



City of Sidney, MT
Nuisance Committee Meeting
August 25, 2026 3:30 PM
115 2nd Street SE | Sidney, MT 59270

1. Approval of Minutes

a. July 28th, 2026 Meeting Minutes

The Committee reviewed the July 28, 2026 meeting minutes. A motion was made by FM/BI Rasmussen to approve the minutes as presented and seconded by Alderman Kauffman. The motion carried.

2. Roll Call

Committee Members Present:

City Officials/ Staff Present:

Committee Members Present: Alderman Kauffman, Police Chief Kraft, FM/BI Rasmussen, PWD Hintz

Others Present: Mayor Norby, CAO Chamberlin, Compliance Officer Schroeder, Clerk/Treasurer Lange

3. Public Comment/ Visitors

Your opportunity for the public to address the Council on items not included on the agenda, no action will be taken during this time.

a. Lee Harris: Uncontrolled Weeds and Lawn Grass

Mr. Harris addressed the Committee regarding the City's weed and nuisance enforcement process and provided photographs of properties within his neighborhood. His comments followed a recent situation in which wildflowers and garden plants at a family member's property were removed by the City after being identified as uncontrolled vegetation.

Mr. Harris expressed concern regarding the effectiveness of the current notification process, particularly when notices are left at properties where they may be missed or displaced. He suggested that vegetation scheduled for removal could be temporarily marked with spray chalk or another visible method, providing property owners an

additional opportunity to identify the area of concern and contact the City before abatement. Mr. Harris also raised concerns regarding long-term construction materials, debris, abandoned or inoperable vehicles, and general property maintenance throughout the community. He suggested reviewing whether building permit requirements or other procedures could provide additional accountability for unfinished projects.

Discussion followed regarding the difficulty of distinguishing intentional landscaping, gardens, wildflowers, and other vegetation from uncontrolled weeds, particularly within boulevards. CAO Jessica Chamberlin explained that questionable landscaping situations may be addressed through the nuisance process, which provides additional notice and time for property owners to respond rather than proceeding immediately under the uncontrolled weed process. Safety considerations, including visibility, pedestrian access, and sight triangles, must also be considered when vegetation is located within public rights-of-way.

The Committee discussed the costs assessed when the City is required to mow or abate a property. Chamberlin explained that property owners are charged the City's established costs for employee time, equipment, fuel, and related expenses, in addition to the applicable penalty. During the most recent assessment period, approximately 56 properties ultimately had mowing costs placed on their property taxes, although substantially more properties received warnings and corrected the violations without City abatement. Committee members agreed that the current penalty structure should be reviewed to determine whether it provides an adequate deterrent. Staff indicated that review of nuisance and weed enforcement fees, penalties, and procedures is planned for the fall, including clarification of allowable costs and potential minimum charges.

The Committee also discussed the importance of community education, consistent enforcement, property-owner responsibility, and the City's responsibility to appropriately maintain its own public spaces.

4. New Properties

a. Iszler 505 Lincoln Avenue South

The Committee reviewed conditions at 505 Lincoln Avenue South. Compliance Officer Schroeder reported that an informal warning letter was sent to the property owner on July 29 requesting cleanup of the property. No response had been received, and no substantial progress had been made. The Committee reviewed photographs of the property and discussed the existing conditions and potential safety concerns.

A motion was made by BI/FM Rasmussen to add 505 Lincoln Avenue South to the nuisance process and proceed with formal notice to the property owner and seconded by Chief Kraft. Motion carried.

5. Properties in Process

CAO Chamberlin reported that the three nuisance properties currently proceeding through the legal process have been scheduled for court on September 28, 2026. The Compliance Officer will prepare to testify regarding the properties.

a. Coon-410 4th St NE (In Process per Committee Timeline)

The Committee also received an update regarding the Coon property. Compliance Officer Schroeder recently met with the property owner and identified three specific areas where progress was expected. The property owner indicated he intended to begin cleanup; however, Compliance Officer Schroeder observed no progress as of the following day. She will continue conducting follow-up inspections.

The Committee also discussed the previously established November 1 deadline for removal of the house at the Coon property. At the time of the staff visit, the property owner had not contacted a contractor or otherwise made arrangements for demolition.

b. Bargain Garage: 1440 South Central Avenue, Sidney, MT 59270 (in Court Process)

The Bargain Garage at 1440 South Cental Ave, the Crowe property at 709 5th St SE, and Giddens property at 411 6th St SE are all in court process with an initial court date of September 28th.

c. Crowe: 709 5th Street SE, Sidney, MT 59270 (in Court Process)

d. Giddens: 411 6th Street SE, Sidney, MT 59270 (*In Court Process*)

No additional progress was reported on the Giddens property.

6. Properties Requesting Extension

None

7. Abated Properties

None

8. Compliance Officer Update

a. August 2026 Report and Update

Compliance Officer Schroeder reported that 58 yards were tagged, with 48 mowed by the property owners and 10 requiring City mowing.

Nineteen trailers were noticed, with 18 brought into compliance. Two trailers received citations following repeated violations. Four vehicles were addressed and all were moved. One semi was also addressed and subsequently moved.

Compliance Officer Schroeder is monitoring an additional property as a potential nuisance case for the next meeting. Cleanup activity, including removal of a tree and branches, has begun, and staff will monitor the property to determine whether sufficient progress continues. Compliance Officer Schroeder also reported that a demolition permit has been issued for a trailer home on 4th Street NE and the

structure is expected to be removed from the property.

CAO Chamberlin provided an update regarding properties containing overgrown gardens, clover, flower beds, or similar vegetation that may not clearly fall within the City's standard uncontrolled weeds and grass provisions. Following consultation with City Attorney Kalil, these properties will be addressed through the City's nuisance process. Property owners will receive the required notice and opportunity to clean the property. Where the issue involves vegetation cleanup rather than a condition requiring court action, the Committee may authorize City abatement after the required notice period if the property owner fails to comply.

The Committee discussed weed control on City property, within parks, sidewalks, streets, alleys, and other public areas. Staff explained that the City performs weed control in certain public spaces and assists with the downtown commercial district when possible; however, available funding does not allow all City parks and public areas to be professionally treated at the desired frequency.

Property owners remain responsible for maintenance associated with their property, including applicable sidewalks, boulevards, alleys, and rights-of-way.

The Committee returned to the issue of penalties for weed and nuisance violations. Discussion indicated that Montana law may provide the City additional flexibility to establish higher penalties, including increased penalties for repeat offenses.

The Committee reported that a review of the City's existing fee and penalty structure is planned for the fall. The review will also consider how the City defines and calculates abatement costs, whether a minimum charge should be established, and how enforcement should distinguish between minor violations and properties requiring substantial City labor and equipment.

The Committee agreed that, with the Compliance Officer position and current enforcement process now more established, the next step should include reviewing and strengthening the supporting policies and procedures.

9. Adjournment

The Nuisance Committee Meeting was adjourned at 4:10pm.

[MIN_SIGNATURES]