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City Council Minutes – July 1, 2026

Mayor Jerry Merrill
Council Members:
Bryanna Johnson David Reeser
Colin Erickson Bill Riggins
Eric Erickson Alisha Tietjen

City Staff:
Spencer Rammell – City Attorney
Matt Nielson – Finance Officer
Keith Davidson – Public Works Director
Alan Parkinson – Planning & Zoning Administrator
Scott Johnson – Economic Development Director
Deborah Lovejoy – City Clerk

6:30 P.M.
Council Member Riggins said the prayer.
Council Member Tietjen led the pledge.

Roll Call of Council Members:
Attending: Council Member Johnson, Council Member Tietjen, Council Member C. Erickson, Council Member Reeser, Council Member Riggins, and Mayor Merrill.

Council President E. Erickson did not attend the meeting.

Motion to Amend the Agenda as per Idaho State Statute §74-204(4)(b): Amendment to remove Item 4 – to Annex Property at Approximately 80 E 7th N into the City of Rexburg Action Item

Mayor Merrill asked for a motion to amend the agenda.

Council Member Riggins moved to Amend the Agenda as per Idaho State Statute §74-204(4)(b): Amendment to remove Item 4 – to Annex Property at Approximately 80 E 7th N into the City of Rexburg; Council Member C. Erickson seconded the motion; Mayor Merrill asked for a vote:

Those voting aye	Those voting nay
Council Member Johnson	none
Council Member Tietjen	
Council Member C. Erickson	
Council Member Reeser	
Council Member Riggins	

The motion carried.

~~**Public Hearing 6:30 P.M.** to Annex Property in the Impact Area at Approximately 80 E 7th N into the City of Rexburg (26-00321). Designated as **Ordinance No 1351** if motion passes and considered 1st read – Alan Parkinson Action Item~~

Public Hearing 6:30 P.M. Consideration of Proposed Fee Increases for Water and Sewer Capacity Fees effective July 2, 2026, and Water, Sewer, and Sanitation Monthly Fees effective October 1, 2026. Designated as Resolution No 2026 – 07 if motion passes – Scott Miller Action Item

Deputy Treasurer Miller explained that Finance Officer Nielson had reviewed the proposed changes to the utility rates in detail with the City Council. The sample utility bills are also provided to help illustrate how the increases will affect the average customer.

Deputy Treasurer Miller reviewed the sample utility bills and explained that a typical customer's bill will increase by nearly $6 per month, representing an approximate 4.3% increase. Multifamily apartment complexes will experience an average increase of about 10%, although the actual amount can vary depending on water usage. Businesses will see an average increase of approximately 9.2%, which equated to about a $33 increase in the sample provided.

Mayor Merrill reminded the Councilmembers that the proposed rate increases were reviewed in detail during a previous City Council Work Meeting.

Rexburg Utilities Sample Bills

New Fiscal Year 2027

Effective Date 10/1/26

REXBURG RESIDENT -SAMPLE BILL

3/4 Inch Meter	Monthly Average	1/1/26 Rate OLD	10/1/26 Rate NEW	INCREASE	INCREASE
SEWER (Gallons x 1000)	7	58.54	58.74	0.20	0.3%
WATER (Gallons x 1000)	25	48.37	52.82	4.45	9.2%
GARBAGE	90 G Weekly	28.03	29.21	1.18	4.2%
TOTAL		134.94	140.77	5.83	4.3%

REXBURG APARTMENT COMPLEX -SAMPLE BILL

2 Inch Meter	Monthly Average	OLD	NEW	INCREASE	INCREASE
SEWER (Gallons x 1000)	46	383.29	410.22	26.94	7.0%
WATER (Gallons x 1000)	62	228.08	263.86	35.78	15.7%
GARBAGE	3 yd Bin x 2 Weekly	163.34	178.16	14.82	9.1%
TOTAL		774.70	852.24	77.54	10.0%

REXBURG BUSINESS -SAMPLE BILL

3/4 inch Meter	Monthly Average	OLD	NEW	INCREASE	INCREASE
SEWER (Gallons x 1000)	25	158.08	174.68	16.60	10.5%
WATER (Gallons x 1000)	82	121.27	130.41	9.14	7.5%
GARBAGE	3 yd Bin Weekly	81.67	89.08	7.41	9.1%
TOTAL		361.02	394.17	33.15	9.2%

Each utility account is unique. The above sample bills are based on a 5 year average for account types. To see a change in rates for a specific property, please contact the Utility Billing Clerk in the City of Rexburg Finance Department

2027 Fiscal Year	Calculation Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Sewer	Recommended by FCS from Rate Study	Adopt Changes
Water	Recommended by FCS from Rate Study	Adopt Changes
Garbage	Recommended by FCS from Rate Study	Adopt Changes

Council Member Reeser said that he was absent from the previous meeting. He asked whether any of the proposed figures had changed since that meeting. Deputy Treasurer Miller confirmed that the figures remained the same.

Council Member C. Erickson stated that he has two primary concerns. First, he emphasized the importance of evaluating the utility rates every year rather than simply following the entire five-year capital improvement plan without review. He explained that he had discussed the matter with Finance Officer Nielson and wanted it clearly reflected in the record that they will continue to review the rates annually. He expressed concern that residents are facing increasing costs in many areas and wanted the city to consider future population growth and other changing circumstances before implementing additional increases. Deputy Treasurer Miller confirmed that the rates will continue to be reviewed annually regardless of the capital improvement plan.

Council Member C. Erickson said his second concern is related to garbage rates. He expressed hesitation about the proposed increase, stating that it appeared to be larger than necessary at the present time. Although he acknowledged the increase is relatively small, he emphasized that every additional expense affected many families in the community. He wanted to ensure the city is using the funds responsibly and asked for additional explanation regarding the need for the increase.

Deputy Treasurer Miller explained that the proposed garbage rate adjustments are based on the city's five-year capital improvement plan, which anticipated future expenditures on equipment and other capital assets. The purpose of the increase is to ensure the sanitation fund will have sufficient resources available when those investments become necessary.

Council Member C. Erickson responded that he is comfortable approving the proposal for the current year but reiterated his desire for the city to thoroughly reevaluate the rates the following year. He noted that rates were increased the previous year and does not want the city to continue increasing rates without careful annual consideration.

Mayor Merrill confirmed that the city reviews the utility rates every year and explained that, in some years, increases have been minimal or had not occurred at all. He stated that recent cost increases have required the city to begin catching up financially and noted that replacing a garbage truck can cost approximately $320,000. He explained that the city needed to collect sufficient revenue over time to ensure that major capital expenses can be funded when necessary.

