



City of Broken Arrow

3100 New Orleans St
Broken Arrow
74014

Amended Minutes

City Council Special Meeting

Mayor Debra Wimpee
Vice Mayor Johnnie Parks
Council Member Lisa Ford
Council Member Justin Green
Council Member David Pickel

Monday, January 12, 2026

Time 6:00 p.m.

NSU Broken Arrow

1. Call to Order

Mayor Debra Wimpee called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Invocation

Pastor Greg Pittman led the Invocation.

3. Roll Call

Present: 5 - David Pickel, Justin Green, Lisa Ford, Johnnie Parks, Debra Wimpee

4. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The Pledge was led by Vice Mayor Johnnie Parks.

5. General Council Business

- A. 26-151** **Consideration, discussion, and possible approval of BAZ-002469-2025 (Rezoning) and SP-002526-2025 (Conditional Use Permit), Islamic Center of Tulsa, 15.06 acres, AG (Agricultural) to CG (Commercial General), located approximately ½ mile north of Tucson Street (121st Street) and just east of Olive Avenue (129th E. Avenue)**

Community Development Director Rocky Henkel presented an application to rezone a roughly 15-acre property on the east side of South Olive Avenue, south of the Creek Turnpike, from A1 Agricultural to CG Commercial General, along with a conditional use permit for a place of assembly. The site is designated Level 6 in the 2019 Next Comprehensive Plan, which supports commercial uses, and surrounding properties are primarily agricultural, greenway, floodplain, vacant land, or limited residential and assembly uses. The rezoning request complies with the comprehensive plan, and a place of assembly is allowed in both the existing and proposed zoning districts with a conditional use permit under the zoning ordinance update effective July 1, 2025. The applicant submitted a conceptual site plan, with complete engineering, infrastructure compliance, and final parking calculations to be addressed during the formal site plan process. Parking requirements will be determined in accordance with the ordinance standards for assembly and retail uses. Public comment at the Planning Commission raised concerns about future traffic, stormwater, sewer capacity, and a planned frontage road, while others spoke in support of the project. All infrastructure issues would be addressed during engineering, and the applicant would be required to dedicate right-of-way for the frontage road if approved. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the rezoning by a four-to-one vote and approval of the conditional use permit by a three-to-two vote, with the condition that no outdoor speakers be allowed. Based on the comprehensive plan, site location, surrounding land uses, and zoning regulations, staff recommends approval of both applications, subject to platting requirements, and offered to answer council questions before the applicant's presentation.

Mesuth Kasem addressed the council in support of the proposed place of worship, explaining his civic involvement, professional background, and longstanding connection to Broken Arrow, and describing a vision established in 2014 to responsibly acquire land for future expansion to serve both the faith community and the broader public. He emphasized that the project is community-oriented, low-impact, and comparable to existing churches, with predictable activity and full compliance with city traffic, parking, and safety requirements. Mr. Kasem argued that zoning decisions should be guided by facts, fairness, and consistency rather than fear, noting that places of worship are recognized institutional uses that do not diminish

property values and often provide stability and community engagement. He stated that the proposal complies with the zoning code and is consistent with the intent of the City's 2019 Comprehensive Plan, which serves as a policy guide and does not require a frontage road for institutional or religious uses. He highlighted the longstanding contributions of Muslims in Oklahoma and described charitable and interfaith service efforts demonstrating the group's commitment to being good neighbors. He concluded by respectfully asking the council to affirm the zoning approval in the interest of fairness, religious freedom, and community values. Then he introduced the next presenter from Wallace Engineering.

Nicole Watts of Wallace Design explained that the property contains extensive floodplain and floodway areas, as well as a jurisdictional stream, which significantly limit developable area and require careful engineering compliance. She described revisions to the conceptual site plan that reduce intensity, including a smaller parking layout consistent with zoning code limits, dedication of right-of-way for a future access road, and inclusion of a detention pond designed to meet state discharge requirements and potentially improve downstream flooding conditions. She noted that no development can occur in regulated floodplain or floodway areas without federal approvals and that utilities, including the likely use of aerobic or septic systems, would be permitted and regulated through ODEQ due to the lack of nearby sewer infrastructure. Addressing traffic concerns, she stated that current traffic volumes on Olive Avenue are well below the roadway's capacity and that anticipated peak use would occur during off-peak weekday hours, thereby limiting congestion impacts. Ms. Watts concluded by emphasizing that similar places of assembly in commercial zoning and Level 6 comprehensive plan areas have been approved throughout Broken Arrow, making the request consistent with past city decisions. She affirmed the applicant's commitment to working with city staff through all engineering and permitting processes.

During council discussion, members clarified that the site plan shown represented a three-phase master development, beginning with the prayer hall, followed by a gym and additional facilities. Questions were raised about traffic capacity, with Ms. Watts explaining that the 48,000-vehicle figure was based on standard traffic engineering guidance of 2,000 vehicles per lane per hour. However, she acknowledged she did not have the source document immediately available. Council members also focused on parking, noting that earlier conceptual plans showed several hundred spaces. At the same time, Ms. Watts explained that under the zoning code, the required parking for the prayer hall would be approximately 150 spaces based on seating or square footage, with a maximum allowance of 125 percent. She stated that earlier, higher numbers reflected conceptual assumptions rather than code-compliant calculations. Ms. Watts further clarified that retail components would be developed in later phases and that undeveloped commercial areas would remain raw land until built, as the city would not allow paving those areas for interim overflow parking.

