

WRIGHT COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
Meeting of: August 29, 2025
MINUTES

The Wright County Board of Adjustment met on Friday, August 29, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. in the County Commissioner's Board Room at the Wright County Government Center, Buffalo, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Paul Aarestad. With members present being Bob Neumann, Sandy Greninger, Dan Mol, & Dan Vick. Representing the Planning & Zoning Office was Aaron Ogle, Planner. Caroline M. Bachun, Chief of Civil Division, legal counsel, was also present.

ACTION ON MINUTES FOR THE AUGUST 8, 2025 MEETING

Vick pointed out a change on Page #8 letter I. His comment was that he would be more comfortable with the proposed plans if a two foot increase to what is existing not if the structure were reduced by approximately two feet.

On a motion by Mol, seconded by Greninger, all voted to approve the minutes for the August 8th meeting with the change as noted.

1. **RODNEY HEBRINK** – Continued from 8/8/2025

LOCATION: 9811 ENDICOTT AVE NW – Part of Gov't Lot 1 and Gov't Lot 2, Wright County, Minnesota in Section 17, Township 121, Range 26, Wright County, Minnesota. (Silver Creek Twp.) Tax: 216-000-172100 & 216-000-172401. Property owners: RODNEY W HEBRINK & CAROL J HEBRINK JREVTR

REQUEST: Lot line adjustment as regulated in Section 155.026 of Chapter 155, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances to add land from PID 216-000-172401 to PID 216-000-172100.

No Representative Present

A. Ogle reminded the Board they had closed the public hearing to further written and oral comment on the August 8th meeting and continued the request to the August 29th meeting so that staff could draft findings consistent with the discussion for denial regarding the proposed property line adjustment between PID 216-000-172401 and PID 216-000-172100.

B. Greninger moved to adopt the Findings for denial of the request as presented. Motion seconded by Mol.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Note that with no representative present at the meeting Ogle will mail the signed findings directly to the applicant/owner.

2. **ANTHON ELLIS** – Cont. from 7/18 & 8/8

LOCATION: 7075 Pilger Ave NW – Portion of Gov't Lot 2 in Section 28, Township 121, Range 28, Wright County, Minnesota. (Southside Twp.) Tax : 217-000-284300. Property owners: JEFFREY HARMSSEN & STACY HARMSSEN

REQUEST: Variance as regulated in Section 155.026, 155.049(F)(2), 155.057(E)(1) and 155.090(Table 3) of Chapter 155, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances to construct a new single-family dwelling that would be within the road and shoreland building setbacks while the septic absorption area would be within the setback from the home.

No Representative Present

A. Olge explained that the applicant has signed the request for continuation form and 120-day waiver and is requesting continuation to the September 19th meeting to allow for more time to review an updated proposal with the property owners.

B. Motion made by Vick to continue the item to the September 19th meeting. Seconded by Greninger.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. **SHAUN HANSON** – Cont. 8/8

LOCATION: 2976 24th St SE – KEL-KARY ACRES LOT-003 & LOT-004, Section 16, Township 119, Range 25, Wright County, Minnesota. (Rockford Twp.) Tax #215-128-000030, 215-128-000040 Property Owner: FRANCES J HANSON

REQUEST: Variance as regulated in Section 155.026, 155.049(F)(3), and 155.057(E)(1) of Chapter 155, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances to replace and enlarge the existing screen porch and deck. The existing home is located within the side yard and shoreland building setbacks.

