



MINUTES

**Mankato Planning Commission
June 24, 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, Mr. Filipovitch.

Staff Present: Mark Konz-Director of Planning and Development Services, Travis Johnson- Permit Technician, Brittany Mitchell-Planning Coordinator, Molly Westman-Planning Coordinator.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Dieken made a motion to approve the minutes from May 27th, 2026. Mr. Wilke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

1. **Draft May 27, 2026, Planning Commission minutes**

4. **OLD BUSINESS**

No old business

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **CY26-26**

Request of ISG, on behalf of the owner, for a preliminary and final plat review of Hiniker Parkway Subdivision. The subject property is described as Lot 2, Block 1, Hiniker Pond Park; Outlots A, B, and C, Axis Subdivision, and that part of Government Lot Two (2), Section 1, Township 108 North, Range 27 West, described as follows: Commencing at the northeast corner of Government Lot Two (2) thence South 00 degrees, 2 minutes, 28 seconds East along the east line of Government Lot Two (2), a distance of 1159.22 feet to the point of beginning; thence due West 415 feet; thence due South 2 feet more or less to

the Northerly boundary of Butterworth Street; thence easterly along the Northerly boundary of Butterworth Street, a distance of approximately 415 feet more or less to a point directly south of the point of beginning; thence northerly approximately 8.2 feet more or less to the point of beginning; All that part of Government Lot 2 in Section 1, Township 108 North, Range 27 West, described as: Commencing at a found iron pipe monument designating the Northeast Corner of Government Lot 2; thence South 88 degrees 46 minutes 20 seconds West (assumed bearing along the north line of Government Lot 2), a distance of 813.93 feet; thence South 01 degrees 13 minutes 40 seconds East, 182.13 feet; thence continuing South 01 degrees 13 minutes 40 seconds East, 17.87 feet; thence North 88 degrees 46 minutes 20 seconds East and parallel with the north line of Government Lot 2, a distance of 64.00 feet to the point of beginning of the tract to be described; thence South 74 degrees 40 minutes 42 seconds East, 90.04 feet; thence North 01 degrees 13 minutes 40 seconds West, 26.71 feet; thence South 88 degrees 46 minutes 20 seconds West and parallel with the north line of Government Lot 2, a distance of 89.86 feet to the point of beginning.

Ms. Westman reports that staff respectfully 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. A drainage study/stormwater management needs have been assessed by the City of Mankato to ensure a development conforming to the applicable standards.

2. Streets

1. The street right-of-way widths for the existing local street conform to the standards listed in Chapter 10 of Mankato City Code. Additional right of way areas are included in the plat to accommodate storm water retention ponds and additional right of way on Range Street.

3. Easements

1. The plat will provide standard easements required in Chapter 10 of the Mankato City Code prior to affixing signatures.

4. Block Standards

1. The block within the subdivision is designed around the existing condition and park configuration.

5. Lot Standards

1. The lot is designed to accommodate the existing configuration and is in conformance with the standards set forth in Chapter 10.

6. Public Sites and Open Spaces

1. The subject site includes Hiniker Pond Park and payment in lieu of parkland dedication will not be required.

Ms. Westman reports that staff recommends approval of the preliminary and final plat of Hiniker Parkway Subdivision.

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 CY26-26. Ms. Surdy seconded the motion and passed unanimously.

The anticipated date of City Council action is July 13, 2026.

Request of Amanda Furnas of Mankato Chemical Health, with permission of the property owner, for a conditional use permit to allow a medical clinic in the R-1, one-family dwelling zoning district, to serve adults seeking treatment and support for substance use and co-occurring mental health concerns. The subject property is described as an approximately 1.77 acre parcel located in the west half of the southeast quarter of Section 17, Township 108 Range 26, Blue Earth County (114 Pohl Road).

Ms. Westman reports that staff respectfully submit the following findings of fact.