Council Member C. Erickson also pointed to the city's recycling program, noting that the city continued to subsidize that program. He suggested that the city should continue evaluating the program for another year or two to determine whether it remained worthwhile to continue providing that level of financial support. Deputy Treasurer Miller agreed that the recycling program is part of the ongoing evaluation process.

Public Works Director Davidson explained that garbage trucks experience significant wear and tear because they are constantly stopping, starting, carrying heavy loads, and operating through repeated collection cycles. As a result, maintenance costs for the sanitation fleet remained substantial.

Council Member C. Erickson reiterated his concerns about the proposed rate increases, emphasizing the importance of reevaluating the financial assumptions each year. He said he wants to ensure the city is making the best use of the revenue collected rather than simply continuing to build reserves based on a five-year projection. He noted that a five-year capital plan is largely an estimate and that changing circumstances could require adjustments in future years. Deputy Treasurer Miller agreed and assured the City Council that the utility rates will continue to be reviewed each year, as is the city's standard practice.

Mayor Merrill opened the public hearing.

Public Testimony in favor of the proposal (5-minute limit): NONE
Public Testimony neutral to the proposal (5-minute limit):

Brett Crandall asked for clarification regarding the proposed utility rate increases. He explained that his comment is more of a question than a statement and wanted to understand why residents living in apartments appeared to be receiving approximately twice the rate increase of those living in single-family homes. He expressed concern that the city might unintentionally be placing a greater financial burden on apartment residents, many of whom are students, rather than on other residents in the community.

Mayor Merrill explained that the rate adjustments are intended to reflect the actual cost of providing utility services to different types of properties. He stated that the utility rate study determined that servicing multifamily developments generally costs more than servicing single-family homes, and the proposed rates have been adjusted accordingly. He also emphasized that the City Council reviews the utility rates every year to ensure they remain fair and equitable and to determine whether additional adjustments are necessary based on the city's actual costs.

Council Member Johnson added that the detailed rate analysis showed some apartment-related rates had decreased while others had increased. She explained that the overall increase represented the combined effect of those adjustments and is not intended to target apartment residents unfairly.

Mayor Merrill added that the city evaluated the costs associated with providing water, sewer, and sanitation services for each customer classification. He explained that some rates increased while others decreased based on those cost calculations, with the goal of maintaining an equitable rate structure across all customer classes.

Council Member Johnson noted that one important aspect of the water, sewer, and sanitation utilities is that the revenue generated from those rates is legally restricted to those enterprise funds. She explained that the city cannot transfer or use those funds for unrelated purposes, so there would be no benefit to overcharging utility customers because the revenue can only be used to operate, maintain, and improve the water, sewer, and sanitation systems.

Public Testimony opposed to the proposal (5-minute limit):

Nathan Bloomberg introduced himself and stated that he is attending the meeting to better understand the proposed utility rate increases. He asked why the residential water rates reflected an approximate 9% increase, noting that while the actual dollar amount is only about $4.45, he is curious about the reason for what appeared to be a relatively large percentage increase.

Mayor Merrill explained that the increase is based on the same cost-of-service analysis discussed in response to the previous public comment. He stated that the city reviewed its operating costs and projected capital improvement needs over the next five years to estimate the revenue necessary to provide reliable utility services. Based on the rate study completed by FCS determined the rates needed for each customer's classification to adequately fund those services.

Mr. Bloomberg responded that he would have preferred to see the water rate increase more closely aligned with the percentage increases for the other utilities. He acknowledged that the increase is not substantial in terms of dollars but observed that rates have increased the previous year and will likely continue to rise in the future, as is common with utilities such as electricity, internet, and other essential services. He explained that he simply wanted a better understanding of the reasoning behind the proposed increase.

Mayor Merrill acknowledged those concerns and explained that the city conducts a comprehensive utility rate study approximately every five years; however, the utility rates are reviewed every year. He said that larger adjustments sometimes occurred following those studies to realign rates with actual operating costs and long-term capital needs. He expressed hope that, as inflation and construction costs stabilized, future annual adjustments will be much smaller. In some years, the city has been able to leave rates unchanged or even implement small decreases.

Mr. Bloomberg then asked what residents could do to help keep utility rates as low as possible. Mayor Merrill responded that conserving water could help reduce individual utility bills because a portion of the charges are based on water usage. He encouraged residents to use water efficiently, particularly during the current season, by watering lawns more deeply but less frequently. He explained that this approach could help conserve water without damaging landscaping.

Mr. Bloomberg reiterated that his primary concern is seeing future rate increases remain more balanced across the various utility services. He acknowledged that different utilities have different costs and usage patterns but stated that he would prefer to see percentage increases that are more consistent with one another, like cost-of-living adjustments.

Mayor Merrill closed the public hearing.

Council Member C. Erickson moved to approve Resolution No 2026 – 07 Fee Increases for Water and Sewer Capacity Fees effective July 2, 2026, and Water, Sewer, and Sanitation Monthly Fees effective October 1, 2026; Council Member Riggins seconded the motion; Mayor Merrill asked for a vote:

Those voting aye	**Those voting nay**
Council Member Tietjen	none
Council Member Johnson	
Council Member C. Erickson	
Council Member Reeser	
Council Member Riggins	

The motion carried.

Presentation pertaining to the Old Seminary building located at approximately 60 W Main St – Cheryl Empey and Lisa Jones, Historical Preservation Committee

Cheryl Lempy introduced herself and stated that she serves as the chairperson of the Historic Preservation Commission. She introduced Lisa Jones, who serves as the vice chairperson, Jamie Patton, who serves as the secretary, Cricket Mounts, who oversees communications, and David Jones, who serves as the treasurer.

Committee Member Lempy clarified the purpose of the commission and explained that the terms "commission" and "committee" are used interchangeably throughout the organization's documents. She stated that the purpose of the commission is to promote the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the residents of the City of Rexburg through the identification, evaluation, designation, and protection of buildings, sites, districts, areas, structures, and objects that reflected significant elements of the city's, state's, or nation's historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural heritage.

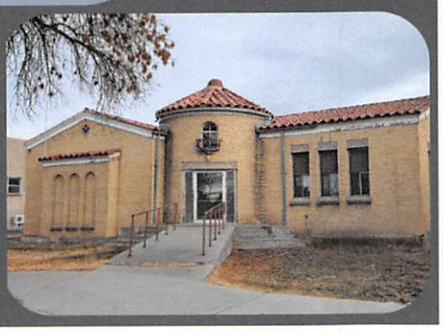
Committee Member Lempy explained that the Historic Preservation Commission's role is to provide recommendations to the City Council based on the research and information the commission gathers. She stated that the commission has been meeting as a group for approximately two years. During that time, one of their projects was the creation of the Flood 50 "Built to Last, I Survived the Flood" window decals. The decals were designed for buildings and other locations that have survived the Teton Dam Flood and were sold as a fundraiser to support the Rexburg Tabernacle.

