



Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

~ Minutes ~

1408 Lake Street South
Forest Lake, MN 55025
www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

6:00 PM

City Center - Council Chamber

[City of Forest Lake - Livestream and Recorded Meetings](#)

1. Call to Order

The Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Paul Girard	Commission Chair	Present	
Susan Young	Planning Commissioner	Present	
Andy Aplikowski	Planning Commissioner	Present	
Don Stehler	Planning Commissioner	Present	
Corey Goodwin	Planning Commissioner	Present	
Jesse Wagner	Planning Commissioner	Present	
Tim Stender	Commission Vice-Chair	Present	

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approve the Agenda

No comments on the Agenda.

Motion: Commissioner Stender made a Motion to Approve the Agenda as presented.
Motion seconded by Commissioner Wagner. Motion carried 6-0-1 (Aplikowski abstained).

5. Open Forum – Citizen Petitions, Requests, and Concerns

*The Open Forum is available for residents to express personal opinions for any item of business.
Please limit your comments to three (3) minutes.*

None.

6. Consent Agenda Considerations (Action Items)*

a. Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from February 11, 2026

No comments on the Consent Agenda.

Motion: Commissioner Wagner made a Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Item 5.a.
Motion seconded by Commissioner Stender. Motion carried 6-0-1 (Aplikowski Abstained).



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7. Regular Agenda (Action Items)

a. Public Hearing: Hidden Creek South

i. Preliminary Plat

ii. PUD Preliminary Plat

Assistant Community Development Director Gilmore reviewed the Preliminary Plat and Planned Unit Development Amendment for Hidden Creek South. He summarized the project overview and requests. He discussed the street collector expectations and the local street network requirements. He explained the parkway cost participation since Headwaters Parkway was a required major collector extension. He reviewed the stormwater and drainage coordination and noted the ongoing coordination. He discussed the park dedication and neighborhood park and noted that 3.17 acres were previously dedicated.

Commissioner Young asked what roadways had been constructed. Community Development Director Wittman answered that the fourth phase of Hidden Creek South had not been constructed, but the third phase had been completed.

Commissioner Young said that the lots would not have significant parking in driveways. She expressed concerns with the 30-foot-wide streets, especially in the winter. Assistant Community Development Director Gilmore answered that there would just be parking on one side of the lot for D2. He said that the road widths were due to connecting it to the existing development.

Community Development Director Wittman responded that they understood the concern and worked with the developer to increase the roadway width in all remaining portions of the development that would extend within all different areas of the development.

Commissioner Young said she understood the benefit to the developer for the smaller lots, but she did not understand the benefits to the larger community. She expressed concerns about the increased density that would be placed on City services. She asked about the public benefits of the smaller lot sizes. Assistant Community Development Director Gilmore answered that the extension of Headwaters Parkway was a significant development. He said that the lot sizes were the least dense that you could get according to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. He said that the development of a park would be beneficial.

Commissioner Young asked about the total acreage of Outlot A and the section to the North. Assistant Community Development Director answered that they would have 1.92 acres in Outlot A and they would receive cash-in-lieu. The two parcels would be just over five acres.



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Community Development Director Wittman said that the additional dedication amount would allow for a park to be built out, rather than getting raw land and waiting for the City to be ready to build out a park.

Assistant Community Development Director Gilmore said that the Parks and Recreation Commission would prefer cash-in-lieu so the City could develop the park as they see fit.

Community Development Director Wittman said that the cash-in-lieu was at a minimum of \$2500 per lot, but they did not have the specific dollar amount finalized yet.

Commissioner Aplikowski asked about the number of lots below the 7000 square foot requirement. Assistant Community Development Director Gilmore answered that it was less than half.

Commissioner Aplikowski expressed concerns with allowing such a large number of lots be below the 7000 square foot requirement.

Commissioner Stender said that the lot size and house size would create a small side lot.

Chair Girard stated that he empathized with the City trying to honor the Comprehensive Plan requiring three units per acre. He encouraged trying to eliminate smaller lots in the future.

