



## **MINUTES**

**Mankato Planning Commission  
August 27, 2025 - 6:00 p.m.  
IGC - Mankato Room**

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Zehnder called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner's Present: Chair Zehnder, Ms. Surdy, Mr. Filipovitch, Ms. Miller, Mr. Wilke, Mr. Dieken, Mr. Iddings,

Staff Present: Molly Westman-Planning and Zoning Administrator, Mark Konz-Director of Planning and Development Services, Bennett Hanson-Economic Development Specialist, Travis Johnson-Permit Technician, Brittany Mitchell-Planning Coordinator, Victoria Potts-MVCOG Program Administrator, Ean Pringnitz-Intern.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dieken made a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Surdy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Fillpovitch made a motion to approve the minutes from July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025. Mr. Wilke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

1. **July 23, 2025 Draft Planning Commission meeting minutes.**

4. **OLD BUSINESS**

No old business

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

1. 

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| CY39-25 |
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**Request of Bolton and Menk, with permission of the property owner, for a preliminary plat review of Victory Ridge Apartments. The subject property is described as Outlot B, Kearney Addition No. 2, City of Mankato (Blue Earth County PID R010909301015).**

Ms. Mitchell reports that staff submits the following findings of fact:

1. General Requirements:
  1. The site is designed in conformance with the existing location and widths of streets, the general drainage situation, lot sizes and arrangement.
  2. The preliminary plat depicts all the land as lots of record.
  3. A drainage study is being prepared and will be submitted to verify compliance with the City drainage requirements.
2. Streets
  1. The street right-of-way widths conform to the standards listed in Chapter 10 of the Mankato City Code.
  2. The proposed subdivision does not contain any new public streets.
3. Easements
  1. The preliminary plat provides standard easements required in Chapter 10 of the Mankato City Code.
4. Block Standards
  1. The blocks within the subdivision were designed for the intended end use as office-residential lots.
  2. The blocks within the subdivision were designed around the existing Dublin Road corridor.
5. Lot Standards
  1. The lot within the subdivision is intended for multiple-family residential development. The lot is designed in conformance with the standards set forth in Chapter 10.
  2. The concept plans submitted for the multiple dwelling units depict areas for off-street parking.
6. Public Sites and Open Spaces
  1. The applicant shall make a payment-in-lieu of parkland dedication fee in the amount of \$69,734.00

Ms. Mitchell reports that staff recommends approval of the preliminary plat with the following conditions:

1. Payment in lieu of parkland dedication in the amount of \$69,734.00 will be required prior to affixing signatures on the final plat.
2. A conditional use permit will be required for the proposed housing development based on the conditional uses defined in the Office Residential district.
3. The applicant shall submit a hydrology report and drainage analysis at the time of submission of the final plat. The applicant shall be aware that no drainage outlet shall be constructed at the top of the bluff.
4. Applicant shall submit a final traffic memo at the time of submission of the conditional use permit.
5. The applicant shall be aware of the wooded areas and any removal of trees shall be evaluated by the Mankato City Code.
6. The applicant shall be aware that a public watercourse exists on the subject property and any development that occurs within 300' will be subject to the City's Shoreland Ordinance.
7. The applicant shall make a payment-in-lieu of parkland dedication in the amount of \$69,734.00. This number is based on the assessed unimproved value of the property multiplied by 7 percent per the Mankato City Code requirements.

Chair Zehnder asked staff to elaborate on the traffic memorandum and clarify whether any requirements would result from its findings.

Ms. Mitchell stated that the submittal for the conditional use permit was recently made and noted that the application included a traffic memorandum.

Mr. Konz added that the applicant could provide further details on the traffic memorandum. He also wanted to clarify that at this meeting, the only item that was being reviewed was the preliminary plat. The next step in the process will be the conditional use permit, which will include the traffic memorandum.

**Steve Kuepers-Kuepers Construction.** Mr. Kuepers was present at the meeting to answer any questions from the Commission. He indicated that the four building types proposed are similar to those used in the Augusta Park Estates project located at 1690 Premier Drive.

Chair Zehnder opened the public hearing for comment.

**Dick Cogley-President North Star Cree Point Association.** Mr. Cogley expressed the association's main concern regarding traffic. He indicated that, based on the current layout, it would not be possible for vehicles exiting the proposed apartment complex to make a left turn onto North Victory Drive. This restriction would likely increase traffic on Dublin Road and Adams Street. The association is seeking the addition of a traffic light at Dublin Road or the installation of a roundabout to address these concerns.

Ms. Surdy questioned where they would suggest locating a roundabout.

Mr. Cogley suggested that the roundabout could potentially be located halfway between the bridge on North Victory Drive and Dublin Road, or alternatively, at the intersection of Dublin Road and North Victory Drive.

