

CITY OF TUPELO

PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date: August 3, 2026, 6:00 P.M.

Location: City Council Chambers, City Hall, 71 East Troy Street, Tupelo, MS

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mark Williams called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

- **Invocation:** Ms. Patti Thompson
- **Pledge of Allegiance:** Mr. Scott Davis

Committee members and staff introduced themselves for the record.

Committee Members Present:

Mr. Mark Williams, Mr. Victor Fleitas, Ms. Leslie Mart, Mr. Lindsey Leake, Ms. Patti Thompson, Mr. Scott Davis

Staff Present:

Mr. Tanner Newman, Director of Development Services, Mr. Pat Falkner, Planning Consultant, Ms. Kim Rushing, Community Development and Outreach Coordinator, Mr. Patrick Reagan, Chief Building Inspector, Mr. Ben Logan, City Attorney

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **Action:** Motion made by Ms. Leslie Mart to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2026 meeting as submitted.
 - **Second:** Mr. Scott Davis
 - **Vote:** Approved by show of hands; motion carried.
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REPORT OF COUNCIL ACTION

Mr. Newman reported no actions from City Council pertaining to the last meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Newman confirmed there was no old business on the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

There were five applications on tonight's agenda. Chairman Williams reviewed public comment procedures for applicants and citizens.

1. Flex26-03: Flexible Use - 205 Commerce Street (Parcel 089L-32-013-00)

Request: Flexible use to allow an established daycare (Kids World Daycare of Tupelo) to occupy space currently used by Tupelo Academy of Cosmetology.

Notifications:

Mr. Newman confirmed surrounding property owners were notified. No written responses were received, though attendees were present.

Applicant:

Mr. Michael Walden, 2016 W. College St., Booneville, MS, Owner of the building and property.

Representative present on behalf of Mr. Walden and Mr. Chris Jones: Mr. Clint Martin, 5941 West Wind Dr.; Attorney: Melissa Bell, 1279 CR 87, New Albany, Owner of Kids World Daycare.

Applicant provided traffic-flow plans and safety assurances, including:

- No children crossing Commerce Street.
- Revised drop-off pattern designed to keep traffic off Main Street.
- Anticipated building updates to meet fire marshal requirements.

Owner / Operator Input:

Melissa Bell, owner of Kids World Daycare, answered committee questions regarding:

- State-regulated child-to-teacher ratios.
- Anticipated occupancy (up to 150 children but practically fewer).
- Estimated staff parking needs.
- Agreement for additional parking use from Huntington.

- Outdoor play-area location and fencing plans.
- Compliance with state health and safety guidelines.
- Traffic patterns, staggered drop-off times, and parent conduct rules.
- Willingness to include safety instructions (including prohibiting crossing Commerce Street) in parent handbooks submitted to the state and city.
- No objection to future alcohol-related businesses nearby; willingness to sign a waiver if needed.

Public Comment:

Clay Knight, 819 Clayton Ave., Tupelo, MS –Mr. Knight owns a property on Spring Street behind the proposed daycare. Concerned about the daycare's proximity (within 500ft) affecting his existing business (events with alcohol).

- **Legal Clarification:** As an existing establishment, his rights would come first, and the daycare would not affect his ability to operate.
- **Ms. Bell:** No objection to existing or future establishments selling alcohol, willing to sign a waiver. Noted current location is next to a gas station selling alcohol, and "Barbecue by Jim's" is within 100ft.
- **Mr. Clint Martin** stated for the record that no one involved with the property or the daycare had an objection to his business.

Committee Discussion:

Topics included alcohol-distance rules, traffic safety, drop-off flow, fencing guidelines for the Downtown Overlay District, landscaping requirements, and parent-handbook enforcement.

Traffic Flow:

- A traffic plan has been submitted, designed to keep traffic off Main Street.
- Rule: "No kids are to walk across that street" (Commerce Street).
- Drop-off/pick-up will occur in front of the building, with staggered times (6:00/6:30 AM to 9 AM) to prevent backup onto Commerce Street.
- Owner's current facility typically sees "maybe six cars lined up in two lines" during peak times and has a policy for quick drop-off/pick-up.

Fire Marshal: Communication has occurred, and the building is assured to be up to fire code. Internal changes for classrooms and flow will be made upon approval.