Doug Townsden, a longtime Broken Arrow resident, spoke in support of the proposed place of worship, framing his remarks through his Christian faith and personal experiences with interfaith relationships. He emphasized that the core teaching of Jesus is to love God and love others without exclusion, arguing that faith cannot be reconciled with fear, hatred, or unequal treatment of people who believe differently. Drawing on his experiences with Muslim families, interfaith education, and travel, he said these relationships reflect the inclusive love taught in Scripture. Mr. Townsden urged the council to evaluate public comments through the lens of fairness and consistency, questioning whether similar concerns would be used to block a Christian church. He concluded by affirming his support for his Muslim neighbors and encouraging the council to act with justice and love, which he described as love expressed in public life.

Billy Hursch, a Ward 2 resident, church member, and police officer speaking as a private citizen, shared his professional experience patrolling an area that included a mosque. He stated that, over the years, in responding to hundreds of incidents in that area, none were caused by the mosque or its members, whom he described as respectful, cooperative, and good neighbors. Drawing parallels between mosques and churches, he emphasized that places of worship strengthen community ties and reduce crime by fostering connection and accountability. Hursch expressed his belief that the discussion would be far less contentious if the request involved a Christian church and concluded that Broken Arrow would be stronger by welcoming the mosque, urging the council to include rather than exclude neighbors who worship differently.

Aliyah Shimi, a multigenerational Broken Arrow resident, spoke in support of the mosque proposal by emphasizing that Muslims have long been part of Oklahoma and are deeply integrated into local life as veterans, military families, professionals, business owners, educators, and community leaders. She described her work training and liaising with law enforcement, argued that Muslims are not uniquely associated with crime or danger, and framed the request as a straightforward exercise of religious freedom and equal access to houses of worship. She noted the size and diversity of the Muslim population in Northeast Oklahoma, said existing facilities are overcrowded, and asked the community to move past fear of what feels unfamiliar.

Linda Russell, a Broken Arrow resident, spoke in opposition, urging caution based on concerns about the property's ownership and alleged organizational affiliations. She cited the 2014 purchase and subsequent transfer of the property to the North American Islamic Trust (NAIT), then described NAIT's origins and asserted links to organizations she characterized as part of a Muslim Brotherhood network, referenced past FBI investigations and the Holy Land Foundation case, and pointed to recent statements by public officials as reasons to prioritize public safety. She argued that, in her view, these reported connections make heightened scrutiny common sense rather than fear.

Michelle Thomas, a Broken Arrow resident raised in a Christian household, shared that she once feared people of different religions due to misunderstanding and negative portrayals, but that those views changed through personal relationships with Muslim friends. She acknowledged that technical issues such as zoning, parking, and infrastructure are essential. Still, she urged the council to ensure the decision remains focused on land-use considerations rather than religious fear. Ms. Thomas emphasized that Muslims are integral members of the community, including medical professionals, teachers, and nonprofit leaders. She encouraged the council to approach the decision with openness and understanding rather than allowing fear of difference to guide the outcome.

Christi Gillespie urged the council to deny the application, arguing that it conflicts with the City of Broken Arrow's comprehensive plan and would negatively impact long-term economic development. She stated that the plan clearly anticipates a future frontage road along the Creek Turnpike in this area and that approving the project could hinder that connectivity and worsen traffic congestion. Ms. Gillespie contended the site was consistently designated for commercial retail or employment uses, not a place of assembly, and that preserving sales-tax-generating development is especially important given recent growth in South Broken Arrow. She also raised concerns about clustering multiple non-sales-tax-generating uses nearby, the importance of the Olive exit as a commercial gateway into the city, unresolved floodplain and stormwater issues, and limited roadway capacity south of the turnpike. Based on these factors, she concluded the proposal does not align with the comprehensive plan, is economically unsound, and does not serve the city's long-term growth, and she asked the council to deny the request.

Sandra Rana spoke in support of the proposed mosque, noting that Broken Arrow has approved many places of worship over time and that this application represents an opportunity for the city to provide its first mosque. She shared her deep multigenerational roots in Oklahoma and emphasized that freedom of religion has long been central to both her family's history and the nation's founding principles. Ms. Rana stated that she has chosen to live and work in Tulsa County and has contributed to the community through her family, employment, and nonprofit involvement. She reminded the council that places of worship are constitutionally protected and referenced a 2001 Broken Arrow City Council resolution calling for tolerance, protection of minority rights, and respect for religious diversity. She urged the council to uphold those principles and offered to provide copies of the resolution for reference.

Jamal Siddiqui, a Broken Arrow resident and ophthalmologist, spoke in support of the proposed mosque by highlighting the longstanding presence and contributions of Muslims in the community. He shared his own deep American roots and noted that many Muslims in Broken Arrow are veterans, descendants of veterans, or professionals who actively serve veterans through healthcare and other services. Mr. Siddiqui addressed misconceptions he has seen online, emphasizing that Muslims respect and support veterans, contribute significantly to the local economy, and pay taxes through significant business investments that create jobs and generate revenue for South Broken Arrow. He also challenged stereotypes about Muslim women by describing his wife's leadership roles on prominent educational, medical, and nonprofit boards and her extensive philanthropic work. He concluded by underscoring that Muslims are deeply integrated into the community's civic, economic, and social fabric.

Brooklyn Forbes urged the council to deny the request, arguing that the proposed mosque does not comply with Broken Arrow's zoning ordinance or the Next Comprehensive Plan. She cited provisions intended to protect public health, safety, and welfare, asserting that the anticipated number of attendees would create traffic congestion and inconvenience residents, particularly during peak school and weekday travel times. Ms. Forbes questioned whether the site could safely accommodate the scale of the proposed use and raised concerns about incomplete planning, potential abandonment if the project could not be fully built, and impacts on neighborhood character, cohesion, and property values. She contended that approving the request would require bending zoning rules, create inconsistent precedent, and undermine community standards, and she asked the council to uphold the ordinance and vote no.