Committee Member Lempy also explained that the commission researched and documented the history of Rexburg's historic buildings. She stated that the commission has participated in the Flood 50 commemoration and has consulted with owners of several downtown buildings, including June's Place, to provide historical information, locate older photographs, and help property owners better understand th history and significance of their buildings. She then turned the presentation over to Lisa Jones.

Lisa Jones, Vice Chairperson of the Historical Preservation Committee, presented historical information and the commission's desire to preserve the Historic Seminary Building.

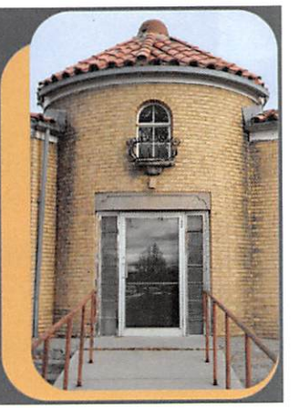
A brief history...

The land the seminary building sits on was first owned by Sarah Holman in 1885. Sarah was the mother of 12, the last surviving member of the Martin Handcart Company, and sister-in-law to Thomas E. Ricks who owned the adjacent lot. The school district purchased the land in 1903. There aren't any records that tell us what type of structure was on the site, only that there was demolition of an existing structure prior to the start of construction on the current building in 1937.



Land Use Timeline of Block 32, Lot 3

- 1885–1903: Pioneer settlement and development
- 1903: Lot 3 acquired by School District
- 1937: Seminary building constructed
- 1938: Seminary opens
- 1950s–1990s: School & seminary hub
- 2010s: Preservation efforts



1937 Seminary Timeline:

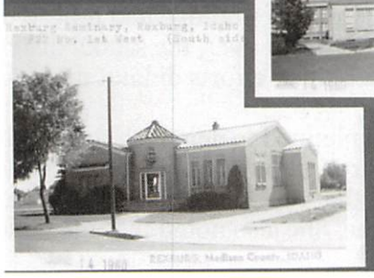
- **May 1937:** Construction contract approved - Contractor was Charles Zollinger
- **Aug 1937:** Commissioner Franklin L. West inspects
- **Dec 1937:** Construction completed
- **Jan 1938:** Open house and opening events



The Completed Seminary Building in early 1938

Photos taken in 1960





Historical Significance:

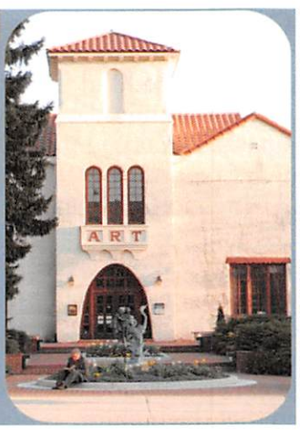
- Represents Rexburg's Educational Heritage
- Survived the Teton Flood
- Served as an important community gathering place for decades and we believe it can be revived to be a prominent community landmark again
- 60% of the cost of construction was covered by the church and the other 40% was covered by donations labor and money by the ward members in the Rexburg Stake
- Example of early 20th Century Architecture unusual to this area



Architectural Significance:

Spanish Revival Style

- Popular in the early 1900s and rare in eastern Idaho
- Inspired by historic Spanish and Mediterranean designs
- Known for stucco walls, red tile roofs, and arched details
- Represents craftsmanship and artistic character not common in modern buildings
- Preserving this style protects architectural diversity and community identity



Examples of preserved Spanish Colonial buildings in other cities in Idaho as featured on the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office Facebook page.







Seminary Preservation Happening in Other Cities



Springville, UT



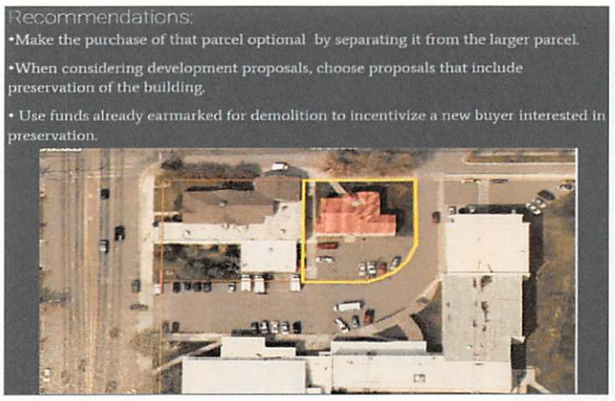
Provo, UT

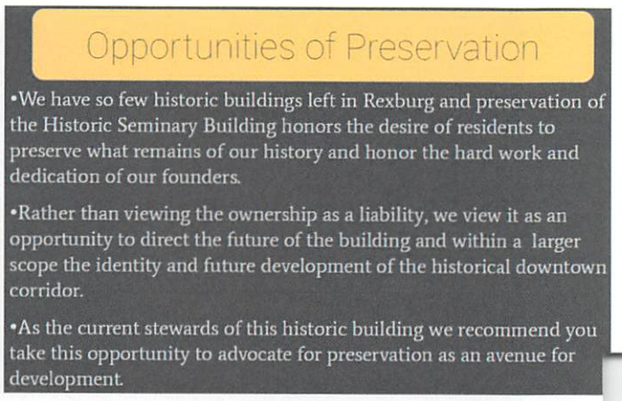
Community Value

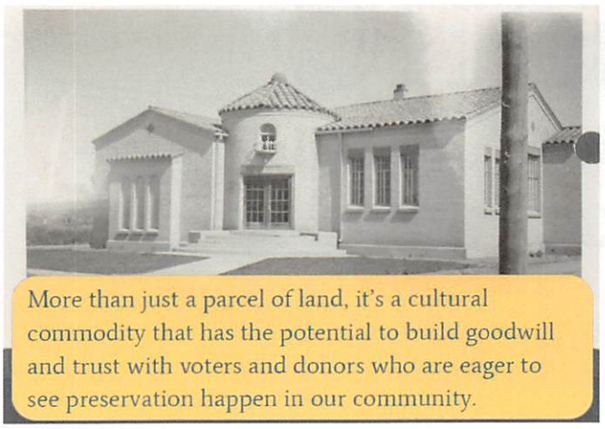
Residents previously organized to oppose demolition and at the recent Founders Day event, we heard from many people expressing the hope that the seminary building (and others) would be preserved.



