



**Ravenna City Council
Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
July 13, 2026**

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

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

Also attending the meeting: Mayor Frank Seman; Police Chief, Jake Smallfield; Service Director, Tim Contant; Finance Director, Tami Lorence; Interim Council Clerk, Cindy Kaderle; Larry Silenius, Cliff Soudil, Barbara Niemiller, Cynthia Miller, Peter Martin, Mike Bogo, Carlee Krause, Trisha Krause

Planning Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:59 P.M. by member, Tim Calfee

The first item was Legal Consulting and Workshop; Bricker. Graydon and Wyatt

Ms. Laudato explained that the first item was a proposed legal consulting agreement and workshop with Bricker Graydon regarding data center regulations. She explained that the opportunity was brought forward by Mr. Kairis and would allow the City to work with legal counsel specializing in data center development regulations. Ms. Laudato stated that the goal was to ensure the City's zoning language is legally defensible and protects the City's interests. The proposed cost for the service was \$8,000, which would include legal consulting and a customized workshop.

Mr. Kairis explained that he became interested in the service after attending a workshop related to economic development tax incentives and speaking with attorney Jeff Harris of Bricker Graydon. During those conversations, data centers were discussed, along with the need for a workshop to educate Council members, board members, and commissions on municipal legal topics such as ordinances, resolutions, public records, and open meetings requirements. Mr. Kairis noted that the firm could customize the workshop rather than provide a standard presentation.

Ms. Michael asked whether the City had considered partnering with the Township to share costs. Ms. Laudato and Mr. Kairis explained that the firm could not represent both entities on the same matter but that the Township could contract separately if desired.

Ms. Michael supported moving forward, stating that the City needs specialized guidance on data centers and other emerging issues to protect residents and make informed decisions.

Mr. Calfee questioned the scope of the workshop and how the \$8,000 fee would be applied, noting the attorney's hourly rate.

Mr. Kairis explained that the firm would customize the workshop and that the estimated cost was not expected to reach the full amount.

- The item was moved forward.

The second item was rezoning Reed Memorial Library Parcels to C-1.

Ms. Laudato addressed rezoning Reed Memorial Library parcels from R-4 residential and Central Business District, to C-1 commercial. She explained that the request originally came before the Planning Commission in 2025 and was unanimously approved. Council previously delayed action due to legal concerns, but the recommendation was to move forward with the rezoning to correct an issue because the property has functioned as C-1 since approximately 2004.

Cynthia Miller, a nearby property owner, expressed concerns about moving forward while litigation involving the property remained active. She requested that Council table the rezoning until the lawsuits were resolved, stating that the R-4 zoning provides a residential buffer and protects surrounding neighborhoods. Ms. Miller raised concerns that future commercial development could negatively impact nearby residents and argued that changing the zoning could be viewed as spot zoning.

Larry Silenius also requested additional review of the Comprehensive Master Plan before making zoning changes, stating that potential commercial designations near residential neighborhoods should be carefully examined.

Ms. Laudato stated she had contacted Regional Planning Director, Todd Peetz, for clarification regarding the future land use map and whether surrounding neighborhoods were adequately protected. She noted that the Comprehensive Master Plan is a living document and could be amended if necessary.

Committee members discussed that the rezoning would primarily formalize the property's existing use.

Ms. Michael stated that while she wanted additional clarification regarding neighborhood protections, she understood the change would address an existing zoning issue.

Ms. West and Ms. Laudato supported moving the item forward, with the understanding that additional information would be gathered.

- The item was moved forward.

The third item was Space Requirements for Multi-family Units.

Ms. Laudato stated that the current code is vague because it only references "livable space" without defining specific requirements. She proposed reviewing standards from other communities, including minimum square footage requirements, dumpster and garbage enclosure requirements, and possible management requirements for absentee property owners.

Ms. Michael shared positive feedback from a police officer regarding the City's neighborhood cleanup efforts and supported stronger multifamily housing standards. She stated that clear regulations could help protect neighborhoods, renters, and property values.

Ms. Laudato explained that the goal was not to prevent affordable housing but to establish objective standards that the Planning Commission could apply consistently. She suggested requiring owners who live outside the area to have a local management contact to address maintenance concerns. Ms. Laudato planned to bring back a more detailed proposal at a future meeting.

- The item was for discussion only.

The fourth item was Design Review Commission (DRC) Conflict of Interest.

Ms. Laudato stated that recent events caused her to reconsider whether business owners within the Historic District should serve as voting members of the DRC due to potential conflicts when reviewing competing businesses or neighboring properties.

Mr. Kairis clarified that the discussion involved property owners within the Historic District and questioned whether residential property owners should be treated differently.

Committee members discussed the distinction between residential and commercial property ownership.

Larry Silenius stated that he believed previous situations involving signs and approvals demonstrated a potential conflict of interest for business owners serving on the DRC. He supported reviewing the membership requirements.

Cynthia Miller questioned how a private dispute and video presentation had been brought before Council and expressed concerns that the discussion was prompted by a specific incident.

Mr. Kairis explained that public delegations are open to residents and that individuals have the right to present information.

Ms. Laudato clarified that there was no planned effort or “ambush” and that the purpose of the discussion was to review DRC guidelines, not focus on a specific individual.

Ms. West redirected the discussion back to the purpose of the agenda item, which was determining whether DRC guidelines should be reconsidered.

Committee members agreed that the issue warranted further review.

Mr. Kairis stated that any changes would require specific language amendments rather than a general concept.

Ms. Laudato agreed to continue researching and bring proposed language forward at a future meeting.

The Committee decided to keep the matter in committee and continue discussion at a later date.

- The item was for discussion only.

Management Update

Mayor Seman noted that reviewing the DRC requirements could affect other membership qualifications, including professional requirements and residency standards. He suggested additional review before making changes.

Ms. Michael suggested that individuals with specialized expertise, such as architects, could potentially participate without serving as voting members if conflicts existed.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

**Carmen Laudato, Chairperson
Planning Committee**