

**WRIGHT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

**Meeting of: January 15, 2026**

**MINUTES**

The Wright County Planning Commission met on Thursday, January 15, 2026, in the County Commissioners Board Room at the Wright County Government Center, Buffalo, Minnesota. Planning & Zoning Administrator Rhineberger, acting as Chairman Pro Tem, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with members present: Jeanne Holland, Charlie Borrell, Dan Bravinder and Dan Mol. Absent was Sandy Greninger, Pat Mahlberg & Troy Beise. Brian Wold, Assistant County Attorney, was the legal counsel present.

**ORGANIZATIONAL ITEMS:**

1. Elect Chair & Vice-Chair for 2026

- A. First meeting of the year was opened by Administrator Rhineberger, acting as Chairman Pro Tem at 6:30 p.m. First order of business was to call for nominations for Chairman: Bravinder nominated Dan Mol as Chair with Holland seconding the nomination. Rhineberger called three times for any further nominations, hearing none, a unanimous ballot was cast for Dan Mol as the 2026 Chair.
- B. Mol assumed the Chair and called for nominations for a Vice-Chairman for 2026: Holland nominated Dan Bravinder as Vice-Chairman with Borrell seconding the nomination. Mol asked three times if there were any further nominations, hearing none a unanimous ballot was cast for Dan Bravinder as Vice-Chair for 2026.

2. Set the 2026 Meeting Calendar Dates and Time

- A. Holland moved to approve the 2026 meeting calendar dates and times, with a note that “summer hours” have a 7:30 pm start time. Motion seconded by Borrell.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Per Diem: Set by the County Board for 2026

- A. Per Diem \$120 All Meetings
- B. Per Diem \$70 Site Inspections

**ACTION ON DECEMBER 18, 2025, MINUTES**

Holland motioned to adopt the minutes for the December 18, 2025 meeting as printed. Seconded by Borrell.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

1. **CHRISTINA CLARK** – Cont. 11/20 & 12/18

LOCATION: 17483 64TH ST SW– PART OF GOV'T LOT 1 AND 2 IN SECTION 06, TOWNSHIP 118, RANGE 28, Wright County, Minnesota. (Stockholm Twp.) Tax #218-000-064200. Property Owner: VIRGIL & ALICE SCHLOTTE REV TR

Petitions to rezone 4.50 acres of the property referenced as Tract A on a survey completed by Northstar Surveying, Job No. 2025107, from General Agriculture (AG) with a Residential-Recreational Shorelands District Overlay (S-2) to Commercial-Recreational Shoreland District (S-3), as regulated in Sections 155.028, 155.048 & 155.057, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances.

Public meeting closed

- A. Rhineberger noted that the public hearing was closed and that findings were provided to the Commission for review. Staff is seeking a motion to accept the Notice and Order of Denial, with findings to be forwarded to the Wright County Board of Commissioners and heard at the next available meeting date, which appears to be February 3.
- B. Bravinder feels this rezoning request is unique and, based on his understanding, S-3 zoning requires an association with the lakeshore. Rhineberger noted that the property must be in shoreland and that the business must be water-oriented. Bravinder felt the acreage was very small and that there would be limitations on what could be done. He does not have an issue with the rezoning and noted that, during the development phase and interim use permit (IUP) process with the Township, the project would be required to be as restrictive as Wright County, and with the size of the property a large-scale operation would be limited. Bravinder disagreed with the notion that approval would result in additional similar requests. He does not believe there would be a proliferation of such developments in the County, as S-3 zoning is very difficult to obtain. Property values were mentioned in prior meeting minutes, and he cited an example in Cokato Township where a 250-unit RV campground is located next to homes valued between \$500,000 and \$1 million. He noted that those home values have increased every year, except in 2025, when they declined for an unknown reason. Bravinder stated that if the property were rezoned to S-3, that zoning would remain in place, meaning that if this business did not move forward, future businesses would need to go before the Township but would not be required to return to this Commission. He noted there may be a future request from the applicant to expand the rezoned area if the business grows, and that decision would rest with the Board at that time. His final comment was that, with S-3 zoning, he believes the County Board needs to closely evaluate the situation. He noted that in northern Minnesota resort areas, campgrounds and resorts are commonly located on recreational lakes, which is not typical in Wright County. He stated it is important for the County Board to determine whether this is the direction they want the County to move.
- C. Borrell stated that his vote against the request is related to road access. He would feel more comfortable with the request if access were from an asphalt road as he understands the neighbors' concerns regarding traffic and dust on the gravel road. If the gravel road were the only option, conditions could potentially be added at the IUP stage, but that authority rests with the Township. He questioned whether the Commission could require access from the asphalt road or if other options exist. Rhineberger explained that all shoreland activities must be located within the appropriate zoning district. If a driveway is used for commercial purposes, it must be located on land zoned for commercial use, S-3 in this case, and cannot run through property zoned Agricultural (AG). Borrell reiterated his preference that the plan show business access not coming off 64th Street, which is the dirt road. He acknowledged the presence of "not in my backyard" concerns but also noted that the County is significantly short on campsites. He expressed support for additional private campgrounds, even small three- to four-site locations, as a way for County residents to generate income while also benefiting local businesses. Borrell concluded by stating that his opposition was based on the proposed traffic access from the gravel road.
- D. Motion made by Holland to accept the Notice and Order for Denial of Application for Rezoning with Findings and forward the order and findings to the Wright County Board of Commissioners. Motion seconded by Borrell.

*DISCUSSION: Borrell asked whether the applicant could withdraw the request and, if so, whether it would be with or without prejudice and whether the applicant would be allowed to reapply. Rhineberger noted that withdrawal could occur at the applicant's request. He stated that he had spoken with the applicant earlier in the day and that withdrawal is a possibility. He noted the applicant has until prior to the start of the County Board meeting to request withdrawal. Borrell asked what would occur if the County Board voted to deny the request. Rhineberger explained that the applicant could reapply after one year.*

VOTE:

Aye: Mol, Holland & Borrell

Nay: Bravinder

MOTION CARRIED

2. **MBE, INC.** – Cont. 11/20 & 12/18

LOCATION: xxxx State Hwy. 25 N & 50th Street NE– Part of SW ¼ of SW ¼, Section 4, Township 120, Range 25, Wright County, MN. (Buffalo Twp.) Tax #202-000-043206 Owner: MBE Inc.

