

CITY OF SUGAR CITY, ID
PLANNING & ZONING MINUTES
Thursday, May 7, 2026, 7:00 P.M.
PUBLIC HEARING

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

Others in attendance: P&Z Administrator Kurt Hibbert, Office Assistant Erieka Pimentel, Building Inspector Quinton Owens, Citizens Brian Dold (Acton School), Debi Coatney, Alyse Huskinson, Hunter Bale, Kennedy Bale, Ryan & Carmen Heap (SUP Applicants) joined by Zoom Meeting

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

Prayer by: Kurt Hibbert

Pledge of Allegiance led by: Spencer Haacke

Public Hearing: Special Use Permit Application for 180 Business Loop in Sugar City Business Park for a Preschool Specializing in Fine Arts

Administrator Hibbert Introduced the Special Use Permit Application

The applicants presented their proposal by sharing the following:

- **Business:** Little Sprouts Fine Arts Preschool owned by Carmen Heap, operating within Legacy Dance Academy.
- **Curriculum:** Purchased Blossom and Grow fine arts curriculum focusing on movement, visual art, music, and imaginative play with kindergarten readiness goals.
- **Class structure:** Maximum 15 students per class with staggered 30-minute drop-off/pick-up windows; potential for three classes (45 total students) at full capacity.
- **Staffing:** Two teachers per class plus administrative position; all staff require enhanced background checks and pediatric CPR/first aid certification.
- **Start date:** Planned for August 2026, pending IdahoSTARS daycare licensing completion.
- **Parking Plan:**
 - **Available spaces:** sixteen client parking spaces plus one dedicated ADA space and four staff spaces (21 in total).
 - **Drop-off protocol:** Parents walk children to door within 5-minute window; state requirements prohibit parents from staying in building.
 - **Shared tenant:** Sidon Water occupies other half of building with minimal on-site staff (0-1 employees); primarily warehouse with UPS/FedEx deliveries.
 - **Traffic reduction:** Preschool will reduce parking demand compared to current fitness classes that require longer parking durations.

Public Comment

Support: Multiple community members spoke in favor, including Brian Dold from Acton Academy Rexburg who suggested allowing street parking for growth and noted 30-second drop-off times work well.

Speakers also emphasized need for additional preschool options in growing Sugar City and Legacy Dance's positive community impact.

Neutral: None

Opposition: None

No rebuttal by applicant.

7:56 p.m. Public Hearing closed by Chairman Haacke

CITY OF SUGAR CITY, ID
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Thursday, May 7, 2025
REGULAR MEETING

Discussion of Public Hearing for Special Use Permit for Little Sprouts Fine Arts Preschool at 180 Business Loop: Preschool Requirements/ Building Code and Occupancy:

- Change of use: Building currently approved as warehouse (S1 occupancy); requires change to business/daycare occupancy classification.
- Fire suppression: Building under 12,000 square feet threshold; no sprinkler system required.
- State oversight: IdahoSTARS licensing process will verify all health, safety, and building code compliance before preschool can open.
- Square footage compliance: Three separate spaces within dance studio allow class rotation and meet IdahoSTARS per-child square footage requirements.
- City engineer Dick Dyer to review whether preschool use will require adjustment to utility user fees.

After a brief discussion stating that concerns were addressed, the commission recommended approval with the following motion:

Motion by: Cory Roberts to recommend to city council the Special Use Permit for Little Sprouts Fine Arts Preschool with two conditions:

- (1) completion of IdahoSTARS licensing, and
- (2) compliance with local building occupancy requirements for change of use from warehouse to daycare.

Second by: Rick Robertson

All were in favor, motion carried.

Approval of 4-16-2026 Minutes:

Motion to approve minutes made by: Rick Robertson

Second by: Cory Roberts

All were in favor, motion Carried.

Public Comment: None

Discussion of Salem Zoning and Possible Setting of Public Hearing:

Combine Salem zone naming changes with land use map public hearing on June 4th, 2026, rather than holding separate hearings. Both involve map changes and naming of zones.

Points discussed:

- **Rural Ranchette zones:** Add geographic descriptors (e.g., "Salem Rural," "Moody Rural") to existing Rural Ranchette zones to create neighborhood identity.
- **Zoning code amendment:** Minimal text changes to allow descriptors in front of zone names according to geographic area.
- **Community priority:** Salem residents strongly expressed desire to preserve Salem identity and historical significance.
- **Junction Renaming Proposal:**
The desire is to create collaborative, non-confrontational naming that serves all communities equally. Discuss "Salem Sugar/Sugar Salem" signage concept for community entries.

The three junctions involved are US-20 corridor including Salem South exit, North Rexburg exit, and interchange (Fort Henry). Fort Henry was the site of first white encampment west of Continental Divide (circa 1810), predating Lewis and Clark. The committee will prepare a draft proposal for May 21st meeting with three subpoints for each junction.

Planning Commission will make a recommendation to Sugar City Council, which will go to Madison County then to the Idaho Department of Transportation.

Land Use Code Improvements:

The committee would like all special use permits to be conditional use permits to reduce arbitrary approval processes. Special use permits are perceived as favoring "special" applicants; conditional use permits provide clear approval criteria based on compliance with conditions.

They will need to revamp land use table language; City Council has requested this change for 3 years. Our online land use table appears unreadable with missing headers/footers, color coding confusion, and version inconsistencies between online and official records.

Subcommittee Reports:

No new reports.

Administrative Report:**Highway Expansion Advocacy:**

- Current plan: US-20 widening from Idaho Falls to Rexburg (4 to 6 lanes) programmed in State Transportation Improvement Program.
- Recommendation: Advocate for extension to Fort Henry Junction to avoid bottleneck at Rexburg.
- Historical precedent: 1970 double-lane stoppage at Fremont County line caused numerous accidents; avoid repeating mistake.
- Regional benefit: Serves Jackson Hole and Yellowstone tourism traffic, not just Sugar City.

Pedestrian Connectivity:

- Bridge upgrade: Middle overpass between Sugar City and Salem programmed for pedestrian amenity improvements to support community integration.

Planning & Zoning Commission Vacancies: Replacements are needed for Brian Hawkes and Drew Eager. County Commissioners are working on Salem impact area representative appointment. Mayor indicated eventual appointment of a new P&Z member but no confirmed timeline. Contact information was provided to commissioners for a potential Salem impact area P&Z member.

Action Items for Next Meeting:**Administrator Hibbert:**

1. Prepare land use code amendment language for special-to-conditional use permit conversion.
2. Draft three-junction renaming proposal with specific language for each interchange.
3. Report on land use table corrections and online version discrepancies.

Chairman Haacke: Complete findings of fact for preschool special use permit recommendation and deliver to city clerk by end of Friday, May 8th.

Office Assistant Erieka Pimentel: Email transportation study with updated pathway maps to commissioners (available from Public Works Director Arlynn Jacobson).

Agenda Items for Next Meeting:

Review draft of Salem zone naming language on May 21st meeting in preparation for public hearing.

Review junction renaming proposal, land use map rollover and land use table updates.

8:55 P.M.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by: Rick Robertson

Second by: Cory Roberts

All were in favor, motion carried.

*Note: Only one meeting will be held during summer months.