Present: Shaun Hanson

- A. Ogle displayed the site plan and reviewed details of the request. The request is to replace the existing screen porch with a new 16 ft. x 32 ft. screen porch, and to replace the existing deck with a new 12 ft. x 22 ft. deck. The request was continued to the August 29th meeting to allow for reassessment of the plans based on the Board's discussion. No updated plans have been submitted. The proposed structure will be located 62.9 feet from the ordinary high-water mark of Dean Lake. The existing home is situated 11.9 feet from the north side property line and 57.3 feet from the ordinary high-water mark of Dean Lake. A variance is required to replace and enlarge the existing screen porch and deck because the existing home and proposed addition would be located within the 100 ft. shoreland building setback and the 15 ft. side yard setback. The Township noted approval of the request. Since the last meeting, written responses from the public were received, overwhelmingly supporting the request.
- B. Hanson stated that at the last meeting, members expressed concerns about the roofline. He explained that the roofline cannot be altered, and that a 16 ft. deck is a fairly standard size. The only issue, and the reason he is present, relates to the setback distance from the lake. If the house were built 120 to 150 feet from the lake, he could obtain a permit without issue regarding the roofline, so he is unsure why this is problematic. He is willing to sign any document stating the area will never be converted to livable space. Altering the plans would impact the existing retaining wall and steps, which would be costly to remove or replace. He does not plan to encroach any closer than the existing home, and the lake view for others will not be impacted. No neighbors along the road have objected to his request.
- C. No comments were received from the public.
- D. Mol stated he understands the goal but, as a Board member, he is somewhat on the fence. The Board has previously seen cases where a large deck addition was approved and later converted into a four-season enclosed area. The concern here is that the structure is too close to the lake. The Board's role includes helping the DNR protect the integrity of the lakes. This request would add more roof area and therefore more runoff. He is not totally opposed but would like to hear others' opinions. Hanson does not believe the proposal will affect the lake. Mol asked what measures will be used to handle runoff. Hanson stated gutters and downspouts, as currently installed, will be used.
- E. Vick noted that while it is a desire for a larger deck, the house was likely built before the current setback rules, so a hardship could exist. He feels it is best to minimize further encroachment and would be comfortable if the structure were at least 65 ft. from the lake. He understands the desire for a larger space and agrees that 8 ft. would be unreasonable.
- F. Greninger expressed concern about the proximity to the lake and the potential increase in water runoff due to changes in the roofline. She shares Mol's concern that the porch could eventually be converted to a four-season room. Hanson reiterated that he has no plans beyond the screen porch. Greninger noted that future owners might have different plans. Her main concern remains the distance to the lake and potential impacts. Hanson stated he is not requesting to encroach closer than the current footprint. Ogle added that any future conversion to a four-season porch or expansion would be considered a violation. It is not uncommon for Staff to observe violations related to conversions even without variances. He went on to remind the Board that an exact replacement would not require Board approval and could include alterations to the roof design. Greninger also expressed concern about the proximity to the property line. Hanson stated he owns both parcels and has no plans to separate them.
- G. Neumann commented that when there is a variance request something is being asked for that is outside of the rules,

what makes this property unique that there is a need for a 16 ft. wide deck and it is a necessity over a want. Hanson explained that the necessity is to replace the deck without having to remove the retaining wall and stairs. A 16 ft. wide area allows use of the existing retaining wall steps. He did not build the house, is working with what exists and does not want to tear down or replace the retaining wall. A 16 ft. deck is fairly standard and will fit his large family that enjoys gathering outdoors. Neumann questioned why an 8 ft. screen porch and 8 ft. deck were sufficient for years, but now a larger porch and deck are necessary. He wanted to know what changed to make the property unique and to establish a hardship. Hanson responded that the only uniqueness is proximity to the lake, and the hardship is that the current structure is unusable. The house is set at 70 ft., which met code at the time.

