

WRIGHT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting of: September 11, 2025
Minutes

The Wright County Planning Commission met on Thursday, September 11, 2025, in the County Commissioners Board Room at the Wright County Government Center, Buffalo, Minnesota. Chairman, Dan Mol, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with members present: Jeanne Holland, Ken Felger, Sandy Greninger, Pat Mahlberg, and Dan Bravinder. Brian Wold, Assistant County Attorney, was the legal counsel present. Barry Rhineberger, Planning & Zoning Administrator, represented the Planning & Zoning office.

ACTION ON AUGUST 21, 2025, MINUTES

Holland motioned to adopt the minutes for the August 21, 2025 meeting as printed. Seconded by Greninger.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. **Estate of Frank G. Lushine** – Cont. 8/21

LOCATION: 6070 PILGER AVE NW - part of Gov't Lot A in Section 33, Township 121, Range 28, Wright County, Minnesota. (Southside Twp.) Tax #217-000-334401 Property Owner: CHERYL D LUSHINE QPERESTR and FRANK G LUSHINE QPERRESTR

Petitions for a Conditional Use Permit for a three-lot unplatted subdivision, as regulated in Sections 155.029, 155.051 & 155.057, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances.

No representative present.

- A. Rhineberger noted the applicant has requested continuation to the October meeting to allow more time to prepare the requested information. Therefore, staff would recommend a motion to continue the matter to the October 2nd meeting, at the applicant's request, to allow more time for the applicant to provide the revisions requested.
- B. Mol called for public comment with no one stepping forward.
- C. Bravinder moved to continue the matter to the October 2nd meeting, at the applicant's request, to allow more time for the applicant to provide the revisions requested. Greninger seconded the motion.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. **JOHNATHAN CELANDER** – Cont. 8/21

LOCATION: 5834 FAIRHILL DR SE - Part of the NE 1/4 of Section 12, Township 119, Range 25, Wright County, Minnesota. (Rockford Twp.) Tax #215-100-121300. Property Owner: RACHEL L CELANDER & JOHNATHAN R CELANDER

Petitions to convert an existing Conditional Use Permit for a Commercial Agricultural Tourism use, granted in 2021 and amended in 2023, into an Interim Use Permit and allow a change from 40 to 50 larger weekend events year, add 12 weeknight large events a year, security to be present for events with alcohol only, and a change to bathrooms, as regulated in Sections 155.003(25), 155.031, 155.048(D) & 155.109, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances.

Present: Rachel and John Celandar

- A. Rhineberger reminded the Commission that the matter was continued from the previous meeting for a site inspection and a better description of the activities taking place. The site inspection was conducted, and the application provided a revised narrative. The revision includes removing the request for additional events on the weekends and reducing the number of requested weeknight events from 12 to 6. There are some other revisions, and all included in the staff report.
- B. J. Celandar walked through the 5 amendments. First, they removed the request to add additional large events on the weekends. Regarding the weeknight events he clarified the intention for these events is to not be late night or wedding in nature. Specifically intended to run 4 – 8 pm as an open house event they put on themselves, it would not be a private rental, and open to the public with the idea to invite people to their property to have food, drinks and listen to live music and enjoy the property. They anticipate 60-100 visitors. Rhineberger explained he provided the Commission with a potential motion based on discussion and narrative, so he removed the connotation between large and small and labeled them all events in the proposed motion. J. Celandar asked for clarification if that would remove all small events with Rhineberger confirming and asked if the intention is to have small weekday events. J. Celandar thought they might eventually do a small tour with a school and was the intent of small events. Rhineberger reminded the Commission that the proposed motion in the staff report might need to be adjusted to include those small weekday events. J. Celandar went on to explain that with security currently all large events have security present. They brought a proposal and would like some feedback as to what makes sense. They hosted a 60th wedding anniversary and baby shower that didn't seem to be events that drive a need for security. They have proposed security for any weekend events that run past 8 pm. They would like some flexibility for those events where security really isn't necessary. J. Celandar noted the narrative reflects the current situation with bathrooms, they currently have 5 bathrooms in the barn with 4 of them being handicap accessible. The last item J. Celandar addressed is the agricultural-related activities on the property. Currently the narrative mentions 280 vines, small strawberry patch and apple trees. When they purchased in 2023 the vineyard was taken over by weeds as well as the strawberry patch and they never found any apple trees, he isn't sure if there were ever any trees. They are wanting to ensure the CUP is

updated based on what they actively have as well as feedback on what the Commission would like to see moving forward. They have spent quite a bit of time revitalizing the vineyard with a lot to still learn. The intention is to continue and grow the agriculture portion of their property.

