

CITY OF SUGAR CITY, ID
PLANNING & ZONING MINUTES
Thursday, October 1, 2026, 7:05 P.M.

Commissioners in attendance: Chairman Spencer Haacke, Rick Robertson, Connie Grassi, and Sam Johansen online

Absent: Chandler Lessing

Staff in attendance: P&Z Administrator Kurt Hibbert

Citizens in attendance: Members of the public, including residents and property owners from Sugar City and Salem

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

Prayer by: Spencer Haacke

Pledge of Allegiance led by: Connie Grassi

Connie Grassi was sworn in as a Planning and Zoning Commissioner.

Public Hearings

Salem and Sugar City Zoning Map Amendments

Staff presented the proposed revisions to the Sugar City zoning map. The revisions included approximately 25 technical and graphical corrections, updated map legends and geographic references, clearer interchange and annexation labels, and improved zone differentiation. The substantive changes included proposed changes along Railroad Avenue and nearby areas from medium-density residential, light manufacturing, and highway commercial designations to commercial or downtown-commercial designations, and a change in the former grain-elevator area near Steiner Park from public facility to downtown commercial. Existing lawful nonconforming uses would continue where applicable.

Members of the public asked questions about grandfathered uses, vacant lots, permitted uses, setbacks, parking, rebuilding after damage, lighting, traffic, school access, and the potential effects of future commercial development on adjacent residences. The Commission also discussed the need to enforce Sugar City's dark-sky and full-cutoff lighting requirements.

The public hearing was closed.

Salem Rural Ranchette Zone Amendments

Staff explained that the proposal would amend the text of the Rural Ranchette zone and would not rezone any individual property. The proposed changes were: adding descriptive area prefixes such as Salem; increasing the minimum side-yard setback from five feet to ten feet; reducing maximum building height from 60 feet to 35 feet; and reducing animal density from four animal units per acre to two animal units per acre. The existing short-term grazing provision was discussed.

Members of the public raised questions about the status of the zone, the public process, small-acreage homesteading, animal density, water and sewer availability, existing agricultural and business uses, and how lawful existing uses would be treated. The Commission received testimony both supporting and opposing portions of the proposal.

The public hearing was closed.

Zoning map amendments: Neutral testimony was provided by Keith Boyle, Lamont Merrill, and Jeff Nelson, along with additional residents and property owners whose names were not clearly captured. No clearly identified speakers testified for or against this proposal.

Rural Ranchette zone amendments: Bruce Eckman and additional Salem residents whose names were not clearly captured testified against portions of the proposal. No clearly identified speakers testified for or neutrally.

Approval of 09-03-2026 Minutes

The Commission reviewed the September 3, 2026 minutes and corrected the spelling of Rick Robertson's name.

Motion to approve the 09-03-2026 minutes with the correction made by: Rick Robertson

Second by: Connie Grassi

All voting commissioners were in favor, motion carried.

Approval of 09-17-2026 Minutes

The Commission reviewed the September 17, 2026 minutes and made the same correction to Rick Robertson's name.

Motion to approve the 09-17-2026 minutes with the correction made by: Rick Robertson

Second by: Sam Johansen

All voting commissioners were in favor, motion carried.

Discussion and Possible Action on Salem and Sugar City Zoning Map Amendments – Action Item

The Commission discussed the public testimony and the long-term planning purpose of the proposed map changes. The Commission also discussed including the parcel south of Boyle Fertilizer in the downtown-commercial designation and addressing the property owner concerns raised during the hearing.

Motion to forward the five zoning-map changes to the Sugar City City Council, with the additional Boyle Fertilizer parcel included in the downtown-commercial area, made by: Rick Robertson

Second by: Connie Grassi

All voting commissioners were in favor, motion carried.

Discussion and Possible Action on Salem Rural Ranchette Zone Amendments – Action Item

The Commission discussed the proposed area-prefix language, setbacks, maximum building height, and animal-density provision. The Commission determined to retain the existing four-animal-unit-per-acre provision rather than reduce it to two animal units per acre, while recognizing that existing uses would be treated under applicable grandfathering provisions. The Commission also discussed the need to clarify the status and administration of the zone with the Madison County Commissioners.

Motion to approve the area-prefix, side-yard setback, and maximum-height amendments; retain the existing four-animal-unit-per-acre provision; and confer with the Madison County Commissioners to clarify the zone and related questions made by: Rick Robertson

Second by: Connie Grassi

All voting commissioners were in favor, motion carried.

8-2 Sign Code Change Concerning Fort Henry Junction Area – Action Item

The Commission discussed the proposed Fort Henry Junction sign-code amendment, including sign height, spacing, visibility, and the relationship between the interchange and surrounding areas. The item was tabled for further work and discussion.

Business Park Sidewalk Requirement Code Amendment

Staff reviewed the history of the business park development, the existing walking path, drainage and ribbon-curb constraints, fire-hydrant locations, accessibility, and the need to provide safe pedestrian connections. The Commission directed staff to refine the proposed code language with the city attorney and prepare materials for further Commission review, with a possible public hearing targeted for the next regular meeting.

Arlynn Jacobson – Sewer and Water Study Report

Arlynn Jacobson was not available to present the report. Staff reported that the study is progressing under an approved extension expected to run through the end of December 2026. Potential infrastructure options discussed included a route along Second East and a pressure-sewer option along U.S. 20. A completed report will be presented when available.

Building Inspector Report

No separate building-inspector report was presented.

SCURA Report

The Commission discussed the upcoming November ballot question concerning authorization for the Sugar City Urban Renewal Agency to transact business and exercise its powers under Idaho Code Title 50, Chapter 20. Informational flyers and a public-information video were being prepared and distributed.

Downtown Design and Revitalization Report

No report was presented because the responsible commissioner was absent. The item was deferred to a future meeting.

Administrative Report – New Committee Member Update

The Commission discussed potential annexation inquiries from property owners near the interchange and the need to coordinate future road connections. Staff also identified the need to refine the regional commercial zone language so it better reflects Sugar City's planning goals while preserving appropriate flexibility for development.

Salem Area Development Report

The Commission discussed the Salem townsite and impact-area designations, communication with Salem residents, and the importance of clarifying the existing impact-area and zoning documents with Madison County.

City Council Coordination – Discussion and Possible Action

The Commission discussed coordination with the City Council and the possibility of more regular communication. No separate action was taken.

Discuss Agenda Items for Next Regular Meeting

The anticipated next-meeting items include the business-park sidewalk code amendment and possible public hearing, a building-inspector report, the sewer and water study report if available, regular administrative and Salem-area reports, and continued discussion of regional commercial and City Council coordination matters.

10:41 p.m.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by: Rick Robertson

Second by: Connie Grassi

All voting commissioners were in favor, motion carried.