



Grand Lake Planning Commission

Wednesday, August 20, 2025, at 6:30 PM

Online via Goto Meeting

*The Town of Grand Lake upholds the Six Pillars of Character:
Citizenship, Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness and Caring*

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

Chairman Shockey called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. in the Town Hall Board Room.

2. Roll Call

Chairman Shockey confirmed all commissioners are present.

3. Conflicts of Interest

None.

4. Unscheduled Citizen Participation

Jim Cervenka, 236 Lakeview Drive- Mr. Cervenka noted that, when considering large developments, the town should reflect on historical context. He referenced a situation from 37 years ago in which a Canadian entity purchased eight lots in a row, suggesting that the town might consider maximum size limitations for developments to maintain appropriate scale.

5. Items for Discussion

A. QUASI JUDICIAL (PUBLIC HEARING) – Resolution 08-2025 – Preliminary Development Application for a 3-story mixed-use building located at 900 Grand Avenue. The proposal consists of ground floor commercial and two residential units.

Emily Weber from Ayres Associates presented an overview of the preliminary development application for the proposed project at 900 Grand Avenue, located at the corner of Grand Avenue and Ellsworth Street. The site is zoned commercial, and the applicant is proposing a mixed-use development that would include a 2,000-square-foot taphouse on the ground floor and two approximately 2,000-square-foot residential units on the second and third floors. The project also includes an outdoor patio area.

Ms. Weber explained that this proposal is at the preliminary development application stage, which provides a high-level review by both the Planning Commission and the Board. A final development application will follow, including detailed review by referral agencies and further analysis by both bodies.

Regarding zoning, both commercial and multifamily residential uses are permitted in this district. However, since the residential portion of the development would make up about 53.1% of the total square footage, the applicant will need to obtain a conditional use permit, as the town code requires this for mixed-use developments with more than 50%

residential use. The applicant plans to apply for the conditional use permit concurrently with the final development application rather than revising the building's square footage.

Ms. Weber also summarized key aspects of the site layout, including parking, snow storage, and open space. The applicant proposes four on-site residential parking spaces accessible from the alley, meeting the town's requirements. For commercial parking, eight spaces are required, which can be satisfied through adjacent on-street parking per town code; an existing ADA space also serves the site. Snow storage areas are planned on-site and appear to meet standards, though staff will review their practicality in greater detail during the final application phase. The project meets the 35% open space requirement, achieved primarily through the outdoor patio area, which qualifies as open space in a commercial zone.

Ms. Weber then discussed the design review standards, focusing on the materials and massing of the building. The applicant proposes metal faux wood siding as the primary exterior material. However, metal is not listed as an acceptable primary material in the town's design code—only as an accent material. Therefore, the applicant will need to either adjust materials to comply with code or request a variance. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission and Board discuss this issue further during the final development review.

In terms of massing and scale, Ms. Weber noted that the town code encourages designs that reflect human scale and avoid overwhelming pedestrians. While the proposed building includes some architectural variety through insets, offsets, gables, and overhangs, staff suggested exploring additional design modifications to reduce visual bulk and enhance the pedestrian experience.

Finally, Ms. Weber highlighted a potential gray area in the code concerning the third-story step-back requirement. Town code requires a 12-foot setback on the third story for commercial structures, but it is unclear whether this applies to mixed-use buildings. Despite this ambiguity, Ms. Weber acknowledged that the proposed structure is set back approximately 36 feet from the front property line, which helps preserve view corridors and visual openness relative to nearby properties.

She concluded by recommending that the Planning Commission discuss the project's materials, massing, and code interpretation as part of the ongoing review process before the applicant submits for final approval.

Kaylee Wallesen, one of the project owners for the proposed development at 900 Grand Avenue, provided a brief presentation outlining key aspects of the project. She confirmed that the development team will be applying for a conditional use permit as part of the project approval process.

Mrs. Wallesen explained that the proposal involves removing the existing open garage structure currently on the property to make way for a new mixed-use building. The new structure will feature a first-floor commercial space of approximately 2,000 to 2,200 square feet, which will be used as a retail or merchant area—specifically a taphouse as referenced in earlier presentations.