Maximum Number of Children: The current facility has 89 children, licensed for 129. New building design could accommodate up to 150, but the owner states, "I will never get to that point," having had up to 115 at the current location.

Child-to-Caregiver Ratio: Adheres to state of Mississippi guidelines, which vary by age (e.g., 5:1 for babies, 9:1 for 1-year-olds, 12:1 for 2-year-olds).

Staff Parking: Anticipates "about 15 cars" for staff—sufficient on-site parking, with a written agreement to use Huntington's parking lot for overflow.

Parking Capacity: Estimated 15 cars can line up in front of the building within the property line.

Outdoor Play Areas: Required for daycares of this size (33% of capacity must be outside space).

- Planned for "the grass area on the right side... mixed in with a chain-link fence with the black vinyl" and "the concrete side on the side of the building by the side of barbecue by jams."
- No play area on the back side due to the railroad.
- Owner consulted with the state agency regarding playground design.
- Fenced areas on the north and south sides of the building. Teachers will be present during recess.

Use of Parking Across Street / Coliseum Events: Huntington's parking lot across the street "would not be used... when calculating the required parking because of the type of street that it is." Ms. Bell stated they had a written agreement with the arena to allow overflow parking.

Building Ownership: Melissa Bell (Kids World owner) will lease the building from current owner Michael Walden.

Covered Drop-off: Not planned for the new location.

Play Area Security: Fenced areas to prevent unauthorized access, with teachers present.

Parent Handbook: Will detail expectations for parents, including not using the space across Commerce Street for drop-off/pick-up—handbook to be submitted to state and city planning. Repeated violations could lead to suspension.

Committee Discussion:

- In the mixed-use downtown overlay, a 500-foot buffer applies to *new* establishments selling liquor, not existing ones.
- Landscaping must be brought up to code.
- Fencing must abide by downtown design guidelines and will need to go before the downtown overlay design committee.

Concerns regarding traffic, specifically children crossing the street, led to a recommendation for a one-year contingency approval to review traffic issues.

Staff Analysis:

Mr. Newman stated the application meets criteria for flexible use concerning area harmony, special requirements, and public safety. Traffic concerns could be addressed through a one-year review contingency. The decision was for the committee to make.

Motion and Vote:

- **Action:** Motion by Ms. Mart to **approve FLEX26-03** with the conditions to re-review traffic in one year, submission of a copy of the handbook detailing the code of conduct and the consequences for crossing Commerce St. with the children, and a waiver permitting alcohol sales on adjacent properties.
- **Second:** Mr. Leake
- **Vote:** Approved by show of hands.

Next Steps:

Mr. Newman advised of the three-day appeal period beginning the next day. He advised they will need to work with the Downtown Overlay Committee on fencing requirements and the MS State Health Department on their requirements.

2. Flex26-04: Flexible Use – (Parcel 072N-09-046-01) Property in southeast quadrant of I-22/ McCullough Boulevard

Request: Flexible use to allow development of a previously approved 240-unit apartment complex (originally approved in 2020).

Notifications:

Mr. Newman confirmed notices were sent; no responses received.

Applicant:

Bruce Patel, Fusion Hospitality, 2749 Bayhill Woods Cove, Collierville, TN, owner/developer, represented by Harvey Matheny, 6363 Poplar Ave, Ste 300, Memphis, TN, Engineer with Pickering Group.

Applicant outlined a multi-component housing concept including:

- 60 fully furnished units for Toyota personnel.
- 52 units for active adults (with elevator access).
- 128 traditional multifamily units.
- Resort-style amenities including pool and play areas.

Applicant explained delays since 2020, updated feasibility considerations, and existing relationships with Toyota.

Committee Questions:

Discussion included:

- Whether project still conforms to current development code (including maximum building length and unit limits).
- Need for two access points under fire code.
- Pending MDOT approval for emergency access.
- Traffic study updates.
- Potential reinterpretation of Toyota units as extended-stay hotel units.
- Changes to city master plan since original approval.
- Feasibility of revising or segmenting the project.

Staff Analysis:

Mr. Newman stated the flexible-use request would require submission of a major site plan meeting current code, including:

- Two access points
- Building-length compliance
- Landscaping requirements
- Updated traffic information

The City recommended a full review once the applicant submits updated plans.

