

CITY OF CLERMONT
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES
July 7, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Colby called the meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission to order on Tuesday, July 7, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Colby, Commissioner Entsuah, Commissioner Niemiec, Commissioner Hoisington, and Commissioner Cramer

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Commissioner Tidona, Commissioner May

ALSO PRESENT: Development Services Director Curt Henschel, Planner Nicholas Gonzalez, Planner Justine Day, City Attorney Christian Waugh (by phone), and Planning Coordinator Rae Chidlow

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES

MOTION TO APPROVE the June 2, 2026, Minutes of the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting as amended, made by Commissioner Cramer, seconded by Commissioner Hoisington. Motion passed 5-0.

REPORTS

Commissioner Hoisington shared that she attended the city's Juneteenth celebration and described it as a very positive experience. She encouraged everyone to make time to attend next year's event and celebrate Juneteenth together, emphasizing its value to the community.

Commissioner Cramer expressed enthusiasm about the proposed dark sky compliance ordinance, noting that it is an issue he has supported for a long time. He thanked city staff and the legal department for their significant work in developing the ordinance and bringing it forward for consideration. He also expressed appreciation for the opportunity to discuss this important topic and conveyed support for the ordinance.

Commissioner Niemiec thanked the community members who turned out despite the weather to participate in the Fourth of July Clermont 250th celebration. He expressed appreciation for the attendees' patriotism and support in making the event a success.

Commissioner Entsuah had no reports.

Chair Colby announced an upcoming community event, the Lake County Hobnob, which will be hosted by the City of Clermont at the Clermont Performing Arts Center. He explained that the free event will take place on Monday from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and will provide an opportunity for residents to meet candidates running for city, county, state, and federal offices.

NEW BUSINESS

Item No. 1 – Resolution No. 2026-021R – CityVet Conditional Use Permit

Planner Justine Day presented as follows:

The applicant, Peacock Partnership, is requesting a Conditional Use Permit to allow for a veterinary clinic to operate on a property that is currently undergoing site review. The property is located at the Southeast corner of S US Hwy 27 and Citrus Tower Blvd intersection, within the Governors Lake Commerce Center Planned Unit Development.

The applicant is proposing to build out a new animal clinic within the future multi-tenant shell building. The clinic will operate entirely indoors and offer services such as checkups, diagnoses, dental care, and minor surgery to small animals. No overnight boarding or the treatment of large animals, such as livestock, will be provided.

Business hours will be Monday through Friday from 7AM to 6PM and Saturday from 8AM to 2PM. The clinic will be preparing a waste management plan that includes an internal pet relief area. In the future, they may add an outdoor relief area with a monitored waste station.

The property is governed by Ordinance No. 2020-24, which allows for mixed-use development with C-1 Light Commercial uses. The veterinary clinic may be comparable to retail or medical office use within this district due to the services being offered. Additionally, the parcel is situated between commercial development on the North, South, and West sides of the parcel while Lake Felter provides a buffer on the East side. The nearest residential use is approximately 1,100ft +\- away, across S US HWY 27 and the nearest veterinary clinic is approximately 1 ½ miles away, south of Hartwood Marsh Rd. Based on the site's location and surrounding uses, staff finds the proposed use compatible with the district and would not be more obnoxious than existing permitted uses.

When evaluating a request for a Conditional Use Permit, Section 101-212 of the Land Development Code outlines specific development standards that are required to be met. Staff has reviewed the application and finds the proposed use can meet the general criteria for approval and will not be detrimental to the health, safety, and welfare of the surrounding community. Therefore, staff recommends approval of Resolution No. 2026-021R

Jim Graham, CityVet, clarified that the official applicant is Peacock Partnership, the project's architect. He stated that he was available to answer any questions from the commissioners and expressed confidence that the proposed project would be a valuable service and amenity for the community.

There were no public comments.

Commissioner Hoisington stated she reviewed the proposed veterinary clinic and stated that the project appeared appropriate, with reasonable operating hours and concerns about waste management already addressed since the clinic will not treat large animals. She questioned an

apparent inconsistency between the staff report, which stated there would be no overnight boarding, and the resolution, which allowed overnight stays when medically necessary.

