

PLAN COMMISSION

City of Kaukauna

Council Chambers

Municipal Services Building

144 W. Second Street, Kaukauna



Thursday, October 9, 2025 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

In-Person in Council Chambers

Mayor Penterman called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Brett Jensen, Giovanna Feller, John Neumeier, John Moore, Michael Avanzi, Pennie Thiele, Mayor Tony Penterman

Absent: Ken Schoenike

Other(s) Present: Planning and Community Development Director Dave Kittel, Associate Planner Adrienne Nelson

Moore made a motion to excuse the absent member. Seconded by Jensen. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Approve Minutes from September 18, 2025

Feller made a motion to approve the minutes from September 18, 2025. Seconded by Avanzi. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Old Business

- a. None

4. New Business

- a. Extraterritorial CSM Review – Hoelzel CSM Hollandtown

Director Kittel presented the extraterritorial certified survey map (CSM) for review. He explained that, per state statute, the City of Kaukauna has review authority for all land divisions and new plats in townships located within three miles of the city border. This review authority allows the City of Kaukauna to make sure that these land divisions and plats are substantially compliant with city ordinances in the event that they are

annexed into the municipality in the future. This CSM would create an additional parcel by separating out the existing barn structure. This CSM does not interfere with any long-term city plans, and it's far enough away from city borders that it's not a point of concern. Staff is recommending approval of the CSM as presented.

Thiele asked if the CSM would be going before the Town Board as well.

Kittel confirmed that, although the city has first review, it would also be going before both the county and township for review.

Avanzi asked for more information on the city's extraterritorial review authority. If the Plan Commission were to deny a land division or plat located within the city's extraterritorial review jurisdiction, would the process stop?

Kittel explained that, although it's uncommon, the Plan Commission could halt the process. There are several factors that play into stopping the process, however, and it would usually only be stopped if the area in question was set to be annexed in the near future or should already be in the city. He gave an example of a development that occurred in the Town of Vandenbroek that was halted because of some concerns raised by the city. Once solutions to those concerns were found, the development was allowed to move forward. The city would only deny a land division or plat if it would cause problems. The closer the land in question is, the more applicable the review process is.

Thiele made a motion to approve the extraterritorial certified survey map creating three lots as presented. Seconded by Moore. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Discussion to Update Zoning Ordinance to Include Data Centers in Industrial District

Director Kittel began the discussion on updating the city's zoning ordinance to include data centers in the Industrial District (IND). This change would help the city to stay relevant by providing for new industry

and new opportunities, but there are many items to consider when it comes to data centers, both good and bad. The state of Wisconsin has taken the stance that we are promoting them. Wisconsin is ideal for these developments because we have ample water for cooling, our cold weather reduces the amount of cooling days, and we have the space to facilitate larger developments. Some of the benefits that could come from allowing data centers include the addition of support industries for these centers, such as HVAC businesses or maintenance staff. There are also secondary economic benefits, as the buildings themselves have a decent assessed value and would help distribute the tax burden. This conversation is being brought forth in order to make the process clear, as there is a high probability a data center could come to the area, and the city wants to be ready and not reactive. This discussion has already gone forth to the Common Council, and staff has been directed to research data centers further. More information will be available at the next Plan Commission meeting, but right now staff is looking to see what information commission members want and if there are any initial points of concern. Some cons for data centers already noted by staff are their high energy draw and high water usage, although there are some ways to mitigate these effects. Additionally, although these centers typically add about fifty jobs, these jobs are often remote work opportunities. One thought is that data centers could be allowed, but only up to a certain size. Any data center over that size would require a special exception and a more intense review process. Although there would be energy and water challenges, the centers themselves operate quietly and with no smell, and their warehouse-like appearance would allow them to blend in seamlessly with the rest of the Industrial District. In summary, the city wants to be prepared instead of reactionary, and there may be positives for the community if data centers are allowed in a way and in an area that makes sense.

Moore commented that, if a data center were to be placed in another zoning district such as the Commercial Highway District (CHD), there would need to be extra consideration taken in regards to size and proximity to residential areas. The CHD might be appealing to some groups because this zoning district is very close to needed resources of water and power.

Kittel stated that the city could require a conditional use or special exception for data centers that wanted to locate to the CHD. There is tremendous variation in the size, form, and use of data centers. Staff is also gathering information from Wisconsin communities that have already had experience with data centers, such as Wisconsin Rapids, Beaver Dam, Port Washington, Caledonia, and Port Washington (former location of FoxConn).

