



MINUTES

Mankato Planning Commission May 27, 2026 - 6:00 p.m. IGC - Council Chambers

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

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

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

Staff Present: Mark Konz-Director of Planning and Development Services, Travis Johnson- Permit Technician, Brittany Mitchell-Planning Coordinator, Bennett Hanson-Planner, Molly Westman-Planning Coordinator, Ean Pringnitz-Community Development Intern.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Wilke made a motion to approve the minutes from April 22nd, 2026. Ms. Bigham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. **OLD BUSINESS**

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

1. | | |---------| | CY22-26 | |---------|

Request of ISG, on behalf of the owner, Snell Real Estate, LLC, for a final plat review of Snell Addition. The subject properties are described as Lots 3, 4, and 5, Block 1, Menard Addition; except a portion of Lot 5, Block 1 (1900 and 1990 Madison Avenue).

Mr. Pringnitz respectfully submits the following findings of fact:

- **General Requirements**

1. The site is an existing commercial complex and changes to the existing development are not proposed at this time.
2. Because site improvements are not currently proposed, a drainage study has not been submitted to verify compliance. If future site modifications occur, a drainage plan will need to be submitted.

3. The site provides existing storm connections.

- Streets

1. The street right-of-way widths are in line with the existing street right-of-way widths. No changes are proposed.
2. Future reconstruction of Haefner Drive will require the installation of the sidewalk unless determined by the City Engineer that the sidewalk is infeasible.

- Easements

1. The plat provides the standard easements required in Chapter 10 of the Mankato City Code where currently feasible.

- Block Standards

1. The blocks within the subdivision were designed for the intended end use as a commercial lot.

- Lot Standards

1. The lots within the subdivision are intended for commercial uses and are designed to accommodate the existing use of the site.

- Public Sites and Open Spaces

1. Because the property was previously platted, no parkland dedication is due at this time.

Mr. Pringnitz reports that staff recommends approval of the final plat with the following conditions:

1. Any revised or new signage at each site will need to conform with the applicable standards based on any new/revised frontages.
2. Any proposed modifications to existing site or building conditions shall trigger the requirement that all off-street parking and driving surfaces on the subject property be hard surfaced within one year of the proposed work occurring.
3. Any future reconstruction of Haefner Drive will require the installation of a sidewalk along its west side, as identified in the City's Critical Link Sidewalk Plan, unless the City Engineer determines installation to be infeasible.

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 CY22-26. Mr. Wilke seconded the motion and passed unanimously.

The anticipated date of City Council action will be June 8, 2026.

2.

CY23-26

Request of Cherry Creek, Inc, on behalf of the owner, Scott and Charlie Trautman, for a conditional use permit to allow for a modification to the approved subdivision grading plan that will allow the construction of a patio home on a lot that was graded for a walkout basement, requiring fill in excess of 25 cubic yards to be moved into the property. The subject property is described as Lot 3, Block 1, Miller Creek 1st Addition, Mankato (112 Butler Falls Road).

Mr. Hanson reports that staff respectfully submit the following findings of fact for the conditional use permit:

1. Mankato City Code [Section 10-1498](#), (substantial land alteration) requires that a Conditional Use Permit be obtained where the excavation, grading, and filling of any land would result in the

movement of earth and materials in excess of 25 cubic yards and would significantly change the existing ground contour and existing drainage, or cause flooding or erosion. The proposed development results in the filling of land beyond 25 cubic yards and significantly alters the existing ground contours of the site.

