



COTTAGE GROVE PLANNING COMMISSION
12800 Ravine Parkway South
Cottage Grove, MN 55016

July 28, 2025

COUNCIL CHAMBER - 7:00 P.M.

The Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was held in the Council Chamber and telecast on Local Government Cable Channel 16.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Frazier called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Pradeep Bhat-Here; Ken Brittain-Here; Jessica Fisher-Here; Evan Frazier-Here; Eric Knable-Excused; John Stechmann-Here; Terrence Woodman-Excused.

Members Absent: Eric Knable, Terrence Woodman

Staff Present: Emily Schmitz, Community Development Director; Samantha Pierret, Senior Planner; Kelly Becker, Associate Planner; Crystal Raleigh, Assistant City Engineer; Justin Olsen, City Council Liaison.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Bhat made a motion to approve the agenda. Stechmann seconded. The motion was approved unanimously (5-to-0 vote).

4. OPEN FORUM

Frazier opened the Open Forum and asked if anyone wished to address the Planning Commission on any non-agenda item. No one spoke. Frazier closed the Open Forum.

5. CHAIR'S EXPLANATION OF THE PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS

Frazier explained the purpose of the Planning Commission, which serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council, and that the City Council makes all final decisions. In addition, he explained the process of conducting a public hearing and requested that any person wishing to speak should go to the podium and state their full name and address for the public record.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND APPLICATIONS

A. Grove Tobacco - Case CUP2025-019

Royalty & Sons, Inc., DBA Grove Tobacco, has applied for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to sell low potency hemp edibles at their existing business located at 8599 West Point Douglas Road South, Suite 200.

Pierret summarized the staff report and recommended approval subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report.

Frazier asked if there were any questions for staff.

Fisher said I have one. I know that there were some, I mean we're still trying to figure out all this cannabis stuff, right? But there was something about proximity to schools and things, and the bus garage is like right next door. Does that have any bearing on this at all? Pierret replied that's a very good question. So, the low-potency edibles do not need to meet those setbacks from schools, parks, treatment centers, all of that kind of stuff. Just kind of diving in even further here, the bus garage would not be considered a school structure by definition that a full-potency cannabis business would need to meet the distance requirements for, but that is not what the applicant is here for tonight, it's just that low potency.

There were no further questions, so Frazier thanked Pierret.

Frazier asked at this time if the applicant is present and would like to add anything additional.

My name is Mike **Tadal** and I'm a resident at 6419 Edgemont Circle North in Brooklyn Park; my business address is 8599 West Point Douglas Road, Suite 200, in Cottage Grove. I just wanted to explain a little bit more about the low potency, it doesn't seem like there was anybody on your member board that had any questions, but the low potency is not. Let me just explain about myself, I am a student at St. Paul College. That is, I'm in the process of getting certification for cannabis retail, and so they have classes that help us understand how to, what is in our product and how it affects people and how to best explain the effect to people. The product itself is probably controlled a lot more than a lot of other product that is available out there in the stores that is not regulated currently by the State, like for example, kratom or things like that that still need to be regulated. But, again, what I wanted to just share with you is that I'm not just somebody who has just decided hey, you know, I'm going to sell this product and make money off of it and then I don't care about the community. That's completely opposite, I really, truly believe that this product can help a lot of people that are taking medications; for example, I know from a recent study that the highest increase in consumption of low-potency hemp was in the senior population of Minnesota, 67% increase just last year, since its been passed. So, just basically just an intro about myself and that I really know what I'm doing with this product, and I'm not going to be reckless with it. So, that's about it, and if there's anybody that has questions for me, I'll be more than happy to explain a little further. I don't want to go on a rant here and nonstop, but yeah. So, does anybody have any questions?

Bhat said so my question is regarding, what's the difference here, what you refer to as hemp, is that cannabis in pure form, or its just an exception of? Mike replied great question. So, cannabis is the marijuana plant, and hemp is the plant itself, but there's levels of potency; so, for example, in alcohol, you know how they sell 3.2 beer at a gas station, and you get the regular beer at a liquor store. So, this low-potency hemp is that type of marijuana, a plant that you would find that's equivalent to the 3.2 beer that you would find at a gas station. Again, hemp is marijuana, but its not the, there are three types, the stuff you can buy from someone off the street; at the same time, to your question, there are different levels, not just levels, but like there are different types of hemp. So, there's the THC, the CBD is a form of hemp, but it's a very different plant and a different seed, a strain of seeds that is grown in the ground to give that potency. The average potency of a street marijuana plant is between 23% to 35%, so that's the THC that is contained in the flower, and with hemp, it could be 2%.

Stechmann said I was just curious, the lower-potency hemp, is that sometimes referred to as Delta-8 or Delta-9 or something along those lines? Mike replied great question, yes, it is referred to as Delta-8, sometimes referred to as Delta-9, and it also could be a combination of the two. So, it could be CBD plus the Delta-9 or Delta-8; I don't know if you remember, there was a Delta-7 back then. There are certain grams of that hemp that the State allows the maximum to be in a product. So, right now, you can't get any product that has more than 10 mg. of THC or hemp or Delta-8 or 9, and yeah, there's a Delta-8 plus so and so, so there's many acronyms to it. It can get a little confusing here, but you're right. Stechmann said thank you. Mike replied yeah, no problem.

There were no further questions, so Frazier said all right, thank you. Mike replied great, thank you very much.

Frazier opened the Public Hearing. No one spoke. Frazier closed the Public Hearing.

Frazier asked if there was any further discussion by the commission and there was none.

Fisher made a motion to approve the Conditional Use Permit subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report. Stechmann seconded. The motion was approved unanimously (5-to-0 vote).

B. 61 Marine & Sports - Cases SP/CUP2025-018

61 Marine & Sports has applied for a Site Plan review for a 50-foot by 8-foot building addition and a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the display, hire, service, rental, leasing, and/or sale of boats and recreational vehicles conducted outside a building with servicing inside a building at 11730 Point Douglas Drive South.

Pierret summarized the staff report and recommended approval, subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report.

Frazier asked if there were any questions for staff; none were asked. Frazier thanked Pierret.

Frazier asked at this time if the applicant would like to approach and add anything additional; Frazier said he's waving from the back that he's okay.

Frazier opened the Public Hearing. No one spoke. Frazier closed the Public Hearing.

Frazier asked if there was any discussion by commission.

Brittain said we have a letter that was given to us from Theresa Williams. Could you comment on the concern that they have about the lighting, how it exists, and how this may affect it or not? Pierret replied sure, of course. The letter was in reference to the residential houses that are across Highway 61 from the property. It seems that some lighting that is not downward directed, that is kind of flooding the parking lot, has been installed over the years. It is the City's Code that all lighting in the commercial districts not exceed a one-foot candle at properties adjoining commercial and industrial, and a half-foot candle adjoining residential; however, taking into consideration we do understand Highway 61, a four-lane road, is in between these two. However, all lights should be downward directed, and that is included in a condition in your packet that all lighting be installed to City standards, and we would require the applicant to do that with the existing lighting on the property at this time. Brittain said okay, thank you.

