Planning Commission February 3, 2026

Meeting Minutes

February 3, 2026, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM.

Pledge Of Allegiance

Disclosures

Approval Of The Minutes

Planning Commission Meeting January 20, 2026

Public Input/ Reports

(Limited to three (3) minutes) Non-Agenda Items

Prior to moving into agenda items, staff noted that a combined Open Meeting Act training would be required for all committees, including the Planning Commission and the Trail Commission. Ciera advised that the training was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, March 31st, as it falls on a fifth Tuesday with no Planning Commission or Town Council meeting scheduled. She indicated she would confirm the date with Nancy and send notice to all relevant parties. The training was expected to last no longer than one hour and would be held at the standard meeting time of 1:00 PM, with a Zoom connection available for remote attendees.

Agenda Items

Public Hearing: Aspen Meadows Christmas Tree Neighborhood and Nordic Center Preliminary Plat

Greg Sant, Planning and Building Administrator.

The Chair opened the public hearing and confirmed there were no written responses received by staff. One member of the public came forward to address the Commission.

Martin Tidwell, of 182 North Red Fox Circle, began by congratulating the applicant on moving the project forward to this next step. He expressed his appreciation for their efforts and noted his excitement about the development. However, he raised a concern regarding potential traffic on Steam Engine Drive. He referenced Land Management Code Section 953(b)(6), which places responsibility on the applicant to ensure the project will not result in undue traffic congestion or traffic hazards.

Mr. Tidwell noted that when reviewing the maps and staff report, he did not see a commitment for when Birch Road would be started or completed. He also observed that the new neighborhood would include resort-style activities such as a Nordic Center and potentially ski lifts, and expressed concern about routing resort-style traffic through an existing residential neighborhood. He recalled the heavy snow event of 2022–2023, during which very high berms and narrow roads along Steam Engine Drive created dangerous conditions, particularly near driveways and intersections that abut the road.

Mr. Tidwell also acknowledged that the staff report had raised concerns about ingress and egress for emergency vehicles, which he said was valid and should be taken into account. He formally recommended that a traffic study be conducted and that a timetable commitment for Birch Road be established, specifically for non-residential traffic access. He clarified that he understood construction and residential traffic would be expected, but that his primary concern was the routing of resort-style activities through the neighborhood.

There were no additional public comments and no comments from online attendees. The Chair closed the public hearing.

Administrative Action: Aspen Meadows Christmas Tree Neighborhood and Nordic Center Preliminary Plat

Greg Sant, Planning and Building Administrator.

Greg Sant opened the administrative action discussion by expressing his genuine enthusiasm for the preliminary plat and the Aspen Meadows proposal. He shared that when he was hired approximately a year and a half ago, he had been unaware of the Aspen Meadows project, and discovering it on his first day had been an exciting revelation. He remarked that seeing the first development come forward was a significant milestone and would be great for the town.

Greg provided historical context and indicated the applicant had compiled an impressive set of exhibits — among the best he had seen in his experience with master plan developments — noting that the applicant had thought through a wide range of issues upfront, including water, skiing infrastructure, and lifts. He highlighted that the proposed preliminary plat closely aligned with the general plan amendment approved in 2024 as part of the development agreement, meaning a general plan review or amendment was not required.

Access and Emergency Egress

Greg discussed the issue of secondary access and egress. He noted that he had consulted with Town Marshal Dan Benson regarding the approximately one-mile dead-end road leading to the Nordic Center. Both Greg and Bret acknowledged that "Birch Road to Nowhere" consistently arose as a topic in discussions of traffic, access, and even water looping. While Birch Road was not passable during winter, it was passable in summer and was slated for development. Greg acknowledged the difficulty of placing firm timelines on a development of this scale, noting that the development agreement was intentionally structured to react to market conditions. He expressed the view that forcing specific deadlines — such as requiring Birch Road to be completed by a certain date — could potentially jeopardize the project.

