



City of Rockaway Beach

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, December 18, 2025

Location: Rockaway Beach City Hall, 276 Hwy 101 - Civic Facility

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Maxfield called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Planning Commissioners Present: Penny Cole, Sandra Johnson, Stephanie Winchester, Nancy Lanyon, Jason Maxfield

Planning Commissioners Excused: Bill Hassell

Council Members Present: Charles McNeilly, Mayor; Mary McGinnis, Planning Commission Liaison

Staff Present: Luke Shepard, City Manager; Melissa Thompson, City Recorder; Abram Tapia, City Planner

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. November 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Penny Cole, seconded by Nancy Lanyon, to approve the November 20, 2025 meeting minutes presented.

Motion Passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 (Penny Cole, Sandra Johnson, Stephanie Winchester, Nancy Lanyon, Jason Maxfield)

No: 0 (None)

5. PRESENTATIONS, GUESTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS - None Scheduled

6. STAFF REPORTS

Tapia provided an update on the following:

- Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) Remand – Nedonna Wave PUD: Applicant notified intent to appeal City Council decision. Oregon Shores moved to intervene, supporting City Council decision. City is considering a limited brief to reinforce prior LUBA decision.
- City awarded \$100,000 housing planning assistance grant that will be used to complete Comprehensive Plan & Code Modernization project. Exploring creation of new comprehensive plan and zoning map for better usability.

- Permit activity included 4 zoning permits approved in November, and 3 permits approved in December. 5 permits are currently in progress; some delayed by state agency reviews.

7. PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor McNeilly and Council Member McGinnis excused themselves from the hearing since the decisions could be appealed to the City Council.

a. **Consideration of #VAR-25-2 Request for a Variance to Setbacks Required to Expand a Non-Conforming Structure at 25985 Beach Drive (2N1020CA 6900)**

- Maxfield opened the public hearing at 5:08 p.m.
- Maxfield read aloud required statements and testifying instructions.

Conflicts of Interest

- None were declared

Ex-Parte Contacts

- Johnson declared she drove by the property and looked at it, but didn't stop or speak to anyone.
- Lanyon declared she went by and looked at the property, but didn't speak to anyone.

Staff Report

- Tapia gave a presentation providing a summary of the staff report and images showing the location of the property.
- Property currently encroaches on the minimum required setback for corner lots.
- Tapia reviewed the relevant criteria for the application and staff findings, noting that staff findings were limited to the application that was submitted.
- Staff recommended denial of the request.

Commission Questions for Staff

- Lanyon inquired about emergency vehicle access related to a fire hydrant. Staff provided clarification.
- Maxfield questioned the purpose of extra setbacks on corner lots. Tapia confirmed that the current law must be applied. Maxfield suggested that the property may pose a unique hardship given that the location where the addition is going is actually not at either corner of the two lots. It's in the middle away from the corners, posing an unusual corner lot situation.
- Tapia confirmed for Johnson that the variance was required because non-conforming use was being extended. Tapia confirmed that applicant could propose a new site plan within the 15-foot

setback.

Applicant Presentation - Crina Horga, Applicant

- Applicant provided personal background information related to their purchase and use of property.
- Applicant testified that the back lot is too small to support a new dwelling due to septic system requirements.
- Applicant stated the best use of the lot, confirmed by county and city staff, is for an addition rather than a separate dwelling.
- Applicant testified that due to the siting of the original structure, a 15-ft setback would make rooms too small and defeat the purpose of the addition.
- Applicant explained it is a corner lot with ample space at rear. The addition is positioned centrally, minimizing impact.
- Applicant stated addition would be an improvement and visually unobtrusive from the street.

Questions for Applicant

- Applicant confirmed for Johnson that drawings were done for the addition. The addition would extend a great room. Applicant further explained the existing layout and limitations to building to meet their needs.
- Maxfield inquired about options for building up rather than extending into setback. Applicant stated cost was a limiting factor, as well as making functional spaces for their purposes. what they needed into the addition.
- Lanyon inquired about the garage. Applicant said it was a storage and laundry space.
- Lanyon inquired about a slope and clearing of trees on the second lot. Applicant stated it was not significant slope, but was told there was a slight slope when it was evaluated for the septic system. Applicant confirmed the lot was graded and trees were removed for the septic system and proposed addition.

