



# Planning Commission

## Regular Meeting

~ Minutes ~

1408 Lake Street South  
Forest Lake, MN 55025  
[www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us](http://www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us)

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Wednesday, March 11, 2026

6:00 PM

City Center - Council Chamber

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[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	Absent	

### 3. Pledge of Allegiance

### 4. Approve the Agenda

No comments on the Agenda.

**Motion:** Commissioner Young made a Motion to Approve the Agenda as presented.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Wagner. Motion carried 6-0.

### 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 25, 2026

Chair Girard noted that Susan Young was not the Vice Chair. He requested that the title be updated.

**Motion:** Commissioner Stehler made a Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Item 6.a.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Wagner. Motion carried 6-0.

### 7. Regular Agenda (Action Items)



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**a. Public Hearing: Hidden Creek South (tabled at 2/25 PC)**

**i. Preliminary Plat**

**ii. PUD Preliminary Plat**

Assistant Community Development Director Gilmore noted that the developer was requesting to table the item to work through additional issues. The developer requested a 60-day extension for their application.

**Motion:** Commissioner Young made a Motion to table the Hidden Creek South Preliminary Planned Unit Development and Plat consideration until a date to be determined in the future.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Goodwin. Motion carried 6-0.

## 8. Discussion

**a. 2050 Comprehensive Plan Update Discussion**

Community Development Director Wittman summarized the importance of the 2050 Comprehensive Plan Update to prepare for the December 31, 2028, deadline.

Commissioner Young stated that community engagement was difficult in Forest Lake, especially to encourage residents to think about the future. She said that community engagement was expensive. She asked about focusing on the groups in the City that would have an interest in the discussion, such as the Homeowners Associations, to start the conversation. She asked about the opportunity to engage with high school students to create YouTube Videos to promote the Comprehensive Plan conversation.

Community Development Director Wittman stated that the Economic Development Authority expressed interest in being involved in the process to reach business owners and those visiting the community.

Commissioner Aplikowski suggested presenting the information via YouTube so that individuals can watch an overview on their own time.

Community Development Director Wittman discussed the survey utilized by the Park and Recreation Commission that they could explore.

Commissioner Young said that there were a variety of organizations, such as the Rotary Club, that would be open to presentations.

Community Development Director Wittman noted that community engagement was the most expensive feature of the discussion.

Chair Girard discussed the difficulty of community engagement with an abstract concept.



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Assistant Community Development Director Gilmore said it would be important to consider different ways to do broad outreach and gather feedback.

Chair Girard suggested meeting with the Forest Lake Lake Association to attend the annual meeting.

Commissioner Stehler suggested attending the Clear Lake Association meeting.

Chair Girard suggested engaging with individuals engaged with the senior center.

Community Development Director Wittman asked for feedback after the last comprehensive plan discussion.

Commissioner Young discussed the MXR stuff put in at the last minute. She said that there was a change in the City Council majority, and that they did a 180 on significant pieces of the comprehensive plan that was put together. She stated that significant changes were made, which made the City and Consultants do a lot of rework. She wanted to stick with the timeline so that it could be completed.

Commissioner Aplikowski suggested finding the hard mandates and guardrails from the Metropolitan Council. Community Development Director Wittman answered that the system statement was included in the packet. She noted that the City Council appealed the system statement on three factors, and the City has a hearing scheduled with the Land Use Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Young said that they were both diversified rural and suburban edges. She asked why it was citywide. Community Development Director Wittman clarified that it was in the urban service area.

Commissioner Young said she was on page four of the introduction. She stated that she was glad that the City Council was discussing the AMI. She discussed that no recent developments were in an affordable housing range according to the AMI.

Commissioner Stehler stated that new housing developments were often larger homes, and older homes would be on the market for a lower rate.

Commissioner Young said that they would have to get 600 homes, with some of them at the 30 percent AMI. She said that the current home builds were at 150 percent AMI.

Community Development Director Wittman acknowledged that they were a growing community and developing many homes on smaller lots. She said that some of the requirements in the system statements had prescriptions for the City to follow.



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Commissioner Young said that existing homes were seldom sold for less than \$270,000. She stated that some of the older homes would not be affordable in accordance with the Metropolitan Council Guidelines.

Community Development Director Wittman said that Forest Lake was a growing community, which impacted the valuation.

Commissioner Young noted that apartment rent was not even affordable for certain AMIs.

Community Development Director Wittman discussed different strategies to help obtain affordable housing. She said there was no mandate to put in 600 units, but they need to have the climate to create the 600 units.

Commissioner Young stated that she did not read the system statement in the same way.

Community Development Director Wittman discussed the difference between the requirements for sewer treatment and the density requirements.

Chair Girard asked about the possibility of getting closer to the required number or if they would have to cut it down. Community Development Director Wittman said that they just got the number for the implementation, and they have not been able to compare that to the existing proposed developments. She stated that the City had too much land guided for low to medium density development. They need to consider where to put in medium to higher density to balance out the 3.5 units per acre.