Greg noted that a general rule of thumb in the fire code is that once 30 dwelling units are reached, a secondary access is required. He stated that this preliminary plat

contained only 18 residential units. While there was also a commercial component with a parking lot and a building, fire hydrants and appropriate fire apparatus turnaround spaces were planned. Marshal Benson had indicated he did not feel secondary access was required at this stage, particularly given that Birch Road was expected to be completed within the next three to five years. Greg noted that temporary, non-paved turnarounds — capable of supporting a 75,000-pound fire truck — had been added at key dead-end locations on the revised preliminary plat, including at the West Hut dead end and at the Birch Road tie-in point.

A commissioner asked when the revised plat changes were made. Greg confirmed they had been received on Friday, just prior to the meeting, after he had submitted his staff report. He explained that following a lengthy discussion with Bret and himself, Flint had agreed to add notation on the plat referencing Birch Road and its future connection point, along with the turnarounds at the relevant dead ends. No lots, road alignments, or other substantive elements had been changed.

Traffic Concerns

Commissioner Gary raised significant concerns about traffic on Steam Engine Drive, referencing at least three incidents involving cars sliding off the road at an upper turn near Tim and Kelly Marshall's property, even in a year of relatively modest snowfall. He suggested the town consider installing K-rails at that turn to prevent further incidents. He expressed concern not so much about additional residential traffic, but particularly about the commercial uses being added, noting the difficulty in projecting what kind of traffic volume that would generate. He emphasized the importance of conducting a UDOT traffic study as soon as possible.

Greg clarified that UDOT does not conduct traffic studies directly but rather requires them to be done. He noted that traffic studies had already been completed for Hidden Springs and another development at MLV, both at UDOT's request, given their connection to State Route 143. He confirmed that those studies had been provided to Flint and his team, and that the applicant had agreed to begin the traffic study process now.

A commissioner asked whether the traffic study area had defined boundaries. Greg indicated that the engineering firm Horace would be engaged to conduct the study, and he expressed his intent to be involved in establishing the parameters. He acknowledged a limitation, noting that UDOT's primary concern was the intersection with SR-143 — specifically, when acceleration, deceleration, or turn lanes might be needed — and that they were generally less concerned with internal town roads like Steam Engine Drive. Greg acknowledged the importance of ensuring that Steam Engine Drive was also included within the study's scope for the town's own concerns, particularly regarding commercial traffic, and committed to being part of that discussion.

Town Attorney Bret weighed in, noting that based on his understanding of such traffic studies, the key output would be trips per hour. He pointed out that all generated trips from the development would travel the full length of Steam Engine Drive, making that figure the critical data point. He acknowledged that there were some safety improvements that could potentially be made, but ultimately the traffic volume would be what it would be. He noted that routing construction traffic through Birch Road rather than Steam Engine Drive had already been discussed and agreed upon as a mitigation measure, which would eliminate a significant category of potential impact. Bret summarized that the remaining question would center on the number of additional daily trips, the safety impact of those trips, and the potential impact on neighborhood character.

A commissioner noted the importance of also understanding road weight limits and the types of vehicles expected on Steam Engine Drive, as well as accounting for the topographical changes and visibility challenges that already exist along that corridor. The commissioner emphasized the desire for the town to plan proactively rather than react to conditions after they develop.

The Chair raised a question about whether the traffic study should encompass not just the Aspen Meadows development, but also other developments accessing Steam Engine Drive. A commissioner agreed but cautioned that the scope of the study should be limited to the applicant's own impact, as it would be unfair to require them to analyze traffic from unrelated developments. He indicated that the same standard should be applied to other applicants independently.

Martin Tidwell returned to the microphone to reiterate his concern about the traffic impact during heavy snow years, such as 2022–2023, when 9-to-10-foot berms rendered Steam Engine Drive potentially dangerous. He acknowledged this might be difficult to analyze formally but urged the team to consider that scenario as a priority in the scope of the traffic study.

Construction Traffic

Regarding construction traffic routing, Greg and Bret confirmed that all heavy construction traffic for the Aspen Meadows project would be directed up Birch Road to Nowhere rather than through Steam Engine Drive. A commissioner asked whether this arrangement would also extend to smaller construction vehicles and laborers, and Bret confirmed this was the intent that had been discussed with Flint. The Chair then asked Flint whether routing all construction traffic up Birch Road might slow down development timelines along that corridor, to which Flint responded that it would not, noting that Aspen Meadows had been phasing improvements to Birch Road since fall 2021, completing stretches and grading sections each year, with continued improvements planned for 2026. He noted the road would likely be accessible approximately nine months of the year rather than twelve.

