RESOLUTION NO. 2026-17

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF PLACERVILLE RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 10, CHAPTER 4, SECTION 3 OF THE PLACERVILLE MUNICIPAL CODE (ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT 26-11) TO REMOVE STANDARD ZONING YARD SETBACK REQUIREMENTS FOR MINOR DETACHED ACCESSORY STRUCTURES EXEMPT FROM BUILDING PERMITS, SUBJECT TO STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH FIRE SAFETY AND LIFE-SAFETY STANDARDS, AND DETERMINING THE AMENDMENT TO BE EXEMPT FROM CEQA

WHEREAS, the City of Placerville initiated Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA) 26-11 in response to regulatory challenges raised by citizens regarding the impact of restrictive yard setbacks on minor, unpermitted detached accessory structures; and

WHEREAS, under the current framework of Section 10-4-3 of the Placerville Municipal Code, minor detached structures under 120 square feet (such as tool sheds, playhouses, and minor storage buildings) are burdened by restrictive zoning setbacks, creating an unnecessary barrier for basic, low-impact property uses; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment decouples minor, non-habitable outbuildings from standard zoning yard restrictions, provided the structures are already exempt from structural building permits under the California Building Code (CBC) (typically detached structures under 120 square feet without utilities); and

WHEREAS, this amendment provides meaningful relief to property owners facing physical obstacles due to constrained lot sizes, steep Sierra foothill topography, and irregular historic lot configurations; and

WHEREAS, the City of Placerville is situated within a high fire hazard environment, and removing standard spatial zoning setbacks must not translate into creating fire hazards; and

WHEREAS, to preserve public health, safety, and property protection, the amendment explicitly mandates that all such permit-exempt structures must strictly adhere to Fire Safety Setbacks and Fire Separation Distances as defined by the California Building Code (including Chapter 7A and Wildland-Urban Interface standards), the California Fire Code, and local fire district clearances; and

WHEREAS, the amendment explicitly preserves public utility and drainage easements to ensure no structure blocks vital community infrastructure or creates localized flooding issues for neighboring properties; and

WHEREAS, on November 17, 2026, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed special public meeting to consider Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA) 26-11, evaluated the analysis provided in the staff report, and received public testimony; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that ZOA 26-11 directly aligns with the goals, objectives, and policies of the City of Placerville General Plan, including Goal C (Land Use Element) regarding property utility and topography, the Land Use Element policies on streamlining administrative and code enforcement processes, and Goal G (Health and Safety Element) regarding wildland-urban interface structural hardening and fire protection; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has reviewed the environmental determination for this project and finds it exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) ("Common Sense Exemption").

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission of the City of Placerville hereby recommends that the City Council:

SECTION 1. Recitals. The Planning Commission hereby makes the following findings based on the complete record before it, finding that the foregoing recitals are true and correct and are fully incorporated into this Resolution as formal findings.

SECTION 2. CEQA Findings. The Planning Commission finds, based on its independent judgment and the administrative record, that Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA) 26-11 is exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because adjusting setback rules for minor, non-habitable structures while preserving strict fire safety protocols ensures there is no potential for a significant physical impact on the environment. The Planning Commission recommends that the City Council direct staff to file a Notice of Exemption (NOE) following final adoption. (Correcting and superseding any erroneous historical references to administrative water conservation regulations inadvertently contained in related analysis).

SECTION 3. General Plan Consistency Findings. The Planning Commission finds that ZOA 26-11 is structurally consistent with the City of Placerville General Plan because it optimizes property utility on parcels constrained by steep Sierra foothill topography without requiring costly variance processes (Land Use Element Goal C), eliminates redundant permit streams for de minimis neighborhood elements (Administrative Efficiency Policies), and maintains full regulatory enforcement over fire separation distances to prevent outbuildings from acting as hazardous ladder fuels (Health and Safety Element Goal G).

SECTION 4. Recommendation of Approval. The Planning Commission hereby recommends that the City Council approve Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA) 26-11 and adopt an Ordinance amending Title 10, Chapter 4, Section 3 of the Placerville Municipal Code to remove standard zoning setback requirements for minor detached accessory structures that are exempt from a building permit under the CBC, while maintaining strict fire safety, life-safety, and easement compliance.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a special meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Placerville on November 17, 2026, by the following vote:

AYES: _____

NOES: _____

ABSENT: _____

ABSTAIN: _____

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Kris Kiehne, Planning Commission Chair

ATTEST:

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Arianna Blandon, Associate Planner