

MINUTES

OPEN SPACES COMMISSION
MONDAY
JUNE 22, 2026

HYBRID MEETING
FLAGSTAFF AQUAPLEX
AND [MICROSOFT TEAMS](#)
1702 N FOURTH STREET
4:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order

Chair Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

2. Roll Call

NOTE: One or more Commissioners may be in attendance through other technological means.

Chair Jacqueline Thomas, present
Co-Chair Bruce Fox, present
Commissioner Mary Norton (P&Z Liaison), absent
Commissioner William Kluwin, present

Commissioner Molly Joyce, present
Commissioner Lina Wallen, absent
Commissioner Nat White, present
Councilmember Rep: David Spence,
present at 4:21 PM

Staff Present: Rebecca Sayers (PROSE Director), Robert Wallace (Open Space Manager), Sylvia Struss (Open Space Coordinator), Ashlee Flaney (Open Space Educator) and Lori Reynolds (Administrative Specialist)

3. Land Acknowledgment

The Flagstaff Open Space Commission humbly acknowledges the ancestral homelands of this area's Indigenous nations and original stewards. These lands, still inhabited by Native descendants, border mountains sacred to Indigenous peoples. We honor them, their legacies, their traditions, and their continued contributions. We celebrate their past, present, and future generations who will forever know this place as home.

Read by Chair Thomas.

4. Approval of [Minutes](#) (June 1, 2026)

Commissioner Fox moved to approve the June 1, 2026 minutes as attached. Commissioner Kluwin seconded the motion. Motion carried.

5. Open Call to the Public

At this time, any member of the public may address the Commission on any subject that is not scheduled before the Commission on this day. The Arizona Open Meeting Law prohibits the Commission from discussing or taking action on an item which is not listed on the prepared agenda. Commission members may, however, respond to criticism made by those addressing the Commission, ask staff to review a matter, or ask that a matter be placed on a future agenda. To address the Commission on an item that is on the agenda, please wait for the Chair to call for Public Comment at the time the item is heard.

Read by Chair Thomas. No comments were received.

6. Business Items

A. Land Availability and Suitability Study - Code Analysis Project (LASS-CAP)

Tiffany Antol, Zoning Code Manager, shared with Commissioners a presentation of the City of Flagstaff's Land Availability and Suitability Study (LASS) and Code Analysis Project (CAP); a culmination of three years work that began with a land availability and suitability study. The LASS-CAP recommendations focused on how current zoning and development regulations affect housing affordability, sustainability, and future growth. These recommendations are intended to support the City's adopted goals related to housing supply, climate action, and community livability.

Commissioner White shared an early overall impression of the presentation and expressed concern regarding references made in the presentation to the cost assigned to resource protection. He suggested that while resource protection may impose costs on development, it also provides important community and environmental benefits. He commented that emphasizing costs may not be as effective in conveying the value of resource

protection measures. In response, Tiffany explained that all regulations and policy choices involve both costs and benefits, and that the analysis attempts to evaluate those tradeoffs regardless of whether they are perceived positively or negatively. Commissioner White further observed that many of the recommendations were presented as providing potential benefits and potential cost reductions. He noted that the anticipated outcomes remain projections and expressed hope that the proposed changes would ultimately achieve the stated goals of lowering costs and improving housing affordability.

Commissioners were particularly interested in discussing the Resource Protection Overlay (RPO) regulations and its relationship to housing development. Tiffany shared that the study found that the current Resource Protection Overlay (RPO) can significantly limit developable area and may need refinement to better balance environmental protection, wildfire risk reduction, and housing goals. Recommended changes include re-mapping protected resources, creating clearer mitigation standards, and providing relief for projects that participate in the incentive program. During discussion, Commissioner Joyce requested clarification regarding the Open Space zoning district and tree preservation requirements. Tiffany explained that Open Space is a zoning designation rather than a reference to public open space. Under current standards, development in the Open Space zone generally requires approximately 30% tree preservation, whereas residential zones may require closer to 50% preservation. Additional discussion focused on how tree preservation should be measured in future code updates. Commissioners questioned whether tree preservation standards should continue to rely on a simple trees-per-acre count or shift toward using basal area, a forestry-based measurement that accounts for tree size and overall forest density.

