

**PORT ORFORD PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA  
GABLE CHAMBERS, PORT ORFORD CITY HALL  
REGULAR MEETING  
Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 5:30 PM**

**If unable to join in person, please join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.**

<https://meet.goto.com/815658101>

**You can also dial in using your phone.**

United States (Toll Free): [1 866 899 4679](tel:18668994679)

United States: [+1 \(571\) 317-3166](tel:+15713173166)

**Access Code: 815-658-101**

1. Call to Order
2. Chair Comments
3. Public Comments (On Agenda Items Only)
4. Additions to the Agenda
5. Minutes March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026
6. Discussion Items
  - A. Code Compliance/Enforcement
  - B. Planning Clearance Update/Approved since last meeting
  - C. Planner Public Service Announcement
7. Other Business
  - A. City Planner Comments
  - B. Planning Commission Comments
8. Public Considerations
9. Future Meetings
  - A. May 12<sup>th</sup> @ 5:30
10. Adjourn

**Item (5): PORT ORFORD PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 5:30 PM**

<b>Commission Member</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>City Staff</b>	<b>Present</b>
<i>Chairman Greg Thelen (GT)</i>	Present	<i>Joseph Harrison, Planning Tech. (JH)</i>	Present
<i>Comm. Jerry Boydston (JB)</i>	Present	<i>Crystal Shoji, City Planner (CS)</i>	Present
<i>Comm. Margo Truini (MT)</i>	Present		
<i>Comm. Stephanie Gomes (SG)</i>	Present		
<i>Comm Carol Lawton (CL)</i>	Late (6:06)		

*The minutes were prepared using the video available at:*

1. Call to Order
  - A. Due to technical difficulties, the meeting was delayed in starting. Chair Greg Thelen calls the meeting to order, and the roll call shows Commissioner Lawton is absent, but she is communicating with the Commission and attempting to join virtually.
2. Chair Comments: No votes tonight, just discussion and updates
3. Public Comments (On Agenda Items Only)
4. Additions to the Agenda: None
5. Minutes for the February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026 Meeting
  - A. Adopted by consensus
6. Discussion Items
  - A. Code Compliance/Enforcement
    - i. Chair Thelen gives an update on the previous City Council meeting – the Council approved the recommendations and directed staff to return with a resolution implementing them into the Municipal Code. Chair Thelen took the report Comm Gomes submitted last month and revised it with the City Administrator to make it applicable to the Municipal Code. Comm Gomes reiterates that the main focus right now is on Right of Way and Dark Sky issues. Animal Control may be added as a third enforcement objective, depending on Council directive.

- B. Planning clearances approved since the last meeting:
  - i. None. Partition on Vista is moving forward. In process planning, clearances are a remodel/fix-it ticket on Port Orford Loop and two new developments on Talus. When Talus begins developing waterfront properties, they will be required to provide proof that the retaining walls are still functional or redo them prior to further development.
    - 1. The Planning Commission requests Joseph follow up with ODFW about the retaining wall and the OWRD to see if there is an issue with wells being near Garrison Lake.
    - 2. Lawton arrives at 6:06 pm.
  
- 7. Other Business
  - A. City Planner Comments
  - B. Planning Commission Comments
    - i. Thelen thanks the Commission and Staff for their hard work.
  
- 8. Public Considerations
  
- 9. Future Meetings
  - A. April 14<sup>th</sup> @ 5:30
  
- 10. Adjourn
  - A. Adjourn at 6:15 pm.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chair, Greg Thelen**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Attest:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**City Recorder, Joseph Harrison**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## Item 6(A): Procedure for Outdoor Lighting Complaints

Note: lighting complaints fall under the Outdoor Lighting Code §15.17.30, but enforcement should also be carried out meeting the requirements of the Health and Safety Nuisance Code §8.04, sections 050 through 110. This is because the enforcement language in the Outdoor Lighting Code is not explicit with regard to how communication with the owner of the property that is not in compliance.