She also noted that the proposed design meets the town's height requirements and does not exceed any height or massing limitations set by local zoning standards. Overall, her comments emphasized that the project will comply with all required regulations.

Chairman Shockey opened the public hearing.

Jim Cervenka, 236 Lakeview Drive- Mr. Cervenka shared his thoughts on the proposed development at 900 Grand Avenue, offering both praise and concern. He began by noting that he appreciated certain design elements, particularly the gable rooflines and setbacks covered boardwalk, which he felt added character and visual appeal to the project. He also mentioned that while the concept of a taphouse sounded appealing, he questioned whether it was the right fit for this location, especially given the residential context of the surrounding area.

Mr. Cervenka explained that he initially attended the meeting because he was concerned after hearing that the proposal involved a three-story metal building. However, after reviewing the design, he acknowledged that he liked some of the aesthetic choices—particularly the horizontal siding and the corrugated metal details, which he found to be thoughtfully used. He compared the proposed materials to James Hardie siding used on his own home, noting that while it is not real wood, it can provide a good visual match.

Despite those positives, Mr. Cervenka expressed ongoing concern about the proposal including three stories of faux rock as a primary exterior material. He suggested that this design choice did not seem appropriate in keeping with the character of the area, adding that the use of such materials might not align with the town's historical or architectural context. Speaking partly on behalf of the Historical Society, he said the group shared similar reservations about the exterior materials and overall appearance.

In conclusion, Mr. Cervenka reiterated his appreciation for certain aspects of the project but urged reconsideration of the corrugated vertical materials and the three-story rock façade, recommending adjustments that would better reflect the town's traditional aesthetic and historical setting.

Susan Larson, 91 County Road 6525- expressed overall support for the project concept, noting that she appreciated the use of alternative materials similar to what had been done with the Gateway project years ago. Ms. Larson felt that the proposed design direction was good, though the materials could be improved to achieve a higher-quality look.

Ms. Larson said they agreed with Jim Cervenka's remarks about the corrugated metal portions of the building, sharing concerns that this element might not fit the desired aesthetic for the area. She suggested exploring other siding products that could offer the appearance of lap siding or wood, rather than the straight corrugated finish currently proposed.

She closed by thanking the board and staff, reiterating their support for the overall idea of the project while encouraging the applicant to refine the exterior materials for a more natural, visually appealing result

Alexander Thompson, 508 Cairns Avenue- Mr. Thompson offered a thoughtful public comment focused on the design, massing, and materiality of the proposed building at 900 Grand Avenue. He emphasized the importance of human scale and pedestrian experience,

particularly how the building feels when walking along the boardwalk. While he understood the need for durable materials that last over time, he stressed that materials should also fit contextually with the surrounding mountains and the town's character.

He reflected on the town's unique charm, noting that visitors and residents are drawn to Grand Lake because of its distinct architectural character and spirit, which contributes to its special atmosphere. He acknowledged the challenges the applicant faces in maximizing space and meeting financial constraints while still creating a building that serves as a community asset.

Mr. Thompson specifically addressed material choices, agreeing with prior comments that the corrugated vertical siding might stand out too much and that large areas of faux stone could feel inappropriate if extended up the sides of the building. He encouraged balancing practical needs for the business with architectural quality and contextual design, recognizing the project as an opportunity to contribute positively to the town's built environment.

Overall, his comment was supportive but framed around ensuring that the scale, materials, and design details enhance the pedestrian experience and respect the town's unique character.

Peter Rempel, 1201 West Portal Road- Mr. Rempel expressed general support for the project, noting that he liked most of what had been presented. He specifically appreciated the large setbacks, even if not required, because they help keep corners open and provide a more pleasant experience for pedestrians, avoiding the feeling of crowding.

Mr. Rempel also raised a concern about flat roof designs, observing that most traditional architecture in Grand Lake features pitched roofs. He referenced a nearby project, suggesting that flat roofs can feel out of place in the town's context and may not align with the overall architectural character.

