



**DRAFT**

**CITY OF WHITE SALMON**  
**Planning Commission Meeting - Wednesday, March 12, 2025**

**COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

**Commission Members:**

Carl Trabant, Chair  
Erika Price (5:35 p.m.)  
Michael Morneault  
Brendan Brown (Zoom)

**Staff:**

Erika Castro Guzman, Project Coordinator  
Paul Koch, Interim City Administrator  
Kelly Hickok, Legal Counsel

**Consultants:**

Michael Mehaffy, Housing Consultant

**CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL**

City Attorney Kelly Hickok called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. A quorum of planning commissioner members was present. Three members of the audience attended the meeting, either in person or via teleconference.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**1. Electing a Chairperson**

**Moved by Michael Morneault. Seconded by Brendan Brown.**

Move to nominate Carl Trabant as Chairperson of the White Salmon Planning Commission for the term of one year.

**MOTION CARRIES 3-0-1.**

**Price – Aye, Morneault – Aye, Brown – Aye, Trabant – Abstained.**

**2. Electing a Vice-Chairperson**

**Moved by Brendan Brown. Seconded by Michael Morneault.**

Move to nominate Erika Price as Vice-Chairperson of the White Salmon Planning Commission for the term of one year.

**MOTION CARRIES 4-0.**

**Price – Aye, Morneault – Aye, Brown – Aye, Trabant – Aye.**

**3. Confirm Election Results**

**Moved by Michael Morneault. Seconded by Carl Trabant.**

Move to confirm the election of Carl Trabant as Chairperson and Erika Price as Vice-Chairperson of the White Salmon Planning Commission for the term of one year.

**MOTION CARRIES 4-0.**

**Price – Aye, Morneault – Aye, Brown – Aye, Trabant – Aye.**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**4. Unit Lot Subdivision**

Chair Carl Trabant opened a public hearing to review proposed Unit Lot Subdivision Ordinance, Chapter 16.66 – Unit Lot Subdivision at 5:38 p.m.

Presentation

Housing Consulting Michael Mehaffy opened the discussion by acknowledging the long-standing effort behind the proposed unit lot subdivision ordinance, emphasizing that its adoption is required by state law and will support increased infill development and more affordable housing options. He clarified that this ordinance marks the first step in a multi-phase process, with future work needed to address key implementation issues such as utilities, lot placement, and unusual lot configurations in White Salmon. Housing Consulting Mehaffy presented examples from state Department of Commerce guidance, including diagrams of potential development types such as rowhouses and duplexes with shared access and utilities. He highlighted feedback from state officials, noting that the draft ordinance has passed initial legal review and is aligned with model language recently issued by the Department of Commerce.

Public input was also reviewed such as concerns around shared utilities, lot access, and implementation challenges. Housing Consulting Mehaffy reiterated that issues like CC&Rs, infrastructure upgrades, and site-specific layouts must be addressed case-by-case during the application process. He distinguished the unit lot subdivision process from condominium ownership and short plats, clarifying that the ordinance allows separate ownership of individual dwellings within a parent lot, while common areas would be jointly owned and governed. He emphasized that some of the concerns raised—such as utility easements, improvement requirements, and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) classifications—fall outside the scope of the ordinance itself and are best handled during project review and permitting.

In conclusion, Housing Consulting Mehaffy acknowledged the many valid questions surrounding implementation and supported the recommendation to move the ordinance forward while concurrently addressing these operational issues. He encouraged the City to maintain momentum toward zoning reform to expand housing options, cautioning against delaying the ordinance due to unresolved but manageable implementation concerns.

Public Testimony

Chair Carl Trabant opened the Public Testimony portion of the hearing at 5:56 p.m.

**Peter Wright, Inside City Limits**

Peter Wright emphasized that the unit lot subdivision ordinance is primarily an ownership tool—not a tool for regulating physical development. He raised concerns about provisions like treating ADUs as primary dwellings, which could conflict with parking requirements and undermine ADU flexibility. While not planning to use the ordinance himself, Wright stressed the need for it to be simpler than the condominium process, which he noted is now more accessible in places like Seattle. He urged the Commission to ensure strong city oversight and thoughtful implementation.

Chair Trabant noted that three written comment documents had been submitted to the Planning Commission and were entered into the official meeting record.

Chair Carl Trabant closed the Public Testimony portion of the hearing at 6:00 p.m.

Discussion

Chair Carl Trabant opened the public hearing discussion, asking members for comments.

Commissioner Erika Price had none.

Commissioner Michael Morneault inquired about the term “middle housing,” which was clarified by Housing Consultant Michael Mehaffy as a broad term referring to housing types like duplexes and townhomes. City Attorney Kelly Hickok and Mehaffy noted the term comes from state models and does not require definition but could be added if desired.

Further discussion covered fee simple ownership and shared utilities. Housing Consultant Mehaffy explained fee simple as full land ownership and distinguished it from condominiums and common areas. Concerns about shared utilities were discussed, including cost sharing, and infrastructure responsibility, which Housing Consultant Mehaffy noted are complex and better addressed outside the ordinance.

Commissioner Brendan Brown questioned the procedural timeline, and Chair Trabant emphasized public concern and the need for clarity.

Commissioner Morneault suggested referencing applicable state laws in the ordinance.

Chair Trabant recommended more discussion, possibly in a workshop, and warned against tabling the ordinance without clear next steps, citing Robert’s Rules.

City Attorney Kelly Hickok outlined the options for the Planning Commission: they could postpone the decision to a specific time, table it, or make a motion to move forward. She clarified that the purpose of the ordinance is to comply with a 2023 state law requiring cities to allow unit lot subdivisions in their short plats processes. The ordinance was drafted based on the Washington Department of Commerce’s model, and issues like shared utilities are outside the ordinance’s scope and should be addressed by Public Works.

Action

**Moved by Erika Price. Seconded by Michael Morneault.**

Move to recommend adding Title 16.66 by adopting Unit Lot Subdivision Ordinance, as is, for eventual approval by the City Council.

Discussion

Paul Koch, Interim City Administrator, advised that any action should be based on the specific needs of White Salmon. He acknowledged the importance of complying with state law but cautioned against rushing decisions without full understanding. He suggested tabling the item if necessary and providing a list of questions or concerns for staff to address before the next meeting.

City Attorney Kelly Hickok noted that a motion was already on the table and should be voted on before further discussion.

**MOTION FAILED. 1-3**

**Price – Aye, Morneault – Nay, Brown – Nay, Trabant – Nay.**

**Moved by Carl Trabant. Seconded by Brendan Brown.**

Move that the Planning Commission schedule a workshop with interested stakeholders, and bring the ordinance back for consideration at a future meeting following the workshop.

**MOTION CARRIED. 4-0**

**Price – Aye, Morneau – Aye, Brown – Aye, Trabant – Aye.**

Chairman Trabant closed the public hearing at 8:34 p.m.

5. **Administration Update**

Interim City Administrator Paul Koch announced that the planner candidate will visit on Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with a 2:30 p.m. meeting slot for Planning Commission members at City Hall.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

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Carl Trabant, Chair

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Erika Castro Guzman, Project Coordinator