Commissioner Young said that they cannot go back to the original 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Community Development Director Wittman said that the current comprehensive plan was not being changed. They have hit the MUSA line. She said that when people want to expand the MUSA line, that is when they must re-evaluate.

Chair Girard asked about the vision. Community Development Director Wittman answered that they were getting closer to the 3 without the 50 feet.

Commissioner Stehler said that there were areas closer to the City that they had no control over, but the Metropolitan Council was putting control on Forest Lake.

Commissioner Aplikowski discussed the difficulty with the Metropolitan Council in forcing the City to follow guidelines. He encouraged the City Council to continue to appeal to the current process.

Assistant Community Development Gilmore discussed opportunities to hold tight to lot sizes in the future, if they could not include the stormwater ponds.



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Community Development Director Wittman provided an overview of other items to discuss.

Commissioner Young discussed the regional transit system and the 2050 regional transit plan, which would exclude Forest Lake from any transit opportunities and transit-oriented development. She said that the transit plan goal was for people to be a 10-minute walk from a transit opportunity, which was not possible in Forest Lake. She requested more clarity on what is expected of the City for the regional transit system.

Community Development Director Wittman said that they still have transit services, but they are not as frequent. The City Council was engaged in continued conversation.

Commissioner Young said that they did not have the characteristics of the transit level that were stated. She discussed the bicycle planning.

Community Development Director Wittman said the Swedish Immigrant Trail would connect to Hardwood Creek, but she did not know if that would be reclassified.

Commissioner Young discussed the bicycle access along County Road 4, which would provide additional access.

Community Development Director Wittman said that they continued to advocate for a bike trail along County Road 50 to provide a northern bicycle route.

Commissioner Wagner asked if the dial-ride services included Uber. Community Development Director Wittman answered that it included the Metropolitan Council Dial-Ride services, but not Uber.

Commissioner Aplikowski asked if the dial-ride services were reliable. Community Development Director Wittman answered that the services were provided, and she could provide numbers from 2024. Community Development Director Wittman noted that the newer service provided was not seeing large ridership, but the marketing was not present.

Commissioner Young expressed concerns about the restrictive time frame for the dial-ride services, but emphasized the importance of people knowing about the services.

Community Development Director Wittman reviewed different ride services offered in Forest Lake by other organizations. She discussed the opportunity to redefine the developable land area in Forest Lake.

Commissioner Young asked about discussing the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives. She asked if the Planning Commission should be thinking about how to promote a variety of transit options. She would like to better understand tactics if it were an objective. Community Development Director Wittman said she would like to tie the objectives to more measurable results.



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Chair Girard asked if any communities experienced success with the comprehensive plan. Community Development Director Wittman answered that this system was a big, unfunded mandate of regional planning that all cities have to do at the same time. She noted that many communities were muddling through, but the foundation documents were important.

Assistant Community Development Director Gilmore discussed the importance of engaging the public to have a successful comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Young discussed the importance of building back the concept of a community.

Commissioner Goodwin discussed the value of building a brewery and a dog park in Forest Lake. He mentioned it would be valuable to get businesses involved in the discussion of the comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Young said businesses in other cities encourage employees to live in the community where they work, so they invest in community services like parks.

Community Development Director Wittman voiced appreciation for the communicated high points, which would help them set a good foundation.

Commissioner Aplikowski discussed the importance of engaging residents by discussing change and what it could look like.

Commissioner Young asked if they could provide feedback on the Park and Recreation Commission plan. Community Development Director Wittman answered that the City Council would review it, but they could pull from that plan and put it into their plan.

## 9. Updates

Councilmember Larson mentioned that they held a neighborhood meeting regarding Timm's Marina from 5 to 6 p.m. The Public Hearing would be at the Planning Commission in two weeks, and there would likely be a lot of public feedback.

Commissioner Aplikowski asked when the pothole season was going to end. Councilmember Larson answered that the Public Works Department was out working on roads, but the weather makes it difficult.

Commissioner Young said certain roads were not public streets, but rather County roads, so the Public Works Department could not provide improvements.



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Community Development Director Wittman discussed a fraud scheme targeting applicants, in which scammers request wire transfers to obtain approval. They have done public messaging to help individuals understand the fraud scam. She said the Economic Development Authority updated its 2026 Workplan and included planning for Headwaters 123 and the Highway 61 Corridor.

Assistant Community Development Director Gilmore discussed the Environmental Assessment Worksheet completed by Timm's Marina. He noted that its rare to have the level of public comments received for an EAW, which demonstrates the importance of Forest Lake to city residents. The document had been released to the public, and will be published in the EQB Monitor on Tuesday March 25, so individuals can see the response to each public comment.

Commissioner Young voiced appreciation that they responded to each of the comments. She said that next Wednesday, the MET Council representative would be doing a presentation to the Rotary Club.

### 10. Adjourn

**Motion:** Commissioner Aplikowski made a Motion to Adjourn the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Wagner. Motion carried 6-0.