- H. Aarestad expressed willingness to accept that the roofline could be changed without the variance. His main concern is the distance to the lake, with 65 ft. being a firm standard for this Board and has yet to hear adequate reasons to allow less than 65 ft. He could support the request if the deck were at least 65 ft. Hanson asked what that would look like. Aarestad believes the lake setback is the primary issue for the Board. If the applicant meets the 65 ft. setback, he would be comfortable approving the request and does not see this as setting a precedent. Ogle clarified that the Board does not set precedent; each request is reviewed individually. Reviewing the plans, Ogle pointed out that the proposed screen porch is 64.4 ft. from the lake on one side but the other side where the screen porch and deck meet is 62.9 ft. To reach 65 ft. would require reducing the structure by roughly 2 ft., mostly towards that referenced corner.
- I. Vick suggested an option to build a 12 ft. deck cantilevered over the step area. Because cantilevering is possible, he is okay with a 12 ft. deck. His concern remains water penetration and runoff closer to the lake. Greninger asked why the retaining wall would need to be replaced. Hanson explained that with anything less than 16 ft., a support post would fall where the concrete steps are located. The wall is sound, and he wants to avoid replacing it. Vick asked if cantilevering is feasible; Hanson said he would need to check and is unsure about the load-bearing requirements.
- J. Mol asked what is currently underneath the deck area. Hanson replied deck sections that he plans to replace with pavers or similar material. Mol asked if there is a patio or pavers extending beyond the deck area; Hanson confirmed there is not. Mol noted that the proposed 16 ft. deck would be 64.4 ft. from the lake at the corner near the retaining wall. Ogle reviewed the site plan and believes it might be possible to adjust some corners to achieve a 65 ft. setback. Mol feels that the 2 ft. difference is due to the lake's natural curve, as no lake shoreline is perfectly straight. Mol considers the practical difficulty to be that the proposal is roughly 65 ft., missing by only six inches, there is already an existing roof covering a portion, and the proposed addition does not encroach more than the existing structure. What he sees is the 2 ft. difference is due to the lake's curvature. He noted that the roof is already hard-covered, and its pitch is the only change. Water runoff will be managed by gutters and downspouts. Removing the retaining wall would cause more disruption and problems with reestablishing it. Vick noted that approximately 260 sq. ft. of roofline is being added. Mol pointed out that adding an 8 ft. patio towards the lake would result in similar water runoff. Ogle confirmed that an at-grade patio could be installed without a permit.
- K. Neumann moved to approve the replacement of the existing 8 ft. x 24 ft. screen porch with a new 16 ft. x 32 ft. screen porch, and to replace the existing 8 ft. x 30 ft. deck with a new 12 ft. x 32 ft. deck. The proposed structures will be located 62 feet from the ordinary high-water mark of Dean Lake. Site plan Exhibit A and Building plan as Exhibit B. Motion seconded by Mol. (***)In reviewing of the minutes Staff noticed an error. Motion included a new 12 ft. x 32 ft. deck whereas the plans approved showed a 12 ft. x 22 ft. deck)

DISCUSSION: Vick asked if a stormwater management plan would be included. Neumann responded that the topography between the house and lake is relatively flat, so he does not believe such a plan would be necessary.

VOTE: Mol, Neumann, Aarestad, Greninger

NAY: Vick

MOTION PASSED

4. **SHELLY & DOUG WATTERS** – New

LOCATION: 3821 DONNELLY DR NW, – MAPLE CREST LOT-025 ALSO LT2 6 & SW1/2 OF LT 27 along with PART OF GOVERNMENT LOT 6, Section 04, Township 120, Range 26, Wright County, Minnesota. (Maple Lake Twp.) Tax #210-000-043303, 210-014-000250. Property Owner: DOUGLAS L & SHELLY M WATTERS

REQUEST: Variance as regulated in Section 155.026 and 155.048(F)(2) of Chapter 155, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances to construct a new storage building that would be within the road setback.

