OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the regularly scheduled meeting of the Spring Lake Park Planning Commission was held on August 24, 2026, at the City Hall, at 7:00 PM.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hansen called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT
Chair Hans Hansen
Commissioner Rick Cobbs
Commissioner Eric Julien
Commissioner Steve Coyle
Commissioner Kristi Goldstein

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT
Building Official Jeff Baker, City Planner Beth Elliott

VISITORS

Ken Wending	547 81st Ave NE	Spring Lake Park MN
Rick Frith	8299 Central Avenue NE	Spring Lake Park MN
Emily Lambert	8299 Central Avenue NE	Spring Lake Park MN
Jenny Vazquez-Kessel	8040 McKinley Street NE	Spring Lake Park MN
Nathan Puccini	8299 Central Avenue NE	Spring Lake Park MN
Johanna Richards & Peter Janoski	8035 Benjamin Street NE	Spring Lake Park MN

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes – May 26, 2026 Meeting

Motion made by Commissioner Julien, seconded by Commissioner Cobbs, to approve the minutes from the May 26, 2026 Planning Commission meeting.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Cobbs, Commissioner Julien, Commissioner Coyle, Commissioner Goldstein, Chairperson Hansen. Motion carried.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Public Hearing: Variance Request for Rear Yard Setback – 8035 Benjamin Street NE

Building Official Baker presented the variance request for 8035 Benjamin Street NE, which is within the Spring Lake Park Villas PUD. He said the applicant seeks a variance from the rear-yard setback requirement in the R3 district to allow a covered patio structure. Baker explained that a roofed patio was constructed in 2025 without required permits or zoning approvals, and staff later determined a portion of the structure extended onto an adjacent property. He noted the applicant subsequently withdrew the application, modified the structure so it is now entirely on their property, and resubmitted the request. Baker noted the property's unusual lot configuration within the 1994 PUD and stated that these physical characteristics constitute unique circumstances supporting the variance.

Staff recommended approval, finding the proposed roofed accessory structure to be a reasonable residential use, with the following five conditions:

1. The structure must remain entirely within the property boundaries.
2. It must substantially conform to the submitted plans.
3. All required building permits and inspections must be obtained.
4. The structure must comply with applicable building, drainage, and fire-safety codes.
5. The variance approval is not effective until all administrative penalties, permit fees, and other charges associated with the prior unauthorized construction are paid in full.

Ms. Richards stated the patio and pergola were initially constructed without proper permits due to time constraints and inexperience with the permitting process.

Commissioner Julien asked about HOA opposition, and staff noted the HOA had expressed concerns related specifically to the zero-foot rear setback. Ms. Richards indicated willingness to comply with all requirements and clarify plans with the homeowners' association (HOA), noting that earlier HOA concerns were related to discrepancies between submitted plans and the structure that had been built.

Commissioner Coyle inquired about drainage impacts and required structural safety measures. Building Official Baker reported that the existing patio slab slopes away from the home in multiple directions, directing water toward designated discharge areas and the rear drainage corridor. He stated he does not anticipate drainage issues from the proposed covered structure. Baker also noted that footing and anchoring requirements will be verified during the building permit review.

Chairperson Hansen opened the public hearing at 7:12 PM.

A neighboring property owner spoke and indicated they had no objection as long as the structure remains entirely on the applicant's property.

Chairperson Hansen closed the public hearing at 7:14 PM.

Motion made by Commissioner Coyle, seconded by Commissioner Goldstein to recommend approval of the Variance Request for the rear-yard setback at 8035 Benjamin Street NE.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Cobbs, Commissioner Julien, Commissioner Coyle, Commissioner Goldstein, Chairperson Hansen. Motion carried.

B. Public Hearing: Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Zoning Map Amendment, and Conditional Use Permit for a Child Daycare Use within Substance Church

Planner Beth Elliot explained that Substance Church is requesting approval for a 5,000-square-foot daycare within its existing facility at 8299 Center Avenue. She said the proposal requires three actions: a Comprehensive Plan amendment from Commercial/Industrial to Commercial, rezoning from I-1 Light Industrial to C-1 Shopping Center Commercial, and a Conditional Use Permit for the daycare use. She noted the site's proximity to other commercial uses supports the changes and that all findings and standard conditions are included in the staff report. Elliot outlined the commission's options to recommend approval, denial, or tabling and offered to answer questions.

Representatives from Substance Church, including Board Member Rick Frith, Executive Pastor Nate McGee, and Children's Ministry staff member Emily Lambert, addressed the commission. They stated that the applications aim to align the property's long-term land use with its current operations and to establish a weekday childcare facility as an extension of the church's existing family-focused services. They expressed appreciation for staff assistance during the application process and noted their desire to strengthen their partnership with Spring Lake Park and serve local families.

