



## **TOWN OF BOWLING GREEN PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

### **M I N U T E S**

**Thursday, July 16, 2026  
6:00 PM**

#### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

#### **ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:**

Commissioners Present: Chair Matthew Benjamin, Vice-Chair Lisa Gattie, Commissioner Jeff Voit, Commissioner Lauren Griemsman

Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Scott Seigmund

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

#### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:**

1. June 18, 2026 Minutes
  - Vice-Chair Gattie motioned to defer consideration of the June 18, 2026, Planning Commission minutes until the August meeting. 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 6:01 PM. Public comment was closed at 6:02 PM with no speakers present.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

2. Comprehensive Plan Discussion
  - A. Project Timeline**
  - Ms. Odom reviewed the Comprehensive Plan project timeline and the timing of the proposed joint work session with Town Council. Commissioners agreed that the work session should occur after the Planning Commission had reviewed a more complete draft, including the environmental, transportation, mapping, and land-use components. The Commission supported holding one joint work session and public open house in October, followed by a potential public hearing on November 12, 2026. Ms. Odom explained that the October session would provide an overview of the revisions and make the draft available for public review before the hearing. She further noted that the public hearing could be delayed if substantial revisions were required, although the environmental chapter and related ordinance amendments must remain on schedule for completion before the February 2027 compliance deadline.

- Commissioner Voit motioned to amend the Comprehensive Plan project timeline to schedule the joint Town Council and Planning Commission work session and public open house in October, with a potential public hearing in November. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Griemsman and was approved unanimously by all members present.
- Commissioner Voit motioned to amend the Planning Commission meeting calendar by moving the October meeting from October 15 to October 22, 2026, at the regular time and location. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Griemsman and was approved unanimously by all members present.

### **B. Outreach with Town Staff and Partners**

- Ms. Odom reported that staff coordination with Town departments and partner agencies remained ongoing. Updated police-call information, utility-account data, school information, and other community-facility information had been received or was being compiled. Commissioners discussed the need to verify the number of water and sewer connections, private wells, and septic systems within the Town because the available billing categories did not clearly answer those questions. Ms. Odom also advised that utility-related revisions prepared with Mr. Imboden addressed portions of Chapters Three, Seven, and Ten but had been inadvertently omitted from the packet. Staff would email the material to the Commission and obtain clarification or additional input from Mr. Imboden as necessary. Commissioners were asked to review the utility information and submit questions or comments by July 31.

### **C. Proposed Chapter Layout Revised**

- Ms. Odom presented the revised chapter layout and stated that no additional structural changes were anticipated. Chapter Two would become a community profile combining a brief Town history with demographic information, charts, and narrative explanations of significant trends. The Commission agreed to carry forward the concise history contained in the existing Comprehensive Plan, subject to later comments. The revised structure would also place tourism with regional economy and economic development, while plan goals and implementation strategies would be incorporated into the applicable chapters. Ms. Odom noted that state-law changes affecting housing, including the treatment of manufactured homes, would need to be addressed in the housing and land-use components.

## **3. Chapter 2: Community Profile**

- Mr. Smith reviewed corrections to the community-profile tables and graphics. The year-structure-built table was revised using Caroline County Commissioner of the Revenue records to show 11 structures constructed from 2010 through 2019 and 14 constructed in 2020 or later. The population-change graphic was adjusted so Town and county trends were both visible, and school enrollment data were expanded through Grade 12. Commissioners requested additional review of the school-enrollment projections, clearer presentation of the zero-bedroom housing category, and explanatory text defining housing cost burden. They also recommended separating unemployment and remote-work data, adding information concerning commuting patterns and destinations, reviewing potential Main Street and regional-planning data sources, correcting missing sources and table formatting, and retaining only graphics that meaningfully inform future land-use, housing, transportation, economic-development, and community-service decisions.

4. Chapter 7: Community Facilities & Services

- Ms. Odom presented available police and community-facility information and noted that the Virginia State Police office formerly located in Town had closed, although agency contact information and service arrangements remained unchanged. Commissioners questioned the meaning of the police computer-aided dispatch data and the substantial variation between the 2024 and 2025 totals. They requested verification of whether the figures represented dispatches, calls for service, or broader departmental activity; an explanation of the effect of staffing levels; and, if available, comparable information for the Caroline County Sheriff's Office and Virginia State Police. The Commission agreed that the chapter should provide sufficient context to avoid suggesting an unsupported increase in crime. Staff would also continue verifying utility, well, septic, school, public-safety, and other facility information and would circulate the omitted utility revisions for commissioner review.

5. Chapter 5: Economic Development, Tourism and Economy

- Ms. Odom presented the draft chapter, which expanded the existing economy discussion to address regional economic conditions, local employment and income trends, poverty, taxable sales, commuting patterns, Town revenue indicators, economic development, and tourism. Commissioners requested that Town-specific data be identified clearly and compared consistently with county and regional information; that the years represented in the tables be made more consistent; and that incomplete Fiscal Year 2026 figures be identified. The Commission recommended replacing or supplementing the business-license tax-collection chart with the number of active, new, and renewed licenses by business category, because changes in collections could reflect tax policy or administrative practices rather than economic growth. Commissioners also requested incorporation of Bowling Green Main Street goals and initiatives, a graphic illustrating projected population within the five-, fifteen-, and thirty-minute trade areas, and definitions or explanations for acronyms and specialized sources such as Esri. Comments on the chapter and the forthcoming utility revisions were requested by July 31.

6. Chapter 3: Environmental Sustainability & Resilience

- Ms. Odom stated that the environmental sustainability and resilience chapter remained under development and had intentionally not been included in the meeting packet. The chapter would incorporate applicable state-law changes and would be provided for Commission review when the draft was complete.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

7. None

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

- Ms. Odom advised that future zoning-ordinance amendments would be required or considered in response to recent state-law changes affecting housing and manufactured homes, solar facilities, battery energy-storage systems, data centers, and related environmental matters. She also requested Commission input concerning the Town's fence regulations, including side-yard height limits,

setbacks, vegetative screening, prohibited materials, and provisions applicable to corner lots. Commissioners discussed the intent of the existing ordinance and recommended reviewing the prior Planning Commission and Town Council proceedings for clarification. Ms. Odom further discussed revising the home-occupation provisions to distinguish low-intensity, by-right home offices from more intensive uses such as vehicle or equipment repair, classes, or other activities that may warrant a special use permit and enforceable conditions. Commissioners expressed general support for a clearer approval process, and staff indicated that proposed language could be presented with other ordinance amendments at a future meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

- Chair Benjamin motioned to adjourn the Planning Commission Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Voit and was approved unanimously by all members present. The Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM.

**Attest:**

**Chair:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Matthew Benjamin**

**Clerk:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**India Adams-Jacobs, MPA, ICMA-CM**