POPE COUNTY
MINNESOTA

MEETING MINUTES
POPE COUNTY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION
Thursday, January 22nd, 2026

The Planning Advisory Commission convened in regular session on Thursday, January 22nd, 2026 at the Pope County Courthouse, 3rd floor Meeting Room.

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

Other Officials Present: David Green (Director) and Leigh Nelson (Senior Administrative Associate).

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Director Green at 6:55 p.m.

Annual Organizational Meeting

The first order of business was to seek nominations for Chairperson. Director Green asked for nominations for Chairperson. Member Barkeim nominated Chairman Messenger for another term. Motion seconded by Member Halls. Director Green asked for other nominations. Hearing no other nominations, the motion carried unanimously.

Chairmen Messenger took over the meeting, and asked for nominations for Vice Chair. Member Barkeim nominated Member Kannegiesser, and the motion was seconded by Member Isdahl. Chairman Messenger asked for other nominations. Hearing no other nominations, the motion carried unanimously.

The next order of business was the selection of Site Team Members. Member Barkeim made a motion to continue with the same Site Team Members chosen at the Board of Adjustment meeting, being Chair Messenger, Members Kannegiesser and Barkeim. County Commissioner Wildman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

The Planning Advisory Commission was provided with a copy of the 2026 Meeting Dates. County Commissioner Wildman moved to accept the meeting dates as presented. The motion was seconded by Member Barkeim, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Planning Advisory Commission was provided with a draft copy of the 2026 Bylaws. A motion to accept the Bylaws as presented was made by Member Halls, seconded by Member Isdahl, and the motion passed unanimously.

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 Member Barkeim and seconded by member Isdahl. Motion carried unanimously.

Review minutes of December 18, 2025 Regular Meeting of the PAC

The minutes of the Planning Advisory Committee meeting that was held on December 18, 2025 were submitted for approval. Motion to accept the minutes as written was made by County Commissioner Wildman and seconded by Member Kannegiesser. Motion carried unanimously.

General Business

Chair Messenger asked if there was any General Business to discuss. There were no comments from the Members or Staff.

Old Business

Conditional Use #CUP-25-013 Maxwell PID# 09-0008-000 & 09-0002-000

Chair Messenger asked for an update on the Application. Director Green stated that there is no new information to present at this time. No action is needed as the Staff recommendation from the prior meeting was to issue a 60-day extension on the decision-making period, beginning on January 6th, 2026. This will be on the February 26th, 2026 agenda for review.

New Business

Conditional Use #CUP-25-016 Ascheman PID# 19-0078-000 & 19-0086-000

The applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) allowing for topographic alterations in a shoreland designated zoning district, including the excavation, grading and fill activities, which will result in the disturbance of greater than 50 cubic yards of materials in a shoreland bluff impact zone.

Chair Messenger read the full background from the Staff Report.

Director Green presented Staff comments, noting that this property is not only in a Shoreland-Recreational Development zone, but is also burdened by a Bluff Impact zone. He pointed out that the applicant(s) do not provide enough information in their application. It lacks stormwater management information or quantities of fill to be used. There does not seem to be a clear intent of significant shoreland alterations.

There were requests for a number of different map views among the Members and Director Green showed several different maps of the properties on the screens as requested. These maps were visible on screen to both members of the Planning Advisory Commission and members of the public in attendance.

Chair Messenger invited the applicant(s) to come up to the presentation table. Brandon Ascheman came to the front, and confirmed that he was speaking for all of the applicants. He presented several points:

- They currently have a retaining wall issue, and are concerned that the current walls

were not built well and are shifting and moving. While they have been rebuilt, the applicants feel that they are an eyesore and a safety concern.

