



OFFICIAL PUBLIC NOTICE
MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2026 AT 5:30 PM

COUNCIL ROOM AT THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 450 S. MAIN STREET, RICHLAND CENTER, WI 53581

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER *Roll Call for the meeting, determine whether a quorum is present; determine whether the meeting has been properly noticed.*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- [1.](#) Meeting Minutes

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

- [2.](#) Consider and Report on Proposed Conveyance of City-Owned Property Located at 929 W Seminary St (Tax Parcel 276-2012-0900) to Lydia's House Ministries
- [3.](#) An Ordinance Amending Chapter 485: Authorizing Electronic Message Center Signs on Public Property
4. Draft Ordinance Review: R-1/R-2 District Consolidation

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

REPORTS/UPDATES

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

SET NEXT MEETING DATE *Fourth Wednesday of the month*

ADJOURNMENT

Posted this 17th day of July, 2026 by 5:45 PM.

Copy to the official newspaper the Richland Observer.

PLEASE NOTE: That upon reasonable notice, a minimum of 24 hours in advance, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through appropriate aids and services. For additional information or to request this service contact Ashley Oliphant, City Administrator at 450 S. Main St., Richland Center, WI. 53581 or call 608-647-3466. Notice is hereby given that the council members who are not members of this committee may attend this meeting so as to constitute a quorum of the city council. Any such council member attendance will be for information gathering, discussion, and/or related purposes and will not result in the direct decision making by the city council at the committee meeting. The City of Richland Center is an equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender.

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2026, AT 5:30 PM

COUNCIL ROOM AT THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 450 S. MAIN STREET, RICHLAND CENTER, WI 53581

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Jarvis called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. Glasbrenner affirmed proper notice. Members present: Karin Tepley, Ryan Cairns, Chris Jarvis, and Duane Welte. Members absent: Mark Jelinek and Ray Wilson. Others Present: Attorney Michael Windle, DPW Jasen Glasbrenner, Clerk/Treasurer Misty Molzof, Aaron Unbehaun, and Ryan Pluemer.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion by Cairns, second by Welte, to approve the agenda changing the type from meeting time at 5:30 am to 5:30 pm, and the garden shed square footage from 192 sq. ft to 256 sq. ft. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Cairns, second by Tepley to approve the May 27, 2026, meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

Public Hearing for the Conditional Use Permit Application of Ryan & Megan Pluemer for the Construction of a 192ft² Garden Shed at 1235 Arbor Lane (Tax Parcel 276-1742-4500): Chair Jarvis opened the public hearing at 5:35 pm. Ryan Pluemer, 1235 Arbor Lane, stated that he changed the plan on Tuesday, June 23rd from 192 sq. ft. to 256 sq. ft. replacing the proposed 12'X16' shed with a 16'X16' shed. After three requests for public participation and receiving none, Chair Jarvis closed the public hearing at 5:38 pm.

Consider the Conditional Use Permit Application of Ryan & Megan Pluemer for the Construction of a 192ft² Garden Shed at 1235 Arbor Lane (Tax Parcel 276-1742-4500): *Motion by Jarvis, second by Cairns, to recommend to the Common Council approval of the conditional use permit for 1235 Arbor Lane, Tax Parcel #276-1742-4500, Ryan and Megan Pluemer with the following conditions:*

- 1. The accessory structure shall be used solely for the storage of personal lawn, garden, and household equipment incidental to the residential use of the property. The structure shall not be used for any commercial, business, or habitation purpose.*
- 2. The accessory structure shall not exceed 256 square feet in floor area (16' × 16'). If the structure exceeds fifteen (15) feet in height above ground level, it constitutes a separate conditional use under 402.04(13) and shall require additional review and approval.*
- 3. The structure shall comply with all detached accessory building setback requirements of 402.05(8), including a minimum of three (3) feet from any side or rear lot line (measured to the foundation or wall) and one and one-half (1.5) feet to any roof, eave, or eaves trough.*
- 4. The structure shall be located entirely within the rear yard and shall not encroach upon any recorded easement.*
- 5. Roof drainage and stormwater runoff from the structure shall be managed on-site and shall not be directed onto adjoining properties, consistent with § 400.07(7).*
- 6. Only one (1) accessory building other than a private garage is permitted on the lot; this permit authorizes that single structure.*

