



## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 24, 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 Eric Larson, Paula Lang, and Paul Luger

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Commission Member Kent Johnson and John Medeiros

*\*The PC Has six members currently, there is one open seat*

### **CITY STAFF and OTHERS PRESENT**

Thomas Roloff, City Planner; Traci Pederson, Zoning Administrator; Laura Larson, Council Liaison; Nick Roy, City Public Works Supervisor; Andy Schwartz, City Water/Wastewater Operations Manager; Tim Houle, City Engineer; Meg and Pete Miller, Variance applicant; Chan Johnson, PLAID LLC; Jim Kramer, KLD; Kyle Narveson and Erica Meitz, Trailside Estate 24 LLC; many other community members

### **CALL TO ORDER**

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

### **CONSIDER AGENDA**

No updates or changes to the agenda were proposed.

### **PUBLIC HEARING(S)**

**MOTION BY COMMISSION E. LARSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSION LANG, TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

The Public Hearing was opened at 6:01pm.

#### **Peter and Margaret Miller, Variance Application V25-01, PID 29360686**

Thomas Roloff presented the staff report for a variance request to construct a 2,531 square foot dwelling with an attached garage, screen porch, and covered entry within the required lake setback of 75 feet and within the road right of way setback of 10 feet from Wilderness Road. The property, owned by Peter and Meg Miller, is located at 5561 Wilderness Road and is zoned Shoreline Residential. It is riparian to Lower Cullen, classified as a General Development Lake, and includes an existing legal nonconforming lot of record.

Thomas highlighted that the proposal would involve taking down an existing structure and reconstructing it; although it would not be any closer to the lake, it would be located slightly closer towards Wilderness Road. He provided details about the septic system, drainage, and stormwater management, noting everything is in compliance with the applicable sections of the land use ordinance. He clarified that the proposed dwelling is within the 75-foot regulatory setback from the lake and also within the road right of way to Wilderness Road.



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Public Works had commented regarding the proposed driveway, indicating a desire for clarity on configurations to ensure functionality, while the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was sent the application but provided no comment. The total impervious surface is noted to be compliant with the current ordinance limits. Roloff suggested that the Planning Commission discuss the criteria for both approval and denial and consider the proposed conditions if an approval was to be granted.

Commission members expressed that the proposal seemed reasonable given the lot's constraints. The Millers were present at the meeting, and they expressed their sentiment that the proposed structure is reasonable and appropriate for the lot, emphasizing the intention to build a comfortable year-round home that is in keeping with the neighborhood. There were no public comments opposing the variance.

**MOTION BY COMMISSION LANG, SECONDED BY COMMISSION E.LARSON, TO APPROVE THE VARIANCE REQUEST BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF FACTS AND IMPLEMENT THE CONDITIONS NOTED IN THE REPORT. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

The conditions noted in the staff report:

1. An as-built certificate shall be provided to the City following the construction of the proposed dwelling to demonstrate that the lowest floor level is above the Regulatory Flood Plain Elevation/Base Flood Elevation for the property.
2. The proposed concrete areas denoted on the Certificate of Survey as "to be removed" shall be removed within one (1) year of the approval of any land use permit related to the proposal in this application and shall be revegetated to adequate standards as outlined in Section 17-5.8.
3. The proposed downspout gutters, grading, and stormwater retention areas as shown on the drainage plan shall be implemented upon completion of the project if/when a land use permit is applied for and approved by the City.

### **PLAID LLC, Preliminary Plat Application, PPlat 25-01, PIDs 29110515, 29110539, 29110540**

Thomas Roloff presented the staff report for the preliminary plat of Plaid Northwest 1, which includes 3 lots, 3 platted streets, and 2 out lots. The property is located at and surrounding 4762 Main Street, section 11 Township 136, range 29. Roloff explained that the application includes public zoned land owned by the city of Pequot Lakes. The proposed plat includes three lots, three platted streets (Proposed North-South Road, East Sibley Street, and Bergquist Drive), and two outlots (A and B).