Clayton Bowen, a Ward 4 resident and member of the Broken Arrow Muslim community, spoke in support of the rezoning and conditional use permit recommended for approval by the Planning Commission. He said a mosque in Broken Arrow would significantly improve his family's lives. He emphasized that Muslims are an established part of the city's fabric, contributing as workers, parents, volunteers, and neighbors. Mr. Bowen framed the request as one of fairness and equal quality of life, noting that faith and family are central to community

life and that the First Amendment protects the free exercise of religion. As an expecting father, he rejected claims that a mosque would negatively change Broken Arrow, instead describing it as a continuation of the city's role as a place to raise families. He highlighted the community service and professional roles of Muslims in Broken Arrow and stated that the local Muslim population has outgrown existing facilities in Tulsa. He concluded by asking the council to uphold constitutional rights and approve the request based on the merits of the application.

Steve Swagger addressed the council with general remarks about freedom, tolerance, and boundaries, stating that his comments were not directed at any specific person or group. He argued that freedom requires laws and guidelines to protect society and that what some view as discrimination, he considers responsible governance. Citing a belief that societal change often progresses from resistance to tolerance to acceptance, he expressed concern about compromising constitutional freedoms. He questioned whether the community is willing to accept the long-term consequences of such compromises.

Hassan Kaleem shared his personal journey as an immigrant and physician to illustrate the challenges many Muslims face and the contributions they make to the community. He described undergoing extensive scrutiny upon arriving in the United States, then completing training, residency, and fellowship before practicing medicine in Oklahoma. Mr. Kaleem recounted serving as a hematologist-oncologist during the COVID-19 pandemic, isolating from his family for weeks to care for patients, and later founding the state's only private hematology-oncology practice, which now employs numerous American staff members. He emphasized his commitment as a taxpayer, employer, and community member, highlighted his family's volunteer work, and described his close relationships with people of different faiths. Mr. Kaleem concluded by explaining that his request is simple: to have a nearby mosque so his family, including visiting parents, can worship, stressing that the proposal is about faith, family, and belonging rather than anything more.

Sean Murray, a longtime Broken Arrow resident, spoke against the proposal, framing his comments through his Christian beliefs and concerns about what he described as false doctrine and cultural acceptance. He argued that Christian teachings do not support an "anything-goes" approach and said community standards and citizen sentiment should be considered in the council's decision. Mr. Murray also referenced earlier comments raising concerns about property ownership, affiliations, and financing, and questioned whether those issues had been vetted. He urged council members to represent their constituents' views when voting.

Namira Newaz, a Muslim American, spoke in support of the proposed mosque by describing her deep roots in the city, her academic and civic achievements, and her ability to freely practice her faith while contributing to the community. She emphasized that mosques serve not only as places of worship but also as centers for service, support, and community building, and framed the proposal as an exercise of constitutionally protected religious freedom rather than a request for special treatment. Ms. Newaz expressed concern over hostile rhetoric surrounding the proposal, acknowledged shared fears on all sides, and urged the council and community to choose dialogue, compassion, and coexistence so that all residents can feel a sense of belonging in Broken Arrow.

Sherri Thomas, a Broken Arrow resident, spoke in opposition and urged the council to deny the proposal, arguing that the Planning Commission erred in advancing it and that approval would be politically expedient rather than principled. She maintained that the property should remain designated for long-term commercial or agricultural use to support the city's financial sustainability. She contended that the project would not generate sufficient revenue to offset infrastructure costs, which she said would be borne by city taxpayers. Ms. Thomas raised concerns about sewer capacity, flooding, stormwater impacts, and the feasibility of septic or lagoon systems in a flood-prone area. She argued that paving and development would worsen existing problems. She concluded that the site is unsuitable for the proposed use and that approving it would harm, rather than benefit, Broken Arrow residents.

Shahad Shambil, a Broken Arrow resident, business owner, and healthcare provider, spoke in support of approving the proposed mosque, emphasizing that Muslims are already integrated members of the community who live, work, raise families, and serve others in the city. He described a mosque as a place of peace, family, education, charity, and community service. He said misconceptions and misinformation have led some to conflate religion with politics and fear what they do not understand. Mr. Shambil urged the council to base its decision on zoning facts, fairness, and constitutional principles rather than fear or bias, noting that the First Amendment protects religious freedom for all and arguing that freedom is meaningless if it applies only to some people.

Phill Byers summarized opposition arguments raised at the January 6 meeting, focusing on zoning and infrastructure concerns. He asserted that the proposed mosque conflicts with the Broken Arrow Comprehensive Plan, would interfere with a planned frontage road intended to support retail development and sales tax generation, and could worsen existing traffic congestion at Olive and 121st, especially given that road expansion is not planned for up to ten

years. He raised concerns about sewage capacity, stormwater runoff, marshy conditions, and whether the site can physically accommodate the required parking, septic systems, and leach fields in compliance with DEQ standards. Mr. Byers argued the request seeks a special use that does not align with the long-term retail vision for the area and urged the council to table the item for further engineering review of traffic, utilities, and acreage needs. He also asked for additional time to investigate property ownership and funding, disputed claims that most public commenters supported the project, and concluded by urging the council not to bend the rules or delay future projects to approve the mosque.

