



COTTAGE GROVE PLANNING COMMISSION
12800 Ravine Parkway South
Cottage Grove, MN 55016
COUNCIL CHAMBER - 7:00 P.M.

November 24, 2025

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

Brittain 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-Excused Absence; Eric Knable-Excused Absence; John Stechmann-Here; Terrence Woodman-Here.

Members Absent: Evan Frazier; Eric Knable

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

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Brittain said he's looking for a motion to amend the agenda, to move Item C to Item A.

Stechmann made a motion to approve the amended agenda, as above. Fisher seconded. The motion was approved unanimously (5-to-0 vote).

4. OPEN FORUM

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

5. CHAIR'S EXPLANATION OF THE PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS

Brittain 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. Yellow Tree Apartments - Cases PUD2025-030 & SP2025-030

Discussion: CONTINUE TO DECEMBER 15, 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING. Yellow Tree Development has applied for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) and Site Plan Review of a proposed 186-unit apartment building to be located north of East Point Douglas Road and west of Hardwood Avenue.

Brittain said we are looking for a motion to continue the Yellow Tree Apartments case until December.

Fisher made a motion to continue the Yellow Tree Apartments case to the December meeting. Woodman seconded. The motion was approved unanimously (5-to-0 vote).

- B. 95th Street Low-Potency Hemp Edible Warehouse - Case CUP2025-029**
Michael Weis and Andrew Turner, on behalf of Banks Distro LLC, have applied for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a low potency hemp edible warehouse and wholesale operation at 7769 95th Street South.

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

Brittain asked if there were any questions for staff, none were asked. Brittain asked if there were any questions for the applicant, none were asked.

Brittain asked if the applicant would like to add anything to the presentation. He indicated he would, so Brittain asked him to step to the podium and state his name and address for the public record.

My name is Michael Weis, my address is 10300 City Walk Drive, Woodbury, Minnesota, 55129. He said so, yes, we are basically moving back into Minnesota. We just need a warehouse right now and an office to ship our products to our registered hemp businesses that we sell to, currently. We do, however, have ambitions for manufacturing in the future. Right now, all of our manufacturing is done offsite, through other third parties. We do want to bring in stuff, like our beverage manufacturing, into this location; that is like a six-to-nine month timeline from now. I just wanted to add that into there, that is our ambitions. Thank you. Brittain replied all right, thank you.

Brittain asked if there was any further discussion from the commission; there was none.

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

Stechmann made a motion to approve the Conditional Use Permit for a Lower Potency Hemp Edible Warehouse and Wholesale Operation at 7769 95th Street South, subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report. Woodman seconded. The motion was approved unanimously (5-to-0 vote).

Brittain noted this will be on the December 3 agenda for the City Council.

- C. MoonSoon Low Potency Hemp Edible Retailer - Case CUP2025-028**
Giza Inc., DBA MoonSoon Tobacco, applied for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Lower Potency Hemp Edible Retailer at their existing business at 7584 80th Street South, Suite 201.

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

Brittain asked if there were any questions for staff.

Brittain said okay, I have one question. So, I see the 1,000-foot radius from other uses. What about schools and churches? Is there a limitation on how close that it can be to schools and churches? Becker replied there is not, for the lower potency adult cannabis uses. Brittain said okay, thank you.

Brittain asked if the applicant would like to add anything, but the applicant declined.

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

Brittain asked if there was further discussion from staff.

Fisher said I have a question for the applicant, as far as the compliance check that happened. I'm just wondering, she said that you were going to be doing more training or something with the staff; I guess my biggest concern with all these applications coming through now is just the compliance and making sure they're being told appropriately. So, I'm just wondering what training steps you're taking to make sure that you're.

Brittain asked the applicant to just state his name and address for the public record.

Hi, my name is Ramadan Hussein, I'm the owner of MoonSoon Tobacco. Yes, unfortunately, this was the first violation in 36 months, and I have the store manager here. We have training every week and text message reminders every day to the staff, and we had this new employee, she was in the shop for about three weeks, four weeks. And she did actually check the IDENTIFICATION, and her excuse was she read the 2009 as 2004; and we do actually have an age identification scanner and she hadn't use it, unfortunately, because if she did scan the ID, it would have gone all red in front of her cash register. So, she was terminated the same day because she didn't follow the rules, and hopefully, it's never going to happen again. Fisher said thank you.