1. City receives complaint online or on paper.
2. City Administrator (CA) notifies compliance team of complaint, giving address and nature of complaint.
3. Two members of compliance team go and look, and report findings back to CA.
4. a. CA directs team to make friendly contact with person at property to let them know the property may be in violation of City code, and that official action will be taken in 30 days if violation is not taken care of.  
b. Team also delivers a letter with the same message. (See letter 1)
5. After 30 days, team checks and reports back to CA if violation is abated. *If not:*
6. CA or police officer go to property to check status of complaint. *If verified:*
7. a. CA or police cause an official courtesy notice to be posted on the premises or at the site of the nuisance directing the person responsible to abate the nuisance within 10 days (see notice 1).  
b. CA or police also cause a copy of the courtesy notice to be mailed to the last known address of the property owner. *If the nuisance is not abated:*
8. a. CA or police cause an official notice (see notice 2) to be posted on premises or at the site of the nuisance, directing the person responsible to abate the nuisance.  
b. At the same time, the City Recorder sends a copy of the notice by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to all persons responsible at that person's last known address.
9. Police Chief may cause an officer to issue a citation, to be handled by the City court system.

Notes:

Outdoor lighting code 15.17.030 says any peace officer, the director of the public works department or any other individual who may be designated by City Council shall enforce this chapter.

*Council should pass a motion stating the City Administrator can enforce it too...*

how is the notice posted at property--sticker? in vinyl film?

## Item 6(A): Procedure for Right of Way complaints

Note: Enforcement is carried out meeting the requirements of the Health and Safety Nuisance Code §8.04, sections 050 through 110.

1. City receives complaint online or on paper.
2. City Administrator (CA) notifies compliance team of complaint, giving address and nature of complaint.
3. Two members of compliance team go and look, and report findings back to CA.
4. a. CA directs team to make friendly contact with person at property to let them know the property may be in violation of City code, and that official action will be taken in 14 days if violation is not taken care of. Team brings along informational materials explaining what RoW is, how to find where private property meets City RoW, examples of RoW violations, and ideally a printout of a plat showing lot and street dimensions and locations of surveyed corner pins for discussion.
- b. Team also delivers a letter with the same message. (See letter 1)
5. After 14 days, team checks and reports back to CA if violation is abated. *If not:*
6. CA or police officer go to property to check status of complaint. *If verified:*
7. a. CA or police cause an official courtesy notice to be posted on the premises or at the site of the nuisance directing the person responsible to abate the nuisance within 10 days (see notice 1).
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9. Police Chief may cause an officer to issue a citation, to be handled by the City court system.

# FRAUD

# ALERT!

Planning departments are rethinking digital security as a swarm of imposters scrape public records to send city clients fake invoices.

By PATRICK SISSON Illustration by CATHERINE BIXLER

**T**his past September, contractor Rochon Corporation received good news about its bid to install a digital sign at a Minneapolis middle school. An email apparently from city planner Ben Carrier said the company's sign variance was recommended for approval, and if Rochon paid an attached invoice for \$4,800, it could avoid administrative delays on the way to final authorization.

The email noted that instructions for wiring payment would be sent separately because "all correspondence associated with this case must be conducted via email" for "accountability, transparency, and ease of auditing."

Rochon Corporation's staff quickly clocked the message as a fake. Although Carrier was a real person, his email address wasn't Planning-Dept.CityOffMinneapolisMN@usa.com. While the other details of the request were spot on, a fee of that amount—paid through a wire transfer, of all things—was not standard operating procedure. Instead, the city relies on in-person or over-the-phone credit card payments.

Since May 2025, a growing number of phishing emails have hit inboxes throughout Minneapolis, says city planning director Meg McMahan, AICP. "It just stuck out to us because the amount of detail that they had was alarming," she says.

## Phishing attempts on the rise

This new form of attack—using public planning data to compose counterfeit emails requesting money—has gone nationwide. In many cases, the phishing emails come within hours or days of public meetings or website postings.

