

STILLWATER PLANNING COMMISSION SUMMARY
REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 6TH, 2025
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OKLAHOMA OPEN MEETING
LAW, THE AGENDA WAS POSTED January 2ND, 2026 IN THE
MUNICIPAL BUILDING AT 723 SOUTH LEWIS STREET

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jana Phillips, Chair
Riley Williams, Vice Chair
Mark Prather, Member
Mike Shanahan, Member
David Peters, Member

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Kim Payne, Assistant City Attorney
Henry Bibelheimer, Senior City Planner
David Barth, Development Services Director
Alexandria Holle-Maged, Administrative Assistant

Staff Absent

Joshua Brown, Project Coordinator

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER.

Chair Phillips called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

2. GENERAL ORDERS

- a. Review and possible approval of an alternative compliance for building facade material/symmetry for property addressed as 229 S. Knoblock in the Form Based Code Transect 6 (T6) district.

Mr. Henry Bibelheimer, Sr. Planner presents staff report on the proposed remodeling of the former Marble Slab Creamery into a bank.

Mr. Bibelheimer states findings:

- The current Form-Based Code requires street-facing facades to be symmetric and prohibits "blank walls," requiring active windows or doors along the frontage.
- The existing building features a centered door with symmetrical windows on either side.
- The proposed remodel maintains the centered door but replaces the right-hand windows with an ATM and a night dropbox.

Commissioner Prather asked staff to clarify how this request was distinguishable from a true "blank wall" scenario. Discussion is held regarding the concern that approving the request might unintentionally set a precedent for "inactive facades" in other areas.

Mr. Bibelheimer responded that while a "blank wall" is typically a solid, featureless surface like a jail wall, this proposal maintained intentionality; and states the facade remained broken up by the ATM, the dropbox, and the surrounding materials, which provided a focal point rather than a solid wall.

Mr. Austin Drum, 508 S Boston Tulsa OK, Architect with Inventure comes to speak on the following:

- Stated that they were looking at some alternative design ideas such as adding a window over the ATM area.

- Explained that the design was driven by the bank's internal program, which includes a hospitality space for OSU students to study.

Chair Phillips asked the architect if they had considered placing the ATM inside a 24-hourglass vestibule to preserve the existing glass facade. Mr. Drum responds that a vestibule would consume too much interior space designated for student study areas; noted that meeting ADA requirements for a vestibule on the sloping sidewalk would be difficult; and argued that the exterior ATM was safer because a user would not be trapped in a single-entry room with someone behind them.

Chair Phillips countered that ADA compliance is still achievable even if it requires more space; also noted that regarding safety, an argument could be made for either side; while the applicant preferred the "method to run" outside, believes a user might actually feel "more exposed" on the exterior sidewalk.

Vice Chair Williams then suggested that a "spandrel" or transom window be added above the ATM to match the height of the windows on the opposite side. Mr. Drum agreed this was architecturally feasible.

Chair Phillips asked about the specific materials shown in the rendering. Mr. Drum identified them as wood-look panels and a vinyl-on-metal graphic for the bank branding.

Chair Phillips invites staff to present alternatives

Mr. Bibelheimer presents the findings and alternatives, which are:

1. Accept findings and approve the façade/design as presented for alternative compliance with the Form Based Code.
2. Deny the request for an alternative design as presented.
3. Table the request to a future meeting.

Commissioner Peters noted that the ATM unit appeared to be roughly the same size as the windows on the left side of the door; and asked if the ATM could be shifted to allow for symmetrical windows surrounding the door.

Mr. Drum explained that interior clearances and a remote Fire Department Connection (FDC) limited the placement.

Vice Chair Williams moved to approve the application with the stipulation of adding a window above to ATM to match the symmetry of the other side. Commissioner Peters seconds.

Roll Call:	Phillips	Williams	Prather	Shanahan	Peters
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Time: 18 minutes

3. PUBLIC HEARING

- a. Receive public comment regarding a Text Amendment to Stillwater City Code Chapter 23, Land Development Code, Article I General Provisions, Section 23-7, Definitions; Article V, Use Categories and Limitations, Division 1, Generally, Section 23-96, Definitions; and Article VI, Land Use Classifications, Division 3, Residential Districts, Section 23-140, RMI

(Multi-Family Intermediate) District, and Section 23-141 RMU (Multi-Family Urban) District.

Mr. Bibelheimer presents staff's report which seeks to reclassify fraternity and sorority houses from a general term to a "use" within the code. Key proposed changes include:

- Definition Update: Identifying houses as organizations recognized by a university chapter.
- Setbacks: Establishing consistent 5-foot or 15-foot side-yard setbacks in RMU districts to match RMI standards.
- Design Standards: Requiring a "residential appearance," including front porches, 50% brick or stone masonry on facades, and specific landscaping minimums (one tree and ten shrubs per 30 linear feet).
- Height Restrictions: Requiring a height "step-down" to two stories when a structure is within 30 feet of a single-family residential district.

Chair Phillips raised concerns regarding the provision allowing houses built before 2025 to be rebuilt or enlarged without conforming to new standards; and suggested it would allow owners to bypass new requirements indefinitely.

