

**MEETING OF THE PEQUOT LAKES PLANNING COMMISSION
MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2025 **DRAFT**
PEQUOT LAKES CITY HALL**

- Members Present: Commission Chair Andy Ellering; Commission Members, Kent Johnson, Eric Larson, Paul Luger, and John Medeiros
- Members Absent: Commission Member Paula Lang
**The PC has six members currently, there's one open seat*
- Staff Present: Thomas Roloff, City Planner; Traci Pederson, Zoning Administrator; Laura Larson, Council Liaison, Tyler Gardner, Mayor; Nick Roy, Public Works Supervisor
- Others Present: Chan Johnson, John McGary, Jim (KLD), Tony Pohl (KLD, virtual), Sean Pratt, Bill Brekken, Diane Moon, Robb Fritz, Dennis and Sue Paulson (virtual)

1. Call Meeting to Order

Commission Chair Ellering, called the meeting of the Pequot Lakes City Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Electing Chairperson and Vice-chairperson for 2025

FOR THE POSITION OF CHAIRPERSON, A NOMINATION WAS MADE FOR ANDY ELLERING TO RETAIN HIS POSITION BY ERIC LARSON. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY KENT JOHNSON AND CARRIED WITHOUT OPPOSITION. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

FOR THE POSITION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON (CHAIRMAN PRO TEM), ERIC LARSON NOMINATED HIMSELF. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY KENT JOHNSON AND CARRIED WITHOUT OPPOSITION. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

3. Consider Agenda

No updates or changes to the agenda were proposed.

4. Public Hearing(s)

The Public Hearing opened at 6:02 p.m.

a. Ordinance Amendment Chapter 17: Cannabis

City Planner, Thomas Roloff, presented the proposed ordinance amendments to Chapter 17 of the zoning code, pertaining to the cultivation, manufacturing, retail sales, and wholesale operations of cannabis in the city. He explained that the amendments would add definitions and modify the existing land use matrix to provide permitting guidance and allowed locations for cannabis-related activities.

The proposed land use matrix additions included:

- Cannabis cultivation commercial: permitted in forest management and agricultural zones

- Cannabis manufacturer: permitted in forest management, agricultural, and light industrial zones
- Cannabis retail business: permitted in downtown mixed-use and commercial zones, and as accessory use in the light industrial zone
- Cannabis wholesale business: permitted in agricultural and light industrial zones

The commission discussed the proposal, with Eric Larson suggesting that cannabis wholesale business should also be allowed as a permitted use in forest management zones to align with cultivation. The commission agreed to this modification.

The public hearing was then open to the public for comments, but no members of the public came forward to comment on the cannabis ordinance.

COMMISSION E.LARSON MOTIONED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO APPROVE THE ORDINANCE AMENDMENT WITH THE MODIFICATION OF ADDING CANNABIS WHOLESALE BUSINESS TO BE A PERMITTED USE IN FOREST MANAGEMENT ZONES IN THE LAND USE MATRIX. COMMISSION JOHNSON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

b. Ordinance Amendment Chapter 17: Impervious Surfaces

Roloff presented proposed changes with a red lined version to Chapter 17 regarding impervious surfaces. The amendments included:

- Increasing the impervious surface maximums in various zones, specifically addressing rural residential, shoreline residential, and shoreline commercial zones. For instance, the impervious coverage maximum in rural residential zones would be increased from 15% to 20%, and in shoreline residential zones, it would increase from 20% to 25% and 15% to 25%, depending on the subcategory.
- Removing the existing requirement for a conditional use permit to exceed current impervious maximum amounts in the shoreline residential zone, thereby simplifying the process for property owners in those categories.
- Eliminating the existing 2:1 impervious surface replacement performance standard in the shoreline commercial zone, which was considered outdated and no longer necessary for the current zoning and environmental needs.
- Introducing a definition for permeable/pervious paver surfaces. These surfaces allow the inflow of rainwater into the underlying construction or soil, providing a more eco-friendly option for land development. Along with this, relevant performance standards for their use and regulation were proposed, including that projects using these systems and being 400 square feet in size or smaller would not require an engineered design, as long as the manufacturer's specifications, standards, and the stormwater manual are followed.

The commission engaged in a thorough review of these proposed changes, noting their alignment with prior discussions. Members confirmed that the

amendments would enhance clarity and fairness in zoning regulations, ensuring environmental considerations were maintained while simplifying compliance for landowners.

The public hearing was then open to the public to receive feedback on the proposed ordinance amendments regarding impervious surfaces. However, no members of the public stepped forward to offer comments or objections to the proposed changes. Consequently, the commission pressed forward with their decision-making process regarding the proposed amendments.

COMMISSION E.LARSON MOTIONED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO APPROVE THE ORDINANCE AMENDMENT AS PRESENTED. COMMISSION JOHNSON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

COMMISSION JOHNSON MADE A MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING. E.LARSON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

The public hearing was closed at 6:11 p.m.

5. Open Forum

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

6. New Business

a. **Diane Moon, Metes and Bounds <10-acres, PID 29260549**

Thomas presented a metes and bounds subdivision request for Diane Moon's property located on County Road 107. The proposal was to divide a 15.31-acre parcel into two lots: a 5.27-acre parcel on the north side and a 10.5-acre parcel on the south side. Both parcels were vacant and had approved site suitability for future septic accommodation.

Thomas noted that the Crow Wing County Highway Department provided comments regarding residential access and the need for access permits for new driveways. The planning commission discussed the proposal and found it to be straightforward and meeting all requirements.

