

EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

June 9, 2025

The East Bethel City Council met on June 9, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. for the regular City Council meeting at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ardie Anderson, Suzanne Erkel Brian Mundle
 Tim Miller Jim Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Matt Look, City Administrator
 Eric Larson, City Attorney
 Grace Gerard, City Planner

1.0 Call to Order

The June 9, 2025, City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Anderson at 7:00 p.m.

2.0 Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3.0 Adopt Agenda

Mundle stated I'll make a motion to adopt tonight's agenda. Erkel stated I'll second. Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

4.0 Presentations and Public Hearings

None.

5.0 Public Forum

Brian Mundle stated that he will be abstaining and stepping down from his position on the East Bethel City Council. Mr. Mundle stated that he will be using his rights as a resident to speak at public forum.

Brian Bezanson stated that he was appalled at the attack on BDM that happened at the previous meeting. Mr. Bezanson stated that he has been involved in City government for over 30 years.

Mr. Bezanson stated that Menard Lake Estates is the issue and the history goes back to before he was a resident here. Mr. Bezanson stated that he was present on the Council when the City took possession of the land due to tax forfeiting.

Mr. Bezanson stated that they had to buy out 4-6 residents so they could have their modular homes removed because the City did not want to be a landlord. Mr. Bezanson stated that back then, the budget was \$1,000,000, and 20% of that went to pay the bonds on Menard Lake Estates.

Mr. Bezanson believes that the contract with BDM that is being disputed was written by the City Attorney at the time, Randall, Dean & Goodrich. Mr. Bezanson stated that he would like to see a spreadsheet with all the figures and numbers from Miller.

Matt Dwyer stated that he is also appalled by the situation with BDM and requests that this discussion be put on the agenda so that everyone can present the information they have and there can be full transparency. Mr. Dwyer stated that he has very pointed questions that he would like answered at a future meeting.

Narendra "Ram" Ramnarine stated that he has issues with the attacks and lies regarding the situation with BDM and wonders where the transparency is. Mr. Ramnarine asked that they open up the books and show all the details regarding the money and interest.

Larson read a public comment from a resident, Mark Gimpl, containing two documents. One regarding a complaint form dated 6/9/2025 regarding City Administrator Look. The comment stated that at the May 28, 2025, City Council meeting, Look did not provide all the information regarding their 6-horse IUP, and the information that was provided was misleading.

The second document from Mark Gimpl was another complaint form dated 6/9/2025 regarding Mayor Anderson. The comment stated that at the May 28, 2025 City Council there was a section of the City Code violated by the Mayor, *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Mr. Gimpl stated that he has great concern regarding the information Look provides to the Council and stated that it is misleading and he is not doing his job to the best of his ability. Mr. Gimpl stated that if Look presented the information he has access to, the IUP issue would go away and there should be no dispute about it.

Sarah McLoughlin thanked the Council for the public forum and the opportunity that she had to speak out about the situation with her neighbor. Ms. McLoughlin also thanked the Anoka County Sheriff's Department and Fire Department for taking care of the situation and removing the needed people. Ms. McLoughlin lastly thanked Jerry Streich because she said the issue would not have been taken care of if it were not for him and his help.

Ms. McLoughlin stated that she believes the Council could have taken swifter action and did not do their due diligence when the issue was brought to them back in 2024. Ms. McLoughlin stated that she hopes to see change in the Council in the future.

Mary Wells stated that she was shocked at the attack made that night and that she disagrees with the claims made. Ms. Wells stated that the investigation made was one-sided and gave clarification on certain points made at the May 28, 2025, City Council meeting.

Ms. Wells stated that regarding the violation from the avoidance of commercial property taxes was an oversight by the City's previous property assessor. Ms. Wells stated she would love this topic to be brought up again in the future and would hate for this to go to court and cost the City more unnecessary money.

Mark Fors stated that the City sent them a letter stating that their house was not in compliance with the setback, which was a shock to them because they submitted all the paperwork and received a certificate of compliance in November of 2024.

Mr. Fors stated that if their variance is denied, it would cost them about a million dollars to tear down their home, move the slab, move the septic system, etc., all because of a clerical error from the City's building department.

Brian Mundle Sr. stated that he is ready to fight all the lies that came from the City Council. Mr. Mundle Sr. addressed Look on why he intentionally left out certain information when referring to the contract with BDM at the last City Council meeting.

Mr. Mundle Sr. stated that it is unbelievable what is happening on this City Council.

