MEETING MINUTES
POPE COUNTY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION
Thursday, July 24th, 2025

The Planning Advisory Commission convened in regular session on Thursday, July 24th, 2025 at the Pope County Courthouse, 3rd floor Meeting Room.

Members Present: Roger Isdahl, John Messenger, Kathy Christiansen, Ted Kannegiesser, and Russell Barkeim and Paul Wildman (County Commissioner).

Other Officials Present: David Green (Land & Resource Management, Director), and Galen Gruber (Land Use Specialist II)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Messenger at 7:10 p.m.

Additions and Corrections to the Agenda

There were no additions or corrections to the agenda. A motion to accept the agenda as prepared was made by Commission member Wildman and seconded by Commission member Barkeim. Motion carried unanimously.

Review minutes of June 26, 2025 Regular Meeting of the PAC

The minutes of the Planning Advisory Committee meeting that was held on June 26th, 2025 were submitted for approval. Motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Member Isdahl and seconded by Member. Wildman. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Conditional Use #CUP-25-006, **Matt Altendorf of Altendorf Landscape Co. on behalf of Jon and Laurel Worms,** PID #09-0828-000

The applicant, landscaping contractor Altendorf, seeks permission to undertake shoreland alterations including the reconstruction of a patio structure and the access stairway, the construction of retaining walls and rip rap repairs.

Land Use Specialist Galen Gruber presented the applicant's request and staff report, noting that the applicant was not present. However, landowners Jon and Laurel Worms were able to speak to the request. Gruber details the permitting history of development on this parcel and mentions that there are defined steep slopes present on the property. Gruber completes his presentation stating that staff supports a recommendation of tabling of the application and that the applicant provides an amended project design minimizing the alteration to twenty-five feet in width,

eliminating the wall closest to the lake, and maintaining the integrity of the slope north of the existing stair location as it currently exists. Following the staff report presentation, Chair Messenger offers to the owners and opportunity to comment on the staff report and their project proposal. Worms state that the stairway is in desperate need of replacement and that their proposal including rip rap which will help stabilize the shoreline and the retaining walls that should help with stormwater runoff. Commissioner Wildman asks about the retaining wall height. While, Planning Commissioner Isdahl asks about the type of materials that are proposed for the retaining wall. Worms respond that they believe that it will be landscape boulders.

At 7:22 pm, Chair Messenger opened the hearing for public comments. As there were no comments offered either for or against the proposed landscape alterations, Chair Messenger closed the public hearing.

Chair Messenger asked for comments from the site team which consisted of Messenger and Barkiem. Barkiem commented that the retaining walls should help with stormwater runoff. Messenger stated that preserving as much vegetation as possible would help with stormwater control.

Motion: Commission Chair Messenger seeks a motion. Commission member Barkiem made the following motion: Based on the information as presented in the staff report and facts as gathered this evening, I move to offer a recommendation of approval of the Conditional Use Permit provided that the conditions as identified in the staff report are complied with. This motion was seconded by Board member Isdahl. With no further discussion, motion carried unanimously. Conditions and Findings as follows:

Conditions

1. *Compliance with Section 4.6.10 A, 1-10 of the Pope County Land Use Control Ordinance.*
2. *Retaining walls shall be screened from view utilizing vegetation as seen from the water during leaf on conditions.*
3. *That land within the shore impact zone and steep slopes lakeward and outside of the described area in Section 4.6.10 D.3, and the designated shoreline access/viewing corridor; be established with native shoreland vegetation.*
4. *The applicant's shoreland alteration permit application must include erosion and sediment control plans conforming to the MPCA Construction Stormwater Permit to protect adjacent waterbodies, neighboring properties, ditches, and wetlands from negative impacts due to erosion.*
5. *Prior to any construction activities, all required permits must be secured from Township, County and State agencies including a NPDES permit if necessary.*

Findings

1. **The project is in compliance with the setback and other provisions of this ordinance unless a variance has been granted:**

   Findings: *Yes, with the condition of ensuring the establishment of native shoreline*

vegetation, this shoreline alteration project will conform to the provisions of the Ordinance.