Nida Hyder, a Broken Arrow resident, interior designer, and longtime member of the local Muslim community, spoke in support of approving the proposed mosque. She described her deep roots in Tulsa and Broken Arrow, her professional background in architecture and interior design, and her experience working on churches, schools, tribal facilities, and government buildings across Oklahoma, including current service on a Broken Arrow design committee. Ms. Hyder emphasized her understanding of code compliance, infrastructure, and city limitations, and said she is committed to development that does not burden the city. She shared personal examples of how a local mosque would benefit families, including elderly relatives and working professionals, and described overcrowding at existing Tulsa facilities. Ms. Hyder framed the proposal as an opportunity to provide a safe, accessible place of worship for a growing community that has long been part of Broken Arrow and expressed hope that the city will continue to be a place where all residents feel seen, represented, and able to belong.

Chris Walsch, president of AOM Ministries, spoke in opposition to the proposed mosque, framing his remarks around concerns about Islam's compatibility with American society and constitutional freedoms. He stated that while he respects individual Muslims and has had positive personal interactions with Muslim communities, he opposes Islamic doctrine, which he characterized as inherently dangerous and incompatible with peaceful coexistence. Mr. Walsch argued that even a small number of extremists pose an unacceptable risk and asserted that Islam, in his view, does not integrate well within pluralistic societies. He concluded by strongly opposing the construction of a mosque in Broken Arrow or elsewhere in the United States and urged the council to reject the proposal.

Yaser Khan, a longtime Broken Arrow resident, spoke in support of the proposed mosque, emphasizing his deep connection to the city and his pride in its growth, diversity, and recent development successes. He argued that part of Broken Arrow's strength lies in welcoming people of different backgrounds and faiths and ensuring freedom of religious practice. Mr. Khan highlighted the Muslim community's existing service efforts, including food banks and volunteer work. He described how a new mosque in Broken Arrow would expand charitable programs such as food assistance and free medical services to more residents across multiple ZIP codes. He framed the proposal as an opportunity to strengthen the city through shared service and community-building and urged the council to view the project as a way to bring people together for the common good.

Linda Corban Young, a Ward 4 resident and longtime Oklahoman, spoke in support of the proposal while urging the council to consider the practical and legal implications of its decision. Framing her remarks as a taxpayer, she asked the council to consider the potential costs of litigation and damages if a denial were later found unconstitutional. How such expenses could affect city services. She also questioned how the city would address potential national attention and reputational harm if the proposal were rejected, particularly in terms of economic development and attracting employers and investors. Ms. Young encouraged council members to consider their long-term legacy and whether their decision would be guided by law or public pressure, and stated her support for the project so long as the engineering and technical requirements are met.

Leslie Stubbs, a longtime Broken Arrow resident living near the proposed site, spoke primarily about concerns over traffic, sewer, and infrastructure capacity along South Olive Avenue, stating that existing congestion would worsen and could deter families and harm nearby tax-generating businesses. While emphasizing respect for Muslim neighbors and opposing personal attacks, she said her objections were not about individuals assembling but about the broader impact on quality of life, future growth, and what she described as ideological concerns. Ms. Stubbs urged the council to consider traffic realities, infrastructure feasibility, and long-term community effects and asked that the proposal be denied.

Sarah Little, a Ward 2 resident, addressed the council to emphasize that both the Oklahoma and United States Constitutions guarantee religious freedom without exception, citing Article 1, Section 2 of the Oklahoma Constitution, which protects the free exercise of religion and prohibits discrimination based on religious belief. She noted that federal law, including the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, requires land-use regulations to be applied neutrally and without substantially burdening religious exercise. Ms. Little reminded the council of its oath to uphold these constitutional protections consistently and stated that zoning laws cannot override fundamental religious freedoms. She affirmed that Broken Arrow's Muslim residents are welcome and entitled to worship without fear or intimidation and

urged the council to ensure its decision reflects equal and lawful application of these principles.

Barry Pyles, a longtime Broken Arrow resident, spoke in opposition to building a mosque, stating that while he values the city, the country, and individual freedoms, he believes Islamic teachings—particularly Sharia law—are incompatible with the U.S. Constitution. He framed his concerns within a broader historical and geopolitical context, referencing past acts of terrorism and conflicts involving Islamist regimes, and argued that assimilation to constitutional principles is necessary to enjoy American freedoms fully. Mr. Pyles emphasized that his objection was directed at the ideology rather than individual Muslims and urged denial of the proposal on that basis.

Nida Abu-Jbara, a psychology professor and 11-year Broken Arrow resident with long family ties to the city, spoke in support of the proposed mosque, emphasizing her active community involvement and the broader role of Muslims in Oklahoma and the United States. She cited recent research showing that Muslims attend religious services at rates comparable to Christians, indicating that worship-related crowd sizes are not unusual. Ms. Abu-Jbara also highlighted data demonstrating that U.S. Muslims are, on average, highly educated and younger than the general population, which she said reflects a productive, engaged community that contributes positively to society. She concluded that the experiences and credentials shared by speakers that evening reflect these broader trends and underscore the Muslim community's role as an integral part of American civic life.

David Oldham, a Broken Arrow resident, urged the council to deny the proposal, stating that his opposition is not to religious freedom but to the appropriateness of this specific project at this particular location. He said residents' primary concern is neighborliness, citing claims of intimidation, threats of lawsuits, and assertions that religious liberty overrides local objections, which he argued chills free speech and civic participation. Mr. Oldham raised substantive concerns about stormwater flooding in an already flood-prone area, traffic impacts on a two-lane road with expansion years away, shifting project details, increased demand on city services without corresponding tax revenue, sanitation challenges, and insufficient land to accommodate parking, stormwater management, and future road widening. He concluded that these cumulative issues justify denying the application.

