



MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2025 AT 6:30 PM

COUNCIL ROOM, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 450 S. MAIN ST., RICHLAND CENTER, WI 53581 & VIRTUALLY

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order by Mayor Coppernoll at 6:30 PM. Members present were Ron Fruit, Karin Tepley, Tom McCarthy, Rachel Schultz, Douglas Martyniuk, Steve Downs, Melony Walters joined virtually, and Ryan Cairns joined by phone. Absent: None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mayor Todd Coppernoll requested an amendment to the order of the agenda, moving the Appointments and Public Comment before the Items for Discussion and Possible Action. Motion by Alderperson Schultz to approve the amended agenda. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Stori Field Pre-Development Agreement: Mayor Coppernoll reported that the developer had informed the City that two other communities were interested in the project and respectfully requested timely communication regarding its feasibility in Richland Center. He emphasized that the Council should have the opportunity to vote on the predevelopment agreement before the developer pursues options elsewhere, noting that delayed decisions in the past have limited community growth.

Director Glasbrenner reviewed the proposed agreement, highlighting key provisions: the developer would construct all required public infrastructure, including streets, utilities, and stormwater facilities; the project would be completed within 24 months of land transfer; all state, local, and permitting standards would be met; and the housing units would be built to zero-step accessibility standards in response to community demand.

Motion by Alderperson Tepley to reconsider the previous motion postponing the discussion until October 7th. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried unanimously.

Alderperson Schultz introduced an amendment directing that approximately 1.5 acres of green space be retained under City ownership to be incorporated into the park system and memorialized in honor of the Stori family. Discussion included whether the amendment was premature for a predevelopment agreement, given that a final development agreement would still require negotiation and approval. Questions were raised regarding survey accuracy, recreational liability, stormwater detention design, and the City's ability to reserve green space later in the process. Attorney Windle clarified that the predevelopment agreement expresses intent but does not finalize land conveyance, and that the City retains discretion when negotiating the development agreement. Motion by Alderperson Schultz that the City shall retain ownership of the green space that is approximately 1.5 acres to include the sledding hill, water retention basin, and the booster station with the intention the green space would become a part of the park system and to have the subdivision for the park be memorialized with the Stori family name. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion failed by roll call vote 2-6.

The Council returned to the original motion to approve the predevelopment agreement as presented. Discussion focused on the urgency of responding to the developer while preserving the Council's authority to negotiate final terms. Members acknowledged the community's strong and divided input, noting that approval would not finalize the project but allow staff to move forward with negotiations. Motion by Alderperson Downs to approve the Stori Field pre-development agreement as presented. Seconded by Alderperson Martyniuk. Motion carried by roll call 8-0.

APPOINTMENT & CONFIRMATION: Mayor Coppernoll reported that the term of Commissioner Mike Nice had expired, requiring a new appointment to the Utility Commission. Two candidates, Sarah Schultz and Brian Jones, were present for consideration. Schultz expressed her interest in becoming more involved in city service, while

Jones highlighted his long career with the School District and decades of volunteer service with the Fire Department. Mayor Coppernoll expressed appreciation to both candidates for their willingness to serve. Brian Jones was elected to the Utility Commission following a roll call vote of 7-1.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Shirley Steiner, 848 Cedar St, RC - Read a letter written by Susan and Anne-Marie Stori expressing sadness at the proposed development but requesting involvement in green space planning and honoring their father if the project proceeds.
- Greg Peterson, 4th St, RC: Collected 227 signatures opposing development and urged the Council to allow residents vote directly on the matter.
- Alfonso Salazar, 969 Cedar St, RC: Questioned communication about field use restrictions, asked about alternative development sites, and expressed concern that the community has not had a direct say in the project.
- Larry Komarek, 855 Panorama Ct, RC: Supported the project, noting the developer's responsibility for infrastructure costs, benefits to the entire city and tax base, and recommending that a street be named in honor of the Stori family.
- Ruth Wilson, 931 Valley View Dr, RC: Opposed development, citing the field's recreational use, drainage concerns, and availability of alternative sites.
- John Cler, 465 E 8th St, RC: Supported the project, emphasizing the community's housing shortage and long-term benefits of additional homes which will outlast the benefits of an empty field.
- Shelly Dobbs, 900 Summit Dr, RC: Opposed development, arguing for preservation of green space and suggesting alternative development sites or potential private purchase to maintain the field.
- Alan Pellett, 554 E 4th St, RC: Reported collecting petitions largely opposing development and argued the community favors preserving the field.
- Dave Turk, 144 W 7th St, RC: Supported the project, highlighting the unique opportunity of a developer funding infrastructure and the economic benefits of new housing and tax base. The city and county budgets are very tight and this project presents a very important opportunity for community growth.
- Ellen Evans, 4294 S Jordan Dr, McFarland: Submitted petitions totaling over 500 virtual and physical signatures opposing development and urged consideration of the UW–Richland campus as an alternative site.
- Mike Breininger, 24810 Mourning Dove Ln, RC: Supported the project, citing housing shortages documented by regional studies and stressing the long-term community benefits despite neighborhood concerns. Breininger also noted the campus land would be several years away from being usable.
- Deb McCoy, 665 N Chestnut, RC: Opposed development, emphasizing the field's community use, alternative available properties, and concern over property tax inequities.
- Mike Grindemann, 548 Stori Dr, RC: Opposed development, citing the city's ongoing housing projects, the recreational value of the field, and the risk of losing valuable green space. Grindemann also stated his desire to have the project moved to his 30 available lots in Muscoda.
- Chris Younger, 606 Stori Dr, RC: Opposed development, urging Council members to vote according to constituent petitions rather than administrative preferences.
- Rod Perry, 445 E Haseltine, RC: Supported the project, recalling similar past changes in neighborhood and stressing the need for single-family housing rather than additional apartments.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Alderperson Tepley to adjourn. Seconded by Alderperson Walters. Motion carried 8-0 at 7:33 PM.

Meeting minutes recorded by Clerk Keller