



Grand Lake Planning Commission

Wednesday, October 22, 2025 at 4:30 PM

Online via Goto Meeting

*The Town of Grand Lake upholds the Six Pillars of Character:
Citizenship, Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness and Caring*

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

Chairman Shockey called the planning commission meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

2. Roll Call

Chairman Shockey confirmed all commissioners are present.

3. Conflicts of Interest

None.

4. Work Session 4:30 PM

A. WORK SESSION – Discussion of a proposed Central Business District Overlay Zone and accompanying design regulations intended to reinforce the historic western character of Grand Lake.

Mayor Bergquist called the joint workshop meeting of the Planning Commission and Board of Trustees to order at 4:36 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room.

Mayor Bergquist welcomed attendees and expressed appreciation for everyone's participation. She explained that the purpose of the workshop was for the Planning Commission and Board of Trustees to review and discuss the proposed historic overlay, with guidance from Josh and Emily from Ayres Associates. The Mayor noted that supporting reference images were provided for discussion purposes, emphasizing that no final decisions would be made at this time.

She shared a passage from a tourism website describing Grand Lake's historic character as a former frontier town known for its Old West charm, which continues to attract visitors. Mayor Bergquist highlighted that this description aligns with the town's goal of preserving its historic identity. She encouraged the group to consider how the overlay could reflect that heritage, particularly the Western boardwalk aesthetic that remains a key part of Grand Lake's appeal.

She concluded by turning the discussion over to Josh and Emily for further presentation and guidance.

Emily Weber, from Ayres Associates thanked the Planning Commission and Board of Trustees for attending and introduced the purpose of the discussion—to review and refine the draft text for the proposed Historic Overlay Zone. She explained that the draft was developed based on prior discussions with the Board, Commission, and community

feedback, drawing language from the Comprehensive Plan and existing zoning code to better define and emphasize Grand Lake's historic Western character.

Ms. Weber noted that because Grand Lake's architectural identity is unique and not tied to a single, defined style, the intent is to clarify the architectural elements—such as building forms, materials, textures, and colors—that best reflect that character. She emphasized that all proposed language and guidelines are preliminary and open for discussion, with visual examples provided to help guide feedback.

She presented an overview of the proposed overlay boundary, focusing on the central business district and adjacent lakefront commercial area, while noting that the boundaries could be adjusted over time as implementation progresses. The overarching goal is to make design guidelines clearer, consistent, and enforceable for applicants, staff, and decision-makers—reducing subjectivity in code interpretation.

Ms. Weber concluded by inviting open discussion of the proposed guidelines, starting with color and materials, to gather input that will inform revisions to the draft overlay document.

The group held an in-depth discussion regarding building colors, trim details, accent materials, and how to best preserve the authenticity and character of Grand Lake's historic Western aesthetic within the proposed overlay district.

Discussion – Building Color, Materials, and Architectural Character:

Participants discussed the importance of visual contrast and architectural authenticity, referring to historical examples such as mining-era buildings in Central City, where the use of color often reflected prosperity. The group debated whether trim and accent colors should be permitted or limited, emphasizing the need for clear definitions to avoid overly subjective interpretations in code enforcement.

Ms. Weber noted that color regulation is inherently challenging due to variations in perception, tone, and material application. To address this, she recommended requiring applicants to submit physical material samples—painted on the actual building material—for review by the Planning Commission and Board of Trustees prior to approval. This approach would ensure more accurate evaluation of colors and finishes.

Discussion also covered code enforcement for paint colors, with staff confirming that exterior color approvals are already tracked and enforced through the permitting process. Current practice requires applicants to match approved palettes for both exterior finishes and roofing materials, with staff sign-off before final approval.

The group reviewed reference images of building examples, considering the use of bright trim, contrast colors, and accent features. While some members supported allowing limited use of brighter or contrasting trim colors to highlight architectural features, others expressed concern about overly bold colors detracting from the town's historic character.

The conversation then shifted to building materials and façade design, including limits on accent materials such as stone and metal. Ms. Weber clarified that current draft language restricts accent materials to approximately one-third of each building façade, generally at the base of structures. Participants recalled previous code amendments addressing similar issues, such as restrictions on metal siding following a 2017–2018 review.