Public Comment:

No public comments were offered.

Committee Discussion:

Committee agreed that additional information and updated site plans are needed before considering flexible use approval.

Motion and Vote:

- **Action:** Motion by Mr. Scott Davis to table the application pending submission of a complete site plan including emergency access, code compliance for building lengths, and clarification of use types.
- **Second:** Mr. Victor Fleitas
- **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously.

3. Flex26-05: Flexible Use - 1708 S. Gloster Street (Parcel 106D-13-041-00)

Request: Flexible use to allow climate-controlled storage occupying approximately 12,000 sq. ft. of an existing 55,000 sq. ft. building.

Notifications:

Mr. Newman confirmed notices were sent; no responses received.

Applicant:

TMC, LLC – Applicant not present; no reason provided

Committee Discussion:

Committee discussed concerns about the absence of the applicant but acknowledged staff analysis indicating the use is appropriate for the building and location.

Planning staff affirmed:

- Building is currently sprinkled

- Any CO changes will require updated building plans and code compliance
- Landscaping will be brought up to code
- Change-of-use standards will still apply

Motion and Vote:

- **Action:** Motion by Ms. Thompson to **approve FLEX26-05.**
- **Second:** Mr. Fleitas
- **Vote:** Approved by show of hands.

4. FLEXVAR26-05: Flex Variance - 603 Clayton Avenue (Parcel 077H-25-240-00)

Request: Permit alcohol sales for new business “Ikey’s Deli & Market” at a location less than 400 ft from a residence.

Notifications:

Mr. Newman reported a few responses from neighboring residents, mostly concerning potential noise and late hours.

Applicant:

Melanie McCarter, 399 Rd 141, Tupelo, MS, owner of Ikey’s Deli and Market

Melanie McCarter and Chris Delgrande described the proposed neighborhood deli/market.

Key points:

- Operating hours planned to end around 8–9 PM
- Small outdoor seating area; not intended for amplified music or events
- Indoor seating capacity of approximately 4 tables and a small high-top area
- Commitment to complying with noise ordinances
- Intention to serve the Joyner neighborhood with food, drinks, and take-home items

Public Comments:

None.

Committee Discussion:

Members expressed support for the neighborhood-oriented concept.

Motion and Vote:

- **Action:** Motion by Ms. Mart to **approve FLEXVAR 26-05.**

- **Second:** Mr. Davis
- **Vote:** Approved unanimously

Next Steps:

Mr. Newman noted the three-day appeal period.

5. RZ 26-03: Zoning Map Change – (Parcel 106S-14-036-12) NW quadrant of South Thomas Street/ HWY 278.

Request: Rezone 5.03 acres from Low Density Residential to Mixed Use Commercial Corridor and 20 acres from Low Density Residential to Mixed Use Residential for future development.

Notifications:

Mr. Newman confirmed that adjoining property owners were notified; responses were mainly curiosity about what is being built.

Applicant:

Jay Collins, Applicant not present; no reason provided.

Public Comment:

- Henry Rupert Jr. expressed concern regarding unknown development impacts on his parents' nearby property.
- Antonio Acosta, adjacent property owner with agricultural uses, requested clarity on proposed development.

Committee and staff acknowledged concerns but explained no plan was provided.

Committee Discussion:

- This is a rezoning request, a "much more substantial change" than a change of use.
- Committee is uncomfortable recommending action without the applicant present to state their intentions,

Staff Analysis:

Mr. Newman stated staff cannot recommend approval without the applicant present to explain intended uses due to the significance of the zoning change.

Motion and Vote:

- **Action:** Motion by Mr. Davis to **table RZ26-03** due to applicant's absence
- **Second:** Mr. Fleitas

- **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously.
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OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Newman announced expected applications for the next meeting and projected submission of the comprehensive plan.

Because of Labor Day scheduling and council calendars, the committee will hold:

- **Work Session:** August 24, 2026
 - **Public Session:** August 31, 2026
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ADJOURNMENT

- **Action:** Motion by Ms. Thompson to adjourn
- **Second:** Mr. Williams
- **Vote:** Motion carried

Meeting adjourned.