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Review of Zoning Code and Specific Water Runoff Regulations: *No Action.*

Attorney Windle stated that there is extensive case law on this issue. Courts have generally ruled that a property owner is not liable for water runoff onto a neighboring property unless the runoff was intentionally caused. He advised that if the Commission wishes to see changes made to the existing ordinance, a more general or flexible standard would be the better legal approach. DPW Glasbrenner stated that the existing ordinance creates some enforcement challenges. He noted that whether the City should, or even legally can, enforce the ordinance is highly dependent on the specific circumstances of each situation.

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2026, AT 5:30 PM

COUNCIL ROOM AT THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 450 S. MAIN STREET, RICHLAND CENTER, WI 53581

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Glasbrenner stated that from an Economic Development standpoint, staff are consistently working on implementation of the Comprehensive Plan including grants through WEDC, who was in town today touring various locations; Panorama has started pouring concrete; and collaboration with the County is strengthening for the campus redevelopment.

REPORTS / UPDATES: None.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Review Rough Draft R-1/2 Ordinance
- Elect and Vote on Chair of the Commission at the next meeting.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, July 22nd at 5:30 PM.

ADJOURNMENT Motion by Cairns, second by Welte to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 6:06 PM.

Minutes recorded by Misty Molzof

CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER

AGENDA ITEM DATA SHEET

Item 2.

Agenda Item: Consider and Report on Proposed Conveyance of City-Owned Property Located at 929 W Seminary St (Tax Parcel 276-2012-0900) to Lydia's House Ministries

Meeting Date: Plan Commission on 7/22/2026

Requested by: Ashley Oliphant, City Administrator

Background: The City owns the above-referenced property, having become owner when SWCAP recorded a Quit Claim deed conveying the property to the City on August 27, 2025. The City has received a request from Lydia's House Ministries (LHM) to convey the property to LHM. The terms of the proposed conveyance are scheduled to be under consideration by the General Government Committee.

Under a broad interpretation of Wis. Stat. § 62.23(5), this parcel constitutes "public grounds," and the sale, donation, or change of use of public grounds must be referred to the Plan Commission for its consideration and report before final action is taken by the Council. This item is before the Plan Commission to satisfy that referral requirement.

The City's Future Land Use Map designates this parcel as "Residential" without further specification of housing type. The property is zoned "R-2" One and Two Family Residential District. Chapter 403 does not list a homeless shelter, transitional housing facility, or similar use among either the permitted uses (§ 403.02) or conditional uses (§ 403.04) of that district. LHM has operated the property as a shelter providing 60-to-90-day transitional housing since 2014, and the property has served similar residential-services purposes since at least the 1980s.

Chapter 400.04(3)(a) provides that any structure or use lawfully in existence upon June 14, 1990 may continue as a legal nonconforming use. Because the property's use as a group home, sheltered apartment, and later transitional housing facility predates June 14, 1990 and has continued without a six-month discontinuation since that date, the use appears to qualify as a legal nonconforming use under this provision notwithstanding the absence of a permitted or conditional use category for it in Chapter 403.

Recommended Action: The Plan Commission is asked to review the proposed conveyance for consistency with the comprehensive plan and Future Land Use Map, and to provide its consideration and report for referral to Council. Based on the property's continuous use predating June 14, 1990, staff considers the transitional housing use to be a legal nonconforming use under § 400.04(3)(a), and no further zoning action is necessary to authorize its continuation. Staff recommends the Commission's report address whether the proposed conveyance and continued transitional housing use is consistent with the comprehensive plan and Future Land Use Map.

Attachments: None

CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER, WISCONSIN

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-__

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 485 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER TO AUTHORIZE ELECTRONIC MESSAGE CENTER SIGNS ON PUBLIC PROPERTY

The Common Council of the City of Richland Center, Wisconsin, does ordain as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 485 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Richland Center is hereby amended by adding a new subsection § 485.04(14) to read as follows:

(14) ELECTRONIC MESSAGE CENTER SIGNS ON PUBLIC PROPERTY.

