

MINUTES
Planning Commission
February 24, 2025

The City of Wyoming Planning Commission met in regular session on Monday, February 24, 2025, in the Council Chambers at the City Building. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Jon B. Boss, Chair. Attendance was as follows:

MEMBERS:

Jon B. Boss, Chair
Dan Driehaus
Dan Johnson
Ethan Pagliaro
Arwin Xu, Wyoming High School Student

ABSENT:

Phyllis Bossin
Matthew Erickson, Wyoming High School Student

STAFF:

Megan Statt Blake, Community Development Director
Tana Bere, Community Development Specialist
Rusty Herzog, City Manager
Brooke Brady, Police Chief
Dennis Brown, Fire Chief

OTHERS:

Tim Weber, Superintendent of Wyoming City Schools
Ronda Johnson, Treasurer of Wyoming City Schools
Gina Kirschner, Primary Schools Principal
Claire Miller, Friendship United Methodist Church
Mark Nolte, Kleingers Engineering
Mike Ruetschle, Ruetschle Architects
Lisa Nice, Central Terrace resident
Mitch Nice, Central Terrace resident
Tom Tucker, Fleming Road resident
Leslie Cowden, Central Terrace resident
Susan Klein, Fleming Road resident
David Savage, Fleming Road resident

Welcome and Introductions: Wyoming High School Students:

Mr. Boss introduced Arwin Xu (present) and Matthew Erickson (not present) who are

Wyoming High School sophomores that have been appointed to be part of the Planning Commission for the school year. The Commission is delighted to have the students participate and be part of discussions and to learn how the Planning Commission operates. Each of the board, commissions, and committees has at least two students appointed to serve. Mr. Boss asked Mr. Xu to introduce himself.

Mr. Xu, currently a sophomore, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate. Arwin thanked everyone for their warm welcome and support. Mr. Erickson was not in attendance.

Business:

Review of a Development Plan Exemption Request from Wyoming City Schools for a Temporary Primary School to be Located at Friendship United Methodist Church,

1025 Springfield Pike: Superintendent Tim Weber of Wyoming City Schools opened the discussion by introducing himself and members of his team. He acknowledged the presence of the City Manager, Chief of Police, and Fire Chief, who were in attendance to assist with questions concerning the proposal.

Superintendent Weber emphasized the importance of the moment, as the school district reached a critical point in the planning process for replacing the three K-4 primary schools—Vermont, Hilltop, and Elm—on their current sites. Because of space limitations, students must be relocated during the demolition and reconstruction of the existing buildings. The term “swing space” was used to describe these temporary school locations.

Claire Miller, a representative of Friendship United Methodist Church and a long-time resident of Wyoming, expressed her support for the proposal. She shared that the church is pleased to offer its space for educational use and welcomes the opportunity to partner with the school district. She stated that the church utilizes only a small percentage of the time during the week and could accommodate two of the three schools during their respective construction phases.

Mike Ruetschle, lead architect from Ruetschle Architects, outlined the purpose of the evening’s presentation. He explained the planning process to date, reviewed the swing space site evaluations, and introduced the detailed proposal for the use of the Friendship United Methodist Church property. Mr. Ruetschle recapped the broader school facility planning effort that began in fall 2023 and included community engagement, geotechnical studies, and traffic analyses. Eight planning options were initially developed, which were narrowed to two options by spring 2024. A statistically valid community survey resulted in 60 percent support for rebuilding the three schools on their current sites. The approved plan, backed by a successful bond issue vote in November 2024 with nearly 69 percent support, involved replacing each school one-for-one at their existing locations.

Mr. Ruetschle reviewed the physical limitations of each school site, noting that the existing footprints leave no room to construct new buildings adjacent to current structures. Thus, students must be relocated during construction. He referenced the precedent of the middle school swing space previously placed on the high school baseball field and how that experience influenced planning.

The team evaluated approximately eight alternate swing space locations, including Hilltop Park, St. James Church, the Civic Center, Foster Grove Park, Crescent Park, and the high school campus. Each presented significant challenges related to size, infrastructure, and access. The plan presented to voters included use of the softball field at the high school for modular classrooms for Vermont and Hilltop students. However, after the bond passed, Friendship United Methodist Church reached out with an offer to use its facilities, prompting a shift in planning.