2. **The use is not in conflict with the County Comprehensive Land Use Plan:**

   Findings: *The use, along with conditions to mitigate negative impacts does conform with the County Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Within the Goals and Policies and specifically under Shoreland Management, objective 2, it states the desire to "develop criteria by which to evaluate the suitability of undeveloped and developed shoreland areas for appropriate uses. Under Environmental objectives, a desire to "recognize the importance of the County's natural resources, including its lake, rivers, wetlands, soils and wildlife habitat, and work to preserve or improve their long-term health."*

3. **That the use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, not substantially diminish or impair neighborhood property values in the area and will not interfere with the best interest of the surrounding area or the community as a whole:**

   Findings: *The proposed use, in conformance with performance standards and conditions as outlined, does not appear to substantially impact properties in the immediate vicinity nor within the neighborhood.*

4. **The use will not create an excessive burden on parks, schools, streets, water supply, public drainage systems and other public facilities and utilities which serve or are proposed to serve in the area:**

   Findings: *This shoreland alteration is not expected to have a negative impact on public infrastructure.*

5. **The structure and sites shall have an appearance that will not have an adverse effect on adjacent properties:**

   Findings: *Retaining walls can be a very visible feature from as seen from the public utilizing the lake. Ensuring the minimum walls necessary to establish the use and providing visual screening of the wall should substantially mitigate adverse impacts.*

6. **The road on which the project is proposed is adequate to handle increased traffic during operation, and that the use will not cause traffic hazards or congestion:**

   Findings: *Yes, the proposed project will not have an impact on the road or traffic.*

7. **Existing businesses nearby will not be adversely affected because of curtailment of customer trade brought about by intrusion of noise, glare, odor, or general unsightliness:**

   Findings: *This shoreland alteration/landscaping project is not expected to cause noise, glare, odor or general unsightliness.*

8. **That the establishment of the use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding vacant property uses predominant to the area:**

   Findings: *The proposed project will not impede orderly development of adjacent properties.*

9. **That adequate utilities, drainage and other necessary facilities have been or are being provided:**

   Findings: *Not applicable to this project.*

10. **That adequate measures have been or will be taken to prevent or control rodents, insects, offensive odors, fumes, dust, noise, and vibration in order that none of these will constitute a nuisance, and that adequate measures have been or will be taken to prevent negative impacts on surface water, groundwater, and air quality, and that measures have been taken to control lighted signs and other lights in such a manner that no disturbance to neighboring properties will result:**

    Findings: *Proper erosion and sediment controls are expected to be implemented to reduce impacts to surface water. Construction equipment will be the only source of noise, fumes, vibrations, etc., and will be limited in duration. The project, after completion, is not expected to cause a nuisance to neighboring properties.*

Conditional Use #CUP-25-007 **Matt Haats** PID #19-0175-000

The applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit to establish a non-farm residence within the A-1 Zoning District.

Director Green presented the staff report and noted that there was a review completed by the County Feedlot Officer regarding impacts to neighboring feedlots and future feedlots. Director Green added that there is a need for residences within Pope County and that staff does not object to the issuance of a non-farm residence in this area.

Commission member Halls asked about minimum parcel size in the A-1 zoning district. Director Green noted that 3 acres is the minimum buildable lot.

Commission member Halls asked about the "right-to-farm". Director Green noted that this was a recommended condition listed by staff.

Applicant Haats was present for the hearing. Haats noted that the proposed residence is intended for his son.

Commission member Barkiem asked about the applicant's intent to subdivide the property. Haats said yes, he did intend to subdivide a portion of the property for this use and that a future survey would be completed.

Chair Messenger asked about the size of proposed lot. Haats said at least 3 acres but likely larger.

Commission member Barkiem asked about accessing the future lot. Haats noted that they would access off of the township road.

Chair Messenger opened the hearing for public comments at 7:30 pm. There were no public comments for or against, and the public hearing was closed.