An Interim Use Permit to mine sand and gravel for approximately 10.7 acres and up to 348,300 yards, to include excavation, screening, washing, crushing of materials, stockpiling and processing of recycled materials, and fill for reclamation, to be used for fill and base material for public and private construction projects in the area, as regulated in Section 155.031, 155.048 & 155.100 of the Wright County Code of Ordinances.

- A. Rhineberger noted that the public hearing was closed and that findings, including proposed conditions related to those findings, had been prepared and provided to the Commission for review.
- B. Borrell addressed the proposed conditions and stated that he did not recall discussion indicating the pit would not open until after the roundabout was completed. He requested clarification from Rhineberger regarding when the applicant would be permitted to begin mining operations. Rhineberger explained that, in order to open the pit, the applicant must either provide documentation demonstrating that they are the material hauler contractor or another accepted participant in the construction of the roundabout or provide confirmation from the County Highway Engineer that the roundabout has been completed. Rhineberger noted that he specifically spoke with the Highway Engineer regarding the bid process and that portions of the proposed condition were suggested to address the bid process and possible outcome. He reiterated that the roundabout is a County Highway project and stated that this topic was discussed throughout prior meetings. He explained that the proposed conditions are based on the meeting record and recollections of prior discussions, and that only conditions specifically discussed or standard to mine approvals were included. He referenced a condition citing Section 155.100, noting that since mining regulations are already codified in the ordinance they do not need to be restated. Rhineberger stated that all conditions were either drawn from the record or are already included in the County ordinance. Borrell stated that he didn't recall discussion indicating the pit would not be allowed to open until after the roundabout was constructed or bids were accepted. Rhineberger responded that the conditions reflect that discussion and that the condition in question was central to both the application and the broader discussion regarding improvements to the intersection. Mol noted that a primary reason for denial of the prior request was safety concerns related to the intersection and the roundabout. Holland stated that she supports the conditions and feels they represent a reasonable compromise for all parties involved.
- C. Borrell questioned how MBE would be able to bid on the Highway 25 project if the restriction were included. Mol stated that the roundabout was a key condition tied to the application and reiterated that safety concerns at the intersection were central to prior discussions. He stated that without the roundabout, he does not believe approval would be considered. Mol further noted that while the installation of the roundabout has been confirmed, the sequencing of bids is outside the Commission's control. Holland added that Highway 25 will be closed during construction of the roundabout, eliminating traffic concerns during that period. She stated that the applicant wishes to bid on the project and supply material, but if they are not awarded the bid, they would be required to wait until the roundabout is completed. Borrell asked whether construction on Highway 25 would be completed in phases. Rhineberger stated that he has been informed that some portions may be bid separately, but he does not know the specific timing. Holland stated her understanding is that work will occur concurrently at the County Road 37 and County Road 113 intersections and the segment between them. Mol noted that, regardless of approval, the pit would operate beyond a single project. He emphasized that the primary concern is safety at the intersection and that the roundabout addresses that concern, rather than which bids are awarded or in what order work occurs.
- D. Borrell noted that at the previous meeting he referenced "boilerplate" ordinance provisions addressing berm height and dust control. Rhineberger stated that berm height is at the discretion of the Commission. He noted that discussion on this topic was attempted at the prior meeting but was cut short when the question was called, and therefore the

berms would be approved as shown on the submitted plans. Holland stated that the ordinance standards would apply as they do to all gravel pits. Rhineberger confirmed this and added that the ordinance specifies that “the Planning Commission shall set” the standards; however, in this case, approval would be based on the plans as submitted, with no modifications made by the Commission. Borrell asked about the height of the proposed berms. Rhineberger stated they are approximately four feet in some areas and up to six feet in others. Borrell stated he did not believe changes were necessary but questioned whether specific heights should be stated as a condition. Rhineberger recommended leaving the berm heights as approved per the submitted plans.

- E. Bravinder asked whether, under the first proposed condition, MBE would be allowed to open the pit immediately if awarded the contract to supply material for the roundabout. Rhineberger confirmed this. Bravinder then asked whether berm construction or site preparation could occur prior to hauling. Rhineberger stated that while he would not allow hauling in or out prior to an awarded contract, he would allow berm construction and site preparation upon verification of the contract, provided that any activity is specific to the roundabout project. Borrell agreed, noting that MBE indicated they intend to use specific materials for dust control, which requires preparation time, and he supported allowing preparatory work once the contract is awarded.
- F. Bravinder moved to adopt the Notice and Order for Approval of Interim Use Permit with Findings and Conditions, as presented. Motion seconded by Holland.

*DISCUSSION: Borrell stated that based on his knowledge of MBE, he believes the company will comply with the discussed haul road usage and berm height requirements. Holland agreed, stating that she has heard positive feedback regarding MBE’s business practices and operations.*

*Borrell disclosed that he received a call indicating a potential conflict of interest due to an MBE employee sharing his last name. He stated that he does not know the employee or her husband and believes, at most, there may be a distant familial connection. He clarified that no personal relationship influenced his decision.*

*Mol referenced Condition No. 5, which states that when operations cease in the fall, stockpile heights must not exceed the bottom of the berm. He noted that this condition reflects prior discussion regarding wind impacts during off-seasons and prevents stockpiles from reaching 15–20 feet above berm height.*

VOTE:

Aye: Bravinder, Holland & Borrell

Nay: Mol

MOTION CARRIED

Note: Applicant was provided record of the findings at this time.

3. **COLLEEN DAY** – New

LOCATION: 5511 20TH ST NE - GOVERNMENT LOT 8, Section 25 and part of THAT PART OF GOVERNMENT LOT, Section 24, all in Township 120, Range 25, Wright County, Minnesota. (Buffalo Twp.) Tax #202-000-251204 & 202-000-244100. Property Owner: COLLEEN M DAY & ROBERT W DAY

Petitions to rezone the property referenced from General Agriculture (AG) with a Residential-Recreational Shorelands District Overlay (S-2) to Agricultural/Residential (A/R) with a Residential-Recreational Shorelands District Overlay (S-2), as regulated in Sections 155.028, 155.047, 155.048 & 155.057, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances.