- The ground on their property is very unlevel, hard to mow, and they have had family & guests fall on the stairs, on the uneven ground & off of a retaining wall. Family & guests with mobility issues using the golf cart have had difficulty navigating the golf cart on the property, resulting in significant safety concerns for the applicants.
- There was a trailer house on the property, which they have had removed. The applicants would like to build a structure at some point, serving also a safe place in case of a storm.
- They are planning on working with an engineer on the retaining walls in order to manage the stormwater runoff.
- They plan on reseeding immediately after grading, and have someone potentially lined up to do this.
- The property has sentimental value, and they would like to keep it in the family.
- Mr. Ascheman noted that there is a "fair amount" of earth to be moved – stating about 400 cubic yards, and that many trees would have to come down. He has already talked to Pope County Soil & Water about trees that would grow well there.
- Mr. Ascheman also stated that he has talked to a civil engineer, and that the drainage wouldn't change.

Chairman Messenger asked if the Members had any questions for the applicant. Member Isdahl asked if this was just a path? Mr. Ascheman replied that no, they were hoping to make a 4:1 grade and then even the property out at the bottom.

Member Halls asked if the 4:1 slope was a path or a wider area. Ascheman replied that this would be mostly grass, not a driveway. The current driveway would be eliminated.

Member Isdahl asked for clarification regarding the amount of material that would have to be moved – did he mean 400 cubic feet? Ascheman clarified that it would be 4,000 cubic yards of material that would be moved.

Director Green clarified & reminded Members that a permit is required for alterations in the shoreland and the bluff impact zones.

Chairman Messenger opened the public hearing at 7:28 p.m. No one spoke in support of the issue. When asked if anyone wanted to speak against, Elaine Boll, an adjoining property owner was recognized by the Chair. Mrs. Boll expressed her concerns about protecting their septic mound system, which is on or close to the property line. She also expressed concern regarding the existing drainage problems, as all of the properties to the south of them drain on to her

property. She described the existing ravine and concerns about how it could adversely affect her property if it's altered. There is a retaining wall that would be removed that is against her mound system that would need to be addressed.

Joann Knutson was then recognized by the Chair to speak during the Public Hearing. Mrs. Knutson identified herself as another owner of the adjoining property, along with Mrs. Boll as a Trustee (as their property is in a Trust.) She expressed concern about how this will affect their property. Member Kannegiesser asked Mrs. Knutson if the property was surveyed. Mrs. Knutson replied that there are existing stakes. Her concern is for the existing septic system, their flower beds, and how everything slopes towards their property causing water runoff issues. She is also concerned that this will significantly change their view of the lake.

Teresa Hanson was recognized by the Chair to speak in opposition. She stated that the retaining wall is quite tall, and asked how would they be able to fill that in without the runoff going "their way".

With no other speakers coming forward, Chairman Messenger closed the public hearing at 7:45 p.m., and invited members of the Site Team to comment. Member Barkeim said that this plan was hard to envision, and that it looks like a patchwork of attempts to correct. It is possible that this plan could slow water to other properties. Member Kannegiesser said it was "complicated". Chair Messenger said that he sees why the applicant wants this, but he is concerned and troubled by the number of trees to be removed. Member Kannegiesser said that he is all for people having access to their lake lot. Every lake lot isn't perfect, and there's a reason some lots are the way they are.

Chairman Messenger asked for a motion. Member Isdahl made a motion to deny the Conditional Use Permit, which was seconded by Member Halls. With the question called by the Chair, Members Isdahl and Hall vote in favor of the motion. Members Barkeim, Kannegiesser, Wildman and Messenger vote nay and therefore the motion fails.

County Commissioner Wildman put forth a motion to table action on this Conditional Use Permit in order to allow the Applicants to provide more information. The motion was seconded by Member Barkeim. The motion passed with Member Hall being the only dissenting vote. The action was thereby tabled until the February 26, 2026 meeting of the Planning Advisory Commission.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Member Isdahl to adjourn the Planning Advisory Commission meeting with a second by Member Barkeim. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh A. Nelson/Senior Administrative Associate
Pope County Land & Resource Management

David Green/Director
Pope County Land & Resource Management