Chair Messenger asked for comments from the site team. Chair Messenger commented that the site is a good building site. Commission member Barkeim agreed and noted that no agricultural land will be taken out of production for the proposed location.

Motion: Commission Chair Messenger sought a motion. Commission member Wildman made a motion to approve the request in accordance with the conditions as presented in the staff report. Conditions as follows:

1. *That the Agriculture Zone (Right-to-Farm) Acknowledgement form be signed and returned to the Land & Resource Management office prior to the issuance of a Land Use permit for the construction of the non-farm residence.*
2. *That the property owner applies for an E911 rural address*
3. *That the property owner is responsible for reaching out to the Township to assure compliance with any Township standards.*
4. *That prior to any construction activities, all necessary permits are secured from County and State agencies.*

This motion was seconded by Commission member Isdahl. With no further discussion, motion carried unanimously. Findings as follows:

1. **The project is in compliance with the setback and other provisions of this ordinance unless a variance has been granted:**

   Findings: *Any proposed structure and/or use will necessarily be in compliance with the provisions of the Pope County Land Use Controls Ordinance as a condition of the permitting unless a variance has been granted.*

2. **The use is not in conflict with the County Comprehensive Land Use Plan:**

   Findings: *The current Comprehensive Plan includes goals that state a recognition of diverse and existing land uses throughout the county. It is noted that not all uses are compatible and that there should be consideration as to separation, siting, development requirements and operating standards. Based on the proposed land use including distance from sensitive environmental features, roadway and neighboring properties, the proposed use is not in conflict with the County Comprehensive Plan.*

3. **That the use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, not substantially diminish or impair neighborhood property values in the area and will not interfere with the best interest of the surrounding area or the community as a whole:**

   Findings: *The proposed land use is located in a sparsely populated rural setting in White Bear Lake Township. The dominant land uses in this area are agricultural production, open space and extractive use. This non-farm residential use should not create interference with future development on adjacent properties, nor is it expected to diminish or impair neighboring property values.*

4. **The use will not create an excessive burden on parks, schools, streets, water supply, public drainage systems and other public facilities and utilities which serve or are proposed to serve in the area:**

Findings: *This land use is not expected to have a significant negative impact on public infrastructure.*

5. **The structure and sites shall have an appearance that will not have an adverse effect on adjacent properties:**

   Findings: *The site is expected to remain neat and orderly in appearance.*

6. **The road on which the project is proposed is adequate to handle increased traffic during operation, and that the use will not cause traffic hazards or congestion:**

   Findings: *300th Street is adequate to handle traffic associated with a non-farm residence.*

7. **Existing businesses nearby will not be adversely affected because of curtailment of customer trade brought about by intrusion of noise, glare, odor, or general unsightliness:**

   Findings: *There should not be any negative impacts related to the intrusion of noise, glare, odor or general unsightliness upon nearby existing businesses.*

8. **That the establishment of the use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding vacant property uses predominant to the area:**

   Findings: *The predominant neighboring land use is agricultural and extractive use in nature. The residential use will not conflict with existing uses.*

9. **That adequate utilities, drainage and other necessary facilities have been or are being provided:**

   Findings: *Any necessary utilities, drainage, septic systems or other facilities will be addressed prior to and as a condition of issuance of any land use permit.*

10. **That adequate measures have been or will be taken to prevent or control rodents, insects, offensive odors, fumes, dust, noise, and vibration in order that none of these will constitute a nuisance, and that adequate measures have been or will be taken to prevent negative impacts on surface water, groundwater, and air quality, and that measures have been taken to control lighted signs and other lights in such a manner that no disturbance to neighboring properties will result:**

    Findings: *The site is expected to remain neat and orderly in appearance. As such, the site should not have a negative impact on neighboring properties with noise, dust, appearance, and other nuisances or impacts.*

Conditional Use #CUP-25-005 **William O'Leary** PID# 14-0058-001

The applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit to establish a non-farm residence within the A-2 zoning District.