Chair Zehnder indicated that this issue will be further examined as part of the conditional use permit application review, which has already been submitted.

Mr. Cogley questioned when the project would be started.

Chair Zehnder indicated that once the public hearing was finished, the applicant would provide an answer.

Mr. Konz added that North Victory Drive is a county road, so Blue Earth County will provide a review in conjunction with the City of Mankato engineering department.

**Dorothy Viker-18 Cree Point Dr. Mankato, MN.** Ms. Viker was present at the meeting to voice her concerns about traffic related to this project. She added that Adams Street and North Victory Drive are already congested throughout the day, and increasing traffic could raise safety concerns and further impact travel times.

**Dick Van Hecke-58 Cree Point Dr. Mankato, MN.** Mr. Van Hecke was present at the meeting to voice his concerns about traffic related to this project. He asked the commission to please consider the traffic impacts on Adams Street as the project progresses.

With no one wishing to speak further, the public hearing was closed.

Chair Zehnder questioned if the intersection of Adams Street and North Victory Drive would be covered in the traffic study.

Mr. Konz indicated that traffic studies typically examine multiple intersections, but based on the feedback received, that specific intersection will be given closer attention.

Chair Zehnder inquired as to the timeline for when the building would be constructed.

Mr. Kuepers indicated the project is expected to be started by next spring.

Mr. Dieken made a motion to approve the preliminary plat with conditions. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilke. The motion passed unanimously.

*The anticipated date of City Council action is September 8, 2025.*

2.

CY40-25

**Request of Mankato Area Public Schools for a preliminary plat review of Mankato West High School Subdivision. The subject property is described as being located in the Southeast Quarter of Section 13, Township 108, Range 27, Blue Earth County, City of Mankato (West High School, 1351 S. Riverfront Drive).**

Ms. Mitchell reports that staff submits the following findings:

1. General Requirements
  1. The site is designed in conformance with the existing location and widths of streets, the general drainage situation, lot sizes and arrangement.
  2. A drainage study was submitted and is in compliance with the City drainage requirements.
2. Streets
  1. The street right-of-way widths conform to the standards listed in Chapter 10 of Mankato City Code.
3. Easements
  1. The preliminary plat provides standard easements required in Chapter 10 of the Mankato City Code.
4. Block Standards
  1. The blocks within the subdivision were designed around the existing corridors.
5. Lot Standards
  1. The lots are designed in conformance with the standards set forth in Chapter 10.
6. Public Sites and Open Spaces
  1. The applicant will be making a payment-in-lieu of parkland dedication. The Parks and Open Space Plan does not show that a park is needed within this subdivision.

Ms. Mitchell reports that staff recommends approval of the preliminary plat with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall be a willing petitioner when any intersection improvements are proposed on adjacent roads.
2. The applicant shall obtain a cross-access agreement with the adjacent parcel (YMCA).
3. The applicant shall grant the City an easement for all existing storm and sanitary over the parcel between Riverfront Drive and Pleasant Street.

Chair Zehner questioned the need for Mankato West to complete the replat.

Ms. Mitchell indicated that while the review for the new parking lot was being conducted, it was determined that there was never a plat completed.

**David Cornelius-733 Baker Avenue, Mankato, MN.** Mr. Cornelius was present at the

meeting and inquired if the baseball fields would be expanded. He referenced the removal of the girls' softball field to accommodate the construction of the new parking lot.

The applicant stated that there are no plans to expand the baseball fields and clarified that girls' softball will be played at Caswell Park.

Mr. Cornelius questioned if the slough would be filled in.

The applicant indicated there was no construction work associated with this project other than the parking lot.

Mr. Cornelius wanted to clarify that the map provided is intended only to show the property boundaries and does not indicate any planned expansion into the slough.

Chair Zehnder indicated that is correct and added that this is a replat and does not involve any building project.

With no one wishing to speak further, the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Wilke made a motion to approve the preliminary plat with conditions. The motion was seconded by Ms. Surdy. The motion passed unanimously.

*The anticipated date of City Council action is September 8, 2025.*

3.

CY41-25

**Request of Rice Companies for a conditional use permit to allow unenclosed storage of materials, products and equipment in the PI, Planned Industrial, zoning district, and for an easement vacation. The subject properties are described as Lots 1 and 2, Block 1, Westman Industrial Park No. 2, Mankato. (2416 Volk Avenue).**

Mr. Hanson reports that staff respectfully submit the following findings of fact for the Conditional Use Permit:

1. The proposed unenclosed storage of material, products and equipment is considered a Conditional Use in the PI, Planned Industrial Zoning District.
2. The applicant is proposing to extend municipal utilities from existing services located at Volk Ave.
3. The proposed outdoor storage, when implemented with the recommendations and in conformance with Mankato City Code, is in keeping with the comprehensive planning policies of the City. The underlying land use plan identifies this parcel as "Light Industrial".
4. The proposal does not interfere with or diminish the use of property in the immediate vicinity.
5. The proposal does not cause undue traffic congestion. Access is proposed to be created along Lundin Blvd and Volk Ave.
6. To the extent known, the development conforms with all other applicable regulations of the district, and other applicable ordinances.
7. There are no known historical or architectural resources on the site.
8. There are no known significant natural or environmental features on the property.
9. It will not cause a negative cumulative effect and effect on the City as a whole.
10. The proposal will not jeopardize the public's health, safety, or general welfare.