According to news reports and interviews with planning officials, dozens

of departments have reported such attempts, from small cities like Martinsburg, West Virginia, to Miami, Houston, and Las Vegas.

Several planners say these emails are increasingly sophisticated, with seemingly official seals, references to municipal and state statutes, and phony signatures. However, there are tells—like odd payment requests, subpar graphic design, and fake email addresses. Several cities also have reported the use of the @usa.com domain.

In Montclair, New Jersey, the local detective bureau is investigating phishing attempts that used the @usa.com domain, according to *Montclair Local*. David Genova, principal of Greenwood Development, a local real estate development firm, was confused when a fake email requesting a wire transfer appeared in his inbox late last year.

"I've done 30-plus projects in town, and I've never seen an email like this, and I've already paid my application fees and escrow fees, so I went, 'What is going on here?'" Genova told the news outlet.

One planner in Oskaloosa, Iowa, however, reports that a local business fell for the scam, wiring payment to a fake organization

supposedly based in Colorado. The applicant paid an alleged planning department invoice for a rezoning application, but soon after received a second invoice. Confused, they called the department to sort it out and learned the first one was a scam.

"It's like punishment for these applicants for doing the right thing," says Shawn Christ, AICP, the city's development services director. He was especially frustrated that his name was used in the fake email. "It just looks bad on everybody," Christ says.

### What does this mean for the future?

In response, many planning departments have altered their operations to warn developers and residents about these phishing attempts. Many suspect—but can't definitively prove—artificial intelligence (AI) is being used.

They also question whether this tactic may erode the public's trust. "Balancing that tension is something that's worrisome to me, especially when I think about the potential for the sophistication of this sort of thing to escalate," says McMahan of Minneapolis.

Cybersecurity training has become standard for municipal workers as the prevalence of these cons increases. FBI data estimated phishing scams cost public and private victims at least \$70 million in damage—but many incidents go unreported, so the amount could be even more.

In Miami, the police department is investigating a series of phishing emails to see if internal databases were breached or email accounts were hacked, says Erica Lee, assistant to the director of the city's planning department. In 2025, the planning department was made aware of about a dozen poorly composed phishing emails requesting thousands of dollars in payment. As the year progressed, similar scam emails became more polished, with details apparently scrubbed from the city's website and the names and dummy signatures of real officials.

### Is AI an accomplice?

Suvidha Bandi, AICP, planner manager for Houston, has seen similar scam emails on and off since May 2025. Like the emails flagged in Minneapolis and Miami, they urge recipients

## 3 WAYS PLANNING DEPARTMENTS CAN FIGHT SCAMMERS

### REMOVE CONTACT INFORMATION

Removing email addresses before land variance or zoning requests are publicly available makes it more challenging for scammers to collect that data. Oskaloosa, Iowa, has started redacting contact information, including phone numbers, before applications are posted online, says Shawn Christ, AICP. This process also has made a difference in Houston, says Suvidha Bandi, AICP. That city's planning department staff noticed that every time they didn't take out email addresses from a batch of applications, they'd hear about scam emails over the following weeks.

### BE TRANSPARENT AND CONSISTENT

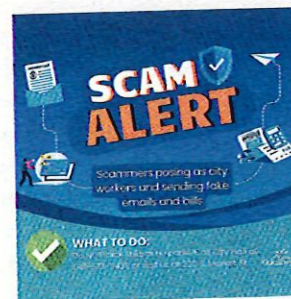
Clearly outline the steps for submitting applications to the planning department in relevant communications. This way, applicants understand what is—and is not—involved with the process. Consistent messaging among departments about how residents should interact with the city and how city staff will interact with them also is essential, says Paul Cameron, chief information officer for Minneapolis.

### PRIORITIZE EDUCATION

Notify residents of these scams, how to avoid them, and how to report them. Oskaloosa even shared a copy of a phishing email on its Facebook page, which caught the attention of local media and radio. "I think using both social media and traditional media was important to help the message spread more quickly to a wider audience," Christ says.



Houston and Oskaloosa, Iowa, posted on Facebook and X to warn residents about scams.



to respond for wire payment instructions.