Overall, Mr. Rempel conveyed support with recommendations to maintain pedestrian-friendly spaces and ensure rooflines are compatible with the town's historic and visual context.

Town Manager Kudron read two letters onto record.

Kirsten Heckendorf, a resident of Ellsworth Avenue, raised concerns primarily about parking and building scale for the proposed development at 900 Grand Avenue. She questioned where parking would be located, noting that multiple residents in nearby units often compete for alley and on-street parking during the busy summer season, which could create congestion behind the property.

Mrs. Heckendorf also expressed concern about the height and scale of the building. While the project meets the town's 35-foot height limit, they felt it is inconsistent with the two-story character traditionally discussed for downtown Grand Lake. They suggested that the building should be reconsidered or modified to better align with the historic character of Grand Avenue and the designated historic downtown area.

Finally, while acknowledging that the building's design resembles other structures along the boardwalk on Ellsworth, Mrs. Heckendorf noted that it dominates the corner, and they

encouraged the builders and planning staff to work together to ensure the project fits the scale and character of the surrounding area.

Janice Ziegler, a resident at 828 Grand Avenue, Unit 203, provided public comment via letter on the proposed development at 900 Grand Avenue, noting that her unit directly faces the site and she would be viewing the building daily from her second-story deck. She expressed her concerns after reviewing the planning documents and drawings provided in the agenda packet.

Her primary concern was the exterior design, particularly the overall mass and bulk of the building. She described the front gable element, intended to break up the large box shape, as dark and clunky, which she felt adds to the visual heaviness rather than reducing it. Ms. Ziegler argued that the building's appearance does not fit with the historic character of this older section of Grand Lake, contrasting it with the Rocky Mountain Repertory Theater as an example of a newer building that successfully complements the town's visual identity. She encouraged the developers to redesign the exterior to enhance the historic context rather than detract from it.

Her second concern focused on the third-story setback. While acknowledging that the building is set back approximately 36 feet from the front property line, she noted that the third floor does not step back from the street wall as required by code. She emphasized that a proper setback would improve the view corridor and break up the building's mass, making it more visually appealing from the street and surrounding properties.

Ms. Ziegler concluded by thanking the Planning Commission for considering her concerns and apologizing for not being able to be present in person.

Chairman Shockey closed the public hearing.

Board and staff discussion addressed clarification of conditional use permits, setback regulations, and third-story step-back requirements. Staff noted areas of ambiguity in the code, particularly regarding whether commercial setback standards apply fully to mixed-use buildings, and recommended further review during the final development application. Design review discussion focused on materials, massing, and pedestrian scale, with staff recommending that the Planning Commission discuss how the building aligns with the town's historic and aesthetic goals.

Commissioner Bishop moved to approve Planning Commission Resolution 08-2025, recommending approval of the preliminary development application for a three-story mixed-use building located at 900 Grand Avenue, with the following conditions:

1. The primary exterior material shall not be metal as presented; it is recommended that an alternative material with a wood-grain appearance be used.
2. The building shall maintain setbacks on both Grand Avenue and Ellsworth Street above the second floor.
3. The applicant shall apply for a conditional use permit to exceed the 50% residential requirement, allowing a 50% residential / 50% commercial split.

4. The applicant shall proceed with the alternate shed roof design on the Ellsworth side, including the overhang above the boardwalk.

Commissioner Murray seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor except Commissioner Finch.

B. QUASI JUDICIAL (PUBLIC HEARING) – Resolution 09-2025 - Consideration of a Zoning Regulation Variance for 1001 and 1005 Lake Avenue as part of a proposed development project located at 1016 Grand Avenue and 1001, 1005, and 1007 Lake Avenue.

Josh Olhava, Ayres Associates presented on the variance request for 1001 and 1005 Lake Avenue, corresponding to Resolution 920-25. The properties are located along Lake Avenue, adjacent to the boardwalk, and are zoned commercial, surrounded by other commercial properties. They are part of a preliminary development plan currently under review. Detailed plans were not shared to preserve the quasi-judicial nature of the review process, though previous sketch plans have been discussed with the Planning Commission and Board of Trustees.