Frazier stated I did not see the front of that email that indicated it was an email, and so that will be part of the record for this application as well. And, Sam, the only other thing I was going to ask then about that is so there's a condition, I see Condition 15 that was added about outdoor lighting shall be directed downward as part of City Ordinance; going forward, has that been just incumbent on Code Enforcement then to make sure that City Code is being followed with respect to this issue? Pierret replied that would be correct. There also is the opportunity for us to require a Lighting Plan or a Photometric Plan where the applicant would show us that that half-foot candle is being met at property lines. So, there are other things that we can also look into as well. Frazier said okay, thank you.

Frazier asked if there was any further discussion from the commission.

Frazier said I guess I'll just add I've been on the Planning Commission now since 2018 and so I've seen 61 Marine & Sports come through several times, as we saw in the application. I'm glad they're a business in the community that's still growing and doing more business, and so, I'm glad to see them work out with the City this application.

Brittain made a motion to approve the Site Plan Review and Conditional Use Permit subject to conditions stipulated in the staff report. Fisher seconded. The motion was approved unanimously (5-to-0 vote).

C. Almar Village Parking - Case V2025-017

Curt Hoffman, on behalf of Almar Village, LLC, has applied for a variance to allow expansion of the existing parking lot at 7155 Jorgensen Lane South to be within two feet of the east property line and to increase the impervious surface coverage of the parcel beyond the 70 percent impervious surface allowed in the B-1, Limited Business District.

Pierret summarized the staff report and recommended approval based on the findings of fact and subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report.

Frazier thanked Pierret, asked if there were any questions for staff.

Brittain said the parking spaces that are in the southeast corner of the property, which is not part of the 2.4 acres, if that parcel were to develop at some point in time, I know its kind of small, how would that impact if whatever business were to go on that parcel required the entire site have more parking spaces? What would happen? Pierret replied that's a very good question. So,

we're discussing this box in the red, down in the southeast corner. Should a business or something come in there that requires more parking spaces than is currently provided on their individual piece, as you can see there is less fewer parking spaces than our required on the site today. So, what we do is we look at their use and we look at things like peak hours of business. For example, the two restaurants on site are going to need these parking spaces roughly at the same time of the day vs. a hair salon or nail salon that is in there if that were to go on this vacant parcel, they need the parking spaces at a different time of the day. We are able to kind of look at peak hours and things like that, but technically, each tenant space needs to have parking to satisfy their particular use. So, without knowing what somebody would come in and ask for, it's hard to say, it's very much a situation-based request. Brittain replied so, if there was a high parking need, then it probably couldn't go in there, but it wouldn't prevent some type of use from going in there if it had a balance between the hours and that use. Pierret replied yes. Brittain said okay, thank you.

Frazier said if we can go back to that photo, so this is a rendering then of what it would look like, or what the approval was back when it was first approved. So, the green circle is kind of these are the parking spots that they want to add, and I know you said it was two feet from the property line is where these spots end, which Pierret confirmed. Frazier said and then there is the Right-of-Way, and within the Right-of-Way there is a walking trail that does bend towards the parking lot. Do we know how close the parking spots are going to be to the walking trail at its closest spot? Pierret replied Mr. Chair, very good question. I did not measure that, however the two feet plus, I would only be guessing if I had to say the trail is maybe four-or-five feet off of that property line there, so at least five feet, but that would only be a guess. Frazier said okay, thank you, and I appreciate it. I don't like to play stump the planner, but just a concern of mine that it does bend towards the parking lot right where those spots are going to go; and it doesn't sound like we're going to get any screening or any fencing or anything, which makes sense because it would not fit the rest of the character of the area, but just a concern of mine that that's going to be pretty close to that walking trail.

Fisher said I was trying to find in here, I read that there's like a shared parking agreement amongst all of the businesses there. Is that going to change anything about that agreement? Because I know that there are other places that I won't name, but one near me where I know that there are like kind of fights between the establishments with parking, right, and if anyone's on the Facebook page, they know all about the drama. I'm just wondering with two restaurants there and you think about peak time and you think about all of that, is the City going to require some sort of agreement amongst all of them to play nice or how does that work? Because I could see that becoming an issue. Pierret replied that's a very good question, and I am not on the Facebook page. So, like I kind of mentioned, this owner owns the two restaurants or will own the two restaurants, which are the major parking gatherers if you will of the property, with the gas station being the second one; however, it's kind of, as we all know, more a transient come and go, and then the retail space, which is, as I mentioned before, the peak hours are going to be different. In my conversations with the owner, unfortunately he couldn't make it tonight, they all work well together with this shared parking agreement, they all understand that you can park on any of these parcels. You'll be able to park in his new spaces and go to the gas station if you really wanted to walk that far, and there's been no issues with them as of yet with the current owners, I'll say. Fisher said okay.

Bhat said regarding the vacant parcel, it seems to have some parking areas in it, so why is it called vacant then? Pierret replied good question. I considered it vacant since there's not a commercial use or structure on the site; right now, its solely being used for parking and mostly people who are visiting the Carbone's restaurant, I would say, are parking in that space. So, right now, there's not a structure or a commercial use taking place on the property, it's solely at-grade parking. Bhat asked so if there is going to be a structure coming up there, can it occupy any of those parking areas? Pierret replied so, they would be able to count those few parking spaces towards their use; however, then we would be taking away those parking spaces from the Carbone's, this restaurant use, and it kind of leads back to Commissioner Brittain's question where we're talking about what type of use would go here; and without just spitballing various ideas, we would need to be looking at what are the peak hours of operation for such a use, how much parking are they needed based on the use, based on our ordinance. It's very hard to kind of imagine what could ever possibly go there, and as mentioned, it is a fairly small parcel as well. Bhat said I guess my question was can in that vacant parcel, can they build anything on the existing parking area so that those will be no longer parking spaces, something else will come up on them? So, then you're short of parking areas. Pierret replied okay, so that would kind of be like they'd be taking away the parking from not only themselves, but also from the other uses on the site. So, technically, if they met all of the setbacks, all of our City ordinance requirements, you could construct a building that meets setbacks and everything like that on that vacant parcel; however, again, it's just hard to envision something that isn't in front of us right now as a proposal. Yes, somebody could construct a building over those parking stalls, and those would then be removed from the site. Bhat said thank you.

Frazier said I have a question about stormwater maintenance. So, maybe our City Engineering Department and since Commissioner Stephens isn't here, I will talk about the stormwater. I know Sam pointed out that the retaining basin that's on the other side of Jorgensen Lane was set up to accommodate 6.3 acres, and this is going to get us to 6.3 acres. I'm assuming that is like a, is that based on like the 100-year estimates that would keep the 6.3-acre amount of water that would be diverted from the site, or? Pierret replied yeah, that's a great question. The stormwater design for this site is based on several different storms based on our Surface Water Management Plan. So, yes, the 100-year storm is evaluated in those conditions, and that additional impervious acreage that would be included from these parking stalls was accounted for in that 100-year calculation for the current stormwater pond that's on the site. Frazier said okay. So, even though we are getting up to the 6.3-acre limit, that's not a concern because it is built to handle a very unlikely scenario with respect to that area. Pierret replied yeah, Mr. Chair, that is correct. We're getting up to what it was designed to accommodate in the first place. Frazier said okay, thank you.

Fisher said and I don't know if you guys, because the applicant isn't here, so you may not be able to answer, but would there ever be a time when instead of considering expanding the parking lot, the capacity of the restaurant that's coming in would be less? Because, I mean, that might be, and like I said, you may not be able to answer it because he's not here. Pierret replied good question. So, the capacity of the restaurant of course is how we calculate the needed parking spaces. It was brought up to the applicant that the restaurant could reduce the number of seats to hit or get much closer to that required parking number without adding these parking spaces; however, as most of us from a business standpoint, reducing the number of seats it was a very large number of seats they would've needed to reduce by, almost half, just to get to the required parking number on site where they wouldn't need to add these. Fisher said sure, it makes sense. It's just the part of the variance thing, the economic part of it, is I guess what I'm hung up on; like, you know, when we grant a variance, economics are not supposed to be factored in, right? When you have a restaurant coming in and you have to have X amount of capacity in order for it to be economically viable, you just have to consider that. Pierret replied yeah, so, I'll just kind of piggyback; restaurants are a permitted use, and so, had this met all the parking standards and everything, staff would have said go forth and open your restaurant and everything. We are just really trying, because we know as staff and as commissioners, parking in this lot is quite challenging; and, so, now seemed like the time to with this 2016 variance to let's get that added because we're going to be having another restaurant on the site. Fisher asked is there any plan, because there's a residential area immediately to the west of there, are there No Parking signs on that street already, or are there going to be measures taken to not hinder the residents either? Because I would assume that this parking lot would overflow at some point. Pierret replied I don't think that there are any No Parking signs on Jorgensen. Fisher replied I'm just thinking about where is the overflow going to go? It's going to go on those residential streets that are. Council Member Justin Olsen said I can answer that question for you. There is nothing posted on Jorgensen that says No Parking. There actually are overflow parkers who use that now, and one of the concerns under consideration is the space that that would leave for emergency vehicles should they need to access that area. If you think about a bar and a restaurant, sometimes that's something that you have to think about. But there's no posting on it now; it's certainly something that could be recommended. Fisher replied right, I was just going to say maybe that's something that can be considered if it becomes a problem, if things get jammed up there. I don't know how the City would go about keeping an eye on that or whatever, but it's just a thought.

Bhat said I have a quick question. So, where is the Mexican restaurant going to come; is it in the big building or the one in front of the Holiday station? Pierret replied yes, it is in the big building. It's going to take up two tenant spaces right on the north side of the building here, so they will have the outdoor patio area accessible for them as well out there. Bhat replied okay, thank you.

Stechmann asked so, when exiting onto 70th Street from Jorgensen there, before, at some point in time, there was a porkchop that prevented people from turning left to head westbound on 70th Street, right? Council Member Olsen replied that's correct. Stechmann said okay, and that is since removed, so now that restriction has kind of been removed and so people can turn either left or right onto 70th Street, that's probably true? Council Member Olsen replied yes, the County took that out. Stechmann said so, with the increased number of parking spaces and the increased demand for this space with the new restaurant coming in, are there going to be concerns about increased traffic spilling out onto 70th Street, especially with respect to the property that abuts it to the north? Pierret replied yes, I will allow Crystal Raleigh, the Assistant City Engineer, to come up; I know she was preparing for these questions. Raleigh said yeah, this is a situation that will continue to be monitored by the County as additional developments go in and change the way that this is used. Currently, their guidance regarding this intersection has been, and we'll get to it with the Cedarhurst discussion, but to align this access from Jorgensen to the north with the Cedarhurst driveway; that makes that intersection safer for a variety of reasons by aligning that. Those left-turning movements can operate much more freely. We also have the benefit of having a left-turn lane into both of these properties, so that stacking isn't on the main throughway. The County does have the ability to limit this access if it does become problematic in the future, so they could limit it to that right in, right out in the future. Stechmann said thank you.

Frazier said Sam, I do have just one more question for you, and I have not been to this parking lot in a while, so I don't remember. I think, correct me if I'm wrong, but I think the entire lot is kind of surrounded by curb. So, my question is, if that is the case, are these new spots going to have curb to prevent them from going onto the grass and the Right-of-Way, where Keats is? Or is it just going to be pavement right up to, like basically at level with the grass? Pierret replied very good question. So, they would need to be installing the curb and everything like that per the City standards for parking lots and everything. Frazier said okay, all right, thank you.

Frazier asked and you said the applicant is not here tonight? Pierret replied correct.

Frazier opened the Public Hearing. No one spoke. Frazier closed the Public Hearing.

Frazier asked if there was any further discussion by commission.

Frazier said I guess I have to highlight it, I have some real concerns with the parking abutting the walking trail and just how close its going to be. I think as Council Member Olsen indicated, you know, bars and restaurants are sometimes places that emergency vehicles need to get to; bars and restaurants are also places that serve alcohol and people then drive away from, and when they do that, they're not always the most careful drivers. And, so, I think getting that close to the public Right-of-Way, especially where there is a device designed for people to be walking on, I think is a concern that I have about extending this parking into that area. So, that is my personal concern about it. Does anyone else wish to discuss?

Fisher said I actually was going to say that. I'm wondering if there's any sort of, instead of just a curb, if this does go through, like is there some sort of something, I don't know, like outside Target there's the big red balls, right? Like, is there something that can be put along that side of the parking lot to maybe help protect from cars going too far, or? Pierret replied sure, something like bollards or something like that. Fisher said I don't know what they're called, something, a stake or something that would stop a vehicle that's going where it's not supposed to be, maybe that could be something added to it. I don't know. Pierret replied that is, the commission's purview could be to add that as a possible condition for the overall safety. Brittain said in regards to that, I can see there being some issues with something along those lines, even though there might be value added in it, and I would think that we'd want to evaluate whether moving the trail would be a better solution for that than putting in a guard rail, so to speak, whether it's bollards or not. Maybe have staff evaluate what the best option for safety is there vs. forcing them into something with the particular application. Fisher replied you can't put that trail closer to Keats, though. Brittain said well, it is closer to Keats on 50% of it, this is significantly farther in than the rest of it. So, it's just a thought. Frazier said yeah, I mean, I understand the commercial realities of the parking and needing it; if you're now going to have two restaurants in there in what is already a busy parking lot, obviously, you need to have places for people to park legally because then I think the issue on Jorgensen gets worse if you don't. Because people are just going to not go there, they're just going to find other places to put their car that are probably not as great a place to put it. So, I think if it does go through and the commission votes to recommend City Council approve it, I would ask if staff and the applicant to work together on what is a workable way to make sure that pedestrians and people who are on the walking trail are protected. Because I agree that putting bollards, obviously that's the one that they stop cars because they're either metal or they're concrete, but in this area, I think they would look odd. You know, I don't know how effective they would be, but I think there should be some kind of consideration that the applicant should put forward in making sure that this is not going to become a nuisance or a problem.

Brittain said I agree, and another option may be some of the standardized fencing that we have around patios and things along those lines. While it wouldn't forcibly stop a vehicle from moving forward, but it would be an additional optical recognition from anybody getting in their car that there's something in front of them and maybe subconsciously have them think about that. But just to consider the different options that are available for making it as safe as possible.

Brittain made a motion to approve based on the findings of fact and subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report with the additional request that staff review the trail placement and safety of that parking area and what can be done, if anything, to make it as safe as possible as it moves forward and then present that to the City Council to get their consideration on that as well. Stechmann seconded. The motion was approved unanimously (5-to-0 vote).

D. Cedarhurst - Cases ZA/HCUP/SP2025-020

Bellagala has applied for a Zoning Amendment to rezone the property at 6940 Keats Avenue from AG-2, Agricultural, to M-U, Mixed Use District; a Historical Conditional Use Permit to operate an event center in the M-U, Mixed Use District; a Site Plan Review; a Zoning Amendment to rezone the property at 9912 70th Street from AG-2 to R-3, Single

Family Residential; and a Historical Conditional Use Permit for associated business uses in conjunction with the event center.

Schmitz summarized the staff report and recommended approval subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report. She stated the applicant with Bellagala, J.J., is also here and he is going to share some more details of the improvements, as I had promised, to understand better that restoration effort to the mansion. Brittain asked Emily, can we do questions to you before we, sorry, J.J., and Schmitz replied yeah.

Brittain said question one, Caretaker Cottage and Gardener's House, are those the same thing? Schmitz replied technically, yes. Brittain said so if you could maybe be consistent because it got a little confusing in there, it almost sounded like the Gardener's House somebody just owned it and they were going to stay living there; but then this Caretaker thing was going to potentially be utilized for some sort of function, even though it wasn't owned. So, there was a little bit of confusion there in regards to that. So, that's a separate property that has the Gardener's House on it, has some potential use for it, and is not owned by this entity that is buying the Cedarhurst part of it? Schmitz replied the current landowner owns both parcels, and the applicant is proposing to purchase both parcels. Brittain replied okay, I didn't get that from the staff report, so that is a good clarification. Brittain asked with respect to the drainage, is that a little pond that's to the right, a little holding area to the right of the impervious parking lot? So, that's for water storage there as well, okay. Brittain said so I was going to ask about ghost platting that other property, but if you're going to own it all and there isn't somebody that's living there that's going to do something else with it, then I don't have a concern with that. So, that satisfies my questions at this time. Thank you.

Frazier asked if there were any other questions for staff.

Bhat said so why are these two parcels zoned differently, like in the Comprehensive Plan, and is there, I mean, can we amend it and then call both of them as Mixed Use? I'm having that confusion. Schmitz replied long term, it was always envisioned that this would remain as a single-family home likely due to its historic nature, it would give us the ability to preserve it as the home and preserve the home itself. However, yes, we could reevaluate long term, as we think about our 2050 Comprehensive Plan, to align both of those parcels with the same guidance of Mixed Use.

Fisher said so about the Cottage House only being used as like a staff, it sounds like a lunchroom kind of thing, but is there going to be a capacity assigned to that building because its now going to become a commercial use capacity, what about like Fire Code things? Are they going to be able to rent that out for let's say somebody wants to have a meeting? Like, what are, because that house is changing from a dwelling, basically, into a commercial business use, are any of those things being considered? Schmitz replied so that would be specific to the Building Code. So, from a Zoning perspective, we recognize that it is still a single-family home, but we allow for this commercial use as they apply for permits to do the improvements and what that use looks like and how they evaluate it from the State Building Code side. They will align with those standards. Fisher said okay.

Brittain said so, in regards to that, if the Gardener's Cottage is still zoned as low residential, how does that fit into a business use? Schmitz replied so zoning is one standard, right, for how it can be utilized? But when you look at the Building Code, and I am no building official, but I can tell you they do look at how it is being utilized and there are standards that align, even though it is technically a single-family home if its being used for a different type of use it does need to meet those standards. Brittain asked and at some point, would they have the ability to, not that they would want to do this, but just so that we're prepared, to subdivide that under its current zoning classification as low residential into more than one structure? Schmitz replied that is possible, they could submit for that application. Brittain asked with the extension of the water and sewer from the cul-de-sac to the west, I'm assuming that would preclude building on that area? Schmitz replied it likely would impact how those lots may lay out. Brittain said okay, all right, thank you.

Bhat said so the stormwater pond that is proposed, that is for the additional impervious land coming from the parking lot and just the parking lot alone, or does it account for all the impervious land there? Schmitz replied I am going to turn it over to Assistant City Engineer Crystal Raleigh to give just a little bit more of a detailed general overview of how the stormwater is laid out and evaluated on the site. Bhat said thank you. Raleigh replied so, the stormwater that is proposed on the site, which is just to the east of that new proposed impervious parking, that stormwater is to take care of any additional impervious that's being added to the site. So, that would include the parking lot, the additional area on the driveway that's being added, as well as the roof for the 4,000 square-foot addition. So, that stormwater pond would be to accommodate all of the stormwater from the additional impervious for the whole site. Bhat said thank you.

Fisher said I don't know how to ask my question, I'm trying to figure out how to word it. So, with the Cottage House, now Ken's got me thinking about developing it in the future. So, it's going from AG-2 to R-3; is there an different R we can put it under to kind of keep it? I don't know, I'm still trying to learn the new. Schmitz replied sure. So, it is a unique scenario in that we are proposing to rezone to R-3, which is single-family residential. We want to make sure that aligns with the Comprehensive Plan. Now, hypothetically, a new property owner says I would like to sell it, it would be a single-family residence, right, someone could live there; is there the potential for redevelopment? Certainly. The Historical Conditional Use Permit (HCUP) is what gives us the ability to say hey, we want to use it in conjunction with this other historic use, which lays over top of it, right? It does run with the land, so that opportunity is there, but we did want to be specific in our conditions that the commercial use was just that, limited within the Gardener's Cottage. Fisher said got you, okay, thank you.

Brittain said all right, I'm going to ask another question there because it's burned a thought. So, the driveway or the Gardener's Cottage is now coming off of the new drive line. If, for some unforeseen reason, that parcel was sold off and developed as something, would that require an access point on 70th Street, or would they still continue to use that shared new driveway access with the commercial use? Schmitz replied likely if that parcel were to potentially I'm going to say redevelop, it would take its access from 69th Street, the cul-de-sac to the west. Brittain said all right, thank you. Brittain said all right, I'm going to ask another one. So, access from 70th Street, I have some concern with; well, let me just ask you this. Coming east on 70th Street, we currently have a dedicated right into Almar, correct, and a through to go to the roundabout, and then going west, we currently have a dedicated left into Almar and a through, so two lanes going both directions. What's going to happen with people going east on 70th Street since we don't have a dedicated left coming from that direction coming into the property and because you no longer have a through. If traffic stops, in order to enter this property and there's a backup on 70th, you know waiting for people coming through the roundabout, then that's going to mean that traffic would potentially back up on 70th, correct? Schmitz replied so, there's currently, if folks are headed east on 70th and they're going to take a left into the site, there is currently a turn lane. Brittain said so there is currently a dedicated left and right going east? Schmitz replied correct. Brittain said okay, good, that's one of the things that I wanted to clarify, so that's great. Now, going the other way, going west, is there going to potentially be a need for a right-hand dedicated turn? Because we have a dedicated left into Almar and a through, and my concern is if there might be a need for a dedicated right-hand turn lane into the property and the storm holding area that we currently have there could potentially preclude if that were necessary to move the trail over to add a dedicated right-hand turn lane. So, I guess I would phrase it this way: If we feel that there's a safety concern from a traffic perspective that would require a right-hand turn lane, does that automatically trigger the north entrance point being invoked as an in and out from the Military cul-de-sac? Or is there a way to do this in such that if we don't feel we need a right-hand turn lane right now, which I'm concerned about, because people whipping around that roundabout might not see people stopped or slowing down in order to turn right into this property. So, I have a concern about that, so I see two solutions: One is a dedicated right-hand turn lane, and is there a way that we can make it feasible to add that if we don't feel that its added now but enable us to do it later? Keeping in mind that storm portion on the south part of the parking lot, the stormwater pond, if you put something there, there might be a problem with moving the trail so that you can put in the turn lane. Or if we see that there's a problem automatically, we're going to have to put a new road in from the north? Schmitz replied two things: First, 70th is a County Roadway, and it will be up to the County to identify when this particular intersection needs to be limited to that right in, right out, on both the north and the south side. Second, folks heading into the site, taking a right, they're not limited by anything as they're pulling into that site, right, so that's a free flow of traffic into the Cedarhurst site. No, there is not a dedicated right-turn lane as folks are headed west, turning into the site; however, there is nothing that stops them so likely that backup wouldn't be an issue on 70th Street. Brittain replied I'm not necessarily worried about a backup, I'm worried about you're traveling at say 35 MPH by the time you're at that point, and then you're slowing down to 0 to make the turn; there's that transition point of I was flowing at one speed through the roundabout and it's like oh, now I've got to turn right. It's the guy behind him that you're not stopped, but you also may not be paying attention because you're not, and so, I just have a concern with the proximity distance from the entrance to the roundabout; and I understand it's the County's decision, but we can squeak enough that if we feel that it's important that they would at least evaluate it. I guess what I'm trying to do here is what I see is a potential solution being prevented by the current location of the southern portion of that holding pond, maybe, I don't know, the City Engineer would be able to say better, but my concern is that we might need something there. If the simple solution is it's just going to trigger a road through the woods up to the Military thing, then okay, you know that would be the way to go, but it would be nice to preserve the option of not forcing it to have to happen right now. If we felt it was necessary to add one later, that you could add one later without putting infrastructure in place that would prevent that from moving. So, that would be my thought on that particular part of it, and granted, I would expect it to be fully evaluated by staff because you guys do a great job about that, but this may not have been considered up to this point in time. Schmitz replied I would also add if at such time a right-turn lane in were to be warranted, I imagine likely at that point it would be warranted to shift the driveway to the full access to be on Keats Avenue, and so that right-turn lane wouldn't be necessary. But we will follow the guidance of the County absolutely. Brittain said okay, thank you.

Stechmann said just to follow up, do I understand correctly that the County has kind of like the exclusive jurisdiction to decide whether or not this has become a safety hazard on 70th Street? Because I thought that I read somewhere in the packet that it could be either the County Engineer or the City Engineer that could initiate whatever is necessary, a traffic study or reporting of the number of crashes, or other types of evidence to establish that there needs to be some measures taken to improve the safety. I drove this today and it was during my lunch hour, so it wasn't a big deal for me to go around the roundabout and come back, heading westbound on 70th Street. I didn't encounter that and of course it wasn't open so nobody was turning right into the property. But I can foresee on a Saturday at 6:00 p.m., you know, people coming through there, and like Commissioner Brittain said, you know that people are accelerating from this roundabout, heading westbound; then suddenly they encounter brake lights in front of them, and they have to then like decelerate, perhaps after they've had a few while at some other establishment. So, that's my concern, I guess is the County the exclusive arbiter of whether or not there needs to be either a dedicated right-turn lane or if there needs to be the northern access to Military? Raleigh replied the City and the County will continue to work together on the safety of this intersection into its future. We're frequently communicating with them and we communicate our concerns on County corridors often, and they are taken seriously. We will continue to work with them. I think Emily was correct in saying that the second option really is that Military access if we get into a situation where a right-turn lane would be needed, I do think we'd be going up to Military rather than constructing that right-turn lane, but this will continue to be worked on with the County. One thing I also wanted to mention is that the internal site itself has a significant amount of stacking in the driveway, so it's not like they're turning right and then they're waiting for somebody to back out of a parking stall before they can get into the parking lot. There's a significant amount of stacking within the driveway, before they're turning down into the parking lot as well. So, we don't anticipate traffic sitting out there on 70th Street, but there are some unknowns here with this type of use and exactly how many people we're going to have coming in here. We know we don't anticipate that it's going to cause stacking out on 70th, but that's the reason why we'll continue to plan for that access at Military, if needed. Stechmann said I did notice in maybe one of the other figures that was included in the packet, not this one, that the entrance to the proposed parking lot was awfully close to the driveway entrance on 70th Street, but it appears now in this drawing that the entrance into the parking lot is further north. Is that the additional buffer zone or distance that would allow this stacking to occur on site instead of on 70th Street? Raleigh replied I don't really understand your question, can you state that again? Stechmann said when I was looking through the packet, I saw that a motorist that would drive from 70th Street and enter to the property, using the driveway, I thought on one of the diagrams it showed that in order to go from the driveway into the parking lot was on what would be the south side of the parking lot instead of the north side of the parking lot. So, is it in fact the case that the entrance to the parking lot will be on the north side of the parking lot and not the south, thereby to prevent the stacking from occurring on 70th Street? Raleigh replied you're correct, the entrance has moved to the north side of that parking lot, and we've required that alignment with the driveway to the Gardener's Cottage. It was I guess a later change in the Site Plan when the County guided us to align the driveway with Jorgensen. With that in mind, we needed to move the driveway to the Gardener's Cottage, and the best design then is to have those two coming together at the same point, on the north side of the parking lot. Stechmann said great, thank you.

Frazier said all right, I think that's it for questions for staff. If the applicant would like to approach and add anything additional.

Good Evening, my name's J.J. Maleitzke, 6940 Keats Avenue South, Cottage Grove, Minnesota, 55016, hopefully. Emily, great job, a tough crowd to follow here, but she kind of took a lot of my thunder here. I'm just going to tell you a little bit about who we are to just kind of show you the behind the screen here, behind the curtain: 28 years in business, not me, I've just been with the company for three years, Tim George started this business as a DJ company almost three decades ago, and we're up to six venues, this could be number seven. As you stated, we're in 12 other cities, actually outside of here, so lucky number 13, technically here. We've got an old historic mansion, VanDusen Mansion, in downtown Minneapolis, A'BULAE, Le' Venere, also a historic building in downtown St. Paul. We've also got over 200 acres in Chaska with three locations out there, Edward Anne Estate, Equestria West, and Woodland Glasshaus. The part of the business that is actually in the other markets, as well as here, where we do all the wedding services, wedding, photo, video, DJ, etc., is called Bellagala. Our goal is to host world-class events; we consider ourselves one of the premier wedding venues in the State of Minnesota and hoping to expand that a bit here, too. You kind of hit all the highlights of what the mansion is all about, built in the 1860s, expanded once in 1917, multiple remodels since then. It is on the Historic Registry, so its kind of unique; this is basically the spiel that I gave a few weeks back to the neighborhood to try to educate them about us. I'll try to go a little more high level since you guys are knowledgeable on it, but the biggest notable historic things are not only ABA significance, but also the people who stayed there: Cordenio Severance, Cass Gilbert, and the mansion hosted on occasions U.S. Presidents, Teddy Roosevelt, William H. Taft, Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and so on. Our plan is simply to mirror what we did at the Van Dusen Mansion:

- 1) Respect the history of Cedarhurst. We want to keep as much green space as possible, do as little disruption as we can; obviously, adding a 4,000 square-foot building, the Atrium, is not a small disruption, but knowing that, we're trying to limit it as much as possible, focusing on important pieces like the Rose Garden, focusing on that Cass Gilbert building as soon as we can, kind of in a Phase 2, and trying to get the grounds, the yard, the inside spaces as original as possible.
- 2) Again, rehabilitate wherever we can and whatever we can.
- 3) Create a luxury wedding experience with a rich history and with modern amenities, ADA compliance, proper restrooms, new elevators, all those things.
- 4) Bellagala gives our couples an all-inclusive wedding experience. Marketing would kill me, but it's kind of a one-stop shop, if you want; you have the ability to get all those services, the location, the food, the beverage, everything on site.
- 5) Be a steward of our community and be a great neighbor, not just our neighborhood, the people that live right around us, but Cottage Grove, the cities that we obviously have business in.

You'll notice a lot has happened in the last five years since they have not done business. These are just a few lowlights of what the place looks like, but our plan is to again keep as much as we can: Windows, siding, all of these things, but obviously bringing it back to life. If this thing sits for too many more years, I'm afraid its going to turn to rubble, and so our goal is to reverse that. Inside, as much of the flooring as we can keep, as much of the original lighting that's 100 and some odd years old, we want to keep. We want to rewire, we want to bring back and bring back to life. The basement is scary, probably haunted, but we're going to definitely go in there, I'm not going to, he's going to go in there, and do everything that we can from new wiring, new plumbing, HVAC, everything, bring it up to Code again to keep the life of this building going.

The Build

- 1) This is pretty darn high level, but we're hoping for approval here and the next couple of hoops we've got to jump through, too. The plan is to potentially start in mid-to-late August, if possible.
- 2) The goal would be to get a lot of the outdoor heavy work done in 2025, then in winter, spring, and then mid-summer next year to kind of help it grow and help it settle.
- 3) In the wintertime, a lot of the indoor remodeling.
- 4) Spring, 2026: Plantings, all the finishes, all the fine details that those couples really, really fall in love with.
- 5) Our goal is opening August, 2026. This is at or around probably an 11-month project that it would take to actually get this thing to the finish line; he says 12, but I bet you we can get them at 11, so, it's on the record now.
- 6) Grand opening would be a few weeks after the first event, we said that in the neighborhood, we would love the City, we'd love everybody to come join and be part of it. As we said, we want to be stewards of the community and let you guys come and enjoy something on us, too.

J.J. said Emily had kind of shown the vibe, the picture, the view of this. Part of what we're attempting to do here is you'll notice the shed-style addition; our goal, especially from the recommendations of the historic channels, is we don't want to match this, we don't want to make it look like Cedarhurst Mansion, we want to make it look a little bit different and obviously, that is what we have chosen to do here. What you'll also notice kind of in that top-right picture, notice the floor-to-ceiling windows, basically. In that little area that you see those little mini people walking around, that is the Rose Garden. Our goal is to make that Rose Garden really the centerpiece of this entire thing. It is one of the most beautiful things about this history, and our goal is to kind of bring that outdoor space inside as well. What you'll notice, too, is our neighborhoods are kind of going west and north, for the most part; this area is where the majority of the activity is actually going to take place, which really acts as a physical barrier when it comes to sound, when it comes to light, noise pollution, and stuff like that. So, that was by no mistake, that was by design, to again make sure our neighbors love us not only today but years from now as well.

Again, this is just kind of a high-level overview of what this is going to look like, and Emily had already gone through some of this, but you will notice like our goal on the inside of this building is to do whatever we can to maintain. Obviously, we're going to have to rehabilitate a lot, but whatever we can do to sand down floors, whatever we can do to keep existing original wallpaper, lighting, etc. we're going to do. Some of that stuff is a little TBD, we've had a lot of construction. PMI has brought in tons of contractors to make sure that they can give it the best assessment, and from the current approach, it feels like we're going to be able to save a lot of it, which is awesome, same thing for the upstairs and the addition.

Traffic Management and Parking

Something that's always important is traffic, parking, and how do we manage it, obviously, a controlled entry and exit. Our goal from a business standpoint, from location to the parking lot, the ideal is going to be off of 70th, it just makes the most sense. It's going to allow for that grand entrance when people go into the parking lot, walk through the really nice pathway to get them to

either the mansion, the Rose Garden, or the Atrium. We do understand that who knows what's to come in the future, and that's why we're working with Emily and the City to determine a Plan B, hopefully Plan Z, but way down there if we do have to make something happen, we want to make it happen. What we're also pros at is we've got three locations on 200 acres in Chaska, all of which come in the same single-road driveway. We've got what we call air traffic controllers out there that are actually getting people in and out, we escort them, we do this thing for being a high end, for lack of a better term, exclusive wedding experience, and our clients come to expect that. So, on the face it shows as high-end luxury, but at the same time, too, it's also protecting the little things; I don't want people sitting and waiting in parking lots, not knowing where they're going, backing up traffic on the main road. So, the cosmetic beauty up front is cool, high-end luxury, the reality on the back end is we're doing it because we've got flow, we've got function, we've got things that we need to do from an operations standpoint, too. Obviously, designated areas for staffing, vendor parking, client parking, which you would see all the way in the bottom right; so, we would have over here in our, it's not necessarily overflow, the 24 spots is 1A and then 1B is the spot I'm highlighting right here. You know, if you ever go to Home Depot or whatever, everybody parks in the back; that's kind of the same thing that we would do, so the people that are coming in for the event would obviously filter into the front area. We do also from a parking standpoint build relationships, we're not there yet, we wait obviously until everything is done, but local hotels, local shuttles, local limousines, etc. to identify opportunities for people to do more than the average three person per car typical usage. Also, internally, when we see extremely high guest counts, more towards the max of our capacity, there are times that we'll actually implement inhouse valet parking, which would allow us to in those 23 spots, you can usually get close to three times, actually, if you're kind of parking them like sardines, if you will, but we'd have licensed, insured valet parkers bring that in, which would alleviate that parking issue. I don't have the updated one, because I sent this before, you were so kind to adjust that, but Emily had shown the updated parking is actually going to be here, not here. This is the Code Red, though, 911 parking stuff that we don't plan to use; we would only use it in a situation that we had to make it happen.

Managing Sound and Light

How do we manage sound and light? These are two of those pollutions, too, that obviously I think really impact the neighbors. The building itself, as I showed, is a massive blocking agent, I guess, for both sound and light. Emily had also mentioned that any amplified sound from us wouldn't be after 10:00 p.m.; that would include the Rose Garden, that would be included on any of our porches or patios. The majority of our ceremonies are typically like that 4:00 to 5:30, give or take, so usually any of those things that she had stated were 150+ feet away from any of the other properties, would usually be done by dinnertime. So, then they would move back into the mansion and spend the majority of their time in that Rose Garden area. Again, the parking lot is a little bit more, its closer to the 70th area, and what she had shown and with the amount of trees that we're bringing in, this is also one of those two-part things. Clients love it, but it's also really, really functional. Our goal is, you know, we are still going to be taking out a decent amount of stuff, expanding the driveway, obviously adding a 4,000 square-foot establishment, we want to make it beautiful. We also know from a functional standpoint that these are great sound barriers when we're putting up trees, we're putting up bushes, removing actually some of the dirt; if there are any other areas where we want to actually make any of those type of sound barriers, you know, little four-foot slopes on the exterior, especially to the north and potentially to the west, blocking those homes, we've actually considered that as well.