Mr. Hanson reports that staff respectfully submits the following findings of fact for the requested Easement Vacation:

1. The applicant has petitioned to vacate the subject portion of the 25' utility easement.
2. The applicant has provided notice to the utility companies with a copy of the vacation request and has provided responses from the utility companies. Xcel Energy identified an overhead power line utility located within the easement and has asked that the applicant coordinate with them to remove the existing lines and provide alternative access. Based on this response, the easement would no longer be needed for utility purposes once City and Excel Energy utilities have been abandoned.
3. Public sewer and water utilities are present within the proposed to be vacated easement. The applicant has proposed to abandon/vacate these utilities back to Volk Ave.
4. This proposed 5,697 Sq. Ft. easement vacation preserves the 10' dedicated utility easement along the eastern property boundary, as required.
5. The proposed vacation is necessary for the development of the subject parcel.

Mr. Hanson reports that staff recommends approval of the Conditional Use Permit to allow unenclosed storage of materials, products and equipment for an industrial and construction equipment business in the PI, Planned Industrial Zoning District with the following conditions:

1. Outdoor storage is limited to operable equipment only. Inoperable or unlicensed equipment or construction materials will not be permitted. Wrecked, dismantled, partially dismantled, inoperative, or abandoned vehicles or machinery shall be prohibited.
2. Signage for the development shall conform to Mankato City Code standards and a sign permit shall be obtained for any proposed signage prior to fabrication and installation.
3. The applicant shall coordinate with Blue Earth County to combine the two subject parcels.
4. The applicant shall provide proper notification to MPCA regarding the installation of the above-ground storage tanks on site. If fueling of vehicles occurs on site, MPCA substance transfer area requirements may need to be met.
5. The applicant shall verify if an industrial storm water permit is needed based on the proposed tanks. If one is needed, the applicant shall obtain one prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
6. The applicant shall be aware that a separate fire permit is needed for the proposed above-ground tanks.
7. The applicant shall be required to investigate for unsealed wells and soil concerns. If unsealed wells are found to be located on site, the applicant must work with Blue Earth County to properly record and seal the wells prior to issuance of a building permit. The applicant must provide documentation stating that all wells on site have been properly investigated and sealed, prior to issuance of a building permit.
8. The applicant shall provide screening of 90% opacity or greater for the proposed exterior storage in accordance with Mankato City Code.
9. The proposed project will be subject to water and sewer connection fees based on the City of Mankato assessment policy and fee schedule.
10. The applicant shall provide a stormwater report prior to issuance of a building permit.
11. The applicant shall provide a traffic memo detailing the trips generated by the development.
12. The applicant shall provide a detailed grading plan prior to issuance of a building permit.
13. The applicant shall provide a hydrant coverage map prior to issuance of a building permit.
14. A snow storage plan shall be submitted and approved. Snow storage shall be in conformance with an approved plan.
15. On-site lighting shall conform to the lighting standards in the Mankato City Code, including but not limited to full-cut, fully shielded fixtures. Conformance shall include, but not limited to, all signage, building, and parking lot lighting.
16. Landscaping shall be installed in conformance with the Mankato City Code and in accordance with an approved landscaping plan prior to issuance of a certificate of

occupancy.

17. The proposed project shall conform with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to address the concerns related to the project. Evidence of the resolution shall be provided with the application for a building permit.

Mr. Hanson reports that staff recommends approval of the vacation of the 25-foot-wide utility easement running east-west in Westman Industrial Park No. 2, with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall work with Xcel Energy to remove/relocate the overhead utilities present within the proposed to be vacated utility easement. The applicant/property owner is responsible for any and all costs of re-routing the existing infrastructure to a location that is acceptable to the utility company.
2. The existing public utility services located within the easement shall be abandoned/vacated back to the main at Volk Avenue prior to issuance of a building permit.

Chair Zehnder opened the public hearing for comment. With no one wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Iddings made a motion to approve the conditional use permit and the vacation of the 24-foot-wide utility easement. The motion was seconded by Ms. Surdy. The motion passed unanimously.

*The anticipated date of City Council action is September 8, 2025.*

4.