Roloff detailed the applicable regulations, including commercial and public zoning requirements, as well as the preliminary plat process, referencing sections of the Pequot Lakes code pertaining to commercial districts, publicly owned land, preliminary plat guidelines, and subdivision processes. The site contains multiple parcels with various configurations; one parcel was rezoned from forest management to commercial to enable the development. Tim Houle, the City Engineer, noted that further discussions and details were necessary concerning municipal utility items, potential street configurations like the East Sibley and North-South, and public improvement proposals, indicating the complexity added by the multiple stakeholders and technical considerations.

Several members of the public expressed concerns during the meeting, highlighting issues such as traffic impact and safety given the proximity to the roundabout, potential light pollution from a proposed gas station as part of the development, and questions about the process for public input and voting on development decisions. There was also apprehension about the funding for infrastructure improvements and the potential financial burden on city taxpayers, with inquiries about whether such changes would be subject to taxpayer votes or city council decisions alone.



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A contingent concern was the impact of the proposed roadways on existing properties, creating potential for increased traffic near residential areas and logistical challenges with access management at the roundabout and Main Street intersections. The question of how future construction phases, including water and sewer extensions, would be funded also remained ambiguous, necessitating further clarity and exploration.

Jim Kramer, KLD, helped to answer some of the questions from the public – aiming to provide additional clarity on the plans put forth by PLAID LLC. Chan Johnson, one of the applicants and part of PLAID LLC, explained that the preliminary plat is a necessary step to move forward with potential development and attract buyers. The intention behind pursuing the plat was to provide a "house plan" for prospective investors or developers to visualize and understand the potential offered by the site.

After extensive discussions and public input, the Planning Commission agreed that more information was needed before making a recommendation. Particularly, a complete cost analysis, development agreement, and input from city entities were indispensable to ensure informed decision-making. Thus, the commission concurred with the staff's suggestion to table the preliminary plat application to allow for additional research and drafting of findings and conditions. The decision to table the matter exemplified the need for due diligence and comprehensive planning in urban development projects.

The Planning Commission will work with other staff and local agencies to create a list of items still needed and what would likely become a list of conditions for the Preliminary Plat application for PLAID LLC and KLD to work with. The hope is to provide as much information as possible before the next Planning Commission meeting.

**MOTION BY COMMISSION E. LARSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSION LANG, TO TABLE THE PLAID LLC PRELIMINARY PLAT APPLICATION UNTIL FURTHER INFORMATION IS PUT TOGETHER, AND A CLEAR LIST OF ITEMS CAN BE COMPILED INCLUDING NOTES AND COMMENTS FROM STAFF AND OTHER LOCAL AGENCIES. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

### **Trailside Estate 24 LLC, Preliminary Plat Application, PPlat 25-02**

Roloff presented the staff report for the preliminary plat of the first addition to Trailside Estates. This proposal seeks to subdivide the common area within the existing plat and incorporate it with adjacent lots. Significantly, no new lots are proposed within this development; instead, the plat will consist of 30 lots designated for residential purposes, along with multiple outlots, which are intended to be integrated with adjoining properties.

Roloff noted that the property is zoned urban residential and that all lots have been designed to be supplied by city municipal sanitary sewer and water. During his presentation, Roloff also highlighted detailed feedback provided by the city engineer, which particularly focused on a drainage easement. This easement, a key aspect of the plat's infrastructure plan, was noted to require proper location assignment to ensure effective stormwater management and compliance with city planning standards.

Condition noted by Roloff in his report was:

1. Natural or manmade stormwater storage areas shall be utilized where needed and shall be designated by drainage and utility easement, if necessary. All storage areas shall be vegetated and designed to lower naturally after a storm.



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- a. Per the City Engineer: Configuration of the proposed 15 ft wide drainage easement to the west between new Lots 3 and 4, Block 6 shall follow natural swales from the pipe's outlet over to the local low spot in Outlot J.

