



Planning and Zoning Commission City of Ashton Minutes

714 Main St
4/16/2026
7:00 p.m.

In Attendance: Rosie Owens, Trenna Howell, Audrey Tibbitts, and Dallas Hill.

Also in attendance: Administrator Aaron Denney, Deputy Clerk Denise Vega, Deputy Clerk Jan Warnke, Dan Drake, Mitchell Trost, Derek Oswald, Matt Britton, and Carlos Huerta.

Chairwoman Owens opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

1. Approve Minutes from February 19, 2026: ACTION ITEM

Commissioner Owens made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Commissioner Tibbitts seconded the motion. The motion passed.

2. Cobblestone Hotels Presentation

Administrator Denney introduced a local development group. Mitchell Trost, a representative of the developer, stated that Brad Hall Companies owns approximately 7 acres of land on the northeast corner of Highway 20 and Main Street. They are seeking a zone change for the property from Community Core to Highway Commercial and a possible height code change.

Mitchell mentioned they are wanting to divide the 7 acres into three different lots: one for a hotel, and the other two likely for a Good 2 Go gas station with a possible drive-through restaurant and an additional food user with kiosk use. He then turned the time over to Dan Drake and Derek Oswald from Cobblestone Hotels. Administrator Denney clarified that there is no current application started yet; they are only proposing the idea at this time. Dan Drake began introducing his and Derek Oswald's company, DJK Lodging, which works with the Cobblestone franchise.

Dan stated that after speaking with the administrator, he realized there are a few restrictions within Ashton that may interfere with the project. They have the north 3 acres under contract and would like to build a 54-room hotel approximately 49 feet tall at the top of the parapet wall. Their plan is to have customers enter from Maple Street and build the hotel facing south, with a lawn and patio area on the west side facing Highway 20. Their goal was to give the commission a better understanding of what they were hoping to accomplish. He also mentioned the ground on the site is lower than Highway 20 and hoped it would not impede the city's views. The reason for the height code change would be to accommodate the four-story hotel building. Commissioner Hill clarified

that with the building plan, the commission will consider whether it complies with the comprehensive plan, public sentiment, and city code. He encouraged the group to continue discussions with the administrator.

The Cobblestone group stated they wanted to give the commission an idea of their plans and the reasoning behind the requested code changes. Administrator Denney reminded the commission that they had discussed a possible height code change in the past and opened the floor for discussion. The commission discussed several pros and cons of the proposed project, weighing both sides carefully. Administrator Denney and Commissioner Hill helped the development group understand the process for proceeding with the project, beginning with applications.

3. Zone Change Request at 115 N. 2nd Street

Chairwoman Owens asked Administrator Denney to introduce the zone change request.

He introduced Carlos Huerta's request to rezone his property. Carlos Huerta spoke about future plans for the RV park, including additional amenities and a possible HOA with CC&Rs and management. He then updated the commission regarding his residence at 115 N. 2nd Street. Carlos mentioned they received a conditional use permit in 2020. Clerk Warnke helped explain the reasoning for approval, stating that neighboring properties lie within low-density zones and the commission felt Huerta's property fit within the area.

The land is currently zoned commercial, but he is requesting it be rezoned residential. He has been unable to obtain a residential loan because the property is zoned commercial, but he also cannot obtain a commercial loan because the property is being used as a residence. Administrator Denney mentioned that this matter will be brought before the commission as a public hearing next month.

Commissioner Hill requested a survey for the zone change relating to the current use of the property versus potential development plans discussed previously. Huerta agreed to provide surveys with the commission.

4. Discussion on Code Change Regarding Commission and AOI

Chairwoman Owens moved the meeting to Item 4.

Administrator Denney informed the commission that the mayor had asked individuals within the Area of Impact (AOI) to serve on the commission, but they had all declined. He explained that the city is looking to adjust the city code so it no longer states that the commission must include citizens residing within the AOI. Commissioner Howell expressed that opening the opportunity to business consumers rather than only taxpayers may attract more interest in serving on the commission. The commission discussed the meaning of the Area of Impact. Clerk Warnke helped the commission understand that commissioners may only serve if they reside within the affected area.

5. Comprehensive Plan Discussion

Chairwoman Owens moved the meeting to Item 5.

Administrator Denney recommended projecting the document and updating necessary changes in real time as a commission. The commission then began discussing the changes needed page by page. Commissioner Owens asked if 2045 was simply the intended duration for the comprehensive plan, and Administrator Denney confirmed.

Page 4 – There is a jump from historic Ashton to present-day Ashton, leaving out essential attributes of the city. The commission would like to see more attractions listed, such as the Mesa Falls Marathon and the dog derbies. The city’s goals should also be expanded upon.

