Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting
April 22, 2026
Cedar Falls, Iowa

MINUTES

The Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission met in regular session on April 22, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall. The following Commission members were present: Fischer, Hartley, Johnson, Koger, Moser, Stalnaker and Watkins. Henderson and Grybovych were absent. Karen Howard, Planning and Community Services Manager, Jaydevsinh Atodaria, Planner II and Shane Graham, Economic Development Coordinator were also present.

1.) Chair Stalnaker noted the Minutes from the April 8, 2026 regular meeting are presented. Hartley made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Moser seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 7 ayes (Fischer, Hartley, Koger, Moser, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

2.) The first item of business was an Urban Renewal plan for Wild Horse Ridge 7th Addition. Chair Stalnaker introduced the item and Mr. Graham provided background information. He explained that the subdivision has been generally under construction for the last 20 years, noting that the applicant is ready to move forward with the 7th of ten additions. Mr. Graham spoke about the State Code requirements and explained that a recommendation gets forwarded to City Council and Council sets a public hearing for May 18, 2026. Goals with the Cedar Falls Comprehensive Plan include encouraging diverse housing opportunities to serve a variety of needs and preferences; repairing aging infrastructure; and expanding technology infrastructure to attract business and industry. The Comprehensive Plan shows a need of 3,778 housing units by 2030. One of the components of the Comprehensive Plan is the Future Land Use Map, which shows the entire Wild Horse Subdivision as Low and Medium Density Residential. The area was rezoned back to RP, Planned Residential District in 2005 when the subdivision was first beginning development. The subdivision currently is mainly single-family homes at this time but in the future more bi-attached dwellings will be built in the next addition to increase density.

Mr. Graham reiterated that the objectives of Urban Renewal Plan include increasing availability of housing opportunities; stimulating private investment in housing and residential development; planning and providing for sufficient land for residential development; helping finance the cost of constructing public infrastructure; achieving a well-balanced economy providing a desirable standard of living; and strengthening the tax base. To meet those objectives, City Council has adopted a new guideline to allow for reimbursement to the developer of 50% of the cost to install new public infrastructure in a residential subdivision. Public infrastructure includes new roads, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, water mains, etc., and the incentive can only be offered after an urban renewal is in place and approval of a subsequent development agreement between the developer and the City are established.

Staff finds that the proposed objectives and activities of the proposed wild Horse Ridge 7th Addition Urban Renewal Plan are in conformance with the general plan for the development of the municipality as a whole and recommends that the Commission do the same.

Stalnaker asked about the 2.25 acres of park space and whether that is based on calculations from the 7th Addition or the remaining 7th through 10th Additions. Ms. Howard stated that it is based on the 7th through 10th.

Donna Ketterhagen, Arbors Subdivision, asked if there would be parks planned. Ms. Howard stated that the developer will dedicate the land to the City and the City will design a park plan.

Watkins made a motion to approve the item. Hartley seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 7 ayes (Fischer, Hartley, Johnson, Koger, Moser, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

3.) The Commission then considered an Urban Renewal Plan for Greenhill Village Commons. Chair Stalnaker introduced the item and Mr. Graham provided background information. He explained that this is for a new 16 lot subdivision infill lot and is similar to the last request. He showed the Comprehensive Plan and explained that discussed the objectives. Staff recommends that the Commission find that the proposed Urban Renewal Plan is in conformance with the Cedar Falls Comprehensive Plan.

Hartley made a motion to approve the item. Fisher seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 7 ayes (Fischer, Hartley, Johnson, Koger, Moser, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

4.) The next item of business was a rezoning request for 48.37 acres within West Viking Road Industrial Park from M-1-P Planned Light Industrial District to P-Public (RZ26-003) and an associated Land Use Map Amendment (LU26-001). Chair Stalnaker introduced the item and Ms. Howard provided background information. She explained that this is the site of the proposed Viking Energy Center and noted that this request is to be in place of the withdrawal of the request of M-2 Zoning. Public Zoning is reserved only for government uses and private uses such as cryptocurrency mining would not be allowed in this zone. With this change, the Future Land Use Map will also need to be amended. Ms. Howard noted that the Master Plan would also need to be updated but noted that the standards adopted with the Deed of Dedication for the subdivision would still apply to this lot. She explained that staff recommends that the Commission invite the public to comment and discuss. Susan Abernathy, General Manager of Cedar Falls Utilities, gave a presentation on why public zoning is being requested.

