

Anacortes Planning Commission Minutes - June 11, 2025

Roll Call

Chairperson Linda Martin called to order the Anacortes Planning Commission meeting of June 11, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners Jim Stoneman, William McCombs, Paul Ryan, Luke Currier, and Mike Mills were present. Jim Stoneman moved to excuse Frank Jeretzky. Will McCombs seconded. All ayes.

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes

Minutes of 01/22/2025 and 05/28/2025 were submitted for approval.

Paul Ryan moved to approve the minutes for 01/22/2025 as submitted. Jim Stoneman seconded. All ayes.

Luke Currier moved to approve the minutes for 05/28/2025 as submitted. Will McCombs seconded. All ayes.

Public Comment

There was no public comment taken.

Linda Martin pointed out that there was a written comment submitted late that the Commissioners reviewed before continuing.

Public Hearings

Other Business

2025 Comprehensive Plan & Development Regulations Update - Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) draft code amendments

Libby Grage said tonight's meeting is on the draft code amendments for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's). She reviewed the history of ADU's in Anacortes. The first regulations were in 2008 and there have been 3 updates. ADU's are allowed in R1, R2, R3 and R4. The code used to require public notice and comment period but no longer does. Current code restrictions include entry location and off-street parking requirements. The code doesn't require impact fees or general facility charges. In the 2019 update there were design standards added to code. Today you can build an ADU in any zone on a lot with an existing single-family home (SFR). ADU permits are a type 1 administrative ministerial action. They are reviewed for compliance with building & fire code, zoning, form intensity standards, site access and utilities, ADU-specific standards, critical area regulations and stormwater regulations. HB1337 was enacted in 2023 to ease barriers to ADU construction. This bill required that jurisdiction be consistent with the new requirements. This update is to be completed by 12/31/2025.

Ms. Grage reviewed the legislature findings that drove the changes to ADU regulations. She summarized the key requirements of HB1337: allow 2 ADU's on lots in zones allowing for SFR's (that meet minimum size for principal unit); owner occupancy not required; not charge more than 50% of impact fees charges for principal unit; allow at least 1000 sq ft, 24' in height, 0' set back to alley; and set parking requirements based on distance from transit and lot size. HB1337 does not restrict the use of ADU's for short-term rentals, but the City of Anacortes has regulations regarding STR's, so this doesn't apply.

Libby Grage reviewed the proposed amendments to comply with HB1337. The proposed language in A2 was added by staff to clarify that a breezeway connection does not make the ADU considered as attached. There has been confusion in the past, so this clarifies it. The existing purpose statements are proposed to be removed. There is new language for standards and criteria. The subdivision section was removed. The size for an ADU was increased to a maximum of 1000 sq. ft.

Linda Martin commented that the State says we have to allow at least 1000 sq ft.

Libby Grage clarified that we cannot set a maximum size for an ADU that is any less than 1000 sq. ft.

John Coleman stated that if we don't set a limit, ADU's could be allowed at any size.

Commissioner Martin said the State says the minimum size is 1000 sq. ft., but the City is saying the maximum size is 1000 sq. ft.

Mr. Coleman clarified that the City cannot restrict an ADU to be any smaller than 1000 sq. ft.

Libby Grage moved on to the maximum height. She explained the current height and daylight plane regulations. The proposal is a maximum height of 25' for detached ADU's. Attached ADU's are subject to the maximum building height of the primary unit.

Linda Martin reminded commissioners to keep the minimum lot size in mind because the Comprehensive Plan update has some proposed lot size changes.

Paul Ryan pointed out that smaller lots could have a single structure with 2 ADU's inside.

Ms. Grage moved on to the minimum setback requirements. Staff is proposing to allow siting at the lot line if it abuts the public alley. If the ADU contains a garage perpendicular to the alley, the setback should be 10 feet.

John Coleman said if the garage door is on the side of the building (not along the alley), then the ADU can be at the property line. If the vehicle access is directly from the alley, it needs to be set back 10 ft for vehicle maneuverability.

Libby Grage said that these still have to comply with the maximum lot coverage and landscaping & open space requirements. One off-street parking space per ADU is required. Where paved on-street parking meeting city standards is available abutting the lot, it may satisfy applicable ADU parking requirements.

They also added that ADU's are not allowed on properties not served by city sewer. ADU's are subject to the public health, safety, building codes, and environmental permitting requirements that are applicable to the principal unit unless specifically stated otherwise in this section.

Will McCombs clarified that the City is required to allow at least 2 ADU's, but they also have to meet the lot coverage requirements. If the SFR is already at 50% coverage, then 2 detached ADU's would not be allowed

Libby Grage agreed.

Linda Martin said if the neighborhood has an HOA, what prevails.

Ms. Grage clarified that the city only enforces the city regulations. It would be a private matter between the HOA and the homeowner.

Linda Martin stated that means that the HOA would prevail. The homeowner signs a covenant with the HOA.

Libby Grage agreed.

Commissioner Martin commented she's really in favor of ADU's. They can solve a lot of problems. In order to solve the housing issues, we either add more density or more sprawl. This proposal has more density in a way that is more amenable to the neighborhood.

Libby Grage asked if the Planning Commissioners need any additional information brought back.

Mike Mills pointed out that we don't currently charge impact fees for ADU's, but they do have an impact. He wondered if that needs to be reviewed.

Ms. Grage said staff is not reviewing that at the moment.

Mike Mills referenced the new language regarding the proximity to public transit. He pointed out that public transit routes are subject to change.

John Coleman clarified that references a "major transit stop". The definition doesn't apply to Anacortes.

Libby Grage reviewed the definition from the RCW.

Planning Department Update

John Coleman referenced the Shoreline Development permit for Curtis Wharf went to City Council Monday. They approved it as the Planning Commission recommended. He also updated the City Council with where the Planning Commission was at with the Comprehensive Plan update process. Last Friday there was a North Star symposium regarding housing, homeless services and behavioral health. They delved into the human aspect of homelessness. It was an enlightening event. He moved on to the department update, stating we're close to completing 2 studies: (1) Sharpes Corner to determine if there's capacity for low-income housing opportunities on city-owned property there and (2) working on the Economic Development Strategic Plan draft based on the

community survey and the 2 workshops we had.

Luke Currier said he attended the North Star event. One major takeaway was the correlation between housing and homelessness is clearly defined. Where there is more housing, there's less homelessness. There was a lot of discussion about infill and creating more housing.

Mike Mills commented that was a fantastic meeting. The keynote speakers were at opposite ends of the spectrum. He was inspired by both of them. He has an expanded appreciation of the problem.

John Coleman said the book, Homelessness is a Housing Problem, shows the strong correlation between homelessness and housing prices. The higher the costs, the higher the homelessness. We need to create more affordable housing to potentially get us out of this problem. Skagit County has the lowest vacancy rate, lower than 1% for 5+ years. We are headed for a crisis if we do nothing.

Adjournment

Linda Martin adjourned the meeting at 7:03 p.m.