

EAST BETHEL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

June 24, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Sharon Johnson, Glenn Terry, Kristina Pagnac, Brian Downie, and Kory Jorgensen.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tanner Balfany

ALSO PRESENT: Grace Gerard, City Planner
Kendra Lindahl, Interim Community Development Director
Brian Mundle, City Council Liaison

1.0 Call to Order

Chair Johnson called the Planning Commission regular meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2.0 Adopt Agenda

Commissioner Jorgensen moved and Commissioner Downie seconded to adopt the agenda as presented. Johnson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Johnson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

3.0 Updates

Council Liaison Mundle updated the Commission on recent Council actions. He provided information on Booster Day.

4.0 Approve May 27, 2025 meeting minutes

Johnson noted a correction to page 1, line 36, to change “The Commission reviewed the letter of recommendation” to “ The Commission reviewed the letter of application.”

Commissioner Terry moved and Commissioner Downie seconded to adopt the May 27, 2025, regular meeting minutes as corrected. Johnson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Johnson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

5.0 Swearing in of Planning Commission Candidates- Kristina Pagnac

Gerard stated that the City Council has approved the appointment of Kristina Pagnac to the Planning Commission.

Kristina Pagnac took the Oath of Office.

6.0 Public Hearing – Consider the request by applicant, Alec Jensen of EB Commercial LLC, for a variance at Outlot A, Elevage EB Second Addition

Gerard reviewed staff’s report stating this is a public hearing to consider a variance request to allow a development monument sign within the 20-foot setback from the public right-of-way for property located at Outlot A of Elevage EB Second Addition. The applicant is Alec Jensen of Elevage Development Group.

Gerard stated that this property is a 5.61-acre outlot that is zoned and guided MXU – Mixed Use. The adjacent properties are guided and zoned the same. This property is part of the Elevage EB Planned Unit Development (PUD), a 62-acre residential and commercial development east of Highway 65.

Gerard noted that, according to City Code, residential development signs must be located at least 20 feet from the public right-of-way. Setting the sign back from the ROW reduces the likelihood that the sign would need to be removed or relocated if the ROW or easements need to be expanded in the future. The

applicant is proposing to locate the sign within the 20-foot setback from the ROW at the northeast corner of Sandhill Parkway NE and 189th Lane NE. Additionally, the Elevage EB Second Addition Final Plat has a utility easement extending 10 feet to the east and 10 feet to the west of the fire hydrant at this corner. Meeting the 20-foot setback requirements from the ROW and placing the sign outside of the utility easement would locate the sign at least 60 feet from the curb of Sandhill Parkway and 40 feet from the curb of 189th Lane NE, which could limit visibility of the sign.

Gerard stated the Commission's options for approval or denial.

Johnson opened the public hearing at 7:15 p.m.

Will O'Keefe noted that he is working on the development of the project and provided more information on the request and the reasons it is needed.

Johnson closed the public hearing at 7:18 p.m.

Gerard noted that the City Engineer has no concerns with the placement of the sign regarding the easements.

Downie stated that he sees no reason not to recommend approval.

Commissioner Terry moved and Commissioner Downie seconded to recommend approval to City Council with the conditions set forth in the provided Resolution. Johnson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Johnson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

This item goes before City Council on July 14, 2025.

7.0 Public Hearing – Consider the request by applicant, Tom Babineau, for a variance at 239 Aspen Road

Gerard reviewed staff's report stating that this property is a 0.42-acre through lot with frontage along Aspen Road NE to the east and Lakeshore Drive NE to the west. The property is zoned and guided Coon Lake within the Shoreland Overlay District. The surrounding properties are guided and zoned the same. The lot slopes down towards the lake. The proposed dwelling with an attached garage will replace an existing single-family home, detached garage, and 2 small accessory structures.

Gerard stated that the request is to allow a front-yard setback of 15 feet along Aspen Road. City Code requires a 25-foot setback within the Shoreland Overlay District for properties zoned Coon Lake. The garage portion of the proposed structure is located 15 feet from Aspen Road NE, and the rest of the structure is set back 23 feet from Aspen Road. The proposed structure is setback 35.7 feet from Lakeshore Drive NE and 77.3 feet from the Ordinary High-Water Level of Coon Lake. The proximity of the lot to Coon Lake limits the potential locations for the home and septic site.

Gerard stated the Commission's options for approval or denial.

Johnson opened the public hearing at 7:27 p.m.

Vicki Busby shared that she is a neighbor to the property and has no concerns with this property, but is concerned with the proximity of her other neighbor to this property.

Tom Babineau addressed the neighbors' concerns. He stated that they will not be impeding the view of the neighbor's property.

Downie asked if the garage would be standard-sized. Tom Babineau noted that the garage will be smaller than the home.

Jorgensen noted that he drove past the property and does not think this will be an issue or look out of place.

Downie asked if he could make the garage smaller. Tom Babineau noted that he will be using part of the garage for a storm shelter since they can't have a basement.

Johnson closed the public hearing at 7:42 p.m.

Commissioner Terry moved and Commissioner Jorgensen seconded to recommend approval to City Council with the conditions set forth in the provided Resolution. Johnson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Johnson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

This item goes before City Council on July 14, 2025.

8.0 Public Hearing – Consider a Zoning Ordinance amendment to regulate “barndominiums” in East Bethel

Lindahl reviewed staff's report stating that the Planning Commission tabled this item at the last meeting. The public hearing tonight is to consider a Code amendment to allow barndominiums in East Bethel. Staff has worked to identify the specific sections of the code that will need to change to address the main issues (Size, Architecture, Home Occupations) with the current ordinance when discussing barndominiums.

Johnson opened the public hearing at 7:47 p.m.

Johnson closed the public hearing at 7:48 p.m.

Downie asked for clarification on the definition of “barndominiums.” Lindahl noted that a single-family attached home would mean a town home or twin home, and detached homes are all other single-family homes.

Downie stated that some words in the definition should be changed to provide more clarity.

Jorgensen asked if they are following the Minnesota building Code for these barndominiums. Lindahl stated that they are following the State Code, but they must change their Zoning ordinance. The State code does allow barndominiums.

Jorgensen stated that he thinks these should be options for people, but should require bigger lots.

Terry noted that he agrees with the need for larger acres for these buildings.

Lindahl stated some of the architectural design requirements and standards.

Commissioner Johnson moved and Commissioner Downie seconded to recommend approval to City Council with the conditions set forth in the provided Resolution, with the corrections as discussed. Johnson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Johnson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

This item goes before City Council on July 14, 2024.

9.0 Adjournment

Commissioner Downie moved and Commissioner Pagnac seconded to adjourn at 8:17 pm. Johnson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Johnson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

Submitted by:

Sylvia Rokosz

TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.