Present: Doug Watters

- A. Ogle displayed site plan and reviewed the request. The property is located at 3821 Donnelly Dr. NW in Maple Lake Township. The backlot is 0.92 acres, zoned General Agriculture, and located within the shoreland area of Maple Lake which is classified as General Development. In 2020 the Board of Adjustment approved PID 210-000-043303 as a backlot to be owned in common with the home parcel that is PID 210-014-000250. A condition of the backlot approval was that a potential septic site must be identified and protected prior to any accessory structure being placed on the property. The request is to construct a new storage building 30 ft. from the centerline of 51st St. NW on PID 210-000-043303. A variance is required to construct a storage building within 65 ft. of the centerline of the road on the backlot. The Township disapproves of the request due to the proposed storage building being too close to the road. No written comments from the public have been received.
- B. Watters stated the intent is to optimize the backlot. A survey shows the future septic location. What is not visible in the survey is the slope of the property, which steepens at 65 ft., and the goal is to avoid building on a hillside. They are also trying to preserve a tree. At 65 ft., 100% of the structure would require fill, encroach on the tree, and impact the future septic site.
- C. No comments from the public.
- D. Vick noted that the Township does not approve the request, and it is difficult to go against their wishes since they maintain the road. He asked if there is an opportunity to rotate the shed and pull it back to protect the tree and meet setbacks. Since a foundation will be required, there may be options to meet the 65 ft. setback. He does not see a need to grant a variance.
- E. Greninger agreed with Vick, stating she also has concerns about the proximity to the road and believes there is enough lot space to meet the road setback requirement.
- F. Neumann asked whether the 65 ft. setback would encroach on the proposed septic site. Watters responded that the primary concern is the septic site and the significant slope requiring fill. Neumann inquired if soil borings exist for a second septic site; Watters stated the cabin across the road has an existing septic system. Neumann confirmed only one set of soil borings for the backlot were shown. He concurred with other members that if the Township does not approve, he would not either.
- G. Ogle noted that the Township provided limited comments. Watters said the Township indicated it would be a county decision but felt 30 ft. was too close. Some leniency on the 65 ft. would be helpful. Mol understood the Township's concern at 30 ft., as it leaves little room in front of the building. He asked if the Township considered approving at 45 ft., since they maintain and improve the road. Watters recalled that the property owners maintain the road. Ogle clarified that 51st St. is a dedicated right-of-way, considered a road, but it is unclear if the Township maintains it; the right-of-way is about 10 ft. wide. To the west, a similar request was made a couple of years ago. There had been some discussion the Township might take over and improve the road. Ogle said the Township could decide to maintain the road at any time. Mol asked if there are other buildings meeting the 65 ft. setback; Ogle said there are, but he is unsure if those lots have similar topography. Mol added that if the road is not maintained by the Township and is not a full-size road, granting 30 ft. could cause issues if the road is ever expanded and maintained by the Township. Watters asked if it would be advisable to discuss a 45 ft. setback with the Township. Mol suggested asking if the Township would allow less than 65 ft., and if not, a variance would not be necessary. Mol said the Board agrees that 30 ft. is too close, and any less than 65 ft. could be problematic if the road is expanded.

- H. Aarestad stated there is an option to vote as is likely resulting in denial, or to continue the meeting to the next month to allow the Township to provide input on the minimum setback they would allow.
- I. Neumann questioned the hardship in this case, noting there is ample room on the nearly one-acre property to build without requesting a variance. He does not believe a variance should be approved when there is sufficient space and with brand new construction.
- J. Watter requested the item be continued. Vick asked if there is time to meet with the Township before the meeting on the 19th. Ogle said it would be tight and was unsure about potential holiday-related scheduling issues.
- K. Mol advised the applicant that even if the Township approves a setback of, for example, 50 ft., it does not guarantee approval from the Board. The Board must find a practical difficulty and valid reason to grant a variance. There is an option to continue and reassess the request or withdraw prior to the next meeting. Ogle explained the difference between withdrawing, voting which may result in a denial, and a continuation. Watters stated he does not want to continue and would prefer to withdraw.
- L. Vick moved to accept the withdrawal at the request of the applicant. Neumann seconded the motion.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. **TODD KEASLING** – New

LOCATION: 7589 & 7543 Baker Ave – part of S1/2 OF S1/2 OF SE1/4 OF NE1/4 and pat of the N1/2OF S1/2OF SE1/4OF NE1/4 in Section 26, Township 1121, Range 26, Wright County, Minnesota. (Maple Lake Twp.) Tax #210-100-261404, 210-100-261402, 210-100-261400. Property Owner: BENJAMIN & JESSICA M R MARTIN & JUDITH A BICKERSTAFF

REQUEST: Variance as regulated in Section 155.026 & 155.048(G) of Chapter 155, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances to allow a transfer of land that would expand and existing lot of record over the maximum allowed size.

