



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

Wednesday, 8/13/2025

12:00 P.M.

Itasca County Boardroom

The regular meeting of the Itasca County Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment (PC/BoA) was held on Wednesday, 8/13/2025, at 12:00 p.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;
GUESTS: Chad Mertz, Sean Leonhard, Peggy Clayton, Mike Erickson, Mike Sura

*Members met at the Courthouse at 8:30 a.m. to view the Leonhard and Sura properties and then returned to the Courthouse to hold the meeting (the Mertz and Erickson properties were viewed in previous months).

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/Butterfield, which carried unanimously, the agenda was approved as distributed.

Minutes. Upon the motion of Maasch/Janssen, which carried unanimously, the minutes of the 7/9/2025 hearing were approved as distributed.

Call Back to the Table - Chad Mertz/CUP—((Part of NE SW, SE SW, Section 18, Morse Township 145-25, Parcel #29-118-3101, 29-118-3104, 29-118-3401)— submitted a conditional use permit application (CUP) to hold swap meets. At the 7/9/2025 PCBA meeting, the application was amended to include vendor camping (and later also amended to include Parcels 29-118-3104 and 29-118-3401) and tabled until the August meeting to allow the required notification. The parcels were viewed on the overhead screen. Chad Mertz was present and discussed his application and explained there will be primitive camping for vendors only if needed; and he plans to hold one swap meet around Memorial Day and one around Labor Day. There are two active wells on the property for water; there will be portable restrooms for sanitation and dumpsters will be provided. Butterfield/Janssen motioned to close the public portion of the meeting which carried unanimously.

Motion: Janssen/Oja motioned to approve the amended CUP application submitted by Chad Mertz to hold swap meets periodically throughout the spring and summer months and include vendor camping as set forth in the 8/8/2025 staff report, motion carried unanimously with the below condition:

1) Use Best Management Practices for vendors and campers

Sean Leonhard/CUP—(E ½ of NW NW, Section 13, Harris Township 54-25, Parcel #19-013-2201) — submitted a CUP application to establish a dog kennel/grooming facility. There were two documents added to the record: PCBA 7 – comments received from Mike & Tammy Warren and PCBA 8 - comments received from Russell Kohlstad. The parcel was viewed on the overhead screen. Sean Leonhard was present and discussed his application for a dog kennel/grooming facility for 16-18 dogs. His discussion included that the

driveway will be gated; only a few dogs will be outdoors at a time to keep noise to a minimum; staff will be onsite from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (for grooming); general hours of operation will be from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. and there will be a holding tank for the dog kennel. Peggy Clayton, with Harris Township, was present and commented that Harris Township has recommended approval and there was previously a kennel in the area. Janssen/Maasch motioned to close the public portion of the meeting which carried unanimously. Members discussed traffic and noise concerns and noted the mature pines should help to buffer noise and the indoor kennel (with dogs going outside periodically) would also help to reduce noise. There was discussion regarding the hours of operation and several members thought that there should be flexibility to allow some dogs to be let out after hours if needed.

Motion: Butterfield/Oja motioned to approve the CUP application submitted by Sean Leonhard to establish a dog kennel/grooming facility as set forth in the 8/8/2025 staff report. Motion carried unanimously with the following conditions:

Condition/s: 1) Normal business hours will be from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (with exception of emergencies);
2) Gated security;
3) Adequate lighting directed away from neighbors;

Butterfield/Janssen motioned to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting and open the Board of Adjustment meeting and motioned carried unanimously. At 1:07 p.m. there was a 5 min. recess and meeting was called back to order at 1:15 p.m. The motion was amended to hear the Erickson variance first (as requested by Mr. Erickson).

Mike Erickson/After-the-Fact Variance- (Lot 42, 1st ADD to Plat of Sunrise, Section 6, Unorganized Township 56-26, Parcel #64-520-0036) — submitted an after-the-fact variance application for a 24'x24' dwelling addition constructed 17' from the top of the bluff. The parcel was viewed on the overhead screen. This application is being amended after the applicant's initial after-the-fact variance request for addition and deck were denied on 6/11/2025. The site was previously viewed in June by the members (since Member Maasch was absent she viewed the site at a later date). Mike Erickson was present and discussed his application noting that the 16'x24' covered deck/sonotubes will be removed (he agreed to remove by 10/31/2025), area re-landscaped and roof (for the dwelling addition) reconstructed so the roofline will not be closer than 17' from the bluff. Janssen/Maasch motioned to close the public portion of the meeting which carried unanimously. There was discussion which included gutters and it was the consensus they could direct runoff any direction away from the OHWL.

Motion: Janssen/Maasch motioned to approve the after-the-fact variance application submitted by Mike Erickson for a 24'x24' dwelling addition constructed 17' from the top of the bluff and set forth in the 8/8/2025 staff report. Motion carried unanimously.

Condition/s: 1) Covered 16'x24' deck and sonotubes removed by 10/31/2025;
2) Gutters directing runoff away from the lake;

Mike & Carole Sura/Variance—(Lots 6 & 7 & VAC Barbara St. LYG SE & ADJ Thereto, Eagle Point, Section 11, Unorganized Township 59-25, Parcels #59-430-0060, 59-430-0070) - submitted a variance application for construction of a 24'x32' cabin/6'x32' porch to be located 87' from the Ordinary High Water Level (OHWL) of Eagle Lake, Recreational Development 2 Class and 10' from rear property line. At the site inspection, the dwelling setback distances were measured to be 80' from the OHWL and 9' from the rear property and it was noted that the existing vegetative buffer met requirements. The property was viewed on the overhead screen. Mike Sura was present and discussed his variance request needed to construct a cabin for year-round use. Oja/Butterfield motioned to close the public portion of the meeting which carried unanimously.

Motion: Oja/Butterfield motioned to approve the variance application submitted by Mike & Carole Sura for construction of a 6'x32' porch/24'x32' cabin to be located 80' from the OHWL and 9' from the rear property line as set forth in the 8/8/2025 staff report. Motion carried unanimously with the following condition:

1) Comply with Best Management Practices during construction

Other:

Water Plan Implementation Committee (WPIC) Report. Member Butterfield reported there was discussion which included the Upper Mississippi headwaters, forestry assistance grant updates, Bigfork/Littlefork watersheds, county fair (information will be available in the new conservation building) and it was also mentioned there is a new member, Allison Ahcan.

At 2:07, Chair Bellomy adjourned the meeting.

By: _____
Diane Nelson, Recording Secretary