

CITY OF LEWISTON
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
MINUTES for August 10, 2026

- I. **ROLL CALL:** The meeting was held in the City Council Chambers on the first floor of City Hall and was called to order at 5:30 p.m. Chairperson, Shanna Cox chaired the meeting.

Members in Attendance: Lucy Bisson, Shanna Cox, Alexander Pine, and Amy Smith

Members in Absent: Penthea Burns and Michael Marcotte

Associate Members in Attendance: Darren Gallant and Heidi Bertels

Chairperson Cox appointed Heidi Bertels and Darren Gallant to full voting members for this meeting.

Staff Present: Shelley Norton, Deputy Director

II. **ELECTION OF SECRETARY**

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **Alexander Pine** to continue the election of secretary until all the current board members are present (not a date certain).

Second by **Amy Smith**.

VOTED: 6-0 (Passed).

III. **ADJUSTMENT TO THE AGENDA:** None

IV. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None

V. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

Lewiston Housing Authority has submitted a development review application for Phase 3 of the conversion of the former Martel School site for senior housing in a new 9,860 square foot footprint apartment building with 44 units on 2.76 acres at 860 Lisbon Street.

Shelley Norton briefly introduced the project. Penn Lindsay, Director of Development for Lewiston Housing Authority and Craig Burgess, Engineer with Acorn Engineering provided an overview of the project. The project includes 44 new apartment units and a new curb cut on Marsten Street. Craig described the stormwater treatment for all three phases, some changes to the stormwater design approved for phases 1 and 2 where phase 3 is being developed necessitating a change in the type of stormwater treatment. They are using a focal point and r-tank system. The active space required was about 1,100 sf and they have created a seating area and garden area as well as a common recreational room and rooftop patio on the fourth floor. Board members asked

about the open space area and seating and Craig discussed the planting design and clarified the drawings. Craig stated that a retaining wall between Phases 2 and 3 has been added to break up the elevation change, which is about five feet at its highest. The board asked about walking connectivity between the phases. Craig stated due to the grade changes and stormwater they would need to use the sidewalk on Marston Street; they were not able to provide an internal walk connection. Shanna asked if there was anything at the top of the wall to prevent people from falling over the wall. Penn stated they have gathering areas outside of Phase 2 exit, but there isn't a fence at the top of the wall. The board suggested having lighting or plantings at the top of the wall for safety.

Penn stated Phase 3 is Senior Housing, all one-bedroom apartments with all very similar layouts. Shanna Cox asked if there are any two-bedroom units? Penn stated no, but they do have some two-bedroom units in the Soleil project which they expect will be single and older residents, probably not many children. Shanna stated that she hears a lot from couples looking to downsize who want homogenous generation living and want a two-bedroom apartment.

Darren asked about the Phase 3 commercial, which was briefly discussed. It is not included in this application. Alexander Pine asked if there is any interior bike storage to keep bikes out of the weather. Penn stated there is not. Alex made comment on where the entrances are and that they aren't facing the streets, just the parking lot, making it friendly and approachable matters, especially for Senior Housing, making it convenient for walking is important. Penn stated the architects worked to bump out the entrance so it would be noticeable. Since it only has one elevator, they wanted it to be in the middle to reduce walking to the units.

Lucy made a comment asking if they are putting in bathtubs or showers. Penn stated there is a mix of bathtubs, showers, and roll in showers. People want tubs so they have a mix of accommodating preferences. Lucy stated that at least if putting in tubs have bars, Penn stated absolutely all bathrooms will have grab bars.

Amy continues to be concerned about trash management. There are two dumpsters for 132 units and people must take the trash outside down the stairs. Penn stated there are no trash rooms, but they have tried to make the trash locations as convenient as possible. Through management, if someone needs reasonable accommodation to get the trash out, they will work with them. Amy asked if there was recycling to which Penn wasn't sure.

Shanna pointed to sheet A201 and the East elevation and a very big blank wall. Staff clarified this isn't regulated because they are outside of the Design District. Penn stated they have talked about it and they could add a row of windows in the corridor that would bring in natural light and he actually thought they did have windows there, it might be an older design in the rendering.

They don't want the door to be so welcoming that it attracts people. The board suggested an overhang over the door to help make it more prominent. Penn stated that when coming up Marston Street people will see the main entrance first and there will also be trees softening the look.

Alex asked on the fourth page about the storage room and what is going there. Penn stated they have to leave space for future installation of solar, also they haven't fully designed out the building or HVAC system. There was discussion that they would consider if there is space they can use for bike storage.

Amy asked if all units have space for the HVAC system? Penn agreed that there is space for a heat pump in each apartment which will cover both the living room and bedroom. She pointed out that they may not need all the space they have for mechanicals if each unit has its own heat and cooling. Amy asked if each room would have their own breaker panel, Penn wasn't sure and Amy stated is it great as a landlord.