Ms. Day explained that the exception was intended for emergency situations where an animal may require observation or stabilization before being transferred to an emergency facility.

Mr. Graham clarified that the clinic distinguishes between boarding and medical hospitalization. He stated that pets will not be accepted for overnight boarding or pet-sitting; overnight stays will only occur when medically necessary following treatment or surgery.

Commissioner Cramer stated that the application was generally straightforward and echoed the concerns already raised by Commissioner Hoisington. His only question was whether the parking analysis for the multi-tenant commercial center accounted for future occupancy of the remaining tenant space.

Ms. Day responded that the site currently provides 96 parking spaces, which exceeds the 27 spaces required for the existing retail businesses and the proposed veterinary clinic. She noted that the use of the remaining tenant space has not yet been determined, so future parking needs will be evaluated once that space is proposed for development.

Commissioner Niemiec asked the applicant how the proposed veterinary clinic would benefit the City of Clermont.

Mr. Graham responded that many residents are pet owners and explained that CityVet's model differs from large corporate veterinary chains because each clinic is owned by a local veterinarian who lives and works in the community. He said this approach promotes long-term commitment and personalized care while providing a valuable local service. He explained that the company carefully analyzes population growth, demand, and nearby competition before selecting a location and believes the Clermont area has sufficient need to support the new clinic.

Commissioner Niemiec followed up on the clinic's overnight care policy, asking whether staff would remain on-site when animals stay overnight after emergency procedures.

Mr. Graham explained that while staff may remain until late evening if urgent care services are provided, employees do not typically stay overnight. Animals kept overnight are generally sedated and housed in kennels until staff return when the clinic reopens the following morning.

Commissioner Entsuaht stated that his questions had already been addressed, with his primary concern being parking at the proposed veterinary clinic.

Mr. Graham acknowledged that parking is an important consideration and explained that CityVet typically negotiates for a few short-term or reserved parking spaces near the clinic entrance. These spaces are intended to assist clients transporting injured, immobile, or large animals, as well as pets being brought in for euthanasia. He also noted that the clinic operates primarily by scheduled appointments and drop-off/pick-up times rather than walk-in visits, which helps reduce parking demand.

Commissioner Entsuaht appreciated the clinic's approach to managing parking and patient access.

Chair Colby asked for clarification about the clinic's hours and how emergencies would be handled if an animal arrived shortly before closing.

Mr. Graham explained that during normal business hours, the clinic would close as scheduled and would not continue regular appointments after closing. However, if the location offers urgent care services, the clinic may remain open later potentially until 9:00 or 10:00 p.m. to handle urgent cases only.

Commissioner Colby asked what factors determine whether urgent care would be offered at the location.

Mr. Graham explained that the decision depends on several factors, including competition nearby, whether existing veterinary emergency facilities are available in the area, and whether the clinic has sufficient veterinary staffing capacity to support extended urgent care hours.

MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL of Resolution No. 2026-021R CityVet Conditional Use Permit; Moved by Commissioner Niemiec, Seconded by Commissioner Hoisington. Motion passed 5-0.

Item No. 2 – Ordinance No. 2026-025 – Dark Sky Land Development Code Amendment & Resolution No. 2026-022R – Dark Sky Land Development Code

Planner Justine Day presented as follows:

At the direction of the City's Manager's office and City Council, staff is proposing an amendment to the Land Development Codes in order to provide for lighting standards within the City limits.

Land Development Codes Sections 24-12 and 115-12 provided regulations for lighting to illuminate properties without subjecting adjacent properties to unnecessary/ unreasonable reflection, or glare. However, these sections of the code do not provide standards to measure by or enforce when reviewing development applications. The proposed amendment would repeal these sections of the code and replace them with a new chapter that would then establish enforceable standards for outdoor lighting.

The new chapter would be created to align the City's outdoor lighting regulations with modern model standards published by Dark Sky International and the Illuminating Engineering Society. Resolution 2026-002R would help implement the standards set forth in section 129-4(d) of the new chapter.