There were no public comments on this item.

**MOTION BY COMMISSION E. LARSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSION LANG, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE PRELIMINARY PLAT BASED ON STAFF FINDINGS WITH THE CONDITION NOTED. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

### **Trailside Estate 24 LLC, Final Plat Application, FPlat 25-01**

Thomas Roloff presented the staff report for the final plat of the first addition to Trailside Estates, noting that it was largely the same as the preliminary plat application. He mentioned that a correction was needed in the staff report to accurately reflect the applicant's name as Trailside Estate 24 LLC.

Condition noted by Roloff in his report is the same from the Preliminary Plat:

1. Natural or manmade stormwater storage areas shall be utilized where needed and shall be designated by drainage and utility easement, if necessary. All storage areas shall be vegetated and designed to lower naturally after a storm.
  - a. Per the City Engineer: Configuration of the proposed 15 ft wide drainage easement to the west between new Lots 3 and 4, Block 6 shall follow natural swales from the pipe's outlet over to the local low spot in Outlot J.

**MOTION BY COMMISSION E. LARSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSION LUGER, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FINAL PLAT BASED ON STAFF FINDINGS WITH THE CONDITION NOTED. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

### **Chapter 17 Ordinance Amendments, 25-04**

Thomas Roloff presented proposed amendments to Chapter 17 of the city ordinance regarding natural environment lake setbacks and water-oriented accessory structures in the shoreline residential zone. Key changes included:

1. **Reducing the natural environment lake setback:** The current setback, which is set at 200 feet, would be reduced to 150 feet. This change aims to make the ordinance more consistent with practical land use requirements and better accommodate residential development near lakes while still maintaining necessary environmental protection.
2. **Provisions for water-oriented accessory structures:** The proposed amendments include specific size and setback requirements for these structures. Such provisions are designed to ensure that water-oriented accessory structures, like docks or small boathouses, do not exceed a height of 12 feet for pitched roofs and 10 feet for flat roofs. Moreover, these structures cannot occupy a combined area greater than 120 square feet and must maintain a minimum distance of 20 feet from the ordinary high-water mark.
3. **Modifying impervious coverage regulations:** The amendments also address impervious surfaces within 50 feet of the ordinary high-water mark. Previously, structures like boathouses were prohibited within this area, but the new amendment proposes allowing certain impervious surfaces if they adhere to specific guidelines aimed at reducing environmental impact.



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4. **Permitting water-oriented accessory structures:** A crucial change proposed in the ordinance is shifting the status of water-oriented accessory structures from 'excluded' to 'permitted' within the shoreline residential zone. This permits property owners greater flexibility in developing their shorelines, provided they meet the new standards.

Roloff emphasized that the amendment concerning structure visibility was primarily aimed at mitigating issues related to excessive clearing and the strategic placement of structures. It is intended to ensure that structures do not disrupt the natural aesthetics and views of shoreline areas, rather than regulate the architectural aesthetics between neighbors. The goal is to preserve the natural environment while allowing residential developments to be harmonious with their lakeside settings.

**MOTION BY COMMISSION CHAIR ELLERING, SECONDED BY COMMISSION E. LARSON, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THESE CHAPTER 17 ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

**MOTION BY COMMISSION E. LARSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSION LANG, TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:21 pm.

### **OPEN FORUM**

No members of the public came forward for the open forum.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business to discuss.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business to discuss.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION BY COMMISSION LANG, SECONDED BY COMMISSION LUGER, TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 24, 2025, MINUTES AS IS. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

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

Zoning Administrator, Traci Pederson, presented her monthly report. She reported that violation enforcement was in full swing. She also mentioned that an application for a new Planning Commission member had been received and would go to the City Council in April.



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### ADJOURNMENT

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSION LANG, SECONDED BY COMMISSION LUGER TO ADJOURN. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

The meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Traci Pederson  
Zoning Administrator

DRAFT