Several members recommended allowing some flexibility for the placement of accent materials—such as on chimneys, gables, or dormers—provided they complement the overall building design and are approved by the Board. The group reached consensus that natural materials like wood and stone should remain dominant, with limited and context-sensitive use of accent materials.

In closing, Ms. Weber summarized that revisions would be made to clarify color guidelines, allow for limited trim contrast, refine accent material use (especially regarding stone and metal), and maintain flexibility for unique architectural elements. The group agreed to continue refining these sections in future drafts of the overlay code.

Discussion – Boardwalk Design, Building Setbacks, and Open Space Requirements:

The Commission and Board continued their discussion on the architectural and streetscape components of the proposed Historic Overlay District, focusing on the boardwalk character, building setbacks, and open space requirements along Grand Avenue.

Participants reviewed historic and current images of Grand Lake’s main street to evaluate whether a continuous covered boardwalk should be required throughout the downtown corridor. Members noted that while many of the original buildings once featured connected wooden boardwalks and awnings, several current structures do not, resulting in a mix of covered and uncovered walkways. There was general agreement that maintaining the traditional boardwalk appearance contributes to the town’s Western identity and pedestrian experience. However, opinions varied on whether uniform coverage should be mandated. Several members favored allowing variation in awning and boardwalk height and design to preserve individual building character and prevent a “cookie-cutter” appearance. Others expressed concerns about snow, shade, and maintenance implications associated with covered walkways.

The discussion then shifted to architectural flexibility, including the potential for second-story decks or patios built above boardwalks. While current code does not allow decks to extend over the public right-of-way, members expressed interest in exploring options to permit such features in the overlay zone under defined conditions. It was noted that allowing upper-level outdoor spaces could enhance building usability and add visual interest, provided materials and design align with the district’s historic character and maintain public safety standards.

Regarding setbacks and open space, the group debated how far buildings should be placed from the property line and how much street frontage should remain as a solid “street wall.” Some members emphasized the importance of maintaining a consistent street wall along Grand Avenue to reinforce the traditional storefront rhythm. Others advocated incorporating limited open areas or courtyards to provide outdoor seating for restaurants and public gathering space. Several examples, such as the Hub, RMRT building, and Rocky’s, were referenced to illustrate how minor setbacks and covered patios can enhance both function and aesthetics.

There was general support for allowing partial setbacks, with consensus emerging around maintaining approximately 60% of a building’s frontage at the street wall and permitting up to 40% to be recessed for outdoor use, subject to architectural review. Members also

requested visual examples of varying setback percentages and depths to better understand their impact on streetscape character.

Finally, the group discussed removing the mandatory open space requirement currently imposed on mixed-use developments, noting that flexibility would allow builders to design open areas as amenities rather than as constraints. Staff were directed to refine the draft overlay language to reflect this consensus, ensuring that future development maintains Grand Lake's historic boardwalk charm while allowing measured flexibility in design, setback, and use of outdoor spaces.

Discussion – Parking Requirements and Related Code Updates:

The Planning Commission and Board of Trustees held a detailed discussion regarding parking requirements within the proposed Historic Overlay District, focusing on the challenges of applying current code standards to properties along Grand Avenue and within the commercial core.

Ms. Weber explained that under current code, commercial developments are required to provide on-site parking at a ratio of one space per 200 square feet of restaurant use, which has proven difficult for properties on smaller downtown lots. She cited the example of 900 Grand Avenue, where the developer was required to provide nine to ten spaces but was only able to meet the requirement due to its corner location and adjacent right-of-way parking. The group acknowledged that the existing standard often makes redevelopment or infill projects financially unfeasible, with costs for required parking spaces estimated at approximately \$20,000 per space.

Several members expressed support for eliminating or significantly reducing commercial parking requirements within the overlay zone, especially where on-street or right-of-way parking already exists. It was suggested that commercial uses such as retail, office, and restaurants rely on shared and public parking to maintain walkability, while uses requiring overnight parking—such as hotels or motels—would still be responsible for providing adequate on-site spaces. The group agreed that removing parking minimums would help encourage investment, redevelopment, and preservation of the town's historic core.

There was also consensus that if commercial parking requirements were eliminated, the associated in-lieu parking fees should be removed as well, since those fees can discourage new development and make small-lot projects economically impractical. Members noted that under the current structure, few new projects could be built within the downtown core due to the combined burden of parking construction and in-lieu costs.