Flint elaborated on the four categories of construction traffic that would be seen in Brian Head. The first category involved heavy equipment mobilization, which occurs once in spring and once in fall. He confirmed that all heavy equipment had already been mobilized and demobilized through the Birch Road area, including allowing other contractors to use that access point as a courtesy. He described three existing turnaround points along Birch Road to facilitate safe movement of large vehicles. The second category involved mid-level equipment such as utility vehicles, which would also use Birch Road where applicable. The third category related to concrete work, noting that the project intended to transition to on-site concrete batch plant operations, significantly reducing the number of large concrete truck trips on town roads. He also noted that trees were chipped and reused on-site and that aggregate was harvested on-site, eliminating those categories of truck traffic entirely. The fourth category was typical homebuilding trade traffic — electricians, framers, HVAC contractors — which would continue to access the site via paved roads as normal, as redirecting those vehicles up

Birch Road would add significant time to their workdays and could not realistically be mandated for third-party homeowners.

Water and Sewer

Greg noted that he had consulted with Jared, the new Public Works Director, who expressed comfort with the water plan as presented. The project's exhibits included a detailed master plan for water infrastructure, with phased well development tied to demand thresholds. Pressure zones were addressed in the exhibits, and specific compliance with town standards would be confirmed through construction drawings reviewed by public works. The Chair noted that the water system was currently designed as a dead end and asked whether it could eventually be looped, for instance, to connect to the top of Old Scout Road. Bret confirmed that the water system was designed to loop in a future phase of the development.

Greg also confirmed that sewer service would use the E1 system already in use throughout the southeast neighborhood, and that this system would extend through Aspen Meadows as well. Jared indicated no concerns with either water or sewer as currently proposed.

Traffic Circle / Roundabout Design

The Chair raised a concern about the traffic circle included within the subdivision design, specifically regarding how snow removal would interact with adjacent private property. He suggested that the design be reviewed with Jared to ensure it would function effectively for snow plows and large trucks, noting that some designs accommodated large vehicles by providing a paved or rigged center apron roughly 12 feet wide. He acknowledged that while the roads would be private, design guidelines for traffic circles were not currently well established in the town's standards. Flint confirmed that the preliminary plat introduced the first of five to six roundabouts planned along the Birch Road corridor and that the team would work closely with Public Works Director Jared on an appropriate design to be presented at a future meeting.

Lot Dimensions and Zoning

Commissioner Ciera raised the issue that lot dimensions had not been included in the preliminary plat materials. Flint acknowledged this and confirmed that dimensions had been reviewed and all lots exceeded the 45-foot frontage minimum required by Brian Head Town. He noted this would be verified and included in the final plat documentation.

A commissioner raised a concern that the property had not yet been rezoned as required under the Land Management Code's transitional zoning provisions, which stated that the property must be rezoned to allow further subdivision. Greg acknowledged this requirement but explained that a zone change requires defined boundaries, which in turn require an approved preliminary plat. He noted that Bret, Flint, and himself were actively working to resolve this sequencing issue and agreed that the rezoning would need to be completed before the final plat was recorded.

Bret acknowledged that the language he had written in the annexation transition zone provisions was not well drafted, and that the sequencing issue created a catch-22: the town council could not approve a zone change on lots that did not yet legally exist. He suggested that the practical solution would be to approve the preliminary plat conditionally, subject to the subsequent rezoning. The Chair and commissioners discussed this approach and agreed it was a workable path forward.

Flint elaborated on the zoning framework for Aspen Meadows, explaining that the development was not based on traditional residential zone classifications such as R-1, R-2, or R-3. Instead, it was built on a vision approved by the town council in December 2023 and an annexation agreement approved in 2024, based on overall density units totaling 1,467. He described the appropriate characterization as "resort mixed use," given that the Christmas Tree Ridge hamlet, commercial Nordic Center building, open space, and resort amenities all fell within Aspen Meadows as an expansion of Brian Head Resort and the ski area. He noted that staff were actively exploring the best administrative path for making the zoning classification transparent and accessible to consumers.