Ms. Abernathy clarified information on the Viking Energy Center and explained that they want the public to know that they have been planning this project over the course of several years. She explained that building new power generation is a long process, with zoning being just one step. She explained the zoning request for the parcel, the use of the land and the importance of a new power generation facility, and shared information about similar projects in the Midwest. She clarified that this rezoning request is independent of any particular customers, clarifying that it is separate from any discussion related to potential cryptocurrency mining operations. She acknowledged that at one point additional cryptocurrency mining operations were being discussed at the site in the northern portion of the land proposed for rezoning. This northern area is not immediately needed for utility use, so was being contemplated as a potential area that could be leased to a cryptocurrency mining use. Ultimately the City and CFU decided that leasing ground for cryptocurrency was not workable. CFU needs to reserve all 38 acres of the site for current and future utility use, as the community is expanding in the future and the space will be needed for future growth. Ms. Abernathy showed a conceptual site plan for the proposed power plant with the buildings and infrastructure located on the southern half of the site.

Ms. Abernathy explained that local generation is critical as it provides reliability and cost control. It provides a key role during extreme weather disruptions and can maintain service even when the broader electric grid is under stress. CFU local power plants run infrequently and only when market prices are very high, helping keep energy bills low for the community. She explained that the generation fleet is aging and reliable replacement technology is

needed. Ms. Abernathy discussed renewable energy and the all-of-the-above energy strategy and showed examples of other energy centers in the Midwest.

Tom Risse, Viking Energy Center Project Manager, spoke about the noise generated and provided decibel information from similar energy facilities and played a video of one particular site and the sound level when the plant is running.

Johnson asked about the noise level at the Streeter Station in Cedar Falls. Mr. Risse stated that they are within City noise standards and you do not hear it when the power is online.

Nathan Nebbe, 2027 South Union Road, spoke about his views on energy and costs and the need for more consideration of renewable energy options for the new plant and the potential effects on neighboring properties of the gas-powered plant.

Kamyar Enshayan, 1703 Washington Street, stated that he feels that the decision to build a gas-powered plant did not involve any public discussion early in the process about possible alternatives, in particular not much discussion of renewable energy options. He also spoke about the Comprehensive Plan and its mention of clean, renewable energy.

Nalin Goonesekere, 1518 Athens Court, stated he felt that the energy center should be reconsidered with regard to the actual power needs if cryptocurrency mining is not allowed.

Amanda Stocker, 5324 Red Oak Lane, noted health concerns with locating the energy center near residential neighborhoods.

Matthew Bancroft Smith, 815 Walnut Street, spoke about the lack of community involvement when the decisions were made about the energy center and stated his opposition.

Mitch Dowell, 1609 Grandview Court, asked what the true purpose of the power plant is, why make natural gas the default instead of the backup, what role do subsidies play in the decision and why natural gas - does it provide a strategic advantage over renewables.

Andrea Kettle, 5315 Red Oak Lane, unclear why the public zoning designation was not an option at the March 25 meeting and asked why CFU didn't ask for public zoning from the beginning.

Keith Kuper, 2503 Franklin, spoke about moving in the direction of using EV in the future.

Steve Bernard, former CFU General Manager, spoke about the planning process during his time at CFU and gave background information on the current and previous units. He discussed the different kinds of power used in Cedar Falls and reiterated that the cryptocurrency mining does not have anything to do with the planning for this new energy center. Mr. Bernard stated that the economics of battery power and challenges with it is not as good as they may seem. He also emphasized that this is not a new subject and has been discussed at open board and strategic plan meetings over the last ten years.

Jacob Kottman, 917 Bertchwood Street, asked that all parts of town have a voice in this decision, including North Cedar.