The discussion then shifted to residential parking standards within the overlay. Ms. Weber proposed simplifying requirements to one parking space per studio, one-bedroom, or two-bedroom unit, and two spaces for units with three or more bedrooms, eliminating the current "one-and-a-half-space" requirement for two-bedroom units. Some members supported this change, noting that most multi-bedroom vacation or seasonal units typically use only one vehicle. Others raised concerns about overflow parking, particularly for two-bedroom units that may accommodate multiple occupants.

Participants discussed broader trends across Colorado, where many municipalities have recently reduced or eliminated downtown parking minimums to encourage walkability and affordability. It was noted that overlapping usage patterns—such as daytime business

parking and evening residential parking—could support efficient shared use of limited parking resources.

The conversation concluded with general agreement to continue refining the proposed parking and open space standards, including the possible removal of commercial-to-residential ratio requirements tied to open space calculations. Staff and the consultant team will prepare revised draft language and visual examples for review at a subsequent workshop. Several members requested an additional meeting before formalizing recommendations to ensure that the overlay code revisions are clear, practical, and aligned with the community’s goals for redevelopment within the downtown core.

The workshop was adjourned.

5. Unscheduled Citizen Participation

None.

6. Items for Discussion

B. QUASI JUDICIAL – Sketch Review of a Preliminary Plat for eight lots located at 120 County Road 663, commonly referred to as the Ruger Subdivision.

Chairman Shockey opened the public hearing.

Emily Weber from Ayres Associates presented a sketch review for a proposed subdivision known as the Ruger Subdivision, located at 120 County Road 663, north of West Portal Road. The 4.88-acre parcel, recently annexed into the town, is currently undeveloped. The proposal includes eight single-family residential lots ranging in size from 0.39 to 1.01 acres. As outlined in the annexation agreement, the property may contain up to nine residential lots, and due to the presence of critical town water infrastructure beneath County Road 663, the road is expected to remain unpaved and unimproved to avoid potential damage. The annexation agreement also requires stormwater improvements to address drainage needs.

Ms. Weber explained that the subdivision process includes three steps—sketch, preliminary, and final—with the current review being the sketch phase, intended only for high-level discussion and code compliance. The property is zoned Single-Family Residential High Density (SF-HD), requiring minimum lot sizes of 5,000 square feet and 50 feet of frontage. Development on slopes greater than 30% is discouraged and prohibited on slopes over 40%, and this will be further reviewed at the preliminary stage to ensure all lots are buildable and accessible.

The town’s subdivision code requires that 7% of the gross land area be dedicated for public purposes. To meet this, the applicant has agreed to provide a 10–15-foot trail easement along County Road 663, likely on the east side, which will be reviewed in detail at the preliminary stage. Additionally, the inclusionary zoning requirement mandates that 10% of lots in subdivisions of five or more be dedicated for affordable housing or town use; thus, one lot will be dedicated to the town. The applicant is aware of and agrees to these conditions.

Ms. Weber noted that the next step will be reviewed by the Town Board, followed by a preliminary plat submittal including required drainage plans, land dedication details, and other studies in accordance with town standards. No formal recommendation or

resolution was required at this stage. The purpose of the discussion was to identify potential conditions or concerns—particularly regarding annexation requirements, drainage, and public dedication—that will guide future phases of the subdivision review.

Michael Ruger, 5160 Redwood Drive- applicant, was present for questions.

The topic of road easements and winter maintenance was discussed, particularly regarding liability and responsibility in a rural area. Commissioners and town staff reviewed property boundaries and easements, ensuring compliance with zoning and access requirements. Affordable housing obligations were also addressed, with clarification that the town cannot profit from the sale of affordable lots and must adhere to specific qualification standards.

Comments raised concerns about road access, water supply, and the potential for flooding in the area. Drainage and stormwater management were identified as important considerations for later stages of the development process. The discussion also touched on property ownership challenges in mountainous terrain and the need for clear coordination among the land planner, surveyor, and town officials.

7. Future Agenda Items

To be determined.

8. Adjourn Meeting

This meeting of the Grand Lake Planning Commission was adjourned at 7:56 PM.



James Shockey, Chairman

ATTEST:



Alayna Carrell, Town Clerk