Present: Colleen Day

- A. Rhineberger displayed the concept plan and reviewed the rezoning request. The subject property consists of approximately 47.9 acres and includes two separate parcels divided by a section line (PIDs 202-000-251204 and 202-000-244100). The property is currently zoned General Agriculture (AG) with a Residential-Recreational Shorelands District (S-2) overlay and is located within 1,000 feet of Schmidt Lake, a DNR-designated Natural Environment Lake (NE). The property is designated as Agricultural in the Northeast Quadrant (NEQ) Land Use Plan (LUP). The applicant is requesting to rezone both parcels from General Agriculture (AG) with a Residential-Recreational Shorelands District (S-2) overlay to Agricultural/Residential (A/R) with a Residential-Recreational Shorelands District (S-2) overlay. Rhineberger noted that because the property is designated Agricultural in the LUP, the request may not be consistent with broader planning goals unless the Planning Commission determines the property to be rare and unique or finds that the shoreland lots are especially suited for residential development. A concept plan was submitted showing two lots with a proposed minimum maintenance road. If the rezoning request is approved, a platted subdivision application would be required to implement the concept plan. Buffalo Township has recommended approval of the project and indicated a willingness to allow the creation of a road; however, that recommendation was issued in July 2025, and Township Board membership has since changed. Rhineberger noted it may be advisable for the applicant to return to the Township for an updated recommendation. The Wright Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) provided comments regarding specifications for clear-cutting trees within the shore impact zone of Schmidt Lake and expressed concerns about the proposed driveway crossing a drainage ditch or gully on the area identified as Lot 1. Rhineberger further noted that the concept plan includes an island identified as an Outlot; however, under A/R zoning, the island would be required to be incorporated into one of the lots, as undeveloped outlots are not permitted in standard two-lot subdivisions.
- B. Day stated that there is adequate room for widening the exiting driveway and that she is not concerned. She noted that at the July Township meeting, Anne Neumann and Carl Carlson, the newly appointed Township Board members, were present. Day questioned the comment regarding the island. Rhineberger clarified that the island cannot be a separate Outlot and must be incorporated into one of the proposed lots, and it cannot be held under separate ownership. Day asked whether the second island would be subject to the same requirement, which Rhineberger confirmed. Day explained that the purpose of the request is to create an additional building site for her daughter.
- C. No comments from the public.
- D. Borrell stated that neither the Township nor SWCD has expressed opposition to the request and that he views the site as a desirable location. He commented that the Land Use Plan is outdated and believes the decision should be left to the County Board. He indicated his willingness to support approval.
- E. Bravinder asked the distance which the Township is willing to accept the road. Day responded approximately 300 feet, after which it would continue as a private drive to Lot 1. Day stated that the intent is to install the driveways side by side. Bravinder expressed concern about whether there would be sufficient room to accommodate two driveways

in that location and indicated that a site visit may be helpful. Rhineberger noted that each lot is required to have its own separate access.

- F. Mol stated that the property is designated Agricultural in the Land Use Plan and is currently zoned AG. He noted that in similar situations, the Commission has conducted site inspections to better evaluate the property and surrounding area. Mol stated that the Commission must determine whether the property is rare and unique or otherwise justify the request beyond a finding that the LUP is outdated. He expressed support for conducting a site visit.
- G. Bravinder moved to continue the matter to the February 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, for site inspection. Motion seconded by Borrell.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. **LEONARD E LUEDKE** – Cont. 11/20 & 12/18

LOCATION: 11093 COUNTY ROAD 17 SE – THE NORTH 447.15 FEET OF THE EAST HALF OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 36, TOWNSHIP 118, RANGE 25, Wright County, Minnesota. (Franklin Twp.) Tax #208-200-362105. Property Owner: LEONARD E LUEDKE

Petitions to rezone from Agricultural/Residential (A/R) to Suburban Residential-a (R-2a), as regulated in Sections 155.028, 155.047 & 155.051, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances.

Present: Leonard Luedke

- A. Rhineberger noted that the item was continued from the previous meeting to allow time for the Township to submit its recommendation. Franklin Township has submitted a recommendation of denial, citing that the request does not align with the Land Use Plan (LUP). Rhineberger stated this was the only additional information provided to staff.
- B. Luedke stated that Franklin Township initially indicated the decision should be left to the County, as zoning decisions are a County matter rather than a Township matter. At the previous meeting, the Township stated that it has not approved similar requests in the past and that its recommendation for denial is based on precedent rather than a site-specific evaluation of this particular property.
- C. No public comments.
- D. Holland stated that she generally supports Township recommendations and believes that precedent has been established. She expressed concern about a potential domino effect, where approval could lead to additional properties being subdivided into smaller lots. For those reasons, she stated she is not in favor of the request.
- E. Borrell noted that approximately one-half mile down the road there is an existing platted development. Holland responded that the development was approved in the 1970s. Borrell stated that the existing development may indicate the property fits better within the surrounding area and expressed that he is leaning toward approval.
- F. Bravinder stated that he typically defers to Township recommendations on zoning-related matters. He noted that more than 25 years ago a similar request involving this property was denied. He referenced the properties directly across the road, noting their lot sizes have existed in that configuration for a long time. Bravinder stated he could consider the request as infill development based on surrounding conditions and indicated he is leaning toward approval.
- G. Holland commented that it would be beneficial for the City of Delano and Franklin Township to begin discussions regarding orderly annexation areas. Rhineberger stated it is his understanding that such discussions have occurred for some time, but no agreement has been reached.
- H. Mol stated that based on his experience with annexation discussions in Clearwater Township, these situations can be difficult, as Townships are attempting to manage growth while Cities are seeking areas for residential expansion. He noted that although there are some smaller lots in the area, the subject property is not designated in the LUP for smaller lots. Mol emphasized that the Township is asking the Commission not to allow smaller lots in this area, and he does not want to establish a precedent that conflicts with the LUP. Mol also noted that only four Commission members are present, resulting in an even number with no tie-breaking vote. Borrell suggested that, given this, the item may need to be continued to a future meeting.
- I. Borrell noted that if the City of Delano were to annex the property, it is likely that more than two homes could be developed. Mol stated he is considering the issue primarily from the Township's perspective rather than the City's. Based on his experience as a Township supervisor, he noted that it is not easy for a Township to issue a formal recommendation of denial, and that such a recommendation carries significant weight for him. Holland added that in speaking with the District 5 County Commissioner, the preference is to follow the Township's recommendation due