Grace Rogers, 5016 Cohen Court, asked what other locations were considered and if there is background for the other options.

Ethan Hughes, 1815 Quail Ridge Road, asked what CFU has done to look at other power options and stated he would like to see research on them.

Dave Diebler, 1616 Campus Street, feels CFU needs to be more transparent, and meetings should be held more like Planning and Zoning.

Mark Stocker, 5324 Red Oak Lane, asked about CFU's plan to be carb neutral by 2050 and would like to know what the plans are.
Hartley thanked CFU for their perspective and the public for coming out and giving their thoughts and questions.

Watkins stated that it would be helpful for CFU to share their research with this item. She also noted that there may not be enough time for this to be collected by the next meeting and asked CFU to consider the timeframe.

Stalnaker agreed with the comments about emissions and asked for more data with emission controls.

Hartley made a motion to set a public hearing. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 7 ayes (Fischer, Hartley, Johnson, Koger, Moser, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

5.) The next item for Commission consideration was an amendment to the M-1-P Master Plan for the W. Viking Road Industrial Park to acknowledge the site proposed for rezoning to P- Public (MP26-002). Chair Stalnaker noted that this item is contingent upon the previous item and will be moved to the next meeting for discussion.

6.) The Commission then considered a zoning text amendment regarding trailer parking. Chair Stalnaker introduced the item and Ms. Howard provided background information. She explained that Jamie Castle, Inspection Services Manager/Building Official, had been at the previous meeting to provide information about parking non-motorized vehicles on unimproved surfaces. Ms. Howard noted that at the last meeting a Commission member had asked about how the proposed allowances for parking non-motorized vehicles would apply to corner lots and staff realized after the meeting that further refinement of the code amendments was necessary to avoid unintended consequences for corner and double fronting lots. Therefore, staff recommended continuing the public hearing to the next meeting so staff could refine the language for review at the next meeting.

Hartley made a motion to continue the item to the next meeting. Moser seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 7 ayes (Fischer, Hartley, Johnson, Koger, Moser, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

7.) The next item for consideration was a rezoning request for 38.25 Acres within West Viking Road Industrial Park from M-1-P Planned Light Industrial District to M-2 Heavy Industrial District (RZ26-001). Chair Stalnaker noted that the item has been withdrawn so no action is needed.

8.) The Commission then considered a request for zoning text amendments regarding Cryptocurrency Mining; Utilities and Public Facilities (TA25-007). Chair Stalnaker introduced the item and Ms. Howard provided background information. She explained that a consultant spoke at the last meeting about potential ordinance amendments and the public and Commission presented questions and comments. In the interest of time, Ms. Howard did not go back through the entire presentation. Instead, she addressed questions that were asked at the last meeting, explaining that the information is also in the packet. As there has been a significant number of public comments on the proposal, staff recommends continuing the

public hearing to the next meeting. She also noted that CFU has comments and clarifications regarding cryptocurrency mining.

Ms. Abernathy acknowledged that there has been a great deal of community discussion on this item and whether to allow larger scale cryptocurrency mining and/or that potentially morphs into data centers. She noted that CFU fully supports citizen's rights to weigh in on this topic. She also acknowledged all the work the City has put into this item, but also understands that Simple Mining has requested broader language allowing businesses to be turned into a data center. Ms. Abernathy shared CFU's perspective on this item. She emphasized that CFU shares the community's concern with the cryptocurrency mining in the future and there is a very valid concern about how there could be an easy pivot into a data center. CFU urges the Commission and City Council to move very cautiously and fully assess the impacts of a larger scale cryptocurrency mining operation before moving forward. The concern is that a nod to cryptocurrency mining operations on a larger scale is a nod to a pivot to a data center. She discussed the history of cryptocurrency mining business presence in Cedar Falls, addressed concerns received from the public with respect to the relationship with CFU and the current companies in Cedar Falls, and provided context to what a large load would mean for the local utility and the community.

Moser asked what will happen to the existing cryptocurrency mining businesses if the Commission does not want to move forward with the updates. Ms. Howard explained that the ones already in business will be grandfathered in, but their existing sites must stay the same with no expansion.