Parking Management and Electronic Signage

Flint presented a rendering from the January 20th Planning Commission packet and the January 27th strategic retreat to illustrate the applicant's vision for parking management.

He explained that electronic signage would be deployed starting at SR-143, allowing visitors to see in real time whether the Aspen Meadows parking lot was open, closed, or full. He described plans to implement a software-based paid parking and reservation system to manage the 150-space parking lot, with the intent of mitigating uncontrolled traffic flow by ensuring visitors could plan their trips in advance and prevent the lot from being overwhelmed.

Flint also provided context on existing neighborhood build-out capacity, noting that Steam Engine Drive's corridor was at only 16.9 percent build-out capacity, making it years or decades away from being at full capacity as a collector road. He noted that collector roads running through neighborhoods at ski areas were common across the country, citing examples such as Sugarbush and Stowe in Vermont, Heavenly's California Lodge access, and Nordic Valley. He characterized the current situation as a temporary, approximately three-year arrangement until Birch Road came online, at which point resort-related traffic would no longer access the development via Steam Engine Drive.

Tabling and Conditions for Return

Greg asked the Commission to identify what they would need to see at the next presentation in order to move toward a decision rather than tabling again. Discussion identified the following outstanding items: a clearly revised preliminary plat showing only the Christmas Tree Ridge subdivision area with lot dimensions included, and a timing update on the traffic study. Flint confirmed that the applicant was not seeking a motion at this meeting and that the intent was purely educational, to keep the Commission informed of progress and allow staff and the applicant to work through the outstanding items together.

> A motion was made to table the Aspen Meadows Christmas Tree Ridge Neighborhood and Nordic Center Preliminary Plat, subject to receipt of a revised preliminary plat with lot dimensions included and timing information on the traffic study. The motion was made by ____ and seconded by ____. The motion carried with all in favor.

Discussion On Future LMC Items To Be Put On Agenda: Parking And Sign Ordinances And Potential Transitional Residential Zoning Locations

Sign Ordinance

The Chair opened discussion on future Land Management Code items to be placed on the agenda, beginning with the sign ordinance. He noted that the town was considering installing an electronic information display at the front entrance to replace the existing map, and expressed the view that the current sign ordinance language was ambiguous and needed to be updated before such a sign was approved. He indicated that provisions addressing electronic signs needed to be clearly defined.

A member of the public, Martin Tidwell, asked how the existing banner that stretches across SR-143 fit within the current sign ordinance. The Chair noted the banner was allowed, though he believed there was a time limit provision. Greg noted that he had not received an application for the banner, and while he did not necessarily object to the lack of an application, he would have preferred that whoever installed it had consulted with him first to confirm compliance. It was noted that the town itself had put up the banner, and the discussion indicated the town should probably be following its own application process.

Greg shared his experience reviewing the sign ordinance in connection with applications at the mall, describing it as excruciating to interpret and apply. He noted that the applicant had submitted two sign applications and appeared to meet every requirement, but that the exercise highlighted how difficult and unclear the ordinance was to use. He also noted that accompanying illustrations that had once helped clarify the ordinance had been removed, which he considered unfortunate.

Commissioners discussed looking at sign ordinances from other towns for reference. The Chair suggested San Simeon Island as a model, though he acknowledged it was a Florida golf community. Greg raised a concern that ordinances designed for warm-weather or flat communities may not translate well to a snow town like Brian Head, particularly given the common guidance to keep signs low — a standard that does not function well in winter when snow accumulation can obscure ground-level signs. Greg

invited commissioners to send him examples of sign ordinances from other ski towns or snow communities that they found effective. The Chair mentioned Crested Butte's Mountain Village as a positive example and noted that Park City had recently updated its sign ordinance as well.

The Commission agreed to prioritize sign ordinance revisions before taking up the parking ordinance.

Transitional Residential Zoning Locations

Greg introduced the topic of potential transitional residential zoning locations, noting that the Town Council had previously rejected an R-2 rezone and general plan amendment on Ridgeview and had asked the Planning Commission to identify locations where such a zoning designation might be appropriate. A commissioner expressed frustration with this approach, suggesting that if the council had specific locations in mind, they should send those suggestions to the Planning Commission rather than asking the commission to identify them independently. Greg acknowledged the commissioner's frustration but reminded the group that the Planning Commission is an advisory body to the council and that it is within the council's purview to request such analysis.