Goal 1 – Change wording to: “The City of Ashton will support its residents in opportunities to prosper, strengthen, and diversify its economy.”

Goal 2 – “The City of Ashton will preserve its natural resources and maintain the small-town feel that is integral to the city’s history.”

Page 8 – LAND USE section.

First line after “Figure 2” should be rephrased to: “The City is situated along two highly trafficked state byways, Highway 20 and Highway 47.” Delete the remainder of the sentence after “agricultural industry is still active today” and replace with: “Ashton remains a leading producer of seed potatoes worldwide.”

Bottom of Page 8, rephrase the “HOUSING” paragraph after the first sentence to read: “Due to this condition, a significant number of homes within city limits have undergone renovations. In some cases, the aging housing stock has increased maintenance and utility costs for some residents. In recent years, Ashton has seen a wider variety of housing types built to accommodate various budgets.”

Page 11 – Figure 2:

- “Commercial Core” should be “Community Core.”
- “Heavy Commercial” should be “Highway Commercial.”
- Should reference “higher” and “lower” density according to the code book.
- Update Area of Impact.

Pages 13–14 – Change photos to local photos.

Page 17 – Change the second sentence in the first paragraph to: “The City owns and maintains three city parks: Ashton City Park, Ashton Softball Field, and the Main Street pocket park.”

Rephrase sentence to read: “Additionally, Ashton’s Community Center, housed inside the Fremont County District Library, provides....” In the second paragraph, the trail name should be “Ashton-Tetonia Trail.”

Page 18 – Figure 6: Add the softball field.

Page 19 –

- Update table numbers to begin with “1.1” instead of “2.1.”
- Point “2.1” should read “local chamber of commerce” and remove “and county.”

Page 20 – Remove line “2.3.a.”

Page 21 – Remove line “2.5.c.”

Page 23 –

- Remove “soils after irrigation” and end the sentence after “prime farmland.”
- Under the “NATURAL RESOURCES” section: “The National Forest is part of the greater ecosystem.”
- “United Nations has designated this forest as...” — source needed.
- End the sentence after “by offering a free fishing day,” remove the remainder, and add: “Ashton also provides an ideal location for permitted hunting for a variety of wild game.”

Page 24 – AGRICULTURE section:

- Delete “if irrigated” from the sentence “The majority of the cropland is considered prime farmland....”
- Remove “Non-irrigated land can produce small amounts of grain.”
- Remove “There is a significant portion of the prime farmland located within the City’s Area of Impact.”

Page 25 – Research historical sites, including the Frostop mug, and add information to the paragraph.

Page 27 – Section 3.1.A (now 2.1.a):

Change “hazards are protected and designated” to “hazards are identified and designated.”

Page 29 – WATER AND SEWER section:

- Change “1992” to “2011.”
- Change “last updated in 1978 and 1979” to “2026.”
- Lagoon is located “outside of the city to the northwest.”
- Remove the last sentence of the second paragraph.

EMERGENCY SERVICES section:

- There is one police chief, one detective, and one officer.
- Should read “North Fremont Protection District,” not “Ashton Fire Protection District.”

Page 30 –

- Fremont County District Library.
- “The library operates on **county and federal** funding,” not city funds.
- Use “loan” instead of “rent.”

- Include that it also houses education, outreach, and archives.

Page 31 – OTHER UTILITIES section:

Add the sentence: “Telephone and internet services are provided by Blackfoot Communications and Fybercom.”

SCHOOLS, FACILITIES, AND TRANSPORTATION section:

- Ashton Elementary School has a student population of 242.
- Remove gender percentages.
- Remove sentences beginning with “Ashton Elementary School is projected...” through “...projected to be 23.9 in 10 years.”
- Verify graduation rate of 95.2%.
- Add a row for grade school class numbers for 2025–2026:
 - Pre-K – 18
 - Kindergarten – 35
 - 1st – 27
 - 2nd – 37
 - 3rd – 37
 - 4th – 39
 - 5th – 49
 - Total – 242

Page 32 – Add a row for Jr./Sr. High School 2025–2026:

- 6th – 39
- 7th – 44
- 8th – 50
- 9th – 37
- 10th – 45
- 11th – 35
- 12th – 55
- Total – 305

End the last paragraph in the section after “remoteness or the condition of roads” and remove the final two sentences.

Page 33 – Deputy Clerk Warnke will show Aaron issues on the map.

Page 34 – Area of Impact and sidewalks are incorrect.

Page 36 – Remove 4.2.d.

Pages 38–40 – Previous changes should address the final pages.

6. Upcoming Public Hearing

Chairwoman Owens moved the meeting to Item 6.

The upcoming public hearing will be held at the next meeting on May 21 at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 9:53 p.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: May 21, 2026

Minutes respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Denise Vega