

McAlester Planning and Zoning
Commission
NOTICE OF MEETING



Regular Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, March 17, 2026 - 6:30 PM
McAlester City Hall – Council Chambers
28 E. Washington

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes for the Regular Meeting on February 17, 2026.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Staff Report on each item of scheduled business shall be presented by staff prior to applicant's discussion with Planning Commission.

1. Public Hearing: Discussion and action on Ordinance Amendments of Chapter 62 Article II Division 3 Board of Appeals
2. Discuss and take action to recommend a consulting firm for the Land Development, Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Code Update.

NEW BUSINESS

STAFF REPORT

REMARKS & INQUIRIES BY THE COMMISSION

ADJOURNMENT

McAlester Planning Commission Minutes
Tuesday, February 17, 2026, Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
6:30 PM

Call to Order

Chairman Emmons called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Patti Hobbs called the roll and a quorum was present.

Commissioners Present: 7

Mark Emmons	Levenia Carey	Michael Hull	Jeremy Spiegel
Karen Stobaugh	Chris Taylor	Robby Van Vekoven	

Commissioners Absent: 4

Merrie Brenner	Stephanie Giacomo	Dewayne Hampton	Lyn Roberts
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Recognition

None

Consent Agenda

Approval of minutes for the Regular Meeting on January 20, 2026.

A motion made by Commissioner Stobaugh was seconded by Commissioner Carey to approve all items on the Consent Agenda.

The vote was: 7 – 0

AYE: Emmons, Carey, Hull, Spiegel, Stobaugh, Taylor, Van Vekoven

NAY: None

The motion carried.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS:

1. Discussion and presentation on the Electric Avenue Infrastructure Planning Project

Community Development Director Jayme Clifton explained the application and process; how the City will pursue a planning grant. The grant writer has received feedback that keeps the City hopeful for this grant rotation. Some discussion of the specifics what it means for this type of grant versus an implementation type. No action required.

2. Discussion about the OML Planning Commission & Board of Adjustment Workshop on March 26th, 2026

Ms. Clifton explained this is annual event specifically for Planning Commissioners and Board of Adjustment members. The low cost and the participation from the past years was briefly discussed. No action required.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

STAFF REPORT

1. Annual Planning Commission Report to City Council

Jayne Clifton explained and went over the report; she highlighted areas to include in the Land Development Code Update. There was a handout added to the agenda packet for visual reference. Discussion about the RFP that had went out and what goals/wants should be included in the report. Ms. Clifton asked if there were any

questions. Permits, current and upcoming projects were briefly discussed. No action required.

REMARKS & INQUIRIES BY THE COMMISSION

Commissioners were questioning the codes being enforced in Kinkead Hills and a few remarks were made about that neighborhood. No action required.

Adjournment

Commissioner Spiegel made the motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Taylor. Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m. Roll was taken.

The vote was: 7 – 0

AYE: Emmons, Carey, Hull, Spiegel, Stobaugh, Taylor, Van Vekoven

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Approved:

Planning Commission Chairman

Date



PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT March 17, 2026

To: McAlester Planning Commission
From: Jayme Clifton, Community Development Director
Date: March 16, 2026
Subject: Consideration of Amending the Board of Adjustment Membership for I-Code Requirements.

The Community Development Department is proposing a strategic reorganization of the City's administrative appeal bodies. The primary goal is to consolidate the duties of the currently inactive Fire Protection Board of Appeals and the building code related Board of Appeals into the existing Board of Adjustment (BOA). To achieve this, amendments are required for Chapter 18 Buildings and Construction, Chapter 50 Fire Prevention and Protection, and Chapter 62 Land Development, Planning, Zoning and Subdivisions. Because Chapter 62 establishes the composition and powers of the BOA, the Planning Commission must provide a recommendation before these changes proceed to the City Council.

All the building codes developed by the International Code Council (ICC) are collectively called the International Codes (I-Codes). These codes include various standards for building design and construction, ensuring safety and compliance across different jurisdictions in Oklahoma, including McAlester. Codes such as the International Building Code (IBC), International Residential Code (IRC), and International Fire Code (IFC) require an active BOA to ensure citizen due process. Our current fire-specific board of appeals set by adopted ordinance has not been active for over 20 years. Also, the city currently manages an excessive number of boards. Consolidating these functions into the BOA reduces the total number of citizen volunteers required while focusing limited professional expertise on one high-functioning body.