Moore commented that Caledonia had denied the construction of a data center in their community.

Mayor Penterman added that data centers create many jobs during construction and the creation of infrastructure, but once work is complete the numbers drop and eventually stabilize.

Moore asked how a data center would impact the tax base of the city.

Kittel explained that, although the data center buildings themselves are good for the tax base, items such as the computers needed to run the data center would be exempted. A data center would be helpful for the tax base, but it would not be a top taxpayer and would likely be on par or higher than the average industrial group. There is, however, a benefit they provide in the diversification of industry. This diversification ensures that if a certain industry were to leave Kaukauna or close, there would still be plenty of other industries operating.

Neumeier commented that he would prefer to see a data center allowed as a special exception. This would allow the city to address infrastructure and environmental concerns. He asked if Kaukauna Utilities had any guidance on how large of a data center they could realistically support.

Avanzi stated that data centers had been discussed extensively among energy providers in the state. A data center would need to be isolated from the rest of the customer base, with infrastructure built just to serve it. Risk mitigation measures would need to be taken in contracts with data centers to ensure that they wouldn't pull out and leave stranded assets. For context, Kaukauna Utilities' largest customer requires 20 megawatts. A

data center of the size that are currently being built would require 3 to 4 thousand megawatts. The entire load of energy for Kaukauna and the other communities served by Kaukauna Utilities is 110 megawatts. Realistically, Kaukauna Utilities can't serve a FoxConn-sized site. They could maybe serve a 200 megawatt facility. It would be a big challenge, but he would love to see a data center in the Electric City. It would be great for the utility and the city and would help create and attract tech jobs. He is all for it and is supportive of being proactive.

Penterman commented that the Port Washington data center will require 1 gigawatt, enough to power the City of Milwaukee.

Jensen asked what the power reserve is for Kaukauna Utilities. How much capacity is there?

Avanzi explained that Kaukauna Utilities doesn't have the capacity yet. It would need to be built and would take a number of years. This would require a partnership with WPPI Energy but could be done without putting taxpayers at risk.

Penterman commented that it would need to be hooked into ATC.

Kittel added that, even if construction on a data center started today, it would take about three years to be fully built out. The whole process would need to be planned out and done in phases. The key is to have it done in a way that's attuned to the city. The city could set a size limit on data centers and have a process in place for data centers that exceed that limit to allow for more municipal control. Developers want to know the process going in. Staff appreciates the guidance from the Plan Commission and will continue to research data centers and plan to bring back more information at a later date.

c. Park Donation Application Review – Little Free Library

Associate Planner Nelson presented the donation application for a "little free library" that was submitted by Mary Brennan in memory of her son. The library would be constructed out of recycled plastic and would not

include a plaque. It would be installed on the eastern side of Pool Hill near the parking lot entrance.

Jensen asked if there would be any concern about access during the winter months.

Neumeier explained that the location had already been discussed with the Public Works Department, and that it shouldn't cause any issues.

Avanzi asked who would own it and maintain it.

Director Kittel explained that it would be on city property but would be maintained by the donor.

Avanzi made a motion to approve the little free library donation from Mary Brennan to be installed at Pool Hill at the location as presented. Seconded by Moore. The motion passed unanimously.

d. Park Donation Application Review – Bench

Associate Planner Nelson presented the donation application for a park bench by John and Colette Kieffer to be installed at Riverside Park in memory of Clyde Kieffer. The bench would be in the City of Kaukauna's standard bench style and would include a plaque. It would replace an old wooden bench at the same location.

Moore asked for clarification on the location. Would it be replacing one of the benches overlooking the ball diamond?

Neumeier explained that it would be replacing a bench down by the boat launch.

Moore asked when the bench would be installed.

Nelson explained that it would be installed in the spring or summer of 2026. Staff bulk orders the benches in early spring.

Moore asked if there would be any concerns with the location in regards to road improvements.

Neumeier stated that the Engineering Department did not have any concerns.

Thiele asked about the red maple mentioned in the plaque. Would a tree be donated as well?

Neumeier explained that John and Colette Kieffer had originally donated a tree which unfortunately had to be removed during the construction of the boat launch. A new tree will be planted by the city using the forestry budget next to the location of the bench.

Thiele made a motion to approve the park bench donation for John and Colette Kieffer to be installed at Riverside Park at the location as presented. Seconded by Moore. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Other Business

a. None

6. Adjourn

Avanzi made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Moore. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.

