

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

June 4, 2026

Completed by: Sue Bertrand, P&Z Staff

Site visit completed by Adam Ossefoort and Roger Hendrickson on 5/28/2026

Meeting attended by board members: Chairman Jim Pratt, Vice Chair Ken Hovet, Lloyd Graves, Roger Hendrickson, Andy Watland, and Commissioner Tim Denny.

Staff members: Adam Ossefoort and Sue Bertrand

Other members of the public: Sign-in Sheet is available for viewing upon request.

Jim called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited as a collective group.

Introduction of the staff and board members by Jim.

Ken motioned to have the agenda approved as amended to discuss Data Centers at the end of the meeting, Roger seconded, voice vote, no dissent heard. Motion carried.

Andy motioned to have May 7, 2026, meeting minutes approved. Lloyd seconded, voice vote, no dissent heard. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM 1: Prairie Country Estates, Randy Mechels: Section 16, Long Prairie Township, Site Address: County 5, Long Prairie, MN 56347 **PID:** 18-0015300

1. Request to create a five-lot Plat in Residential-2 Zoning District.

Randy was present as the applicant.

Staff Findings: Adam read through the staff report. This report is available for viewing upon request in the Planning & Zoning Office.

Recommendation:

A motion to recommend approval to the County Board of Commissioners with the following conditions:

Proposed Conditions:

1. New accesses from the County road shall be approved by the road authority prior to installation.
2. Applicant must abide by all other applicable federal, state, and local standards.

Correspondence received: None

Public comment:

Wally Zastro, Long Prairie Township stated they are in support from about six weeks ago when it was presented to the township. He added the County said they can put driveways in along the road and it was all good. He stated the township does not want to put a road in but if the County wants to, they have no problems.

Board discussion:

On Site Visit Report by Roger when he was out there on May 28th, 2026, this report may be viewed in full upon request at the Planning and Zoning office.

Ken had concerns with five access driveways, as the road is busy.

Randy stated he had talked with Loren Fellbaum at public works and he didn't have a problem with it.

Adam added he had reached out to Loren, as well, and was told it's nice to have less driveways for different access points but they have also seen conflicts with shared driveways, and in either case having multiple driveways with the line of site clear along there, he is comfortable with it.

Jim, Roger and Ken all agreed the visibility was great along there.

Ken asked if Randy had any intentions of making this a part of City limits?

Randy, the city has not reached out to him or said anything about that. He likes the R-2 zoning district he grew up in.

Wally stated the township would not want this to be annexed into the city and will fight tooth and nail not to. They have lost too much already from the tax base and want to keep this in the township.

Adam, no comment from the city when he reached out to them, and they never mentioned annex plans. He knows they do not have services that go that far out and pointed out the one additional property between proposed plat and city limits.

Jim stated it looks like a good place for more houses, close to town and not much for farming.

Roger motioned to approve, Ken seconded with the conditions as presented.

Proposed Conditions:

1. New accesses from the township road shall be approved by the road authority prior to installation.
2. Applicant must abide by all other applicable federal, state, and local standards.

Roll call vote commenced as follows:

Board member	Vote (yes or no)
Ken Hovet	Yes
Roger Hendrickson	Yes
Lloyd Graves	Yes
Andy Watland	Yes
Jim Pratt	Yes

Motion carried. Jim noted the application will be presented to the County Board of Commissioners on June 16th, 2026.

AGENDA ITEM 2: Gaylen Sandgren -Section 32, Long Prairie Township, Site Address: 23570 210th St., Long Prairie, MN 56347 PID: 18-0040001

1. Request to Rezone from Commercial to Natural Environment Shoreland Zoning District.

Gaylen was present as the applicant.

Staff Findings: Adam read through the staff report. This report is available for viewing upon request in the Planning & Zoning Office.

Additional Notes:

Section 5.06 Zoning Amendments.

A. The County Board may adopt amendments to the zoning ordinance and zoning map in relation both to land uses within a particular district or to the location of the district lines. Such amendments shall not be issued indiscriminately but shall only be used as a means to reflect changes in the goals and policies of the County as reflected in the Comprehensive Plan or changes in conditions in the county.

Recommendation:

A motion to recommend approval to the County Board of Commissioners with the following conditions:

Proposed Conditions:

1. No conditions

Correspondence received: None

Public comment:

Wally from Long Prairie township stated they were in support of Gaylen's application.

Board discussion:

On Site Visit Report was reviewed by Roger: This report may be viewed in full, upon request, at the Planning and Zoning Office. Roger stated it was a very nice, neat, well-kept property.