Present: Todd Keasling & Jessica Martin

- A. Ogle displayed a concept plan as he reviewed the request. The property is located off Baker Ave NW with three parcels involved but two of them must remain owned in common. PID 210-100-261402 is 2.48 acres and must remain owned in common with PID 210-100-261400 which is 8.45 acres. PID 210-100-261404 is 4.0 acres. All parcels are zoned General Agriculture. The property owner of the two parcels that must remain owned in common took out a reverse mortgage on the home which created PID 210-100-261402. The applicant is trying to sort out this matter prior to the bank taking over PID 210-100-261402. If the bank takes over that parcel, it would landlock PID 210-100-261400 which is not allowed by ordinance. This request is to add approximately 8.1 acres from PID 210-100-261400 to PID 210-100-261404 and approximately 0.3 acres from PID 210-100-261400 to PID 210-100-261402. A variance is required to add approximately 8.1 acres from PID 210-100-261400 to PID 210-100-261404 as it would expand an existing lot of record over the maximum 10 acres. The Township approves of the request as presented, no written responses from the public have been received. The reason not asking to include the entire parcel is when the reverse mortgage was taken out the property line went through an existing building. The intent with the request is to take the property line off of the building.
- B. Keasling explained his mother in-law is over 80 years old and it makes sense to rectify the issue now. She is on a fixed income and as her taxes go up it has been come increasingly difficult to make ends meet. By selling to an adjacent landowner, they avoid the landlock situation. It makes sense to move the lot line versus destroying the existing building. Getting an easement out to Baker Ave. is not desired by the county, especially with the neighboring property being developed and increase in traffic. The current landowners (Martin) have an easement, so they can access from Baker into the back 8 acres. Olge clarified if the 8.1 acres were sold it would be owned with the 4 acre homesite. After January 1, 1977 a new property cannot be created with only easement access.
- C. No comments from the public.
- D. Greninger passed on commenting.
- E. Neumann confirmed with Martin that she owns PID ending in -261404 and if PID 210-100-261401 had interest in owning the 8 acres. Martin stated that parcel was owned by her family years ago with owners of PID 210-100-261403 purchasing -261401 to keep a different owner away from their house and boarding driveway. In talking with them the last few years they have mentioned selling in the next few years, so she does not think they have any interest in the property. Neumann questioned if -261401 has a building entitlement. Ogle stated -261404 was an old lot of record that was over 10 acres and a portion was sold through a land transfer with no exchange of building eligibilities.
- F. Mol questioned if the reverse mortgage is only on -261402 with Keasling confirming and explained the parcel ending in -261400 is owned free and clear. Mol by moving the lot line off the building it is a positive and right thing to do. He questioned the distance noted on the concept plan of 243.8 ft. and wanted to confirm that is the amount of room between the two properties for access. Ogle confirmed that is an estimate and a survey could provide a more accurate distance. Mol addressed the aerial Beacon photo and questioned what appears to be old vehicles or buildings. Ogle explained there is a very old mobile home on the parcel that has been used for storage. Staff would recommend if the approval is given the setback be met off of the buildings. Keasling stated the building is no longer habitable. Martin stated they plan to maintain as storage, if possible, or tear down.