Public testimony was invited. No guests were present.

Staff Response/Clarification

- Tapia commented that the Commission should weigh all information, not just the staff report, when making a decision, since the hearing process was working as intended by providing clarification and additional details.
- Tapia explained the additional testimony added valuable context, and an argument could be made that some criteria may be met based on new information. Septic system limitations likely create a unique exception, as lot size requirements in the urban growth boundary differ from zoning ordinance standards.
- Tapia confirmed for Maxfield that the Commission could apply the additional information

discussed to the criteria.

Applicant Final Comment

- Applicant inquired about suggestions and timeframe for the decision. Maxfield confirmed that a decision would be made that night.

Maxfield close public hearing at 5:50 p.m.

Applicant waived the right to submit final written argument.

Deliberation

- Winchester stated that the applicant's presentation provided reasonable issues that posed hardships to building on the lot, considering the space requirements for a septic system. Winchester understood why a skinnier addition would be a hardship.
- Cole commented on the aesthetics of a structure that would meet the 15-foot setback.
- Johnson stated that she originally had concerns about public health and evacuation routes, but since the existing house is already close to the street, granting the variance will not reduce street width or impede evacuation flow.
- Lanyon expressed concern that an existing tax lot was unbuildable, and concerns that the proposed structure would be larger than others in the area. Lanyon expressed further concerns that trees were cleared.
- Winchester explained that an unfortunate issue with septic is that a large area of land must be disturbed in order to install a septic system.
- Johnson suggested that Criteria 1 was met as there was particular difficulty to build the addition, considering the way the initial construction was done. Maxfield agreed.
- Maxfield stated that Criteria 2 could also be met, noting that the lot is situated between two corner lots, not on a corner itself; lot size limitations in Nedonna Beach create an exceptional circumstance, and the best use of the lot is to expand the existing property, as building a separate dwelling is not feasible. Maxfield noted that there were other large houses in the area, and septic cannot be installed without disturbing the area.

Motion by Stephanie Winchester, seconded by Sandra Johnson, that based on the facts and evaluations presented in the city staff report and evidence presented, the Planning Commission approve Variance 25-2 to reduce the required sideyard setback for the property in question. Winchester further moved to direct staff to prepare findings and conclusions consistent with the discussion of the Commission and authorize the chair to sign an order to that effect.

Motion Passed by the following vote:

Yes: 4 (Penny Cole, Sandra Johnson, Stephanie Winchester, Jason Maxfield)

No: 0 (None)

Abstain: 1 (Nancy Lanyon)

b. Consideration of #CPA 25-01 Proposed Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan section titled *Policies Relating to the Economy*

- Maxfield opened the public hearing at 6:06 p.m.
- Maxfield read opening statements, required statements and testifying instructions.

Conflicts of Interest

- Maxfield declared he owns a business and is a member of the Chamber of Commerce and other business associations in the community. Maxfield stated that was the extent of the relationship, there were no financial ties, and he didn't think it presented any reason to be biased in deliberations.

Staff Report

- Tapia gave a presentation summarizing the staff report.
- Staff recommended approval of the proposed amendments.

Questions for staff

- Lanyon questioned specifying the process of developing a marketing program. Tapia explained that policies and actions should be separate from goals in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Johnson agreed changes are needed for fair business practices. Johnson suggested that both policy 4 and 5 should include attractions, events and facilities.
- Johnson suggested removing "the" in front of "efforts" in policy number 4.

Public testimony was invited. No guests were present.

Staff comments

- Tapia explained that the Planning Commission would make a recommendation to the Council, and the Council would hold another public hearing and consider adoption of the amendments.

Motion by Penny Cole, seconded by Stephanie Winchester, to close the Public Hearing at 6:21 p.m.

Motion Passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 (Penny Cole, Sandra Johnson, Stephanie Winchester, Nancy Lanyon, Jason Maxfield)

No: 0 (None)

Motion by Sandra Johnson, seconded by Nancy Lanyon, that based on the facts and evaluation

presented in the city staff report and evidence presented, the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council approval and adoption of the amendments to the City of Rockaway Beach Comprehensive Plan case file CPA25-01 with the changes as discussed and direct city staff to prepare findings consistent with this decision.

