



City of Othello
Planning Commission Meeting
June 15, 2026
Zuleica Morfin

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rob Simmons called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Rob Simmons, Ruth Sawyer, Donald Burks, Jose Garza, Daniela Voorhies, Chad Robbins

Remote: Maria Martinez

Staff: Community Development Director Anne Henning, Building and Planning Secretary Zuleica Morfin

Attendees: Bob Carlson; Council members Chris Dorow and Kelli Camp; Tania Morelos, Michael Morelos, Jose Lemus, Genna Dorow

Absent: Council member Alma Carmona

PUBLIC INPUT

Council member Chris Dorow addressed the Planning Commission regarding data centers in Othello. He encouraged the Commission to consider data centers as part of future Comprehensive Plan discussions, noting their potential economic benefits, impacts on water resources, employment opportunities, and tax base growth. He emphasized the importance of educating the public and evaluating whether data centers would be an appropriate opportunity for the city.

MINUTES APPROVAL

May 18, 2026, minutes approved M/S Sawyer/Burks

STATE LAW UPDATE - NEW HOUSING IN EXISTING BUILDINGS, CHILDCARE LOCATIONS, AND FAMILY BURIAL GROUNDS – PUBLIC HEARING & RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL

Chair Rob Simmons opened the public hearing at 6:07 p.m.

Community Development Director Anne Henning presented proposed code amendments necessary to comply with recent state law changes regarding:

- New housing in existing buildings
- Childcare centers
- Family burial grounds

Staff discussed the following proposed changes:

- Creating a definition for family burial grounds consistent with 2026 state legislation
- Updating childcare definitions to align with current state licensing requirements
- Allowing childcare centers as outright permitted use in residential and commercial zones as required by state law
- Removing the conditional use permit requirement for childcare centers
- Considering whether adjacent property owners should receive notifications when childcare centers are established
- Updating commercial zoning language regarding daily care providers

Commissioners discussed whether daily care provider language should remain broad enough to include future uses beyond elder care.

Chris Dorow requested clarification regarding language changes removing the Hearing Examiner's authority to impose conditions on childcare centers. Staff explained that because childcare centers are now required by state law to be outright permitted uses, conditional use permit procedures and Hearing Examiner review are no longer applicable.

No additional public testimony was provided, so testimony was closed at 6:25. The public hearing was closed at 6:26 p.m.

Motion: Approve the proposed code amendments, including the definitions and revisions presented by staff. Motion: Burks/Garza

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE- PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT- DISCUSSION & JULY 4 VOLUNTEERS

Commissioners discussed gathering community input regarding growth versus preservation priorities and considered including questions related to economic development opportunities such as data centers. Several commissioners volunteered to participate in the July 4 public engagement activities. Staff requested that commissioners provide their availability. Staff also discussed plans for an open house regarding the Comprehensive Plan land use map at the July Planning Commission meeting and sought feedback regarding offering additional afternoon hours for public participation.

OCCUPANCY OF RECREATIONAL VEHICLES AT A BUSINESS- DISCUSSION

Tania Morelos from The Showhouse explained the need for recreational vehicles parking in town for events, tourism, and extended stay visitors. The Showhouse could provide 5 RV spaces with water and electric; however, the municipal code does not currently allow this. The Planning Commission discussed the occupancy of recreational vehicles at business locations and considered related concerns and potential regulations, including length of stay, liability, emergency services, generator noise, and sewage disposal. The Commission asked for more information on considerations and concerns, and will discuss further at a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:19pm. Next meeting is Monday July 20, 2026.

Robert M Simmons DC Date: Aug 19, 2026
Robert M Simmons DC (Aug 19, 2026 14:09:38 PDT)

Rob Simmons, Chair

Zuleica Morfin Date: 8/19/2026
Zuleica Morfin, Building and Planning Secretary