



CITY OF
GRAND RAPIDS
IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 07, 2025

4:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: Pursuant to due notice and call thereof a Regular Meeting of the Grand Rapids Planning Commission will be held on Thursday, August 7, 2025 at 4:00 PM in City Hall Council Chambers, 420 North Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

CALL OF ROLL:

PRESENT

Commissioner Patrick Goggin
Commissioner Paul Bignall
Commissioner David Marquardt
Commissioner David Kreitzer

ABSENT

Commissioner Betsy Johnson
Commissioner Amanda Lamppa

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Consider approval of minutes from the June 24th, 2025 special meeting

Motion by Commissioner Goggin, second by Commissioner Marquardt to approve the minutes from the June 24th, 2025 special meeting. The following voted in favor thereof: Kreitzer, Marquardt, Bignall, Goggin. Opposed: None, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

2. Conduct a Public Hearing to consider a variance petition submitted by Housing & Redevelopment Authority of Itasca County.

Zoning Administrator Richter provided background information. The Itasca County HRA has requested a variance, which if granted, would allow the reconstructed parking lot to encroach into the minimum yard setbacks for surface parking. The proposed project will not enlarge the parking lot and will allow for the elimination of one entrance/exit and retain the required number of parking stall.

Motion by Commissioner Goggin, second by Commissioner Kreitzer to open the public hearing. The following voted in favor thereof: Marquardt, Goggin, Bignall, Kreitzer. Opposed: None, motion passed unanimously.

No one from the public wished to speak.

Motion by Commissioner Kreitzer, second by Commissioner Goggin to close the public hearing. The following voted in favor thereof: Kreitzer, Bignall, Goggin, Marquardt. Opposed: None, motion passed unanimously.

The Commissioners reviewed the considerations for the record.

1. Is this an “Area” variance rather than a “Use” variance?

This is an area variance.

2. Does the proposal put property to use in a reasonable manner?

Why/Why not- Yes, it improves the safety of the parking lot.

3. Is the owner’s plight due to circumstances which are unique to the property and which are not self-created by the owner?

Why/Why not- Yes, the property was already non-conforming when it was purchased.

4. Is the variance in harmony with the purposes and intent of the ordinance?

Why/Why not- Yes, it will improve parking and safety issues.

5. Will the variance, if granted, alter the essential character of the locality?

Why/Why not- No, but it will have a positive impact on the surrounding properties.

6. Is the variance consistent with the comprehensive plan?

Why/Why not- Yes, it will allow for economic growth and allow the property to be put to its best use.

Attorney Sterle noted no correspondence was received and all notices according to law were met.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

3. Consider a recommendation to the City Council regarding amendments to Section 30-564 Uses with Restrictions, Subsection 23 Farm Animals (within AG, RR and SRR)

Community Development Director Mattei provided background information. At their April 4th, 2025 regular meeting the Planning Commission initiated the process to consider amendments to Section 30-564 of the Zoning Ordinance. The purpose of amending the Ordinance is to place limits on the type and density or intensity of farm animal use with restrictions within the Agricultural, Rural Residential and Shoreland Rural Residential zoning districts.

The previous discussion by the Planning Commission addressed the differing purpose and intent of Rural Residential vs. Agricultural zoning and the need to treat them differently in terms of farm animals permitted and their density or number of animals as a factor of land area. Commissioner Johnson assisted staff with research for the proposed amendments.

The Commissioners reviewed the considerations for the record.

1. Will the change affect the character of neighborhoods?

Why/Why not? No, it is clarifying and closing a loophole in the current Ordinance.

2. Would the change foster economic growth in the community?
Why/Why not? There will not be much impact to economic growth.
3. Would the proposed change be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance?
Why/Why not? Yes, it will allow for land owners in those zoning districts to put their property to its maximum use.
4. Would the change be in the best interest of the general public?
Why/Why not? Yes, it's clearing up language within the Ordinance.
5. Would the change be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan?
Why/Why not? Yes, it will close a loophole and clean up the language in the Ordinance.

Motion by Chair Bignall, second by Commissioner Kreitzer that, based on the findings of fact presented here today, and in the public's best interest, the Planning Commission does hereby forward a favorable recommendation to the City Council regarding draft amendments which to Section 30-564 of the Zoning Ordinance (Uses with Restrictions), Subsection 23 (Farm Animals in AG, RR and SRR zoning districts) and consider language changes to section 10-72. The following voted in favor thereof: Goggin, Bignall, Marquardt, Kreitzer. Opposed: None, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Individuals may address the Planning Commission about any non-public hearing item or any item not included on the Regular Meeting Agenda. Speakers are requested to come to the podium, state their name and address for the record and limit their remarks to three (3) minutes.

MISCELLANEOUS:

REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES:

No reports/announcements/updates.

ADJOURNMENT:

NEXT REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 4, 2025 AT 4:00 PM.

Hearing Assistance Available: This facility is equipped with a ready assistance system.

ATTEST: Aurimy Groom, Administrative Assistant