C. Public comment.

- Greg Michalko is a neighboring resident here on behalf of neighbors. It sounds like they are removing the request to increase the number of weekend events as well as reducing from 12 to 6 weeknight events that would not go past 8 pm. He feels the neighbors would be fine with the changes.

- D. Felger asked Rhineberger why there is a concern with agriculture actives and use. Rhineberger explained there must be a use that is agriculture in nature to have an event center. We do not allow strictly an event center within our jurisdiction. There cannot be a standalone wedding barn, it is only allowed as Commercial Agriculture Tourism with the nexus of the operation having some type of agriculture or rural base. Felger questioned if there are any hay crops. J. Celander stating not currently, they have been there for the last two years and have actively maintained the vineyards. Bravinder stated they had asked for an opinion from the Commission on agriculture activities and his standpoint is anything they want. There are all kinds of things that draw in people from pumpkins to apples.
- E. Mol addressed security as they had asked for direction. The Commission should clarify where the Commission would want to see security. Bravinder feels that in looking at the property, it is a large enough property for parking and activity. They can handle most security on their property. The timeline of anything after 8 pm, for large events, should have security. The weeknights it seems like not everyone will be coming and going at the exact same time so he doesn't feel traffic will be an issue. Sticking to large events after 8 pm will be sufficient, with Greninger agreeing.
- F. Mahlberg questioned the proposed motion and item number 11 stating 330 vines, he doesn't see why the Commission needs to regulate the number of vines. Rhineberger stated he added what was in the narrative, with J. Celander stating they wanted to update with an accurate number. Mahlberg just wants to ensure they are not being bound to 330 vines versus 280 and can plant what they please without having to come back to the Commission to discuss vines and crops. Rhineberger stated he included in the motion what is being requested and how it relates, it is up to the Commission to decide how they include or modify the conditions. Mahlberg feels proposed condition 11 can be stricken all together, the Commission doesn't need to reconfirm what the ordinance already states for this use. Mol asked if the Commission wants to include a range to ensure that agriculture is still included and it isn't a single vine. Mahlberg doesn't know why they would regulate what is being done that is agriculture, if they want to rip out the vines and go back to apple trees, he doesn't want them required to come back here to change out the agriculture use. He feels the ordinance states it must be agriculture based, so a condition related to the number of vines is not needed. Bravinder and Felger agreed.
- G. Greninger moved to approve the conversion of an existing Conditional Use Permit for a

Commercial Agricultural Tourism use, into an Interim Use Permit, in accord with the plans, description, and September 4, 2025, revised narrative, with the following conditions: 1) All events are limited to a maximum of 250 people and limited to the months of May through October; 2) The number of large events shall be limited to a maximum events of more than 40 people, per year, on Friday, Saturday, and Sundays only, with small events with under 40 people are allowed throughout the May through October operating season, and 6 weeknight events per year, with all events occurring between the months of May through October; 3) Weekend events to start no earlier than 8 a.m. and must end no later than 11:00 p.m.; 4) Weeknight events to start no earlier than 4:00 p.m. and must end no later than 8:00 p.m.; 5) Overnight stays and activities are prohibited; 6) All food and liquor must be catered in with licensed caterers and cannot be prepared on site; 7) Security must be present at all events that go past 8:00 p.m.; 8) Parking must be on site per the parking plan and in accord with the Townships conditions. Parking on any public road is prohibited; 9) Amplified music is limited to the barn only, from 12:00 noon to 10:30 p.m., provided the amplified music does not leave the property and the doors and windows on the barn are fully closed; 10) The number of porta-potties needed for each event shall be determined by subtracting the number of bathrooms in the barn from the number specified in the porta-potty guidelines provided by the Wright County Environmental Health Supervisor; 11) Township review in one year, with subsequent reviews at an interval established by the township; 12) This permit shall immediately and automatically expire upon transfer, termination of any lease agreement, or any change in business operations or ownership. Motion seconded by Holland.

