city of south hutchinson
2 south main
south hutchinson, kansas 67505
620-663-7104

05/04/2026 @ 6:00 pm at city hall

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Erin Cokeley____Mark Estes____Jim Chastain____Marge Bryant_____
Pam Crank____Kraig Blackwelder____Chad Duvall____Mike Blackburn_____

B. Approval of Agenda (additions/deletions)

C. Approval of minutes for April 6th, 2026

Motion Second Vote

D. Discussion Items

1. Data Centers

E. Public Hearings

1. Motion to open public hearing for Case 2026-02 for a rezoning district amendment permit from C-2 General Commercial Zoning District to R-1A Single-Family Residential

Motion Second Vote

Motion to close public hearing for Case 2026-02

Motion Second Vote

Recommendations to council-

Motion Second Vote

2. Motion to open public hearing for Case 2026-03 for a zoning district amendment permit from I-2 Medium Industrial District to C-2 General Commercial Zoning District

Motion Second Vote

Motion to close public hearing for Case 2026-03

Motion Second Vote

Recommendations to council-

Motion Second Vote

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F. Action Items

1. Motion to open the discussion on moving the June 2026 Planning Commission date

Motion Second Vote

Motion to move the June 2026 Planning Commission date to _____ from 1 June 2026

Motion Second Vote

Motion to close the discussion on moving the June 2026 Planning Commission date

Motion Second Vote

G. Planning/Zoning Administrator Report

After talking with Chair Commissioner Blackburn, I will begin looking into creating bylaws for the Planning Commission review at our next meeting in June.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Motion Second Vote

Next regularly scheduled June 1st, 2026

Prepared by Paige Harman Administrative Assistant

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The South Hutchinson Planning Commission met in regular session. The following members were present:

- Erin Cokeley
- Mark Estes
- Jim Chastain
- Kraig Blackwelder
- Chad Duvall
- Mike Blackburn
- Pam Crank

Marge Bryant was not present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA (ADDITIONS/DELETIONS)

Planning and Zoning Administrators:

- Administrative Assistant Paige Harman stated the agenda was amended to add in the topic of data centers under discussion items and the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair added to action items.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of minutes for March 2nd, 2026

Commissioner Chastain moved, seconded by Commissioner Blackwelder.

Vote: 7-0, Motion Carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Public Comment:

- Mayor Kyle Cokeley talked about a possible data center coming to the area right outside of City of South Hutchinson ETJ. Located across from the Agri Center on the other side of the highway. Cokeley talked about three items to think about when it comes to data centers and those were, sound pollution, growth potential for the city now being limited, and light pollution.
- City Administrator Jeff Schenk discussed the city looking to host a town hall in the month of May to have public input on the topic of data centers. Discussion on bringing a data to Reno County has started and they are looking outside of Hutchinson by Buhler or located right outside of our ETJ. The objective of the city is to protect the K-96 corridor and the growth of the city. City staff are looking at our current zoning regulations and need to start the conversations with the planning commission on establishing limits and boundaries to data centers in our regulations. The city needs to establish a buffer zone and limit the property line of any data center to 40 or 50 kg. The data center they are looking to be brought in would be the size of an Amazon warehouse

and would house around 60 employees. The data center would also bring other businesses to the area, such as technology-based businesses. The future Evergy plant is what is a draw for the data center to our region. The scale of a data center this large would bring in around 3.5 million dollars in Franchise Fees if it was built city or annexed. Some additional information about data centers is that they require a lot of security and the noise produced from the generators on site can range from 50kg to 250kg depending on its size.

