

The Honorable G. Rick Wilson, Chair
Dennis Grant Vice Chairman
John R. Kish
Council President Smith, Ex Officio Member
Bill Wellford
Stanley Spalding
Roy Smith, Alternate



Stephanie Anderson, City Solicitor

Jay Meashey, Director
Department of Economic and Community Development

CITY OF LAUREL PLANNING COMMISSION

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Commission meets the Second Tuesday of each Month

SIX HUNDRED-TWENTY THIRD MEETING – REGULAR CITY OF LAUREL PLANNING COMMISSION TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2026 6:00 P.M.

The meeting was held virtually through Zoom. Chairman Wilson presiding. The roll was called with Mr. Wellford, Mr. Smith and Council President Smith. From the Department of Economic & Community Development, Mr. Jay Meashey, Director, and Ms. Brooke Herring, Community Development Coordinator, were in attendance. There were approximately zero (0) members of the public in attendance.

The minutes from the May 12, 2026, meeting were approved as written, on motion by Mr. Wellford, seconded by Mr. Smith carried on a roll call vote of all members present.

The next item on the agenda was for the Annual Report for Calendar year 2025. Economic & Community Development Director, Mr. Meashey provided a summary of the long report and stated local planning departments are required to submit an annual report to the Maryland Department of Planning for the previous calendar year by July 1st of the current year.

The Commission, on motion by Mr. Wellford, seconded by Mr. Smith, and carried on a roll call vote of all members present, voted to **approve** the Annual Report for Calendar year 2025 and Resolution No. 26-10-PC as presented in the Technical Staff Report.

Next, Mr. Meashey, discussed preliminary proposed regulations for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). He stated the Maryland General Assembly passed a 2025 law requiring jurisdictions with their own zoning authority to allow ADUs on lots with single-family detached homes and the City of Laurel must adopt a local ordinance by October 1, 2025, to comply. He then shared a presentation that included where ADUs would be allowed by right (on single-family detached

lots in R-5 and R-55 zones) outside the historic district, then where ADUs would be allowed through a Special Exception (in R-20 and other residential zones), property owners would need approval through the Planning Commission and Board of Appeals process. Townhouses, duplexes, multifamily and mixed-use properties would generally not be eligible unless they contain a single-family detached dwelling. Various ADU configurations and their requirements were explained. The proposal recognizes three (3) forms: interior ADUs such as basement apartments or converted portions of existing homes, attached ADUs such as additions to existing homes or converted attached garages and detached ADUs such as new standalone structures or converted detached garages or carriage houses. Commission members noted that detached ADUs are likely to generate the most neighborhood concerns.

Furthermore, there was discussion regarding size and design standards, the State law limits ADUs to 75% of the primary home's above-grade finished square footage. No minimum size is proposed, ADUs must remain visually subordinate to the main dwelling. Existing zoning rules govern height, lot coverage and setbacks. It was noted that the City of Laurel cannot impose ADU setbacks stricter than those already required for accessory structures. Regarding density and growth caps, State law specifically prohibits local governments from counting ADUs toward residential density limits, using growth caps to prevent ADU construction and using water/sewer capacity regulations as a barrier to ADUs. For the infrastructure and safety requirements, staff proposes on the utilities, that ADUs should connect to public water and sewer systems and even properties currently on wells or septic systems may be required to connect. With the building codes, ADUs must comply with the International Residential Code (IRC) and Fire Sprinklers, staff requested feedback on whether newly built ADUs should require residential sprinkler systems and converted structures should require sprinklers. Commissioners expressed support for sprinkler requirements, noting that Prince George's County already requires sprinklers in many new residential structures. A residential use-and-occupancy permit would be required before occupancy.

The subject of parking was raised during discussion, and it was explained that State law limits local parking requirements. To impose additional parking requirements, the City of Laurel would first need a citywide parking study. Staff currently leans toward not imposing additional parking requirements because of the cost and complexity of such a study. There was a major focus on rental rules preventing investor abuse. With the proposed requirements, the primary residence must be owner-occupied if the ADU is rented, rental licenses would be required, and Fire Marshal inspections would be required. Family-member occupancy would be treated more flexibly. When talking about short-term rentals, ADUs would be prohibited from operating as Airbnb rentals, tourist homes and other short-term rentals. The Commission discussed concerns about enforcement, particularly how the city would verify owner occupancy or family relationships.

Within the Historic District, staff proposes ADUs would be prohibited on properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Potentially prohibited ADUs on properties eligible for National Register listing. Any ADU in the Historic District would require Historic District Commission review and compliance with historic design standards. Commissioners indicated they would like more legal review and public input on this issue.

Every ADU would receive its own address designation (such as Unit 1 and Unit 2). This was requested by the police department and emergency responders. Existing legal ADUs would be recognized as conforming uses. HOA restrictions questions remain about whether Maryland's new law will override HOA restrictions. Staff expects future court decisions may clarify this issue.

Chairman Wilson discussed whether ADUs should pay school impact fees, public safety fees and other development-related charges. Staff agreed this issue requires further study. Commissioner Wellford asked whether prefabricated or modular structures could qualify as ADUs. Staff responded, potentially yes, however, they would still need to meet building code requirements and be permanently connected to utilities. RVs and trailers would not qualify. Commissioner Smith raised concerns about: Enforcing owner-occupancy requirements. Verifying family-member exemptions. Staff acknowledged enforcement challenges and said they would work further with code enforcement and permitting officials.

Mr. Meashey noted that staff will gather comments from Commissioners and Council members regarding these concerns. Furthermore, a draft ordinance is expected to be presented to the Planning Commission in July. The City Council is expected to consider the ordinance in September. The ordinance must be adopted by October 1, 2025, to comply with state law. In closing, the goal is to align with Maryland's new ADU's law, increased housing opportunities and affordability, protection of neighborhood character, public safety requirements and prevention of speculative investor activity.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Approved: Brooke Herring

Date: 7/14/2026