to concerns about a domino effect of similar rezoning requests. She expressed appreciation for orderly annexation agreements, such as those between Monticello City and Township, and suggested that requests like this may encourage Delano and Franklin Township to reach an agreement.

- J. Rhineberger noted that there is additional time to consider the request, as the applicant has signed a 120-day waiver. Mol stated that the item could be continued to the following month. Holland asked whether there was an option to forward the item directly to the County Board, which Mol stated would not be his preference. Holland noted that further discussion could occur at the February meeting when a full Commission, or at least an odd number of members, is present.
- K. Holland moved to continue the item to the February 12 meeting to allow for further discussion. The motion was seconded by Borrell.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. **JOSHUA PERLICH** – Cont. 12/18

LOCATION: 2807 80TH ST NW – The East 660.00 ft. of the North 659.92 ft. of the NW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 in Section 27, together with part of the East 660.00 ft. of the SW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 in Section 22 and all in Township 121, Range 26, Wright County, Minnesota. (Maple Lake Twp.) Tax #210-100-223302 & 210-100-272207. Property Owner: GLENN H RAY

Petitions to convert an existing Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a landscape nursery, granted in 2003, into an Interim Use Permit (IUP) and expand the use to include a non-commercial contractor's yard, up to a 4,480 square foot building with a 1,392 square foot lean-to, and expansion of outdoor storage, as regulated in Sections 155.003(30), 155.029, 155.031, 155.048(D) & 155.057, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of Wright County Code of Ordinances.

Present: Josh Perlich

- A. Rhineberger noted that the item was continued from the previous meeting for the purpose of conducting a site inspection. He stated that no additional information has been submitted or added since that time.
- B. There were no comments from the public or from Perlich.
- C. Borrell stated that the site is a desirable location for the nursery and business, noting that it is located directly off a blacktop road, in a wide-open area, and not surrounded by nearby neighbors. He indicated that he is leaning toward approval of the request
- D. Holland stated that she agrees with Commissioner Borrell.
- E. Mol raised concerns regarding vehicles and impervious surface coverage, noting that overall lot coverage appears to be approximately 30–35 percent, while the ordinance allows no more than 25 percent. Perlich asked for clarification on what constitutes lot coverage, and Rhineberger explained that any surface driven on or used for parking is considered impervious surface. Perlich stated they believe the impervious coverage could be reduced to comply with the ordinance. Mol stated that achieving compliance with the 25 percent impervious surface standard is important, as 35 percent coverage on a lot of this size is significant and may negatively impact runoff. Perlich confirmed that they can reduce impervious coverage to 25 percent. Mol also reiterated the need to address who is residing in the dwelling and the homesteading requirement related to the Interim Use Permit (IUP). It was noted that the individual currently living in the home is a partner in the business. Perlich clarified that the resident is the son of one of the owners and is also a business partner, though long-term living arrangements are not yet determined. Perlich asked who is required to live in the dwelling, stating his understanding that if an owner resided on the property, an IUP would not be required. Rhineberger explained that this is not the case and reviewed the history of the previously approved Conditional Use Permit, noting that the property is currently out of compliance. He explained that under the definition of a non-commercial contractor's yard, the business operator must homestead the property. Perlich asked whether the situation would change if no one lived in the dwelling, and Rhineberger stated that this would further increase noncompliance. Perlich stated they will ensure compliance with all applicable requirements. Borrell explained that the intent of the homesteading requirement is to ensure the business owner maintains oversight and proper management of the property. Perlich stated that eventually he and the current resident will become the owners of the property and confirmed that one of them will continue to reside on the property. Mol reiterated that the property must be properly homesteaded in accordance with ordinance requirements.
- F. Holland moved to approve the conversion of a CUP for a Landscape Nursery to an Interim Use Permit for a Landscape Nursery, with a limited non-commercial contractor's yard, according to the plans, narrative, and discussion at this hearing, with the following conditions: 1) The site is to be used primarily as a landscape nursery and not solely as a contractor's yard. All equipment, vehicles, and machinery related to the business must be stored indoors at all times, except when being moved to or from job sites or used for work onsite; 2) All outdoor storage of landscape materials and wood waste is to be stored south of the 84 ft. x 40 ft. Quonset building. All other equipment is to be stored inside a building; 3) The dwelling must be continually occupied by an owner in the business, or the business

operator must homestead the property; 4) Township to review in one year, with subsequent reviews at an interval established by the Township; 5) This permit shall immediately and automatically expire upon transfer, termination of any lease agreement, or change in business operations or ownership. Motion seconded by Borrell.

*DISCUSSION: Rhineberger noted that impervious surface coverage had been discussed and asked whether the Commission wished to include a condition addressing compliance, and if so, to establish a deadline. Borrell asked the applicant when construction of the proposed building was anticipated. Perlich stated that, under a best-case scenario, construction would occur sometime next summer. Borrell proposed a compliance deadline of October 31, 2026, which was agreed upon by the Commission and the applicant.*

*Rhineberger also recommended revising proposed Condition #5 to allow for transfer of the permit to existing business partners. Commission members agreed this would be appropriate.*

Holland and Borrell agreed to amend the motion as follows:

- A. Add Condition 6: Impervious surface coverage shall be reduced to meet the 25 percent maximum standard by October 31, 2026.
- B. Amend Condition #5 to read: This permit shall immediately and automatically expire upon transfer, except for a transfer to one of the existing business owners, termination of any lease agreement, or change in business operations or ownership.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. **DUANE OSGOOD** – Cont. 12/18

LOCATION: 10709 30TH ST NW – PART OF GOVERNMENT LOT 3, SECTION 20, TOWNSHIP 120, RANGE 27, Wright County, Minnesota. (Albion Twp.) Tax #201-000-202105. Property Owner: DUANE OSGOOD & ROSE OSGOOD

Petitions for a Conditional Use Permit for a land alteration to stabilize a pathway that was cut into the bluff by the previous owner by building a 90' long by 8' tall retaining wall on the upslope of the path.