One (1) electronic message center sign, as defined in § 485.03(26), shall be permitted on any lot in any zoning district that is owned by the City of Richland Center, Richland County, the State of Wisconsin, the United States, a school district, or a public library, and used for a governmental or public purpose, subject to the following:

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, a sign authorized under this subsection shall be exempt from the zoning permit requirements of § 485.04(3). All other applicable provisions of this Chapter, including construction specifications under § 485.08 and administration and enforcement under § 485.09, shall continue to apply.

(b) The aggregate sign area, including any nameplate or identification signage incorporated into the same structure, shall not exceed seventy-five (75) square feet per surface, with no more than two (2) surfaces.

(c) Maximum sign height shall not exceed twelve (12) feet above grade.

(d) The electronic message portion shall display static messages only. Scrolling, animation, video, dissolve, fade, and flashing effects are prohibited.

(e) Each message shall remain static for a minimum of eight (8) seconds. Transitions between messages shall be instantaneous.

(f) The sign shall be equipped with an automatic photocell dimmer. Maximum luminance shall not exceed 5,000 nits between sunrise and sunset and 500 nits between sunset and sunrise, measured at the sign face.

(g) In the event of malfunction, the sign shall default to a static display or turn off entirely; no error patterns, test patterns, or scrolling error messages shall be visible from any public right-of-way.

(h) When the sign is located in a residential zoning district, the electronic message portion shall not operate between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

(i) No electronic message center sign shall be located within fifty (50) feet of a residential dwelling on an adjoining lot, measured from the nearest point of the sign structure to the nearest wall of the dwelling.

(j) EXISTING SIGNS. Any electronic message center sign on public property that was in place as of the effective date of this subsection but that does not fully conform to the standards of paragraphs (b) through (i) shall be deemed a legal nonconforming sign as of that date, and § 485.07 shall govern its continued operation, maintenance, and replacement.

SECTION 2. SEVERABILITY. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions hereof.

SECTION 3. EFFECTIVE DATE. This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and publication as required by law.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 2026.

Karin Tepley, Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Published: _____, 20____

CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER
PLAN COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

TO:	Plan Commission
FROM:	Ashley Oliphant, City Administrator
DATE:	July 22, 2026
RE:	Proposed Ordinance Amendment — Ch. 485 — Electronic Message Center Signs on Public Property
ACTION:	Recommendation to Common Council

Background

The Richland Center Community Center currently operates an electronic message center sign on its property at 1050 N. Orange St., which is located in an R-1 Single-Family Residential zoning district. The Brewer Public Library has expressed interest in installing a similar sign at its facility, which is also in a residential district.

A review of Chapter 485 finds that electronic message center signs of this type are not affirmatively authorized as a permitted sign type in residential zoning districts. § 485.05(2) permits nameplates, construction signs, real estate signs, political signs, on-premises directional/information signs (limited to 25 sq ft), and temporary special events signs — none of which cleanly captures a monument-style electronic reader board. While § 485.04(7) authorizes electrical changeable copy on any sign the chapter allows, that provision is a thin authorization hook for a full electronic message center.

The result is a gap in the code: the City's own existing sign is arguably non-conforming, and the Library's proposed sign has no clear authorization pathway.

Proposed Amendment

Add a new subsection § 485.04(14) affirmatively authorizing one (1) electronic message center sign per lot on public property, in any zoning district, subject to performance standards. The full draft ordinance is attached.

The amendment provides a self-contained authorization and permit exemption. It does not depend on the sign qualifying as a "Government Sign" under the existing § 485.03(34) definition, and it does not rely on the permit exemption pathway in § 485.04(4)(g). This structural choice was made because § 485.03(34) is content-defined (limited to signs "for traffic direction or for designation of or direction to" certain facilities) and might not reliably cover an electronic message center displaying event announcements, closure notices, or general community messages. Rather than broaden the § 485.03(34) definition — which would create ripple effects for other Ch. 485 provisions that reference it — the amendment establishes an independent authorization tied to property ownership (a speaker-based classification), which is more legally durable than one tied to sign content.