Adam reminded the board we were only looking at the rezone part of this application for a decision tonight. When he goes to do the split, he will have to come back to the board for a public hearing at that time.

Andy confirmed the entire parcel will be rezoned to Natural Environment Shoreland.

Adam, correct. Everything is outlined in black.

Andy also asked if there were any setback considerations with the property to the North as far as next to shoreland?

Adam stated setback distances in commercial are greater anyway, it would be able to be closer but leaves little room for any type of addition.

Jim, just rezone, will have to come back with the split application.

Ken motioned to approve with no conditions, Lloyd seconded.

Roll call vote commenced as follows:

Board member	Vote (yes or no)
Ken Hovet	Yes
Roger Hendrickson	Yes
Lloyd Graves	Yes
Andy Watland	Yes
Jim Pratt	Yes

Motion carried. Ken noted the application will be presented to the County Board of Commissioners on June 16th, 2026.

AGENDA ITEM 3: Lakeside Bluffs Addition, Eric Valencia and Kurt & Barb Johnson -Section 21, Burnhamville Township, Site Address: Dunlin Road, Burtrum, MN 56318 PID: 06-0031100

1. Request to create a two-lot Plat in Recreational Development Shoreland Zoning District.

Eric Valencia & Barb Johnson were present as the applicants.

Staff Findings: Adam read through the staff report. This report is available for viewing upon request in the Planning & Zoning Office.

Recommendation:

A motion to recommend approval to the County Board of Commissioners with the following conditions:

Proposed Conditions:

1. New accesses from the township road shall be approved by the local township prior to installation.
2. Establishment of a 50' drainage easement to protect the flow area across lot 2. Drainage easement shall remain in deep rooted, native vegetation for protection of Long Lake.
3. Applicant must abide by all other applicable federal, state, and local standards.

Correspondence received: None

Public comment:

Yes, Percy Wunderlich, lives across the road and was concerned with the drainage. He has a history of living there and mowed the lawn since he was fourteen years old, now owns it. 1988 he had worked for the department of defense overseas for 37 years. While in Europe, he and the kids stayed there for eight weeks and had been around this property a long time. He grew up one and a half miles from here. His father lived and died there. He is concerned about the water table and the drainage that takes place there. A long time ago, there was a farm about halfway up the hill as you would go toward Burtrum. He blew out a swamp, which changed the water table. Not sure the board was aware, but Dunlin Road used to run on the edge of Galligan's yard then took a 90-degree turn, then another 90-degree turn then joined where Dunlin road is now. Previous owner wanted to create lots and offered to change the road. Township approved the road change as the

school busses had gone off the road on those “S” curves in the winter. Again, changes to the wetlands taking place. On the way to the meeting he stopped at the gully and stated he is not good with distances but the gully is 50’ deep and 150’ across. Where his driveway is it’s only three feet away from the bluff, but if more erosion takes place, he will lose his driveway and he will be back here asking to dig out the bluff. It is only three feet away from his ten-foot asphalt driveway. There is no leeway there for any more water to be dumped in through the culvert or more erosion. He was glad he had stopped as he was shocked at how much more erosion has been taking place since with more trees and roots in there. He had taken pictures that are available if the board was interested to see how much erosion had taken place. He just asked the board to do everything in their power to prevent any additional erosion occur. Once structures go up more water flow is going to change and it is not going to be able to soak in the ground. He mentioned 102 acres from three directions drain into that area of the culvert and not just his property but the neighbor to the North and what is it doing to the lake? Felt a lot of this information was not available as it is not recorded.

Board discussion:

On Site Visit Report was reviewed by Roger: This report may be viewed in full, upon request, at the Planning and Zoning Office. He stated the road seemed a little too close, other than that, looked like a good place. As far as erosion. By farming it there will be more erosion and silt going to the lake and putting grass in as two lots would help, however added structures would displace more water. Kind of a catch all, either way.

Ken asked if he’d been to the township and they were okay with putting driveways in?

Eric stated, yes he’d been to the township and they didn’t oppose.

Ken added he was okay with it.

Jim asked only two lots?

Adam, correct.

Andy asked about the drainage easement, if it meant a 50-foot wide, 25-feet on each side of it, easement along that drainage line that you see?

Adam explained you can see that blue line in the image (showed on overhead). The surveyor would locate the center line and twenty-five-feet on either side would remain permanent vegetation to slow that water down and hopefully take a little bit of it in.

Andy that means there cannot be any building on there or make it a lawn. It must be native vegetation.

Adam, we generally encourage to clip it once a year to encourage regrowth for the sole purpose of conveying water and slowing it down.

Andy stated when soils are left native like that for long periods of time, they actually become more pervious.