No representative present.

- A. Rhineberger noted this is an after-the-fact situation and the applicant has decided to restore the bluff to its natural condition rather than maintain the path cut into the hill. Therefore, the applicant is requesting the withdrawal of the request and has submitted a withdrawal form accordingly. He noted that Staff would recommend that: the petition be dismissed without prejudice, at the applicant's request.
- B. Holland moved to dismiss the petition without prejudice, at the applicant's request. Motion seconded by Bravinder.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7. **BENJAMIN SIMON** – Cont. 12/18

LOCATION: 2612 STATE HIGHWAY 55 SE - PRT OF W1/2 OF SE1/4 in Section 04, Township 119, Range 25, Wright County, Minnesota. (Rockford Twp.) Tax #215-100-044204. Property Owner: LEE A & MARIAN E WALDON REVTR

Petitions for an Interim Use Permit to operate a fence and shed sales company with commercial contracting to include a showroom within the existing building and outdoor laydown yard, as regulated in Sections 155.031 & 155.055, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of Wright County Code of Ordinances.

Present: Benjamin Simon

- A. Rhineberger noted that the item was continued from the previous meeting due to the applicant being unable to attend. He stated that the Commission should be familiar with the property, as it was recently approved in November 2025 for rezoning from Business to General Industry (I-1). The current request is for an Interim Use Permit (IUP) to operate a fence and shed sales business with associated commercial contracting services. The subject property consists of approximately 1.63 acres and is located between Chamberlain Avenue SE and State Highway 55, just east of Buffalo. The business plan was included in the staff report, and the proposed site layout was displayed for Commission review. Rhineberger noted that Rockford Township has recommended approval of the request and indicated a preference for a privacy fence along Chamberlain Avenue, which the applicant has agreed to install. He recommended the Commission discuss the privacy fence and applicable height requirements.
- B. Simon stated that the plan includes installation of at least a 7-foot privacy fence along the rear property line and a 6-foot chain-link fence around the remainder of the property perimeter. Rhineberger added that building permits are required for fences exceeding 7 feet above grade, and fences 8 feet or higher require engineered plans. He recommended the applicant consult with the Building Official for exact requirements. Simon stated that the privacy fence height could be reduced to 6 feet 11 inches if necessary.
- C. No public comments.
- D. Bravinder moved to approve an interim use permit to operate a fence and shed sales company and commercial contractor's yard, in accord with the plans and narrative on file and the discussion at this hearing, with the following conditions: 1) A solid privacy fence, no less than 6 foot 11 inches in height, must be constructed along Chamberlain Ave prior to July 1, 2026; 2) On-site signage must be in accordance with the County's sign regulations; 3) Township to review in one year, with subsequent reviews to be conducted at an interval established by the Township; 4) This permit shall expire upon transfer of the property, except for the original transfer from the current owner, termination of any lease agreement, or change in business ownership or operations. Motion seconded by Borrell.

*DISCUSSION: Borrell questioned the specified fence height of 6 feet 11 inches and how it would be regulated and asked if the wording could be adjusted. Bravinder questioned how the language should be adjusted or whether the language should simply reflect the ordinance requirements. Borrell expressed concern that portions of the fence might exceed the allowable height; however, after discussion, it was determined that the stated height requirement is acceptable as written. Simon stated he is comfortable with the 6-foot 11-inch requirement and does not anticipate any issues with compliance.*

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8. **KRAINA LAND LLC** – New

LOCATION: 3755 BRIARWOOD AVE SE - E 1-2 SW EXC PRT DESC IN BK 190-31, Section 20, Township 119, Range 25, Wright County, Minnesota. (Rockford Twp.) Tax #215-100-203100. Property Owner: KRAINA LAND LLC

Petitions to rezone the north 32.43 acres of the property, as referenced on the Certificate of Description by Otto Associates Inc., Project No. 25-0166, from General Agriculture (AG) with a Residential-Recreational Shorelands District Overlay (S-2) to Urban/Rural Transition (R-1) with a Residential-Recreational Shorelands District Overlay (S-2), as regulated in Sections 155.028, 155.048, 155.049 & 155.057, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances.

Present: Paul Otto with Otto Associates and Donavon DesMarais with Kraina Land LLC

