

WINDEMERE TOWNSHIP, PINE COUNTY MN

316 Elm Ave, Moose Lake, MN 55767

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, May 5, 2026

- I. **Meeting called to Order** at 9:30AM at 316 Elm Ave, Moose Lake, MN 55767 by Chair Anderson followed by the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner's present: Amy Perrine, Phil White, Dick Herzog. Also present: Clerk Treasurer, Vickie Snyder and Zoning Administrator, Grace Liljenquist-WSB. Guest: Andy, Rum River Consultants via remote.
- II. **Announcement: Resignation of Commissioner-** The Chair announced that Corinne Youso has resigned from the Planning Commission. The resignation creates a vacancy on the Commission, and the Town Board will be responsible for appointing a replacement to fill the open seat.
- III. **Public Comment-**The public comment period was opened, and no comments were received.
- IV. **Approval of Minutes-**The April 7, 2026 Planning Commission meeting minutes were corrected and submitted, including a minor zip code correction and a revision under Old Business, Item 12, to reflect "decks and lean-tos – \$50" as the applicable fee schedule item. **Motion** to approve the amended minutes by Perrine, seconded by White. Motion carried 4-0.
- V. **Communications-** The Commission discussed correspondence from the Sturgeon Rush Owners Association (SROA) regarding property line concerns that had been forwarded to members. After discussion, the matter was determined to be a private property line issue rather than a zoning matter. The Commission agreed that a response letter should be sent to the property owners clarifying that the issue is considered a private matter. The Clerk and Zoning Administrator agreed to coordinate and send the letter.
- VI. **Old Business**
 - A. **Township Branding and Entry Signage-** The Commission discussed and reviewed draft branding and signage designs for the township. Members identified the Sturgeon Island Covered Bridge as the preferred focal point for the township logo and reviewed concept examples and photography options. Discussion included potential use of the logo on township entry signs, zoning and sewer requirement signage, township forms, letterhead, and online materials to create a consistent township image. The Commission also discussed possible tagline concepts and confirmed a preference for continuing to use "Windermere Township" for consistency and clarity. The Chair requested that branding and signage concepts be finalized and brought to the Town Board as soon as possible, ideally for the May 14 Board meeting. A high-quality bridge photo will be located and circulated before a final recommendation is submitted to the Board.

- B. Escrow Fee Account and Online Payment System- The Commission discussed escrow handling procedures for permits. It was noted that, in coordination with the Township audit firm and township attorney, a separate dedicated escrow account must be established, requiring Town Board approval. Until that account is created, escrow funds will be held separately and not deposited into the general account. It was agreed that all escrow funds must be kept distinct and fully trackable by project.

The Clerk outlined a plan to implement online permitting forms that will include embedded payment links for both permit fees and escrow fees, which may require applicants to complete two separate transactions per submission. The Township is currently evaluating two payment providers: the Township's bank-based solution and Paystar, which has no setup fee but includes a monthly fee. A comparison and recommendation will be brought to the Town Board, anticipated for the May 14 meeting. Staff are also developing new online permit forms for all permit types, with an estimated 60-day timeline for completion, in coordination with the Township's web designers for site integration. The system will support credit card and ACH payments, with service fees passed on to users and clearly disclosed on the website, including a small flat fee for ACH transactions. The goal is to reduce lost payments, improve efficiency, and increase transparency, while still allowing paper payments but moving toward standardized electronic workflows and minimizing exceptions.

- C. Rum River Consultants Presentation – Septic Permitting and Inspections- Rum River Consultants provided an overview of their services, including building, mechanical, plumbing, fire code, and septic permitting and inspections for 30–35 jurisdictions statewide. They also described their septic inspection process under Minnesota Rules 7080/7082 and their permitting platform (Baseline Technologies), which supports online applications, payments, scheduling, and inspection/document management at no additional cost to the Township. The Commission discussed past reliance on Pine County for septic administration and concerns about service delays and consistency. Rum River noted they can tailor inspection processes and provide model ordinances. It was noted that returning septic administration to the Township would require a local ordinance and MPCA notification, with legal guidance already confirmed. No formal action was taken, and the Commission agreed to continue gathering information before making a recommendation to the Town Board.

VII. Zoning Administrator's Report

- A. Monthly Report-The Zoning Administrator provided a monthly report noting 78 email contacts and 63 phone calls since the last Planning Commission meeting, with most inquiries related to the lifted moratorium, the new fee schedule and escrow requirements, and the zoning permit application process. During the reporting period, 5 zoning permits were issued, with approximately 10 additional applications still in process due to review or missing information. For short-term rentals, 10 permits were issued, 2 applications were denied, and 4 remain incomplete. In code enforcement, 2 letters were issued regarding blight and junk vehicle storage, both of which are still active and pending response.
- B. Zoning Ordinance Issues - Grace identified several ordinance inconsistencies and recommended amendments for Commission consideration. First, she noted a conflict in shoreland setback requirements where patios and at-grade decks are required to be 100 feet from Ordinary High Water, while principal structures may be allowed at 75 feet, resulting in unnecessary variances; she recommended aligning patio/deck setbacks more closely with the principal structure setback. Second, she recommended revising the short-term rental fee structure to establish a non-refundable application fee separate from a permit or renewal fee to address inefficiencies and unpaid staff time when applications are denied or withdrawn. Third, she identified the need for clearer survey requirements beyond shoreland properties, particularly for small non-shoreland lots, recommending a standard survey threshold (e.g., under 1 acre) to ensure accurate property boundaries and improve enforcement. Fourth, she noted the ordinance does not clearly require septic compliance at the time of zoning permit issuance outside shoreland areas and suggested adding a township-wide requirement where appropriate.

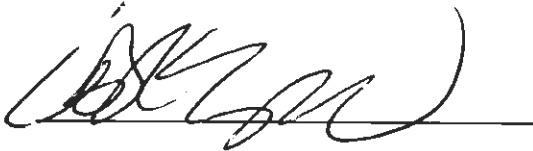
Grace will compile a written list of all identified ordinance issues and circulate it to the Planning Commission and Township Attorney Jason Hill. The Chair will then coordinate with legal counsel on the formal amendment process, with the intent to bundle multiple updates into a single ordinance amendment package

VII. Special Meeting and June Schedule

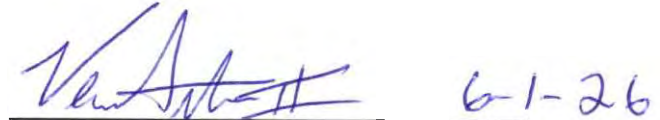
The Chair noted a conflict with the regular June Planning Commission meeting date and stated he would be unavailable, resulting in a potential lack of quorum. The Commission agreed to hold a Special Planning Commission Meeting on Monday, June 1 at 9:30 AM in place of the early-June regular meeting, and to

cancel the second June meeting. The Clerk will provide proper notice for the Special Meeting and ensure the cancellation is documented in accordance with legal requirements.

VIII **Adjournment** - Motion to adjourn by Andersen II, seconded by Herzog. Motion carried 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:42 AM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Vickie Snyder', written over a horizontal line.

Clerk/Treasurer-Vickie Snyder

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Vern Anderson II', written over a horizontal line. To the right of the signature, the date '6-1-26' is written in blue ink.

Chair-Vern Anderson II