This Photo of the DUP was published in the Post Register July 2, 2014 along with an article recognizing their efforts to save the building from demolition









Council Member Riggins asked for clarification regarding the presentation timeline, noting that it referenced preservation efforts during the 2010s and asked what became of those efforts. Committee Member Jones explained that the timeline referred to the decade rather than the specific year 2010. She stated that, during that period, preservation advocates, including the Huber family, had repeatedly expressed interest in purchasing the property from the school district. However, the school district was unwilling to sell or separate the property, and as a result, the preservation efforts did not move forward.

Council Member Riggin confirmed that the school district had planned to demolish the building in 2014. He said he observed that, from approximately 2014 until its recent purchase in 2026, the building had remained largely unused. Committee Member Jones clarified that the school district had continued using the building primarily for equipment storage during that time. She also noted that the building had not been condemned.

Council Member Riggins asked why the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had stopped using the building while still operating a seminary program nearby. Committee Member Jones explained that the church had constructed a newer seminary building behind the older structure. She believed the newer facility better met the church's needs by providing multiple classrooms, whereas the original building consisted of several larger rooms and office spaces. She noted that the older building had continued to serve the community after the church relocated, first housing the school district's gifted and talented program and later providing space for special education services.

Council Member Riggins commented that organizations typically do not abandon buildings unless they require substantial repairs or are no longer practical to maintain. He suggested that the church may have determined it was more cost-effective or functional to construct a new facility rather than renovate the existing building. Committee Member Jones responded that one of the Historic Preservation Commission members, who had construction experience and had inspected the building, believed it remained structurally sound. She emphasized that the building is not condemned and that its primary issue was that it had become underutilized rather than structurally deficient.

Council Member Riggins asked whether any of the individuals shown in the 2014 preservation effort photograph are willing to contribute financially toward purchasing the Historic Seminary Building. He questioned whether there are individuals genuinely interested in investing their own money to preserve the building. Committee Member Jones responded that there are individuals who have expressed a willingness to invest in the property. She stated that someone approached City Cultural Arts Director Platt about the building, and she also referenced former Historic Preservation Commission Member Rick Robinson. She explained that when the commission asked Mr. Robinson whether someone was willing to purchase the building, he indicated that it would not be difficult finding a buyer.

Steve Oakey asked if the city is the owner of the seminary building. Mayor Merrill clarified that the city does not own the Historic Seminary Building. Instead, the property is owned by the Urban Renewal Agency. The building itself was not purchased separately, but rather as part of a larger parcel that was acquired for several million dollars.

Mr. Bloomberg referenced a 2014 *Post Register* article in which the school district superintendent had stated that the building was slated for demolition and replacement with additional parking because it required extensive and costly repairs.

Mayor Merrill expressed his support for preserving historic buildings but also emphasized the importance of balancing preservation efforts with practical considerations. The City of Rexburg already maintained several historic landmarks, including the Tabernacle. He noted that various ideas, including converting the building into a museum, have been discussed in the past. However, he emphasized that every proposal ultimately depended on available funding and identifying individuals or organizations willing to financially support the project.

Mayor Merrill expressed his appreciation to the Historic Preservation Commission for their presentation and the information provided. The commission's role is to help the City understand the historical significance of local properties and to provide information that will assist the City Council in making informed decisions regarding historic preservation matters.

Council Member Tietjen clarified that the Historic Preservation Commission understands the city's financial limitations and is not asking the city to assume ownership or financial responsibility for the Historic Seminary Building. Instead, the commission is encouraging the city to explore creative alternatives, such as subdividing the property and identifying a private buyer who would be willing to purchase and preserve the building. She emphasized that this approach could preserve the building's historical significance without requiring the city to take on additional financial obligations.

Council Member Tietjen encouraged the City Council to consider creative preservation options. She also noted she has received numerous phone calls and has had conversations from residents regarding the Historic Seminary Building. Based on those interactions, she believes there is significant public interest in preserving the building and encouraged the City Council to consider solutions that balance historic preservation.

Council Member Johnson sought clarification regarding ownership of the Historic Seminary Building and asked whether the building is located on property owned by the city. Staff explained that the building is not on city-owned property, it is located on land owned by the Urban Renewal Agency. Staff noted that, while the City Council did not have decision-making authority over the property, it could provide input and recommendations.

Council Member Riggins said speaking in his capacity as a member of the Urban Renewal Agency, explained that the agency has considered options for the property. He stated that prospective developers are being encouraged to consider ways to incorporate the Historic Seminary Building into future development plans rather than simply demolishing it. No development proposals are currently under active consideration but emphasized that the Urban Renewal Agency is not dismissing the building's historical significance and hoped future developers will be sensitive to its preservation.

Council Member Riggins further explained that the Urban Renewal Agency purchased approximately five acres of property for more than $7 million, making the land a significant financial investment. Committee Member Jones responded that, during a previous Urban Renewal Agency meeting, she understood that the portion of the property where the Historic Seminary Building is located had been estimated at approximately $500,000. She suggested that if the building site could be removed from the sale price of the larger development parcel, the historic building could potentially be made available to a private buyer willing to renovate and preserve it.

Council Member Riggins expressed concern that preserving the building without clear ownership and funding plan could leave the city responsible for future maintenance and rehabilitation costs. He emphasized the importance of determining whether there are individuals or organizations genuinely willing to invest the substantial financial resources necessary to restore and maintain the building. He encouraged the Historic Preservation Commission to gather more specific information regarding potential buyers, renovation costs, and funding commitments before presenting a proposal to the Urban Renewal Agency.

Committee Member Jones stated that the commission has discussed gathering construction estimates and other supporting information but had been uncertain whether doing so fell within its responsibilities. She expressed the commission's willingness to compile renovation estimates and other documentation if it will assist decision-makers in evaluating future preservation opportunities. Council Member Riggins responded that the Urban Renewal Agency is willing to listen to well-supported proposals but reiterated that the primary concern remained identifying a financially sustainable ownership plan for the building.

Mayor Merrill suggested that the Historic Preservation Commission compile a formal package outlining any potential preservation proposals. He recommended including specific information about interested buyers, proposed future uses for the building, anticipated renovation costs, and available funding sources. Having concrete details would provide decision-makers with the information

necessary to properly evaluate any preservation proposal, rather than relying on general expressions of interest.