DISCUSSION: Rhineberger addressed condition 2 related to prior discussion. He suggested that the number of events shall be limited to the maximum of 40 large events, over more than 40 people, per year, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday only, with small events with under 40 people allowed on weekends only. This way the small events have no limit but are allowed only on the weekends. The large events are allowed 40 total and would be more than 40 people on the weekends, Friday, Saturday and Sunday and 6 weeknight events per year, with all events occurring between the months of May through October. This would be the proposed revision to allow weekend small events. Holland questioned whether large and small would be allowed on the weekends and if small events would be counted against the large events. Rhineberger stated there is no limit to small events on the weekends. J. Celandier believes the current CUP calls out during May through October small events during the weeknights. He would like to keep the small events as is and petition no changes to the small events with only changes to the large events. Rhineberger read the current CUP condition as 'the number of large events should be limited to a maximum of 40 events of more than 40 people, per year, on Friday, Saturday and Sundays only, with small events allowed May through October operating season and 6 weeknight events per year with all events occurring between the months of May through October'.

Felger asked for clarification if a large wedding is allowed during the weeknight. Holland stated no, only 6 small events on the weeknights. Felger questioned if a wedding is not a large weeknight event. Rhineberger explained the description on file states that weeknight events are something other than a wedding and described as a community event. Holland weekend are labeled as Friday, Saturday and Sunday. It is the weeknights, Monday through Thursday, that allows for only 6 small events. J. Celandier clarified they are public events they will be holding themselves.

Greninger and Holland agreed to amend condition 2 to read that the number of large events shall be limited to a maximum 40 events of more than 40 people, per year, on Friday, Saturday, and Sundays only, with small events with under 40 people are allowed throughout the May through October operating season, and 6 weeknight events per year, with all events occurring between the months of May through October.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. **JENNIFER GARDNER** – New

LOCATION: 199 Jansen Ave SE – part of the E 1/2 of the NE 1/4 in Section 03, Township 119, Range 24, Wright County, Minnesota. (Rockford Twp.) Tax #215-000-031108. Property Owner: JENNIFER GARDNER

Petitions to rezone the property from General Agriculture (AG) to Urban/Rural Transition (R-1), as regulated in Sections 155.028, 155.048 & 155.049, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances.

Present: Jennifer Gardner

- A. Rhineberger displayed the Land Use Plan, Zoning Map, aerial photo of the property, and the proposed concept plan as he reviewed the request. The subject property is approximately 5.69 acres in size and is located along Jansen Avenue SE, also known as County Road 20, in Rockford Township. It is currently zoned General Agriculture (AG) and is designated in the Northeast Quadrant (NEQ) Land Use Plan as a Transition Area for the City of Hanover. The request is to rezone the property from General Agriculture (AG) to Urban/Rural Transition (R-1). The submitted concept plan illustrates a potential layout that includes three separately saleable lots, with two possible new home sites. A comment from the City of Hanover expressed concerns about this type of development within the Transition Area and its impact on future development and the extension of municipal services. A written comment from a neighboring resident was received shortly before the meeting and copies were provided to each member. The Township has recommended approval of the rezoning request. The County Highway Department provided comments indicating that they would allow the existing home site to retain its access and permit only one new access. They are also open to the possibility of two lots sharing an access. There is an existing pole structure on the property. During the subdivision process, the building would need to be removed due to size requirements and setback regulations.
- B. Gardner stated the intention is to reduce the size of the pole building, not to remove it entirely. She also noted that there are other 1.3 to 1.6-acre properties in the area, so the proposed lots would be consistent with neighboring properties.
- C. Public comment.
- Howard Larson and Cindy Lowe (residents nearby): Larson expressed concern that approving smaller lots could set a precedent, potentially leading to further subdivisions along the road and toward the Crow River. He stated that if a precedent is set, it would be difficult to deny similar requests from other landowners. This could ultimately affect property values. He said the concept plan suggests three smaller parcels, and he questioned whether this would lead to widespread changes along the river. Mol responded that this concern could be discussed further. Larson asked when

the board's opinion would be known. Mol stated that the matter would be discussed during this meeting. Lowe expressed agreement with Larson's comments.