“It’s no coincidence that an uptick in this sort of thing, and phishing in general, coincides with an uptick in the adoption of generative AI,” says Joseph Avanzato, a security operations and forensics team leader for the Varonis cybersecurity firm. Varonis has tracked a roughly 700 percent increase in phishing attacks throughout 2025, and a 200 percent increase in phishing attempts using generative AI.

Municipalities are targeted because of their significantly large workforces and because they oversee a lot of payments, says Phillip Harmon, a cybersecurity and data privacy associate at Woods Rogers.

While it’s hard to get commercial AI programs and large-language models to do something illegal, Avanzato says, scammers can simply set up their own local AI models, train them on thousands of invoices and local planning and building codes, and set them loose.

Most cities don’t report such attempts, Harmon says, and the amounts requested—sometimes amounting to a few thousand dollars—don’t necessarily capture the attention of law enforcement.

### Fighting back with information

Many of the affected cities have deployed or are creating information campaigns to deter further phishing scams. In Minneapolis, the planning department quickly added warnings to its pre-application process, so applicants are aware of who would contact them and the right way to pay.

Planners also teamed up with the city’s IT department for a campaign warning residents about these scams. In Miami and Houston, officials have reviewed their application processes to inform applicants preemptively of the right channels for communication and payment.

These scams show the potential downside to increased transparency that may allow others to use information for sinister purposes. As technology allows bad actors to create even more personalized, detailed cons at scale, the issue of transparency will only become more crucial.

“This isn’t the answer people want to hear, but for these criminals, it’s a business,” Harmon

From: [planning@oskalooosawia.com](mailto:planning@oskalooosawia.com)  
Date: October 6, 2025 at 9:18:16 AM CDT  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: Action Required – Application Approval Fee for Site Plan Applications (invoice Attached)

City of Oskaloosa Planning Commission  
220 S. Market Street  
Oskaloosa, IA 52577

Dear [REDACTED],

We hope this message finds you well.

Thank you for submitting your site plan applications to the City of Oskaloosa Planning and Zoning Commission. Your interest in working with the City to ensure proper planning and development at your properties is greatly appreciated.

This message is to confirm that we have reviewed the following two applications submitted under your names:

1. A site plan application for **personal animal raising (chickens)** at [REDACTED], and
2. A site plan application for **seasonal pallet storage** at [REDACTED].

After a thorough internal review, planning staff has issued a **recommendation for approval** of both applications. This recommendation is contingent upon the **settlement of the required application approval fee**, as outlined in the attached invoice.

To move your applications forward and ensure inclusion on the next Planning and Zoning Commission meeting agenda, please follow the steps below:

#### Next Steps:

1. **Reply to this email** to request for wire transfer instructions or have any questions regarding the invoice or payment process.
2. **Settle the attached invoice** via wire transfer.
3. **Return both the wire receipt and a signed copy of the invoice** to this email address as confirmation of payment.

Please note that payment confirmation is required before your application can be officially scheduled for commission review. Prompt attention to this matter will help avoid delays in processing.

If you have any questions or require assistance at any point during this process, do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
Planning and Zoning Director,

City of Oskaloosa Planning Commission  
220 S. Market Street  
Oskaloosa, IA 52577

<INVOICE.pdf>

Reply Reply all Forward



In Oskaloosa, Iowa, a scammer emailed an applicant seeking the “required application fee,” after scraping the details of a real form.

says. “They’re money-motivated. If there is an increase in any of these types of attacks, it’s because they’ve worked, right?”

While technology to spot and deter scams continues to improve, focusing on the human element—training users in official channels of communications and how to avoid such scams—remains the better deterrent, Harmon says.

“This might be the unfortunate case where you just don’t have a technological fix,” he says. “The fix is not to make the data available, but that’s not an option if departments are required to be publicly transparent.”

*Patrick Sisson, a Los Angeles-based writer and reporter focused on the tech, trends, and policies that shape cities, is a Planning contributing writer.*