1. The use, a medical clinic, is one of the conditional uses listed in R-1, one family dwelling district.
2. The request is in keeping with the comprehensive planning policies of the city as identified uses and policies associated with each use are outlined.
3. The proposed use, when considered with the recommended conditions, does not interfere with or diminish the use of property in the immediate vicinity.
4. The property is currently served by public facilities and services.
5. The proposed use does not cause undue traffic congestion.
6. There are no known historical or architectural resources associated with the site.
7. There are no impacts to natural or environmental features and a recommended condition of approval ensures that new fencing achieves the code standards for bluffs/ravines.
8. The proposal will not cause a negative cumulative effect, when considered in conjunction with the cumulative effect of various special uses of all types on the immediate neighborhood, and the effect of the proposed type of conditional use upon the city as a whole. The current structure is a minimum of 100' from any adjacent residential dwelling. The existing street network, pedestrian corridors, access to transit facilities, in conjunction with the proposed conditions of approval outlined herein, are elements to minimize effects on the immediate neighborhood.
9. The proposal complies with all other applicable regulations of the district in which it is located and other applicable ordinances.
10. The proposal will not jeopardize the public's health, safety, or general welfare, and conditions of approval are outlined here to address operational issues that may present themselves with the proposed use.

Ms. Westman reports that staff recommends approval of the conditional use permit to allow the operation of an outpatient substance use disorder treatment center clinic with the following conditions:

1. Prior to the installation of fencing, a construction permit shall be in place. Fencing shall achieve all Code requirements including, but not limited to, bluff setbacks.
2. The use shall be operated in its entirety within a completely enclosed structure, including all group activities. Exterior operations are prohibited.
3. All new exterior lighting shall meet the Mankato City Code. Fixtures shall be full-cut, fully shielded style. Fixture cut sheets and photometric plan shall be provided for review and approval of City Code requirements prior to fixture installation.
4. Prior to the fabrication, installation or modification of any signage, a sign permit shall be obtained.
5. All refuse and recyclable material containers shall meet Mankato City Code standards. If a dumpster enclosure is desired, a construction permit shall be obtained prior to installation.
6. Staffing at the clinic shall be limited to available parking.
7. Prior to occupancy, the parking lot shall be striped in accordance with the City of Mankato standard parking plates.
8. Prior to occupancy, a parking lot screening plan that meets the Mankato City Code shall be submitted for review and approval by City staff. Screening will be required to achieve the Code criteria.
9. All appointments shall be pre-scheduled and drop-in clients are prohibited.
10. Staff shall be onsite during clinic operations.

11. Only the clinical services outlined herein are allowed with this conditional use permit. Those include: comprehensive substance-use assessments, individual counseling, group counseling limited to a group size of no more than 10 clients at any given time (Mon, Tues, Thurs, 8:30 - 12:30 and 4:30 - 8:30 p.m.), Intensive Outpatient Programming (IOP), Relapse prevention education, family education and support, coordination with medical and psychiatric providers, medication management partnerships with qualified providers, and holistic services such as mindfulness, nutrition education, acupuncture and wellness-based recovery support. Any changes in the proposed usage, including, but not limited to, operational offerings, to the proposed business plan and property usage as outlined herein will require additional review and approval by way of an amended conditional use permit.
12. Activities associated with the Substance Use Disorder Treatment clinic operation will be limited to Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.
13. Clients associated with the Substance Use Disorder Treatment clinic operation will be limited to a maximum of 10 clients at any given time.
14. A plan shall be submitted for review and approval of staff prior to occupancy of the facility that contemplates onsite loading related to pick up/drop off of clients and queuing and site deliveries. The plans should address general site deliveries, and should provide a plan for pick-up/drop-off of clients.
15. In-patient or residential components related to the proposed use are not allowed with this approval.
16. A complaint hotline/local emergency contact phone number shall be provided prior to occupancy. The emergency contact should be local, and should be able to respond in the event that questions or concerns arise, including off-hours.
17. The facility shall be and remain licensed by the State of Minnesota through Minnesota Statute 245G. If licensing ceases or operations change, additional review and consideration of the conditional use permit will be required. A copy of the State-issued license shall be provided to the City prior to occupancy.

Ms. Westman invited the applicant to present the proposal and provide details regarding the proposed use to the Planning Commission.

Ms. Furnas explained that she owns and operates Mankato Chemical Health, which she has owned since 2019 and currently operates in North Mankato. She stated that she recently had the opportunity to purchase the subject property and decided to relocate the business.

Ms. Furnas explained that Mankato Chemical Health is a substance-use outpatient treatment center that provides high-quality treatment services through a combination of traditional methods and a complementary holistic approach. She noted that the center offers services such as acupuncture and yoga as part of its treatment programs.

