



## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Monday, September 22, 2025, at 6:00 PM  
City Hall, 4368 Main Street, Pequot Lakes, MN

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### MEMBERS PRESENT

Commission Chair Andy Ellering; Commission Members Jeremy Fyle, Kent Johnson, Paula Lang, Eric Larson, Paul Luger, and John Mederios

### MEMBERS ABSENT

All Commission Members present

### CITY STAFF and OTHERS KNOWN PRESENT

Thomas Roloff, City Planner; Traci Pederson, Zoning Administrator; Laura Larson, Council Liaison; and Community Members – Mark & Linda Barry, Bobby Rickard, Rick Weiblen, Jeff & Karen Silker

### CALL TO ORDER

Commission Chair Ellering called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### CONSIDER AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

**MOTION MADE BY COMMISSION E.LARSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSION JOHNSON.  
MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS IS.  
MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

### PUBLIC HEARING(S)

**MOTION MADE BY COMMISSION E.LARSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSION JOHNSON.  
MOTION TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.  
MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

The Public Hearing opened at 6:00 p.m.

#### **3a. Rezone: Robert Rickard, PID 29030532 - RZ25-05**

Thomas Roloff, City Planner for Pequot Lakes and Community Development Administrator with Sourcewell, presented the staff report regarding a rezone request for an undeveloped property at the north end of town adjacent to Highway 371. The current zoning for the property is forest management, and the request is to rezone it to commercial.

Roloff noted that the property is identified on the zoning map as forest management, with the future land use map listing it as forest preservation. The surrounding zones include forest management to the north, commercial to the east, state right of way/agricultural to the south, and state right of way and forest management to the west. He outlined the 18 findings of fact for the rezone.



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Roloff noted that the comprehensive plan doesn't speak directly to rezones but states that the goal is to identify, preserve, and enhance key social and physical resources that contribute to the character of the area. He stated that the property meets lot sizing requirements for the commercial zone and recommended approval with no conditions.

Mr. Rickard, the applicant, explained that his request would blend his property together as commercial, noting that he already owns the commercial property adjacent to it. He explained that the strange configuration came about because the land was once all commercial, then part of it was changed to forest management, and he wanted it all to be commercial again.

Commissioners noted that this wouldn't be spot zoning since the property is lapped by commercial property aside from the highway. They agreed that it made sense to rezone the property.

**MOTION MADE BY COMMISSION E.LARSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSION JOHNSON.**

**MOTION TO RECOMMEND THE REZONE APPROVAL TO COUNCIL BASED ON STAFF FINDINGS OF FACT AND NO CONDITIONS.**

**MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

### **3b. Variance: Mark Barry, PID 29151068 – V25-04**

Thomas presented the variance request for a property at 30501 Pequot Boulevard in the Shoreline Residential zone. The request was to add a deck addition to an existing dwelling where the deck and part of the existing dwelling do not meet the 75-foot setback to the lake.

Roloff displayed photos and a rendering from the survey showing the proposed deck. He noted that the survey indicated proposed conditions would not increase impervious surface. The impervious percentage on the COS was 30.7%, where 25% is the maximum. He explained that there is a method to add a deck to a nonconforming dwelling without needing a variance, but this request was asking for both a lake setback variance and a property line setback variance where 10 feet is required.

The findings of fact included information that the property's septic system had been inspected, but no stormwater management documentation was included in the application. Roloff noted they received a comment from the DNR hydrologist stipulating that there are mechanisms within state statute to allow deck additions without a variance, which aligns with Pequot Lakes codes.

Roloff stated that if the Board of Adjustments wished to approve the variance, he recommended three conditions: a stormwater management plan, a catch that any new impervious surface would need a variance application, and that the deck shall remain open and constructed of materials that allow for stormwater to pass through.

