



**Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 4, 2026
6:30 PM**

North St. Paul City Hall – Council Chambers
2400 Margaret Street

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Blees called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

COMMISSION

Patrick Blees, Chair

Andrew Wise, Vice-Chair

Arthur Alvarez, Jr., Commissioner

Absent

Cameron Muhic, Commissioner

Pete Marcaccini, Commissioner

Vito Sauro, Commissioner

STAFF/LIAISONS

Jason Nordby, City Council Liaison

Absent

Ken Roberts, Community Development Director

Chris Cherne, Planning Commission Secretary

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Blees asked for a motion to adopt the June 4, 2026, meeting agenda.

M/Sauro, S/Wise.

Motion carried 5-0.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of April 2, 2026, Meeting Minutes

Blees asked for a motion to approve the April 2, 2026, Meeting Minutes.

M/Maraccini, S/Sauro.

Motion carried 5-0.

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

There were no public comments.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Variance Request – 2130 Cowern Place East

Cherne presented the Variance Request – 2130 Cowern PI E item to the Planning Commission. The Applicant, Tom Griffith, is seeking a variance from the accessory buildings and structures requirements in the North St. Paul Zoning Ordinance. The variance is requested in order to proceed with the construction of a proposed 40 ft x 30 ft detached garage at the property located at 2130



Cowern Place E. Prior to the construction of the detached garage, the Applicant proposed to demolish an existing 534 square foot detached garage and 379 square foot attached garage on the property.

Staff reviewed the variance criteria for approval. Staff find the proposed use of the accessory structure as storage space for vehicles is in harmony with the purposes of the zoning ordinance. The proposal also is unlikely to have any adverse effect on the health, safety, or general welfare of the City. The property will be used in a reasonable manner, and staff do not believe the variance, if granted, would alter the essential character of the locality.

The Applicant states that the variance is necessary due to special conditions that are particular to the property, in particular, the large size of the lot. Although staff do agree that the lot is uniquely large for its zoning district and adjacent properties, the size of the lot does not prohibit compliance with the zoning ordinance in this case. Per the zoning ordinance, the Applicant can still construct a detached garage that is up to 948 square feet (equal to the size of the ground floor area of the principal building) and up to two additional accessory buildings, neither of which exceed 200 square feet. In fact, this avenue would provide a way to have more square footage of storage space than originally requested while being in compliance with the zoning ordinance.

Because of these findings, staff recommend the Planning Commission make a motion to recommend City Council approval of Resolution No. 2026-XXX Denying a Variance Application for the Property at 2130 Cowern Place East.

Chair Blees opened the public hearing at 6:45 PM.

Two neighbors of the Applicant spoke in support of the variance request application.

Chair Blees closed the public hearing at 6:46 PM.

Blees asked for a motion to recommend City Council approval of Resolution No. 2026-XXX Denying a Variance Application for the Property at 2130 Cowern Place East.

M/Wise, S/Sauro.

Motion carried 5-0.

B. Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – Accessory Dwelling Units

Roberts presented the Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – Accessory Dwelling Units item to the Planning Commission. At the Planning Commission meeting on April 2, 2026, the Planning Commission determined the existing Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations found in the zoning ordinance did not consider maximum square footage for an ADU that is attached to the principal dwelling unit. Because of this finding, Staff prepared a zoning ordinance text amendment for ADUs for consideration by the Planning Commission.

The proposed ordinance language clarifies the definition of an ADU, amends the maximum size of an attached ADU to 40% of the floor area of the principal dwelling unit and amends the maximum size of a detached ADU to 1000 square feet. The proposed amendment also includes additional language regarding required utility connections and clarification of ownership of an ADU.

Sauro asked about the language indicating that owners may not sell ADUs separately or independently from the principal dwelling or create a separate tax parcel and what issues this regulation intends to

solve. The Commission discussed that if subdividing a lot with an ADU, the ADU would need to be independently connected to city utilities and meet all other lot and dwelling requirements.

Chair Blees opened the public hearing at 7:10 PM.

There were no public comments.

Chair Blees closed the public hearing at 7:11 PM.

Blees asked for a motion to recommend City Council approval of Ordinance No. 2026-XXX Amending Portions of the North Saint Paul City Code Regarding the Definition of an Accessory Dwelling Unit and Accessory Dwelling Unit Regulations.

M/Muhic, S/Wise.

Motion carried 5-0.

VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS, ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Comprehensive Plan Update

Roberts presented the Comprehensive Plan Update discussion item to the Planning Commission. The City is required to complete an update of its Comprehensive Plan by September 2028. The City is starting that process and this is the third meeting discussing the update and Chapter Two of the existing 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Roberts provided an overview of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the Vision, Goals and Decisions. Roberts asked the Planning Commission if the statements in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan are still relevant as they will be the basis for the future update.

The Planning Commission agreed that the Vision Statement provided in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan is still relevant today and for the 2050 Plan Update. Wise indicated that the term “creative placemaking” can be ambiguous and may need to be reworded for clarity. The Planning Commission discussed engaging with consultant WSB to begin the Plan update at the beginning of 2027. Muhic stated he would like to see at least three community engagement sessions for the update and implementation of a form of online engagement as well. Blees agreed with Muhic and stated it is important to show that community input is considered in drafting the Plan. Muhic stated he would be willing to help with strategies for reaching out to the public regarding the Plan update.

The Planning Commission reviewed the goals provided in Chapter Two of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. For the goal emphasizing resiliency and the environment, Wise recommended including language regarding the City promoting and practicing sustainability in the 2050 Comprehensive Plan.

VIII. REPORTS

Blees shared that the citywide garage sale was a great event. Blees also shared that he and his wife cleaned up litter out of Silver Lake during the parks cleanup day.

Roberts provided a recap of the Citywide Cleanup event on May 9, 2026. The City Council also recently approved a new 5-year contract (starting with September 1, 2026) with Tennis Sanitation for residential trash, recycling & yard waste services. The new contract implements a new bulky waste pickup program that will be a big benefit to residents of North St. Paul.

Roberts also shared that the car shows this summer will be alternating week-by-week between the History Cruzers and the Invisible Wounds Project.



IX. ADJOURNMENT

Blees asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 PM.
M/Marcaccini, S/Muhic.
Motion carried 5-0.

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting is Thursday, July 2, 2026, at 6:30 PM.

Members, please notify any planned absences to:

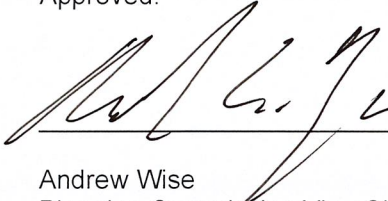
Chris Cherne
Planning Commission Secretary
651-747-2440
chris.cherne@northstpaul.org

Attested:



Chris Cherne
Planning Commission Secretary

Approved:



Andrew Wise
Planning Commission Vice-Chair