John Dobbs, developer, said he had some small issues he needed to work through on his end, so he was hoping to table the item. He discussed the issue of affordability for house costs. He said he could provide additional facts.

Community Development Director Wittman said that 55-foot lots were not uncommon in this specific area.

Mr. Dobbs stated this site was complex because of the road, soil types, judicial ditch number four, and stormwater. He stated he would be ready to return to the Planning Commission with additional information in two weeks.

Commissioner Young asked about the difference in the affordability of the houses on smaller lots. Mr. Dobbs answered that he would like to come back with specific information at the future meeting. He said it would likely be twenty-five percent cheaper than other houses built by the developer.

Community Development Director Wittman said that more housing would bring down housing prices because of the housing shortage.



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Commissioner Aplikowski expressed concerns with the smaller lot sizes, especially for parents who do not have enough yard space for their children to play.

Commissioner Young stated that if Forest Lake would like to attract families, they need to provide the full package, so families have space.

Public Hearing was opened at 6:47 p.m.

Katie Cerney, 4625 195th Street, noted appreciation for the changes since the last plat. She expressed concerns about stormwater and potential stormwater impacts. She discussed concerns with the road access on 195th Street since it was a privately maintained road.

Chair Girard asked how far south 195th Street was located. Ms. Cerney explained the location and noted that it was a little offset.

Paul Schmid, 18070 July Avenue, said that affordability would create community. He stated that more homes would create more affordability for the community. He expressed the benefit of having parks close by for children.

Public Hearing was closed at 6:54 p.m.

Community Development Director Wittman clarified that if there were major changes, they would have missed the notification process for the March 11th meeting for a public hearing.

Commissioner Young asked if this lot was tiled, which would result in drainage challenges. Community Development Director Wittman responded that the engineering team would look into this question. She clarified that Fenway Park had recreational facilities.

Commissioner Aplikowski asked if there was an overflow of water. Community Development Director Wittman answered that the water that would be in the stormwater pond would hook into a stormwater system.

Motion: Chair Girard made a Motion to Table the Hidden Creek South Preliminary Plat and Planned Unit Development Amendment.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Young. Motion carried 7-0.

b. Public Hearing: Variance for Driveway Setback Reduction at 23375 Itasca Ave N

City Planner Birchland reviewed the proposal to extend the driveway towards the north property line to access the rear garage. He noted the proposed retaining wall along the north side of the proposed property line. He summarized the analysis completed by the staff.



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Andy Aplikowski, 23375 Itasca Avenue, noted that the retaining wall was intended to create the slope going toward the back.

Public Hearing was opened at 7:08 p.m.

No comments.

Public Hearing was closed at 7:09 p.m.

Motion: Commissioner Young made a Motion to recommend Approval of Resolution 02-25-26-01, approving a three (3) foot driveway side setback variance for the property located at 23375 Itasca Avenue North (PID 02-032-21-42-0005), subject to the conditions listed in the staff report. Motion seconded by Commissioner Wagner. Motion carried 5-1-1 (Stehler opposed; Aplikowski abstained).

Chair Girard noted that this item will go before the City Council for final action.

8. Discussion

None.

9. Updates

Councilmember Larson welcomed Commissioner Goodwin to the Planning Commission. He noted that the City parted ways with City Administrator Statz, and the Assistant City Administrator Chaika would serve as interim City Administrator.

Community Development Director Wittman said that Community Thread was seeking volunteer drivers to help with the senior ride offering service.

Assistant Community Development Director Gilmore said that Chestnut Creek Phase Two requested to change its name to Havenwood. He said that the Timm's Marina would be decided by City Council on March 9th if they need to go to an EIS for the proposal. There will be a public meeting for the development on March 11th.

Commissioner Aplikowski expressed appreciation for the City staff for their help with the variance application.

Commissioner Young said that they only had eleven drivers for Thrive and encouraged others to get involved. She said that the Rotary Plunge would happen on February 28th.



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10. Adjourn

Motion: Commissioner Stender made a Motion to Adjourn the meeting at 7:21 p.m.
Motion seconded by Commissioner Stehler. Motion carried 7-0.