

Meeting Minutes
New Prague Planning Commission
Wednesday, July 30th, 2025

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Dan Meyer with the following members present: Ann Gengel, Brandon Pike, and Jason Bentson. Absent was Shawn Ryan.

City Staff Present: Ken Ondich – Planning / Community Development Director and Evan Gariepy – Planner.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A. June 25th, 2025 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Gengel, seconded by Pike, to approve the June 25th, 2025 regular meeting minutes. Motion carried (4-0).

3. Public Invited to Be Heard on Matters Not on the Agenda

No public comments were given.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Request for Variance #V7-2025 – Sign Variance at 102 Chalupsky Ave. SE.

Planner Gariepy presented the staff report. He stated that the applicant, Ten Nineteen Development, LLC, is seeking a variance from the 6 square foot in surface area limit and 10 foot height limit for a building sign at 102 Chalupsky Ave. SE. The proposed sign would be 33.5 square feet in area and reach a maximum height of 12 feet. The sign would be above the front door of the Bohemia Flats 54-unit apartment building being constructed. He stated that the sign would allow for the apartment building's name to be visible from the road and adjacent strip-mall. He stated that the sign would not be disproportionate due to the large size of the building. He stated that staff recommends approval of the variance with the findings listed in the staff report.

Cameron Sonju with Ebert Companies/Ten Nineteen Development, LLC stated that the sign will be "shoebox-style" and backlit, and that the sign is the same size as the canopy entry.

A motion was made by Bentson, seconded by Gengel to recommend approval of V7-2025 with the following findings:

- A. The requested variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of this Ordinance because building signs are a permitted use in the RH High Density Residential Zoning District.

B. The requested variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan because the RH High Density Zoning District allows building signs to be constructed as a permitted use.

C. The applicant will use the property in a reasonable manner by adding an additional 27.5 sq. ft. of building signage over the typical ordinance allowed limit and 2 ft. above the typical ordinance allowed height limit on a very large 3 story, 54 unit apartment building.

D. Unique circumstances apply to this property over which the property owners had no control and which do not generally apply to other properties in the vicinity in that the apartment building being constructed is far larger than the majority than the buildings in a Residential District, with a far larger setback, which the Ordinance typically pertains to.

E. The variance does not alter the essential character of the neighborhood because building signs are a permitted use in the RH High Density Residential Zoning District as well as the B2 Community Commercial District, which abut the property on three sides.

F. The variance requested is the minimum variance which would alleviate the practical difficulties because it would allow for advertising of the apartment building name and allow for the sign to be seen clearly from the road and adjacent Strip Mall in the B2 Community Commercial District.

And with the following condition:

1. No conditions are applied.

Motion carried (4-0).

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Backyard Chickens Discussion - Continued

Planning / Community Development Director Ondich presented the staff report. He stated that since the June 25th Planning Commission meeting, he had provided revisions to the ordinance and completed additional research. He stated that changes to the ordinance, as directed by the Planning Commission, included mandating insulated coops and a mandatory 25' wetlands setback. He also discussed having a renewing annual fee of \$15, with a yearly check-in from a City employee to ensure that all ordinances are met. He also discussed implementing administrative citations rather than a legal process for ordinance violations.

General discussion of the Planning Commission was held in general support of administrative citations.

A motion to forward the Backyard Chicken Ordinance to City Council with a recommendation for approval and also to recommend that the City Council discuss a process for administrative citations was made by Pike, seconded by Benson. Motion carried (3-1, Gengel).

6. Miscellaneous

A. Uniform Development Code – 2nd Draft Discussion

Jeff Matzke with Bolton & Menk presented the updated progress on the Uniform Development Code (UDC), which has been brought to the Planning Commission in the past. The UDC aims to provide more clarity and usability to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, as well as assure that it is up to State Statutes.

Matzke stated that there will be a public survey available online and at Czech Out New Prague to get public feedback on topics relevant to the UDC before the final draft begins. The survey will be short to garner more responses, and will cover parking, parks, opinions on accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and demographics of the recipients.

Matzke discussed the proposed changes to lot setbacks, particularly in regards to non-conforming lots in downtown residential areas. Bolton & Menk recommends a reduction to minimum lot sizes, similar to Elko New Market and Jordan.

Matzke discussed the addition of an exceptions process. For existing non-conforming legal lots, this would provide an alternative to a variance request. He stated that other communities, such as Prior Lake, had success with exceptions. Director Ondich stated how the usage of exceptions would benefit lower income families who cannot afford a variance, make the process easier for staff, and encourage house improvements and development.

Matzke discussed the addition of tree preservation language. This will apply to all new developments and land that is being re-developed. It will mandate the size and species of new trees, as well as require the replacement of a proportion of trees removed within a development to encourage reforestation. He stated this has proven beneficial in other communities, and that there will be an exception for trees removed for public infrastructure. Pike and Director Ondich discussed how, once a house is purchased, the owner has property rights and can still remove the trees if chosen.

Matzke discussed adding clarification to exterior building regulations, as well as extending it to residential districts. Pike expressed interest in a historic downtown zoning district. Director Ondich stated that that could be discussed further in the future. The Commission discussed that the current downtown building design code is limiting and confusing, and that it needs to be amended.

Matzke stated that there are proposed changes to PUD, allowing for the City to push for incorporation of public parks, mixed-used projects, and other public benefits that developers don't typically do.

Matzke stated that there is added clarity for when conditional use permits and certificates of surveys are required. He stated that required surveys can be waived at the discretion of the Zoning Administrator in cases where it isn't needed. He also stated that most cities mandate public hearings for variances, and suggested that the City does so as well. Director Ondich recommended it, stating that the only significant change would be putting notice

of variance requests in the newspaper, which may require raising the fee. The Commission discussed how the current system of mailing letters can leave people confused and nervous.

Matzke also discussed the possibility of requiring free or low cost permits for fences and small accessory structures. Director Ondich stated that they used to be \$50, which led to people not consulting with the City. He stated that having a lower fee encourages residents to confirm plans with the City.

Matzke discussed other small changes to the UDC. Minimum parking requirements have been lowered to discourage sprawling empty parking lots. Language involving electric vehicle charging stations was added for future discussion. Accessory dwelling units (ADU) were added and simplified, classified as attached or detached. Matzke discussed that allowing ADUs to have their own utility hookups encourages splitting of plots. Matzke also brought up things that will need future discussion, such as specific definitions, diagrams and images, and implementing code and diagram from other legislating bodies to make the UDC more user-friendly.

General discussion from the Planning Commission showed support for the UDC progress thus far. Director Ondich stated that himself and Planner Gariepy are going through the entire UDC to make comments before Bolton & Menk moves onto the final draft stage.

B. Monthly Business Update

Planning/Community Development Director Ondich presented the monthly business update as information.

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by Pike, seconded by Gengel, to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 pm. Motion carried (4-0).

Respectfully submitted,



Evan C. Gariepy
Planner