Jim asked if it was all on one lot?

Adam only impacts lot 2, and it leaves plenty of buildable area outside of the easement area.

Ken, that condition will stay with the property?

Adam, forever, and it will be on the final plat and would take a whole court process to be removed from the plat.

Percy asked if there is any way when during construction water be directed away from the drainage ditch.

Andy stated they could route water away, but it would eventually make it way back again as it is the natural flow.

Adam relayed you are looking more of retention rather than direction.

Andy and Jim, with that easement it will probably be a lot better than having it agricultural, with washouts and gullies, while this can prevent that.

Andy asked if it will need any special vegetation?

Adam, just deep rooted, native vegetation. One thing they have done in the past, especially on these larger lots, they have set standards to reduce impervious surface coverage. Instead of allowing up to 25% they could cap at 15%, or something like that, just specific to these two lots. Something to consider.

Andy, since it is such a large lot, 15% is still a substantial amount. Asked Eric if that would seem problematic in any way for any future plans?

Eric, didn't think so.

Ken your biggest headache is East of there, and there is nothing we can do about that.

Adam showed the area.

Andy, asked if the conditions come from Soil & Water?

Adam, we received nothing on this one from Soil & Water, however, it is a significant drainage area so just to protect that area, felt this was a straight forward way to secure the soil and slow some water down.

Roger, on that 50-foot drainage easement, can that grass be mowed?

Adam, not like lawn grass. We like to see people maintain it to some extent to keep weeds down and typically, we encourage no mow, other than a couple times a year to encourage regrowth for plants to take up extra nutrients.

Jim, what's growing in there now in the ravine?

Eric, pasture mix, oats and grass, with the intent to plant trees, red dogwood.

Jim stated he did not think they needed to reduce the impervious as they are not cramming a bunch of lots in there. When you have big lots and with the drainage easement, that is going to reduce the run-off quite a bit.

Andy thought it is sufficient the way we have it.

Roger motioned to approve, Andy seconded with the conditions as stated.

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2. Establishment of a 50' drainage easement to protect the flow area across lot 2. Drainage easement shall remain in deep rooted, native vegetation for protection of Long Lake.
3. Applicant must abide by all other applicable federal, state, and local standards.

Roll call vote commenced as follows:

Board member	Vote (yes or no)
Ken Hovet	Yes
Roger Hendrickson	Yes
Lloyd Graves	Yes
Andy Watland	Yes
Jim Pratt	Yes

Motion carried. Ken noted the application will be presented to the County Board of Commissioners on June 16th, 2026.

6:46 Jim called for a short recess before the Data Center discussion and 6:48 reconvened.

Data centers discussion:

Ken if you listen to the news at all Data Centers are a big topic and felt we should have an ordinance in place to get ahead of the game. There are a lot of concerns from the public.

Jim agreed it would be easier to deal with it sooner rather than after and asked Adam if he knew of any neighboring counties that have passed an ordinance on it?

Adam, Jackie Bauer mentioned she knew of one that has passed an ordinance and other counties are working on it. What most are doing and what he thinks we should do is get this to an upcoming work session, get it back to this board and establish a moratorium for a year to establish an ordinance. We would not allow any during that time, so we can get something in place. He is sure commissioners would be on board, then notice it for public hearing and grab any legal help we need along the way. It makes the most sense is to establish the moratorium for a year, to give us some time to get something in place.

Jim and Andy agreed, give us time to organize.

Adam stated the work session would be on the 16th, that meeting is after “our” public notice needs to go out. We could always anticipate it moving forward and put it on the agenda right away and we could always remove it if not agreed upon.

Andy asked if there was any talk about an IUP?

Adam, we do not even have a definition of an IUP in our ordinance, so it would be a significant overhaul of our ordinance to add it. Agreed there are many uses that would make sense for them to be IUP’s instead of CUP’s.

Andy, mentioned putting a moratorium on our solar, being there are no current applications, to close any loopholes for solar farms, since we have learned more.

Adam, same process as with Data Centers

Adam will move it to commissioners for a work session.

Percy asks for the board to consider not to sign any non-disclosure statement, that is what is happening to others where the commissioners sign a non-disclosure statement and the people or public are not included to talk about it. It is all closed doors.

Adam invited Percy to attend or submit comments for the board to hear and consider during this process.

Tim agreed, he’d like that. Send it up the chain.

Jim agreed, give us a little time to gather information, hearing what’s true or...

Roger motioned to adjourn the June 4th Planning Commission Meeting, Ken seconded, voice vote, no dissention heard, motion carried and meeting adjourned at 6:56 PM.