

**CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS
DAKOTA COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
August 26, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Mendota Heights Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, August 26, 2025, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 1101 Victoria Curve, at 7:00 P.M.

The following Commissioners were present: Acting Chair Jason Stone, Commissioners Patrick Corbett, Cindy Johnson, Brian Udell, Jeff Nath, and Steve Goldade. Those absent: Chair Litton Field.

Approval of Agenda

Acting Chair Stone stated that a revised agenda has been circulated and noted that Item 4B will not be discussed tonight as the applicant has withdrawn Planning Case No. 2025-15.

The revised agenda was approved as submitted.

Approval of July 22, 2025, Minutes

COMMISSIONER NATH MOVED, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CORBETT, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 22, 2025.

AYES: 6

NAYS: 0

Hearings

**A) TABLED PLANNING CASE 2025-12
M&M HOME CONTRACTORS, 1867 HUNTER LANE – MRCCA PERMIT**

Community Development Manager Sarah Madden explained that M&M Home Contractors is the applicant and owner's representative of the property located at 1867 Hunter Lane, and has requested a Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) Permit to construct a new single-family home located at 1867 Hunter Lane. A duly noticed public hearing was opened at the July 22nd Planning Commission meeting. Two residents representing one household spoke in favor of the proposal, and one resident spoke inquiring about tree removal and any plans for additional utility work for the construction of the home. City staff have received one written comment related to this item, which was included in the staff report. During discussion of the application, the Commission expressed concerns with the available details on the proposed landscaping for the new home site and requested additional information from the applicant. The applicant was unable to attend the July 22nd meeting, but has provided updated landscaping plans and details, which were included in the packet. An updated survey was also provided, illustrating the location of existing trees on the property.

Hearing notices were published and mailed to all properties within 350 feet of the site; one written comment was received.

Community Development Manager Sarah Madden provided a planning staff report and a presentation on this planning item to the Commission (which is available for viewing through the City's website).

Staff recommended approval of this application based on the findings and with conditions.

Commissioner Johnson referenced a comment made at the last meeting related to a potential intermittent stream and asked if there was any information on that.

Community Development Manager Sarah Madden stated that there is no confirmation of the existence of the intermittent stream. She noted that this is one parcel of three owned by the same property owner, so the stream could be located on an adjacent property if it does exist.

Commissioner Johnson asked if the rate of stormwater flow had been reviewed.

Public Works Director Ryan Ruzek commented that the rates are not factored in for the single-family home construction, and a measure of abstraction is required, and noted that this request meets that requirement.

Commissioner Johnson referenced the primary conservation area on the western edge of the property and asked staff to identify that area.

Community Development Manager Sarah Madden provided additional details on the forested area of the bluff that is considered to be the existing vegetative stand on the edge of the property. She highlighted the bluff impact zone (BIZ) and confirmed that the vegetative stand is within the BIZ.

Acting Chair Stone commented that the public hearing from the last meeting was tabled and, therefore, is still open and invited comments from the public.

The applicant confirmed that he is available to answer any questions.

Commissioner Johnson thanked the applicant for updating and providing more detailed information, noting that because this is an MRCCA permit, there are more requirements.

Theresa Cosgriff, 1875 Hunter Lane, noted that she and her husband submitted a written comment to the Mayor on this topic. She noted that this lot has sat vacant for many years in rough condition. She stated that the neighborhood has been updating, and people have been reinvesting in their properties, and she believed that the new home would assist in that vision for the neighborhood. She stated that she and her husband built their home five years ago and enjoyed the flexibility of working with the Planning Commission and City Council, and asked that this applicant be provided with the same flexibility.

Seeing no one further coming forward wishing to speak, Acting Chair Stone asked for a motion to close the public hearing.

COMMISSIONER CORBETT MOVED, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER NATH, TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

AYES: 6

NAYS: 0

Commissioner Johnson commented that it seems the existing bituminous drive is going to be kept and expanded. She asked for more information on the material that would be used for the expanded portion of the driveway.

Mike Fritz, applicant, commented that the decision on that material has not yet been made.

COMMISSIONER CORBETT MOVED, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER NATH, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE MRCCA-CRITICAL AREA PERMIT REQUEST FOR 1867 HUNTER LANE, WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. A BUILDING PERMIT, INCLUDING A GRADING PLAN, MUST BE APPROVED BY THE CITY PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF ANY SITE WORK.
2. THE PROPOSED PROJECT MUST COMPLY WITH ALL REQUIREMENTS OF THE CITY'S LAND DISTURBANCE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT. ALL PLANS MUST BE REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR.
3. ALL EROSION CONTROL REQUIREMENTS MUST BE PUT IN PLACE PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF ANY GRADING AND SITE WORK ACTIVITIES. SUCH MEASURES MUST REMAIN IN PLACE FOR THE DURATION OF THE CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES UNTIL PROPER SITE RESTORATION PLANS ARE COMPLETED.
4. ALL GRADING AND CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY MUST COMPLY WITH APPLICABLE FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL REGULATIONS AND CODES.
5. ALL WORK ON SITE WILL ONLY BE PERFORMED BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 7:00 A.M. AND 8:00 P.M. MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY; 9:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M. WEEKENDS.