Director Green presented the applicant's request and staff report. The Director noted that staff does not object to recommending approval given the existing use in the area and noted that staff did include a condition addressing the "right-to-farm".

Applicant was present for the hearing. Applicant noted that there is minimal land available for agricultural use given the topography and soil type. Applicant believes the proposed is the best use for this property.

Commission member Wildman noted that he was contacted by a member of the public who asked about future residential uses as far as rental uses etc. Applicant noted that they are intending to build one residential house. Applicant noted that given his age he cannot guarantee what the future use of the site would be. He noted that he would like to also build a large storage building for personal use but only intends for a single-family residence otherwise.

Chair Messenger opened the hearing for public comment at 7:38 pm. There were no comments for or against, and the public hearing was closed.

Chair Messenger requested comments from the site team. Chair Messenger said that it looks like a good place to build a house up on a hill. Commission member Barkiem agreed noting the difficult topography that would challenge agricultural uses.

Motion: Commission Chair Messenger asked for a motion. Commission member Barkiem made a motion to approve the request in accordance with the conditions as presented in the staff report. Conditions as follows:

1. *That the Agriculture Zone (Right-to-Farm) Acknowledgement form be signed and returned to the Land & Resource Management office prior to the issuance of a Land Use permit for the construction of the non-farm residence.*
2. *That the property owner applies for an E911 rural address.*
3. *That the property owner is responsible for reaching out to the Township to assure compliance with any Township standards.*
4. *That prior to any construction activities, all necessary permits are secured from County and State agencies.*

This motion was seconded by Member Kannegiesser. With no further discussion, motion carried with Member Halls opposed. Findings as follows:

1. **The project is in compliance with the setback and other provisions of this ordinance unless a variance has been granted:**

   Findings: *Any proposed structure and/or use will necessarily be in compliance with the provisions of the Pope County Land Use Controls Ordinance as a condition of the permitting unless a variance has been granted.*

2. **The use is not in conflict with the County Comprehensive Land Use Plan:**

   Findings: *The current Comprehensive Plan includes goals that state a recognition of diverse and existing land uses throughout the county. It is noted that not all uses are compatible and that there should be consideration as to separation, siting, development requirements and operating standards. Based on the proposed land use including distance from sensitive environmental features, roadway and neighboring properties, the proposed use is not in conflict with the County Comprehensive Plan.*

3. **That the use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, not substantially diminish or impair neighborhood property values in the area and will not interfere with the best interest of the surrounding area or the community as a whole:**

   Findings: *The proposed land use is located in a sparsely populated rural setting in Blue Mounds Township. The dominant land uses in this area are agricultural production, open space and extractive use. This non-farm residential use should not create interference with future development on adjacent properties, nor is it expected to diminish or impair neighboring property values.*

4. **The use will not create an excessive burden on parks, schools, streets, water supply, public drainage systems and other public facilities and utilities which serve or are proposed to serve in the area:**

   Findings: *This land use is not expected to have a significant negative impact on public infrastructure.*

5. **The structure and sites shall have an appearance that will not have an adverse effect on adjacent properties:**

   Findings: *The site is expected to remain neat and orderly in appearance.*

6. **The road on which the project is proposed is adequate to handle increased traffic during operation, and that the use will not cause traffic hazards or congestion:**

   Findings: *State Highway 29 is adequate to handle traffic associated with a non-farm residence.*

7. **Existing businesses nearby will not be adversely affected because of curtailment of customer trade brought about by intrusion of noise, glare, odor, or general unsightliness:**

   Findings: *There should not be any negative impacts related to the intrusion of noise, glare, odor or general unsightliness upon nearby existing businesses.*

8. **That the establishment of the use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding vacant property uses predominant to the area:**

   Findings: *The predominant neighboring land use is agricultural and natural open space. The residential use will not conflict with existing uses.*

9. **That adequate utilities, drainage and other necessary facilities have been or are being provided:**