She further explained that intensive outpatient treatment groups are offered three days per week during both morning and evening sessions, while outpatient treatment is offered one day per week. She added that the business expects to employ approximately six to eight staff members and will operate Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Chair Zehnder asked whether there was an estimate of how much additional screening would be required beyond what currently exists on the site.

Ms. Westman explained that staff would evaluate the existing screening on-site and work with the applicant to ensure it meets the applicable standards.

Ms. Furnas referenced item 2 of the staff recommendation. She explained that the property is nearly two acres in size and that one of the reasons she purchased it was to utilize the outdoor space. She stated that, particularly during the spring and summer months, the business intends to use the outdoor area for therapeutic recreational activities. She noted that these activities would be quiet and non-disruptive, such as playing games or sitting on the patio, and emphasized that they would take place in a controlled

environment.

Ms. Furnas also stated that the existing fence provides privacy, allowing clients to use the backyard area while maintaining confidentiality and minimizing noise impacts to neighboring properties.

Mr. Filipovitch asked Ms. Furnas to explain how item 2 of the staff recommendation would affect the operation of her business.

Ms. Furnas stated that, based on her understanding of item 2, clients would not be permitted to participate in outdoor activities. She explained that the property includes a large yard, which she would like to use on occasion during group sessions for therapeutic recreational activities. She stated that, as written, item 2 would prohibit activities such as walking outdoors or connecting with nature as part of the treatment program.

Mr. Filipovitch asked for clarification on whether, if approved as written, the business would be unable to continue its activities if outdoor activities were not permitted.

Ms. Furnas stated that they would still be able to operate; however, she requested that item 2 be modified to allow outdoor activities. She explained that outdoor use would not occur during every group session but they would like to retain the ability to use the property for such purposes.

Mr. Filipovitch asked city staff how they interpreted item 2 in the recommendations.

Ms. Westman indicated that staff's interpretation is consistent with the applicant's understanding that all operations would need to occur within the structure. She explained that this approach is consistent with commercial and office districts, where operations are generally required to be conducted indoors. She added that, because the site is located directly adjacent to a residential district, the intent of the recommendation is to minimize potential conflicts between the residential area and the proposed use.

Mr. Filipovitch clarified that the staff recommendation would not permit activities in the yard or exterior areas unless, for example, a gazebo or similar structure were fully enclosed.

Ms. Westman indicated that this was correct.

Mr. Wilke asked whether there is clinical value in allowing individuals receiving substance-use disorder treatment to exercise, spend time outdoors, or otherwise participate in outdoor activities.

Ms. Furnas responded that there is clinical value in allowing those types of activities as part of the treatment program.

Mr. Wilke asked whether the outdoor treatment activities would consist of group or talk therapy and whether they would be conducted in a manner that would not be disruptive.

Ms. Furnas confirmed that this was correct. She added that clients may occasionally play a game outdoors where laughter could be heard and compared the proposed activities to the type of outdoor use typically associated with a church or daycare.

Chair Zehnder opened the public hearing for comment.

Bonnie Weingartz, 125 Eastwood Drive, Mankato, MN. Ms. Weingartz stated that she does not believe this type of facility is appropriate for a residential neighborhood. She commented that she believes the proposed use would be better suited to an area containing a mix of residential and commercial uses, referencing 3rd Avenue as a potential example. She noted that the subject property is surrounded by homes and churches and that there are no other businesses in the immediate vicinity.

Ms. Weingartz acknowledged the applicant's desire to create a more residential, home-like setting rather than a traditional business environment. However, she stated that she believes the facility would be more appropriately located in an area where commercial and residential uses already coexist, rather than within a primarily residential neighborhood.

Ms. Weingartz further stated that the applicant had access to information about this property prior to purchasing it and suggested that a property located in a mixed-use area could have offered similar opportunities while being more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Donald Kusick, 134 Pohl Road, Mankato, MN. Mr. Kusick indicated that several of his concerns had already been discussed but reiterated his concerns about the potential impacts on the neighborhood, including crime. He stated that there can be no guarantees that incidents will not occur. He noted that, nearly every evening between 8:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m., a vehicle travels down Pohl road at approximately 60 mph, adding that this issue has not been controlled. He questioned what measures would be in place if a patient receiving substance abuse treatment experienced a relapse and how those situations would be managed.

Mr. Kusick also expressed concerns about property taxes. He stated that a new use that does not fit the character of the neighborhood is being introduced and questioned what impact it may have on property taxes and property values.