While the final ordinance language is under review, the proposed key changes to the BOA may include:

- **Jurisdictional Expansion:** Formally granting the BOA the authority to hear and decide appeals related to the City's adopted Building and Fire Codes (Chapters 18 and 50).
- **Membership Structure:** Maintaining the five-member statutory limit (per 11 O.S. § 44-101) while exploring the addition of Alternate Members—similar to the City of Glenpool model—to ensure a quorum and provide specialized trade expertise.
- **Refined Qualifications:** Possibly updating language to ensure that remaining citizen seats prioritize individuals with experience in construction, engineering, or fire safety trades.

Staff have been working on departmental coordination leading to this point, prior to the draft amendment being created. So far, the Fire Chief, Fire Assistant Chief, and Fire Marshal are supportive of the consolidation provided the board includes members with relevant trade experience. The BOA chairmen had also been apprised of the proposed changes, and it seems to address some of the concerns of the BOA having so few members combined with the four votes required to act on any decision.

The ordinance amendment seemed to be an easy task until the five-member statutory limit was discovered. In 11 O.S. § 44-101 it says the board “shall consist of five members”. It does not expressly forbid alternate members who may only vote in the absence of a regular member. It might be a “home rule” administrative function, by using five regular members to satisfy the state and two alternate members to satisfy the Fire Department’s need for experts, so that McAlester stays compliant to the I-Codes while solving its vacancy crisis. The City Attorney’s input is needed to provide some legal guidance to ensure the use of alternate members and specific qualifications will align with Oklahoma statutory requirements for cities of our size. It is currently ongoing.

Staff asks that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the ordinance amendment *in concept*, with the understanding that a final draft of the technical language regarding BOA membership and the use of alternates will be completed following the City Attorney's final review.



**PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
March 17, 2026**

To: McAlester Planning Commission
From: Jayme Clifton, Community Development Director
Date: March 16, 2026
Subject: Selection Recommendation for Land Development Code (LDC) Update Consultant

The purpose of the report and agenda items is to provide the Planning Commission with an update on the Request for Proposals (RFP) process for the Land Development, Planning, Zoning, and Subdivision Code update and to recommend a consultant for the project. The City of McAlester issued an RFP on January 12, 2026, seeking a qualified consultant to perform a comprehensive update of the City's land development regulations. The current code requires modernization to align with the City's comprehensive plan and current development patterns. The project scope includes updates to Chapter 62, Chapter 94, and Chapter 106, as well as integration with the Master Drainage Plan and Trails Master Plan. The City received three proposals by the February 18, 2026, deadline:

- Clarion: \$157,595 – \$169,985
- Freese & Nichols: \$166,000 – \$170,000
- White Smith Cousino: \$175,036 – \$202,804

A Selection Committee evaluated the firms based on project approach, firm experience, public participation strategy, schedule/capacity, and cost. The scoring summary:

1. Freese & Nichols: 4.53 Final Score
2. Clarion: 4.18 Final Score
3. White Smith Cousino: 3.96 Final Score

Freese & Nichols received the highest score due to their strong project management, extensive Oklahoma experience, and comprehensive understanding of the City's specific needs. While Clarion offered competitive pricing and impressive credentials, the committee noted a lack of strong Oklahoma-based projects. White Smith Cousino was rated lower due to higher costs and concerns regarding a heavy sub-consultant system.

Proposed costs from the top-ranked firms fall within the City's historical priority project budget range. The city's Finance Department will handle the budget amendment at the City Council meeting on March 24 to move forward with contracting the selected firm. Guidance from the Planning Commission on the selected project timeline is requested.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission endorse the selection of Freese & Nichols to lead the Land Development Code Update project and approve staff to proceed with contracting.

RFP RECEIPT & TABULATION

Request for Proposals - Land Development, Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Code Update
Proposal Deadline: Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Consultant	1. LOI	2. Qualifications	3. Approach	4. Add #1 Sched Opt A (Accelerated)	4. Add #1 Sched Opt B (Standard)	5. Cost & Comp	6. Affidavits	7. Complete Submission - Orig, USB, Letter, Bound	Cost Range	
1	Freese & Nichols <i>(Rece 02/17/2026 @ 0910)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	\$166,000 - \$170,000
2	White Smith Cousino <i>(Rece 02/17/2026 @ 1130)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	\$175,036 - \$202,804
3	Clarion <i>(Rece 02/17/2026 @ 1118)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Partial	\$157,595 - \$169,985

 Receipt By

 Witness

 Witness

3. Firm Experience

FNI is passionate about helping communities create the plans and regulations that result in vibrant places reflective and celebratory of their local culture and heritage while also creating economic development opportunities for the City and its residents.