2. The request is in keeping with the comprehensive planning policies of the City, as the proposed use, a single-family residential dwelling, is not contemplated to change and is in keeping with the low-density residential use, as designated in the City of Mankato's Zoning Map and Land Use Plan.
3. The proposal does not interfere with or diminish the use of property in the immediate vicinity.
4. The primary structure will be served by public facilities and services.
5. The proposal does not cause undue traffic congestion as no changes are proposed to the density of the property or the public street system.
6. There are no known historical or architectural resources on the site.
7. The site contains bluff and wetland areas as natural or environmental features on the site. With the recommended conditions, it is intended that impacts to these areas will be avoided and minimized.
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.
11. The applicant has provided a signed approval form from the adjacent property owner, Richard Wethe, to allow Cherry Creek Inc. and other employed subcontractors, access through the adjacent residential lots during construction of the home.
12. The applicant has made a request to Braun Intertec to provide additional geotechnical report information. The results of their geotechnical analysis will be provided to the City Engineer once completed.

Mr. Hanson reports that staff recommends approval of the requested conditional use permit with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall obtain a building permit prior to any work occurring on site.
2. The applicant shall install permanent code-compliant wetland signage along the wetland setback boundary prior to any work occurring on site. Applicant shall coordinate with City Staff to ensure signage installation compliance.
3. All proposed work shall remain a minimum of 16.5' from the previously delineated wetlands. No work shall occur within the required wetland buffer.
4. For the duration of any construction activities on site, the bluff shall be physically represented on the property to ensure no impacts occur to the bluff or bluff setback area.
5. Maintenance of the property located between the retaining wall and adjacent lot will fully be the responsibility of the owners of the subject property.
6. An erosion control and turf establishment plan shall be provided with building permit application.
7. The applicant shall continue to work with City of Mankato Engineering/Construction Services Staff to ensure code compliance throughout the entirety of the development process.

Mr. Wilke stated that he lives in the neighborhood and is familiar with the area. He questioned whether future homeowners proposing a similar patio home would be required to undergo the same review process, noting the significant amount of time and resources that have been invested in this request for a patio home.

Mr. Konz stated that the original design of the subdivision included an approved grading plan. He explained that if a project conforms to the approved grading plan, no modification is required. Additionally, if a proposal conforms to the grading plan and involves less than 25 cubic yards of fill, a conditional use permit is not required. In this case, however, the proposal does not conform to the approved grading plan and exceeds 25 cubic yards of fill, which is why additional review is required.

Mr. Konz added that this requirement exists for several reasons. He explained that one reason is to ensure that the first person to build within a subdivision does not end up with a bowl-shaped lot where subsequent homes are constructed at higher elevations, causing stormwater to drain onto the first property.

He also noted that there are grading-related impacts on adjacent properties, as changes to landscaping or yard grading beyond what was originally approved could create drainage impacts on neighboring parcels. He added that the findings for this proposal are intended to ensure it does not negatively affect adjacent property owners, and because this request represents a deviation from the originally approved grading plan, it is required to go through the review process.

Ms. Surdy questioned whether the fill was only located where the retaining walls are proposed.

Mr. Hanson explained that the fill would be used around the foundation of the home, as well as in conjunction with the retaining wall, to ensure the project meets building code requirements.

Gary Rudolf, Cherry Creek, Inc. Mr. Rudolf was present at the meeting as the applicant for this proposal. He explained that this proposal was the culmination of a long process for his clients. He stated that his clients had the opportunity to purchase several different lots throughout the community and noted that there were other homes near the proposed site that were developed as patio homes. As a result, once his clients became aware of this, everyone involved assumed that constructing a patio-style home on this lot would not require this type of process.

Mr. Rudolf added that neither he nor his clients were aware of the extensive precautions required to ensure that stormwater runoff from the property remains on the property. He explained that Bolton & Menk prepared a grading plan to address these requirements and noted that soil boring was scheduled to take place the morning following the meeting to determine bearing capacity and ensure that appropriate fill material is used to minimize settling. He stated that every precaution is being taken to avoid impacts on neighboring properties and added that City of Mankato engineering staff have been instrumental in helping ensure this outcome.

Mr. Rudolf further stated that his clients were very fond of the lot, its location, and the trees in the backyard, and were committed to building on the property. He added that they have no interest in including a basement in the proposed home.

Mr. Dieken questioned how many cubic yards of fill would be required for the project.