   Findings: *Any necessary utilities, drainage, septic systems or other facilities will be addressed prior to and as a condition of issuance of any land use permit.*

10. **That adequate measures have been or will be taken to prevent or control rodents, insects, offensive odors, fumes, dust, noise, and vibration in order that none of these will constitute a nuisance, and that adequate measures have been or will be taken to prevent negative impacts on surface water, groundwater, and air quality, and that measures have been taken to control lighted signs and other lights in such a manner that no disturbance to neighboring properties will result:**

    Findings: *The site is expected to remain neat and orderly in appearance. As such, the site should not have a negative impact on neighboring properties with noise, dust, appearance, and other nuisances or impacts.*

Conditional Use #CUP-25-008 **Ted Holsten** PID# 03-0068-003 & 03-0068-004

The applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the establishment of a Planned Unit Development (PUD).

Director Green presented the applicants request and staff report. Director Green noted that there are two zoning districts within the proposed use and that the land exists within an area of approximately 2,000 ft between the existing road and the lake. Director Green noted that there exists a 66 ft wide portion of the property which connects the major portion of the property to County Road 15 and that this area was likely created by the landowner for this future development. Director Green noted that the applicant has been working on this project for some-time and noted that this is a planned unit development which requires both a CUP and a plat. Director Green noted that there are some limiting factors on the property including an existing wetland. Director Green outlined the standards for calculating the buildable area. Director Green noted that he believes this is a difficult area to develop given the floodplain and wetlands present. Director Green noted that, given the proposed lots' proximity to floodplain, there may be some red flags from loan agencies. Director Green noted that there are some information missing such as road construction details. Director Green discussed the proposed mooring space noting that the plan indicates 10 mooring sites. Director Green said that he understands that this would not be allowed and the number of mooring spaces would be limited based on the number of units within the 1st tier of the PUD. Director Green noted that this raises the question of where the boats etc. would be stored for the other proposed lots. Director Green noted that there is some question as to whether there are adequately sewer-able sites noting that the USGS Soil Survey information indicates that the soils are not great for sewers and buildings. Director Green noted that staff recommendation is that the proposal should be tabled for additional information.

Commission member Halls noted that some lots appear to be right up against the property line. Director Green noted that there still would be a structural setback enforced to any structures on those lots adjacent to the property line which does limit the buildable area within that lot.

Commission member Barkeim asked about impervious surface. Director Green said that they would review the impervious surface as it relates to PUD/Common Interest Communities (CIC) standards not per lot as would applied to standard lots.

Commission member Halls asked about impacts to neighboring feedlots. Director Green noted that there are already residences within this area and so no additional impacts would be realized.

Commission member Isdahl asked about the property outside of the 10 proposed lots in regards to who would own that area. Director Green noted that, for CIC's, open space is intended to be owned by those in the CIC. Director Green noted that given the restriction on mooring space, there would likely need to be some storage space within this common use area which impacts the "green space" and the applicant has not provided evidence of compliance with PUD/CIC standards.

Commission member Wildman asked about whether people will own the property or if there will be rental units. Director Green noted that the developer is intending to allow the purchaser discretion. Wildman noted that there could be issues with someone wanting to place a recreational vehicle next to a more traditionally constructed residence. Director noted that convenances would need to address this. Wildman asked if the applicant had provided convenances. Director Green said that they had not.

Commission member Halls asked about septic and wells. Director Green noted that his office has only received a preliminary design that indicated and available are for a drainfield but has not received any septic design information. In addition, there would need to be some more information on who's responsible for maintaining any proposed sewage treatment systems. Director Green said that wells would be handled by the Department of Health.

Commission member Barkeim asked if the developer had contacted the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding the proposed mooring spaces. Director Green noted that yes, the owner has had contact with the DNR specific to the locating of the dock through shallow waters and cattails. Green stated that the developer will need to work with DNR and his office in determining the allowed number of mooring spaces.

Chair Messenger opened the hearing for public comment at 7:59 pm.