- A. Rhineberger displayed the concept plan and reviewed the rezoning request. The subject property is located in Rockford Township on Crawford Lake and was previously heard by the Commission in the summer of 2025. At that time, Rockford Township had neither accepted the proposed future road nor made a recommendation regarding the rezoning request. The Planning Commission did receive public comment with the prior request and conducted a site inspection on July 7, 2025. Based on that prior review, the Commission may be prepared to act on the request this evening. The current request is to rezone a portion of the property from General Agriculture (AG) with a Residential-Recreational Shorelands District Overlay (S-2) to Urban/Rural Transition (R-1) with a Residential-Recreational Shorelands District Overlay (S-2). Rockford Township has since recommended approval of the rezoning and has accepted the road. The Wright Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has expressed concerns regarding potential clear-cutting within the shore impact zone of Crawford Lake. SWCD has also indicated that a wetland delineation has been completed on the property, which would be addressed as part of the preliminary plat process. The Land Use Plan designates the property as Rural Residential; therefore, approval of the R-1 rezoning would require findings that the property is rare and unique or shoreland especially suited for residential development. No other written comments have been received.
- B. Otto stated that the primary change since the prior request is that the applicant has worked with the Township, which is now willing to accept the road and has approved the rezoning request. Rhineberger asked whether there had been discussion regarding a berm or similar buffering measures. DesMarais explained that discussions were held with Township representatives, noting that one reason for hesitation with the original request involved concerns related to the northwest corner of the site. Specifically, there was interest in establishing a buffer easement along the far western shoreland lot line shared with the Yonak and Ellis properties. The intent would be to ensure that existing trees are preserved. The buffer width has not yet been established, though discussion has centered around a width of approximately 10–15 feet. DesMarais further stated that the applicant is considering a landscape berm and screening along the east side of the development to provide a buffer adjacent to the County Park and Briarwood. Rhineberger asked how the westernmost lot would be handled and enforcement assurances to prevent future owners from removing trees. Otto explained that a conservation easement could be established and held by neighboring property owners, the County, the Township, or a homeowners' association, with a clearly identified party responsible for enforcement. He emphasized that accountability would be essential and that the primary considerations would be identifying the beneficiary of the easement and establishing how enforcement and long-term compliance would be ensured. Rhineberger clarified that Planning and Zoning does not enforce covenants. Otto acknowledged that the discussion may be premature at the rezoning stage but noted that some discussion was necessary to move the rezoning forward. He stated the intent would be to return to the Township with a more detailed proposal if the rezoning were approved. Mol reiterated that the matter before the Commission is strictly the rezoning request and that conditions cannot be imposed as part of rezoning approval.
- C. Public comment.

- Bill Yonak, a neighboring property owner, stated that he has received calls from neighbors with questions they would like to address with the applicant and asked where the project is in the overall process. Mol responded that the process is at an early stage, as the property has not yet been rezoned. If the rezoning is approved, the next phase of the process would begin. Yonak asked whether the Commission has experience with buffer zones and how such buffers are typically handled. Rhineberger stated that buffer agreements are not something Planning and Zoning enforces or typically has experience with. Mol added that such matters would generally be civil issues between neighboring property owners and that the developer has not yet proposed a specific agreement. Yonak expressed concern regarding enforcement. Mol noted that County regulations would still apply with respect to building setbacks and other zoning requirements. Any specific tree preservation provisions would need to be addressed through agreements or covenants. Borrell suggested that purchasing the parcel could be a potential solution. Yonak stated that he had considered purchasing a lot but assumed a home would be required to be built. Rhineberger clarified that marketing and development requirements for individual lots are not determined by the Commission and would be at the discretion of the seller. Yonak emphasized his desire to ensure there is adequate time in the process to address concerns. Mol explained that the rezoning is required for the next phase of review to proceed. Rhineberger added that the subdivision process would require a public hearing, where additional comments and concerns could be raised.
- D. Otto stated that while he is not an attorney, he frequently works with easements and has seen them approached differently by various municipalities. He explained that easements can be written in favor of a specific individual or structured to run with the land, and he believes there are multiple viable options that could be discussed further. Otto then reviewed the shoreline overlay map displayed for the Commission, showing the entirety of Crawford Lake and the relationship of the proposed lots to the properties around the lake. He stated that the property is especially well-suited for Crawford Lake and what is proposed will exceed the size of many existing lots. He noted that approximately 60–70 percent of the lake consists of smaller lots with similar widths, and that the proposed lots are consistent with the general character of development on the lake. He added that the proposed lots are intentionally deep to allow development away from the trees, provide adequate space for septic systems on the south side of the lots, and minimize tree removal.
- E. Mol asked whether the trees on the property were planted as a grove. DesMarais stated that he believes the area was previously operated as a tree farm. Mol noted that the Commission has conducted a site visit and held extensive discussion at prior meetings. He stated that the key difference at this meeting is that the Township has now provided approval of the rezoning request.
- F. Borrell moved to recommend approval to the County Board of Commissioners to rezone that portion of tax parcels 215-100-203100 including and laying north of the proposed road, according to the certificate of description submitted by Otto Associates, Project No. 25-0166, dated 5-22-25, from AG-General Agriculture with S-2 Shoreland Overlay District to R1-Urban/Rural Transition with S-2 Shoreland Overlay District, because we find the property is aligned with the goals and policies of the Northeast Quadrant Land Use Plan and that the Township recommended approval. Motion seconded by Holland.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9. **HUTCH ERICKSON** – New

LOCATION: xxxx Quimby & 15528 60TH ST SW – 176.64 acres of the S 1/2 of the NW 1/4 and the NE 1/4 of the SW 1/4 and the SE 1/4 of the SW 1/4 along with part of the E 1/2 of the SW 1/4 , Section 33, Township 119, Range 28, Wright County, Minnesota. (Cokato Twp.) Tax #205-000-332300 & 205-000-334301. Property Owner: GARY FORSMAN REVTR & DEBORAH FORSMAN REVTR and WAYNE KERBER

Petitions to amend an existing Conditional Use Permit for a “1-per-40” residential cluster, previously approved in 2007, that resulted in a grouping of four home locations through “entitlements” to allow a fifth homesite on a proposed 6.28-acre lot, as regulated in Sections 155.029 & 155.048(G)(5)(a), Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances.