Larry Bliese stated that he is a subcontractor of BDM and that BDM is a company that you want in a City. Mr. Bliese stated that this seems like a personal attack on Mundle Jr. because he is in opposition to some of the other council members' ideas.

Mr. Bliese stated that BDM goes above and beyond in all of their work.

Marcia Carson stated that the house behind her did not need a variance because the house could have been attached to the garage and would not have infringed on anyone's setback. Ms. Carson stated that the house is way too close to the fence, and it was no accident.

Gale Stone stated that she is a neighbor of Ms. Carson and she is shocked that everyone in authority has been turning a blind ear while Ms. Carson has been complaining since before the house was built. Ms. Stone stated that the house is out of place and does not belong there. Ms. Stone stated that she thinks the house should be removed.

Brian Mundle Jr. referenced Minnesota State Statutes regarding the gifting of property and discussed details that apply to his situation. Mr. Mundle Jr. discussed the deed and the lack of purchase price of the property, referring to another section of the Minnesota State Statutes.

Mr. Mundle Jr. stated that there is nothing questionable about this situation, and he has all the evidence to show the value of his property. Mr. Mundle Jr. stated that this whole situation is just a smear campaign, and he is happy to answer any questions residents may have.

Mundle returned to his seat on the Council.

6.0 Consent Agenda

Item A: Approve Bill List

Item B: Approve Meeting Minutes, May 12, 2025, City Council Work Meeting

~~Item C: Approve Meeting Minutes May 28, 2025 City Council Work Meeting~~

Item D: Approve Meeting Minutes, May 28, 2025 City Council Meeting

~~Item E: Accept Resignation of Economic Development Authority Member~~

~~Item F: Resolution 2025-32, Declaring Vacancy and Appointing New EDA Commissioner~~

~~Item G: Appointment of Planning Commission Candidates~~

Erkel requested to pull Items E, F, and G. Miller requested to pull Item C.

Erkel stated I'll make a motion to approve Consent Agenda as amended. Miller stated I'll second. Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

6.0 C Approve Meeting Minutes, May 28, 2025 City Council Work Meeting

Miller asked to include verbatim of what he stated at the May 28, 2025, City Council meeting. Miller stated that he would like to have this brought up in the future so he can bring the bills and evidence to present to the public.

Miller stated I'll make a motion to table Item C of the Consent Agenda until Miller's verbatim account is captured. Erkel stated I'll second. Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

6.0 E Accept Resignation of Economic Development Authority Member

Erkel thanked Ms. Lanrain for serving on the EDA and stated that she enjoyed getting to know her.

Erkel stated I'll make a motion to approve Item E of the Consent Agenda. Mundle stated I'll second. Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

6.0 F Resolution 2025-32, Declaring Vacancy and Appointing New EDA Commissioner

Erkel stated that she cannot remember why she pulled this item from the consent agenda.

Erkel stated I'll make a motion to approve Item F of the Consent Agenda. Miller stated I'll second. Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

6.0 G Appointment of Planning Commission Candidates

Erkel asked if there were any other applicants besides the 2. Erkel stated that in the future, she would like the applications and resumes to come before the Council.

Erkel stated I'll make a motion to approve Item G of the Consent Agenda. Mundle stated I'll second. Anderson asked any discussion?

Smith stated that they have discussed going from a 7-member Planning Commission to a 5 member. Smith stated that he was at the Planning Commission meeting when Kristina Pagnac did her interview, and she did a great job. Smith noted that Eldon Holmes was a no-show. Smith stated that he has no problems approving Ms. Pagnac, but if they decide to reduce the Planning Commission to 5 members, her term would end at that time. Smith also noted that he would vote no to Mr. Holmes.

Erkel withdrew her motion.

Look asked Larson to clarify on appointment terms that need to be completed.

Larson stated that the Council has the ability to appoint for a lesser term than the customary term if desired. Erkel asked if they could add a stipulation that states that the position would be terminated early if modification of the quantity of Planning Commission members was made. Larson stated that there could be.

Smith stated I'll make a motion to approve Kristina Pagnac as a Planning Commissioner and deny Eldon Holmes for the second choice as a Planning Commissioner.

Smith withdrew his motion to make it less complicated.

Smith stated I'll make a motion to approve Kristina Pagnac onto the Planning Commission. Miller stated I'll second. Anderson asked any discussion?

Erkel stated that she would like to see their applications and resumes to create her own opinion.

Smith withdrew his motion.

