

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
RICE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Commissioner's Room / Government Services Building
Thursday, July 10, 2025 at 6:00 PM**

I. Call to Order

A. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order both in-person and electronically by Chair Garrett Johnson at 6:56 p.m.

Members present were: Garrett Johnson, Kenneth Engen, Matt Purfeerst, Jim Cihak

Members absent were: Julia Hogan

Staff present were: Zoning Administrator Trent McCorkell, Senior Planner Jeremy Edwards,
Administrative Coordinator Anna Aguilar, Office Support Specialist MacKenzie Klett.

Commissioners present: Charlie Peters

Others present: see Sign-in Sheet and Registrant List.

B. Motion by Ken Engen, seconded by Matt Purfeerst, Reading of the Notice

RESULT: Approved, AYES: Garrett Johnson, Matt Purfeerst, Ken Engen, Jim Cihak, NAYS: None

C. Motion by Jim Cihak, seconded by Matt Purfeerst, Approval of the Agenda

RESULT: Approved, AYES: Garrett Johnson, Matt Purfeerst, Ken Engen, Jim Cihak, NAYS: None

D. Motion by Matt Purfeerst, seconded by Jim Cihak, to approve the minutes of May 29, 2025.

RESULT: Approved, AYES: Garrett Johnson, Matt Purfeerst, Ken Engen, Jim Cihak, NAYS: None

II. New Business

1. Conditional Use Permit/Ransom (Reuvers) - Section 12, Warsaw Township

Blair Ransom, on behalf of landowner Jeanette Reuvers, has applied for approval of a Conditional Use Permit for a 199-ft Communication Tower. The property is described as: Part of the SE1/4 of the SE1/4, Section 12, Warsaw Township, Rice County, Minnesota. PID# 14.12.4.75.002. The property is Zoned UR, Urban Reserve.

Motion by Jim Cihak, seconded by Ken Engen, to recommend approval of the Conditional Use Permit with the following conditions and findings for Blair Ransom, on behalf of the landowner Jeanette Reuvers. The property is located in Section 12 of Warsaw Township.

RESULT: Approved, AYES: Garrett Johnson, Matt Purfeerst, Ken Engen, Jim Cihak, NAYS: None

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL – Ransom (Reuvers) – Conditional Use Permit (CUP)

1. The permittee shall comply with all rules, regulations, requirements, or standards of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Army Corps of Engineers and other applicable federal, state, or local agencies.
2. The Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is for a 199-ft monopole communication tower with fenced equipment enclosure.
3. Approved site plan shall be followed. Subject to compliance with 120-ft property line and Road Right of Way setbacks.
4. A driveway permit shall be obtained for the upgrading/change of use of the driveway.
5. Tower must have an exterior finish that minimizes off site visibility and is corrosive resistant.
6. A 6-ft or higher security fence shall surround the tower site.
7. The Conditional Use Permit will be considered void if construction is not started on the tower within one year from approval.
8. Tower shall be removed if it is unused for a 12-month or longer period.

Hearing Minutes:

Zoning Administrator Trent McCorkell (TM) presented the request to the Planning Commission (PC).

MP - Is it going to be far enough away from the road so that if it falls down it won't end up in the road?

TM - There is a designated fall zone that they have to meet. It is based on the height of the tower and engineered design for that.

KE - It's 120-ft if I am remembering correctly.

CP - The other tower farm is very close to this too, right?

TM - There is a series of towers, I believe those are the radio broadcast towers. They indicated they are unable to locate on any of that equipment.

CP - But it is in close proximity to that?

TM - Yes, that is just to the northeast about a half mile away.

The PC asked the applicant, Blair Ransom (BR), to come forward to add comments or answer questions regarding the request.

BR - I am here on behalf of Hemphill, the tower developer and Verizon Wireless, who is going to be the anchor tenant on the tower. A brief overview of what we are trying to do and how we selected the site. As demand increases and population is expected to increase in the Faribault and Rice County area, Verizon needs to plan for that and add new cell sites to infill the existing ones to increase capacity for that growth. That is the goal of this site. As TM mentioned we always look for existing towers as the first option. The only towers within the general range are the three radio towers and they are not structurally able to hold the antennas. I know there was a question about fall zones, on the construction drawings, sheet C1-3, has a depiction of the fall zone. We are in compliance with that portion of the ordinance. We are planning to use the existing field access, so we won't be building our own access.
GJ - Thank you, we may call on you if we have any questions.

