



Ravenna City Council
Community & Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2025

The public meeting was held in person in Ravenna City Council Chambers.

Council present: Council President Rob Kairis, Amy Michael, Paul Moskun, Cheryl Wood, Matt Harper, Tyler Marovich, Tim Calfee, Christina West

Also attending the meeting: Mayor Frank Seman; Police Chief, Jake Smallfield; Fire Chief, Mark Chapple; Service Director, Tim Contant; City Engineer; Bob Finney; Finance Director, Tami Lorence; Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor; Larry Silenus, Cliff Soudil, Greg Francis, Eve Francis, Cynthia Miller, Carmen Laudato, Peter Martin, Matt Ferrell, Mike Reynolds

The Community & Economic Development Committee Meeting was called to order at 8:15 P.M. by Chairperson, Cheryl Wood.

The first item was the Design Review Guidelines.

Ms. Wood introduced discussion on updates to the Design Review Commission guidelines in Chapter 1434.

Mr. Kairis clarified that although the agenda referenced “guidelines,” the discussion involved changes to the actual Design Review Commission ordinance. He explained that he and Mr. Silenus had worked on cleanup language, but he strongly opposed a proposed provision in Section 1434.04 that would automatically approve an application after three Design Review Commission meetings. Mr. Kairis argued this would undermine the entire chapter by allowing applicants to simply wait out denials.

Mr. Wood acknowledged his concerns but emphasized that some businesses had faced excessive delays in getting signage approved. She asked for alternative solutions to avoid long holdups. Mr. Kairis responded that the ordinance already included timelines that should prevent months-long delays, but the Design Review Commission had not always adhered to them.

Council members discussed whether the matter should come before Council after repeated denials and whether better communication with applicants was needed.

Mr. Calfee echoed Mr. Kairis’s opposition to automatic approval after three meetings, saying it would invalidate the historic district requirements. He noted the public’s strong support for maintaining historic character.

Mr. Silenus stated that the commission had not approved all proposed changes and that both he and the commission opposed the automatic-approval clause. He explained the intention was to move toward voluntary compliance, similar to recent changes in Kent. Mr. Silenus and others also raised concerns about unnecessary delays due to design suggestions that were not required under the guidelines.

Mr. Finney recommended that the Design Review Commission review the proposed ordinance revisions before Council acted. Several committee members questioned how better oversight and communication could prevent delays for new businesses, citing a recent case in which a business owner experienced significant confusion and setbacks.

Further discussion focused on improving communication, clarifying timelines, and possibly providing applicants with written guidance. Several members agreed that communication failures—rather than code deficiencies—were often the root cause of delays.

Mr. Wood suggested sending the ordinance to the Committee of the Whole while continuing to work on the disputed section, but Mr. Calfee and Mr. Kairis opposed advancing it before resolving the concerns. Ms. Wood and Ms. Michael were for moving the item forward, but Mr. Calfee was against it. Mr. Kairis used his authority as an ex-officio member to vote against moving the item forward, preventing the ordinance from advancing.

- The item was left in committee.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

Cheryl Wood, Chairperson
Community & Economic Development