



CITY OF LANDER

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT & PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, September 04, 2025 at 6:00 PM

City Council Chambers, 240 Lincoln Street

MINUTES

Attendance: Chair Zach Mahlum, Members, Tom Russell, Kara Colovich, Chris Savan, Mary Greene, Rob Newsom, and Joe Henry. City Attorney Adam Phillips, Recording Secretary RaJean Strube Fossen

1. CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

This meeting is being recorded electronically. All petitioners to the Board of Adjustments will receive a written decision and order within thirty (30) days of this hearing. The decision will be clearly stated with findings of fact and conclusions of law. Anyone wishing to appeal against a decision and order may do so through District Court.

Anyone wishing to speak tonight, must first be recognized, come to the podium, take the oath, and state your name prior to speaking.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT MINUTES of August 7, 2025

Joe moved to accept the minutes. Seconded by Rob. Motion passed.

3. BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT - NEW BUSINESS

A. CU 25.11 1165 Goodrich, Short term rental, Suwal

Owner Suraj Suwal took the oath and described his application to rent the entire house. This is a business venture to provide for his family. He lives in town full-time. The house has 4 beds, 3 baths and full kitchen and can sleep up to 7 people. The 2-car garage and 2-car driveway spots make 4 off-street parking.

Kara verified that the application requests 9 quests. Owner reiterated that there will be 7 quests. Kara asked if he would revise his application to which he is amenable.

Joe asked if this is a seasonal operation or to be run year after year. The owner would like this permission indefinitely. Kara reminded members that all STR's are indefinite but they may want to consider changes in the codes if desired.

Chris ask if he would take only one reservation at a time. The owner would like to take one single family at a time.

Kara mentioned another typo in the quiet hours running to 7PM where is should be listed at 7AM. The owner is willing to revise or mark up the application to reflect the correct times.

Zach asks what happens in the event that he is out of town and issues arise. Mr. Suwal has a local nephew who can attend to business if needed. Zach verified that the local contact will be posted in the unit,

RaJean read the City staff recommendation to approve CU 25.11 pending proof of collecting WY lodging tax and having the annual fire inspection.

Rob moved to approve CU 25.11 conditional on the modifications to the application as mentioned and incorporating City Staff recommendations. Rob Seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

RaJean told the owner that he will receive the Decision and Order within 30 days and gave him a business card to contact the fire inspector. RaJean had owner revise his application by marking up and initialing the changes.

4. BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT - OLD BUSINESS

5. PLANNING COMMISSION - NEW BUSINESS

A. Short Term Rental policy discussion

Discussions were held on whether STR's should be an annual application or permission and the enforcement of the permissions as written. Zach reminded members that by code, Conditional uses run with the owner and are in effect until the property is sold or the owner notifies the City to terminate. The owner is responsible for proving compliance. RaJean shared that the City is stepping up the annual fire inspections to make sure the City is in the STR at least once annually. Some solutions offered if the members want more stringent enforcement or time limits include: annual business licenses, annual application and review, and adding language like home businesses where the City must address any issues when they receive 3 complaints from neighbors or police. Zach suggests language for a revocation hearing to enact better enforcement.

Discussions were held on the adequacy of the existing definition. The consensus was that while the definition of short-term rental may be adequate there needs to be additional definitions for types, like bed/breakfast/ hostel/ hotel/ etc. Mary, Zach, and Chris will work on definitions as a committee and report back at the Oct meeting for further discussion.

The members defined the problems as:

1. STRs may grow to reduce the attainable housing stock
2. There is a fear of new/transient faces and a feeling that there will be a change in character in the neighborhoods when STRs are permitted
3. Members feel their decisions may be deemed arbitrary and capricious when placing conditions on individual applicants.

Possible solutions to the potential reduction of housing stock include requiring that the home is a primary residence as evidenced by IRS forms, limits on # within the city, limits on # by individual zone type.

Possible solutions discussed for the fear of change include requirement for primary residence, requirement for local, in-town ownership or ADU, Conditions on STRs can vary to better meet each zoning type and not allowing any more STRs.

Possible solutions to stop the perception of arbitrary conditions include better defined/tighter codes, refined definitions, adding business licensing, and adding conditions to be met to the application.

When formulating these changes, the following things must also be considered:

1. ADU code changes as appropriate
2. Grandfathering in approved applications
3. Tourism effects
4. Individual property rights
5. Community and council involvement. Members would like an audience with the Council as soon as possible after definitions and before working on the details for STR code changes.

6. PLANNING COMMISSION - OLD BUSINESS

7. ADJOURNMENT at 8:10 pm