Mr. Kusick added that there are many other commercial properties available in Mankato and questioned why this location was selected. While acknowledging that people need these services, he questioned why the facility should be in this neighborhood.

Mr. Kusick also questioned item 2 of the city staff recommendations. He asked how activities could be kept internal, particularly if an individual experienced a relapse or behavioral crisis. He acknowledged that security measures are likely in place but questioned what would prevent an incident from occurring. He further questioned whether increased police presence would provide sufficient assurance, noting that ongoing speeding issues on Pohl Road have not been adequately addressed.

Mr. Kusick also acknowledged that spending time outdoors may benefit patients but questioned what impact outdoor activities could have on the surrounding neighborhood. He expressed concern that this issue should be addressed.

Amy Lencowski, 141 Eastwood Drive, Mankato, MN. Ms. Lencowski stated that she has lived at her property since 2015. She explained that her family chose the neighborhood specifically for its character, history, and proximity to Glenwood Cemetery, which is directly behind their property. She stated that they believed the protections afforded by the R-1 zoning district designation were meaningful.

Ms. Lencowski emphasized that her concerns were not about whether individuals struggling with addiction deserve treatment, but rather whether this was an appropriate location for that type of use. She questioned why the proposed treatment facility should be in an R-1 residential neighborhood instead of a commercially zoned area.

Ms. Lencowski stated that she carefully reviewed the staff report and the research cited within it. She said her primary concern was the section addressing property values. She noted that one study showed property values decreased by approximately 5%, but after researchers applied a statistical adjustment that assumed treatment centers are more likely to be in lower-value neighborhoods, the study concluded there was no significant impact on property values. She stated that while this may be a valid conclusion for a city such as Seattle, she did not believe it was applicable to Mankato due to the lack of local data.

Ms. Lencowski added that other studies have reached different conclusions, including a study published in the *Journal of Sustainable Real Estate* in 2014 that examined smaller, mid-sized communities in central Virginia. She stated that the study found treatment centers located in residential neighborhoods were

associated with declines in home values ranging from 8% to 17%.

Ms. Lencowski stated that, in her opinion, the issue was not determining which study was correct, but rather that there are no comparable studies specific to Minnesota, Mankato, or Blue Earth County. She noted that experts often reach differing conclusions and stated that she did not want her neighborhood to become the test case.

In closing, Ms. Lencowski stated that, on behalf of herself and her neighbors, she believed the responsible course of action was to preserve the existing character of the neighborhood rather than conduct what she viewed as an experiment in one of Mankato's established R-1 residential neighborhoods. For those reasons, she requested that the application be denied.

Jessica Windisch, 105 Eastwood Drive, Mankato, MN. Ms. Windisch stated that the neighborhood has several concerns regarding the proposed use, with her primary concern being why the facility must be in their neighborhood. She emphasized that she is not opposed to individuals receiving treatment but questioned why the proposed facility should be in this residential area.

Ms. Windisch also questioned why the company has relocated three times in the past eight years. She stated that, based on information she found through Google, the facility was required to locate in commercial zone areas in Waseca and North Mankato. She questioned why the proposed location in Mankato would be adjacent to a residential neighborhood. She concluded by stating that there are no guarantees regarding the safety of the neighborhood.

Sharon Taylor, 145 Eastwood Drive, Mankato, MN. Ms. Taylor stated that she agreed with the concerns expressed by previous speakers. She explained that her property is adjacent to Glenwood Cemetery and that it contains the only gate providing access to the cemetery along that row of homes. As a result, she stated that many people already cross through her property.

Ms. Taylor indicated that she lives alone and expressed concern that the proposed use could result in additional people walking through her property, which would make her feel unsafe. She thanked the Planning Commission for the opportunity to share her comments and stated that she hoped the commission was listening to the concerns expressed by her and the other individuals who spoke during the public hearing.

Paul Fox, 138 Eastwood Drive, Mankato, MN. Mr. Fox stated that his primary concern was the potential impact the proposed use could have on his property taxes. He indicated that he understands there is a need for the services the applicant proposes to provide but questioned whether this neighborhood is an appropriate location for the facility.

Mr. Fox stated that he attended a neighborhood meeting the previous evening regarding the proposal. He referenced the City of Mankato's mission statement and questioned whether it included locating treatment facilities in vacant homes. He reiterated that he did not believe the proposed use was a good fit for the neighborhood and questioned what benefits the neighborhood would receive from the project.