- G. Vick asked if there should be an Animal Unit (AU) restriction or would it be the $\frac{1}{2}$ AU per acre. Ogle confirmed but if it was over 10 acres it would be a conversation had with the Feedlot Administrator. Vick asked if the Board should take precautions at this time. Ogle explained the Board could condition a $\frac{1}{2}$ AU per acre and not to exceed 9.99 AU's. If it is a major holdup he would suggest continuing the item to the next meeting to allow input from the Feedlot Administrator.
- H. Aarestad sees this as fixing a problem and being proactive. He has no issues with the request. He would be comfortable with a 9.99 AU restriction. Keasling and Martin agreed to the 9.99 AU restriction.
- I. Mol moved to approve the request to add approximately 8.1 acres from PID 210-100-261400 to PID 210-100-261404 and add approximately 0.3 acres from PID 210-100-261400 to PID 210-100-261402 CONDITIONED on survey, Administrative Order, and property not to exceed 9.99 animal units. Concept plan noted Exhibit A. Motion seconded by Greninger.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. **AUSTIN HARWOOD** – New

LOCATION: 3516 County Road 30 SW – PRT OF SW 1/4 OF SE1/4 & PRT OF SE 1/4 OF SW 1/4, Section 16, Township 118, Range 26, Wright County, Minnesota. (Woodland Twp.) Tax #220-000-164301. Property Owner: AUSTIN C HARWOOD

REQUEST: Variance as regulated in Section 155.026 and 155.048(F)(2) of Chapter 155, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances to construct a new storage building that would be within the road setback.

No Representative Present

A. Ogle explained to the Board that the applicant has signed a request for continuation form and requested to be continued to the 9/19/2025 meeting so they could speak with the Township again about the request.

B. Motion made by Vick to continue the item to the September 19th meeting. Seconded by Greninger.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7. **JACK PEARSON** – New

LOCATION: 11595 Clementa Ave SW – N1/2 OF SE1/4 , Section 34, Township 118, Range 26, Wright County, Minnesota. (Woodland Twp.) Tax #220-000-344100. Property Owner: JACK PEARSON & COLEEN PEARSON

REQUEST: Variance as regulated in Section 155.026, 155.003(B)(1), and 155.090(B)(12) of Chapter 155, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances to allow an entitlement division that includes an existing accessory building exceeding the maximum accessory building area and unable to support two Type I septic sites.

Present: Todd Bartels (employed by Pearson)

- A. Ogle displayed proposed site plan as he reviewed the request. The property is 44.66 acres and zoned General Agriculture (AG). In 1998 the Planning Commission approved a private airstrip on the property. A 60 ft. x 80 ft. (4,800 sq. ft.) agricultural building was then constructed for equipment and aircraft. Requirements of the permit were the building was for storage only, no commercial use and no residential sleeping quarters allowed. This request is to allow a 2.49-acre entitlement division that would include an existing 60 ft. x 80 ft. (4,800 sq. ft.) agricultural building and can support two Type III or Type IV septic system locations. The applicant met with the Township prior to applying for the variance request. As such, a 2.6 acre entitlement division was presented to the Township before discussion with the County noting that 2.49 acres would only require 150 ft. of depth whereas 2.6 acres would require 300 ft. of depth and further encroach the field to the west of the building. The applicant chose to request 2.49 acres. A public comment submitted was in favor of the request as they would be purchasing the remaining tillable acreage if the proposed division were to be approved. The entire property is prime soils so with an entitlement division can be done up to 10 acres or capped at 2.5 acres of prime soils. A building this size is allowed on 10 acres or more. The entire property being prime soils and a building this size really requires a variance for any division.
- B. Bartels stated that if a division is desired, there is no way to proceed without a variance. With input from Staff and the Township, they are presenting what they feel works best to maintain agricultural land. They are flexible with the size of the division, and what is proposed aligns best with the direction and requirements. They do have a buyer for the farmland. Initially, the idea was to buy the property and sell the farmland, but they soon realized there were unforeseen challenges. The buyer is a 100-year-old farming family currently renting from the property owner. The Township supports the request because the land will continue to be farmed.
- C. No comments from the public.
- D. Neumann asked whether there had been discussion on where the septic system would be located and whether there was enough space for a house. Ogle showed elevations and explained there is no significant change in elevation. When a septic system location was studied, they were unable to find a Type I septic site, but were able to find area for a Type III or Type IV system. Ogle noted there has not been a formal home site evaluation because there is currently no intent to build a home. However, on paper, there appears to be space for a home, and there is an entitlement on the property. He does not believe soil borings were done on the entire property. Barthel confirmed none were done on the farmland. Ogle noted a full set of home plans is not required for an entitlement division. Neumann asked about the drainage ditch and whether water flows east or west. Barthel and Ogle were unsure. Neumann noted that if the ditch flows into a residential property, the drainage of surrounding agricultural areas could be affected. Ditches must be cleaned and maintained, and he wonders how cooperative a residential lot owner would be about maintaining the ditch. Barthel stated that the neighboring owner had already approached the property owner and was given permission to maintain the ditch.
- E. Mol expressed concerns about the prime soils. He questioned why the entire parcel couldn't be sold to the farmer, who would gain a storage shed in the process. The 4,800 sq. ft. building is a significant issue for him. He's concerned that allowing a large building on a 2.5-acre lot could set a precedent for others to build large structures on large parcels and later request a variance to split off small lots with oversized buildings. This could be seen as a way to bypass the ordinances. Additionally, it sits on prime soils, which the Board tries to protect. He asked whether the building could be converted into a home. Ogle stated that from a zoning perspective, a conversion could be allowed. However, since the building was permitted as an agricultural building, it might be costly to meet building code for a single-family home. Final determination would be made by the Building Official. Mol said he is thinking ahead to the