Gabe Wooley, a state representative from Broken Arrow, spoke about constituent concerns focused primarily on traffic impacts associated with the proposed development. He stated that South 129th East Avenue is already congested during peak hours and is not scheduled for widening for at least ten years, making additional high-traffic uses problematic. Mr. Wooley questioned rezoning or granting a conditional use permit without concrete, enforceable plans to address increased traffic, emphasizing that future promises are insufficient substitutes for binding solutions. He noted the site's single access point, the lack of alternative entrances, and the absence of long-term mitigation beyond short-term measures, such as police-directed traffic control. He also expressed concern that multiple daily prayer times would coincide with existing peak traffic periods, including school dismissal and evening rush hour, further compounding congestion, and urged the council to consider these impacts in its decision carefully.

Jim Ingram, an 84-year-old Broken Arrow resident and owner of a longstanding junior golf facility near the proposed site, spoke in opposition based on traffic and flooding impacts rather than religion. He explained that worsening congestion on South 129th East Avenue has already significantly reduced his evening business, forcing him to close earlier because customers can no longer reasonably access the property during peak hours. He stated that traffic now regularly backs up from the Creek Turnpike to his location, making the area functionally inaccessible. Mr. Ingram also described severe downstream flooding problems that have intensified with upstream development, noting that increased impervious surfaces have caused water to overwhelm outdated drainage infrastructure, repeatedly damaging his golf course and costing him approximately \$50,000 per year in repairs. He said the creek has expanded dramatically over the past three decades. He argued that additional development on the proposed parcel would further exacerbate both traffic congestion and stormwater issues, making the site unsuitable for approval until those problems are resolved.

Baber Saeed, a Broken Arrow resident since 1998, spoke in support of the proposal, describing his family's longstanding roots in the city and their contributions as engineers, professionals, homeowners, and taxpayers. He emphasized that Muslim families in Broken Arrow are well-established, economically integrated, and already contribute significantly through property and sales taxes and local spending, noting that the mosque would serve an existing population rather than introduce a new one. Mr. Saeed argued that concerns about economic impact overlook the fact that these families already live, work, and raise children in the city. He also stated that the proposed development aligns with the Broken Arrow Next Comprehensive Plan, which directs higher-intensity development to Level 6 areas along major corridors like the Creek Turnpike, and that the site layout is consistent with the plan's vision for compatible, quality development.

Nathan John urged the council to deny the proposal, arguing that the application has been inconsistent and misleading and does not demonstrate compatibility with surrounding development or compliance with the comprehensive plan. He questioned the inclusion of a commercial component without a clear timeline or plan, suggesting it was used to bolster approval rather than reflect a genuine development strategy. Mr. John criticized the traffic claims presented by the applicant's engineer, stating that the cited capacity figures were outdated and inapplicable, and pointing out that parking plans and other details have repeatedly changed since the Planning Commission review, creating a "moving target." He also noted that places of worship have been denied in similar or less-constrained locations, undermining claims of equal precedent. Based on unresolved concerns regarding traffic, stormwater, parking capacity, and overall impact, he concluded that the project cannot be considered low impact or compliant and asked the council to vote no.

Rena Qabbani, a longtime Broken Arrow resident, spoke in support of the proposal by emphasizing his deep ties to the city, her family's life here, and her long history of community engagement, volunteerism, and interfaith work. She described Broken Arrow as a welcoming place where he has never felt isolated and said her faith motivates her to pray not only for her family but also for the well-being of the entire community. Ms. Qabbani stressed that she is not seeking special treatment, only equal treatment under the same laws applied to all faith communities, and noted that the project has already received initial zoning approval. She urged the council to base its final decision on land use, infrastructure, and compliance standards rather than on fear or identity, characterizing the mosque as a place of prayer, service, and community building, similar to other houses of worship in the city.

Ryan Myers spoke in opposition to the proposal, arguing that Broken Arrow has a pattern of approving developments that do not align with long-term planning or adequately account for traffic and infrastructure impacts. He cited Aldi at 121st and Elm and a development near Childers Middle School as examples of areas where road narrowing, congestion, flooding, and unmet infrastructure promises have created ongoing problems. Mr. Myers said the proposed mosque site presents even greater concerns due to its proximity to the turnpike, narrow surrounding roads, and expanded traffic hours from uses such as food banks and medical services. He emphasized that development plans have repeatedly changed during the process, creating uncertainty and moving targets that alone should warrant denial. Mr. Myers concluded that the proposal does not increase the tax base or support future growth, conflicts with the comprehensive plan, and unfairly benefits a single interest at the expense of surrounding neighbors, and questioned why it advanced despite significant public opposition.

Jonathon Nation spoke in support of the proposal, questioning whether traffic concerns would differ from those associated with any other development and suggesting that such arguments are being used to mask religious bias. He argued that no other religious group would face the same level of scrutiny and rejected claims that Muslims cannot integrate or that terrorism is uniquely associated with Islam. Mr. Nation stated that Sharia law is not imposed even in many Muslim-majority countries and has no applicability or intent within a minority religious community in a secular society. He emphasized that the United States is neither a Christian nor an Islamic nation but a secular one founded on the separation of church and state. He urged the council not to allow religious prejudice to influence a land-use decision.

Dewan Kazim, a 20-year Broken Arrow resident, spoke in support of the proposal, expressing dismay at the level of division and hostility he observed during the discussion. He argued that longstanding issues such as traffic and stormwater are citywide challenges that should not be attributed to or imposed upon the Muslim community. Mr. Kazim urged council members to show courage by representing all residents equally and by following the law rather than fear or prejudice. Speaking as a Christian, he emphasized that his faith is rooted in love rather than fear and called for decisions guided by fairness, inclusion, and shared responsibility.