Deputy Treasurer Miller said speaking in both the capacity of Deputy Treasurer for the City and Administrator for the Urban Renewal Agency, clarified the respective roles of the city and the Urban Renewal Agency regarding the Historic Seminary Building. He explained that while the City Council could provide advisory input, decisions regarding the property ultimately rested with the Urban Renewal Agency Board. The Urban Renewal Agency has been receptive to the Historic Preservation Commission's comments and will continue to consider additional information. However, because of the financial complexities involved, any future proposals would be most appropriately presented directly to the Urban Renewal Agency Board for consideration.

Committee Member Lempy asked for clarification regarding the relationship between the Urban Renewal Agency and the city. Mayor Merrill explained that the Urban Renewal Agency is a separate legal entity governed by its own board. Although the board members are appointed by the mayor, the agency operated independently from the City Council. The Urban Renewal Agency is responsible for overseeing the affairs of the urban renewal districts.

Committee Member Jones asked whether the Historic Preservation Commission has the City Council's support to continue developing preservation proposals for presentation to the Urban Renewal Agency. Mayor Merrill responded that the City Council is interested in reviewing any well-developed proposals that could assist the Urban Renewal Agency in evaluating potential preservation options. He said that individual opinions might differ regarding whether the building should ultimately be preserved but expressed support for gathering specific proposals that included feasible plans for future ownership, financing, and use.

Public Comment: Items not on the agenda; limit of 3 minutes; issues may be considered for discussion on a future agenda. Please keep comments on point and respectful.

Taylor Riley introduced himself and stated that he and his wife moved to Rexburg to attend school. He expressed concern about the growing use of Flock Safety camera systems throughout Idaho, noting that the technology is in use in communities such as Idaho Falls, Sugar City, and St. Anthony. He urged the City of Rexburg to take proactive measures to ensure that similar surveillance systems are not installed within the city.

Mr. Taylor stated that Flock Safety systems are more advanced than traditional license plate readers, describing them as artificial intelligence-powered surveillance systems operated by a private company. He asserted that the technology could identify vehicles based on appearance, utilize infrared imaging, and integrate additional capabilities such as AI-assisted video searches, thermal imaging, gunshot detection, and Bluetooth and Wi-Fi signal tracking. He expressed concern that information collected by the system could be uploaded to a nationwide network accessible by law enforcement agencies across the country and argued that technology has the potential to create detailed records of individuals' daily movements.

Mr. Taylor further expressed concerns regarding the company's data security practices and cited reports alleging unauthorized access to camera data and security breaches involving police credentials. While emphasizing that he supported law enforcement and believed the Rexburg Police Department is highly effective, he stated that he did not believe mass surveillance of law-abiding residents by a private corporation is appropriate.

Mr. Taylor requested that the city adopt ordinances regulating the use of surveillance technology. Specifically, he asked the City Council to publicly disclose any discussions or exploratory meetings concerning automated surveillance systems such as Flock Safety, develop a comprehensive privacy ordinance establishing strict standards for future surveillance technologies and the handling of collected data, and consider adopting a preemptive ordinance prohibiting the installation of Flock Safety cameras and similar surveillance systems within the City. He stated that Rexburg is one of Idaho's safest communities and argued that protecting residents' privacy and personal freedoms should remain a priority.

Mayor Merrill thanked Mr. Riley for his comments and stated that the City Council will take the information into consideration. Mayor Merrill also noted that one of the City Council Members has prior law enforcement experience and expertise with surveillance camera technology, which would be valuable when evaluating the issue.

Staff Reports:

A. Public Works: - Kieth Davidson

1. Approval of Water Department Building Remodel and Addition Bid - Action Item

Mayor Merrill said the Water Department Building Remodel and Addition Bids will be reviewed at the next City Council Meeting for consideration.

Mayor's Report/Business:

A. Ratify Tina Lesh as a member of the Planning & Zoning Board Action Item

Emergency Manager Kohler introduced himself and explained that he serves in a dual role, working as the County Emergency Manager while also working for the Fire Department. He stated that his responsibilities included supporting all public safety agencies throughout Madison County, including the City of Rexburg, the Police Department, the Sheriff's Office, Fire Department, and other emergency response partners. His primary responsibility is to help prepare the county for emergency incidents.

Emergency Manager Kohler explained that federal grant requirements require the county to conduct emergency management training exercises and drills. He reported that a tabletop exercise was held on February 24 involving a simulated large-scale incident on the BYU-Idaho campus. Participants included the Fire Department, Ambulance Service, Rexburg Police Department, Madison County Sheriff's Office, BYU-Idaho Security, and university administrators. The exercise focused on responding to an active shooter scenario and identified several areas where interagency coordination and response procedures could be improved.

Based on lessons learned from the tabletop exercise, he explained that all participating agencies had requested a more comprehensive training exercise. He announced that Madison County will conduct its first full-scale emergency exercise in several years on September 2. Mr. Kohler noted that although he had served as Emergency Manager since 2019, this would be the first full-scale exercise held during his tenure and explained that such exercises are common and beneficial for improving emergency preparedness.

Emergency Manager Kohler also discussed the importance of preparing elected officials for their responsibilities during a major emergency. He explained that the exercise will include training specifically for the Rexburg City Council to help members understand their roles during a large-scale incident. He noted that the training will address questions such as where Councilmembers should report, what decisions they would be responsible for, how information would be communicated, potential budget considerations, coordination with responding agencies, and the city's responsibilities for long-term recovery efforts, including family assistance and reunification centers.

Emergency Manager Kohler invited the Mayor and City Council to meet at City Hall at 11:00 a.m. on September 2 to participate in the exercise. He explained that emergency responders will be conducting the simulated incident while the City Council participates in a breakout session focused on municipal leadership and decision-making during a major emergency.

Council Member Johnson asked whether Councilmembers would receive a formal invitation to the exercise. Mr. Kohler confirmed that an invitation will be distributed and explained that his presentation is intended to provide advance notice so the Councilmembers can reserve the date on their calendars.

Mayor Merrill encouraged the Councilmembers to place the event on their calendars and expressed support for participating in the exercise. The city regularly participates in Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) meetings and stated that he has often questioned what the City Council's responsibilities would be during a major emergency. He commented that the planned exercise will provide an excellent opportunity for the City Council to better understand its role and practice responding to a large-scale incident.

Emergency Manager Kohler explained that the full-scale emergency exercise will begin at 11:00 a.m. and is expected to last approximately three hours. However, he noted that the City Council's portion of the training will likely take about one hour. The exercise scenario has intentionally not been disclosed publicly because it needs to remain confidential to effectively evaluate emergency response procedures.

Emergency Manager Kohler explained that Councilmembers will be presented with the simulated emergency scenario and asked to determine how they would respond as elected officials. Facilitators will then guide the discussion by asking additional questions, presenting new developments, and sharing lessons learned from similar incidents nationwide. He stated that the goal of the exercise is to identify opportunities to develop or refine city policies and procedures so that elected officials will have a clearer framework for responding to future emergencies.