The applicant is requesting a variance to allow the first 50 feet of the ground floor along Lake Avenue to be residential rather than the code-required commercial use. This request applies only to the two properties identified and represents approximately half a block. Prior discussions indicated general support for allowing residential use in this location due to seasonal fluctuations in activity along Lake Avenue and the abundance of existing commercial space.

Ground-floor commercial use is typically intended to maintain street-level activity and ensure commercial viability along major corridors, such as Grand Avenue. However, the unique circumstances along Lake Avenue make commercial space less practical in this location. Staff reviewed the request in the context of compatibility with the neighborhood, the character of the area, the need for the action, potential effects on future development, unique site characteristics, and the town's comprehensive plan. Staff noted that previous discussions with the Planning Commission and Board of Trustees showed a consensus supporting the variance.

The commission's options include approving the variance as presented, approving with conditions, or recommending denial based on findings of fact per the zoning code. Olhava emphasized that detailed development plans were intentionally avoided during the presentation to prevent influencing the pending quasi-judicial review.

Gabe Bellowe, MA Studios-315 East Agate Avenue- Mr. Bellowe provided an update on the Leatherwood project, clarifying the scope of the current request. He emphasized that the discussion is focused solely on specific areas of the parcel for which variances are being sought, particularly Building One's ground floor, and not the full preliminary development plan. The overall project has been reconfigured based on prior feedback, including reducing residential square footage, increasing open space, and reorienting the site to comply with building code and community priorities.

Mr. Bellowe explained that the Leatherwood parcel spans multiple properties along Grand Avenue and extends to the waterfront event center. Certain areas, like the east side of Lake Avenue and the Lake House condominium, already have residential approval. For Building One, the request pertains specifically to three residential units along the

interior of Lake Avenue; these units have no commercial frontage and are separated from pedestrian areas and the boardwalk by elevation and setbacks to prevent awkward interactions with the public. Other units on Garfield Avenue retain ground-floor commercial space and are not part of the variance request.

The presentation highlighted several project modifications aimed at aligning with community feedback and the comprehensive plan. These include reducing the building height, removing one Grand Avenue building in favor of fully commercial space, creating a public rooftop amenity, and ensuring materials and scale comply with town standards. Mr. Bellowe stressed that the project seeks to provide viable residential and commercial spaces while enhancing public amenities, open space, and community function.

Mr. Bellowe also addressed the six criteria for variance approval. He noted that the project is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, consistent with the pedestrian-oriented character of Lake Avenue and aligns with the town's comprehensive plan. The lots are currently vacant with non-functional structures, and introducing residential units will support local businesses, improve open space, and activate the area. He emphasized that the project will not set a problematic precedent for future development, as it is designed to fit the site's unique characteristics, including its size, topography, and traffic limitations.

Overall, Mr. Bellowe framed the variance request as a balanced solution that integrates residential use where appropriate, preserves commercial activity where viable, and supports the town's long-term vision for Lake Avenue as a pedestrian-friendly, vibrant community space.

Jim Kreutzer, 828 Grand Ave.- Mr. Kreutzer addressed the project's design and community impact. He noted that the deck is being stepped back to Lake Avenue level and that substantial open space has been included in front of the three condos. He explained that several existing buildings, including three duplex motel units and a long, narrow building along Lake Avenue, are being relocated to provide employee housing. These relocated units will accommodate approximately 20 full-time summer employees and remove trailers currently located nearby.

Mr. Kreutzer also mentioned modifications to the "tree house" building, including removing the top story to comply with prior feedback and avoid the need for future variances. He highlighted community support, referencing 14 letters submitted in favor of the project and the variance, representing longtime residents and members of the community. Overall, his comments emphasized efforts to enhance open space, provide employee housing, comply with zoning and design standards, and incorporate community input.

Chairman Shockey opened the public hearing.