Present: Hutch Erickson

- A. Rhineberger displayed the proposed site plan and reviewed the details of the request. He noted that the request involves two separate parcel identification numbers and two different property owners. The request is to amend an existing 2007 cluster approval to allow for the creation of a fifth homesite on approximately 6.28 acres. The proposal includes utilizing a 33-foot-wide strip from the parcel to the east, extending back as an agricultural division, to access and utilize a fifth residential entitlement. Rhineberger emphasized that this is an amendment to the original approval and that all parcels involved will continue to meet the minimum zoning and density requirements. Cokato Township has recommended approval of the request. The Wright County Highway Department commented that an additional driveway along County Road 31 SW would be acceptable, subject to issuance of an access permit. The City of Cokato reviewed the proposal and indicated it has no comments. No other written comments were received.
- B. Erickson stated that he intends to construct a single-family residential home on the proposed parcel within the next one to two years.
- C. Rhineberger noted that this request represents the final remaining entitlement associated with the former Faribault Foods property. He reviewed the history of the entitlements and clarified that no new residential entitlements are being created through this request.
- D. Mol asked whether the proposed parcel would be considered a backlot. Rhineberger responded that, by definition, the parcel would not be considered a backlot nor a second-tier development, as it is not a lakeshore property. He explained that the proposal effectively places one residential entitlement behind another, with access provided via the access strip.
- E. Public comment.
  - Josh Westling, a neighboring property owner, asked for clarification regarding the “one dwelling per 40 acres” rule. Rhineberger explained that properties zoned General Agriculture (AG) allow a density of one dwelling per 40 acres, with several factors considered in the calculation, including additional land ownership and contiguous ownership. Westling asked whether a fifth residential site could ultimately result in the construction of 40 homes. Rhineberger clarified that under the current AG zoning, the property is limited to one home per 40 acres; however, future rezoning to a higher density or annexation by the City could allow for additional development. Westling confirmed that the Commission’s review is limited to the addition of the fifth parcel only.
- F. Borrell questioned the configuration of the proposed driveway access and why it was not designed as a straight alignment into the new parcel. Erickson explained that the driveway strip is being acquired from a neighboring property owner and follows the property line. He further noted that zoning requirements required a minimum five-



acre parcel, and the area proposed for purchase is not productive farmland and was acceptable to the seller.

Rhineberger added that adjusting the alignment could result in exceeding allowable prime tillable soils, potentially placing the division over the 2.5-acre threshold. Borrell commented that when the larger farm property is eventually annexed by the City, a new driveway alignment may be considered. Rhineberger noted that the property is currently located just outside the transition area.

- G. Rhineberger informed the Commission that the parcel from which the access strip is being created appears to have existing compliance issues. A condition addressing this matter was included in the staff report for the Commission's consideration. He noted that staff would address the issue regardless of whether the condition was included but wanted to ensure the Commission was aware. Erickson clarified that the access strip originates from a different landowner than the parcel on which the home would be constructed. Rhineberger cautioned that adding the condition could potentially create complications for the applicant. Mol stated his preference that staff address the compliance issue separately so as not to impact the applicant. Bravinder agreed that the cleanup requirement should not be included as part of the motion.
- H. Borrell moved to amending an existing Conditional Use Permit for a "1-per-40" residential cluster, previously approved in 2007, that resulted in a grouping of four home locations through "entitlements" to allow a fifth homesite on a proposed 6.28-acre lot, with the following conditions: Subject to a deed restriction filed with the Wright County Office of Planning and Zoning; An access permit must be approved by the Wright County Highway Department prior to any construction or earthmoving takes place. Motion seconded by Bravinder.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

10. **CAROL LEE** – New

LOCATION: 4825 PITTMAN AVE SW – part of E1/2 OF SW1/4, Section 28, Township 119, Range 28, Wright County, Minnesota. (Cokato Twp.) Tax #205-000-283100. Property Owner: GALEN M & CAROL LEE

Petitions to rezone the northeast 21.47 acres of the property, as referenced on a survey by Northstar Surveying, under Job No. 2025204, from General Agriculture (AG) with a Residential-Recreational Shorelands District Overlay (S-2) to Agricultural/Residential (A/R) with a Residential-Recreational Shorelands District Overlay (S-2), as regulated in Sections 155.028, 155.047, 155.048 & 155.057, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances.

Present: Carol Lee

- A. Rhineberger displayed the concept plan and reviewed the rezoning request. The subject property consists of 75.88 acres and is located along Pittman Avenue SW in Cokato Township. The property is currently zoned General Agriculture (AG) and is subject to a Residential-Recreational Shorelands (S-2) Overlay District. The entire property lies within 1,000 feet of Brooks Lake, a DNR-designated Recreational Development lake, and/or Dahlgren Slough, a DNR-designated Natural Environment lake. The property is designated as Agricultural under the U.S. Highway 12 (US-12) Corridor Land Use Plan. The request is to rezone the northeast 21.47 acres of the property from General Agriculture (AG) to Agricultural/Residential (A/R). Cokato Township has recommended approval of the request. The Wright Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) submitted comments expressing concern regarding future home placement, including potential wetland impacts associated with driveway construction, lake setbacks, and the need for a new wetland delineation prior to rezoning approval or as part of a future subdivision request. Rhineberger displayed and reviewed an older wetland delineation on record from a previous solar farm proposal. He noted that depending on the location of a future home, a driveway may need to cross a wetland, and SWCD requested that the Commission be aware of this concern. The City of Cokato reviewed the request and indicated it has no comments. One neighboring property owner submitted comments expressing concern that a new home on the lake could impact water quality, wetlands, and trees, and recommended that a new wetland delineation be prepared.
- B. Lee stated that she is undecided whether she would prefer to build closer to the lake or nearer to Pittman Avenue. She indicated that she is required to have at least 10 acres and has completed soil borings in the general area where she may choose to build. Rhineberger clarified that Brooks Lake is an unmeandered lake. As a result, while the rezoning area totals 21.47 acres, the acreage above the Ordinary High Water (OHW) is approximately 10.94 acres.
- C. Mol confirmed that only a portion of the overall property is included in the rezoning request. Lee stated that the rezoning area includes approximately 300 feet of lake frontage and 400 feet of frontage along Pittman Avenue. Mol noted that it appeared the applicant is attempting to meet the requirements of the ordinance, and Lee agreed. She explained following her husband's passing, she is looking to downsize and construct a new home on this property.
- D. No public comments.
- E. Bravinder stated that while he was aware the Township approved of the request, he was not in attendance at that meeting. He noted that his primary concern had been whether Township maintenance staff believed the request could be accommodated without creating issues on Pittman Ave., which is a relatively narrow roadway. He stated that the Township did not express concerns with the request. The subject property is adjacent to City property and the existing homes to the east along Pittman Ave. are on smaller lots that have been established for some time. While the property is not specifically designated in the Land Use Plan, the Township did not object to rezoning the smaller portion of the property due to its location.
- F. Borrell move to continue the matter to the February 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, for site inspection. Motion seconded by Bravinder.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

11. **MICHAEL & DARCY SJOMELING** – New

LOCATION: 345 COUNTY ROAD 30 SE & 9048 AHERN AVE SE – part of SW1/4 OF SE1/4 along with part of N 1/2 OF NW 1/4 OF NE 1/4 , Section 19, Township 118, Range 25, Wright County, Minnesota. (Franklin Twp.) Tax #208-200-184300 & 208-200-191200. Property Owner: MICHAEL & DARCY SJOMELING

Petitions to amend an existing Interim Use Permit to allow a Commercial Agricultural Tourism use to expand hours of operation to 8am-10pm, Wednesday through Sunday, from August through November, including Labor Day, and add a pumpkin trail with LED-lit pumpkins, as regulated in Sections 155.003(25), 155.031, 155.048 & 155.109, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances.