Smith stated I'll make a motion to table Item G of the Consent Agenda until the next City Council meeting. Erkel stated I'll second. Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

7.0 New Business. Commission, Association, and Task Force Reports

7.0 A Planning Commission

7.0 A.1 Site Plan, CUP, Variances: D&D Construction LLC, 21476 Johnson Street NE

Kendra Lindahl stated this request is for a Site Plan, CUP, and 4 variances to allow exterior storage for equipment on the property located at 21476 Johnson Street NE. Ms. Lindahl stated that the property is zoned B-3 Highway Commercial.

Ms. Lindahl stated that the Site Plan is for exterior storage, the CUP is for exterior storage as an accessory use to the principal use on the lot, and the 4 variances are for storage in the front yard, exterior storage square footage more than 2 times square footage of the principal building, allow a 6-foot fence in the front yard, and to allow a chain link fence.

Lindahl noted that the Planning Commission made no recommendation on variance #2, but voted 5-0 to recommend approval of variances 1, 3, and 4. Following the Planning Commission meeting, staff

consulted with the City Attorney and found that variance #2 is required for the fenced area, which would be considered the exterior storage area. The draft resolution includes the Planning Commission recommendation for approval of Variances 1, 3, and 4 and approval for variance #2.

Lindahl stated that staff recommends adopting the draft resolution approving the Site Plan, Conditional Use Permit, and the 4 variances.

Mundle stated I'll make a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-33, approving a Site Plan and granting a Conditional Use Permit and granting 4 variances from the Zoning Ordinance for exterior storage on a property located at 21476 Johnson Street NE. Erkel stated I'll second. Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

7.0 A.2 Concept Plan Review: Subdivision, PIN 12-33-23-14-0002

Gerard stated that the City received an application from Tom Carlisle of Sherco Construction for a Concept Plan Review of a 3-lot subdivision located north of 217th Avenue.

Gerard stated that the property is zoned and guided Rural Residential, the property is within the Significant Natural Environmental Area Overlay, and the property is 19.44 acres.

Gerard noted that the applicant is requesting feedback on the Concept Plan before applying for a rezoning, PUD preliminary plan, and preliminary plat.

Gerard stated that staff found the proposed subdivision complies with the development standards of the City Code and does not increase the overall average density of the RR District beyond what is allowed in the Comprehensive Plan.

Gerard presented the sketch plan submitted by the applicant. Gerard stated that the Planning Commission voted 5-0 to recommend approval of the subdivision and PUD Concept plan.

Gerard stated that staff recommends adopting the draft resolution approving the subdivision and PUD Concept Plan for "Cliffs Anderson Acres" as recommended by the Planning Commission.

Mundle stated I'll make a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-34, approving the Concept Plan of "Cliffs Anderson Acres". Erkel stated I'll second. Anderson asked any discussion?

Mundle asked where they ended up with the discussion regarding the ratio of 1 unit per 10 acres. Gerard stated that staff met with the City Attorney and found that the City has been interpreting ratio to represent the RR district as a whole, not just each subdivision.

Larson stated that approval of this resolution does not bind the City to the plan or the subdivision but rather signals to the developer that the overall concept meets the general consensus of the Council.

Erkel asked about the 1 in 10 ratio. Gerard stated that in the Comprehensive Plan there is a density standard for each of their land use categories, and the standard for Rural Residential is 1 unit per 10 acres.

Gerard also noted that in City Code the density standard for Rural Residential is 1 unit per 2.5 acres, which will be reviewed by staff as they revise the City Code.

Erkel asked if they increased their park fees and what they are. Look stated that they are \$2,000 per lot. Erkel stated that she thinks there should be a discussion regarding increasing park fees.

To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

7.0 A.3 Variances: Garage Size, Impervious Surface, Metal Siding, 138 Laurel Road NE

Gerard stated this is a request for 3 variances to allow a single car garage, impervious surface exceeding 25% of the lot coverage in the Shoreland Overlay District, and metal siding for property located at 138 Laurel Road NE. Gerard stated that the property is zoned Coon Lake Residential, is guides Coon Lake, and is within the Shoreland Overlay District.

Gerard noted that the applicant is proposing to build a single-family home on the property.

Gerard noted that the first variance being requested is a variance from the minimum garage size of 24' x 24' (576 sq. ft.) established in Section 22.7, Subdivision B of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for a 12' x 34' (408 sq. ft.) single-car garage.