Commissioner Coyle asked whether the proposed daycare would have an age limit, and whether the daycare may expand in the future to include elementary-aged or after-school programs. Mr. Frith stated that the initial phase will serve children from infancy through pre-kindergarten, but additional programs could be considered later after completing licensing, evaluating demand, and coordinating with the city. He emphasized that any expansion would require ensuring adequate facilities, staffing, and compliance with state requirements.

Mr. Frith confirmed the daycare would be open to the public, not limited to church members, and noted an initial capacity of 42 children based on current restroom facilities. They explained that future expansion up to approximately 72 children may be possible if additional bathrooms are added and if demand warrants it.

Commissioner Julien inquired about long term plans. Mr. Frith acknowledged that broader educational initiatives could be considered in the future but that no specific plans for a private school currently exist.

Commissioners discussed the proximity of other child-focused facilities near City Hall and noted the compatibility of the proposed use with surrounding development. Staff also clarified past inquiries related to state-mandated allowances for small accessory dwellings at places of worship. Mr. Frith applicant additionally referenced prior coordination with the city on their existing playground to ensure proper setbacks.

Chairperson Hansen opened the public hearing at 7:29 PM.

Chairperson Hansen closed the public hearing at 7:30 PM.

Motion made by Commissioner Cobbs, seconded by Commissioner Julien to recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, the Rezoning Request and the Conditional Use Permit for Substance Church, subject to the conditions outlined below:

Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Findings of Fact:

- The applicant proposes operating a Child Daycare Facility use within a portion of the existing Substance Church building located at 8299 Central Avenue NE (Parcel ID 01-30-24-13-0002). The daycare will occupy approximately 5,000 square feet of the existing 104,000-square-foot church building and will utilize existing classroom, office, restroom, and support spaces.
- The Commercial future land use designation better reflects the property's existing church use and the proposed childcare/daycare facility than the current Commercial/Industrial designation.
- The proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment is consistent with the City's long-term land use goals and policies by supporting a community-serving institutional use within an area characterized by commercial development.
- The requested rezoning from I-1 Light Industrial to C-1 Shopping Center Commercial is compatible with the surrounding development pattern, including adjacent commercial uses and nearby community-serving establishments.
- The proposed rezoning brings the property's zoning classification into better alignment with both its existing use as a public place of worship and its proposed use as a childcare/daycare facility.
- Child daycare facilities are allowed as a conditional use within the C-1 Shopping Center Commercial District, and the applicant's proposed daycare facility is eligible for consideration through the Conditional Use Permit process.
- The existing church site contains established access drives, parking areas, sidewalks, and building infrastructure capable of accommodating the proposed daycare use. The site includes 332 off- street parking spaces, 10 accessible parking spaces, a designated drop-off area, and an existing 3,601-square-foot outdoor playground enclosed by a five-foot-high chain-link fence.

- The proposed daycare facility will provide an important community service by expanding access to childcare and early childhood services for local families while supporting the church's existing community-serving mission.

Conditions of Approval:

- 8299 Central Avenue NE (Parcel ID 01-30-24-13-0002) shall be re-designated from 'Commercial/Industrial' to 'Commercial' on the city's Future Land Use Map.
    - Following City Council approval, the amendment shall be submitted to the Metropolitan Council for review and final approval.
- The applicant shall obtain all applicable local, county, state, and federal permits and approvals associated with the comprehensive plan amendment request.
- The applicant shall comply with all applicable local, county, state, and federal regulations.
- The applicant shall pay all fees and escrows associated with this request.

Rezoning

Findings of Fact:

- The applicant proposes operating a *Child Daycare Facility* use within a portion of the existing Substance Church building located at 8299 Central Avenue NE. The daycare will occupy approximately 5,000 square feet of the existing 104,000-square-foot church building and will utilize existing classroom, office, restroom, and support spaces.
- The proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment is consistent with the City's long-term land use goals and policies by supporting a community-serving institutional use within an area characterized by commercial development.
- The requested rezoning from I-1 Light Industrial to C-1 Shopping Center Commercial is compatible with the surrounding development pattern, including adjacent commercial uses and nearby community-serving establishments.
- The proposed rezoning brings the property's zoning classification into better alignment with both its existing use as a public place of worship and its proposed use as a childcare/daycare facility.
- Child daycare facilities are allowed as a conditional use within the C-1 Shopping Center Commercial District, and the applicant's proposed daycare facility is eligible for consideration through the Conditional Use Permit process.