Alexander Thompson, 501 Cairns Avenue- Mr. Thompson spoke in support of the project's contribution to the community. He expressed appreciation for the thorough and thoughtful presentation. However, he questioned the claim that limiting vehicle traffic is necessary to preserve commercial activity, noting that Lake Avenue and the waterfront area consistently experience public use and traffic, even during winter closures. He emphasized that the area remains heavily used by the public and that access for commercial patronage is generally not restricted by seasonal traffic patterns.

Peter Remple 1201 West Portal Road- Mr. Rempel raised questions and concerns regarding the variance request. He asked whether the properties in question are being considered as a single parcel or separate properties, and whether each currently meets its setbacks and zoning requirements. He expressed concern about approving a variance for commercial space before the project is developed, noting that previous projects have sought variances after commercial spaces did not perform as expected.

Mr. Rempel also questioned the rationale for approving the entire project and variance at once, suggesting a phased approach might be preferable to evaluate each phase individually over time. He noted that the overall project feels large and somewhat overwhelming and expressed a preference for a step-by-step review rather than making a major decision for the full development at this stage.

Town Manager Kudron read letters received on the record.

Greg Miyauchi, opposed the assignment of residential units on the lower level of the Leatherwood project.

Mike Tompkins, expressed support for the Leatherwood development, emphasizing that property owners should be able to develop their property in compliance with zoning. He noted that the requested variances are minor, the project maintains a low-density “Grand Lake” character, and he fully supports the mixed-use aspects, density, and overall design. Mr. Tompkins stated that the development represents a significant improvement to the area.

Maxwell Ludwig, a local hospitality business owner who could potentially compete with parts of the development, expressed support for the project, noting that it appears well thought out.

Ashley North, a lifelong community member and local business owner, expressed support for the subdivision and the variance request to allow residential units along Lake Avenue. She stated that additional commercial space is not needed at this location.

Mindy Nelson, expressed full support for the variance request to allow residential condominium units on the lower level fronting Lake Avenue. She also endorsed the overall project, including its design, massing, and density.

Scott, Francesca, and DJ Parker, expressed full support for the development, including the variance request for residential condominiums.

Mark Consiglio, expressed support for the variance request to allow residential units on the ground level fronting Lake Avenue. He noted that the community currently has an overabundance of commercial space and considered the variance a sensible approach.

Ed McCarthy, expressed support for the variance request to allow residential condominium units on the lower-level fronting Lake Avenue. He noted that the developer personally explained the project’s design, massing, and density to him.

Troy Nelson expressed support for the Leatherwood project, specifically endorsing the variance request to allow residential condominium units on the lower-level fronting Lake Avenue.

Aaron Brown, President of the Boardwalk Plaza HOA, expressed wholehearted support for the project and urged the laborers and Planning and Development Department to facilitate its progression by granting the necessary permits and variances.

Chairman Shockey closed the public hearing.

Discussion during the meeting focused on building orientation, parcel size, pedestrian-friendly areas, open space, and relocation of existing structures to provide employee housing. Stakeholders generally supported the mixed-use development and improved lake access, although concerns were raised regarding parking, commercial traffic, and affordable housing.

Commissioner Finch moved, seconded by Commissioner Bishop, to adopt Resolution 09-2025 recommending approval of a zoning variance for 1001, 1005, and 1007 Lake Avenue as part of the proposed development at 1016 Grand Avenue. The motion passed unanimously. Conditions included:

1. The variance will expire if not exercised within five years.
2. The property on the east end, extending from Lake Avenue to the alley and 45 feet deep, must retain commercial use, with the variance applying to Lake Avenue properties for seven years, beginning 45 feet from Garfield Avenue.

C. QUASI JUDICIAL (PUBLIC MEETING) – Resolution 10-2025 - Consideration of a Rezoning Amendment Request to the Official Zoning Map for the Town of Grand Lake for Town-owned Property Located on Lots 1 through 4, Block 3 Town of Grand Lake, more commonly known as 1128 Park Avenue.