Commissioner Discussion:

- Commissioner Estes asked Mayor Cokeley the location of the proposed data center to the region. Estes asked City Administrator Schenk what a data center looks like, what would the influence be on employment to the area, and if it would utilize cooling towers.
- Commissioner Chastain asked Mayor Cokeley if the property outside of the city's ETJ was North or South of the Agricenter.
- Commissioner Crank asked City Administrator Schenk if they discussed any other locations besides the two, he mentioned and if there is an upside to data centers. If there is an upside to data centers, who does it benefit or does not benefit any of us.
- Commissioner Blackburn asked City Administrator Schenk if the data center looking to come to the area decided they wanted to come here because of the power plant Evergy is building in our ETJ.
- Commissioner Cokeley made the comment that a data center would not benefit us in franchise fees because it is not in our city but would be built in the county.
- Commissioner Blackwelder asked City Administrator Schenk if there was property available closer to the Evergy plant being built and if the city would collect any sales tax revenue from the data center. Blackwelder made the comment that it would not 100% bring local jobs in.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Case No. 2026-02 for a zoning district amendment permit from C-2 General Commercial to R-1A Single-Family Residential

Commissioner Duvall moved, seconded by Commissioner Blackburn.

Vote: 7-0, Motion Carried.

Applicant Presentation:

- The applicant explained that the house in question has been vacant for several years and has a desire to remodel it into something nice but also removes the blight to the area. His brother has remodeled two other houses and would be helping him with this project. The house does have structural issues and would need the bathroom rebuilt in but believes it can be redone and the foundation repaired. This house will be his first project home of doing a remodel. He is planning

on doing a rehaul of the garage to have the doors face the alleyway and not the backyard. He is looking into redoing the foundation in sections by replacing them with slabs.

- Answers to Commissioners' questions:
  - Yes, there is a plan to remodel the garage and add better support for the overall structure.
  - The plan is to resale the house once it is completed.
  - Starting with a slab for the foundation.
  - Realtor did not explain in-depth that the house was zoned as commercial and not residential. Did explain it had abatement letters, but that was it.
  - I paid $20,000 for the house, and plan to put in $45,000 into remodeling it.
  - Did not have an official inspection done on the house as it was his brother who went out to do the inspection. However, his brother does have experience in fixing and repairing foundations.

Planning and Zoning Administrators:

- Public Works Superintendent, Matt Mock stated it had been a couple of years ago that the house was hit by a vehicle that took out the bathroom to the back of the house.
- Administrative Assistant Paige Harman explained the property has been zoned as commercial since 1998 on the zoning map. The house was built before zoning districts were recognized, and in 1998 the city passed a zoning map designating that property as commercial. The house was allowed as it was granted under a non-conforming status. However, that status was lost when the house became vacant. The house has been vacant since March of 2022. Harman was able to pull water meter records to verify the month and year it has been vacated. The house must now be rezoned to a residential district for the owner to pull building permits or be converted into a commercial use to fit the current zoning it is in.

Commissioner Discussion:

- Commissioner Cokeley asked if Mr. Beachy planned to remodel the garage and what his plan was if the foundation turned out to be in worse condition than he planned for. Cokeley asked who did the inspection on the house and asked the commissioner what they thought the area would be like in 5 years if they rezoned away from commercial.
- Commissioner Crank asked why the house is zoned as commercial.
- Commissioner Chastain asked if Mr. Beachy was planning to rent or resale the home after it was remodeled. Chastain asked to confirm that the budget for the remodel of the home was $45,000 and if there were any other houses in the surrounding area of the home.

- Commissioner Blackburn asked when the car had hit the house that took out the bathroom. Blackburn made the statement that once a block foundation starts to have issues it can be hard to fix and repair.
- Commissioner Blackwelder made the statement of does it make sense to keep the lot as commercial due to the size of the lot. Blackwelder asked the applicant how much he paid for the house. Blackwelder asked if the realtor informed him of everything the house had tied to it, like the code enforcement letters and the zoning of the property.
- Commissioner Estes made the statement the property was zoned as commercial to become a commercial property, not be rezoned to residential to stay with a house on the property.
- Commissioner Duvall made the statement that with the size of the property there would not be a lot of parking spaces available if it became a commercial lot.

Motion to Close Public Hearing:
Commissioner Chastain moved, seconded by Commissioner Blackwelder.
Vote: 7-0, Motion Carried.
Recommendation to City Council: Approval of rezoning to R-1A Single Family
Commissioner Crank moved, seconded by Commissioner Duvall.
Vote: 6-1, Motion Carried with Commissioner Estes opposing the approval.
Case No. 2026-01 for a conditional use permit in C-2 General Commercial for a business to be used as a multiple use building allowing an apartment to be located inside the business
Commissioner Blackburn moved, seconded by Commissioner Chastain.
Vote:7-0, Motion Carried.
Applicant Presentation:

- Applicant did not show to the Planning Commission Meeting.