The amendment also includes an express grandfathering provision at § 485.04(14)(j) that deems any existing lawfully installed sign a legal nonconforming sign under § 485.07 if it does not meet the new performance standards. This closes a small drafting ambiguity in § 485.07(1)(b), which conditions legal nonconforming status on compliance "on the date of adoption of this Chapter" — potentially unclear for signs installed after Ch. 485's original adoption. The express clause removes the doubt.

Scope — Who is Covered

The amendment authorizes electronic message center signs only on public property owned by:

- The City of Richland Center
- Richland County
- The State of Wisconsin
- The United States
- A school district
- A public library

The amendment does not authorize electronic message center signs for private businesses, churches, private schools, or nonprofit organizations. Private commercial uses in the C-G and C-DT districts may continue to use electrical changeable copy under existing § 485.04(7), subject to the size limitations already in § 485.05(3).

Performance Standards Summary

Standard	Requirement
Permit	Exempt from zoning permit under new § 485.04(14)(a); other Ch. 485 provisions continue to apply
Number	One (1) per lot
Aggregate area	75 sq ft per surface, maximum 2 surfaces
Height	12 feet above grade
Display type	Static messages only; no scrolling, animation, video, dissolve, fade, or flashing
Dwell time	Minimum 8 seconds per message; instantaneous transitions
Brightness	5,000 nits max daytime / 500 nits max nighttime; automatic photocell dimmer required
Malfunction	Default to static or off; no visible error patterns
Hours	In residential districts only: electronic portion off between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. No hours restriction in other districts.
Residential buffer	Minimum 50 feet from nearest wall of any residential dwelling on an adjoining lot
Existing signs	Expressly grandfathered as legal nonconforming under § 485.04(14)(j) if not fully conforming; § 485.07 governs continued operation, maintenance, and replacement

Key Policy Choices Made in the Draft

Any zoning district, not just residential. The draft applies citywide rather than only in residential districts. This avoids the need to identify each government facility by district and future-proofs the ordinance if government property changes designation.

No Conditional Use Permit required. The amendment provides a direct authorization and permit exemption in § 485.04(14)(a) itself.

75 sq ft aggregate area cap. Chosen to accommodate the existing Community Center sign (which appears to be within this envelope) and to leave reasonable room for the Library's proposed sign without setting an aesthetic benchmark that invites oversize applications from future government facilities.

50-foot residential dwelling buffer. Balances neighbor protection with practical siteability on constrained institutional lots.

10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. shutoff, residential districts only. The shutoff addresses potential neighbor concerns about nighttime light spill in residential areas, where residential dwellings are the predominant adjacent use. In non-residential districts (commercial, downtown, industrial), where government facilities are less likely to abut residential dwellings and where existing commercial signs are unrestricted as to hours, no shutoff requirement applies. Both the Community Center and Library are closed during these hours, so no operational conflict is created for the two facilities driving this amendment.

Legal Framing

The amendment is speaker-based (limited to signs on property owned by specified governmental entities), not content-based (does not limit what messages may be displayed and does not condition authorization on any content-based classification such as the existing Government Sign definition at § 485.03(34)). This framing is consistent with the government-speech doctrine articulated in *Pleasant Grove City v. Summum* and avoids the content-neutrality concerns raised in *Reed v. Town of Gilbert*. A government entity may regulate its own speech on its own property without triggering strict First Amendment scrutiny. The Wisconsin municipal law framework under § 62.23(7) does not conflict.

Requested Action

Staff requests that the Plan Commission review the proposed amendment and make a recommendation to the Common Council. Specifically, the Plan Commission is asked to consider:

- Whether the scope (government entities only) is appropriate
- Whether the 75 sq ft area cap is appropriate
- Whether the 50-foot residential dwelling buffer is appropriate
- Whether the 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. shutoff (limited to residential districts) is appropriate
- Whether to recommend the amendment as drafted, with modifications, or against adoption

Attachment

Proposed Ordinance No. 2026-____, amending Chapter 485 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Richland Center by adding § 485.04(14) — Electronic Message Center Signs on Public Property.