Mr. Bibelheimer acknowledged the point and suggested the language could be revised.

Discussion is held regarding that while current structures are grandfathered, any future rebuild or enlargement should be required to meet the new compliance standards; questioned the decision to place landscaping requirements within the "Use" definition rather than the dedicated Landscaping Section of the city code; and asked how a developer would know where to find the correct criteria.

Mrs. Kim Payne, Asst. City Attorney explained the city is moving toward a "one-stop-shop" model where all requirements for a specific use are in one place.

Chair Phillips asked if Greek houses would be exempt from the city's standard landscaping "point system." Mr. Bibelheimer confirmed they would be.

Chair Phillips replied that this is not "industry standard" and expressed concern that it would be confusing for developers who expect to find landscaping rules in the landscaping section.

David Barth, Development Services Director, explained that the current landscaping ordinance is based on a point system that allows developers to meet requirements solely by "putting down so"; noted that for massive structures near the campus, want to ensure higher quality landscaping than what the current system permits; and while these requirements could have been added to the existing landscaping section, state that doing so, would have required a massive overhaul of that portion of the code, which is already scheduled for an eight-month revision process.

Mr. Barth continued that the current goal is to consolidate all requirements for a specific zoning district or use into one section to eliminate the need for cross-referencing; and the current code is "complicated and confusing" due to conflicting multi-location mentions and that the city intends to make the process easier for developers.

Chair Phillips suggested that the most professional and least confusing "housekeeping" method would be to leave the specific Greek housing rules in the new section but add a reference in the general landscaping section directing users to the specific requirements.

Mr. Bibelheimer agreed that the language could be clarified to ensure developers realize these new rules override the standard point system; and further noted that this eight-month period would serve as a "test pilot" for this new method of measuring landscaping.

Chair Phillips opens the public hearing and asks if anyone would like to speak in favor of the item; none respond. Chair Phillips asks if there is anyone that wishes to speak in to speak in opposition; none respond. Chair Phillips asks for findings and alternatives.

Mr. Bibelheimer presents findings and alternatives.

Findings:

1. The proposed text amendment updates how the City regulates fraternity or sorority houses.
2. The proposed text amendment updates the definition of fraternity or sorority house and moves the definition to the use categories.
3. The side setback for fraternity and sorority houses in the RMU zoning district is proposed to be reduced to align with the side yard setback requirements in RMI.
4. Design standards for fraternity and sorority houses are proposed to be incorporated into the RMI and RMU district, to ensure a quality residential design.

Alternatives:

1. Accept findings and recommend that the City Council approve the proposed Text Amendment as presented.
2. Find that additional information or discussion is needed prior to making a recommendation and table the request to a future Planning Commission meeting.
3. Find that the Text Amendment is not needed and do not recommend that the City Council approve the request.

Mr. Bibelheimer adds the alternative to conditionally approve the text amendment with discussed modifications.

Commissioner Prather expressed an inclination toward conditional approval but sought clarification on the landscaping provisions.

Discussion is held that the Commission was generally satisfied with the proposed landscaping language, provided that a future update to the general landscape code would include a specific reference back to these new requirements for sororities and fraternities.

Mr. Bibelheimer agreed that this was the intended direction.

Chair Phillips reiterated that the intent of the "grandfathering" language found in sections 23-140 and 23-141 (E7) should be to protect current structures as they exist, while requiring any future modifications or rebuilds to comply with the new code standards.

The Commission debated whether simply striking Section E7 entirely would achieve this goal.

Ms. Payne noted that "grandfathering" for existing structures is often automatic under general code principles.

Chair Phillips suggested that if Section E7 were removed, any existing structure would remain in compliance as-is, but any future construction or rebuild would be forced to meet the new standards. The Commission and staff agreed that striking E7 on both sections appeared to satisfy the Commission's requirements.

Mr. Bibelheimer presented the option to table the item to allow for refined wording.

Vice Chair Williams moved to table to item to the January 27th Planning Commission, Commissioner Peters seconds.

Roll Call:	Phillips	Williams	Prather	Shanahan	Peters
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Time: 28 minutes

4. MEETING SUMMARY FOR REVIEW AND POSSIBLE ACTION.

- a. Regular meeting summary of December 16th, 2025.

Chair Phillips asks if there are any changes and/or additions; none respond.

Vice Chair Williams moved to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Shanahan seconds.

Roll Call:	Phillips	Williams	Prather	Shanahan	Peters
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Time: 1 minute

4. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS FROM STAFF, PLANNING COMMISSIONERS OR CITY ATTORNEY FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:

- a. Next Regular Meeting is January 27th, 2025.

5. ADJOURN

ADJOURNMENT. This regular meeting of the Stillwater Planning Commission was called for adjournment by Commissioner Prather, seconded by Commissioner Shanahan at approximately 6:18PM on January 6th, 2026. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held Tuesday, January 27th, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the City Commission Hearing Room, Municipal Building, 723 South Lewis Street.

Prepared by Alexandria Holle-Maged, Administrative Assistant
Reviewed by Cindy Gibson, Administrative Services Manager

Approved by - 
Stillwater Planning Commission