Again, just another little high view overview; Emily did a great job about talking about trees and all that fun stuff, and if you really want to get crazy granular, these are actually a great deal of the things that we plan to add in. And then just a little overview, you know we've been working with the same designer for the last 15 years, his goal at Oxford is to really embody I think the history of what Cedarhurst is all about. So, our goal is to bring in as much old-fashioned furniture, utilizing a lot of the stuff that still is there because a lot of it is actually decent and in good shape.

This is just a sketch of the Bridal Suite or one of our getting ready suites, and the Groom Suite, the other getting ready suite, is going to be a little bit more interactive; you know, a pool table, the bathtub that President Roosevelt actually apparently bathed in. We have no photos to prove this, but we're going to have that actually in the Groom's Suite as kind of a photo opp thing; it won't be functioning, but more of a piece of art. Even the elevators, the inserts of the elevators, our plan is to find a really cool wall to kind of place those on; they will not be functioning, but we want to pay homage to a lot of these things that maybe aren't going to work anymore but can still tell that story. The bar, this is probably the biggest addition or change inside the mansion itself. The current bar just isn't going to work functionally, that flow isn't going to be possible. There used to be actually a hole behind the bar, historically, that was filled in, in one of those 1917 to whenever expansions or renovations. So, we're actually just going to reopen that wall, having the same entrance to where it used to be before, and then close to where the kitchen is, that's where that bar is going to be. So, from a functionality standpoint, it's going to make a lot more sense, but also from a flow standpoint, just the safety of congestion and stuff it's also going to make a lot more sense. What this will allow people to do is head out to the Atrium, head back into the mansion, and so on, creating a great flow and obviously a good experience for our

clients. We're keeping all those fireplaces that were built 100+ years ago, as you can see one in the sketch on the left there. The Atrium, kind of our ballroom if you will. You know, we do want to bring just a tiny bit of that history in here, you'll see some of the lattice, etc. We're actually toying with bringing an actual fountain in there, not a plumbed one, so we're not going to have to go there, but something that can be decorated, something that people can put floral and things like that on, and finding something that is from that period of the late 1800s, early 1900s, to really back the history of that location. The Cedarhurst Mansion, we want to keep the name; we did update, just a touch, the logo, but that's about it. Questions? And thank you for your consideration. Frazier replied absolutely.

Frazier asked if there were any questions.

Bhat said so, I do see that in some of these pictures or diagrams you had the driveway not aligned with the Jorgensen street, and in some, you have it aligned with the Jorgensen street, so which one is it going to be? J.J. replied aligned. So, we had about nine emergency meetings I feel like in the last ten days, and I had gotten this, prior to Thursday over to these ladies for you guys to be prepared, and on Thursday, Tim, one of our architects, was able to provide the updated version to Emily so that could be added. So, it would be aligned, and we actually hadn't had County confirmation prior to me submitting this as well. So, she's right, I'm wrong. Bhat said thank you; J.J. replied you're welcome, thank you.

Fisher said I don't have a question, but I just think it's really cool to see this thing renovated. I'm a big house geek, and I just cannot wait to see this done, I think it's going to be awesome. J.J. replied very cool, I'll take that, very nice. Commissioner Bhat, do you want to second that? Stechmann said I will.

Stechmann said I'm very happy that this property is coming into a greater use, and it's a beautiful property and I'm happy to see this. And, you now, that's all I have to say. J.J. replied thank you, Commissioner Stechmann.

Frazier said all right, thank you very much. J.J. replied I appreciate you, thank you.

Frazier opened the Public Hearing. No one spoke. Frazier closed the Public Hearing.

Frazier asked if there was any further discussion by commission.

Fisher said I do have one question. It was mentioned that there was a community meeting, and it said mostly unobjectionable. I'm wondering why it doesn't say 100% unobjectionable. What were the concerns, if any, that were brought up by the people surrounding the property? J.J. replied so, full transparency, you know, there was one couple that was in there that was kind of busting me up a little bit and asking every single question; it was a lot like what Emily had to go through up here a few minutes ago. At the end of it, they were one of the first groups there and they stayed the entire time, and they were on board. Every single person, multiple people were talking, which you said, and it's like we witnessed, we saw what this place was going to become; it was a shopping center, it was a strip mall, it was apartment complexes, it was our neighboring on the west were nervous about, the entire staff aren't going to come here through the cul-de-sac, correct? And, so, they saw what this place could be and what this place still might be, and they were so happy with this. I think they were appreciative, so to me, from my aspect, I felt like 100% of the people; 90% were happy when they got there, 100% were happy when they left. And, so, I don't want to say even for that last 10%, it was the lesser of two evils, maybe, but they liked what we talked about, they investigated what our brand was about, who we were, they read our reviews, and they said, you know, if I have to have a neighbor that's going to do something here, I'd like it to be you. Fisher said okay, thank you. I would agree, I mean, the lack of public comment right now, too, says that it sounds like the meeting was well attended and lots of questions were answered. J.J. replied my estimate was closer to 40 people, by the way, just throwing it out there. Thank you.

Frazier said I guess I'll add in my two cents. I'm thankful that someone is willing to take on what sounds like a very big job, and it's going to be closer to 12 months, I agree, to do this work because I think this is a very important piece of the City's history that we want to make sure we can keep; and the best way to do that is by having somebody come in and be able to use it for a commercial venture and make money off it, because that means they'll take care of it. So, I'm excited to see how it turns out. I think this is a very good proposal to have in the community, and it sounds like the applicant is willing to keep the historical aspect of this property intact so that we can remember what it was like, but also use it going on in the future.

Brittain said I'll say that from a planning perspective, I think you guys are dotting all the I's and crossing the T's, and you know, that's what goes into a recommendation, yea or nay. From a personal perspective, I've seen what's been proposed here in the

past, and I've seen what's been implemented here in the past, and I haven't seen anybody take it to the level that you're proposing to take it. And it's exciting to see what you're proposing, it's something, it's never our purview to consider whether or not you're going to be successful, that's just not our job; our job is just to focus on the zoning, but from what I've seen in the past, there's never been enough investment in what was trying to be done in order to make it successful and therefore it was never sustainable. So, I am excited to see the Atrium, the Rose Garden, and all the things that you're adding; that, in my opinion, from seeing all these other things, give it a very high chance of success vs. what we've seen happen in the past.

Fisher made a motion to approve the Zoning Amendment for both parcels, the HCUP for both parcels, as well as the Site Plan Review subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report. Stechmann seconded. The motion was approved unanimously (5-to-0 vote).

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of the June 23, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Staff Recommendation: Approve the June 23, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.

Bhat made a motion to Approve the June 23, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. Brittain seconded. Motion passed unanimously (5-to-0 vote).

8. REPORTS

A. RECAP OF JULY 16, 2025 CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Schmitz summarized the actions taken at the July 16, 2025 City Council Meeting.

