



PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 22, 2026

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Stephen Nordbye at 5:30 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OATH OF OFFICE: City Clerk Jennifer Schmitke administered the Oath of Affirmation to the newly appointed Planning Commissioners Daniel Louder and Tyler Rutledge. Both Commissioners will serve a 4-year term.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioners present:	Chairperson Stephen Nordbye, Commissioners Sharon Lazorko, Daniel Louder, Tyler Rutledge, and Vice Chairperson Vern Montague
Commissioner absent:	None
Councilmember(s) present:	None
Staff present:	City Planner Lisa Lozier and City Clerk Jennifer Schmitke

IDENTIFY CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON FOR 2026

City Clerk Jennifer Schmitke requested nominations for Chairperson for 2026. Commissioner Lazorko nominated Chairperson Nordbye. With no further nominations, the nomination period was closed. The motion carried 5-0 by a voice vote. Chairperson Nordbye was declared Chairperson for 2026.

City Clerk Schmitke requested nominations for Vice Chairperson for 2026. Chairperson Nordbye nominated Commissioner Montague. With no further nominations, the nomination period was closed. The motion carried 5-0 by a voice vote. Commissioner Montague was declared Vice Chairperson for 2026.

ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS: None

CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Approval of Planning Commission Minutes from October 16, 2025

ACTION: Vice Chairperson Montague moved, seconded by Commissioner Sharon Lazorko, to approve the consent calendar as presented. Motion carried by a voice vote, 5-0.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION OR ACTION

- A. Tree Ordinance

City Planner Lisa Lozier presented background information and policy considerations related to the potential development of a Tree Ordinance for the City of Orland. She referenced the January 6, 2026, City Council meeting, at which staff provided an overview of options for regulating trees, including whether a future ordinance should supplement existing landscape regulations in Title 17 of the Orland Municipal Code or be established as a stand-alone ordinance focused on tree conservation, protection, and maintenance. Following that discussion, City Council directed staff to bring the matter to the Planning Commission and to prepare a draft ordinance for review and recommendation prior to City Council consideration.

Ms. Lozier explained that current regulations in Title 17 include landscape standards for residential, commercial, and industrial development, as well as parking lot landscaping. While these standards address planting requirements, they do not comprehensively regulate tree removal, long-term protection, or ongoing maintenance, particularly for mature or significant trees.

She summarized prior City Council comments, noting concerns that existing business landscaping requirements are not regularly enforced, and that there are currently no mechanisms to address maintenance or public safety issues related to existing trees on residential or commercial properties. Additional comments included consideration of enforcement or punitive measures for unsafe trees, updating the commercial tree list to include lower-maintenance species, providing landscape maintenance information to property owners, and addressing drought restrictions and increased water rates.

Ms. Lozier outlined key questions for Planning Commission consideration, including whether the intent of a future tree ordinance would be to enhance existing Title 17 regulations or establish a stand-alone ordinance applicable citywide, how such an ordinance would interact with existing development standards, and the potential for unintended consequences such as increased development timelines, added costs for arborist reports and mitigation, and increased administrative workload for staff.

She also discussed the distinction between a mandatory tree ordinance and a voluntary tree conservation program, noting that ordinances rely on regulations, permits, and enforcement, while conservation programs typically focus on education, incentives, and voluntary participation to promote long-term environmental goals.

Ms. Lozier concluded by reviewing common elements found in tree ordinances, including permit requirements, public safety clearance standards, protections for significant or heritage trees, development-related preservation and mitigation standards, exemptions for hazardous or emergency removals, and enforcement provisions. She noted that the City of Red Bluff's tree ordinance was provided as a reference example and that similar ordinances could be used as models if the City Council directs staff to prepare a draft ordinance for Orland.

Orland resident Jan Walker expressed appreciation for the item being brought forward and spoke about the importance of the City and community taking pride in Orland.

Orland resident Ron Lane discussed the possibility of expanding the façade improvement program to assist businesses with landscaping improvements. He raised questions regarding landscaping regulations at the State run fairgrounds and referenced prior projects in which community members were required to remove landscaping located within the City right-of-way. He also spoke about the elderberry bushes being protected.

Commissioners discussed approaches to a potential tree ordinance, including regulatory and educational options. Commissioner Lazorko expressed opposition to additional regulations and emphasized education as a preferred approach, suggesting outreach efforts such as informational materials and online resources. City Planner Lisa Lozier noted that permit requirements would depend on ordinance language and that a future tree list could include non-allergenic species.

Commissioner Louder supported a preapproved tree list, particularly for developers, and emphasized the benefits of trees near school sites for heat reduction and air quality. Vice Chairperson Montague stressed the importance of protecting heritage trees and asked questions regarding development standards, tree lists, and enforcement. Commissioner Rutledge inquired about the origin and purpose of the proposed ordinance and expressed interest in learning from the City of Red Bluff's experience.

Mr. Lane asked questions regarding code enforcement related to landscaping requirements.

Ms. Walker suggested partnering with the Master Gardeners program to assist with community education, noting that shared educational outreach would be both beneficial and important.

Chairperson Nordbye emphasized starting with a community education approach and suggested partnering with the UC Cooperative Extension to assist with tree education, recommended tree lists, and outreach materials. Commissioners discussed potential partnerships, incentives, and grants to support residents, as well as assistance from arborists and Master Gardeners. The Commission agreed that beginning with public outreach was the preferred approach and expressed interest in developing a heritage tree policy.

STAFF REPORT

Ms. Lozier shared a few updates, including:

Ms. Lozier noted that she presented the Planning Department's annual year-in-review to the City Council on January 6 and asked whether the Commission would also like to receive the presentation. The Commission agreed and requested that the presentation be scheduled closer to her one-year anniversary with the City.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

- Commissioner Lazorko thanked Ron Lane and Jan Walker for attending the meeting and providing insight and feedback to the Commission.
- Commissioner Rutledge thanked the Commission for the warm welcome and announced that Mill Street Elementary School would be holding TK–K registration on Saturday, January 24, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Commissioner Louder stated that he was pleased to be serving on the Commission.
- Vice Chairperson Montague expressed concerns regarding the naming of Road M ½ within City limits, shared that he would be volunteering on Saturday, January 24, at the funeral service for Congressman Doug LaMalfa at the Silver Dollar Fairgrounds at 12:00 p.m., noted that flags would be displayed along Walker Street for the State funeral, and welcomed the two new Commission members.
- Chairperson Nordbye welcomed the new Commissioners and thanked the Commission and City staff.

ADJOURNMENT – 6:39 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Schmitke, City Clerk

Stephen Nordbye, Chairperson