

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the regularly scheduled meeting of the Spring Lake Park Planning Commission was held on May 27, 2025, at the City Hall, at 7:00 PM.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Hansen called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

Commissioner Sharon Weighous
Commissioner Rick Cobbs
Chairperson Hans Hansen

MEMBERS ABSENT

Commissioner Eric Julien

STAFF PRESENT

Administrator Daniel Buchholtz, Building Official Jeff Baker, Planner Phil Carlson

OTHERS PRESENT

Abby Rehberger	10600 National Street NE	Circle Pines MN
Kurtiss Kemmet	965 83 rd Avenue NE	Spring Lake Park MN

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes – April 28, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting

Chairperson Hansen asked if there were any changes or corrections to the minutes. Hearing one, Chair Hansen declared the minutes approved.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Public Hearing – Variance Application for Privacy Fence 965 83rd Ave NE

Administrator Buchholtz summarized the applicant's request for a variance to exceed the four-foot height limit and 75% transparency requirement for a front yard fence on a corner lot. He explained that under city code, both street-facing sides of a corner lot are treated as front yards, limiting fences to four feet in height unless placed behind the home's front structure line. He stated that the property in question presents unique circumstances, as the garage and driveway face Laddie Road NE, making that frontage function more like a side yard.

Administrator Buchholtz noted that enforcement of fence codes across the city has been inconsistent, contributing to both compliant and non-compliant fences in similar situations.

Administrator Buchholtz said that while acknowledging that privacy fences are common and the proposed fence wouldn't impair visibility or significantly alter the neighborhood character, he emphasized that approving the variance could further contribute to inconsistent application of city standards.

Administrator Buchholtz acknowledged that there are valid arguments both for and against the requested fence variance. He stated that on one hand, due to the lot's configuration, the street-facing yard functions more like a side or rear yard. He said the proposed fence would provide increased privacy and security without impacting visibility, as it falls outside the required sight triangle.

Administrator Buchholtz noted that granting a variance for a taller, fully opaque fence could lead to inconsistent application of fencing standards and may detract from the open character typically expected on corner lots. He stated that a code-compliant option exists: the applicant could build a fence aligned with the front of the garage, enclosing most of the yard while meeting current regulations.

He said staff has no recommendation at this time and will defer the decision to the Planning Commission, offering suggested conditions for approval and findings of fact for denial, depending on the direction the Commission chooses.

Kurtis Kemmet from 965 83rd Avenue NE., said the plan is to replace the existing chain link fence, extending it along the east and back sides of the house up to the front. He stated that they chose not to follow the official fence line along the garage side because doing so would significantly reduce the usable space in what they consider their backyard. Mr. Kemmet stated that while the area is technically classified as the front yard in City Code, it's where they spend most of their time and where the majority of our yard space is located. He said that moving the fence back to comply with the front yard designation would eliminate much of that space, making it impractical to fence the yard in.

Chairperson Hansen opened the public hearing at 7:20 PM.

Chairperson Hansen closed the public hearing at 7:21 PM.

Motion made by Commissioner Cobbs, seconded by Commissioner Weighous to approve the variance request for 965 83rd Avenue NE, contingent upon the three specified conditions:

- The fence must be set back at least 17 feet from the back of the curb to stay out of the city's right-of-way.
- It must be constructed of durable, residential-grade materials (such as vinyl, cedar, or treated wood) and maintained in good condition.
- A building permit must be obtained prior to construction.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Weighous, Commissioner Cobbs, Chairperson Hansen. Motion carried.

B. Public Hearing – Conditional Use Permit and Zoning Text Amendment – Optimize PT – 8406 Sunset Road NE

Planner Carlson presented a two-part request from Optimize Physical Therapy to establish a sports performance and therapy center at the former Rise facility, 8406 Sunset Drive. He stated the industrial zoning district does not explicitly account for this type of use. Planner Carlson said the first part of the request seeks to amend the zoning ordinance definition, while the second adds this use to the table of uses, including footnotes addressing parking, signage, and truck maneuvering considerations.

Planner Carlson stated that the proposed ordinance amendment incorporates performance standards language, effectively classifying the use as a conditional use. He said if approved, the applicant would apply for a conditional use permit. Planner Carlson noted that the applicant is occupying an existing building with no exterior changes, so the permit meets all zoning requirements favorably. He is recommending approval of both the ordinance amendment and the conditional use permit.