Council Member Reeser asked whether the local school district will participate in the exercise and whether the scenario would affect school operations. Emergency Manager Kohler explained that the school district is not directly involved because the selected location did not require its participation. He also noted that the exercise was intentionally scheduled when very few BYU-Idaho students are on campus to minimize disruption. He added that the public schools will not be affected by the exercise but

are welcome to observe if they wished, as the training is primarily focused on emergency response coordination.

Council Member C. Erickson expressed support for the upcoming emergency preparedness exercise based on prior experience participating in similar tabletop exercises, including an active shooter training conducted on the BYU-Idaho campus before 2019. He added that such exercises provide valuable opportunities to think through emergency response procedures in advance and better understand each participant's responsibilities during a crisis.

Mayor Merrill presented the ratification of Tina Lesh for appointment to the Planning and Zoning Commission. He noted that he emailed her biography to the City Council. He encouraged the Councilmembers to review the information and noted that Ms. Lesh expressed her willingness to serve on the commission.

Mayor Merrill also informed the Councilmembers that several additional board and commission vacancies will be occurring over the coming months. He stated that Council Member Johnson has provided several recommendations for potential applicants and that other names have been suggested, although it has not been determined whether those individuals are interested in serving.

Council Member Johnson moved to ratify Trina Lesh as a member of the Planning & Zoning Board; Council Member Riggins seconded the motion; Mayor Merrill asked for a vote:

Those voting aye	**Those voting nay**
Council Member Tietjen	none
Council Member Johnson	
Council Member C. Erickson	
Council Member Reeser	
Council Member Riggins	

The motion carried.

Items for Consideration:
A. Approval of New 2026 Fireworks Stand located at approximately 900 N 2nd E, Parcel No. RPR6N40E175400 Action Item

City Clerk Lovejoy explained that the property is located between Christensen Auto Body and the Armory. The applicants currently operate a fireworks stand in Rigby and are expanding by opening a location in the Rexburg area.

Council Member Reeser moved to approve the New 2026 Fireworks Stand located at approximately 900 N 2nd E, Parcel No. RPR6N40E175400; Council Member Tietjen seconded the motion; Mayor Merrill asked for a vote:

Those voting aye	**Those voting nay**
Council Member Johnson	none
Council Member Tietjen	
Council Member C. Erickson	
Council Member Reeser	
Council Member Riggins	

The motion carried.

B. Planning & Zoning recommendation to approve a Comprehensive Plan Map amendment from Intermediate Residential (IR) to Commercial (C) at approximately 4 W Moody Rd (26-00544). Designated as **Resolution No 2026 – 09** if motion passes – Alan Parkinson Action Item

P&Z Administrator Parkinson presented the request for a Comprehensive Plan amendment involving two parcels located west of the freeway. Using the map below, he identified the two subject properties and explained that the applicants are requesting a Comprehensive Plan designation change from Intermediate Residential to Commercial. He said approval of the Comprehensive Plan amendment will allow the applicants to pursue a future zone change to develop commercial uses along Moody Road and Highway 20.

Council Member Reeser asked whether the applicant owned all the surrounding property. P&Z Administrator Parkinson clarified that the applicant owns only the two subject parcels and that the parcel located between them are owned separately and is being developed as the Homestead Living project.

Council Member C. Erickson asked whether one of the parcels is currently zoned Light Industrial. P&Z Administrator Parkinson confirmed that the northern parcel adjacent to Highway 20 is currently zoned Light Industrial. He explained that, if the requested zone change were approved, the property would transition from Light Industrial to Commercial, creating a more gradual transition from industrial uses to commercial development.

Council Member C. Erickson said his primary concern is not with the northern parcel adjacent to the freeway. He noted that the existing Light Industrial zone made a future Commercial designation a reasonable transition. Instead, his concern centered on the southern parcel, where changing the Comprehensive Plan designation to Commercial would place commercial development adjacent to residential areas. He stated that this compatibility issue gave him some hesitation.

P&Z Administrator Parkinson acknowledged the concern and explained that the southern parcel's location along Moody Road is an important consideration. He noted that Moody Road is expected to become a significant transportation corridor in the future and suggested that commercial development could ultimately be appropriate along the roadway, with residential neighborhoods located behind the commercial frontage. He also acknowledged that future development patterns remain uncertain.

Council Member Reeser asked about the zoning of the property immediately east of the subject parcels. P&Z Administrator Parkinson responded that all the adjoining church-owned property remained zoned Transitional Agriculture (TAG) and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has not submitted any applications to change the zone. The church owns all the adjoining property east of the subject parcels.

Council Member Johnson commented that the city needs additional land designated for commercial development. She expressed support for the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment because it would increase the Commercial Zone in the city. She also noted that, regardless of the type of development proposed for the area, there will likely be differing public opinions, including concerns about residential or apartment developments near church property. The proposed commercial designation represented an appropriate use for the site.

Mayor Merrill added that Moody Road is expected to develop into a significant commercial corridor over time. He stated that commercial development along the roadway is likely inevitable as the area continued to grow and evolve.

Council Member Riggins asked about the size of the southern parcel that had generated the most discussion in the P&Z meeting. P&Z Administrator Parkinson responded that the parcel is approximately 5.5 acres.



Council Member C. Erickson moved to approve Resolution No 2026 – 09 a Comprehensive Plan Map amendment from Intermediate Residential (IR) to Commercial (C) at approximately 4 W Moody Rd; Council Member Johnson seconded the motion; Mayor Merrill asked for a vote:

Those voting aye	**Those voting nay**
Council Member Johnson	none
Council Member Tietjen	
Council Member C. Erickson	
Council Member Reeser	
Council Member Riggins	

The motion carried.

C. Planning & Zoning recommendation to approve a rezone from Light Industrial (LI) and Medium Density Residential 2 (MDR2) to Community Business Center (CBC) zone at approximately 4 W Moody Rd (26-00541). Designated as **Ordinance No 1352** if motion passes and considered 1st read – Alan Parkinson Action Item

P&Z Administrator Parkinson explained that the zoning request applied to the same two parcels that were considered under the Comprehensive Plan amendment. He said with the Comprehensive Plan amendment approved; the applicants are now requesting a zone change for both properties. Specifically, the parcel adjacent to Highway 20 be rezoned from Light Industrial to Community Business Center (CBC) zone, while the parcel along Moody Road be rezoned from MDR-2 (Medium Density Residential 2) to Community Business Center (CBC).