Mr. Rudolf explained that this determination would be made following the soil boring scheduled for the following day. He stated that, because the site had previously been developed, they conducted exploratory excavation several weeks earlier in an attempt to identify the existing soil conditions; however, the excavation did not provide sufficient information. He noted that it was unclear whether the soil currently on the site had been imported or was native to the property, and that the soil boring would be necessary to make that determination.

Mr. Rudolf added that another consideration is the amount of weight exerted by the soil behind the proposed home. He explained that, to reduce this load, structural foam may be used beneath the fill material, with soil placed above it. He noted that whether this approach is necessary will be determined based on the results of the soil analysis and the composition of the existing soils.

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

Ms. Surdy commented that, in her opinion, this was primarily a property owner issue, noting that this type of home could have been constructed on a different lot. She stated that she understood it was unfortunate for property owners to purchase a lot and later discover they are unable to build exactly what they had intended. However, she expressed concern that allowing property owners to make significant alterations to a site simply because they wish to build a particular type of home is not something the Planning Commission should routinely support.

Mr. Wilke made a motion to approve CY23-26. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bigham. The motion passed on a vote of 5–1, with Ms. Surdy voting in opposition.

The anticipated date of City Council action will be June 8, 2026.

3.

CY24-26

Request of Bolton and Menk, on behalf of the owner, Old Town Riverfront Properties, LLC., for preliminary and final plat review of Eastwood Energy Center No. 7. The subject properties are described as Tract B, Registered Land Survey No. 175, (Blue Earth County PID R010903400026).

Ms. Mitchell reports that staff submits the following findings:

General Requirements:

1. The site is designed in conformance with the location and width of streets, the general drainage location, lot sizes and arrangement.
2. A drainage study is being prepared and will be submitted to verify compliance with the City drainage requirements
3. The site will need to conform to the Common Plan of Development rules and regulations for stormwater. Applicant shall continue working with the City Engineer on design and requirements.
4. The uses identified conform to the zoning types of the parcels.

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.

Easements:

1. The proposed preliminary plat provides the standard easements required in Chapter 10 of the Mankato City Code.

Block Standards:

1. The blocks within the subdivision were designed for the intended end use as industrial lots.

Lot Standards:

1. The lots within the subdivision are intended for industrial development. The lots are designed in conformance with the standards set forth in Chapter 10.
2. The concept plan for the industrial areas conforms to the minimum lot size requirements.

Public Sites and Open Spaces:

1. The applicant is not required to make a park dedication as the property was previously platted.

Ms. Mitchell reports that staff recommends approving the preliminary and final plat with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall continue working with city staff regarding site design, drainage, and storm water management.
2. The applicant shall submit a traffic impact study for each buildout at the time of building permit.
3. The applicant shall provide an easement for the stormwater pond area and the shared drives for the subject property.
4. The applicant shall be required to pay water and sewer connection fees.
5. The applicant shall submit a plan reflecting that the wetlands have been investigated on the site.

Alternately, the applicant shall provide the NOD demonstrating that no wetlands were found on the subject site.

Chair Zehnder questioned whether the drainage pond had available capacity and, if the applicant intended to utilize any portion of that capacity, whether they would be required to provide sufficient stormwater retention elsewhere to offset the difference.

Mr. Konz stated that the City of Mankato would allow credit for the stormwater pond capacity that was accounted for in the original design. However, if the proposed development exceeds the original assumptions due to the amount of impervious surface being created, the applicant will first need to demonstrate that adequate capacity remains available under the original buildout conditions. He added that any additional stormwater runoff generated beyond those assumptions would need to be addressed through additional on-site retention measures.

Nate Myhra, Bolton & Menk. Mr. Myhra was present at the meeting to respond to any questions from the Commission.

Ms. Surdy questioned whether any developments had been identified at this time.

Mr. Myhra stated that the second lot is the only one not currently spoken for. He added that they are actively working on site designs for both Lot 1 and Lot 3.