Conditions of Approval:

- 8299 Central Avenue NE (Parcel ID 01-30-24-13-0002) shall be rezoned from I-1 to C-1 on the city's Zoning Map. The rezoning request is contingent on approval of an amendment to the Future Land Use Map in the city's Comprehensive Plan.
- The applicant shall obtain all applicable local, county, state, and federal permits and approvals associated with the rezoning request.
- The applicant shall comply with all applicable local, county, state, and federal regulations.
- The applicant shall pay all fees and escrows associated with this request.

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Conditional Use Permit

Finding of Facts:

- The applicant proposes operating a Child Daycare Facility use within a portion of the existing Substance Church building located at 8299 Central Avenue NE. The daycare will occupy approximately 5,000 square feet of the existing 104,000-square-foot church building and will utilize existing classroom, office, restroom, and support spaces.
- The Commercial future land use designation better reflects the property's existing church use and the proposed childcare/daycare facility than the current Commercial/Industrial designation.
- The proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment is consistent with the City's long-term land use goals and policies by supporting a community-serving institutional use within an area characterized by commercial development.
- The requested rezoning from I-1 Light Industrial to C-1 Shopping Center Commercial is compatible with the surrounding development pattern, including adjacent commercial uses and nearby community-serving establishments.
- The proposed rezoning brings the property's zoning classification into better alignment with both its existing use as a public place of worship and its proposed use as a childcare/daycare facility.
- Child daycare facilities are allowed as a conditional use within the C-1 Shopping Center Commercial District, and the applicant's proposed daycare facility is eligible for consideration through the Conditional Use Permit process.
- The existing church site contains established access drives, parking areas, sidewalks, and building infrastructure capable of accommodating the proposed daycare use. The site includes 332 off- street parking spaces, 10 accessible parking spaces, a designated drop-off area, and an existing 3,601-square-foot outdoor playground enclosed by a five-foot-high chain-link fence.
- The proposed daycare facility will provide an important community service by expanding access to childcare and early childhood services for local families while supporting the church's existing community-serving mission.
- The proposed use will operate within an existing building and is not expected to adversely affect surrounding properties, public health, safety, welfare, property values, or neighborhood character. The proposed use meets the criteria in Section 16.56.030(E)(1) of the Zoning Code for approval of a Conditional Use Permit.

Conditions of Approval:

- The applicant is authorized to operate a Child Daycare Facility use within the existing church building at 8299 Central Avenue NE according to the plans and materials submitted to and reviewed by the City for this request.
    - An amendment to this permit shall be required for any expansion of the daycare facility beyond those areas identified in the approved plans.
- The designated drop-off and pick-up area shown on the approved site plan shall be maintained and available for daycare operations, and pedestrian access between the drop-off area and daycare entrance shall be maintained.

- The outdoor play area and fencing shall be maintained in accordance with the approved site plan and applicable City Code requirements, including maintenance of the existing fencing around the outdoor play area.
- The applicant shall obtain all applicable local, county, state, and federal permits, approvals, inspections, certificates, and licenses required for operation of the daycare facility, including all required State of Minnesota childcare licensing approvals.
- The proposed *Child Daycare Facility* use shall comply with all applicable local, county, state, and federal regulations, including building code, fire code, accessibility, health, safety, and childcare licensing requirements.
- A certificate of occupancy shall be obtained prior to commencement of daycare operations.
    - Prior to issuing a certificate of occupancy, city staff shall verify the daycare's licensed capacity, staffing levels, hours of operation, and pick-up/drop-off procedures to ensure that the proposed use has sufficient off-street parking and on-site circulation.
- The applicant shall pay all fees and escrows associated with this CUP request.
- Any violation of the conditions of approval or applicable City Code requirements may result in review or revocation of the Conditional Use Permit in accordance with City Code provisions.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Cobbs, Commissioner Julien, Commissioner Coyle, Commissioner Goldstein, Chairperson Hansen. Motion carried.

6. OTHER

A. Council/Board/Commission Comprehensive Plan Survey

Building Official Baker informed the commission that a memo had been sent out regarding the 2050 Comprehensive Plan Visioning Survey. He said the survey was distributed to the Planning Commission, City Council, Park and Rec Commission, and department heads. He noted that the survey should take about 15 minutes to complete. Baker said that the survey includes several questions aimed at gathering input on what representatives would like to see for the future of Spring Lake Park. He pointed out that the meeting packet contains a QR code linking directly to the survey website.

7. ADJOURN

Motion made by Commissioner Julien, seconded by Commissioner Coyle to adjourn.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Cobbs, Commissioner Julien, Commissioner Coyle, Commissioner Goldstein, Chairperson Hansen. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.