CY42-25

**Request of Widseth, on behalf of the developer, Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership, with permission of the property owner, for the vacation of a portion of Ruth Street between the platted, improved 4<sup>th</sup> Street and the vacated 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The subject property is generally described as Ruth Street between 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and as lying directly to the south of Outlot C, School Sisters of Notre Dame Subdivision, etal and being part of Highwood Subdivision.**

Mr. Pringnitz reports that staff submit the following findings.

1. The portion of Ruth Street proposed to be vacated was never improved as a Public Street following its dedication as such.
2. The developer plans to create an Outlot on the triangular portion of the property adjacent to N 4<sup>th</sup> Street and to dedicate a utility and access easement to the City for maintenance of the existing sanitary sewer line that runs adjacent and parallel to the Section line. Alternatively, the applicant may deed a portion of the vacated Ruth Street right of way to the city of Mankato.
3. The proposed vacation is necessary for the development of the subject parcel as the existing alignment restricts development of a portion of the property.

Mr. Pringnitz reports that staff recommends approval of the vacation of Ruth Street with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall provide a utility and access easement to the City of Mankato for maintenance of the existing sanitary sewer line that runs adjacent and parallel to the Section line. Alternatively, the applicant may deed a portion of the vacated Ruth Street right-of-way to the City of Mankato.

**Craig Britton-Civil Engineer, Widseth & James Arentson-Architect, Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership.** Mr. Britton was present at the meeting to represent the applicant and answer any questions the commission members may have. He indicated that

they have reviewed and agreed to the conditions set forth by the City of Mankato.

Chair Zehnder opened the public hearing for comment. With no one wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Ms. Surdy made a motion to approve the vacation of Ruth Street with conditions. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilke. The motion passed unanimously.

*The anticipated date of City Council action is October 14, 2025.*

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| CY43-25 |
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**Request of Wrestling Brotherhood, with permission of the property owner, for a variance from Mankato City Code Chapter 10, Article 2, Division 5, Sec. 10-169 to decrease the rear yard setback from the required 49.5' to 25' in the R-3, Limited Multiple Family Dwelling District, and for a conditional use permit to allow for a wrestling recreational facility in the R-3, Limited Multiple Dwelling zoning district. The subject properties are described as Lots 3, 4, 5, Block 16, Mankato City, Blue Earth County (Blue Earth County PID R010907206004, R010907206005, R010907206006, 1416, 1420, 1430 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue).**

Ms. Westman reports that staff respectfully submits the following findings of fact with respect to the conditional use permit to allow a non-commercial, recreational use in the R-3 zoning district:

1. The proposed use, a non-commercial recreational use, is considered a conditional use in the R-3 zoning district.
2. The request is in keeping with the comprehensive planning policies of the City as the underlying land use plan identifies this parcel as "Medium Density Residential", and in that district this proposed use is identified in Code as a conditional use.
3. The proposal does not interfere with or diminish the use of property in the immediate vicinity.
4. The proposed development will be served by public utilities.
5. The proposal will not cause undue traffic congestion, according to the trip generation memo provided. A condition is included herein that in the event that traffic impacts occur, the applicant will be required to study and implement mitigation strategies.
6. There are no known historical or architectural resources on the site.
7. There are no known environmentally sensitive areas on the site.
8. It will not cause a negative cumulative effect and effect on the City as a whole.
9. To the extent known, the development, when considered with the recommended conditions, conforms with all other applicable regulations of the district, and other applicable ordinances.
10. The proposal will not jeopardize the public's health, safety, or general welfare.

Ms. Westman reports that staff respectfully submits the following findings of fact with respect to the variance to reduce the rear yard setback from 49.5' to 25.36'.

1. The use allowed by the variance is a reasonable use.
2. The necessity of the variance arises out of the unique conditions of the lot not created by the property owner. The site was the location of a previous demolition building site, and the unknown fill types present challenges to locating the new structure over those previous building site locations.
3. The variance achieves the essential character of the neighborhood. In addition to existing residential homes, there are existing industrial buildings located in the neighborhood, some of which are located at, or very near, the property line.

4. The variance is in harmony with the intent of the ordinance because the new use is considered a conditional use within the district, and there are existing industrial-type structures and uses in the neighborhood.
5. The variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan because the land use is considered "medium density" and the zoning is proposed to be R-3, Limited Multiple Family Dwelling District. The applicant is proposing to use the property in a manner allowed a conditional use within the subject zoning district, and is requesting flexibility from the setbacks in the R-3 district.

Ms. Westman reports that staff recommend approval of the conditional use permit to allow the operation of a private recreational use and of the variance to reduce the rear yard setback from 49.5' to 25.36' with the following conditions of approval.