Gerard noted that the second variance requested is a variance from the 25% impervious surface lot coverage standard as established in Section 57.10, Subdivision B of the Zoning Ordinance, to allow coverage of 27.6% of the lot area.

Gerard noted that the third variance being requested is a variance from the siding material standards established in Section 13.1, Subdivision A of the Zoning Ordinance to allow metal siding on the proposed residential structure.

Gerard stated that in order to grant a variance, the applicant must demonstrate that the request meets all three of the tests for "practical difficulties" including reasonable use of the land, uniqueness of the land that is out of the control of the owner, and that the request would not alter the existing character of the neighborhood.

Gerard stated that the Planning Commission held a public hearing at the May 27, 2025, meeting. Other than the applicant's daughter, who was in attendance to represent the applicant, there was no one present to comment during the public hearing. The Planning Commission voted 3-2 to approve all 3 variance requests. 2 Planning Commissioners found that the metal siding variance did not meet the uniqueness test required for the granting of a variance. 1 Commissioner also found that the impervious surface variance did not meet the uniqueness standard required for granting a variance.

Gerard stated that staff recommends adopting the draft resolution approving the 3 variances for 138 Laurel Road NE as recommended by the Planning Commission.

Erkel stated I'll make a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-35, granting variances from Section 22.7, Subdivision B of the Zoning Ordinance for a 12 x 34 foot garage, from Section 57.10, Subdivision B for an impervious surface coverage of 27.6%, and from Section 13.1, Subdivision A for metal siding on property located at 138 Laurel Road NE. Miller stated I'll second. Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

7.0 A.4 Variances: Rear Setback and Impervious Surface, 144 Laurel Road NE

Gerard stated that this request is for variances for a reduction of the rear yard setback for a principal structure and an increase in the amount of impervious surface allowed for the property located at 144 Laurel Road NE. Gerard stated that this property is zoned Coon Lake Residential and guide Coon Lake. The property is within the Shoreland Overlay District.

Gerard noted that this applicant was issued a building permit for this site in April 2024. Gerard added that without a variance, the homeowner may encounter issues with reselling or repairing the home. Gerard noted that this is a result of a clerical error.

Gerard noted that the 2 variances requested are a variance from Section 51.7, Subd. B of the Zoning Ordinance to allow a setback reduction from 25 ft. to 9.3 ft and a variance from Section 57.10, Subd.

B of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for impervious surface coverage of 25.09%, exceeding the 25% limit within the Shoreland Overlay District.

Gerard stated that the Planning Commission held a public hearing on this item on May 27, 2025. During the public hearing, one neighbor spoke in opposition of the variance request, citing concerns over the proximity of the applicant's home to her property line. The applicant was present to speak on the item. The Planning Commission voted 5-0 to recommend approval of both variance requests.

Gerard stated that staff recommends adopting the draft resolution approving the 2 variances for 144 Laurel Road NE, as recommended by the Planning Commission.

Erkel asked how the applicant got a certificate of occupancy. Look stated that it is a mystery to staff as well. Erkel stated that there needs to be some accountability.

Erkel stated I'll make a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-36, granting variances from Section 51.7, Subdivision B of the Zoning Ordinance for a rear yard setback of 9.3 feet and from Section 57.10, Subdivision B for an impervious surface coverage of 25.09% on a property located at 144 Laurel Road NE. Miller stated I'll second. Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

7.0 A.5 Final Plat: Hidden Prairie

Gerard stated that this a Final Plat for "Hidden Prairie" for a 17-lot subdivision located at PID #22-33-23-33-0005 and #22-33-23-34-0006.

Gerard stated that T.H. Construction of Anoka has applied for a Final Plat approval for a subdivision with 17 buildable lots. The property is zoned and guided Rural Residential.

Gerard noted that City Council approved a Concept Plan for Hidden Prairie on August 14, 2023, approved a Preliminary Plat on February 12, 2024, and the City received a Final Plat application and supporting materials on April 23, 2025.

Gerard stated that staff has found the Final Plat request meets the standards in the Code and matches the Preliminary Plat previously approved by the City.

Gerard stated that a Development Agreement will be drafted at a later date for execution by the City and Developer prior to the Final Plat recording with Anoka County.

Gerard stated that staff recommends adopting the draft resolution approving the Final Plat for Hidden Prairie.

Mundle stated I'll make a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-37, approving the Final Plat of "Hidden Prairie". Erkel stated I'll second. Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

7.0 B Economic Development Authority

None.