Mr. Fox also stated that, during the neighborhood meeting, he was told that residents were fortunate that the existing home was not demolished and replaced with an apartment building. He further stated that he was told the Eastport Apartments were associated with crime and that it was a good thing individuals from that development would not be served by the proposed facility.

Mr. Fox shared that he raised three children in his home and that his wife had passed away at the Parker Hughes Cancer Center. He stated that he had previously spent \$40,000 to have the Parker Hughes Cancer Center in the Twin Cities closed and indicated that he would do the same with this proposed facility.

Jessica Windisch, 105 Eastwood Drive, Mankato, MN. Ms. Windisch returned to the podium following Mr. Fox's comments to add that there is a great deal of frustration within the neighborhood regarding the

proposal. She stated that the process had felt secretive and that many residents do not feel secure. She also expressed concern that there is not an adequate police presence to respond if a situation were to arise.

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

Ms. Surdy stated that she works in the mental health field and has referred clients to this clinic. She indicated that she understands the challenges of working with a population that may pose a risk to area residents under certain circumstances. She also stated that she understands why the proposed site may be appealing, explaining that a residential setting can provide a home-like environment that may benefit clients receiving treatment. She added that outdoor activities can also be beneficial as part of the treatment process.

Ms. Surdy expressed concerns regarding traffic flow at the site, noting its corner location. She also questioned whether the existing parking lot would adequately accommodate the anticipated number of staff and clients.

Ms. Surdy stated that many people would prefer this type of use to be in a business or commercial district because residents generally do not want the associated traffic and activity within residential neighborhoods. She acknowledged that the proposal could create concern in other neighborhoods that similar facilities may be established elsewhere throughout the city.

She also noted that the property is located near the university and that substance use is already prevalent among some college-aged individuals in the area. Based on the concerns raised by residents during the public hearing, Ms. Surdy concluded that this may not be the appropriate location for the proposed clinic.

Chair Zehnder stated that, at first glance, it is surprising that a use of this nature is conditionally permitted within the R-1 zoning district. He questioned that, based on how the zoning ordinance is currently written, prohibiting a use such as this in a residential neighborhood would require amendments to the ordinance.

Mr. Konz indicated that this was correct.

Ms. Surdy stated that facilities such as Mankato Clinic or Mayo Clinic are located within or adjacent to residential areas, so locating this type of use near neighborhoods is not entirely uncommon. However, she noted that this is a unique neighborhood with approximately 20 homes, compared to areas such as Main Street where there are many more properties and a different surrounding context.

Mr. Filipovitch stated that several concerns had been raised during the discussion, including the concern that the proposed use does not belong in a residential neighborhood. He noted that, according to the zoning ordinance, the use is conditionally permitted within the R-1 district if the applicable conditions are met.

Mr. Filipovitch also addressed concerns regarding potential impacts on property values. He referenced more recent research that considers previous studies and concluded that treatment facilities do not have a negative impact on property values. He added that Blue Earth County has indicated that it does not anticipate an impact on property values.

Mr. Filipovitch stated that the traffic study identified the proposed use as a low traffic generator and indicated that the expected traffic would be less than other potential uses allowed at the property. He also addressed parking concerns, stating that the site includes 14 parking spaces, with 10 designated for clients and four for staff. He noted that the parking requirement would be met based on the anticipated staffing levels.

Mr. Filipovitch also discussed concerns related to crime and neighborhood safety. He stated that he understands the concerns expressed by neighbors but questioned if this use is not appropriate in this location, where would it be appropriate?

Mr. Filipovitch stated that he does not agree with the assumption that individuals struggling with addiction are inherently criminals. He acknowledged that drug and alcohol addiction affects a broad range of individuals and stated that assuming those individuals will engage in criminal behavior is not appropriate.

Mr. Filipovitch concluded by stating that he intended to vote in favor of the request because it complies with the zoning ordinance. He stated that if the ordinance is determined to be inappropriate, then the ordinance should be amended; however, he stated that the commission cannot disregard the ordinance simply because there is disagreement with how it is currently written.

Chair Zehnder stated that he understands the security concerns raised but questioned whether the proposed screening plan would prevent individuals from accessing the property through non-standard means, such as crossing through adjacent properties.