COMMISSION E.LARSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETS AND BOUNDS SUBDIVISION BASED ON THE 16 STAFF FINDINGS. COMMISSION MEMBER JOHNSON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

b. Hunt Technologies/Landis Gyr, Metes and Bounds <10-acres, PID 29120515

Robb Fritz from Hunt Technologies, Inc. (doing business as Landis Gyr) presented a metes and bounds subdivision request for the property located at 6436 County Road 11. The proposal was to subdivide approximately 6.7 acres

from the larger 33.2-acre parent parcel. Both parcels are zoned light industrial and contain existing structures, water, and sewer systems.

Robb explained that the current use of the main building is for research and development (R&D) of electrical, water, and gas metering products, with 12 employees who in the main building that cannot perform their duties remotely. The proposed tract B is approximately 6.7 acres, located in the southeast corner of the property, and contains existing features and R&D facilities and test features. This area will focus on the same R&D purposes and will accommodate testing for electrical and gas metering products.

Additionally, the subdivision plan included compliance with all required zoning regulations for light industrial areas, including the approved inspections for existing septic systems on both the parent and subdivided parcels. The planning commission acknowledged the findings, noting that all zoning and lot configurations met the minimum requirements, with septic systems deemed compliant by inspection certificates. The commission discussed the subdivision proposal and determined that it met all requirements for approval.

COMMISSION JOHNSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETS AND BOUNDS SUBDIVISION AS PRESENTED. COMMISSION LUGER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

c. Dennis and Sue Paulson, Ordinance interpretation, PID 29020538

Dennis and Sue Paulson joined the meeting remotely to discuss their application for an accessory structure on their rural residential property. Thomas explained that the application raised questions about the establishment of primary use on the property, as there is currently no primary dwelling.

Thomas explained that while rural residential zones allow for accessory structures without a primary dwelling, a septic design for a future residence must be submitted. During his analysis, it became apparent that the Paulson's application may reflect a non-residential use on their property, as there is some processing of lumber occurring without an existing residential septic system or home, aligning more with a different land-use category in the zoning code.

Dennis provided further background on their use of the property, stating that they operate a small firewood business, primarily selling to Wilderness Point Resort and a few local customers. He emphasized that this business is more of a retirement hobby meant to keep him active, not a full-scale operation or expansion-driven venture. The business reportedly generates less than \$10,000 in revenue annually, with approximately 60 percent of the firewood consumed by the family, donated, or given to friends.

The planning commission discussed the need for a current survey of the property that would illustrate existing structures, the proposed location of the new building, and the septic design. This survey is crucial for determining if a primary dwelling

and septic system could realistically fit on the property in compliance with zoning ordinances. Thomas noted that while an old survey exists, it lacks the necessary updates and detail to accurately reflect current conditions and planned improvements.

The discussion included security issues the Paulsons face, with frequent thefts from their property leading to their preference for discreet business operations, including no on-site sales or public advertisements. Dennis confirmed that any further development, such as constructing a primary dwelling, was not definitively planned, leaving future use intentionally open-ended.

The commission determined that more comprehensive information was needed before they could approve the application. They suggested that Dennis and Sue either submit an updated certificate of survey for administrative review or, alternatively, apply for a conditional use permit for a lumber yard, which would also need an updated survey. This would enable a more thorough examination of the property's use and align it with the city's planning requirements.

d. PLAID LLC, NW Corner Sketch Plan Review: PIDs 29110515/539/540

John from PLAID LLC presented detailed development plans for a significant project on the northwest corner of their property. The proposal outlined extensive infrastructure improvements and the establishment of a KwikTrip gas station and convenience store, highlighting PLAID LLC's vision for future development along an important corridor.

During the presentation, the commission explored critical logistics and addressed potential traffic flow concerns, focusing on the impact of increased semi-truck movement in the area. John assured the commission that traffic management would be adequately handled through specific proposals, including implementing directional curbing and effective signage. These measures are designed to efficiently redirect truck traffic away from the nearby roundabout, effectively minimizing congestion, and directing vehicles towards 'East Sibley Street'. This plan emphasizes the importance of controlling traffic patterns to ensure minimal disruption to existing traffic flows and enhance overall safety.

The discussion included questions about the feasibility and effectiveness of these traffic control methods, particularly regarding preventing trucks from turning left onto Main Street and causing disruptions. John stressed that the strategic implementation of physical barriers and dedicated truck pathways would deter incorrect traffic movements, thereby maintaining orderly traffic flow and adhering to traffic safety standards.

The commission expressed general support for PLAID LLC's approach, acknowledging the potential benefits of the project. They eagerly supported the progression to the preliminary plat stage. Furthermore, they recommended that PLAID LLC coordinate with the City Council at their upcoming meeting scheduled for February 3rd. This coordination is crucial because the development of 'East

Sibley Street' will necessitate the city acting as a co-applicant. This partnership is essential to secure the necessary approvals and facilitate the project's progress while ensuring compliance with all city regulations and standards.

Discussions will be held at the Council's February 3rd meeting regarding the signatures from the city as co-applicants, if the Council agrees to co-sign the preliminary plat application, PLAID LLC would then be able to proceed with submitting the preliminary plat application.

7. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

8. Approval of Minutes

COMMISSION MEMBER E.LARSON MOVED TO ACCEPT AND APPROVE NOVEMBER 25, 2024 MINUTES AS IS. COMMISSION MEMBER JOHNSON SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

9. Planning & Zoning Administrator's Updates

Zoning Administrator, Traci Pederson, presented the End of Year 2024 Report and Monthly Report. The commission commended Pederson on the detailed and well-prepared reports. No specific questions or concerns were raised about the reports.

10. Adjournment

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, COMMISSION MEMBER E.LARSON MOVED TO ADJOURN. COMMISSION MEMBER JOHNSON SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

The meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Traci Pederson
Zoning Administrator