1. The operation shall be, and remain, private and shall be non-commercial.
2. If traffic issues arise associated with the development, at the discretion and request of the City of Mankato Engineering Department, the applicant/property owner will be responsible for having a more in-depth traffic study prepared, and will be a willing petitioner for the costs associated with any recommended geometry or traffic control improvements.
3. All existing, unused public utility services shall be removed and vacated at the service main.
4. The exterior finishes shall conform to the franchise coloring standards contained in Mankato City Code.
5. Prior to the fabrication or installation of any signage at the site, a sign permit shall be issued. All signage shall conform to the standards in the Mankato City Code.
6. Exterior lighting shall conform to Mankato City Code standards. All exterior light fixtures shall achieve Mankato City Code standards and a photometric plan shall be provided that demonstrates conformance with the Mankato City Code.
7. The development shall conform to Mankato City Code noise standards and to Minnesota Rule 7030 noise standards. In the event that noise issues arise, the applicant will be required to provide a noise study that demonstrates site conformance and implement any recommended mitigation strategies for site conformance to the noise standards.
8. Any refuse and recyclable material containers stored outdoors shall be fully enclosed in accordance with Mankato City Code standards.
9. The facility will be used for private recreational practices. Tournaments, meets, or other events that involve spectators and additional occupants will require an amendment to the conditional use permit, which will allow a review of necessary additional parking for additional occupants.
10. All future uses operating at the facility will be required to adhere to the standards of the R-3 zoning district.

Chair Zehnder opened the public hearing for comment. With no one wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Dieken made a motion to approve the conditional use permit and variance. The motion was seconded by Ms. Surdy. The motion was passed unanimously.

*The anticipated date of City Council action is September 8, 2025.*

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| CY44-25 |
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**Request of the Planning Agency to review Chapter 10 of Mankato City Code related allowing multiple-family dwellings as conditional uses in B-3, Highway Business District and to review the parking standards for multiple-family dwellings.**

Mr. Konz presented to the Planning Commission members regarding the review of Chapter 10 of the Mankato City Code. He indicated that as part of the City of Mankato's Strategic Plan and Housing Needs Analysis, the Mankato Economic Development Authority has directed staff to refine the City's development processes to better support community growth and address housing needs. This direction focuses on providing flexibility in the zoning ordinance by allowing high-density residential use in the Highway Business District and by reviewing parking requirements for high-density residential projects.

Mr. Konz indicated that in the past three years, the City of Mankato has reviewed nine Land Use Plan amendment applications for residential development. Five of these applications required changing the designation from commercial to residential, all of which were approved. The current process, requiring both a Land Use Plan amendment and a rezoning, adds four to five months to the development timeline. This can delay project readiness and increase costs.

He indicated that the City of Mankato's Housing Needs Analysis recommends "fast track permitting programs" to reduce delays and costs in the development process. By adjusting land use and zoning approvals, the City can streamline reviews and reduce the zoning timeline to approximately 60 days, creating a more efficient and predictable process for housing projects.

Apartments are currently allowed in the Central Business District, Central Business District-Fringe, Community Business District, and Office Residential Districts, where mixed-use development is encouraged. At present, B-3 Highway Business District limits residential uses. The proposed amendment would add apartments as a conditional use within the B-3 District.

This amendment would reduce approval timelines and provide opportunities to infill vacant commercial properties, while maintaining Planning Commission and City Council oversight of individual projects. To ensure compatibility, the amendment would include requirements such as transitional yards, open space, restrictions on outdoor storage, screening of mechanical equipment, and conformance to commercial district design standards.

Mr. Konz also indicated that parking requirements for multifamily housing have been raised in several recent proposals, with applicants citing reduced car ownership, greater transit access, and changing resident needs. The current standard of two stalls per unit may not reflect today's development patterns.

Based on a review of other communities, staff recommend reducing the requirement for apartment buildings to 1.5 stalls per unit. This adjustment would align with best practices and provide several benefits: more efficient land use, reduced stormwater runoff, lower development costs, and increased housing supply.

Mr. Dieken questioned if the parking requirements would be 1.5 stalls per unit regardless of bedroom count.

Mr. Konz stated that the proposed changes would apply to multifamily dwelling units located in the R4, OR, B1, and B3 zoning districts. He referenced the Silos apartment project and noted that under the Mankato City Code, the City Council has the authority to require additional off-street parking in downtown areas as part of a conditional use permit.

He further explained that, under the current Mankato City Code, developments within the Central District Fringe are submitted to a reduced (half) parking requirement. However, the council retains authority to increase that requirement if deemed appropriate. This flexibility is specifically afforded to the City Council in downtown areas.

Mr. Konz also clarified that R3 zoning districts have different parking requirements compared to the R4 and commercial districts. In areas adjacent to lower-density residential neighborhoods where on-street parking is more critical, those existing rental parking requirements remain unchanged. The parking requirements adjustments primarily affect commercial and higher-density residential areas.

Mr. Dieken questioned if that would include the Central Business District.