Chair Johnson opened the public testimony portion of the item to the public and no one spoke.

Chair Johnson closed the public testimony portion of the item to the public.

Discussion:

TM - Two things I want to point out. One for the applicant, with the driveway, the driveway change-in-use will require a permit from the Rice County Highway Department. Even though it's in the same location and they aren't making big changes to it, the change-in-use triggers that. And for the Board, why I have the 120-ft property line/road right of way set back in there, they are always subject to their site plan approval, but it was kind of unclear with a couple of the drawings of where exactly it would be sitting compared to the right of way. So, I added that as a condition to make sure they are meeting that minimum.

MP - Do we require a bond for these like we do for solar projects, in case there is bankruptcy and abandonment?

TM - We do not, or we have not anyway.

GJ - It will be a tower in a nice spot out in the open. It's going to be surrounded by panels at some point too.

JC - I motion to approve item #1 subject to the 8 conditions.

KE - I second.

Motion to recommend approval with stated conditions and findings made by JC, seconded by KE, and approved unanimously.

2. Waiver of Plat/ Pumper - Section 20, Forest Township

Daniel Pumper has applied for approval of a Waiver of Plat to create a 2.5-acre building site through the use of a Transfer Development Right (TDR). The property is described as: Part of the SW1/4 of the SE1/4, Section 20, Forest Township, Rice County, Minnesota. PID# 06.20.4.50.001. The property is Zoned A, Agricultural.

Motion by Matt Purfeerst, seconded by Jim Cihak, to recommend approval of the Waiver of plat with the following conditions and findings for Daniel Pumper. The property is located in Section 20 of Forest Township.

RESULT: Approved, AYES: Garrett Johnson, Matt Purfeerst, Ken Engen, Jim Cihak, NAYS: None

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL – Pumper – Waiver of Plat (WOP)

1. The new 2.5-acre Transfer Development Right (TDR) receiving parcel shall contain one principle single family dwelling.
2. Any new construction on the parcel is to adhere to all Rice County codes and ordinances.
3. Prior to issuance of a building permit for a home and within one year of this approval the applicant shall record a new deed at the Rice County Recorder's Office separating the TDR receiving parcel.
4. The remaining parcel and TDR receiving parcel shall not be further subdivided or combined with other land(s) unless approved under the Rice County subdivision regulations.
5. The conservation easement for the TDR sending area shall be recorded at the same time or before the new parcel is recorded.
6. In-lieu park dedication fee of \$500 shall be paid prior to recording of the new parcel.

Hearing Minutes:

Zoning Administrator Trent McCorkell (TM) presented the request to the Planning Commission (PC).

The PC asked the applicant, Daniel Pumper (DP), to come forward to add comments or answer questions regarding the request.

DP - Just looking to improve the property by having a TDR there, so someday in the future it can be used.

Chair Johnson opened the public testimony portion of the item to the public and no one spoke.

Chair Johnson closed the public testimony portion of the item to the public.

Discussion:

KE - Another straightforward TDR.

GJ - It looks good, I'm glad people are using them.

MP - It's 2.5 acres instead of 5.

GJ - It's surprising, that's the first one in a while.

KE - Since they got larger.

MP - I motion to approve with the 6 conditions.

JC - I second.

Motion to recommend approval with stated conditions and findings made by MP, seconded by JC, and approved unanimously.

3. Preliminary and Final Plat/Swedin - Section 36, Shieldsville Township

Vern Swedin, has applied for approval of a preliminary and final plat to combine two current lots within a Planned Unit Development Plat into one single-family dwelling lot. The property is currently described as: Lots 5 and 6, Block 3, Grays Landing subdivision in Section 36, Shieldsville Township, Rice County, Minnesota. PID#s 09.36.1.51.012 & 09.36.1.51.011. The property is Zoned GDS, General Development Shoreland.