Nick Wheeler, a lifelong Broken Arrow resident and Army veteran, spoke about his varied personal experiences with Muslims, describing both positive and negative encounters over the years and emphasizing that every community includes both good and bad actors. He said his opposition to the proposal is not rooted in religion but in process and planning concerns, noting that key details have changed repeatedly in a short period of time and that there is no clear, stable plan before the council. Mr. Wheeler argued that the shifting proposals and unresolved questions justify a pause rather than an immediate decision and recommended deferring the vote to allow for additional information gathering, further engineering review, and the outcome of any pending investigations before making a final determination.

Janet Sanders, a longtime Broken Arrow resident and business owner, spoke against the proposal, stating that her opposition is based on land suitability and impacts on nearby residents rather than religious considerations. She said the concerns raised by technical experts and affected neighbors, particularly regarding traffic and flooding, highlight that the site is not appropriate for the proposed use. Ms. Sanders noted that she has historically traveled across town to attend church and does not view proximity as a sufficient justification for building a new place of worship near impacted properties when alternatives already exist. She urged the

council to focus on the land and its effects on existing residents and businesses and concluded that, on that basis, she would vote no.

Theresse Lawless addressed the council, emphasizing that her opposition is based on the site's physical limitations rather than the project's religious nature. She stated that the property cannot reasonably support a large-scale development of this size, whether it were a mosque, church, or other large facility, citing concerns about parking capacity, extensive paving, building size, and resulting traffic impacts. Ms. Powell argued that the land and surrounding area are not suitable for such a high level of use and urged the council to defer the vote to conduct further architectural, engineering, and geological studies. She concluded that additional analysis would likely demonstrate the site's inability to support the proposed development.

Garrett Hampton, a Broken Arrow resident and military veteran, spoke against the proposed development, stating that his opposition is based on land-use and infrastructure concerns rather than religious freedom. He emphasized that while the Constitution protects the free exercise of religion, it does not override zoning laws or public safety requirements. Mr. Hampton said the project requires rezoning despite unresolved issues related to traffic congestion, parking capacity, sanitation, and flood control, noting that traffic in nearby areas is already severely strained and that planned roadway improvements are years away. He expressed concern that supporters focused primarily on character and community contributions, rather than addressing the technical issues, and concluded that the site is unsuitable for the proposed use and would impose undue burdens on the surrounding community.

Nancy Berk, a longtime South Broken Arrow homeowner, urged the council to deny the proposal based on conflicts with the comprehensive plan and serious infrastructure concerns. She emphasized that proposed septic leach fields near White Church Creek within the Haycook Creek Watershed raise risks to water quality and DEQ compliance. She argued that a prominent place of worship with extensive parking is incompatible with septic systems in a flood-prone area. Ms. Berk also cited existing traffic congestion at 121st and Olive, warning that additional vehicles would create unsafe conditions for residents, commuters, school buses, and law enforcement. Drawing on personal experience with drainage problems, she stressed the financial and practical burdens caused by increased runoff and flooding. She expressed concern that the development could jeopardize the area's sole nearby business. She concluded that the site is unsuitable for the proposed use and asked the council to vote no.

Hind Abedrabbo expressed shock and hurt at the hostility directed toward Muslims and spoke in strong support of the proposed mosque, emphasizing that Islam is a religion centered on belief in one God, love, kindness, and respect for other faiths, including Christianity and Jesus. They argued that opposition framed as traffic or land-use concerns often masks religious or racial bias and noted the imbalance between the number of churches and mosques in Oklahoma. Citing both the Quran and the Bible, the speaker urged the council and community to act with love, uphold the First Amendment's guarantee of religious freedom, and remember America's history as a place of refuge from religious persecution. They stressed that Muslims are part of the community and are not seeking control or special treatment, only equal rights, and highlighted that the proposed Islamic center would include services such as a food pantry and free medical clinic open to all. She concluded that denying the proposal would not erase the Muslim community but would instead reflect poorly on the city, calling for peace, understanding, and genuine coexistence.

Omar Chaudri, a Broken Arrow resident of five years, urged the council to base its decision on facts, fairness, and precedent rather than fear or discomfort. He argued that commonly cited concerns about traffic, parking, schools, sewer, and stormwater are inconsistent with how similar or larger facilities already operate in the city, noting that places like Tulsa Tech generate far more continuous daily traffic yet were approved with adequate access. Mr. Chaudri explained that mosque attendance is predictable, limited in duration, and generally does not overlap with peak school or commuter traffic, and that parking expectations for churches have long been accepted for peak-use scenarios without controversy. He stated that infrastructure issues, such as sewer and stormwater, are routinely addressed through engineering conditions rather than denial. He warned that applying heightened scrutiny here would amount to unequal treatment based on who is worshipping. Mr. Chaudri concluded that zoning should regulate land use, not belief systems. He asked the council to approve the request because it meets the same standards applied to other religious and institutional uses.

Patrick Wilkinson, a multigenerational Broken Arrow resident, spoke in opposition to the proposal, arguing that the project has repeatedly changed in scope and details, which he characterized as a "bait and switch." He said earlier representations about the size of the facility and parking have shifted dramatically, undermining confidence in the plan and raising doubts about whether traffic and site capacity concerns are being addressed honestly. Mr. Wilkinson emphasized that his objection is not rooted in religion but in practical impacts, particularly stormwater and runoff affecting downstream properties. He criticized the Planning Commission for advancing the proposal despite unresolved issues. He urged the applicant to seek a larger, more suitable site that would not impose additional burdens on neighboring

landowners.