Ms. Abby Rehberger, 8406 Sunset Road NE, said the need for expansion is due to the current facility in Blaine reaching capacity. She stated that the existing space accommodates baseball and softball training, strength and conditioning programs, and physical therapy services for youth and high school athletes. She stated that with nearly 40 teams unable to be accommodated in 2024, the plan is to move into a larger facility that will support additional sports, including basketball and volleyball.

Ms. Rehberger said the new facility already has built-in office spaces ideal for physical therapy and massage therapy. She noted that the facility will also house a homeschool co-op during the day to maximize space usage. She stated that three basketball/volleyball courts have secured letters of intent from local organizations such as Blaine Basketball Association and Centennial Volleyball Club. Ms. Rehberger stated the baseball and softball training programs will transition to the new location, including a dedicated bullpen area for specialized pitching and overhead throwing instruction.

Chairperson Hansen inquired if the facility would be used all year. Ms. Rehberger outlined future plans to ensure year-round activity at the facility. She noted that softball and baseball dominate the spring and summer seasons, incorporating basketball and volleyball into their offerings will help maintain steady engagement. She stated that April is currently the slowest month, as high school athletes focus on their seasons, leading to a temporary lull until they return. She stated to address the gap, a summer youth camp is planned, featuring themed weeks for basketball, volleyball, and kickball. Ms. Rehberger said the camps will cater to K-6 students, keeping the facility active while providing summer job opportunities for teachers, high school students, and college athletes.

Chairperson Hansen asked if 97 parking spaces would be adequate enough with the anticipated multiple camps. Ms. Rehberger stated that 97 spaces is more than adequate. She stated the camps schedule is staggered, leaving a 30-minute gap for parent drop-off and pick-up.

Administrator Buchholtz inquired about the planning of tournaments at the facility. Ms. Rehberger discussed the possibility of hosting second, third, and fourth-grade tournaments for the Blaine Basketball Association, pending approval. She stated that with three courts available, six teams would play simultaneously, totaling around 60 participants.

Ms. Rehberger said parking logistics were considered, assuming most parents drive individually. She said to manage flow, structured game times with short intervals between matches were proposed. She stated that there were previous discussions about partnering with Eagle Brook Church for overflow parking, with Saturday tournaments being a potential solution. She noted the idea has been explored, but further conversations with the church are needed to finalize arrangements.

Chairperson Hansen opened the public hearing at 7:31 PM.

Commissioner Hansen acknowledged the letters of support submitted to the Planning Commission. The following individuals provided letters in favor: Richard and Lori DiVito, Katie and Brandon Fream, Katie Anderson, Susan Leet, and Molly Guy.

Chairperson Hansen closed the public hearing at 7:32 PM.

Motion made by Commissioner Cobbs, seconded by Commissioner Weighous to approve the Zoning Text Amendment to add the Sports Performance Training Center use in the Definitions and Table of Uses in the Spring Lake Park Code as a Conditional Use in the I-1 District.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Weighous, Commissioner Cobbs, Chairperson Hansen. Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Cobbs, seconded by Commissioner Weighous to Approve a Conditional Use Permit for Optimize Physical Therapy to Operate a Sports Performance Training Center at 8406 Sunset Road NE with the following conditions:

- The conditional use is contingent upon adoption and codification of Ordinance 504, amending the zoning code to allow sports performance training centers in the I-1 district.
- All parking for activities on the site shall be accommodated with off-street parking on the property or through a joint parking agreement.
- All signage shall comply with the requirements of the Spring Lake Park Zoning Code.
- Customer parking and pedestrian access shall not interfere with off-street loading or large truck maneuvering areas.
- The Building Official shall determine whether the proposed use requires building modifications to meet applicable health and safety codes. Any required modifications shall be completed at the expense of the property owner or tenant.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Weighous, Commissioner Cobbs, Chairperson Hansen. Motion carried.

6. OTHER

Administrator Buchholtz gave an update on the vacancy for the Planning Commission, and stated that the City is taking applications for the vacancy,

7. ADJOURN

Motion made by Commissioner Weighous, seconded by Commissioner Cobbs to adjourn.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Weighous, Commissioner Cobbs, Chairperson Hansen. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:36 PM.