Shanna opened the public hearing.

No one spoke and she closed the public hearing.

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **Lucy Bisson** that the application submitted by the Lewiston Housing Authority and Lewiston Auburn Area Housing Development Corporation, for a new four-story apartment building containing 44 dwelling units at 860 Lisbon Street, meets all of the necessary criteria contained in the Zoning and Land Use Code, including, but not limited to, Article XIII, Section 4, *Approval criteria*, and Section 5, *Coordination with state subdivision law* and that approval be granted with the following conditions:

1. Prior to signing the site plan, the landscaping plan be updated to provide buffering meeting the requirements of the ordinance around the transformer adjacent to East Avenue.
2. Prior to signing the site plan, comments from Public Works be addressed.
3. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall prepare a subdivision plan signed by a surveyor and filed at the Registry of Deeds.
4. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall provide documentation addressing the affordable housing density bonus eligibility requirements including, but not limited to, providing a copy of the restrictive covenant to be filed with the Registry of Deeds.

5. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall file a stormwater maintenance guarantee letter with the Registry of Deeds.
6. Prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the applicant's engineer shall certify that all improvements have been completed in accordance with the approved plans including but not limited to stormwater and utilities, pavements, plantings, and exterior building materials.

Second by **Heidi Bertels**.

VOTED: 6-0 (Passed)

The board took a three minute recess then the resumed.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS:

- a) Lewiston Housing Authority and Lewiston Auburn Area Housing Development Corporation have submitted a request for an extension to the approval of the Martel School Apartments Phase 2 located at 860 Lisbon Street developing 44 new apartments.

Shanna asked if the reason they haven't started is due to them working on Phase 1, have secured financing? Penn stated they expect to start in the next six months.

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **Alexander Pine** pursuant to Article XIII, Section 11 of the Zoning and Land Use Code to grant a two-year extension of the August 12, 2024, development review approval to Lewiston Housing Authority and Lewiston Auburn Area Housing Development Corporation for the amendment of the development review of Phase 2 of the Martell School Apartments at 860 Lisbon Street, until August 12, 2028, to start construction.

Second by **Lucy Bisson**.

VOTED: 6-0 (passed).

- b) Lewiston Housing Authority has submitted a request for an extension to the approval of Soliel Apartments Phases 1 & 2 located at 61 Ash Street developing 72 new apartments and first floor commercial space.

Shelley Norton introduced the project and the extension request. Penn stated they will have an amendment coming in the near future which will be a separate application. Alex stated that when this came before them there was discussion about the commercial spaces designed for smaller businesses. Penn stated they designed them to be flexible so they have spaces small,

medium, and large and they could also be combined if needed. This is about 8,000 sf of commercial space and the Dewitt project has about 15,000 sf total of commercial retail space. Amy Smith asked how the leasing is going at Dewitt, Penn stated they have active conversations for all four commercial spaces and a lease signed on the largest space. Penn stated on the Dewitt Park Street side Community Credit Union is going in. Heidi asked if they will be making security improvements? Penn stated they are responsible for their own build-out. Heidi asked if there are any restrictions on what can be put in because of the public funding? Penn stated yes there are extensive restrictions. He stated he expected they will close on this project in the first quarter of 2027.

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **Darren Gallant** pursuant to Article XIII, Section 11 of the Zoning and Land Use Code to grant a two-year extension to the August 12, 2024, development review approval, Phases 1 and 2, for Lewiston Housing Authority to construct a mixed-use building with commercial space and apartments at 61 Ash Street, until August 12, 2028, for the start of construction.
Second by **Alexander Pine**.

VOTED: 6-0 (passed).

c) Appointment of a member to the Forestry Board.

Shanna stated that Zoe Lidstrom moved and her new housing put her in a ward that already had two members so it

Shanna asked if anyone is interested in serving on the board. Darren stated he is willing to serve if no one else is interested. Heidi asked if they could rotate and both serve. Shanna asked staff to verify if two people can share (alternate) service. Alexander Pine questioned the use of volunteer time and inquired what the intention is for having a seat on this board as there is little overlap between the two boards. He stated he has often thought that not having this type of relationship with Complete Streets Committee doesn't make sense.

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **Shanna Cox** to continue the appointment of a Planning Board representative to the Forestry Board to a meeting when more of the regular members are present.
Second by **Heidi Bertels**.

VOTED: 6-0 (Passed)

Heidi stated that the more she thinks about it, she thinks that she is interested in serving on the Forestry Board.

Shanna stated she would like Penthea to have the opportunity to weigh in on whether she is interested.

Shanna asked board members to keep the memo on the election of Secretary and appointment to the Forestry Board meeting for future meetings.