Mr. Barry, the applicant, addressed several points from the staff report. He clarified that in his application he had already asked for a variance for any additional footings the deck would require. Regarding the side deck that appears to encroach on the property line, he explained that the new deck as designed would go out the front of the house and not impede on the 10-foot setback. He noted that the existing deck that has been there since the 1980s does impede on the side setback, and he questioned why he should need a variance for something that has existed for 40 years.

Mr. Barry explained that the existing deck would be rebuilt to accommodate a hot tub, which would eliminate deck space for sitting and recreation, necessitating the expansion to the front of the house. He described the need to



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rebuild the entire existing deck as it currently has 40-year-old infrastructure and would need to be upgraded to support composite decking materials.

After extensive discussion about setbacks, stairway access, and impervious surface requirements, the Commission determined that if Mr. Barry reduced his proposed deck from 12 feet to 10 feet from the house and kept his stairway within 4 feet wide, he could build the deck without a variance. The 4-foot stairway would be allowed outside the setbacks per city code. He would need to submit a land use permit application for review and approvals.

Mr. Barry agreed to this solution rather than pursuing the variance.

**MOTION MADE BY COMMISSION CHAIR ELLERING, SECONDED BY COMMISSION LANG.**

**MOTION TO DENY THE VARIANCE REQUEST BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF FACT, WHICH INCLUDES THE DNR COMMENT.**

**MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

### **3c. Ordinance Amendment, 25-08: Shoreline Residential/Shoreland Overlay District**

This was a continued discussion from last month's Planning Commission meeting/public hearing. Thomas Roloff reported on the meeting with the DNR regarding the Shoreland Overlay ordinance. He noted that he had produced revisions based on DNR input, shortening the document and making the concurrent regulations more understandable. He presented the new red-line version for the Commission's consideration.

Commissioners Ellering and E.Larson noted that they found the meeting with the DNR very helpful, particularly regarding the "more restrictive language" where in transition areas between different zones, the more strict requirements must be followed.

**MOTION MADE BY COMMISSION LANG, SECONDED BY COMMISSION JOHNSON.**

**MOTION TO RECOMMEND COUNCIL APPROVAL FOR THE ORDINANCE AMENDMENT 25-08.**

**MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

**MOTION MADE BY COMMISSION E.LARSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSION LANG.**

**MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.**

**MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

Public Hearing closed at 6:40 p.m.

### **OPEN FORUM**

Richard Weigel of 6277 Wilderness Road addressed the Commission regarding Wilderness Point Resort. He stated he has been a neighbor to the resort for 40 years and expressed concerns about potential development plans. He noted that originally the resort was going to be all single villas, but the plans have changed over the years to include apartments and twin homes.

Mr. Weigel expressed concern about a recent plan that proposed 21 additional units (17 up front and 4 on the back) compared to the previously planned 14 units (10 on the lakeside and 4 on the back). He stated he is in favor of completing the resort development but is concerned about the increased density. He asked to be included in communications about future plans before they come to the Planning Commission for official review.



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Mr. Weigel also mentioned that screening that was supposed to be done when the beaches were relocated wasn't completed because one of the old cabins was in place. Now that most cabins have been removed, he suggested that the screening should be completed. He also noted that the original approvals required all cabins to be removed, including the point cabin, which was supposed to become a common area.

The Commission discussed notification procedures, explaining that statutory requirements for public hearings include publishing notices in the newspaper and notifying property owners within 350 feet of the subject property. While the Lake Association is not a property owner and therefore doesn't receive direct notification, the Commission suggested that Mr. Weigel contact them and/or the HOA for any information in advance, as the direct communication he's looking for from city staff or the commission is not required, regardless of if it was done in that manner years ago. It was also noted that he would receive notice as an adjacent property owner before any plans come to the Commission.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **5a. Metes & Bounds <10-acres: Jeff Silker, PID 29220564, MB25-06**

Thomas presented a metes and bounds subdivision request to subdivide a parcel on Sibley Lake into two lots: proposed parcel A at 6.36 acres and proposed parcel B at 2.64 acres. He explained that shoreland residential requirements apply to both properties.

