



LEBANON PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

April 15, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Library Community Meeting Room
55 Academy Street, Lebanon, Oregon

CALL TO ORDER / FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Chair Don Robertson
Vice-Chair Lory Gerig-Knurowski
Karisten Baxter
Kristina Breshears
Alternate Shyla Malloy
Alternate Michael Miller
Alternate Regina Thompson

ABSENT

Don Fountain

STAFF

City Manager Ron Whitlatch
Development Services Director Shana Olson
City Attorney Tre Kennedy

MINUTES – none

CITIZEN COMMENTS – none

ELECTION OF A NEW CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Motion to nominate Lory Gerig-Knurowski as Chair was made by Robertson, seconded by Malloy. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion to nominate Don Robertson as Vice-Chair was made by Malloy, seconded by Breshears. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMISSION REVIEW

1. Public Hearing – Planning File PD-26-01

Request: Approval of a Planned Development for the Western University of Health Sciences Lebanon Campus. The proposal consists of a phased university campus with a total buildout of up to approximately 500,000 square feet of institutional and supporting uses. Phase I includes about 177,000 square feet of building area across three buildings, intended for academic, administrative, and supporting campus functions. The subject site is approximately 110 acres, located along E. Milton Street and E. Grant Street (12S-02W-11, Tax Lot 1000) and is zoned Mixed Use.

Chair Robertson opened the public hearing. City Attorney Kennedy reviewed the public hearing process. Chair Robertson disclosed prior familiarity with the property from its time as a sawmill and stated that this would not influence his decision. There were no other conflicts of interest, biases, or ex-parte contacts were disclosed.

Development Services Director Olson presented the staff report, noting that the planned development establishes a conceptual master plan with development expected to occur in multiple phases over time. The Planning Commission must also determine the level of review for future development phases: (1) ministerial review by the planning official without public notice; (2) administrative review by the planning official with public notice and a higher level of review; or (3) Planning Commission review for each phase through a public hearing.

Staff finds that the proposed planned development meets, or can meet, applicable Development Code requirements, subject to the recommended conditions of approval. Staff also recommends that future phases be processed through administrative review (Option 2) to ensure each phase provides adequate infrastructure, access, and services, and remains consistent with the approved planned development.

No written testimony was received during the public notice period.

Olson confirmed for Chair Robertson that the Commission's review is limited to the overall concept and does not include evaluation of specific development details.

Applicant testimony – Lyle Hutchens, Project Manager Consultant for Western University of Health Sciences, introduced Kim Olson, Mahlum Architects, who provided an overview of the site conditions, the project vision, and proposed community amenities. Hutchens addressed circulation and site access.

Chair Robertson inquired about their plans to direct traffic to the Grant Street entrance. Hutchens responded that construction traffic will be fully controlled in terms of site access and egress. For general traffic, efforts will be made to minimize use of Milton Street through informational measures. He noted that students and faculty will become familiar with the Milton Street access over time, but that it is necessary to provide secondary fire and life safety access.

Vice-Chair Knurowski asked whether the trail system will be open to the public, Hutchens responded that the intent is to make most of the site accessible; however, due to the presence of students, some security concerns will need to be addressed.

In response to Chair Robertson's question regarding the project timeline, Hutchens stated that it will largely depend on financing, including potential grant funding. He indicated that the first project – construction of the public street extension from Grant Street and the railroad undercrossing – is expected to begin in 2027.

Public Testimony (Favor) – none

Public Testimony (Opposition) – John Dupkavich expressed concern about traffic on Milton Street, particularly noting that train activity can cause backups in both directions.

Rebuttal – Hutchens stated that he had nothing further to add but acknowledged their own concerns regarding Milton Street traffic. He noted that every effort will be made to direct users to the main Grant Street entrance. Western administration understands the situation and does not want to negatively impact traffic on Milton beyond what is necessary.

The public testimony portion of the hearing was closed.

Commissioner Thompson asked how traffic impacts would be addressed through an administrative review. Olson explained that a traffic impact analysis would be conducted at each development phase and will include the three primary intersections – Grant Street/main campus access, Grant Street/Williams Street, and Milton Street/Williams Street – to identify any issues and whether improvements are needed. Additional intersections could be included in the analysis if other areas are found to be affected.

Vice-Chair Gerig-Knurowski stated that she appreciated the level of detail in the proposal, particularly as it relates to the site's landscaping, history and ecological health.

Discussion was held regarding the three options for future review. Chair Robertson expressed concern that the Planning Commission is being asked to decide on something that may not be

implemented for 10-15 years and that future commissioners or staff have no connection to the original decision. He suggested that the Planning Commission be briefed when Phase 2 is brought forward and decide then on the appropriate review process. Olson provided additional information on administrative review options. Kennedy noted that administrative decisions include public notice and are subject to appeal to the Planning Commission; this may address some of the concerns raised. Further discussion followed regarding potential triggers for review.

Chair Robertson called for a five-minute recess.

City Manager Whitlatch explained that requiring a return to the Planning Commission at every phase defeats the intent of a planned development. Each phase will trigger a new traffic impact analysis, utility review, and evaluation against the development code. Staff also retains the discretion to bring a phase before the Planning Commission if they determine it would be beneficial to obtain guidance.

Decision: Motion to approve application PD-26-01 and adopt the draft order as presented by staff, with future phases reviewed through the administrative review process by the planning official (Option 2), made by Commissioner Malloy, seconded by Commissioner Baxter. Voting Yea: Chair Robertson, Vice-Chair Gerig-Knurowski, Commissioners Baxter, Breshears, Malloy, Miller and Thompson. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMISSION BUSINESS AND COMMENTS

- The next meeting scheduled for May 20, 2026 will tentatively include a planned development.
- The former Walgreens site will include a gas station, convenience store and two retail spaces.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM.