



**Meeting of the Planning Commission
Held at the Elk River City Hall
Tuesday, August 26, 2025**

Members Present: Acting Chair Dennis Booth, Commissioner Robert Rydberg, Commissioner James Zahler, Commissioner Anthony Kaba

Members Absent: Chair Perry Beise, Commissioner Eric Johnson, Commissioner Dornan Bland, Councilmember Jennifer Wagner

Staff Present: Community Development Director Zack Carlton, Senior Planner Chris Leeseberg, and Sr. Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary Katie Porath

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. CONSIDER AGENDA

Moved by Commissioner Rydberg and seconded by Commissioner Kaba to approve the agenda. Motion carried 4-0.

3. CONSIDER MINUTES

Moved by Commissioner Zahler and seconded by Commissioner Kaba to approve the following consent items as outlined in their respective staff reports. Motion carried 4-0.

3.1 DRAFT Minutes - July 22, 2025

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

4.1 Pat Briggs Planned Unit Development (PUD): Two 79-unit Apartment Buildings, Land Use Amendment, Zone Change, and Ordinance Amendment - 17379 Twin Lakes Rd NW

Mr. Carlton presented the staff report.

Commissioner Rydberg asked what percentage of the proposed apartments were studio or one-bedroom. Mr. Carlton responded that 96% of the units are either studio or one-bedroom apartments.

Commissioner Rydberg commented on the request to reduce the number of parking spots and stated he would prefer to see the number closer to the 2.5 spots per dwelling standard.

Acting Chair Booth opened the public hearing.

Matthew Lerfald and Morgan Duvall, 17395 Twin Lakes Rd, expressed their concern as owners of an adjacent property. Their concerns included high volumes of traffic, stormwater runoff into their

property from increased hard surfaces, the effects on the creek running through the property, the density of surrounding apartments within a one-block radius, people parking on their driveway, the impact on native species, the effects of the Northstar train decommissioning, and lack of privacy from a four-story building located so close to their house.

Mr. Lerfald commented on privacy issues with nearby apartment residents trespassing on their property, burning, and dumping trash.

Commissioner Rydberg asked if the property owner had spoken with Mr. Lerfald or Ms. Duvall. They responded that he had only approached them to discuss a natural gas connection. Currently, their home has an easement agreement for driveway access through the property.

Ms. Duvall asked that a traffic impact study be a condition of the approval as well as stormwater controls and capping the building height at two to three stories rather than four.

Arthur Meisenbach, 1739 Twin Lakes Rd, expressed concern about the watershed district and destroying wetlands. He stated the easement does not align with the driveway. He has concerns about security from surrounding apartment residents who trespass on his property and cut down his trees. He added that he currently takes care of snow removal for the road to his home at his own expense.

Mr. Carlton stated a condition could be included to address concerns with the driveway alignment and the two driveways of existing property owners.

Susan Meisenbach, 1739 Twin Lakes Rd, stated her biggest concern is regarding traffic safety.

Ms. Duvall added that she was concerned about the value of her property decreasing.

Caroline Hattell, 19601 Tyler St, commented that the curve at Twin Lakes Rd is terrible. She has recently moved to the state and has concerns about the number of apartments being built in Elk River.

Attorney Alan Kantrud, representing the applicant, Pat Briggs, stated he was taking comments into consideration and could answer questions.

Chris Dahn, Bogart, Pederson, and Associates, addressed some of the comments received. He stated that curving the road (driveway) through the apartment complex could reduce the speed of traffic. The creek that was mentioned is actually a drainage ditch owned and maintained by Sherburne County. Water entering this ditch will be treated in accordance with State stormwater requirements.

Mr. Dahn asked if anything would stop the current property owner from cutting down all of the trees today? Mr. Carlton responded that the City does not have a tree preservation ordinance. Commissioner Rydberg added that a landscape plan would need to be submitted.

Commissioner Rydberg agreed that adjacent property owners could be negatively affected by the height of the proposed development and the ingress/egress across the property. Mr. Dahn agreed that the developer could discuss those concerns and come back with suggestions.

Acting Chair Booth asked if plans had been prepared to ensure property owners can access their property during construction. Mr. Dahn responded that access would be maintained.

Mr. Dahn commented that stormwater runoff to adjacent properties will not be increased and will follow State requirements.

Mr. Dahn stated that trees will not be cut down on adjacent properties and will be replaced in accordance with city standards.

Mr. Dahn stated, if the city engineer were in favor of a turn lane and/or a deceleration lane, the change would benefit the current owners as well as the proposed project. Attorney Kantrud added that change could be brought back as a rendering.

Mr. Dahn added that the landscaping plan could work to protect neighboring properties from the height of the proposed project.

Mr. Dahn addressed the request to reduce the number of parking stalls per dwelling. He felt the request of 1.63 stalls was reasonable based on the fact that the apartments would be smaller and, therefore, have fewer occupants. Commissioner Rydberg disagreed, stating the population is more upscale and, without the commuter train, more occupants would need vehicles to get to work.

Mr. Dahn felt the location would allow residents to walk or bike to their place of employment and most units would have 1–2 occupants with one vehicle.

Acting Chair Booth asked about plans for trash collection. Mr. Dahn responded that there were trash enclosures inside the building and the containers would be wheeled out weekly for collection. Commissioner Rydberg questioned the process for residential trash collection. Mr. Dahn explained that there was plenty of space for the garbage trucks to enter and turn around.

Acting Chair Booth asked about snow removal plans. Mr. Dahn responded that snow could be piled along the west side of the property as well as the stormwater pond located in the center. Excess snow could be removed by truck.

Acting Chair Booth asked if the parking lots were large enough for fire truck access. Mr. Dahn responded that the parking lots were large enough to allow access of emergency vehicles.

Mr. Dahn continued his discussion of reducing the parking stall amounts, citing examples of other apartment complexes throughout the city that had fewer than the required parking stalls and did not have complaints or lack of parking.

Mr. Dahn commented that parking on the ingress/egress would be restricted with Fire Lane "No Parking" signs.

Commissioner Rydberg stated the PUD may need conditions to reduce traffic impacts, such as a three-quarter intersection.

Ms. Duvall added that the curve along Twin Lakes Rd does not deter speeding. She stated that traffic backs up along the road when the train crossing arms are down.

Mr. Lerfald expressed concern that changing the zoning district would allow other apartments to be developed.

Ms. Duvall stated she felt it wasn't her responsibility to enforce parking restrictions on the road her property is located on.

Ms. Meisenbach added that large vehicles or trucks with trailers need to use the center median to make a left turn into the property.

Acting Chair Booth closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Zahler asked for an explanation of a FAST district. Mr. Carlton gave a history of the FAST district, explaining that the plan from 2010 centered on the Northstar train station and its support for apartments and town home complexes near the train station. The new comprehensive plan was approved in 2021 and reflects changes in the community. The comprehensive plan calls for smaller scale apartments, which is why the land use would need to be changed. The current zoning does allow an apartment complex.

Commissioners Zahler and Rydberg agreed that the impact on the neighbors, traffic, and the ingress/egress would need to be addressed.

Mr. Carlton asked the Commissioners if they had changes they would like to see the developers make.

Commissioner Rydberg recommended tabling the discussion until issues with the neighbors and safety could be addressed, as well as the alignment of the easement.

Moved by Commissioner Rydberg and seconded by Commissioner Kaba to postpone the proposed land use amendment, changing the Comprehensive Plan guidance from Mixed Residential to Multifamily; the proposed zone change, changing the zoning from FAST (D) to Planned Unit Development (PUD) subject to council approval of the associated land use amendment (LU 25-02); and the ordinance amendment (OA 25-08) establishing the PUD standards to the September 23, 2025 Planning Commission meeting. Motion carried 4-0.

Mr. Carlton reviewed that the developer could look at access points and turn lanes, alignment with existing easements and driveways, landscape and stormwater plans, and stormwater calculations.

Acting Chair Booth stated he was concerned about the mix of apartment sizes within the proposed development.

Commissioner Rydberg recommended a discussion with the neighbors on post-development prevention of trespassing and trash.

4.2 Preliminary Plat: Prairie Haven, Gavin Hemmer - 13631 192 1/2 Ave NW

Mr. Carlton presented the staff report.

The Commission agreed that the following conditions may be removed:

2. A wetland variance to support a driveway for lot 1 must be approved prior to approval of a final plat.
3. The applicant should work with their surveyor to explore opportunities to minimize the right-of-way dedicated for 192nd 1/2 Ave.

Acting Chair Booth opened the public hearing. There being no one to speak to this matter, Acting Chair Booth closed the public hearing.

**Moved by Commissioner Zahler and seconded by Commissioner Kaba to recommend approval of the Preliminary Plat of Prairie Haven, subject to the following condition:
I. The associated lot size variance (V 25-12) must be approved and recorded along with a future final plat. Motion carried 4-0.**

4.3 Conditional Use Permit: Motor Vehicle Sales and Repair, Pavel Liashkovich - 15777 Jarvis St NW
Mr. Leeseberg presented the staff report.

Acting Chair Booth opened the public hearing.

Eduard Yukhimchuk, 20266 Yale St, currently occupies Suite C and D and was available for questions. Since his business is currently allowed to salvage cars, he felt they should also be allowed to repair them.

Acting Chair Booth closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Rydberg checked that the applicant did not have issues with the 14 conditions. Mr. Yukhimchuk responded that he did not.

Moved by Commissioner Rydberg and seconded by Commissioner Zahler to recommend approval of the Conditional Use Permit with the following conditions to satisfy the standards set forth in Section 30-654:

- 1. The Conditional Use Permit shall not be recorded until all conditions have been completed.**
- 2. The applicant and/or property owner must apply for all required commercial building, electrical, plumbing, and/or mechanical permits before any associated activities can occur.**
- 3. Outdoor storage of damaged or inoperable vehicles shall be allowed only in the fenced-in outdoor storage area as shown on Exhibit A.**
- 4. Hazardous materials shall be handled and disposed of in accordance with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).**
- 5. The number of motor vehicle sales dealers shall be limited to one (1).**
- 6. No more than 10 “for sale” vehicles may be displayed on the subject property.**
- 7. All motor vehicle repairs, body work, or detailing shall only occur inside the building.**
- 8. Exterior doors shall be closed while any motor vehicle repair, body work, or detailing occurs.**
- 9. A code analysis finding building code compliance for the entire building shall be prepared by appropriate registered professionals.**
- 10. The parking lot shall be striped to city requirements.**
- 11. Ten signs shall be installed indicating “For Sale” vehicles.**

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- 12. Conditions 9-11 must be completed by October 31, 2025, or the CUP will be brought to the City Council on November 17, 2025, to discuss revocation.**
 - 13. An amendment to this Conditional Use Permit will be required for future changes/additions not shown on Exhibit A.**
 - 14. Conditional Use Permit CU 23-20 shall become void.**

Motion carried 4-0.

5. GENERAL BUSINESS

There were no general business items.

6. COUNCIL LIAISON UPDATES

There were no council liaison updates.

7. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Moved by Commissioner Rydberg and seconded by Commissioner Zahler to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 4-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Katie Porath.

Dennis Booth, Acting Chair

Tina Allard, City Clerk