Motion by Ken Engen, seconded by Matt Purfeerst, to recommend approval of the Preliminary and Final Plat with the following conditions and findings for Vern Swedin. The property is located in Section 36 of Shieldsville Township.

RESULT: Approved, AYES: Garrett Johnson, Matt Purfeerst, Ken Engen, Jim Cihak, NAYS: None

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL – Swedin – Preliminary & Final Plat (Pre & Final Plat)

1. Final plat shall be recorded with the Rice County Recorder within 90-days from approval.
2. Combined lot is to contain one single family dwelling.
3. Any adjustments required by the County Surveyor or Recorder shall be made prior to recording of the plat.
4. The approved Grays Landing final development plan shall continue to be followed.
5. If applicable, the Common Interest Community (CIC), Homeowners Association (HOA), and covenant documents shall be revised to reflect new platted lot arrangement.

Hearing Minutes:

Zoning Administrator Trent McCorkell (TM) presented the request to the Planning Commission (PC).

The PC asked the applicant, Vern Swedin (VS), to come forward to add comments or answer questions regarding the request.

VS - I have nothing to add, it was covered very well.

Chair Johnson opened the public testimony portion of the item to the public and no one spoke.

Chair Johnson closed the public testimony portion of the item to the public.

Discussion:

GJ - It looks simple, and it's allowed in the PUD.

KE - It is allowed, I motion to approve with the 5 conditions.

MP - I second.

Motion to recommend approval with stated conditions and findings made by KE, seconded by MP, and approved unanimously.

4. **Waiver of Plat/Wagner - Section 32, Wells Township**

George Wagner has applied for approval of a Waiver of Plat to create two 2.58-acre parcels through the use of Transfer Development Rights (TDRs). The property is described as: Part of the NW1/4 of the NW1/4, Section 32, Wells Township, Rice County, Minnesota. PID# 10.32.2.25.001. The property is Zoned A, Agricultural.

Motion by Jim Cihak, seconded by Matt Purfeerst, to recommend approval of the Waiver of Plat with the following conditions and findings for George Wagner. The property is located in Section 32 of Wells Township.

RESULT: Approved, AYES: Garrett Johnson, Matt Purfeerst, Ken Engen, Jim Cihak, NAYS: None

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL – Wagner – Waiver of Plat (WOP)

1. The two new 2.58-acre Transfer Development Right (TDR) receiving parcels shall each contain one principle single family dwelling.
2. Any new construction on the parcel is to adhere to all Rice County codes and ordinances.
3. Prior to issuance of building permits for a home and within one year of this approval the applicant shall record new deeds at the Rice County Recorder's Office separating the TDR receiving parcels.
4. The remaining parcel and TDR receiving parcels shall not be further subdivided or combined with other land(s) unless approved under the Rice County subdivision regulations.
5. The conservation easement for the TDR sending area(s) shall be recorded at the same time or before the new parcels are recorded.

6. In-lieu park dedication fee of \$1000 shall be paid prior to recording of the new parcels.

Hearing Minutes:

Zoning Administrator Trent McCorkell (TM) presented the request to the Planning Commission (PC).

MP - Will they have separate septic systems?

TM - Yes, that was a change that was made back a year or two ago. When we went to the larger lot size option and changed some things, group septic systems were no longer required.

The PC asked the applicant, George Wagner (GW), to come forward to add comments or answer questions regarding the request.

GW - I'm planning to transfer some development rights to that piece of property to hopefully sell the lots.

Chair Johnson opened the public testimony portion of the item to the public and no one spoke.

Chair Johnson closed the public testimony portion of the item to the public.

Discussion:

GJ - Again, a pretty simple TDR. There does seem to be a little uptick in TDR use, which is good.

MP - Especially on the west side.

GJ - It's good to see, that's why they are there.

JC - I motion to approve item #4 subject to the 6 conditions.

MP - I second.

Motion to recommend approval with stated conditions and findings made by JC, seconded by MP, and approved unanimously.

III. Adjournment

Hearing no other items before the PC, a motion was made by KE, second by JC, to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 pm. Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted

Planning Commission



**MacKenzie Klett
Office Support Specialist**



Garrett Johnson, Chair