Ms. Westman indicated that, depending on the type of screening proposed, such as fencing or existing vegetation, it could help prevent some cross-access between properties. She reiterated that the effectiveness of the screening would depend on the final design and materials selected.

Mr. Wilke thanked Mr. Filipovitch for his comments and his experience and knowledge related to the matter. He stated that it is important to remember that the Planning Commission's responsibility is to review the application based on the zoning ordinance, determine compliance with the ordinance, and make a recommendation to the City Council, which has discretion to consider additional factors when reviewing the application.

Mr. Wilke stated that, at the Planning Commission level, he agreed with the proposed findings of fact and believed the 17 recommended conditions of approval were valid. He noted that he was struggling with the second condition. He explained that he believes there is a clinical benefit to allowing outdoor activities and stated that he was not supportive of the commission restricting a property owner's use of their property when that use is consistent with the permitted use.

Mr. Wilke stated that he would vote in favor of the request and encouraged the other commissioners to do the same. He indicated that he would support approval with the removal of the second recommended condition.

Ms. Surdy stated that she agrees with Mr. Wilke that the Planning Commission's role is to review applications based on the zoning ordinance. However, she added that the ordinance also considers impacts on the surrounding neighborhood and stated that the commission should not dismiss the concerns raised by residents regarding the potential impacts and changes to the neighborhood.

Ms. Surdy stated that she does not want the commission to overlook the concerns expressed by the neighborhood, as she believed those concerns were valid. She questioned whether it could be proven that property values would not be affected and stated that she did not believe that could be guaranteed; however, she acknowledged that similar uncertainty could apply to many decisions.

Ms. Surdy recognized that the request is for a conditional use permit but questioned whether this was the most appropriate location for the proposed use. She stated that a different location with a more spread-out residential setting may be better suited. She reiterated that the Planning Commission's review should consider not only compliance with the zoning ordinance but also the potential impacts on surrounding neighbors.

Mr. Dieken stated that he agrees with the comments made by his fellow commissioners. He noted that the Planning Commission is responsible for reviewing the facts of the application and must base its decision on the applicable requirements. He stated that, because the proposed development meets the required conditions, he does not see a factual basis for denial and expressed his support for the project.

Mr. Iddings stated that these types of items can be challenging because he understands both perspectives.

He suggested adding a condition requiring the use of the rear yard as the designated outdoor space and keeping that area fenced or otherwise private.

Mr. Iddings also stated that he would like to see the entire south side of the property fenced and supported additional screening to make the property more private. He noted that increased screening could help address some of the potential concerns raised regarding access and other “what if” scenarios by limiting access to the designated driveways and entrances.

Mr. Iddings stated that he would like to see the corner property preserved and noted that he did not believe a single-family home would likely be constructed on the site. He stated that a duplex or similar use may be more likely and questioned what type of effect that would have on the neighboring properties.

Mr. Iddings reiterated that, if the request is approved, he would like to see additional screening requirements included to ensure the property is as private as possible.

Ms. Surdy questioned whether Mr. Iddings was proposing to modify recommendation No. 2.

Mr. Iddings stated that he would like to amend recommendation No. 2 to allow outdoor activities only within the backyard area, provided the area is fenced and screened to help prevent clients from leaving the property and allow staff to monitor outdoor activities.

Mr. Wilke clarified whether Mr. Iddings was proposing to amend the second recommendation to allow outdoor activities in a fenced backyard area only.

Mr. Iddings confirmed that was his intent and made a motion to amend recommendation No. 2 of the City staff recommendation to allow backyard use only, provided the area is fenced. Mr. Wilke seconded the motion.

Mr. Konz questioned the statement made by Mr. Iddings regarding an eight-foot fence along the south property line.

Mr. Iddings stated that he would like to further amend recommendation No. 2 to require fencing along the south side of the property to provide additional separation from neighboring properties.

Mr. Wilke stated that, if Mr. Iddings was amending his original motion to include the south side fencing requirement, he would second the amendment.

Mr. Iddings stated that the additional fencing would help prevent individuals from accessing the broader neighborhood area, improve security, and, when combined with the existing vegetation, would blend well with the property. He added that he felt as though screening should be added to the entire property.

Chair Zehnder questioned whether Mr. Iddings intended fencing to be installed on all four sides of the property.

Mr. Iddings stated that screening should be added to the backyard area and along the two sides of the property not adjacent to Pohl Road.

Mr. Konz clarified whether Mr. Iddings was referring to the west and south sides of the property.