implications and isn't outright saying no at this time. Ogle added that the Board should not approve an entitlement division without space for a home as that would not be good planning. He believes this proposed lot has potential for a home. Barthel noted the building is a hangar with a hangar door and the associated airstrip would be eliminated, allowing the field to be fully farmed again. Mol said if the intent is to return the land to agriculture, the building, being agricultural in nature, should go with the Ag land. Barthel replied that the current owner purchased the property two months ago intending to sell the farmland but did not do due diligence on what could be done.

- F. Vick asked whether there is enough room for access to the north. Ogle used Beacon aerial imagery to review parcels and road frontage, pointing out access near the ditch. Vick questioned whether the county allows a shed to be built on 2.5 acres without a residence. Ogle confirmed that storage buildings can be built prior to the construction of a home. In this case, if not for the prime soil issue, an administrative 10-acre division could have been done, and the building would be compliant. Barthel stated they were open to that but needed a variance regardless. The proposed division made more sense to preserve the ag land. Ogle reiterated that even at 10 acres, a variance would be needed due to the 2.5-acre prime soil maximum.
- G. Greninger noted that the property consists of prime soil and that the existing shed is well-suited for farm storage. She feels the parcel should remain a single lot.
- H. Aarestad believes the current proposal preserves the most ag land. He views the large shed as a bonus. Given the properties location, the property is likely to remain in agriculture for the long term. He is comfortable with the request and feels the proposal makes sense. He supports the fact that a local farmer intends to continue using the land.
- I. Mol asked Ogle to show a tentative 10-acre property line using Beacon. Mol noted that a variance would be required either way but at 10 acres, the building would be allowed. Ogle confirmed this. Mol suggested the variance could instead relate to the overage of prime soils. He also noted that people in the county are looking for smaller parcels to start farm operations. He questioned whether the Board would be better off approving a parcel in excess of 2.5 acres of prime soils while ensuring the building size remains compliant. Vick agreed and suggested following the middle of the ditch line. Discussion continued about what the property line could look like, in relation to the ditch, prime soils, and building.

Member Greninger left at this point in the meeting. (9:54 a.m.)

