



General Government & Planning (GGP) Committee

March 10, 2026

Summary and Motions

Committee members Liz Sheehan (Chair), Shayla Lynch, J.D. (Vice Chair), Dan Wu, James Brown, Chuck Ellinger II, Emma Curtis, Whitney Elliott Baxter, Dave Sevigny, Jennifer Reynolds, and Hil Boone were present. Council members Tyler Morton, Joseph Hale, and Tom Eblen were present as non-voting members. Chair Sheehan called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

I. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 10, 2026 COMMITTEE SUMMARY (Sheehan)

A motion by Ellinger to approve the February 10, 2026 Committee Summary was seconded by Curtis and approved unanimously.

II. SOLAR WORKING GROUP – SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS (Sheehan & Sevigny/Cassidy)

Sylvia Cassidy, 5th District Legislative Aide, presented the findings of the Solar Working Group. The group met twelve times over six months to review large-scale ground-mounted solar energy systems in Fayette County's agricultural zones. They examined environmental impacts, soil protection, agrivoltaics, decommissioning requirements, and economic considerations. The group also heard presentations from several stakeholder organizations and LFUCG departments.

The working group recommended updates to the Solar Energy Systems ordinance. These included clarifying regulations for battery storage, strengthening decommissioning standards, and adding definitions related to farmland and brownfields. The group also encouraged dual-use agricultural production at solar sites. The proposal included allowing large-scale solar energy systems in some agricultural zones through a conditional use permit.

During the committee discussion, council members expressed different views on allowing large-scale solar development in agricultural zones. Some raised concerns about preserving farmland and the composition of the working group. They also questioned whether more agricultural stakeholders should have been involved earlier. Others stressed that the proposal contains safeguards, such as the existing acreage cap. They argued that moving the ordinance forward for review by the Planning Commission, Rural Land Management Board, and Environmental Commission would allow broader stakeholder input and continue the policy discussion.

A motion by Boone to remove the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) designation for Large Scale Ground Mounted Solar Energy Systems in the A-R and A-U zones, replacing it with a prohibited use, and remove subsections 8, 10, and 13 of Section 31-7(a) as they apply to CUPs in those zones, was seconded by Baxter. **The motion did not pass, 4-6.** (Aye: Ellinger, Baxter, Reynolds, Boone; Nay: Sheehan, Lynch, Wu, Brown, Curtis, Sevigny)

A motion by Sheehan to report out the Solar Energy Systems Zoning Text Ordinance Amendment to the Planning Commission for its review and public hearing and refer the text to the Rural Land Management Board and Environmental Commission for review, was seconded by Wu. **The motion passed, 6-4.** (Aye: Sheehan, Lynch, Wu, Brown, Curtis, Sevigny; Nay: Ellinger, Baxter, Reynolds, Boone)

A motion by Baxter to amend the proposal by sending the ordinance solely to the Environmental Commission and Rural Land Management Board for input prior to forwarding it to the Planning Commission was seconded by Boone. **The motion did not pass, 4-6.** (*Aye: Ellinger, Baxter, Reynolds, Boone; Nay: Sheehan, Lynch, Wu, Brown, Curtis, Sevigny*)

III. EFFICIENCIES IN OUR DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES (Brown/Horn)

Commissioner Keith Horn, Department of Planning and Preservation, presented an overview of improvements to Lexington's development review process, including changes following the adoption of House Bill 443, which established more objective review standards and shortened approval timelines.

The data presented showed reductions in average approval times for development plans. Planning staff is also evaluating ways to improve application monitoring and expanding the use of the Accela permitting system to improve efficiency and tracking.

Questions and discussion were held until after the next presentation.

IV. PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT STUDY: RECOMMENDATIONS 8 & 10 (Reynolds/Larmour)

Reynolds introduced the presentation regarding Recommendations 8 and 10 from the Planning & Development Study. Alicia Larmour, Council Research Analyst, presented information on a proposed Development Liaison position that could help coordinate development review across departments, track applications through the approval process, and identify systemic delays.

Committee members discussed the potential benefits of the role, including improved predictability in development timelines and support for housing production. Members expressed interest in improving transparency and accountability in the development process, particularly as Lexington continues to address housing supply and economic growth pressures. Some councilmembers noted that further analysis would be needed to determine the appropriate structure, responsibilities, and funding for such a role, and that these considerations may be revisited during future budget discussions or implementation planning.

V. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE (Sheehan)

Due to time constraints, items referred to committee were not reviewed. The referral list will be reviewed at the next meeting on April 28, 2026.

Chair Sheehan adjourned the meeting at 2:58 p.m.