Council Member Olsen said the only thing I would add is we are neck-deep now in budget, so you know, we're meeting every week at this point. We'll meet again this coming Wednesday, last week was Public Safety and Emily's department and General Government and some other things, and this week will be Public Works and Equipment, and then we'll revisit some of the things that we talked about last week. And then the week after that, we have a regular Council Meeting, but we have a before Council Meeting Workshop and an after Council Meeting Workshop; the after Council Meeting Workshop is for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which is where we put in big projects, you know, park buildings and road projects and those kind of things. We have a five-year CIP that we work on, and of course, that's a moving five-year plan, but we reevaluate it every year so that we can slot in what we need to do, when we need to do it, based upon when we can afford it; then we have to circulate that amongst our partners, particularly the County, as you mentioned earlier, to make sure that they're CIP and ours merge. So, it's a heavy lift, but it's sort of the most important thing we do, so we're in the midst of that right now and hopefully we'll have a budget for the next two years put to bed here by the end of August.

With respect to your question, Commissioner Stechmann, about is the County the sole arbiter on County Roads, the answer to that question is yes. We have the ability to make noise or squeak, I think as Commissioner Brittain said, and we're pretty good at it, and we're lucky that we have a County Commissioner who works very closely with us and is responsive to our requests and our needs and things like that; that isn't always the case, sometimes you have that and sometimes you don't. The County staff is very good and their County Engineer, Wayne Sandberg, is exceptional. To give you a perfect example of your question in real life, there was a porkchop that was on that road that was removed, and it was removed at the behest of the City in partnership with the County, and we had a County Commissioner who didn't really work with us too closely on that, but the County staff, Engineer Wayne Sandberg, worked closely with us on that. The caveat when that was taken out is that if anything were to change in terms of the demographic of that intersection and/or traffic patterns, to your point, Commissioner Brittain, we may relook at that. So, I would not be surprised if there is some additional dialogue if the Cedarhurst project continues to progress with regard to that access point and some of the details that you mentioned here tonight, and you did a great job with that, thank you. Those are lots of questions that we as a City Council will also ask, and so, since they've been asked and answered already, we'll just simply follow up on those. So, thank you for that. But yes, the County is in charge, its their road.

The last thing I wanted to mention is if you haven't already heard, this was a year where we did a Community Survey; we do these every three-to-five years, and we did a different type of survey this year. We went with a national survey organization, Polco, and the reason we chose to do that is Polco does community surveys across the country. And, so, we were able to

benchmark Cottage Grove's responses to responses from across the country, different demographics, different states, different cities, different climates, etc. So, I'll just give you a few highlights:

- 79% of the residents in the City of Cottage Grove rank their quality of life as excellent or good; that was great to see, that's 8 in 10.
- 86% gave a very positive rating to our path and trail system, people being able to walk and use the pathways and the trails.
- This one will be good for you, Commissioner Fisher, a variety of housing options was 63% positive and availability of affordable housing options was 89% positive. Now, keep in mind, you and I think of affordable housing differently perhaps than a standard person would because there are definitions to that, but still, that's a pretty impressive response, I think.
- Overall government, are you ready, 56%, I'll take it, gave us a positive response, although 68% said they were happy with their level of taxes, good or excellent, so that was good.
- Public Safety got an unbelievably positive rating, which doesn't surprise me because we spend a lot of time, energy, effort, and investment on Public Safety in this community, 86% positive, which I was gratified to see; if you don't have Public Safety, you don't have a community, it's just the way it is.
- We also had 86% rate the community as a good place to raise a family.

So, some really nice highlights there; there's more information on the survey on the City's website. There was also a lot of information that was shared on the City's social media, Facebook page, etc. If you go to the City's website, you can download the PDF of the entire survey, and the survey was done in two separate ways: So, it was targeted to certain residents, we did direct mailings and things like that, and then there was an open survey where anybody who lived in the community could respond. And, so, they blended those together, which is something that Polco does that I've never seen done before, and the representative sample size was about 493 residents between the two who responded. So, according to Polco, that's a statistically relevant number, I would have liked to see more, but they're the experts, so we're going to go with that. And then they extrapolate those answers out across the entirety of the community's population by demographic. So, all in all, good news there.

Like I said before, there's not going to be a lot of sleep in the next month or so until we get through the budget, but this is the time of year we live for, it's very important, and these survey results are a direct correlation to what we put as priorities in our budget, so it was good to have this information going into the budget dialogue.

Council Member Olsen said with that, Mr. Chair, I'll turn it back to you; if there are any questions, I'm happy to answer them.

Frazier said thank you, Council Member Olsen, and I know in a year in the climate that we're in right now that the budget is going to be probably tricky than ever to try to make sure we balance levy vs. getting services to the people who are in the City. Council Member Olsen replied it's tough, yeah, we've had a lot of Federal government funds that have been committed to us over the last couple of years for different projects that we're not certain we're going to get; so, we're trying to find different ways to balance the budget while still funding those major projects that we have been planning for, like the 80th Street reconstruction and those kind of things. So, I appreciate your acknowledgement of that, it's a very difficult period for local government at the minute.

Bhat said I'm just curious, so when was this survey conducted? Council Member Olsen replied it started in March and it went through the end of May. Bhat said okay, and do they have a statistic showing which areas were picked for the survey? Council Member Olsen replied absolutely, yep, it's all available on the PDF report that's available on the City's website. And if you'd like it emailed to you, send me a note on my City email and I'll happily get it to you. Bhat said okay, thank you. Council Member Olsen said our Communications Department, Phil Jents, whom some of you have met, he's ultimately the one who was responsible for executing that.

Bhat said and one last follow-up question on the management of roads and who is the arbiter, so that's just on the County roads, and we just have City roads, and there's nothing in between? Council Member Olsen replied yeah, the City operates all of the City streets, the City roadways, the collectors, those kind of things. We have the County that also operates County roads, like County State Aid Highway 22 is 70th Street; so, that's a County road. Sometimes, believe it or not, we trade. So, a few years ago, we traded a portion of 65th Street from the County to the City for the City to operate because it wasn't really feasible for the County to continue operating it when it was being used for City traffic; but don't forget, we also have State Highway 61, so if you look at Highway 61 that intersects the City, that's a State highway. So, anything we do with that road has to be done through

MnDOT; the City does not control that, and the same is true of the bridge decks. Bhat replied okay, and the side roads in the neighborhood, they're City owned or are they neighborhood owned, the sidewalks? Council Member Olsen replied so, if you have a community in your neighborhood where you have sidewalks, and you have a Homeowners Association (HOA), your HOA may actually be responsible for your sidewalks. So, if you live in a neighborhood like mine where I don't have an HOA and there are sidewalks, then the City maintains those. Bhat said okay, thank you; Council Member Olsen replied you're welcome.

No further questions were asked, so Frazier thanked Council Member Olsen.

B. RESPONSE TO PLANNING COMMISSION INQUIRIES

Frazier said we had two inquiries that were both answered at the last meeting, so we didn't have any more to follow up on.

C. PLANNING COMMISSION REQUESTS

Frazier asked if there were any requests for staff; there were none.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Fisher made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brittain seconded. Motion passed unanimously (5-to-0 vote). The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.