Mr. Konz indicated that under the current code, the Central Business District is already permitted a reduced (half) parking requirement; however, the City Council has the authority to increase that requirement if deemed appropriate.

Mr. Dieken noted that much of the research provided in the reports is based on bedroom count, and he felt this was a reasonable approach. He also pointed out that some of the examples included provisions for guest parking, which were not addressed in the staff's report.

Mr. Konz stated that guest parking is required in the R3 zoning district. He noted that many of the larger apartment complexes were developed based on a standard of one parking stall per bedroom. However, he observed that a significant number of these parking stalls are currently underutilized.

He cited examples such as the apartments on Roosevelt Circle, as well as those near the university such as Highland Hills and College Town, where units have larger bedroom counts but an excess of parking. Mr. Konz suggested that some of this unused parking could potentially be repurposed for additional units or other project-related uses.

Mr. Konz added that, because these developments would come through as conditional use permits, they could be evaluated on a project-by-project basis. He acknowledged that while the City of Mankato has historically evaluated parking needs based on bedroom count, this approach may not be the most effective moving forward.

Mr. Dieken added that in areas with higher student populations, fewer vehicles are typically expected. He referenced the apartments on Roosevelt Circle, noting that parking availability there can vary depending on the time of day, with more congestion typically occurring at night. He also pointed out that while student density in those apartments may be lower, the developments include garage stalls, which further affect the overall parking usage.

Ms. Surdy expressed concern about reducing parking requirements. She notes that while purchasing a vehicle may currently be unaffordable for some residents, this situation could change over time. If more residents begin owning vehicles in the future, it could lead to increased congestion. She specifically highlighted concerns about the downtown district, where parking is already limited, and on-street parking can be especially challenging during events.

Mr. Dieken questioned whether there would be consideration for a parking requirement of one stall per bedroom. He referenced the plat approval for the Victory Ridge Apartments, which was voted on earlier that evening, and inquired about the proportion of one- and two-bedroom units compared to any five-bedroom units within the development. He also questioned the difference between the current standard of 2 stalls per unit and the potential standard of 1 stall

per bedroom.

Mr. Konz explained that for a development with over 100 units, requiring two parking stalls per unit would result in approximately 200 parking stalls, noting that the current standard is not based on bedroom count. He added that the Planning Commission has the authority to require more than two stalls per unit if they feel it is appropriate. The proposed adjustment would effectively reduce the requirement from 200 stalls to 150 stalls.

From the City of Mankato's perspective, Mr. Konz emphasized the impact of large parking lots on stormwater management. The city must construct stormwater ponds to manage runoff from these expansive parking areas, which adds significant costs beyond just paving. Allowing smaller parking requirements for complexes with smaller units could reduce the amount of impervious surface and, consequently, the volume of stormwater runoff. This reduction could lessen infrastructure costs and provide environmental benefits to the community. Nevertheless, the Planning Commission would retain flexibility to require additional parking when necessary.

Mr. Filipovitch added that with the significant increase in remote work, many residents may use a bedroom not only for sleeping but also as a workspace. This does not necessarily generate the need for an additional vehicle. He noted that as cultural shifts change the way housing is used, these factors should be considered in evaluating parking requirements.

Mr. Dieken expressed concern that residents in market-rate apartments should be guaranteed a parking spot, ensuring there is adequate parking for everyone in the building.

Mr. Wilke noted that, based on the discussion, none of the members appeared opposed to the land use and zoning aspects of the proposal. He thanked the City of Mankato staff for their hard work. Regarding the parking requirements, he expressed support for the proposed changes, emphasizing the need for flexibility, particularly for off-campus, non-student housing. He observed that units with more than one or two bedrooms likely house families with young children who typically do not have vehicles. Mr. Wilke also thanked Mr. Konz for highlighting additional concerns related to parking lots and underscored the importance of balancing multiple factors. He felt the proposal strikes a good balance while retaining the Planning Commission's ability to adjust parking requirements as needed.

Ms. Surdy added that it is reassuring to know the Planning Commission can advocate for additional parking if needed, rather than being limited to the 1.5 stalls per unit standard. She also sought clarification on the proposed use amendment, asking if it would consolidate multiple items into a single amendment rather than addressing them separately.

Mr. Konz explained that the current process for approving uses typically takes about seven to eight months. If the use were designated as a conditional use, the approval process would be significantly shorter. He emphasized that this change would help developers start projects sooner and reduce the uncertainty and variability caused by delays of a year or more.

Mr. Wilke added that it is good practice for a planning agency to avoid rezoning and changing land use parcel by parcel. He expressed support for eliminating that approach, considering it a positive decision.

Chair Zehnder stated that the process would be expedited because adding this conditional use to the B3 district would significantly reduce the number of rezoning and land use changes required.

Ms. Surdy added that Blue Earth County implemented similar code changes, which helped reduce the number of repeated presentations.