AYES: 6

NAYS: 0

Acting Chair Stone advised the City Council would consider this application at its September 2, 2025, meeting.

**~~B) PLANNING CASE 2025-15
BC MIDDLETON LLC, WENTWORTH HILLS—PRELIMINARY PLAT~~**

This application was withdrawn.

New and Unfinished Business

A) DORSET ROAD – STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Assistant City Engineer Lucas Ritchie stated that Dakota County, in partnership with the cities of Mendota Heights and West St. Paul, is planning to reconstruct Delaware Avenue in 2027 between Marie Avenue and Dodd Road. As part of this project, the project team has evaluated the Delaware Avenue and Dorset Road intersection. Currently, the Dorset Road approach to Delaware Avenue has a slope that exceeds the City's maximum allowable roadway grade of six percent. This condition presents long-term safety and maintenance concerns, and the County project provides a feasible opportunity to address this issue.

Commissioner Johnson asked if the proposed length of the cul-de-sac would meet the City's requirements.

Public Works Director Ryan Ruzek replied that the current length would be 640 feet and anticipated that the new Code would allow a length of more than 500 feet. He stated that the current language in the Code related to 500 feet is not enforceable. He explained that when the new language is adopted, most existing cul-de-sacs would come into conformance with the Code if less than 750 feet.

Commissioner Johnson referenced the northwest property that would be proposed to be purchased by Dakota County and asked for more information.

Assistant City Engineer Lucas Ritchie identified the property, 1211 Delaware, and noted that the property has already been acquired by Dakota County.

Commissioner Johnson asked if staff had considered making Dorset Road go through that property.

Assistant City Engineer Lucas Ritchie replied that it is not something the consultant or County has looked at, noting that he is unsure there would be sufficient space for turning movements.

Public Works Director Ryan Ruzek replied that it is still anticipated to have a single-family home on that property in the future, as the County only needs about two feet on the eastern border, along with the easement.

Commissioner Corbett asked for more information on the location of the right-of-way.

Assistant City Engineer Lucas Ritchie replied that the right-of-way shown on the map is incorrect and identified the location of the existing right-of-way as well as previously vacated right-of-way.

Commissioner Corbett asked if there has been consideration of residents' land that would be used in terms of funding.

Assistant City Engineer Lucas Ritchie replied that without going through the formal negotiations, they have not decided one way or the other. He stated that they are asking for a recommendation from the Commission to forward to the City Council, noting that staff does not favor one option over the other. He also asked the Commission to hear the input from the residents in attendance.

Commissioner Goldade asked about the differences between the two concepts other than the cul-de-sac length.

Assistant City Engineer Lucas Ritchie replied that the true differences are the lots that would be impacted. He stated that each concept would impact a total of three properties, although not the same properties.

Acting Chair Stone asked if staff had a preference on the concepts from an engineering standpoint.

Assistant Engineer Lucas Ritchie stated that, objectively, a cul-de-sac does reduce the issue of conflict and is something that has been identified as a safety concern related to the slope of the road. He stated that he does not have a preference between the two cul-de-sac concepts.

Acting Chair Stone asked if staff are aware of any accidents on this road.

Public Works Director Ryan Ruzek replied that there is no crash data recorded in this area.

Acting Chair Stone asked for the recommendation of the Public Works Director.

Public Works Director Ryan Ruzek stated that he aligns with the comments made by the Assistant Engineer. He noted that the neighbors in this area may have more input on a desired concept.

Commissioner Goldade asked and received confirmation that the referenced improved safety would be related to vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic.

Assistant City Engineer Lucas Ritchie commented that there would also be a benefit for the Public Works staff when plowing.

Commissioner Johnson inquired about the construction schedule for the trail along Delaware.

Assistant City Engineer Lucas Ritchie commented that the trail along Delaware would be part of this project, from Marie to Dodd Road.

Acting Chair Stone invited the public to provide input.

Scott Swank, ½ Dorset Road, identified mature trees that they would be losing as part of the Delaware project. He noted that option one would remove additional trees from their property, and therefore, he would oppose that and prefer option two, which more evenly takes from all properties. He noted that option one takes 75 to 80 percent of the property from his backyard. He confirmed that he supports concept two.

Commissioner Johnson noted that concept two would still seem to impact their trees.