Present: Michael, Darcy and Tucker Sjomeling

- A. Rhineberger displayed the proposed site plan and reviewed the request. He noted the request pertains to Fall Harvest Orchard, with the applicant seeking to amend their existing Interim Use Permit to expand hours of operation to 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday, from August 1 through November 30, including Labor Day, and to add a pumpkin trail featuring LED-lit pumpkins. The orchard is currently approved to operate 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday, during the same seasonal timeframe. He noted the proposed pumpkin trail would be located in a wooded area east of the existing operation. Comments from the Wright County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) indicated the proposed fill would consist of approximately 12–18 cubic yards of Class 5 material. While the impact would be minor, SWCD requested a follow-up site visit with staff prior to commencement of any work. One neighboring property owner requested consideration of a temporary speed limit reduction during the fall season, increased sheriff patrols during that time of year, and that apple cannons be limited to 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. to mitigate noise impacts. Franklin Township has recommended approval of the request.
- B. M. Sjomeling stated the purpose of the request is to extend hours of operation into the evening to allow for a lighted pumpkin trail.
- C. No comment from the public.
- D. Bravinder questioned nighttime access to County Road 30 and whether lighting or other safety measures were planned at the intersection. M. Sjomeling stated there are no plans at this time and that they had not anticipated a need. Rhineberger noted that the County Highway Department would be responsible for addressing any such improvements. M. Sjomeling added that the majority of departing traffic turns right onto County Road 30 and that adequate sight lines exist in both directions. Bravinder indicated he was comfortable with the explanation provided.
- E. Mol stated he visited the site during the previous fall season and found the operation to be well run. He noted the business treats its employees well and expressed a positive impression of the operation. While nighttime traffic was a concern, he felt County Road 30 is a suitable intersection. Mol questioned whether apple cannons would operate after 6:00 p.m. M. Sjomeling stated there are no plans to operate apple cannons after dark. Low-impact attractions, such as the corn pit, may continue, but activities such as wagon rides and apple cannons would not operate at night due to safety and noise considerations.
- F. Holland stated she did not expect significant attendance at 10:00 p.m. on Sunday evenings and assumed the site would likely clear earlier. M. Sjomeling explained they are internally debating Sunday evening operations but noted that holidays or non-workdays on Mondays could increase attendance. The intent is to evaluate operations and adjust as necessary.
- G. Mol asked whether business operations would end at 10:00 p.m. with additional time allowed for the parking lot to clear, or whether a defined time should be established for patrons to vacate the premises. Rhineberger referenced other Ag permits that require music to cease by 10:00 p.m. and all patrons to be off the property by 11:00 p.m. Mol requested that specific timing be clearly defined in the motion. Bravinder asked the applicant whether they preferred

all patrons to be off the property by 10:00 p.m. M. Sjomeling explained that evening closures may actually be easier to manage, as turning off lights provides a clear signal that operations have ended. He stated they would be agreeable to ending operations at 10:00 p.m., with all patrons off the property by 10:30 p.m.

- H. Borrell requested that the LED-lit pumpkins not be oriented toward the roadway, expressing concern about potential driver distraction. M. Sjomeling noted the pumpkin trail would be located furthest from County Road 30 and stated they would monitor lighting placement to address this concern.
- I. Bravinder moved to approve to amend the existing Interim Use Permit to allow a Commercial Agricultural Tourism use to expand hours of operation to 8 a.m. - 10 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday, from August through November, including Labor Day, and add a pumpkin trail with LED-lit pumpkins, in accord with the plans, narrative and discussion at this hearing, with the following conditions: 1) Amend condition #2 on document A1557585, to adjust allowed hours of operation to be expanded to 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., with all patrons being off the property no later than 10:30 p.m. The exception for this time would be for apple cannons and wagon rides, which shall be limited to the hours of 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. All other conditions referenced in document A1557585 shall remain in full force and effect; 2) Prior to any grading or placement of fill, the applicant shall coordinate a site visit with Wright County SWCD staff. No disturbance of any wetland without prior review and approval by the Wright Soil and Water Conservation District; 3) Township to review in one year, with this approval and the approval associated with document A1557585, to be combined and run concurrently. Further Township reviews shall be at an interval determined by the Township; 4) This permit, and permit approved in document A1557585, shall expire upon transfer of the property, termination of any lease agreement, or change in business ownership or operations. Motion seconded by Holland.

*DISCUSSION: M. Sjomeling requested an amendment regarding apple cannons and wagon rides, stating the intent is to operate these activities until dark rather than ending them at a fixed hour. He explained that shutting down activities before dark would create an awkward gap prior to the pumpkin trail opening. Rhineberger asked whether an 8:00 a.m. start time for apple cannons would be acceptable. Bravinder suggested the motion specify that apple cannons and wagon rides end no more than 30 minutes after sunset. Rhineberger confirmed the 8:00 a.m. start time remained acceptable, and Bravinder agreed.*

Bravinder and Holland agreed to amend **Condition #1** to read: With the exception of apple cannons and wagon rides, which must end no more than 30 minutes after sunset.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

### **SITE INSPECTION**

The Commission scheduled a site inspection for Tuesday, February 10th, with the Commission to meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Government Center.

Meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Barry Rhineberger  
Planning & Zoning Administrator

BR:sd

cc: Planning Commission, Twp. Clerks