Mr. Iddings expressed his support for the proposed changes and emphasized that the City Council would retain authority to require additional parking if necessary.

Mr. Konz added that for the Trellis project reviewed a few months ago, the developers requested a reduction in parking, which the City of Mankato deemed appropriate. He noted that in that case, the city required “proof of parking,” meaning that if parking demand increased, space was set aside to add additional parking later. He suggested this could be a component considered in evaluating future projects under the proposed changes.

Chair Zehnder asked whether the “proof of parking” requirement would need to be formally added to the City Code or if it would be addressed on a case-by-case basis through the conditional use permit process.

Mr. Konz indicated that the “proof of parking” requirement could be handled either way. If it is included in the City Code, developers would know to expect it upfront when proposing a project. Alternatively, if addressed through the conditional use permit process, developers would respond to specific requirements on a case-by-case basis.

Ms. Surdy indicated that this approach sounded more appealing, as it would help reduce stormwater runoff and potentially create additional green space.

Mr. Dieken indicated that he would also support the proposal if a “proof of parking” component was included.

Chair Zehnder opened the public hearing for comment.

**James Arentson-105 Cody Ct, Mankato, MN.** Mr. Arentson, a staff member of the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership, expressed support for reducing the parking requirement to 1.5 stalls per unit. He indicated that he does not believe the City of Mankato would regret this change and encouraged the Commission to approve the recommendation. Mr. Arentson also highlighted the real impacts of stormwater issues, referencing a brief flooding incident at the Homestead Apartments in July. He advocated for future flexibility regarding parking requirements, suggesting that the ability to adjust parking could be beneficial.

**Nathan Hermer-304 Victoria Blvd, Mankato, MN.** Mr. Hermer expressed agreement with many of Mr. Arentson’s points. He noted a significant reduction in parking demand for residential projects, largely due to a shift from multiple-bedroom units to one- and two-bedroom units. He mentioned that other communities have implemented similar policy changes, which have successfully reduced parking requirements. Mr. Hermer emphasized that developers understand the demand for various housing types and will provide parking accordingly. He added that lowering the minimum parking requirement in the City of Mankato would create greater flexibility for different residential product types.

With no one wishing to speak further, the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Dieken moved to amend the motion by adding a “proof of parking” requirement to the proposed 1.5 stalls per unit standard. Ms. Surdy seconded the amendment. The amendment failed with a vote of 3-3, with Mr. Dieken, Ms. Surdy, and Chair Zehnder voted in favor; Mr. Fillipovitch, Mr. Wilke, and Mr. Iddings voted against and Ms. Miller abstaining (no comment).

Mr. Wilke made a motion to approve the proposed use amendment and parking amendments. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fillipovitch. The motion passed with a vote of 5-2, with Ms. Surdy and Mr. Dieken voting no.

*The anticipated date of City Council action is September 8, 2025.*

7.

CYL45-25

**Request of Brian Keenan, on behalf of MNCSG 2019-57 LLC, with permission of the property owner, for an amendment of a current Interim Use Permit, IUP, to allow an extension of the timeframe for an additional 12 months for the work to begin on the project. The subject property is described as The Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter, except railroad right of ways, and the Northwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter, both in Section 29, Township 109, Range 26, excepting from said Northwest Quarter Northeast Quarter that part of said Northwest Quarter Northeast Quarter described as, beginning at a point 1315.8 feet South of the Northeast corner of Section 29-109-26, thence West 1808.8 feet to the East line of the Right of Way of the Chicago & Northwestern Railway, thence southwesterly along the said Right of Way line, 1264.6 feet, thence East 1692.3 feet to the East line of said Section 29, thence North along the section line 1249.8 feet to the place of beginning. A strip of land one (1) rod wide now used as a road, extending from East to West upon, over and across the North side of the Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter (NW1/4 NW1/4) of Section 29, Township 109 North of Range 26 West, beginning at or near the Northeast corner of said NW1/4 NW1/4 of Sec. 29, and thence West along or near the North line of said NW1/4 NW1/4 of said Sec. 29, to the public highway known as the Mankato and St. Peter Road. The East 302.00 feet of the Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 29, Township 109, Range 26, Blue Earth County, Minnesota, except the South 16.5 feet thereof. Except therefrom: Part of the Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter and part of the Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 29, Township 109 North, Range 26 West, Blue Earth County, Minnesota described as: Commencing at the Southeast corner of said Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter; thence North 89 degrees 41 minutes 42 seconds West (bearings are based on Blue Earth County Coordinates NAD83, 1996 Adjustment) on the south line of said Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter, a distance of 78.00 feet; thence North 12 degrees 41 minutes 56 seconds East, a distance of 16.89 feet to the north line of the south 16.5 feet of said Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter and the point of beginning; thence North 12 degrees 41 minutes 56 seconds East, a distance of 589.95 feet to the westerly right of way of the abandoned Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company; thence South 05 degrees 40 minutes 37 seconds West on said westerly right of way, a distance of 558.85 feet to the east line of said Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter; thence South 00 degrees 11 minutes 26 seconds West on said east line, a distance of 19.81 to the north line of the south 16.5 feet of said Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter; thence North 89 degrees 41 minutes 42 seconds West on said north line, a distance of 74.34 feet to the point of beginning. (23759 3rd Avenue; Blue Earth County PID R400429200017).**

