

Town of Walden
Walden Planning Commission
Regular Monthly Meeting
April 23, 2026
5:30 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Prior to the meeting being called to order, Town Recorder Stacy Stewart led those present in a prayer for fallen Hamilton County Deputy Landon Faulkner.

The regular monthly meeting of the Walden Planning Commission (WPC) was called to order by Chairman Tom Bartoo at 5:30 PM. Mr. Don Reynolds was the only interested citizen in attendance.

II. ROLL CALL

Town Administrator Mariah Prescott called the roll, noting the presence of Tom Bartoo, Angela Cassidy, Joe Robbins, Jr., Werner Slabber, Bill Trohanis, and Dawson Wheeler. Town Attorney Sam Elliott and Ashley Gates, Walden's consultant from Southeast Tennessee Development District (SETD) were also present. Commissioner (Comm) Tim Hilvers was absent.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

COMMISSIONER ANGELA CASSIDY MOVED TO ADOPT THE AGENDA, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WERNER SLABBER AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE WALDEN PLANNING COMMISSION.

IV. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES -- MARCH 26, 2026

COMMISSIONER ANGELA CASSIDY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 26, 2026, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WERNER SLABBER AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE WALDEN PLANNING COMMISSION.

V. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Town Administrator Mariah Prescott gave the report, noting that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BMA) have deferred all action on purchase of the Totten Property until the May meeting.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

There are no communications from the Chairman or Comms.

VII. HEARING OF PERSONS HAVING BUSINESS WITH THE COMMISSION

There are no citizens having business with the WPC.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Zoning Ordinance Updates

i. Livestock and Fowl Regulations

SETD Consultant Ashley Gates summarized the updates to both the Zoning and Outdoor Lighting Ordinances. This summary is attached as an exhibit to these minutes (Appendix A). Discussion among the Comms included the need for clarified definitions and possibly less restrictive language in the Livestock and Fowl regulations.

There is no action taken on this agenda item.

b. Outdoor Lighting Ordinance

Mr. Dan Reynolds was invited to speak regarding this ordinance. He noted that he has worked with a consultant on the Dark Sky initiative. Mr. Reynolds believes that two years is not enough time to require compliance for existing businesses / residences – he feels that five years would be more reasonable. He further stated that new construction or changing out of existing bulbs should possibly be addressed immediately. In closing, Mr. Reynolds feels that a finalized Dark Sky ordinance would give appropriate leverage to citizens and neighbors.

There is no action taken on this agenda item.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

There is no new business.

X. ADJOURNMENT

COMMISSIONER ANGELA CASSIDY MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING, SECONDED BY CHAIRMAN TOM BARTOO.

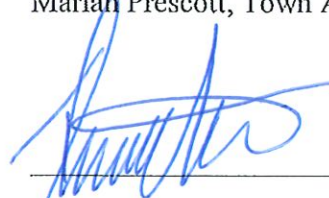
Chairman Tom Bartoo adjourned the meeting at 7:16 PM.



Respectfully submitted:
Stacy Stewart



Approved:
Mariah Prescott, Town Administrator



Approved:
Tom Bartoo, Chairman

(A)



MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Walden Planning Commission

Cc: Mariah Prescott, Town Administrator

From: Ashley Gates, Senior Planner

Date: April 23, 2026

Subject: Summary of updates to Zoning Ordinance and Lighting Ordinance

Zoning Ordinance Updates – Articles 1 through 6 - Updates since March 26, 2026 meeting

Section 1.03(E) – Relation to Other Laws

- Spelling Correction: “more restrictive *statue*” → “more restrictive *statute*”

Section 5.06 – Livestock and Fowl

- Per discussion, in March, removed maximum livestock to match existing regulations.
 - March: “No more than 100 livestock or fowl”
 - April: “No more than 100 fowl”
- Added note to refer WPC members to recommended standards for further review

Section 5.08(F)(3)(ii)(e) – Conceptual Site Plan Requirements

- Added lighting to required site plan elements, corrected plural of right-of-way.
 - March: “Proposed streets, sidewalks, and right-of-ways”
 - April: “Proposed streets, sidewalks, lighting and rights-of-way”

Added: Table of Uses for review; Livestock and Fowl regulations for review

Outdoor Lighting Ordinance - Updates since March 26, 2026 meeting

Title

- March: An ordinance amending the Walden Zoning Ordinance to regulate outdoor lighting for commercial and industrial developments and adopt voluntary residential dark sky practices
- April: An ordinance amending the Walden Zoning Ordinance to regulate outdoor lighting

D(2) – Residential & Public Lighting

- March draft: Explicitly exempted residential uses and framed them as voluntary only
- Final draft:
 - Applies to new permanent lighting in residential zones
 - Applies to publicly owned lighting (ROW, street lights)

Section E – General Requirements

- Intro Sentence: Cleaned duplication (“requirements.the following requirements”)

E(3) – Lighting Controls

- March draft: Had redundant and confusing structure
 - Separate “Timer Controls Required”
 - Separate “Commercial Outdoor Sales Lots”
 - Separate “Motion Sensor Control”
 - Then a duplicative second section repeating same rules
- April Draft:
 - Consolidated into a single, clear subsection applying to non-residential uses only
 - Introduced new requirement: Parking lots must dim to 50% during off-hours
 - Clarified applicability and removed duplication

G – Structure and Compliance Timeline

- **Change 1:** Reorganized into numbered subsections
- **Change 2:** Added distinction between residential and non-residential. Final draft adds 5-year amortization period only for non-residential lighting
- **Change 3:** Removed universal 3-year compliance trigger from March draft

H(6) – Fossil Fuel Lighting

- March draft included: “Fossil fuel lighting. Open fires are not permitted...”
- April draft: Removed entirely

Section I – Exemptions

- March draft: Public lighting was fully exempt
- April draft: Removed this exemption (since public lighting now regulated under Applicability)

Section J – Voluntary Residential Dark Sky Practices

- Entire Section Removed

Section L – Penalties

- March draft: \$50 per fixture per day
- April draft: Fine “per luminaire per annum” (amount left blank)