If the amendment is approved, the City would provide for a phased implementation and retrofit plan to bring all new and existing nonconforming City-owned and City leased outdoor lighting fixtures into compliance with the new chapter by no later than September 1st, 2031, subject to coordination with Duke Energy and any other applicable utility provider. The City manager or designee shall conduct an inventory of all City-owned/ leased outdoor lighting fixtures within twelve months of the effective date and shall provide annual updates to the City Council until compliance is achieved.

Any other existing nonconforming outdoor lighting shall be brought into compliance with this Chapter no later than the earlier of when the fixture is replaced, removed, or substantially modified, or by September 1, 2036. This would be applicable to all new outdoor lighting installations and all replacement of existing outdoor lighting fixtures within the corporate limits of the City of Clermont, including residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and municipal installations, except as expressly exempted within the proposed regulations.

The proposed amendment, in order to fully support the DarkSky initiative and minimize glare, reduce light trespass, and lessen pollution of the night sky, would be applicable to all properties within the City limits. With this amendment, there will be a cost to upgrade and replace the fixtures, which is unknown at the moment. The potential savings would be long-term electricity consumption.

Both the proposed new chapter and the resolution to the code would help provide consistency with the submittal regulations within the land development codes and is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan. Staff recommends approval of Ordinance 2026-025 and 2026-022R.

There were no public comments.

Commissioner Entsua expressed appreciation that the topic was finally being considered. He thanked the staff for reviewing and moving the matter forward.

Commissioner Niemiec stated that he reviewed the item and attempted to identify any issues but commended staff for doing an excellent job preparing the materials.

Commissioner Cramer noted that his neighborhood was the first older neighborhood in the area to fully convert to dark sky standards and expressed that he is glad the city is moving in the same direction. He stated that he reviewed the ordinance and raised two technical questions. First, he noted that the ordinance addresses measuring light trespass both vertically and horizontally but provides a specific measurement method only for horizontal measurements. He recommended adding clarification on how vertical measurements should be conducted. He praised staff for referencing DarkSky International and Illuminating Engineering Society standards but suggested that the ordinance should identify the specific model ordinance, publication editions, or technical guidance documents used to establish the numerical thresholds. He explained that adding this level of detail would strengthen the ordinance and help address any future challenges or questions regarding the standards.

City Attorney Christian Waugh explained that the dark sky ordinance is a highly technical document and discussed the decision not to simply incorporate DarkSky International's standards by reference. Instead, the city chose to establish its own specific numerical standards within the ordinance to maintain local control and avoid automatically adopting future changes made by DarkSky International. He explained that this approach allows the City of Clermont to determine and defend its own lighting standards.

Commissioner Cramer stated that the explanation addressed his concerns about how the ordinance could be supported or defended in the future. He asked whether the adaptive lighting control requirements in the ordinance would apply to single-family homes, specifically

questioning whether residents would be required to turn off porch lights or other residential outdoor lighting at certain times.

Ms. Day clarified that the requirements would apply to both residential and commercial outdoor lighting fixtures, including porch and landscape lighting, but noted that certain residential exemptions and shielding requirements may apply.

Commissioner Hoisington commended staff for their extensive work on the dark sky ordinance.

Chair Colby

MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL of Ordinance No. 2026-025 Dark Sky Land Development Code Amendment; Moved by Commissioner Cramer, Seconded by Commissioner Hoisington. Motion passed 5-0.

MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL of Resolution No. 2026-022R Dark Sky; Moved by Commissioner Cramer, Seconded by Commissioner Hoisington. Motion passed 5-0.

Item No. 3 – Ordinance No. 2026-026 – Surrounding Property Notifications Land Development Code Amendment

Planner Nicholas Gonzalez presented as follows:

At the direction of the City Manager's office and City Council, staff is proposing an amendment to the noticing requirements for certain land use and development applications. Currently, the requirements are for public notices to be mailed to all adjoining property owners within 150 feet of the subject property. There are several sections in the code that address this 150-foot requirement.

In an effort to enhance public awareness and participation; along with keeping surrounding property owners and stakeholders informed, an increase in the written notification requirement is being proposed at a distance of 450 feet. This is a 200% increase in the written notification requirements. No changes are being proposed to the existing newspaper publications or the posting of signage on the subject property.