Ms. Potts reports that staff respectfully submits the previously approved findings from the September 2024 report:

1. Use. - The proposed US Solar community solar is listed as an interim use located on Parcel Identification Number R400429200017.
2. Prohibitions. - The property is not located in shoreland, floodplain, or habitat areas. The site does contain wetlands, but a wetland delineation was conducted, and the project will not impact wetlands. The site is outside of any areas identified as flight zones.
3. Maximum Size and Capacity. - The proposed community solar facility is a 1-megawatt facility. The site encompasses approximately 7.2 acres.
4. Standards for Community Solar Energy Systems. - The site has access via 238<sup>th</sup> Street off

of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. The applicant uses piles as the foundation. The report documents the use of steel and concrete piles. The applicant conforms to the impervious standards of Lime Township. The submittal for the land development permit will include documentation related to conformance with the building code. The applicant has submitted the appropriate documentation to the Blue Earth County Technical Evaluation Panel and it has been approved.

5. Signage. - The applicant will only be utilizing signage required by the regulatory agency requirements.

6. Power and Communication Lines. - The applicant has an interconnection agreement with Xcel Energy.

7. Waste Disposal. - The applicant will be providing portable waste facilities during construction for contractors and employees.

8. Interconnection. - The applicant has an interconnection agreement with Xcel Energy.

9. Decommissioning Plan. - The applicant has submitted a decommissioning plan. The plan addresses costs for decommissioning totaling \$293,916.93. The applicant will be submitting a cash escrow or irrevocable letter of credit for the amount of approximately \$367,396.16.

10. Noise. - The applicant will conform to the noise standards. Suspected violations will be forwarded to the MPCA for enforcement.

11. Electrical Codes and Standards. - The applicant will work with the State of Minnesota on the enforcement and/or compliance with the electrical code.

12. Minnesota State Building Code. - The applicant will submit documentation of this with the land development permit.

13. Maximum Height. - The proposed modules will range between 8 feet and 12 feet in height.

14. Glare. - The applicant conducted a glare study. The assessment passed the Forge Solar FAA policy adherence.

15. Setbacks. - The site conforms to the rear, side yard, and principal dwelling setback requirements.

16. Security Fencing. - The proposal will have an 8-foot fence with more than a five-inch separation from the ground.

17. Screening. - The applicant is not proposing a vegetative screening due to the natural barrier of trees located on the property.

18. Inspections and Reports. - The applicant will prepare the information for the boards and allow for inspections.

19. Tile Lines. - Tiles lines will be identified on the submittal for the land development permit.

20. Roads. - The applicant will be accessing the site via 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue onto 238<sup>th</sup> Street. The applicant is currently working with Union Pacific for a private road agreement.

21. Vegetation Requirements & Management. - The trees on the site will not be cleared. The proposal indicates that a DNR approved pollinator seed mix will be used for the site.

22. Inspection Fees — Inspection fees will be paid to the Lime Township Board per the standards in the ordinance.

23. Natural Heritage Information System Review — The applicant has submitted a review of the cultural features of the site.

24. Utility Notification — The utility companies were notified with the standard notification process for the interim use permit.

Ms. Potts reports that staff recommends approval of the extension of an Interim Use Permit to allow for a community solar facility in Lime Township with the previously approved conditions found in the September 2024 report.

**Jesse Diamond. Stillwater, MN.** Mr. Diamond appeared on behalf of the applicant. He stated that while developing community solar projects, delays are common and often outside the developer's control. He referenced ongoing discussions with the railroad that have caused unexpected delays. Mr. Diamond emphasized that the applicant still intends to move forward with the project without any changes but is simply requesting additional time.

Mr. Wilke asked when the applicant was hoping to begin the project.

Mr. Diamond indicated they would like to have it completed by the end of next year.

Chair Zehnder opened the public hearing for comment. With no one wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Filipovitch made a motion to approve the extension of the interim use permit that was previously approved in the September 2024 report. The motion was seconded by Ms. Surdy. The motion passed unanimously.

*The anticipated date of Lime Township Board action is September 9, 2025.*

6. **MISCELLANEOUS**

No Miscellaneous items

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Ms. Surdy moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Filipovitch with all in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:41 pm.

MINUTES APPROVED.

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Chair, Mankato Planning Commission