The Chair recalled that the Planning Commission had at one point previously identified approximately ten potential R-2 locations, and suggested that exercise could be revisited. The Commission agreed to leave this item for a later agenda.

Parking Ordinance — ADU and Residential Parking

The Chair raised concerns about the residential parking section of the parking ordinance, particularly as it related to accessory dwelling units. He expressed concern that the current code allowed someone to build an accessory structure with an ADU — such as a garage with a living unit above — without any requirement to eventually build the primary house. He noted that there was no time limit in the code requiring the main house to be constructed, meaning someone could build what was intended as an ADU and simply live in it indefinitely without ever constructing a primary residence.

Greg pushed back somewhat, questioning how this scenario would actually harm the town, noting that a similar situation had already occurred on Spruce, where a

homeowner had been required to include a living unit with their garage construction. He noted a comparable situation at Navajo Trails, where a homeowner had built a large garage with a residence above and was now planning to come back and build a second, larger home — which would require the second structure to be at least twice the size of the first in order to qualify as the primary residence.

The Chair maintained that the intent of permitting ADUs was to give owners a place to live while they built their main house, and that language should be added to establish that the structure was an accessory dwelling unit subject to a primary residence being built. He suggested language requiring that the ADU be occupied for no more than two years before construction of the main house must begin.

A commissioner offered a different perspective, suggesting that as long as any structure built met the town's minimum size requirements and applicable codes, it should be permitted regardless of whether it was designated the main house or the ADU. He noted that if someone later chose to build a larger structure, that would become the primary residence and the original structure would become the ADU, at which point ADU compliance standards would apply. Another commissioner agreed, noting that the rental income implications — specifically the restriction on renting an ADU — would be the most meaningful practical difference between the two designations.

The Chair also flagged a scenario in which someone built a 1,600-square-foot structure, later wished to add a primary residence, and found themselves without enough space on the lot to build a structure that met the 50-percent ADU size limitation. Greg acknowledged this was a legitimate concern, noting that in such cases the owner would need to reduce the footprint and add height — while remaining within the height limits — to achieve compliance.

The discussion also touched on the relationship between the ADU provisions and the broader topics of lot coverage, undisturbed area requirements, driveways, walkways, setbacks, and snow storage. The Chair indicated he wanted the Commission to review how all of these standards interacted to ensure that all required elements could realistically fit on a single lot. He noted that the 25-foot front setback and 20-foot setback on all other sides applied to residential lots and referenced a matrix Greg had prepared during the LMC revisions process. Greg acknowledged that on flat lots these

standards were manageable, but on more challenging terrain they could be very difficult to satisfy simultaneously.

The Chair also expressed broader concern about the visual character and environmental impact of increasingly large homes in Brian Head, noting that 5,000-square-foot homes were now appearing in areas where 1,600-square-foot cabins had once been considered large. He suggested the Commission may want to consider increasing setbacks and establishing stronger undisturbed area requirements to preserve the town's natural character and tree canopy.

Legislative Items — House Bill 184 and Bill 310

The Chair directed commissioners who had not attended the strategic retreat to look up House Bill 184. He described the bill as requiring that property applications be approved within 30 days or the applicant would be free to proceed as they chose, with a minimum setback of only 3 feet regardless of local ordinance. He expressed strong concern that while the bill might function appropriately in high-density urban counties such as Davis, Salt Lake, and Utah County for the purposes of producing affordable housing, it was poorly suited to rural communities like Brian Head. He encouraged commissioners to contact their state legislators with feedback.

A commissioner also referenced Bill 310, which related to a Transportation Utility Fee (TUF), describing it as a fee that would function in practice as a tax. The Chair encouraged commissioners to review that bill as well, noting that the town may be directly affected by it in the near future.

Adjournment

> A motion was made to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting for February 3, 2026. The motion was made by ____ and seconded by ____. The motion carried with all in favor.

The meeting was adjourned.