Heidi Swank, ½ Dorset Road, commented that concept two would impact one of the two trees. She stated that they will lose all their front yard trees either way, but they see the value in the project and can replant trees. She agreed that the Dorset Road hill is problematic, and they have experienced a driver sliding down the hill into their yard. She noted that they have also watched snowplows have trouble with the hill in the winter.

Arthur Miller, 1 Dorset Road, stated that he purchased his lot in 1964 and has seen injuries on the road from children skateboarding and vehicles that cannot make it up the hill in the winter. He agreed that the cul-de-sac would be the better option for safety.

Mary and Tim Kirby, 3 Dorset Road, stated that they support this plan, and she prefers concept two. She acknowledged that they would lose some trees, but noted that the trees they would lose are not as valuable as the trees in the Swanks' yard. She stated that people have run into the tree in their yard coming down the hill, as it is a dangerous slope. Mr. Kirby also commented on the dangerous road conditions in the winter because of the slope. Mrs. Kirby stated that she does have questions about drainage and would like to see a vegetative garden to absorb some of the drainage. Mr. Kirby commented that this change would move some of the cut-through traffic to cut through Mears and, therefore, would encourage some type of traffic calming on Mears as well.

Mike Kuenster, 9 Mears Avenue, stated that regardless of whether concept one or two is chosen, he would like to comment on his experience living on the corner of Mears and Dodd. He commented that this is the third time he has been at City Hall to speak on this. He asked if electronic stop signs are used in the city.

Public Works Director Ryan Ruzek replied that the City currently does not have enhanced stop signs. He stated that there are some speed radar feedback signs, which are limited to collector streets and striped roadways. He commented that the signage was recently replaced at that intersection. He commented that his neighbors have young children, and he has safety concerns. He stated that traffic that would have normally turned onto Dorset to go to Mears would naturally have slowed speeds during that turning movement, but now will turn directly onto Mears.

Acting Chair Stone asked if there were thoughts to install speed bumps on Mears.

Public Works Director Ryan Ruzek replied that staff would never recommend speed bumps, noting that he is not aware of any communities in Dakota County that use speed bumps. He commented on the conflicts that would be created for snowplowing. He stated that other improvements could be considered for traffic calming. He acknowledged that there is cut-through traffic, and the stop signs in that area have been installed as a method to slow traffic.

Mr. Kuenster noted that Lilydale senior community has speed bumps, and it was confirmed that it is a private roadway that is privately maintained. He asked his neighborhood to be the test for electronic stop signs.

Commissioner Goldade commented that the issue of traffic control seems to be outside the purview of the Commission.

Commissioner Nath noted that other traffic calming measures could be considered, other than a speed bump.

Public Works Director Ryan Ruzek stated that the first step would be to collect data, acknowledging that for someone standing in their yard, it would seem fast for a vehicle to pass by at the speed limit of 30 miles per hour.

Commissioner Goldade stated that in the staff presentation, it was mentioned that two people opposed the project, but they did not speak tonight. He asked if proper notice was provided.

Assistant City Engineer Lucas Ritchie commented that the notice area for this project was actually expanded, and every resident who provided feedback was also sent notification of the meeting.

Commissioner Johnson recognized that the Swanks prefer concept two, which shows an extension of their driveway that could impact their trees. She stated that from her perspective, in either concept, they would lose their trees. She asked if the Swanks would still prefer concept two.

Mrs. Swank commented that they may still lose the trees. She acknowledged that their lot is not very private, but concept one would take more of their land, and therefore, they would still prefer concept two. She stated that they could perhaps rethink the driveway to save the tree.

Assistant City Engineer Lucas Ritchie commented that the concepts are conceptual, and it is possible that the driveway width and trail alignment could be tweaked to save trees. He noted that it is also possible that additional trees could be added within the right-of-way.

Acting Chair Stone commented that there is a steep hill and all the residents on that street who spoke prefer concept two, and therefore, he will also support that concept. He suggested that the City also complete a study related to the traffic that will be pushed over to Mears and the traffic calming that could be added.

Commissioner Johnson agreed that concept two would seem to have the least impact, as it spreads the impact among the neighbors.

COMMISSIONER CORBETT MOVED, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER JOHNSON, TO RECOMMEND THAT STAFF PROCEED WITH THE REMOVAL OF THE DORSET ROAD CONNECTION TO DELAWARE AVENUE AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE CUL-DE-SAC AS SHOWN IN CONCEPT TWO.

AYES: 6
NAYS: 0

Staff Announcements / Updates

Community Development Manager Sarah Madden noted the next scheduled meeting date of September 25th. She provided an update on recent actions of the City Council related to cases recommended by the Planning Commission.

Adjournment

COMMISSIONER NATH MOVED, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CORBETT, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:19 P.M.

AYES: 6

NAYS: 0