Site Plan and Project Benefits

Mr. Ruetschle emphasized several advantages of the Friendship Church site. The church's west-of-Pike location eliminates the need for students to cross Springfield Pike. The facility itself can host restrooms, dining, and gymnasium activities, reducing the size and cost of required modular units. The proposal includes the addition of four modular classrooms placed against existing berms. Utility costs would be significantly reduced since the church's infrastructure would be used for key functions. Vehicular access from Fleming Road would be safer and more efficient, and use of the church site would preserve the high school softball field. Additionally, the cost savings would allow for expanded learning spaces and program enhancements in the new permanent buildings.

Traffic Impact Presentation

Mark Nolt, Senior Project Manager from The Kleingers Group, presented findings from the traffic impact study. Mr. Nolt stated that traffic would be managed by enforcing a one-way entrance from Fleming Road and a right-turn-only exit onto Springfield Pike. Left turns into the site would not be permitted during school hours due to potential backups onto the Pike. The site layout includes designated drop-off and pickup zones, with peak arrival and dismissal patterns estimated based on current Hilltop site usage.

Traffic studies indicated that morning queuing could be accommodated largely within the site and along a widened segment of Fleming Road. However, afternoon dismissal queues would exceed on-site capacity. As a solution, the city-owned parking lot on the east side of Springfield Pike would serve as an overflow area. Mr. Nolt also discussed proposed pavement markings and signage adjustments to better manage vehicle flow and proposed recommendations to discourage illegal drop-offs on Central Terrace through consistent signage and staff monitoring.

Public Comments and Discussion

Residents from Central Terrace, Fleming Road, and other nearby streets raised several concerns. One primary concern involved the proximity of the playground area to a driveway, with only 13 feet separating play areas from vehicle access. Community members strongly advocated for a protective fence to ensure the safety of students and prevent unauthorized access or vehicle intrusion. Some residents also questioned how the church property would be used once the temporary school functions cease and urged the church leadership to plan for future uses proactively.

Another major concern involved traffic congestion. Residents predicted that despite signage, parents would prefer to park along Central Terrace rather than cross Springfield Pike, thus violating intended traffic flow. Several residents suggested structural solutions, such as creating curbs or physical barriers that prevent left turns or discourage through-traffic in undesignated areas.

Concerns about student safety while crossing both Springfield Pike and Fleming Road were frequently voiced. Multiple suggestions were made, including installation of flashing school zone lights, creation of leading pedestrian intervals at traffic signals, placement of rumble strips, and formal school crossing guards. Mr. Nolt confirmed that such options would be considered and incorporated where feasible. City and school representatives stated that crossing guard responsibilities would fall under the school district's budget and staffing.

One resident asked about the use of the church during afterschool hours. School officials clarified that the only activity beyond regular school hours would be after school care until 6:00 p.m., accommodating approximately 60 students. All other events, including school-related functions, would be relocated to alternative venues during the swing space period.

Planning Commission Feedback

Planning Commission members echoed the community's safety concerns and encouraged the design team to revise the traffic management plan. They urged a detailed examination of pedestrian safety, particularly at key intersections and within the parking area. Commissioners recommended exploring additional physical barriers to restrict illegal turns and unauthorized drop-offs and emphasized that traffic enforcement must rely on more than signage and staff presence.

A suggestion was made to begin striping and traffic signage well before the start of school to allow the community to adjust to the changes. Other comments included the need to coordinate with Rumpke for garbage pickup timing and to examine the interaction between this plan and traffic at the middle school and high school.

Commissioners generally agreed that the Friendship Church site was the best available option and commended the school district for its proactive and transparent planning. They

stressed the importance of continual communication between the school, the church, the City, and residents throughout the temporary school period. They asked that a representative from the schools come back to the Commission and share how the pedestrian and traffic safety plans have evolved.

Motion and Approval

Mr. Driehaus moved to approve the proposed use of Friendship United Methodist Church as a temporary primary school swing space under Chapter 1133 of the City of Wyoming Zoning Code, specifically sections 1133.03 and 1133.04. The approval is valid for a period of up to three years. The motion was seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Approval of August 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Pagliaro moved to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Driehaus seconded the motion. By voice vote, all voted yes, the motion carried.

Excusal of Absent Member:

Mr. Pagliaro moved to excuse Ms. Bossin. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. By voice vote, all voted yes, the motion carried.

Adjournment:

Mr. Pagliaro moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Driehaus seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debby Martin, Executive Assistant

Jon B. Boss, Chair