Mr. Iddings confirmed that this was correct and stated that the additional fencing would provide additional security.

Chair Zehnder questioned whether the proposed fencing would allow for outdoor activities to occur within the fenced area.

Mr. Iddings confirmed that this was correct.

Mr. Wilke stated that he supported the amendment and seconded the motion.

A motion to amend recommendation No. 2 of the city staff recommendations to require fencing along the west and south sides of the property and to limit all outdoor activities to the fenced backyard area was made by Mr. Iddings. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilke and passed unanimously.

Mr. Filipovitch made a motion to approve CY27-26, as amended. Mr. Wilke seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5-1, with Ms. Surdy voting in opposition.

The anticipated date of City Council action is July 13, 2026.

3.

CY28-26

Request of The Factor Group, with permission of the property owner, for a preliminary and final plat review of River Bluff Cottages, and for an amendment to a previously approved Planned Unit Development. The subject property is described as Outlot A, Sibley Parkway (Blue Earth County PID R010813101049).

Ms. Mitchell reports that staff respectfully submits the following findings of fact for the preliminary and final plat:

1. General Requirements

1. The site is designed in conformance with the location and width of streets, the general drainage situation, lot sizes and arrangement.
2. A grading and drainage plan has been submitted for review by the City Engineer.
3. The Minnesota River is located to the north of the subject property and there are no noted encroachments into the existing easement areas.

2. Streets

1. The applicant will not construct any new public streets. Rather, a driveway will provide access to the development from the already developed Sibley Parkway.
2. The applicant shall construct a private street to serve the subdivision and assign it the name "Rogers Trail".

3. Easements

1. The plat maintains the existing drainage, storm, dike and trail easements.
2. The plat provides the standard easements required in Chapter 10 of the Mankato City Code.

4. Block Standards

1. The proposed block layout conforms to the previously approved Sibley Parkway subdivision.

5. Lot Standards.

1. The proposed lot depicts a development that achieves a front yard setback of 30'.
2. The side lot lines are as established on the previous Sibley Parkway plat.
3. The subject development is not a double frontage lot and is not, thus, subject to said standards.
4. The subject parcel conforms to the parking standards in Chapter 10 of the code.
5. The lot abuts a watercourse and drainage way and is designed to accommodate the existing easements which protect those areas. A condition is included with this approval that, prior to work occurring, the Army Corp of Engineers must provide their consent to said development.

6. Public Sites and Open Spaces

1. Open space was dedicated as part of the Sibley Parkway development.

Ms. Mitchell reports that staff respectfully submits the following findings of fact for the planned unit development:

1. The planned unit development satisfies the intent of the City of Mankato ordinance and does not

- jeopardize public health, safety, or welfare.
2. The development of the planned unit development will conform to the approved development plan; including all proposed covenants, easements, conditions of approval, and other provisions relating to the bulk, location, and density of permitted structures, accessory structures, parking, and other public facilities.
 3. A condition is included with the approval that requires that all land shown on the approved development plan as common open space must be conveyed to trustees provided in the indenture establishing the association or similar organization for the maintenance of the planned unit development.
 4. A condition of approval is included for the development of the open space for the use of the residents.

Ms. Mitchell reports that staff recommends the approval of the preliminary plat and final plat.

Ms. Mitchell reports that staff recommends approval of a planned unit development with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall continue to work with staff regarding any engineering-related items.
2. The proposed buildings shall be constructed as approved.
3. The rental licenses will be limited occupancy; occupancy will be limited to a family or no more than 2 unrelated adults.
4. Applicants shall receive approval from the Army Corp of Engineers for the project prior to the submission of a building permit for the project.
5. The easement areas shall be clearly delineated onsite by a surveyor licensed to do work in the State of Minnesota, and protected using BMP's. BMP's shall be in place prior to construction occurring and a pre-construction meeting with the developer, contractor and City staff will be required prior to construction occurring.
6. The private driveway/street shall be given the name "*Rogers Trail*" for addressing purposes. The applicant shall install private signage to the specifications provided by the City of Mankato, and the signage shall be installed prior to the issuance of a building permit and shall remain in place and be verified on the final certificate of occupancy.
7. The proposed private drive and hammerhead areas shall be clearly identified as a fire access way only and shall be clearly designated as a no-parking area.
8. The applicant shall provide a snow removal plan. If snow storage is proposed onsite, the plan should depict snow storage areas not in the hammerhead or truck turning area nor in the easement areas.
9. A sidewalk trail connection and a gazebo or other similar gathering feature be included in the planned unit development as an amenity.
10. All land shown on the approved development plan as common open space must be conveyed to trustees provided in the indenture establishing an association or similar organization for the maintenance of the planned unit development. Applicant shall submit documentation of said association to the City at the time of request for the first building permit for the development.