Faraz Sheikh, a Broken Arrow resident of over 15 years, spoke in support of the proposal, describing his family's strong ties to the city and his upbringing grounded in respect, personal responsibility, and support for law enforcement. He explained that while Broken Arrow has grown significantly, space for the local Muslim community to practice its faith has not, requiring families to travel to Tulsa for worship at a facility that has outgrown its capacity. Mr. Sheikh said a mosque in Broken Arrow would provide a safer, more convenient option for families who already live there and would meet a genuine community need. He expressed disappointment with negative portrayals and rhetoric surrounding the proposal, urging the council and community to distinguish between extremists or oppressive regimes abroad and ordinary Muslim families who chose America for its freedoms and opportunities. He concluded by asking to be judged by actions, service, and neighborliness rather than fear or stereotypes.

Theresa Powell, a neighbor of the proposed site, spoke against rezoning the agricultural land for commercial and place-of-assembly use, citing traffic congestion on two-lane Olive Avenue, septic and sewer limitations, floodplain and stormwater concerns, lack of frontage road access to the turnpike, and the concentration of multiple places of assembly in a small area. She argued that the proposal conflicts with the City's 2019 Comprehensive Plan, which repeatedly designates the 15-acre parcel for complete retail expansion, and said approving a small-scale development would forfeit significant potential sales-tax revenue for the city. Ms. Ward also expressed concern that anticipated traffic patterns would send visitors directly to the turnpike rather than into Broken Arrow to shop, and that accelerating Olive Street right-of-way expansion would impose substantial costs on the city. She concluded that the proposal is a poor long-term business decision for Broken Arrow and urged the council to deny the rezoning.

Randall Preivet stated his opposition, arguing that the Planning Commission ignored clear evidence and citizen input despite having sufficient information to deny the proposal. He said the applicant initially presented an unrealistic plan with hundreds of parking spaces, then drastically reduced the number without resolving fundamental site constraints, characterizing the revisions as cosmetic rather than substantive. Mr. Preivet contended that the revised layout still overbuilds the property, improperly places detention near wetlands, leaves no viable area for septic or drainage fields, and would inevitably lead to violations related to stormwater, wetlands, wastewater handling, traffic control, and future city budgets. He warned that traffic congestion would mirror known problem areas and potentially back up onto major roadways, creating safety hazards long before any planned road improvements. In his view, the site is fundamentally unsuitable for the proposed intensity of use, and he urged the council to deny the request and encourage the applicant to find a location that can realistically accommodate the project.

Lori Gracey urged the council to deny the proposal, framing the issue as one of property rights rather than religion. She argued that the council's primary responsibility is to protect the rights of Broken Arrow property owners, particularly those adjacent to and downstream from the proposed site. Ms. Gracey reiterated concerns about the parcel's proximity to flood zones and wetlands, the infeasibility of installing detention ponds and septic systems, and the inability of the two-lane Olive Avenue—with poor shoulders and no near-term widening plans—to handle additional traffic or emergency services safely. She emphasized that approving the project would undermine the city's Comprehensive Plan, which designates the area for retail development to support long-term growth and revenue. While stating she is not opposed to a mosque in general, she maintained that this site is unsuitable and asked the council to protect existing property owners by voting no.

Nader Sinan, a University of Tulsa engineering student, and American Muslim, spoke in support of the proposal, stating that the project has complied with all applicable laws and requirements. He argued that remaining opposition stems from reviving racial or religious divisions that have no place in the community and asked the council to uphold constitutional principles by granting the right to build a place of worship.

Bill Farmer, a longtime Broken Arrow resident, retired U.S. Army veteran, and disabled veteran, spoke against the proposal, emphasizing environmental and planning concerns rather than religious issues. He argued that a full environmental review is necessary, including EPA considerations, given the site's proximity to sensitive areas and the potential risks posed by stormwater runoff and septic systems during flooding events, which could harm wildlife and protected species. Farmer expressed concern that the project's scope has repeatedly changed, particularly regarding parking capacity, and said the lack of a stable, detailed plan warrants caution. He urged the council to pause, conduct thorough environmental and technical studies, and consider an alternative location better suited for the development. Framing his remarks around the broader community interest, he concluded that his opposition is based on what he believes is best for the overall welfare of Broken Arrow.

Omar Chaudri, a Broken Arrow native and practicing anesthesiologist, spoke in support of the proposed Broken Arrow Islamic Center, emphasizing both its community benefits and legal grounding. He explained that the center is intended to serve not only as a place of worship but also as a hub for public service, including free medical screenings and assistance for uninsured or underserved residents, as well as a food pantry open to anyone experiencing food insecurity, regardless of religion or background. Mr. Chaudri noted that similar services already operate through the Islamic Society of Tulsa and help reduce strain on emergency rooms and public resources. He described the strong ties many Muslim physicians have to Broken Arrow, noting that many return after training because of the community's welcoming nature, and expressed disappointment at feeling treated differently despite a long history of serving others without distinction. He concluded by stressing that houses of worship are constitutionally protected and must be treated equally under zoning laws, arguing that the request seeks equal, not special, treatment and would provide meaningful benefits to the broader Broken Arrow community.