Brittain asked if there were further questions for the applicant, none were asked. Brittain said thank you, sir.

Woodman made a motion to approve the Conditional Use Permit to sell low potency hemp edibles at the existing business located at 7584 80th Street South, Suite 201, subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report. Fisher seconded. The motion was approved unanimously (5-to-0 vote).

Brittain said this will move on to the City Council Agenda on December 3.

C. Yellow Tree Apartments - Cases PUD2025-030 & SP2025-030

Discussion: CONTINUE TO DECEMBER 15, 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING. Yellow Tree Development has applied for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) and Site Plan Review of a proposed 186-unit apartment building to be located north of East Point Douglas Road and west of Hardwood Avenue.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of the October 27, 2025, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Fisher made a motion to approve the October 27, 2025, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. Bhat seconded. Motion passed unanimously (5-to-0 vote).

8. REPORTS

A. RECAP OF NOVEMBER 2025 CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Schmitz summarized the actions taken at the November 5 and November 19, 2025, City Council Meetings:

Schmitz said with that, as always, Council Member Justin Olsen is here, and I will wish you all a very Happy Thanksgiving.

Council Member Olsen said just a couple things here for you, not necessarily fully related to Planning Commission business, but this certainly has a lot of interest for those who may be watching at home, hopefully, and that is all the various holiday events that we've got going on, as we approach Thanksgiving this week and then turn the corner rapidly, moving down Hale towards Christmas:

- This Thanksgiving Day, we've got our Hale to the Bird 5K. For those who aren't aware of what that is, it is a fundraiser that is put on for the Friends in Need Food Shelf and the Holiday Train. This event started here in Cottage Grove with a group of friends who wanted to find a way to give back, and it has grown exponentially every year ever since. I remember the first year, the mayor in a big, tall top hat pardoning the turkey. I don't think he'll be wearing that same top hat this year, but he's certainly going to be there this year, which starts at 8:00 a.m. at Hamlet Park for check in and 9:00 a.m. for the event. Again, it is Hale to the Bird, that is a 5K race; if you go to active.com, you can sign up if you'd care to participate. It's a great fundraising opportunity for those of us who love to support the Friends in Need and the Holiday Train.
- Speaking of the Holiday Train, it will be making its appearance this year in Cottage Grove on Saturday, December 13, and we don't always get it on a Saturday, so it's kind of nice that we're going to have it on a Saturday. The train will arrive at approximately 5:15 p.m.; this isn't Germany, so I don't know if the trails always run on time, but we're pretty close. The event actually starts at 3:30 p.m., and it will run until about 6:30 p.m. For people who are interested in attending, there's no charge to attending. The Holiday Train arrives right near the Youth Service Bureau on West Point

Douglas Road, and there will be music, there will be hot chocolate, there will be cookies, all kinds of different things. Again, this is a fundraiser for the Friends in Need Food Shelf, so if you'd like to bring either nonperishable items you'd like to donate to Friends in Need or straight up cash, which they absolutely love, there will be people there with buckets, walking around, where you can make your donations. I know that there will be a number of check presentations there that evening as well, from some of the local businesses and nonprofits, who are looking to donate. The Holiday Train is the largest fundraiser that Friends in Need has, and Cottage Grove is the most lucrative stop in the United States for the Holiday Train. This year the goal for Cottage Grove and the surrounding communities is to raise \$125,000 for Friends in Need, which would be about 30% of their annual budget. So, hopefully we cannot just hit that number but smash it; we typically do pretty well, so please keep that in mind. Again, that's on December 13, near the Youth Service Bureau; you can park up by the 80th Street Crossing, or you can park over at All Saints Lutheran Church if you need to, and the Park and Ride is also a great spot to park. We will have wagon rides pulling people to and from the various parking areas, so come and enjoy yourself with the family.

