LAND USE MATTERS:

- Chair Benjamin opened public comment at 6:03 PM. Public comment was closed at 6:03 PM with no speakers present.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

2. Comprehensive Plan Discussion
 - A. Project Timeline**
 - Ms. Odom reviewed the updated Comprehensive Plan project timeline and identified work completed since the previous meeting. She stated that the proposed joint Town Council and Planning Commission work session had been moved from June to August to allow additional material to be prepared for review. The Commission discussed whether the July Planning Commission meeting had previously been canceled and agreed that staff would review the adopted meeting schedule, confirm commissioner availability, and notify the Commission by email. Ms. Odom explained that the environmental section of the Comprehensive Plan and related Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act ordinance amendments must be completed before the Town's February 2027 compliance deadline. Staff were working toward completing the full Comprehensive Plan update by December 2026, with an emphasis on state-law compliance and required updates concerning environmental protection, housing, transportation, and related planning matters.
 - B. Plan Vision and Themes**
 - Ms. Odom presented four potential draft vision statements developed from the Commission's May visioning exercise. The Commission discussed language describing Bowling Green as a thriving and welcoming historic community and considered whether visitors should be specifically included alongside residents and businesses. Commissioners generally agreed that the vision should remain focused on residents and businesses and expressed support for Option One as the draft vision statement. Ms. Odom noted that the

proposed language incorporated themes raised during the prior meeting, including vibrancy, safety, community, prosperity, and partnerships.

- Chair Benjamin motioned to adopt Option One as the draft Comprehensive Plan vision statement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Seigmund and was approved unanimously by all members present.

C. Outreach with Town Staff and Partners

- Ms. Odom provided an update on coordination with Town staff and partner agencies to verify existing conditions and obtain current information for the Comprehensive Plan. Staff reviewed information concerning recent construction, water and sewer facilities, well projects, septic systems, utility connections, police activity, and other public facilities and services. Ms. Odom stated that this information would continue to be compiled and was expected to be presented at a future meeting.

3. Plan Diagnostic

- Ms. Odom explained that staff were preparing a diagnostic review of the existing Comprehensive Plan to identify updates required by the Code of Virginia, the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, and accepted planning practices. The review would identify mandatory and optional plan components, required and recommended maps, organizational improvements, and content that could make the plan more useful for Town decision-making and grant applications. Ms. Odom stated that the updated plan would also include a transportation component meeting current Virginia Department of Transportation requirements, an updated housing section, and more actionable implementation strategies with assigned responsibilities and anticipated timeframes. The diagnostic findings would be incorporated into the draft chapters as they were presented to the Commission.

4. Demographics and Community Profile

- Mr. Smith presented updated demographic and community-profile tables prepared primarily from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2024 American Community Survey five-year estimates, with population trends based on decennial census information. He noted that several graphics remained in draft form and required corrections, including a population-projection graphic that was not properly displaying Town and Caroline County data, housing-construction estimates that appeared inconsistent with known development, and an enrollment table that had not yet been expanded through Grade 12. Mr. Smith stated that additional employment and wage information had been obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor and that school enrollment information had been obtained from the Virginia Department of Education.
- The Commission discussed reorganizing the Comprehensive Plan so that Chapter Two would serve as a community-profile chapter containing the Town's history, demographic information, readable graphics, abbreviated tables, and explanations of significant trends. The Commission also discussed whether countywide school information was necessary for a Town Comprehensive Plan. Commissioners agreed that education remained relevant to the community but suggested determining whether enrollment information could be narrowed to students residing within the Town. The Commission also requested that staff investigate available data concerning private-school attendance, including The Carmel School and Fredericksburg Christian School, and continue coordination with Caroline County Public Schools regarding enrollment, facility needs, and projections.

5. Draft Chapter 1 — Full Stride to 2045

- Ms. Odom presented the draft first chapter, titled "Full Stride to 2045," which explained the purpose and legal basis of the Comprehensive Plan, its relationship to the zoning ordinance and capital planning, the process used to prepare the update, and how the plan would be implemented and reviewed. She stated that incomplete dates and references would be corrected and that the final document's colors would be drawn from the Town seal. Commissioners discussed the hierarchy and appearance of headings, noting that subordinate sections should be more clearly distinguished from primary headings and that the heading addressing plan jurisdiction and relationships to other plans and policies should be reviewed for clarity.

- The Commission discussed the draft language concerning a capital improvement program. Ms. Odom explained that the Code of Virginia permits a planning commission to prepare a capital improvement program and requires it to do so when directed by the governing body. The Town did not currently maintain a separate formal capital improvement program, and capital projects were generally addressed through the annual budgeting process and multiyear financial planning. The Commission agreed that the Comprehensive Plan should retain general language describing the relationship between capital investments and the plan's goals without making the provision overly restrictive. The draft chapter was left open for further review and written commissioner comments.

NEW BUSINESS:

COMMISSION COMMENTS AND REPORTS:

ADJOURNMENT:

- Commissioner Seigmund motioned to adjourn the Planning Commission Meeting, seconded by Vice-Chair Gattie. Following unanimous approval by all members present, the Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 7:03 PM.

Attest:

Chair: _____
Matthew Benjamin

Clerk: _____
India Adams-Jacobs, MPA, ICMA-CM