Eli Ingram urged the council to deny the zoning change and retain the agricultural designation, citing decades of direct experience managing the land immediately south of the site and his professional background in landscape contracting, drainage, and grading. He explained that increased development upstream has already caused significant runoff into the Whitechurch Creek floodplain, damaging dams, culverts, spillways, and harming the viability of the adjacent golf course and driving range, which he described as a unique community and tourism asset. He stated that agricultural zoning currently provides critical percolation and that any development would sharply increase runoff beyond the capacity of existing stormwater infrastructure, particularly undersized culverts at 121st Street, worsening flooding downstream. Mr. Ingram emphasized that traffic improvements would further increase impervious surfaces and runoff, compounding flood risks. He warned of ecological damage to an existing wetland that functions as a natural sponge supporting wildlife. He concluded that approving development without first addressing downstream drainage capacity risks leads to watershed failure. He argued that the most responsible action is to keep the land agricultural and use areas south of the turnpike for water detention in line with the comprehensive plan.

Saleem Vasani, a Broken Arrow resident with deep family ties to the city, spoke in support of the proposed mosque, acknowledging that change can bring discomfort or fear but emphasizing that those feelings are not valid grounds for denying zoning approval. He argued that the project should be evaluated solely on objective criteria such as traffic, sewage, and water use, and treated the same as any other place of worship. Mr. Vasani stressed that Muslim families are not outsiders but invested residents who live, work, pay taxes, and raise children in Broken Arrow. He urged the council to apply the law equally, noting that approving the request would affirm fairness, respect for the law, and the inclusive values that accompany the city's growth and diversity.

Cara Lee Ingram, a commercial real estate professional with 30 years of experience and credentials in property administration and environmental design, spoke against the proposed site based on professional judgment. She stated that she would not recommend this location to a client, citing numerous superior alternatives nearby that are flatter, outside floodplains, closer to city utilities, and offer better ingress and egress. She emphasized that each site must be evaluated individually for suitability and that this location is fundamentally incompatible with the proposed use, as evidenced by repeated plan changes. Ms. Ingram also disclosed that she is a co-owner of Little Links Golf Club directly south of the site and opposed any extensive paved development upstream due to drainage and flooding impacts. She highlighted a professional survey showing that, despite being described as a 15-acre parcel, only 6.66 acres are actually developable because of extensive FEMA floodplain along Whitechurch Creek, raising serious concerns for downstream properties.

Vicki Dodson, a lifelong Broken Arrow resident and retired teacher, spoke thoughtfully about the process rather than the religion itself. She said she supports religious freedom and respects the law. Still, she expressed concern that the way this issue has unfolded turned the discussion into something chaotic and divisive, which she found unfortunate. Ms. Dodson emphasized that the situation should not have become a religious dispute and affirmed her support for Muslim, Jewish, and Christian neighbors alike. She highlighted that residents living near the site deserve clear, accessible explanations about zoning, impacts, and planning, noting that technical details can be intricate for non-experts to understand. Given the city's significant growth and the complexity of accommodating it responsibly, she urged the council to defer the decision to allow for more planning, more transparent communication, and better public understanding before moving forward.

John Jacobson, a 31-year Broken Arrow resident, businessman, former elected official, and registered professional engineer, spoke in opposition to the proposal based on extensive experience in zoning, comprehensive planning, and municipal infrastructure. He argued that the Olive Exit is a critical south gateway already burdened by heavy traffic and lacking planned improvements for at least 10 years. Mr. Jacobson emphasized that the site would add another non-revenue-generating use in an area already struggling with underperforming or abandoned developments, undermining the city's comprehensive plan for the corridor. He raised concerns

about sewer, drainage, and water constraints, questioned the feasibility of the promised strip center ever being built, and noted shifting plans and parking assumptions. Based on land-use incompatibility, infrastructure limits, and long-term planning impacts, he urged the council to deny the request.

Aslam Syeed responded by clarifying that the proposed zoning aligns with LUIS 6 and CG standards already presented by city staff, and that the Islamic Society of Tulsa operates locally with its own board. At the same time, NAIT serves only a custodial, asset-protection role, similar to that of other religious institutions, ensuring continuity and donor intent. He stated that if any government authority required disengagement from NAIT, the organization would comply without hesitation. Addressing claims of a "bait and switch," he explained that revisions to parking and site concepts were made in response to public feedback and engineering review, which he described as responsible planning rather than deception. He characterized the Attorney General's inquiry as politically motivated. Still, he said the organization remains fully open to scrutiny, noting that the land was purchased outright by the Islamic Society of Tulsa. Regarding floodplain, septic, and environmental concerns, he emphasized that rezoning is the first step in any development process and that significant engineering expenditures are properly incurred only after zoning approval. He stressed that all future development would be subject to rigorous permitting by professionals from the city, state, and federal governments. He questioned why the city would allow a project to advance if it were fundamentally unsafe. He reiterated that the organization intends to comply fully with all regulations and to be a positive, responsible part of the Broken Arrow community.

Councilor Justin Green stated that the Council's responsibility is to evaluate the proposal the same way it would any other development, based strictly on merits and facts, not on religion, race, or ideology. He emphasized that the Council is not judging freedom of religion or belief, but rather practical considerations such as land use and infrastructure. Rejecting accusations of racism or Islamophobia, he noted his own lived experience with discrimination and underscored that the issues before the Council are practical, logical, and reasonable. Based on the testimony heard, extensive public input, and his independent review, he concluded that the project is not appropriate for the current land use and made a motion to deny the zoning change.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

MOTION: A motion was made by Justin Green, seconded by Lisa Ford
Move to Deny Item 26-151 BAZ-002469-2025 (Rezoning) and SP-002526-2025 (Conditional Use Permit), Islamic Center of Tulsa, 15.06 acres, AG (Agricultural) to CG (Commercial General), located approximately ½ mile north of Tucson Street (121st Street) and just east of Olive Avenue (129th E. Avenue)

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4
Nay: 1

David Pickel, Justin Green, Lisa Ford, Debra Wimpee
Johnnie Parks

Mayor

City Clerk