Council Member Tietjen asked for clarification regarding the purpose of the Transitional Agriculture (TAG) zoning designation. P&Z Administrator Parkinson explained that TAG served as a temporary holding zone for property expected to develop in the future. He stated that land zoned TAG could continue to be farmed, while also allowing limited residential development at a density of one dwelling per acre until the property is ready to be developed for another use.

Council Member Riggins added that both parcels are proposed to be rezoned to Community Business Center (CBC) rather than a more intensive industrial zoning classification. He commented that the proposed commercial zoning appeared to be a more appropriate transition near existing homes. Mayor Merrill agreed, stating that the proposed Community Business Center designation represented a positive land use transition for the area.



Council Member Riggins moved to approve Ordinance No 1352 a rezone from Light Industrial (LI) and Medium Density Residential 2 (MDR2) to Community Business Center (CBC) zone at approximately 4 W Moody Rd and consider first read; Council Member Reeser seconded the motion; Mayor Merrill asked for a vote:

Those voting aye	**Those voting nay**
Council Member Johnson	none
Council Member Tietjen	
Council Member C. Erickson	
Council Member Reeser	
Council Member Riggins	

The motion carried.

D. Planning & Zoning recommendation to approve the **University Towne Center Plat** located at approximately 901 S Yellowstone Hwy, the application is to subdivide the property into eight (8) lots (26-00258) – Alan Parkinson Action Item

P&Z Administrator Parkinson presented the preliminary plat application and clarified that the staff report contained a typographical error. Although the report referenced an eight-lot subdivision, the proposed plat consists of 10 lots and indicated that the report will be corrected accordingly. He reported that city staff reviewed the application and determined that it meets all applicable subdivision requirements and the P&Z Commission reviewed the proposal and is recommending approval.

Council Member Riggins asked about the zoning designation for the subdivision. P&Z Administrator Parkinson explained that the property is zoned Community Business Center (CBC). He added that properties across University Boulevard are zoned Regional Business Center (RBC), which is intended to accommodate larger commercial developments and big-box retail uses.

Council Member Tietjen asked how access will be provided to the commercial lots. P&Z Administrator Parkinson explained that the development will have three access points. Access will be available from Mikan Drive to the east near Eden and Mesa, from Tamara Drive adjacent to the Chipotle development, and from Yellowstone Highway through an additional access point shown on the plat. He also explained that a small adjoining parcel, highlighted by the arrow on the map, will be incorporated into the subdivision plat. The parcel had previously been separated to facilitate a 1031 exchange and that the property owners will sign the plat so it can be formally included in the subdivision.



Council Member Riggins asked whether the buildings already constructed behind McDonald's were part of the proposed plat. P&Z Administrator Parkinson clarified that those existing buildings, including a dental office, are not included in the subdivision plat.

Council Member C. Erickson commented that substantial site grading has occurred on the property and emphasized the importance of clarifying that the current action involved only the land use approvals. He noted that the developer has undertaken the earthwork at their own risk and has not received any guarantees that the requested approvals will be granted. He expressed concern that the public might incorrectly assume the project has been approved because construction activity has begun. P&Z Administrator Parkinson confirmed that the developer proceeded with the site work at their own risk.

Council Member C. Erickson asked whether Yellowstone Highway will be realigned to create a straighter roadway connection as part of the development. P&Z Administrator Parkinson responded

that the required transportation improvements are based on the project's traffic impact study. He explained that the developer will be required to construct additional travel lanes, realigning the roadway to better connect with Henry's Fork Drive, install sidewalks, and complete other associated roadway improvements as part of the development agreement.

Council Member Riggins added that work to widen the roadway has already begun. He explained that the Urban Renewal Agency is assisting with the relocation of electrical utility lines to accommodate the planned roadway widening and improve the connection with the existing roadway network.

Council Member Reeser moved to approve the University Towne Center Plat located at approximately 901 S Yellowstone Hwy, the application is to subdivide the property into (10) lots; Council Member Johnson seconded the motion; Mayor Merrill asked for a vote:

Those voting aye	**Those voting nay**
Council Member Johnson	none
Council Member Tietjen	
Council Member C. Erickson	
Council Member Reeser	
Council Member Riggins	

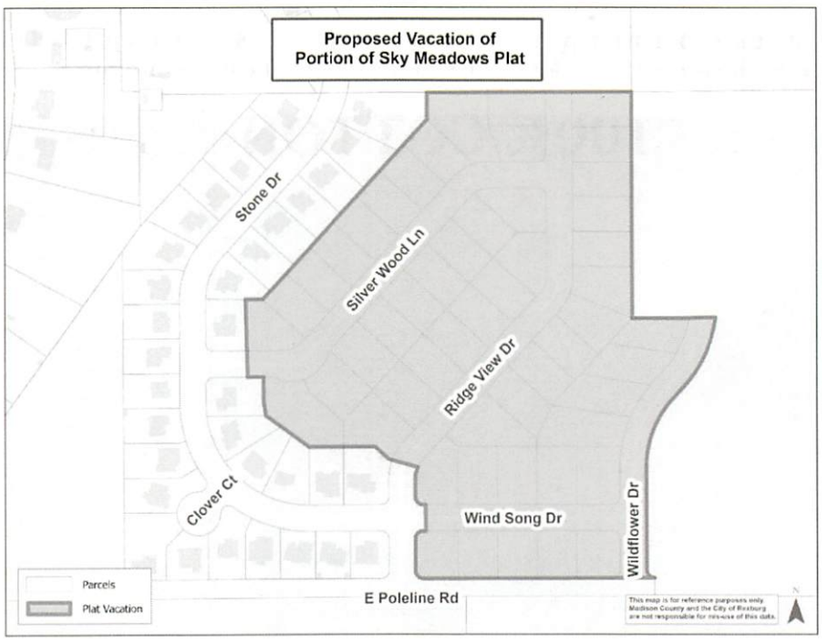
The motion carried.

Calendared Bills:

A. **Second Reading:** Those items which have been first read:
   1. **Ordinance No 1348** Vacate a Portion of the Sky Meadows Plat at Approximately 1228 Stone Dr (26-00383) – Alan Parkinson Action Item

ORDINANCE NO. 1348
Vacating "Sky Meadows" Plat

AN ORDINANCE VACATING A PORTION OF THE PLAT KNOWN AS "SKY MEADOWS" IN THE CITY OF REXBURG, IDAHO; PROVIDING FINDINGS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.



Council Member Riggins explained that he voted against the proposal during the initial vote and wanted to publicly reiterate the reason for his position. He expressed concern that the developers should communicate more effectively with individuals who had already purchased homes in the area. He stated that many homeowners expected future development to be consistent with the existing neighborhood in terms of lot sizes and housing character. Council Member Riggins emphasized that he wanted those concerns to be part of the public record.