Roloff noted that subdivisions of less than 10 acres come before the Planning Commission as a new business item and are not publicly noticed. He stated that one split is allowed within a three-year period, and if not recorded within a year, the approval could expire.

Roloff recommended approval based on 21 findings of fact. He added that he had requested wetland information from the applicant, which was promptly provided, and that there are two locations for a new site suitability on file.

**MOTION MADE BY COMMISSION E.LARSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSION JOHNSON.**

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION BASED ON STAFF FINDINGS OF FACT AND NO CONDITIONS.**

**MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

#### **5b. Discussion of lot sizes**

Thomas presented information on lot sizes for rural residential zoning. He noted that each city handles zoning differently, and Pequot Lakes is unique in its approach to rural residential zoning. He looked at Crow Wing County's breakdown of 1, 2.5, 5, and 10-acre lot sizes, noting that the county may have eliminated 1-acre lots due to issues similar to DNR shoreland concerns.

The Commission discussed reducing the minimum lot size for rural residential from 5 acres to 2.5 acres as a minimum. Commissioners noted that this would provide more flexibility for property owners while still maintaining the rural character.

The Commission also discussed changing additional criteria alongside the lot size reduction, including:

1. Reducing side yard setback from 25 feet to 10 feet



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2. Reducing corner side setback from 40 feet to 20 feet
3. Increasing impervious surface allowance from 20% to 25%
4. Increasing building height from 25 feet to 35 feet
5. Modifying the establishment of primary use criteria to align with the new 2.5-acre minimum lot size

The Commission directed staff to prepare these changes as a red-line version for review.

### **5c. Comprehensive Plan discussion**

Traci reported that Sourcewell might have options to assist with the comprehensive plan update. She also mentioned that Region 5 had attended an Economic Development Commission meeting and indicated they could work with the city to seek funding to revamp the entire comprehensive plan rather than going through it line by line. She stated there would be more information to come on this topic.

### **5d. Patriot Ave. – ROW Vacation Request, Council request for PC comments**

Traci explained that a group of property owners had approached the City Council regarding vacating the right-of-way along Patriot Avenue. This area had a larger setback from when it was part of Highway. The Council wanted the Planning Commission's input on whether to vacate the entire section at once or to proceed piece by piece, and if they saw any issues with going through the road vacation process.

The Commission discussed concerns about utilities and the snowmobile trail that currently runs along that area. They agreed that it would be better to vacate the entire section at once rather than piecemeal, but emphasized the need to consult with the city engineer and the snowmobile club before proceeding.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business to discuss.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION BY COMMISSION E.LARSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSION JOHNSON.**

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 25, 2025, MINUTES AS IS.**

**MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

### **PLANNING AND ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT & UPDATES**

Zoning Administrator Pederson provided updates. She reported that the city has had success with code violation letters, which continue to come in and go out.

She also presented a last-minute addition regarding Dennis Paulson's application for a shipping container on a rural residential property, a letter to the Planning Commission. Thomas explained that rural residential zoning requires a primary use to be established, which can be satisfied by submitting a sewer design for a future home. However, Mr.



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Paulson's application and correspondence indicated he is conducting commercial activities on the property with multiple structures but no residential use.

Roloff noted that commercial uses are excluded in rural residential zones, and Mr. Paulson had previously stated he would not be building a dwelling. The Commission agreed they did not want to approve further changes to the property until it starts being used for its intended residential purpose or until the owner applies for, and gets the approval of a rezone that would allow such activity.

Commissioners also raised concerns about another property on Patriot Ave. that had previously received a code violation letter regarding pavement issues and excessive vehicles on the property, some of which are not titled, but had not addressed the violations. The Commission directed staff to proceed with the next enforcement steps.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business:

**MOTION MADE BY COMMISSION FYLE, SECONDED BY COMMISSION LUGER.**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN.**

**MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

The meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Traci Pederson  
Zoning Administrator