



ITASCA COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION/BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
123 NE 4th St
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
(218) 327-2857

Wednesday, 5/14/2025

11:00 A.M.

Itasca County Boardroom

The regular meeting of the Itasca County Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment (PC/BoA) was held on Wednesday, 5/14/2025, at 11:00 a.m. * in the County Board Room of the Courthouse with the following in attendance:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Bellomy, Dan Butterfield, Conley Janssen, Mike Oja, Lisa Maasch;

ABSENT: None;

EXOFFICIO: Environmental Services Director Katie Benes, SWCD staff: Bill Grantges; Austin Steere, Waylon Glienke

GUESTS: Michael Simmons, Peggy Clayton, Sara Christensen, Mike Schack, Jack Muhar

*Members met at the Courthouse at 8:45 a.m. to view the properties and then returned to the Courthouse to hold the meeting.

Chair Bellomy called the Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment meeting to order, opening with the Pledge of Allegiance. Copies of the agenda and opening statement were available for the audience.

Agenda. Upon the motion of Maasch/Janssen, which carried unanimously, the agenda was approved as distributed.

Minutes. Upon the motion of Oja/Butterfield, which carried unanimously, the minutes of the 4/9/2025 hearing were approved as distributed.

Michael & Cherie Simmons/Variance—(Part of Lot 9, Blk 1, Crystal Waters, Section 12, Unorganized Township 57-26, Parcel #65-420-0091) — submitted a variance application for variance from Section 5.6.7F of the Zoning Ordinance and Section 1.1 of the SSTS Ordinance for installation of a septic system which does not meet the required setback from the Ordinary High Water Level (OHWL) of Johnson Lake, Natural Environment Class 3. An aerial photo of the parcel was viewed on the overhead screen. Mike Simmons was present and discussed his application; he would like to upgrade his existing septic system with an advanced system since he is selling his property and the prospective buyer would like to upgrade the system for family use. There was discussion regarding the need for more vegetation. Butterfield/Oja motioned to close the public portion of the meeting which carried unanimously.

Motion: Bellomy/Butterfield motioned to approve the variance application submitted by Michael & Cherie Simmons for installation of a septic system to be located 55' from the OHWL of Johnson Lake as set forth in the 5/9/2025 staff report. Motion carried unanimously.

Condition/s: 1) Contact SWCD for mitigation plan to increase shoreline buffer;

Harris Township/Variance—(Public landing lying southerly of Lot 37, East Wendigo Park Plat, Section 23, Harris Township 54-25, (no Parcel #), submitted a variance application for variance from Section 5.6.7A of the Zoning Ordinance to expand the existing public landing and exceed the allowable impervious surface. The proposed expansion will include increased turning area, additional parking, an AIS cleaning stall and ADA compliant stall. An aerial photo of the parcel was viewed on the overhead screen. The following documents

were added to the record: 01a -Harris Township criteria, PCBA 08 – email from Rich Libbey; PCBA 09 – MN Cooperative Agreement; PCBA 10 – historical aerial photos, and PCBA 11 – letter from SWCD. Peggy Clayton, representing Harris Township and Sara Christensen, with SEH, were present and discussed details of the proposed plan. There was discussion of concerns which included the AIS cleaning stall. Bill Grantes, Itasca SWCD Invasive Species Manager; was present and his discussion included the need for an AIS cleaning stall since Pokegama is one of the busiest lakes in the County. Austin Steere and Waylon Glienke, with SWCD were also present and discussion included it is a challenging, small parcel—erosion needs to be addressed noting rip rap addresses wave action but not runoff. Mike Schack, with Harris Township, was present in support; he inspects landings and noted there are problems with washouts at this site. Jack Muhar was present, supports improvement to the boat landing (which is consistently used) and ADA compliancy; he also noted there have been erosion and flooding issues at the site. Rich Libbey, was present in opposition noting the proposed plan would not increase parking (only 6 proposed spaces and sometimes there are many more vehicles parked at the site); he suggested postponement to get more information or deny the application to check other options. Butterfield/Maasch motioned to close meeting to public comment. There was further discussion which included the need to address erosion; the unknown pipe onsite and need for ADA compliant parking on the lake.

Motion: Bellomy/Butterfield motioned to table this application until more information was received, motion failed 2:3 (Bellomy, Butterfield voted Aye; Oja, Janssen, Maasch voted Nay)

Members completed their criteria forms and there was further discussion.

Motion: Maasch/Oja motioned to approve the variance application submitted by Harris Township to expand the existing public landing and exceed the allowable impervious surface as set forth in the 5/9/2025 staff report. Motion carried by majority vote 3:2 (Oja, Janssen, Maasch voted Aye; Butterfield, Bellomy voted Nay).

At 1:00 p.m., Butterfield/Maasch motioned to adjourn the meeting and motion carried unanimously.

By: _____
Diane Nelson, Recording Secretary