The applications that would be affected by this include Conditional Use Permits (CUP's), Variances, Rezoning and Future Land Use Map Amendments, and "Live Local Act" Projects. In addition, if any property within the 450-foot radius of the subject property is governed by a property owners' association, such as a condominium association or homeowners association, notice shall also be provided to such association. This language is also being added to better inform the community of the proposed land use changes that may impact their properties and/or communities.

Staff recommends approval of these proposed changes contained within Ordinance No. 2026-026 since it finds that it would be in the best interest of the public and citizens of Clermont.

Bryan Bain, Seat 2 City Council Member, explained that he worked with city staff to develop a proposal aimed at improving public notification for development and zoning-related projects. He emphasized that, as a matter of transparency, elected officials should explain the reasoning behind proposals they help develop. He stated that the proposal was prompted by feedback from residents who felt the current notification radius of 150 feet was too small, often notifying only a handful of nearby homes. He stated that the proposal recommends increasing the notification radius to 450 feet. The proposal also adds a requirement that if any property within the notification radius is part of a homeowner's association or condominium association, the city must also notify that association. This is intended to help associations inform their residents about nearby projects and further expand community awareness.

Commissioner Hoisington stated she is in support of the proposed changes to the public notification process and is glad the initiative was moving forward. Her only question was why the notification radius was set at 450 feet instead of 500 feet.

Commissioner Cramer stated he was in support of the proposed expansion of the public notification process, stating that it is a change the city has needed for some time.

Commissioner Niemiec stated that it was the first time he has seen a city council member speak at a Planning and Zoning meeting as a member of the public. He asked the council member to clarify their role in developing the proposed ordinance.

Council Member Bain explained that shortly after taking office, he met with city department heads and proposed revising the city's public notification policy. He said the process involved extensive discussions with staff to understand the legal, administrative, and financial implications, including how notifications are handled and who bears the associated costs. After working through those details, he and staff agreed on an expanded notification radius, after which staff and the city attorney drafted the ordinance language presented to the board.

Commissioner Niemiec thanked the council member for leading the effort, noting that residents had questioned the limited 150-foot notification radius for years. He expressed appreciation for the added requirement that HOAs and condominium associations receive notifications when projects affect properties within those communities, describing it as a positive improvement for informing residents.

Commissioner Entsuaht thanked Council Member Bain for bringing forward the proposed changes. He asked staff why code enforcement cases were not included in the notification radius amendment.

Mr. Gonzalez explained that code enforcement cases do not involve mailed notifications to surrounding properties and notifications are only provided to the property involved in the case.

Chair Colby stated he was in support of the proposed expansion of the public notification radius but asked about the department's practice of adding an extra 50 feet beyond the required distance. He wanted to know whether this was an official policy or simply a departmental best practice.

Mr. Gonzalez explained that the additional 50 feet is a best practice used to ensure no properties are inadvertently excluded due to mapping boundaries or parcels that barely fall outside the required radius.

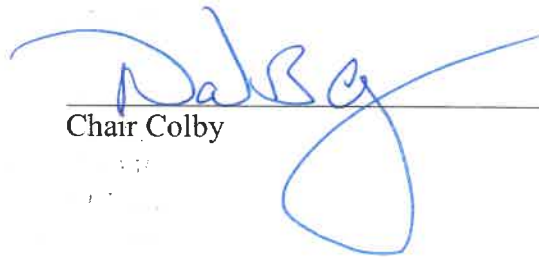
Development Services Director Curt Henschel stated that regardless of the official notification distance, staff intentionally exceeds it slightly to avoid missing properties and to reduce the risk of legal challenges based on inadequate notice.

Chair Colby acknowledged the explanation but expressed concern that relying on a best practice instead of codifying the larger distance could create uncertainty in the future if departmental practices change.

MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL of Ordinance No. 2026-026 Surrounding Property Notifications Land Development Code Amendment; Moved by Commissioner Niemiec, Seconded by Commissioner Entsua. Motion passed 5-0.

DISCUSSION OF NON-AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT – 7:23 pm


Chair Colby

ATTEST:


Rae Chidlow