Johnson asked how it is verified that cryptocurrency mining is the only thing taking place. Ms. Abernathy stated that it would require a contract to increase power and that would trigger a change. At that time they would reach out to the City.

Watkins asked if there are any protections in the contract for if the infrastructure is built and then the company leaves a stranded asset. Ms. Abernathy explained that they would need to create those protections if that scenario happens.

Adam Haynes, Founder and CEO of Simple Mining, provided background information about himself and the company. He briefly provided responses to some prior comments.

Hannah Massey, Ohio Street, Waterloo stated opposition to cryptomining facilities and provided statistics on potential problems with their existence and their impact on the community.

Dylan Southall, 510 Franklin Street, spoke about his issues with Simple Mining and the information they have provided over time. He asked for consideration of a moratorium to the council regarding all cryptocurrency mining operations and does not want an amendment that allows cryptocurrency mining in the future.

Jacob, 306 Cedar Crest, stated concerns with cryptocurrency mining.

Jessie Vickers, 1531 Andover Court, stated her opposition and feels there is too much uncertainty and spoke about potential issues.

Noah Massey, 1923 University Drive, stated opposition to the concept of any cryptocurrency mining in Cedar Falls.

Scott Frerichs, 113 Main Street, stated reasoning for opposition to allowing cryptocurrency mining.

Laura Roman, 204 Magnolia Drive, suggested a moratorium and provided statistics and information on water use.

Brittany McNamara, 4818 Algonquin Drive #2, stated opposition for cryptocurrency mining business.

Chad Welsh, 6701 Strayer Road, asked what the concept of “hosting” is within Simple Mining’s business.

David Olson, 1813 W. 8th Street, stated environmental concerns and their effects. He encouraged banning all cryptocurrency and data centers.

Amber Porter, 2125 Barkwood Drive, explained her opposition to cryptocurrency mining and how decisions have been made.

Ethan Hughes, 1815 Quail Ridge, stated his opposition and that he feels that there is a lack of value in cryptomining.

Mark Stocker, 5324 Red Oak Lane, thanked the Commission for listening to the community. He stated that he feels the community has spoken and does not want this in our city.

Grace Rogers, 5016 Cohen Court, stated her opposition and suggested options to the amendment and would like to see a moratorium put in place.

Mitch Dowell, 1609 Grandview Court, stated that more due diligence should be done.

Alex Haats, Grand Blvd, spoke about data centers and their effects and stated his opposition.

Terry Wellman, Meadowlark Lane, supported a moratorium and stated opposition to cryptocurrency mining.

Brett Tjaden, 4127 Maryhill Drive, stated he owns a business next to Simple Mining and spoke about the effects of the noise pollution that takes place.

Josh, 702 State Street, spoke about the affordability of home computing and how this will raise costs.

Brian Isbell, 5402 Meadowlark Lane, stated his opposition.

Adam Haynes came forward to respond to questions and comments presented.

Laura O’Brien, 1927 Erik Road, stated she is concerned with the noise and its effect on wildlife in the area and how noise carries into the neighborhoods.

Hartley made a motion to continue the public hearing to the May 13, 2026 meeting, and after discussion rescinded the motion.

Moser made a motion to approve the amendment. Johnson seconded the motion.

Stalnaker stated his concerns with the amount of energy being used for any one purpose. He also noted that this is not the kind of business or energy use that he would like to see expand in Cedar Falls.

Fischer noted that he doesn't like the idea of only generating cryptocurrency.

Moser feels there needs to be more discussion before any code amendments are adopted.

Johnson stated that the concerns of the public, as well as CFU, are worrisome with regard to this item.

Watkins and Koger stated concerns.

The motion was denied unanimously with 7 nays (Fischer, Hartley, Johnson, Koger, Moser, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 ayes.

9.) As there were no further comments, Hartley made a motion to adjourn. Moser seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 7 ayes (Fischer, Hartley, Johnson, Koger, Moser, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Howard
Community Services Manager

Joanne Goodrich
Administrative Assistant