Ms. Surdy questioned if a connection were to be made to the trail, where that would take place.

Ms. Mitchell indicated that the City of Mankato would ask for a connection be made to the trail that runs along the river.

Ms. Surdy clarified that she was not sure if they meant the trail that runs along Sibley Parkway or the River Trail.

Ms. Mitchell indicated that the connection would be to the River Trail.

Ms. Surdy questioned if there would be no parking signs installed along the private drive.

Ms. Mitchell indicated that the request was that no parking signs be installed throughout that area so that fire and emergency access would have clear routes through the development.

Mr. Konz provided clarification regarding the trail connection, noting that there are areas that cannot be disturbed due to the presence of the flood wall. He stated that the City of Mankato wanted to ensure that the trail connection is located outside the areas that are restricted from disturbance.

Joe Richter, Company Manager, Factor Property Management & Nate Myhra, Bolton & Menk, Inc. Mr. Richter thanked the Commission members for considering their application and noted that this was the second application they had submitted for this project. He also thanked city staff, noting that it has been a challenging project to bring forward. He stated that many variables have impacted the project, particularly with this site due to the Army Corps of Engineers easements and other issues associated with the Sibley Parkway area.

Mr. Richter stated that, looking back approximately 25 years to when redevelopment efforts along Sibley Parkway began, this project would serve as the “bookend” on one end of the redevelopment area. He expressed excitement about completing the redevelopment efforts in the coming months and credited Mr. Myhra for helping move the project forward.

Mr. Myhra stated that, throughout the development process, they have been aware of the various dike easements and unique site features. He noted that some trail access options may be limited but stated that they will continue working with the Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Mankato to accommodate a trail connection if possible. If a trail connection is not feasible, he stated that the development would still have connectivity to the Sibley Parkway sidewalk, which connects to the Sibley Parkway trail.

Mr. Myhra added that the gazebo will be included as part of the development, but the final location is still being determined as they continue working through grading challenges with the city. He also noted that the proposed private drives are designed with no parking allowed and that each unit would have two parking stalls in front of the unit along with a garage stall. He stated that the parking provided would accommodate the requirement for two unrelated adults and an additional guest parking space.

Ms. Surdy questioned whether the gazebo was still included in the proposal.

Mr. Myhra confirmed that the gazebo would be included but stated that the final location would be determined after completion of the final grading plan.

Mr. Filipovitch commented that, based on the renderings provided, it appeared that the structures stopped at the property line. He noted that, given the proximity of the proposed units to one another, the renderings may provide a different impression than what would be seen once the buildings are completed.

Mr. Wilke thanked the applicants for their continued work on the project and stated that the development would provide much-needed housing for the residents of Mankato.

Mr. Richter added that he lives in Lincoln Park and typically walks or bikes to work. He referenced the Dewey Townhomes currently under construction and the apartment development behind Cub Foods. He stated that he is excited about the additional density coming to the neighborhood and believes it will positively transform the area. He added that they are looking forward to future development opportunities on additional parcels near Riverfront Drive.

Mr. Iddings stated that he drives through the area daily while taking his wife to work and has seen how recent developments have improved and enhanced the surrounding area. He noted that improvements to Sibley Park and the new bridge connection to the campground have helped make the neighborhood a great place. He thanked the applicants for their proposal.

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 CY28-26. The motion was seconded by Mr. Iddings and passed unanimously.

The anticipated date of City Council action is July 13, 2026.

6. **MISCELLANEOUS**

Mr. Wilke asked whether this would be Chair Zehnder's final meeting.

Chair Zehnder responded that he believes he has one more year remaining on his term.

Mr. Wilke thanked his fellow commissioners for their service, acknowledging that, as volunteers, they sometimes have difficult conversations. He expressed his appreciation for everyone treating one another with respect.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Ms. Surdy moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Iddings with all in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:23 pm.

MINUTES APPROVED.

Chair, Mankato Planning Commission