- Speaking of family fun, we have an event right here at City Hall coming up, on December 4, that is our annual Hometown Holiday event, and it runs from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. We would like you to park either at the South Washington County Service Center or the HERO Center next door. Again, we will have wagon rides back and forth, so you don't have to tromp through the snow or walk a very long distance to get here. Once you arrive here at City Hall, there'll be all kinds of fun things for you to do: We'll have live reindeer, Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, and Sparkles the Elf will be here, a lot of food trucks, a lot of games. You'll see a lot of City vehicles and personnel here. We also have a little walkway out to the side here where you can get your picture taken and do some fun things with different holiday lighting, etc. So, we hope you'll come and join us, it's a great time. Again, it's from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., and there's no charge. So, please come down and enjoy yourself, it's a very family-friendly Hometown Holiday event, and you'll get to hear the Park High School choir singing Christmas carols as well. So, we'd love to see you.
- The Cottage Grove Lions has their annual Santa Breakfast at the VFW this year on December 7, that runs from 8:00 a.m. to Noon. You'll have an opportunity to meet Santa Claus and get your picture taken. We also have a number of free giveaways that we do each year for the Lions Club, of which I'm a member; every kid that comes in gets a ticket, that ticket can get put into any number of buckets for free giveaways, and at the end of the day, we give away lots of fun things, like bikes and things like that. So, a lot of fun, December 7, 8:00 a.m. to Noon; the price to attend is \$12 for adults, \$8 for kids. There will be a lot of great food, a lot of family fun, and as I said, the opportunity to meet Santa, so please come and visit with us at the VFW on December 7.
- If you miss the Lions Santa Breakfast, or you just miss Santa Claus, you can come to River Oaks on December 21 for the annual Santa Breakfast at River Oaks. This is a really fun event, we have sleigh rides, we have all kinds of different things going on over there, a wonderful meal. The price is \$25 for adults, \$18 for kids ages 6 to 12, and then kids 5 and under are free. So, if you'd like to come and join us there, you can make your reservations right on the River Oaks website, or you can call River Oaks Municipal Golf right here in town and make your reservations; get in there early because it fills up fast.

Council Member Olsen said so that is all the fun stuff that's coming down the pipeline. If you have any not fun stuff you'd like to ask me about, I'm here for you, so please feel free.

Brittain asked if there was anything for Council Member Olsen.

Fisher said I want to add something to the Holiday Train plug. We have food trucks there, too, and they donate a substantial portion of what they make that night to the food shelf as well. So, I'd invite people to come and just eat dinner down by the train. Council Member Olsen said thank you for mentioning that, I appreciate it.

There were no other questions or comments from the commissioners.

Council Member Olsen said then just let me take a moment to say thank you for all that you do in service to our community as members of the Planning Commission. As I've told you before, we're extremely grateful for the residents of our community who volunteer in all of our advisory commission capacities. The Planning Commission tends to have a bit of a heavier lift sometimes, and I know that sometimes the packets that you get are a little thick, take a little time to read through them, so please know your dedication and your passion for serving the City is greatly appreciated. I wish you and your families all a very Happy Thanksgiving and a very happy holiday season.

B. RESPONSE TO PLANNING COMMISSION INQUIRIES - None.

C. PLANNING COMMISSION REQUESTS

Brittain asked if there were any requests for staff tonight.

Bhat said I don't know if this can be considered a request, but I was wondering, so one of the applications today had a warehouse Conditional Use Permit request and in the same location there is also a food packaging business. So, are there any restrictions with the warehousing of cannabis with having this food packaging in the same place? Schmitz replied yes, Mr. Chair, Commissioner Bhat, to clarify: So, our Code requires a Conditional Use Permit because it is the warehousing of low potency cannabis products. Simply a warehouse use for restaurant equipment or food, whatever that might be, our Code does not require a Conditional Use Permit because of the minimal impact. With the THC and the low potency and the cannabis, we want to make sure that we're treading lightly but learning as we go, right? We want to make sure that we're navigating slowly into this new world, right, where the State is creating standards that are trickling down to be enforced by the local government. So, we're making sure that we have the ability to review, and it sounds like maybe Council Member Olsen has some additional details to share.

Council Member Olsen asked, real quickly, was your concern that those two uses might be in conflict? Bhat replied yeah, so, I was wondering has the State or someone talked about this? Because one place you have cannabis packaging, and in the same location, the same building, I would say, you also have food packaging, right? So, are there any regulations or some kind of a safeguard put there so you don't have cross contamination? Schmitz replied Mr. Chair, Commissioner Bhat, I'll clarify: It's only storage of the material, the items, there's no manufacturing happening in either of those locations within the building. Bhat said okay, thank you.

Fisher said I was just going to say what Emily was saying, I think that they're already packaged, I think it's just a distribution versus an assembly, then distribution, so.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Stechmann made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bhat seconded. Motion passed unanimously (5-to-0 vote). The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.