Within this section, we have included five examples of zoning code updates completed for similar communities within the last five years. The table below illustrates our proposed team’s experience performing on similar projects.

THE FNI TEAM’S RECENT CODE DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE						
Development Code Related Projects <i>(Ongoing or Completed in Last 5 Years)</i>	Client	Proposed Team				
		Brandon Huxford, PE	Chad Bunger, AICP, CFM	Dawn Thomas, AICP	Destiny Andrews, AICP	Jake Lange, AICP
Projects Included in Section 3						
Unified Code Development Update	Edmond, OK			★	★	★
Unified Development Code	Shawnee, OK			★		★
Development Code Reform	Bella Vista, AR		★	★		★
Unified Code Development	Choctaw, OK		★	★		
Unified Code Development	Ponca City, OK		★	★	★	★
Additional Comparable Experience						
Unified Development Code Update	Newcastle, OK		★	★		★
Unified Development Code Update	Las Cruces, NM			★		
Land Development Regulations	Bartlesville, OK		★	★	★	★
Unified Development Code	Brownsville, TX			★		
Unified Development Code	Bee Cave, TX			★		
Unified Development Ordinance	Bonner Springs, KS			★		★
Zoning Ordinance	Port Arthur, TX			★		
Development Regulations	Abilene, TX		★		★	
Engineering Criteria Manual Development	Edmond, OK	★	★	★	★	
Engineering Design Criteria and Green Stormwater Infrastructure Updates	Norman, OK	★		★		

Recent FNI UP+D Awards

2025

Downtown Plan | City of Brownwood, Arkansas
Vernon Deines Award for Comprehensive Plan or Special Project Plan (APA)

2024

Downtown Plan | City of Brownwood, Arkansas
Planning Achievement Award – Economic Development (APA Texas)

2023

Envision McAllen | City of McAllen, Texas
Comprehensive Planning Award (APA Texas)

Unified Development Code | City of Bee Cave, Texas

Gold Achievement Award for Best Practice (APA Texas)

Downtown Master Plan | City of Midlothian, Texas

Gold Achievement Award for Implementation (APA Texas)

2022

Comprehensive Plan | City of Pflugerville, Texas

Comprehensive Plan Award (APA Texas)

Comprehensive Plan | City of Siloam Springs, Arkansas

Achievement in Comprehensive Planning Award (APA Arkansas)

Zoning Ordinance Update | City of Cleburne, Texas

Public Outreach Award, Gold (APA Texas)

4. Schedule

Timeline Option A (Accelerated)

An accelerated timeline will produce the same high-quality, updated Land Development Code. Considerations include fewer opportunities for public and stakeholder engagement, one mid-project update for the Planning Commission instead of two or three, and the need for quick turnaround on City staff reviews of draft content to keep the project on schedule.

	Months												
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
ALL PHASES													
Project Management, Internal Coordination													
Biweekly Project Status Meetings													
PHASE 1: PROJECT KICKOFF AND CODE DIAGNOSTIC													
Initiation and Orientation													
Assessing the Code													
Conduct Stakeholder Interviews (Focus Groups)													
Community Open House (Online and In-person Options)													
Prepare the Draft Diagnostic Report (Issues/Problem Definition)													
Staff Meeting to Review Diagnostic Report (Virtual)													
Joint Workshop with PC and CC													
PHASE 2: DRAFTING THE NEW CODE													
General Provisions													
Zoning District Standards													
Housing and Infill Standards													
Development Standards													
Mid-Project Update – PC Meeting													
Floodplain Hazard Protection													
Subdivision Regulations													
Full Discussion Draft													
Code Testing													
Revised Draft													
Joint Workshop with PC and CC													
PHASE 3: CODE TESTING, REVISIONS AND ADOPTION													
Community Open House (Online and In-person Options)													
Final Draft of Zoning and Subdivision Regulations													
Joint Workshop with PC and CC													
Adoption Public Hearings													
Final Revisions and Deliverables													

Timeline Option B (Standard)

This standard timeline is recommended if the City wishes to place greater emphasis on public outreach, education and engagement during the project. Additional Planning Commission presentations/updates are included and more time is allocated to City staff review of draft content using this schedule.