Ms. Surdy asked, regarding Lot 3, what the road shown along the rear of the lot near the pond was intended for.

Mr. Myhra explained that the roadway was designed to accommodate semi-truck traffic on-site.

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 CY24-26. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilke and passed unanimously.

The anticipated date of City Council action will be June 8, 2026.

4.

CY25-26

Request of Brad Bass on behalf of Bridgewater Group, Inc., with permission of the property owner, Tom Yenish, for a conditional use permit to repurpose the Motel 6 structure to allow an assisted living/affordable housing with services facility serving elderly and disabled adults in the B-3, Highway Business District, and for a certificate of design compliance for exterior modifications in the Highway Gateway Overlay District. The subject property is described Lot 4, Block 1, Venstar Subdivision, Mankato (1731 Premier Drive).

Mr. Hanson reports that staff respectfully submits the following findings of fact for the conditional use permit and the certificate of design compliance:

1. The proposed use, an Assisted Living Facility (also known as congregate housing), is of similar character to other uses listed in the B-3 district. Apartments, which are also multifamily dwellings in nature, are conditional uses within the B-3 zoning district, and thus this proposal is considered a conditional use.
2. The request is in keeping with the comprehensive planning policies of the City as the underlying land use plan identifies this parcel as "Commercial", and in said land use district, residential uses similar in character to this use are identified in Code as a conditional use.

3. The proposal does not interfere with or diminish the use of property in the immediate vicinity. The applicant proposes only minor modifications to the exterior of the structure and the proposed alteration of use type should not fundamentally differ from the existing use.
4. The primary structure will continue to be served by public facilities and services, and no utility service provider changes are proposed with this proposal.
5. The proposal does not cause undue traffic congestion. No changes are proposed to the public street system or private parking/driving areas. The applicant has attested that no significant change with respect to trip generation, site operations and overall traffic impact to the area shall occur with the proposed reuse of the subject property.
6. There are no known historical or architectural resources on the site.
7. There are no known natural or environmental features on the site.
8. It will not cause a negative cumulative effect and effect on the City as a whole.
9. The proposal will not jeopardize the public's health, safety, or general welfare.
10. 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.
11. The property is located in the Highway Gateway Overlay District and proposes exterior modifications to the existing structure.
12. The building elevations conform to the guidelines of the Highway Gateway Overlay District. The proposed project presents no modification to the exterior materials of the existing structure, only removal of signage and repainting of some surfaces. Existing exterior finishes include primarily EIFS, glass, and metal. All sides of the building visible to the public will be treated consistently with quality materials and finishes.
13. In the event that any future storage and maintenance building is proposed, it shall be excluded from this CUP / CDC review process and thus shall be independently reviewed for conformance.

Mr. Hanson reports that staff recommends approval of the requested conditional use permit and certificate of design compliance with the following conditions:

1. Any proposed future storage & maintenance building shall meet Mankato City Code standards. As the applicant has not provided sufficient review materials prior to Planning Commission review of the request, the originally proposed future storage & maintenance building must be reviewed separately from the current request.
2. Any proposed future storage or maintenance building on site shall conform to the standards of the Highway Gateway Overlay District, including exterior finishes which are complementary to the exterior finishes utilized on the primary structure.
3. The proposed exterior "*outdoor activity area*" privacy fencing shall conform with Mankato City Code. A fence permit shall be obtained prior to installation of any fencing.
4. The gazebo shall be installed with a separate building permit and shall conform to Mankato City Code accessory structure standards.
5. The applicant shall obtain a sign permit for any desired site signage prior to fabrication and installation.
6. The applicant shall fully screen any existing or proposed mechanical equipment from public right-of-ways.
7. Bicycle parking achieving Mankato City Code standards will be required. A minimum of four off-street bicycle parking stalls shall be provided on site.
8. Due to the proposed change in use, a full code review for compliance with all applicable Minnesota Codes will be required. Plans submitted at the time of the building permit application shall be signed by a licensed architect.
9. The applicant shall agree to be a willing petitioner for any future sidewalk network improvements along the east side of Premier Drive. At such time as a sidewalk is constructed, a private sidewalk connection to the building shall be developed within the site.
10. Applicant shall coordinate with City of Mankato Construction Services Staff to determine code conformance of current accessible parking stalls. Any modification deemed necessary to achieve ADA compliant stalls shall be performed prior to unit occupancy. Additionally, any parking area shown to be non-compliant with current Mankato City Code standards, shall be updated to conform to code.