Calvin Kalina stated that he agrees with the staff report as presented by Green and further stated that he believes it would be a "fiasco" to build on such small lots. He said that part of the property is a wetland. Mr. Kalina said that he thinks that they should be able to develop it but place only two homes on it.

Tony Tauber 22430 150th St Glenwood. Mr. Tauber addressed the Commission stating that he rents the farm property at 12333 Co. Rd. 15. Mr. Tauber said that he has done weed control and kept up the land [on the subject property] for 13 years and 10 or 12 years before that. He said that there are two of the proposed sites that he wouldn't drive a tractor through because of saturation. Mr. Tauber said that he would sink his tractor in that area. Mr. Tauber said that he believes there are only two developable sites otherwise the rest is too marginal [because of how wet they are]. Mr. Tauber said that they have tried to dig it up but it turns into a 2 or 3 year process of trying to get into the wet ground and plant it back. Mr. Tauber said that he disagrees that the proposed property has as much shoreline as stated because a portion of the shoreline is actually only a sand berm that is pushed up into the wetland, about a 10ft wide ridge, with wetland or lake on either side.

Stuart Olson addressed the Commission and said that he believes it's odd that no additional information was provided and that he's concerned about the use turning into a trailer park and

that there would be no storage space. Doesn't believe that the proposed fits the structures in the area with the proposed lots being too small. Mr. Olson said that the mooring spaces will be 1,000ft out from the shoreline and that there is a shallow stand of cattails. Mr. Olson said that he's concerned about navigability of the shoreline and the mooring spaces blocking peoples access to their docks and properties.

Hearing no other comments, the public hearing was closed.

Chair Messenger requested comments from the site team. Chair Messenger noted that they couldn't get all the way into the site. Chair Messenger said that he was skeptical whether this proposal would work. Commission member Barkeim said that this was challenging site and that he had concerns about establishing sewer onsite given how low the land is. Barkiem said that he is concerned with the mooring dock noting that there is limited access to the shoreline.

Motion: Chair Messenger asked for a motion. Member Isdahl made a motion to table the Conditional Use Permit request and request the applicant provided additional information. This motion seconded by Commission member Halls.

Preliminary Plat Review #SUB-25-027 Fairhaven Beach by Ted Holsten PID#03-0068-003 & 03-0068-004

The applicant is requesting approval of the preliminary plat of the proposed Fairhaven Beach subdivision.

Director Green presented the applicant's request and staff report. Director Green noted that there is a standard for Common Interest Community plat preparation and this request is subject to those standards as well as the normal subdivision ordinances and noted that the staff report outlines the items staff feels are missing from the proposed including a stormwater plan, road plan, septic system info, floodplain reviews, responsible parties for maintenance, etc. Director noted that staff feels there is more information that is needed prior to approving a preliminary plat and recommends tabling the request with a recommendation for a time limit for the applicant to provide additional information.

Applicant Ted Holsten not present for the hearing.

Chair Messenger opened the hearing for public comment at 7:13 pm.

Tony Tauber addressed the Commission stating that that his family owns the tree line along the future road accessing the parcel from Co. Rd. 12 and that they have no intention to give up the treen line.

Reno Township, Board member Tony Tauber, addressed the Commission stating that the township has no interest in maintenance requests given the proposed plan as there is not enough area to maintain the road.

Hearing no other comments, the public hearing was closed.

Director Green noted that he understands that Reno Township has not given up their right to land use controls and so the proposed plat does need approval from the township.

Motion: Chair Messenger asked for a motion. Commission member Barkeim made motion to table the request for additional information with the applicant needing to do so by the regularly scheduled September, 2025 Planning Advisory Commission meeting.

This motion was seconded by Commission member Wildman. With no further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

No other business

Adjournment

Motion by Commission member Wildman to adjourn the Planning Advisory Commission meeting with a second by Commission member Kannegiesser. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Galen Gruber/Land Use Specialist II
Pope County Land & Resource Management

David Green/Director
Pope County Land & Resource Management