Motion Passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 (Penny Cole, Sandra Johnson, Stephanie Winchester, Nancy Lanyon, Jason Maxfield)

No: 0 (None)

c. Consideration of #ZOA 25-01 Proposed Amendments to Zoning Ordinance Section 1.030: Definitions (22) *Dwelling, Multi-Unit* to Differentiate Multi-Unit Housing from Middle Housing

- Maxfield opened the public hearing at 6:25 p.m.
- Maxfield read opening statements, required statements and testifying instructions.

Conflicts of Interest

- None declared

Staff Report

- Tapia gave a presentation summarizing the staff report and sharing examples of developments that would be permitted under the proposed amendments.
- Clarified that multi-unit includes condos (not based on ownership), but doesn't include row homes or cottage clusters,
- Staff recommended approval of the proposed amendments.

Questions for staff

- Tapia clarified for Lanyon that the language states "not including middle housing" to clarify that this standard doesn't apply to "middle housing" standards. Cluster housing has different code standards than multi-unit.
- Lanyon inquired about a reference in the plan to Northwest Oregon Housing Association. Tapia explained it was outside the scope of this amendment, but he could research the reference.
- Tapia confirmed for Johnson that the correct proposed language would include "one or more" residential structures.

Public Testimony was invited. No guests were present.

Staff comments

- Tapia suggested that if approving the amendments, the Commission clarify the correct language

includes "one or more" in their motion.

Motion by Penny Cole, seconded by Stephanie Winchester, to close the Public Hearing at 6:43 p.m.

Motion Passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 (Penny Cole, Sandra Johnson, Stephanie Winchester, Nancy Lanyon, Jason Maxfield)

No: 0 (None)

Motion by Sandra Johnson, seconded by Nancy Lanyon, that based on the facts and evaluations presented in the city staff report and evidence presented, the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council approval and adoption of the amendments to the City of Rockaway Beach zoning ordinance case file ZOA 25-1 with the following changes: adding the words "one or more" in place of the word "a" as stated in the staff report, and direct staff to prepare findings consist consistent with this decision.

Motion Passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 (Penny Cole, Sandra Johnson, Stephanie Winchester, Nancy Lanyon, Jason Maxfield)

No: 0 (None)

8. PUBLIC INPUT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

McNeilly and McGinnis rejoined the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Maxfield invited public comment. No guests present.

9. OLD BUSINESS - None Scheduled

10. NEW BUSINESS - None Scheduled

11. PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS & CONCERNS

- Cole commended Public Works for their work during current storms.
- Johnson expressed thanks to the city for work on the tree lighting event, especially Public Works. Johnson thanked Tapia for providing information regarding 10-year approval standards. Johnson wished all happy holidays.
- Lanyon concurred with Cole and Johnson, commending Public Works.
- Winchester concurred with Cole regarding Public Works.
- McNeilly acknowledged the results of the Facade Grant in the community, including Green Coast Market's new sign. McNeilly celebrated the Public Works department's incredible job, throughout the county, as well as TPUD and Pacific Power. McNeilly acknowledged the City Manager's facilitation of growth of the city. McNeilly wished Merry Christmas to all.
- McGinnis shared appreciation for the work of Planning Department and Fire Department. McGinnis spoke regarding the warming center facilitated by Fire Department, noting that warming center visitors included several people who had moved here in the past two years,

including young families. McGinnis acknowledged Deb Reeves, who brought snacks to the warming center.

- Maxfield gave kudos to Public Works and all who worked in the storm. Maxfield noted that damage in the county highlighted the need for preventative maintenance and that Public Works did a great job. Maxfield looked forward to next year and more business development strategies to attract more professional jobs. Maxfield supported recent testimony about redeveloping Phyllis Baker Park to include a community center there.
- Shepard thanked the Planning Commission and commended them for their work.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Sandra Johnson, seconded by Penny Cole, to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

Motion Passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 (Penny Cole, Sandra Johnson, Stephanie Winchester, Nancy Lanyon, Jason Maxfield)

No: 0 (None)

MINUTES APPROVED THE
15TH DAY OF JANUARY 2026


William Hassell, President

ATTEST


Melissa Thompson, City Recorder