11. If the applicant intends to modify the existing exterior lighting, a Photometric Plan and Lighting cut sheets shall be provided that confirm compliance with full-cut, fully shielded fixture requirements and other applicable Mankato City Code standards.
12. If any existing landscaping will be modified or removed as part of this project, the applicant shall provide a landscaping plan that demonstrates conformance with Mankato City Code.
13. No outside storage shall be allowed on the subject property.
14. All amenity spaces shall be completed prior to unit occupancy.
15. The applicant shall be subject to SAC & WAC fees based on the City of Mankato assessment policy and fee schedule.

Ms. Surdy inquired whether a layout for the proposed storage building had been provided.

Mr. Hason responded that no layout was included in the application and that the information shown was only a general description. He added that the only detail provided was dimensional information, and that no additional plans for the building have been submitted at this time.

Ms. Surdy questioned the layout of the dining room and referenced the ratio of proposed rooms in relation to the dining room layout. She stated that the configuration appears to be limited with respect to the number of rooms that could be accommodated.

Brad Bass, 4336 Linder Bay Ln. Mr. Bass was present at the meeting to address any questions from the commission members. He indicated that the suites are larger than those typically provided, which made the building suitable for the proposed use.

Mr. Bass added that these are the types of suites commonly found in new construction. He referenced the property owner and noted that, during the original construction of the building, the owner incorporated several exceptional features, including accessibility and adaptive design for handicap accessibility. These features have allowed the building to be repurposed for the current proposed use without significant additional costs.

He further explained that the exterior storage building was intended to provide functional storage space, as there are limited storage opportunities within the building and outdoor storage is not permitted. He noted that storage units would be available for residents behind the building, though certain items may not be suitable for outdoor storage. He concluded that while these elements were intended to be included in the submission, the drawings and supporting materials were not completed in time to be included.

Mr. Iddings added that the building should be relatively easy to remodel based on its original construction. He stated that this would be a great addition to Mankato and expressed hope that the transition will proceed smoothly.

Mr. Wilke thanked Mr. Bass for bringing the project forward and stated that it appears to be a great reuse of the property. He also expressed appreciation to the owner for the work that had been done with Motel 6.

Ms. Bigham questioned if the expectation was for 60 people to be able to eat together.

Mr. Bass indicated that the units would be single occupancy. He noted that potentially six of the units would be converted into community spaces for a variety of activities. He added that mealtimes would generally be staggered, such as 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., and that many residents would likely prefer to eat in their own suites.

Mr. Dieken added that he was pleased to see the item move forward and stated that he believed it would be a positive addition to Mankato.

Chair Zehnder opened the public hearing for comment.

Tom Yenish. Mr. Yenish was present at the meeting as the current owner of the proposed building. He indicated that through further discussions with Mr. Bass and his team, he came to realize that the building was constructed in a manner that makes it a strong fit for the proposed use.

He added that this would be a great addition to the area, noting its location, connectivity, and proximity to The Paw. He also stated that Motel 6 currently has a contract with The Paw requiring that all windows be closed by 8:00 p.m. He noted that, over the past three years of new ownership at The Paw, there have been no complaints.

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

Mr. Iddings made a motion to approve CY25-26. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilke and passed unanimously.

The anticipated date of City Council action will be June 8, 2026.

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. Wilke with all in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:51 pm.

MINUTES APPROVED.

Chair, Mankato Planning Commission