- Craig Bruner (lives across the road from the subject property): Bruner opposed the proposed rezoning due to safety concerns. Based on his discussions with Planning & Zoning, he understood that an additional access would be created, possibly shared by the third lot. He noted that this portion of the road acts as a "speedway," and he has experienced multiple vehicles, especially those headed to Hanover, ending up in the ditch on his property. He has also nearly been rear-ended when turning into his own driveway. He stated that another access in this area increases the risk of accidents or fatalities. Additional concerns included the steep grading in the area, drainage issues after heavy rain, and gravel runoff onto County Road 20. Improper installation of the new access could lead to water ponding and even more runoff, particularly hazardous for motorcycle groups that frequently use the road. Bruner said the safest solution would be to follow the City of Hanover's recommendation, wait for annexation, and then install a road behind the property. While this could lead to more neighbors, he believes it would be a safer and more strategic approach. He is not opposed to two homes being built but strongly opposes a new access. He recommended a site visit to better understand the safety concerns.
- D. Gardner stated she had met with the Highway Department on-site, and they were the ones who selected the driveway location. She reiterated that there are already other parcels ranging from 1.3 to 1.5 acres along Jansen Avenue. She emphasized that she is not requesting a variance, only to be allowed to follow the ordinance to create three lots.
- E. Holland questioned whether a recommendation needs to be received from the City. Bravinder and Mol responded no, with Mol going on to say that there is a response from the City of Hanover included in the staff report. Even though the property is in the transition area, it is still under County jurisdiction. While the City's suggestions or concerns can be taken into consideration, ultimate authority remains with Wright County. Rhineberger explained that although the property is still within the Township, anything located in a transition area should be coordinated with the City, as County decisions could impact City growth. He noted that the Land Use Plan includes clear language on how to handle properties in the Transition Area, and a portion of that language is included in the staff report. Holland stated that she would appreciate a site visit.
- F. Bravinder stated that he has questions but will wait until after the site visit.
- G. Rhineberger referenced neighboring lots of similar sizes, noting that all three lots to the south are lots of record created in the early 1970s. These lots likely do not meet current minimum

standards, but they were permitted under different rules in place at the time they were created.

H. Greninger noted that the City of Hanover expressed significant concerns about the proposal due to its location within the transition area and its proximity to an arterial road. While she is familiar with the area, she agrees that a site inspection is warranted. Bravinder added that if a site visit is to be conducted, it is important to consider the City's comments and intentions. He also questioned whether there is room to add a secondary road. Holland asked whether the City of Hanover would be invited to the site visit. Rhineberger stated that they could be sent the site inspection agenda. Felger reminded the Commission that no testimony would be taken during the visit.

I. Public comment.

- Howard Larson stepped forward and explained that there is a road in the back that passes through the first two lots and into the third lot. He is unsure who owns the property or whether there was a lien waiver for the driveway into the second lot from the corner.

J. Motion made by Felger and seconded by Holland to continue the matter to the October 2nd meeting for a site inspection.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. **CARRIE LYNCH** – New

LOCATION: 4665 Eaton Ave SE – Rivendell Lot 002, Block 001 in Section 26, Township 119, Range 25, Wright County, Minnesota. (Franklin Twp.) Tax #208-229-001020. Property Owner: RYAN T LYNCH

Petitions for an Interim Use Permit to operate a home occupation for a massage therapy business from within the existing home, as regulated in Sections 155.003(67), 155.031, 155.047, 155.057 & 155.059, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances.

No representative present.

- A. Rhineberger explained that the applicant has decided that at this time they do not want to pursue the matter any further and would like the matter dismissed without prejudice.
- B. Bravinder moved to dismiss the matter without prejudice, at the applicant's request. Greninger seconded the motion.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

SITE INSPECTION

The Commission scheduled a site inspection for Wednesday October 1st, with the Commission to meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Government Center.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Rhineberger noted that the Commission was provided with a tentative 2026 meeting calendar, which was included in their folders. The dates are not finalized, but the goal is to present them to the Commission and Board of Adjustment for preliminary discussion. While the dates are subject to change, they are being shared early to reserve meeting rooms and inform the public. Members were asked to raise any concerns or conflicts they might have. Holland requested that the 2026 County Fair dates be double-checked to ensure that no meeting falls during that event.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Barry Rhineberger
Planning & Zoning Administrator

BR:sd

cc: Planning Commission
Twp. Clerks