



City of Othello
Planning Commission Meeting
August 17, 2026
Zuleica Morfin

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Rob Simmons, Daniela Voorhies, Donald Burks, Jose Garza, Ruth Sawyer. Commissioner Maria Martinez participated remotely.

Excused: Chad Robbins

Staff: Community Development Director Anne Henning, Building and Planning Secretary Zuleica Morfin, Public Works Director/City Engineer Robin Adolphsen

City Council Liaison: Alma Carmona

City Council Comprehensive Plan Committee: Chris Dorow, Alma Carmona. Kelli Camp participated remotely.

Attendees: Bob Carlson, Genna Dorow (representing Terra Gold Farms), Adams County Emergency Management Director Sandi Duffey, Adams County Planning Director Andie Lorenz. Aren Murcar, the City's consultant from SCJ Alliance, participated remotely.

PUBLIC INPUT

No public input was provided

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 15, 2026, Minutes Approved with the corrections to "Robbins" M/S Voorhies/ Sawyer

July 20, 2026, Minutes Approved M/S Sawyer/ Garza

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE/FUTURE LAND USE MAP/AMENDMENT REQUEST-DISCUSSION

Last month, Commissioners started to work through the information and exercises in the SCJ memo, and discussed land use designations east, west, and south of city limits. Requested amendments on the north side of town, both inside and outside of city limits, were also introduced. The staff report this month also pointed out that Othello's future land use map must be consistent with Adams County's map. The intent of tonight is to discuss the Future Land Use Map north of city limits, review the direction given last month especially as it relates to the County zoning, and then if time allows, look at whether any zoning changes should be made within city limits.

Genna Dorow, representing Terra Gold Farms, stated that they are withdrawing their requests north of Lee Road for now while they work through the process with Adams County, since that area is outside city limits.

Adams County Planning Director Andie Lorenz provided an overview of the County's recent zoning updates and indicated that County staff are considering potential changes to provide appropriate transitions between residential, commercial, light industrial, and heavy industrial uses. He mentioned that current zoning north of Lee is Light Industrial for the first 600'. He also mentioned that they are

considering going back to agricultural zoning so that the land does not end up too divided in case it is eventually annexed. The County has increased lot sizes to protect agriculture.

Commissioners discussed how important it is to maintain appropriate buffers and transitions between residential areas and industrial uses, including public safety, emergency response, traffic, truck routes, and hazardous materials. The Commissioners also discussed the potential for industrial development farther from the city, including the expanded industrial area near Bruce, as a possible opportunity to accommodate future industrial growth for the region while reducing conflicts with residential development.

There was discussion of the southwesterly prevailing wind, and that large recent annexations may provide enough residential land for now. Commissioners agreed to defer decisions regarding the area north of Lee Road until further discussions and coordination with Adams County have occurred. Commissioners reviewed the amendment requests south of Lee Road, including requests to change from light industrial to commercial and residential. Discussion included the appropriate use of light industrial and commercial designations as transitional areas between heavy industrial and residential uses. Commissioners emphasized the need to consider County zoning and future County planning decisions before making final recommendations. Consultant Aren Murcar mentioned that the mixed Industrial/Commercial designation or zone discussed at the last meeting might be a good buffer to the north.

Mr. Lorenz indicated that the County recently completed a comprehensive zoning update and is now looking into smaller adjustments to individual areas. The County is also considering opportunities for commercial and industrial development while protecting agricultural land and providing appropriate transitions between incompatible land uses. Commissioners discussed the importance of continued coordination between the City and County so that future land use designations are consistent across jurisdictional boundaries. Commissioners reviewed areas where City and County designations differ, including areas near Bench Road. Commissioners determined this area should be mixed use (commercial/residential).

Commissioners also reviewed the City's existing zoning map and discussed whether existing zoning designations inside city limits continue to appropriately reflect current and anticipated land uses. They discussed the existing Residential Medical zoning district near the hospital. The district was established to accommodate the existing hospital, nearby residences, and potential future medical-related development. Commissioners discussed whether the district remains appropriate and whether the residential properties within the district should be rezoned. Commissioners agreed that the Residential Medical District should remain as currently designated because of existing uses and potential future medical expansion.

To answer questions about the Traditional Commercial Zone, staff explained that the district reflects the historic development pattern of the downtown area, where buildings are located close to the street rather than being set back with large parking areas. Commissioners determined that the existing designation continues to serve a purpose and did not identify a need for a change at this time.

Commissioners discussed whether additional areas should be changed to higher-density residential zoning, including potential changes from R1 to R2 or R3. They also discussed the potential benefits of allowing additional housing units and greater flexibility for redevelopment, while also recognizing concerns regarding neighborhood density and property-owner expectations.

Commissioners discussed an area near Lions Park as a possible location for increased residential density. After discussion, the general thought was to leave the existing residential zoning unchanged. Commissioners also discussed the importance of allowing individual property owners to request zoning changes when they have specific development proposals, rather than making broad changes without direct requests from affected property owners.

Commissioners noted that City parks are identified on the City's maps but are not currently represented by a dedicated zoning designation. Consultant Aren Murcar suggested that the City consider creating a park zoning designation or otherwise formally zoning existing park properties as part of the Comprehensive Plan and zoning update. They also discussed the former fruit-processing property and whether a mixed commercial/light industrial designation could encourage redevelopment. Public Works Director Robin Adolphsen explained that the zoning is not the problem, there are difficulties with access and utilities. No zoning change was recommended. Commissioners noted that the R-2 zone west of the canal was not a great fit. Ms. Henning said it was zoned at annexation to match the Future Land Use Map, which shows Residential west of the canal.

NEW BUSINESS- IF THERE ARE ANY NEW TOPICS TO DISCUSS

Commissioners would like to discuss data center regulations at future meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 pm. Next meeting is Monday September 21, 2026.

Robert M Simmons, Dc Date: Sep 24, 2026
Robert M Simmons, Dc (Sep 24, 2026 21:54:27 PDT)

Rob Simmons, Chair

zuleica morfin Date: 9/24/2026
Zuleica Morfin, Building and Planning Secretary