

CITY OF SUGAR CITY, ID
PLANNING & ZONING REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, February 5, 2025, 7:00 P.M.

Commissioners in attendance: Spencer Haacke, Cory Roberts, Rick Robertson, Chandler Lessing

Others in attendance: P&Z Administrator Kurt Hibbert, Deputy Clerk Shelley Jones, Citizens Elizabeth & Lavenia Rareba, Abby Derrick, Courtney Hazen, Sandra & Shellie Powell

7:05 p.m. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Spencer Haacke

Prayer by: Rick Robertson

Pledge of Allegiance led by: Chandler Lessing

Approval of 12-18-2025 Minutes:

Motion to approve minutes as amended by: Rick Robertson

Second by: Chandler Lessing

All were in favor. Motion Carried.

Approval of 1-15-2026 Minutes:

Motion to approve minutes made by: Cory Roberts

Second by: Rick Robertson

All were in favor. Motion Carried.

Discussion on the Rural Ranchette Zone: Commissioner Robertson shared a handout with the commissioners which shared some history of the two communities. The handout covered:

- Accomplishments Up to the Present Time
- Preparing Salem for the Future
 - Need to clarify designations of certain areas. Suggestions included removing “Old” from Salem Townsite and changing “lower” and “upper” Salem to “east” and “west,” which describes the area more accurately.
- Recommended Zoning for the Salem Impact Area & Old Salem Townsite
 - Salem Impact Area Code
 - Salem Townsite Code

They want a clear description of their community. Years ago, the community was against being included in Rexburg boundaries. The citizens have been working on editing the proposed zone. They left the setbacks the same as they have been. They reduced height allowance back to thirty-five feet from the proposed sixty-five feet for windmills. The changes are almost the same as the previous Trans Ag zone but keeping the Salem name identity. The Salem subcommittee reviewed the Rural Ranchette zone when making their decisions. Certain residents wanted to leave it Trans Ag other than the townsite. The last paragraph of the last page of this handout states:

“ In the end, Sugar City will provide people who desire more of a city life, the ideal place to locate, and one that includes some commercial favorites; Salem will provide people with a place who desire a rural environment void of townhouses, apartments, and the likes. It is a win/win situation, and, by design, the two entities are quickly transforming the northern end of Madison County into a sought-after locale called Sugar-Salem.”

****Note:** it was explained that the “void of townhouses, apartments” was just for the old townsite. It is understood by law that residents are allowed to have Accessory Dwelling Units on their property.

Chairman Haacke explained to the audience that the handout they were reviewing was an update of the

previously suggested Rural Ranchette Zone for the Salem Area. The commission held a public hearing for this on October 2, 2025. The Salem residents did not approve of certain points of the suggested zone and what it entailed, therefore the Salem subcommittee has worked on changing the verbiage to produce a code that the residents would approve of. The Rural Ranchette Zone information is currently on the city's website for anyone to review.

Mr. Hibbert explained that the Rural Ranchette Zone was not originally created for Salem. It was proposed much earlier to go out into any area of the city's impact area, not just Salem. It is just a rural zone; it is about what life is in the impact area. The placement of this zone was proposed and it went to hearing. The Rural Ranchette was created when we got the area of impact approved by the county commissioners. It became our duty to let them know how it is going to be zoned for future growth rather than just letting it remain as is. Trans Ag is just a general zone that the county has.

There was more discussion on acreage requirements of one or two acre lots. Two-thirds of the lots are one acre or less now. The Rural Ranchette zone changed the lot size from two to one acre. The residents did not like this because of possible sewer and water issues. Two acre lots would help minimize sewage contamination. The area between the Salem townsite and Sugar City would be two acre lots. In the townsite, currently you can have two houses on one acre. The two acre lots could also have two homes. The area between Sugar City and Salem could possibly become one acre lots with city sewer and water available. Chairman Haacke liked the idea of keeping the areas north and west of the Salem highway more rural with the two acre lots. Closer to Sugar City, one acre lots may work well because of the growth coming but protects the townsite as to how we would want it to be.

People seemed to be most upset with the sixty-five-foot height limits and smaller setbacks. This new draft changed those items back to what they were, which is a good thing. There has been plans made by the City Engineer Dick Dyer for future growth and the need to expand our sewer and water services.

It is a consensus that the county commissioners should not eliminate old townsites. They are needed to help find areas and locations. Areas want to keep their historical identities. We want to stay on top of future progress. Continuing the review of the code proposal: they want the platted roads left in as is, height regulations to remain the same, AG exemptions on two acres, not just five acres as currently required, setbacks adjusted, etc. Overall, they want areas identified and keep Salem's identity. They like the name "Salem Townsite," not "Old Salem Townsite." Call everything around the townsite "Salem." This document needs to be placed in an ordinance format by the city attorney.

We cannot stop progress; we need to be on top of this and do what we would like to see. Plans are to possibly hold a public hearing in March, depending on time for attorney to put the document in ordinance form and for the city to notify residents.

Motion by: Rick Robertson to show the Salem townsite and the rest of area of Salem as two distinct different areas, and that we go through our City attorney and Administrator Hibbert to create an ordinance that shows these two identities and have it available for city, community and Salem area so that they can see it and be able to read it and see how the ordinance is put together with the complete verbiage, with the map and the ordinance in a packet, available for Salem townsite and the rest of Salem area in Sugar's Impact Area. The map will designate and show the two different areas. This will be for the hearing and to present to county commissioners.

Second by: Chandler Lessing

All were in favor. Motion Carried.

Public Comment: Sandra Powell from Salem area wanted to make the committee aware of a 100-year trust on the land between the highway and Salem area. There are 70 years left and it cannot be developed. She also wanted to know what plans for water and sewer lines if development expedites in an area. The commission stated that there is a twenty-year plan that has been approved for sewer and water for future development to

that area.

Discussion on Verizon Project: Kurt Hibbert notified the commission that Verizon is wanting to have their services in our area. We have received an application from them. They will need a permit, and they are doing a study to make sure it will be safe.

P&Z Sub-Committee Updates:

- SCURA (Sugar City Urban Renewal Agency) – Spencer Haacke shared that they will be scheduling quarterly meetings.
- Salem Area Development - Rick Robertson shared update previously in this meeting.
- Historical Preservation - Cory Roberts – no update
- Parks and Paths - Drew Eager absent – no report
*Note: Chairman Haacke mentioned that he wrote letter of support to Public Works Director Arlynn Jacobson for pathway grant.
- Community Beautification & Identity/Downtown Design & Revitalization - Chandler Lessing met with former mayor Dave Ogden to collaborate ideas. Mr. Lessing would like to create a questionnaire for the downtown businesses and share it at the next meeting.

Discussion on Downtown Blueprint: Mr. Hibbert shared that there has been an application received for the property next to the Sugar Cube on Center Street for mixed used, commercial on the bottom of building with apartments on top. He also shared with the committee the future plans of Home Depot and Winco coming in near Walmart.

Agenda items for meeting on February 19, 2025:

- Questionnaire for Businesses for Downtown Revitalization
- Review Salem Area Ordinance
- Subcommittee/Urban Renewal Updates
- Review of New Zoning Map
- Public Comment
- Administrative Report

8:50 p.m. Motion to adjourn the meeting by: Cory Roberts

Second by: Chandler Lessing

All were in favor. Motion carried.