Planning and Zoning Administrators:

- Administrative Assistant Paige Harman provided information from the application that was submitted. Harman stated that the planning commission in the past allowed this as long as the business remained open and operational but also followed all building/fire codes. Currently there is someone living in the apartment that was built in the business and there would need to be a certification of occupancy issued for the apartment, but also there needs to be another fire and final inspection due to that not being done when the space was converted into an apartment.
    - Harman answered questions from commissioners:
        - Harman stated that the business sells golf items, skateboard items, Legos, dungeon and dragons' items, and does play nights throughout the week.

  - Harman stated that if the planning commission did not approve, we would let the business know they can appeal and if denied again that it would be in violation as it does not have a certification of occupancy for that use.
  - Harman stated that yes, you can set the condition for a timeline for those items to be completed by.
- Public Works Superintendent, Matt Mock, added to say that yes at one point someone was living in the camper behind the business.

Commissioner Discussion:

- Commissioner Cokely asked what happens if the planning commission does not approve the request.
- Commissioner Duvall asked if a deadline can be set for the conditions that are required if approved.
- Commissioner Chastain asked what the business is.
- Commissioner Crank asked what the options for conditions are.
- Commissioner Blackburn asked if they would need a firewall if there was not one already.
- Commissioner Estes asked if someone was living in the camper behind the building at one point.

Motion to Close Public Hearing:

Commissioner Chastain moved, seconded by Commissioner Blackwelder.

Vote: 7-0, Motion Carried.

Recommendation to City Council: Approval of the conditional use permit with three conditions to be met in 30 days from the approval of city council. Those conditions were to get a fire inspection, final inspection, and certificate of occupancy for the apartment. The apartment would be allowed to follow residential building codes for inside the apartment building.

Commissioner Chastain moved, seconded by Commissioner Blackwelder.

Vote: 5-2, Motion Carried with Commissioner Blackwelder and Crank opposing the approval.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Motion to open nominations for the Chair of the Planning Commission

Commissioner Crank moved, seconded by Commissioner Blackburn.

Vote: 7-0, Motion Carried.

Commissioner Discussion:

- Commissioner Chastain nominated Commissioner Crank for the Chair.
- Commissioner Cokeley nominated Commissioner Blackwelder for the Chair.

- Commissioner Crank declined the nomination and instead nominated Commissioners Blackwelder and Duvall.
- Commissioner Duvall declined the nomination.
- Commissioner Chastain nominated Commissioner Blackburn for the Chair.
- Commissioner Blackburn stated he would be more inclined to accept the Vice Chair position over the Chair.
- Commissioner Blackwelder stated he would be more inclined to accept the Vice Chair position over the Chair.

Motion to close nominations for the Chair of the Planning Commission
Commissioner Crank moved, seconded by Commissioner Blackwelder
Vote: 7-0, Motion Carried.

Motion to select and approve Commissioner Blackburn as Chair
Commissioner Chastain moved, seconded by Commissioner Crank
Vote: 7-0, Motion Carried.

2. Motion to open nominations for the Vice Chair of the Planning Commission
Commissioner Crank moved, seconded by Commissioner Blackburn
Vote: 7-0, Motion Carried.

Motion to close nominations for the Vice Chair of the Planning Commission
Commissioner Crank moved, seconded by Commission Estes
Vote: 7-0, Motion Carried.

Motion to select and approve Commissioner Blackwelder as Vice Chair
Commissioner Chastain moved, seconded by Commissioner Crank
Vote: 7-0, Motion Carried.

PLANNING AND ZONING ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

PEC is currently putting together a contract to send over to the City for review and signature. Once we have the contract reviewed and signed, we will begin the comprehensive plan. Possibly looking in June to start.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Blackburn moved, seconded by Commissioner Blackwelder.
Vote: 7-0, Motion Carried.

Minutes Prepared By:
Paige Harman, Administrative Assistant