Council Member C. Erickson commented that he has received feedback from residents regarding the development proposal and suggested that the city consider expanding its public notification efforts for projects that could affect larger neighborhoods. He noted that, although the city's current notification radius extended beyond the statutory requirement, some developments have impacts that reach well beyond the immediately adjacent properties. He suggested that, in certain situations, the city should consider notifying a broader group of nearby residents so they will have an opportunity to provide input before decisions are made.

P&Z Administrator Parkinson explained that state law required property owners within 300 feet of a proposed zone change to receive mailed notice and noted that the city exceeds that requirement by notifying property owners within 350 feet. He stated that increasing the notification distance will require an amendment to the city's development code. Council Member Erickson clarified that he is not suggesting a broader notification area for every application but believed certain projects with broader neighborhood impacts might warrant additional outreach.

Council Member Riggins agreed, commenting that developments involving previously planned communities could justify enhanced notification because existing homeowners often purchased their properties with certain expectations regarding future development. He suggested that when a project significantly altered an established development plan, broader communication with affected residents would be appropriate.

P&Z Administrator Parkinson explained that, in addition to mailed notices, the city staff posts large yellow public hearing signs at subdivision entrances, publishes notices on the city's website, and advertises public hearings in the newspaper as required by state law.

Mayor Merrill said he has observed that residents sometimes do not realize a proposal might affect them until construction activity becomes visible. He acknowledged the Councilmembers' comments and stated that the city will consider whether there are opportunities to improve public notification and encourage earlier public participation for similar projects in the future.

Council Member Johnson moved to approve **Ordinance No 1348** Vacate a Portion of the Sky Meadows Plat at Approximately 1228 Stone Dr. and consider second read; Council Member C. Erickson seconded the motion; Mayor Merrill asked for a vote:

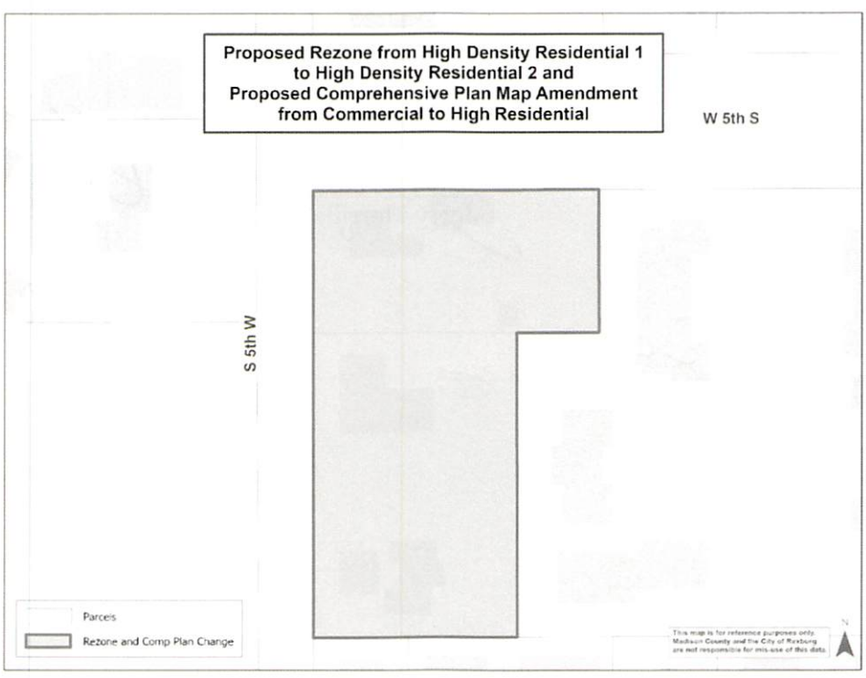
Those voting aye	**Those voting nay**
Council Member Johnson	Council Member Riggins
Council Member Tietjen	
Council Member C. Erickson	
Council Member Reeser	

The motion carried.

2. Ordinance No 1349 Rezone 509-539 S 5th W from High Density Residential 1 (HDR1) to High Density Residential 2 (HDR2) Zone (26-00476) – Alan Parkinson Action Item

ORDINANCE NO. 1349
Rezone 509-539 S 5th W from High Density Residential 1 (HDR1) to High Density Residential 2 (HDR2) Zone

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND CHANGING THE ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF REXBURG, IDAHO, AND PROVIDING THAT THE ZONED DESIGNATION OF THAT CERTAIN PROPERTY HEREINAFTER DESCRIBED, SITUATED IN REXBURG, MADISON COUNTY, IDAHO, BE CHANGED AS HEREINAFTER DESIGNATED; AND PROVIDING WHEN THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BECOME EFFECTIVE.



P&Z Administrator Parkinson said the property owners are seeking the rezoning to improve the marketability of the property for future development. He explained that the requested zoning is consistent with the city's long-term planning objectives, as the area has been identified as appropriate for higher-density residential development due to its proximity to the university campus and its accessibility within walking distance. He concluded that the proposed HDR-2 designation is a better fit for the property's location.

Council Member Riggins moved to approve Ordinance No 1349 Rezone 509-539 S 5th W from High Density Residential 1 (HDR1) to High Density Residential 2 (HDR2) Zone and consider second read; Council Member C. Erickson seconded the motion; Mayor Merrill asked for a vote:

Those voting aye	**Those voting nay**
Council Member Johnson	none
Council Member Tietjen	
Council Member C. Erickson	
Council Member Reeser	
Council Member Riggins	

The motion carried.

B. Third Reading: Those items which have been second read: NONE

Consent Calendar: The consent calendar includes items which require formal City Council action, however, they are typically routine or not of great controversy. Individual Council members may ask that any specific item be removed from the consent calendar for discussion in greater detail. Explanatory information is included in the City Council's agenda packet regarding these items.

A. Minutes from FY27 Remaining Budget Meetings & June 17, 2026, Meeting - Action Item
B. Approve the City of Rexburg Bills - Action Item

Council Member Johnson moved to approve the Consent Calendar containing the minutes, and city bills; Council Member Reeser seconded the motion; Mayor Merrill asked for a vote:

Those voting aye	**Those voting nay**
Council Member Johnson	none
Council Member Tietjen	
Council Member C. Erickson	
Council Member Reeser	
Council Member Riggins	

The motion carried.

Adjournment 8:09 P.M.

APPROVED:

Jerry Merrill, Mayor

Attest:

Marianna Gonzalez, City Deputy Clerk