Tiffany further shared how the City of Flagstaff has been increasing its focus on wildfire mitigation and home hardening as wildfire risk has begun affecting homeowners' ability to obtain or retain insurance coverage. Through the Wildfire Resilient Homes Initiative (WRHI), there are recommended measures including creating and maintaining a defensible space and removing pine needles and other fuels near structures. Commissioner Joyce commented that the five-foot measurement for a defensible space could be especially difficult for those property owners whose homes are within five-feet of a tree, but the tree belongs to a neighboring property. Commissioner Joyce asked whether the consultant team had developed any tools to evaluate the financial impacts on developers and whether reducing tree retention could increase property values by improving insurability. Tiffany responded that while wildfire mitigation measures and reduced tree densities may make homes easier to insure and potentially more attractive to buyers, the purpose of the proposed standards is not to increase developer profits. Rather, the focus is on public health and safety, wildfire resilience, and reducing long-term costs and risks to homeowners.

Commissioners discussed concerns regarding rising insurance rates in Flagstaff, noting that many of the pressures affecting insurance availability and affordability originate outside of Flagstaff and even outside Arizona. Several Commissioners expressed concern about the potential impacts these trends may have on the community's quality of life in Flagstaff. Chair Thomas also expressed concern about preserving neighborhood character in future developments, particularly through the inclusion of common spaces such as pocket parks and other gathering areas. She asked whether varying Resource Protection Overlay requirements could affect the creation of these spaces. Tiffany responded that the City encourages the preservation and incorporation of such areas and that developments often include them. She noted, however, that long-term ownership and maintenance responsibilities must also be considered when planning these community spaces.

Tiffany summarized that the proposed code recommendations are not final code changes but rather a framework for future policy discussions and public engagement, and are intended to reduce housing development costs, increase housing opportunities, support climate goals, and create a more flexible regulatory framework while maintaining compatibility with existing neighborhoods and community character.

Briefly following the conclusion of the LASS-CAP presentation, Tiffany shared with Commissioners a preview of the [Planned Community Master Plan](#) (PCMP) which directs how infrastructure will be phased and coordinated to support the overall development project. The PCMP identifies the timing of development within each land use area, required infrastructure improvements, and any potential offsets that could reduce overall infrastructure demands. The plan also addresses transit facilities and routes, roadway networks, connectivity between land use areas, and pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout the development. She further explained that where a multi-use path or trail is not included within the FUTS network, it would be located within common areas maintained by the property owners association while providing secured public access. These common areas must preserve at least 20% of the gross land area, including a minimum of 10% designated as conservation common space to protect natural features such as washes, floodplains, wildlife corridors, native plant habitats, ridgelines, geologically hazardous areas, and archaeological, cultural, or historic resources. The remaining 10% must be dedicated to public recreational amenities such as playgrounds, sports fields, picnic areas, multi-use paths, and trails.

7. Reports and Updates

A. Council Representative Report, Council Representative David Spence

Councilmember Spence provided an update regarding the City's strategic planning efforts organized by City Manager Joanne Keene. The process will examine key issues including future growth and development, economic development, business attraction and retention, tourism, and other long-term community priorities over the next 3, 5, and 10 years.

Councilmember Spence encouraged Commissioners to provide individual input and recommendations on topics they believe should be incorporated into the strategic plan. He stated that Commissioners could contact him by phone or email over the next month or two to share their perspectives on the City's future direction and priorities.

B. Planning and Zoning Commission Representative Report, Representative Mary Norton

This agenda item was not addressed at this Commission meeting.

C. Open Space Management Report, Robert Wallace and Sylvia Struss

This agenda item was not addressed at this Commission meeting.

D. PROSE Monthly Newsletter - [May 2026](#)

8. Informational Items To and From Commissioners and Staff

No additional information was added.

9. Potential Future Agenda Items

Robert informed Commissioners that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 27th and to reach out to him if they had any topics they would like included in next month's meeting.

10. Adjournment

Chair Thomas adjourned the meeting at 6:14 PM.