7.0 C Park Commission

None.

8.0 Department Reports

8.0 A Community Development

None.

8.0 B Engineer Report

None.

8.0 C City Attorney

None.

8.0 D Finance

None.

8.0 E Public Works

None.

8.0 F Fire Department

None.

8.0 G City Administrator Report**8.0 G.1 2026-2028 MNPEA Labor Agreement**

Look stated that the City of East Bethel has 9 full-time employees (8 Public Works Maintenance Technicians) and (1 Building Inspector) who are represented by the Minnesota Public Employees Association (MPEA). The labor agreement between the City of East Bethel and the employees represented by MPEA is set to expire on December 31, 2025.

Look noted that at the February 10, 2025, City Council meeting, City Council directed the City Administrator to begin contract negotiations with the MPEA for a labor agreement for a term of January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028.

Look stated that he had an initial meeting with MPEA representatives on April 22, 2025, and then a series of meetings with the Finance Committee, MPEA, and a closed session with the entire City Council to discuss proposals.

Look stated that these contract negotiations have now concluded and have culminated in the proposed 2026 -2028 red line version included in the packet. This agreement has been approved by the MPEA membership and would replace the current contract, which will expire December 31, 2025.

Look noted that they were fortunate to have a 3-year contract on the prior agreement, and it was unique because at the beginning of the contract, inflation was reasonable, then in the middle, inflation shot up, and today inflation is reasonable again.

Look stated that when he did an analysis on the neighboring cities and asked what they pay for these specific jobs, they found that East Bethel is 10% lower in salaries.

Look noted that this contract is less than what was requested by the Union. Look stated that the increase that has been given to employees year to year has been 3% on average. Look stated that this year they are proposing an 8% increase, and then 3% increase for the next 2 years after that to help retain their people.

Erkel stated that their employees are deserving of this.

Erkel stated I'll make a motion to approve the 2026-2028 Union Contract as presented. Mundle stated I'll second. Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

9.0 – Other Items**9.0 A Staff Report**

Look updated that they have a signed Letter of Intent to purchase 1347 Sims Road and currently have Larson working on a draft Purchase Agreement. Look stated that he has been in contact with the County and looked at setbacks from MnDOT.

Look stated that from June 25-27, 2025, the League of Minnesota Cities will hold its conference in Duluth.

9.0 B Council Reports

Smith asked if they have any more information on the 6-horse IUP that Mark Gimpl brought up during the Public Forum. Look stated that he understands Mr. Gimpl's frustration and asked the City Attorney to respond to the question.

Larson stated that there was an initial IUP issued for 6 horses, and then the Gimpls came back and asked for an IUP for 2 horses. Once that was done for the same subject matter and use, the second IUP cancels out the prior one.

Larson noted that the first IUP had already ceased and was no longer in legal force and effect, so it was cancelled both ways. Larson noted that you cannot stack IUPs.

Larson stated that this is an Interim Use Permit, not permanent, meaning there is a defined length of time. Larson noted that the Gimpls will have the opportunity to resubmit for the City Council to determine what would be an appropriate IUP for horses on their property.

Look clarified that he is not at odds with the Gimpls. Look stated that his position on the matter is that the conditions must be followed, and if they are not followed, there is a process for getting those changes made.

Erkel made a public apology for not responding to residents who have reached out to her, and she will reach out when she has a chance.

Erkel stated that she thinks \$2,000 for a park fee is crazy and thinks that they do not have enough parks. Erkel stated that if they are getting so many more developments, they need more parks.

Erkel stated that she needs direction on if she wants to change an ordinance, and where does she go to do that.

Look stated that if Erkel wants to let staff know what her goals/ideas are, then bring it to a work session to talk through it with Gerard and Ms. Lindahl. Look noted that it takes time but they can get it addressed.

Miller stated that what was presented at the work meeting a few weeks ago was fact, and the City has been covering all the extra bills involved in that business. Miller stated that it is their job to bring it to the public's attention.

Miller stated that he will never agree with City tax dollars being spent, maybe in a short-term agreement, but not 2 decades worth of money out of the residents' pockets.

Miller stated that it is important to know where their tax dollars are going, and more than half of the City did not know that their money was being spent that way. Miller challenged Mr. Mundle Sr. to pay the bills that his business incurs.

9.0 C Other

None.

10.0 Adjourn

Mundle stated I'll make a motion to adjourn. Erkel stated I'll second. To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Submitted by:

Lilian Rokosz

TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.