Josh Olhava, Ayres Associates addressed the Planning Commission regarding the rezoning of lots 1 through 4, Block 3, at 1128 Park Avenue. He clarified that this was a public meeting, not a public hearing, noting that while public comments are allowed, the formal public hearing occurs later with the Board of Trustees. The site is currently zoned public, vacant, and used as parking. The proposed rezoning is to commercial to accommodate the “Space to Create” project, a mixed-use initiative featuring affordable housing and maker spaces as part of a town-led redevelopment.

Mr. Olhava highlighted the surrounding zoning context, noting adjacent commercial zones along Grand Avenue and transitional commercial properties nearby. Staff analysis focused on criteria under Section 12-34a of the zoning code, particularly criteria two and three: the rezoning is part of a redevelopment project introducing a new use not previously envisioned, and while not contemplated in the town’s comprehensive plan, the proposed use aligns with several of its goals.

He outlined the Planning Commission’s options: recommend approval of the rezoning, recommend approval with conditions, or recommend denial based on findings of fact and the code criteria. Olhava concluded by inviting questions and offering to zoom in on the context map for further clarification.

Chairman Shockey opened for public comment.

Alexander Thompson, 508 Cairns Avenue- Mr. Thompson spoke in strong support of the proposed rezoning for the Space to Create project. He highlighted that the project aligns with the town's long-term priorities, including affordable housing, cultural development, and engagement with the Creative District. Speaking as a private citizen with longstanding ties to the town and experience with local arts initiatives, Mr. Thompson expressed enthusiasm for the project's potential to enhance the town's historic and cultural character.

Chairman Shockey closed public comment.

Commissioner Murray moved, seconded by Commissioner Bishop to approve Planning Commission Resolution 10-2025, a resolution recommending approval of a rezoning amendment to the official zoning map for the Town of Grand Lake for Town-owned property located on Lots 1 through 4, Block 3 Town of Grand Lake, more commonly known as 1128 Park Avenue. The motion passed unanimously

D. QUASI JUDICIAL (PUBLIC HEARING) – Resolution 11-2025 - Consideration of a Design Review for a boat house at: Legal: LAKE KOVE SUBDIVISION Lot: 5 LESS ROW, Town of Grand Lake, more commonly known as 377 Lake Kove Dr.

Brian Kracke, Town of Grand Lake Code Enforcement presented a request for Planning Commission review and approval of a proposed new boathouse at 377 Lake Oak Drive, Grand Lake, owned by Ryan Oliver of Centennial Properties. The structure is designed as a private public storage facility for watercraft, with dimensions of 31.5 feet in length, 18 feet in width, and 16 feet in height, totaling a 567-square-foot footprint. Materials and design are intended to match the existing residence and surrounding properties.

Mr. Kracke noted that the boathouse complies with the town's zoning regulations, Shadow Mountain Reservoir Shore Design District guidelines, and applicable setbacks, height restrictions, and environmental protections. Approvals from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Forest Service have been obtained, including an indemnification letter. The project aims to provide secure, protected storage for watercraft, extend equipment lifespan, and maintain shoreline integrity, while aligning with the town's vision for lakefront development. Architectural drawings, site plans, and photos were provided to illustrate the design and its compatibility with the existing residence.

Ryan Oliver, 3778 Lake Kove Drive (Applicant)- Mr. Oliver expressed his appreciation for the Planning Commission and the meeting process. He noted that a prior homeowners' association affecting the property expired in 2012 and emphasized that there are no current restrictions from any association. Mr. Oliver expressed a cooperative and straightforward approach, welcoming questions from the Commission and expressing enthusiasm for working with the town on the project.

Chairman Shockey opened the public hearing.

No comment was made.

Chairman Shockey closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Bishop moved, Commissioner Murray seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to recommend approval of Resolution 11-2025 to the Board of Trustees. The resolution approved the design review for a boathouse at Lot 5, Lake Kove Subdivision, Town of Grand Lake, commonly known as 377 Lake Kove Drive.

6. Future Agenda Items

Future items to be determined.

7. Adjourn Meeting

This meeting of the Grand Lake Planning Commission was adjourned at 9:43 PM.

James Shockey, Chairman

ATTEST:

Alayna Carrell, Town Clerk