- d) Clarification of things covered at the last meeting on July 27th for board members who were absent.

Amy Smith asked for clarification related to Shanna's question asking to whom members should go if they had issues with city staff, was she specifically asking about staff performance of duties? Shanna said her question was for any issues with staff, although that would probably be the most obvious one. She stated she believes it was noted in the minutes as an item for follow-up, to which members hadn't seen a response yet.

Shanna stated that part of what they did work towards is that staff will work to meet intent, and not just the technical components of what is being requested, and Director Connor committed to that, he also committed to understanding or asking if staff understands before leaving, to better serve that goal.

There was a lot of conversation about the relationship with the Planning Board and City Council and transparency of communications and at one point it felt like Director Connor was assuming that the planning board and city council members listened to each other's meetings. Shanna clarified that it was made clear that there is no expectation that either board is following each other's board meetings. Which is why a request from any planning board member, especially the Chair, is to be handled going forward as an action item from the planning board meeting and not to be (only) handled when there is a council agenda item coming up. Amy and Shanna clarified that watching council meetings is not a requirement of board members.

Amy stated that the board talked about vacant building licensing and rental registration at the same time and there was a statement made that there was outreach done to vacant commercial property owners about a draft ordinance to get feedback – she would like to know how and when that was done? When did that happen and who did they get feedback from? She never saw any public outreach on that. Amy asked what was actually happening with that ordinance. Shanna wanted to make the request more specific and asked staff that when we bring this agenda item back for both the rental registry and vacant building ordinance, the memo last time which was just on vacant buildings prompted a commitment to bring both forward again for discussion with additional information, and the board made specific requests around what was to be included.

Shanna asked staff to amend that list to include outreach actions and types and maybe even a sample of what went out to folks from a communications perspective that went out to folks about commercial vacant properties.

- e) Amy Smith wants to discuss the process regarding how the Planning Board makes suggestions to updating ordinances and policies.

Amy stated specifically there are some ordinances that are old and out of date and have huge impact related to land use. Specifically, the solid waste ordinance is in rough shape and doesn't include the updates with Cart 2 Curb. The City Council committed to forming a sub-committee eighteen months ago to study the trash ordinance and it never happened, and so I don't know if we as the Planning Board could pick that up and evaluate that. Shanna asked if this is the purview of the Planning Board? Staff stated that it is not, it is in the Code of Ordinances which does not require Planning Board recommendation/referral to the Council, it is just a Council action to change it. Changes to the Zoning and Land Use Code is what the Planning Board makes a recommendation on. Amy stated she would argue that trash storage and pickup is a land use. Shanna encouraged Amy to use public comment to City Council to request that it is an area we could collaborate on. If one of the changes she is seeking is to look at it falling under the Planning Board purview then name that request and share that with staff as well as the Planning Board. Shanna stated there may also be a process for this.

Alexander Pine stated he thought he was told by David Hediger that any resident could prepare amendments to ordinance language and submit them to staff asking for changes to be made, saving staff and council member's time. Shelley stated she wasn't sure of the initiation process for the Codes that aren't the Appendix A Zoning and Land Use Code. At Alex's request she stated the process for changing the Appendix A Zoning and Land Use Code. Shanna asked for a future memo and item on an agenda that provides the process for ordinance amendment of the Zoning Land Use Code as well as the process for updating the rest of the Code of Ordinances. Shanna requested that a table of contents for all the Code which identifies which follow which process should be included.

Amy asked, how does an average person help get ordinances changed? The other thing she would like to look at is the property disposition policy. In the policy the very first step is that the City Administrator determines that a property is surplus and then that kicks off the rest of the steps, which Amy stated does not seem like a good policy to her.

Shanna asked if anyone else had questions or comments related to process related to suggesting or requesting updates to our ordinances and policies? Shelley asked Amy if she was asking how does the property disposition policy get changed? She replied yes.

The memo should outline the process for changes to ordinances and policies for the city. Alexander asked if it would be ready for the next meeting, and Shelley stated it is in two weeks, therefore probably not.

Shanna stated a digital answer is best, it should link to things, so please do email it. Include a Table of Contents that says which process is which.

VII. READING OF MINUTES:

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **Lucy Bisson** to accept the July 27, 2026, draft minutes as amended by Amy, Michael and Lucy. Second by **Heidi Bertels**.

VOTED: 6-0 (Passed)

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

The following motion was made to adjourn.

MOTION: by **Heidi Bertels** that this meeting adjourns at 7:16 p.m. Second by **Alexander Pine**.

VOTED: 6-0 (Passed)

Amy and Alexander stated they will not be available for the meeting on July 24, 2026.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is for Monday, August 24, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shanna Cox" followed by a circled "15".

Shanna Cox, Chair