- J. Neumann questioned whether the Board's concerns were related more to the building's size or its use. If it were a large chicken barn or dairy barn, would they have the same concerns about a 2.5-acre division? He noted that old dairy barns over 4,000 sq. ft. are often on small parcels. Mol responded that he's concerned about the large building on a 2.5-acre lot, the building being converted and whether there's room for a house. Neumann believes there is room for a home on the proposed parcel.
- K. Barthel reiterated that the owner plans to retain the building for personal storage and sell the farmland. Ogle explained that any change in use would require a new building permit. Barthel stated they are open to a 10-acre parcel, but that would conflict with the Township's goal of preserving as much farmland as possible.
- L. Vick expressed a preference for a 10-acre parcel that follows natural boundaries and ensures the building meets requirements.
- M. Neumann asked if the 10-acre division could be approved now without Township approval. Bachun said she was unsure and has only recently begun reviewing these issues. She believed decisions could be made independently but couldn't say for certain. Ogle recommended re-noticing the change so that neighbors and the Township are informed. He's unaware of a requirement for Township re-approval but believes consultation would be beneficial. Barthel explained he had previously presented three lot-size options to the Township and that they preferred the smallest footprint to preserve farmland. Neumann noted that even with a 10-acre division, the land could still be rented for farming or used for small-scale agriculture like horses.
- N. Mol reminded the Board that the surrounding area is entirely agricultural. He would consider a 2.5 acre lot to be residential and placing a residential lot in the middle of ag land could create conflicts. A 10-acre lot would allow for

livestock, organic farming, and space for a home and septic.

- O. Aarestad believes a decision can be made now. After hearing from others, he feels 10 acres makes more sense. Ogle stated that if the request changes to 10 acres, the item should be re-noticed and continued to the next meeting. He asked whether any 10-acre configuration would be acceptable, or if the Board had a preferred layout for the applicant to present to the Township. Mol said the ditch should be entirely on one parcel and a single owner responsible.
- P. Barthel stated he heard the main concern is keeping the parcel at 10 acres. He does not want to draw lines that create farming challenges and would prefer to follow natural or straight boundaries. Mol agreed, saying farmers prefer straight lines, but the ditch is a concern. The entire ditch should be on one parcel to avoid maintenance issues. Discussion continued with the direction to keep the ditch on a single parcel, stay at 10 acres and maintain straight boundary lines. Vick asked if excluding the ditch from the farmland would create issues. Mol said it might still create ownership challenges.
- Q. Motion made by Vick to continue the item to the September 19th meeting. Seconded by Mol.

*DISCUSSION: Barthel questioned the involvement of the Township and whether they support or not, they do not make the final decision. Aarestad agreed but emphasized that if the Township does not support the 10-acre division, the Board would need more information. A simple yes or no is not enough.
Ogle confirmed the Township input can be considered by the Board..*

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

(note Greninger was not present for the vote)

8. **ROB JOHNSON** – New

LOCATION: xxxx & 13512 53rd St NW & 5372 NORTON AVE NW, – parts of the NW1/4 OF SE1/4 & NE1/4 OF SW1/4, Section 02, Township 120, Range 28, Wright County, Minnesota. (French Lake Twp.) Tax #209-000-023101, 209-000-023102, 209-000-023100. Property Owner: ZACHARY RAYNOLD JOHNSON & JADE SCHRUPP & JOSHUA J ROSTEN & HEATHER OLSON

REQUEST: Variance as regulated in Section 155.026 & 155.048(G) of Chapter 155, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances to allow the expansion of an existing entitlement division over the 10.0 acre maximum.

No Representative Present

- A. Ogle displayed the proposed site plan and called for the application or a representative three times. He went on to note the applicant had submitted an updated plan late last night but gave no indication they would not be present at the meeting. The Board has the option to discuss the item or continue to the September meeting to allow for the applicant or representative to be present.
- B. Mol questioned why the proposed plan has the gap along 53rd St NW. Ogle stated he was unsure and could only guess it had to possibly do with accessing the field.
- C. Motion made by Vick to continue the item to the September 19th meeting. Seconded by Vick.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Meeting adjourned at 10:14 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Aaron Ogle
Planning & Zoning Planner

AO: sld

CC: Board of Adjustment
Applicants/Owners
Twp. Clerks