



**DEEPHAVEN PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Acting-Chair Kendall Carlson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Preston Ahrens, Kendall Carlson, Patrick Donlin, Jerome D'Alessandro, and Dan Goodrich

**ABSENT:** Chair Mike Petersen and Commissioner Kjell Nafstad

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Planning Director Pat Smith and City Council Liaison Emily Scherschligt

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES  
Minutes of December 16, 2025**

Motion by Commissioner Donlin, seconded by Commissioner D'Alessandro, to approve the minutes of December 16, 2025, as drafted. Motion carried 5/0.

**2. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- a) Conditional Use Permit to Exceed the Hardcover Limit and a Grading Variance for a New House at 18800 Highland Avenue

Smith presented the staff report. Sam Steadman, Cardinal Custom Homes, is requesting a variance to exceed the grading limit and a Conditional Use Permit to exceed the hardcover limit by 12.3% in conjunction with constructing a new house.

According to Hennepin County Property Information, the existing house was constructed in 1940. The existing house is a legally non-conforming structure with non-conforming front yard and side yard setbacks. The existing hardcover is 23.87%. The applicant is proposing to raze the existing house and construct a new house that would increase the hardcover to 37.3%.

The proposed grading plan includes two four-foot retaining walls in the rear yard. Raising the grade eight feet exceeds the grading limit of three feet; thus, a grading variance of five feet is required.

Sam Steadman and David, applicant, addressed the Planning Commission. He believes the steepness of the lot dictates the need for a variance and would not affect any of the neighbors. He said there are four existing retaining walls between 18 inches and 2 feet. He said the house is a speculative house and has not been sold.



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Acting-Chair Carlson opened the public hearing.

Nancy Lauritsen, 18645 Highland Avenue, addressed the Planning Commission. She read a letter from Jackson and Micaela Kranz, 18710 Highland Avenue, who live two houses down from the subject lot and could not attend the meeting. The Kranz' oppose the requested hardcover limit and grading variance. The house does not fit the lot. Nancy Lauritsen said research shows hardcover over 25% increases stormwater runoff that carries soil contaminants.

Ms. Lauritsen went through the past six months of agendas on the City's website. She encourages the City to limit the size of single-family homes. She requests the Planning Commission to deny the variance request.

Betty Bright, 18840 Highland Avenue, addressed the Planning Commission. She used to live in Edina. She believes the proposed house will ruin the character of the neighborhood. She does not believe this is a "hardship lot" as smaller houses could fit on the lot without the degree of variance or hardcover request.

Margi Hedren, 18905 Highland Avenue, read the email from Michael and Laurel Traxler, who live at 3600 James Avenue. She requests the Planning Commission recommend denial of the variance and CUP requests.

Nancy Lauritsen, 18645 Highland Avenue, addressed the Planning Commission again. She read minutes from a City Council meeting discussing the maximum building coverage to a sliding scale.

Tamara Reese, 18740 Highland Avenue, addressed the Planning Commission. She echoes the concerns of her neighbors. Is also concerned with the removal of mature trees that may exacerbate erosion issues.

Sam Steadman, 18915 Lake Avenue and David, addressed the Planning Commission a second time. He believes the drain tile will capture any stormwater runoff. A sport court is needed because the backyard is not usable.

Betty Bright, addressed the Planning Commission again. The proposed house is overbuilt for this lot.

Acting-Chair Carlson closed the public hearing.



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Commissioner Goodrich thanked the neighbors and developer for coming to the meeting. He thinks it would be a beautiful home but the proposed house seems too large for the lot.

Acting-Chair Carlson stated her concerned for the proposed height of the house. Commissioner Donlin stated the proposed house is too large for the lot. Commissioner Ahrens thought the house is about 600 square feet too large for the lot. Acting-Chair Carlson said there are ways to design homes that are more appropriate for the size of the lot. Commissioner D'Alessandro said no one is opposed to the lot being improved, but the proposed house is an over-improvement.

Motion by Commissioner Ahrens, seconded by Commissioner Goodrich, to accept the recommendation and findings of staff and recommend the City Council deny a variance to exceed the grading limit by five feet and a Conditional Use Permit to exceed the hardcover limit by 12.3% in conjunction with building a new house at 18800 Highland Avenue. Motion carried 5/0.

- b) Conditional Use Permit to Exceed Hardcover Limit for a House Addition at 20445 Park Place

Smith presented the staff report. The applicant, Arien Yineman, Measured Inc., is requesting a Conditional Use Permit to exceed the hardcover limit by 11.5% in conjunction with constructing an addition. According to Hennepin County Property Information, the existing house was constructed in 2011. The existing hardcover is 27.38%. The applicant is proposing an addition on the rear of the house that that would increase the hardcover to 36.5%.

Commissioner Donlin stated that the grading plan indicates the stormwater would flow to the neighboring property, not to the proposed rain garden.

Arien Yineman, Measured Inc. addressed the Planning Commission. He said he talked to Planning Director Smith before he submitted the application. He believes the proposed addition is keeping in character with the neighborhood. They are using the same architect as the original house to keep the addition similar to the existing house. No trees would need to be removed to build the addition. He only needs eight feet of clearance for his equipment.

Acting-Chair Carlson opened the public hearing.



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Paul Dubruiel, 20365 Park Place, addressed the Planning Commission. He has seen the evolution of Cottagewood. He recommends a tree-overlay district. He appreciates staff's recommendation. If someone wants a larger house, they should find a larger lot. He believes if the variance is granted, it would continue the erosion of the character of Cottagewood.

Blake and Sara Baratz, homeowners, addressed the Planning Commission. They are building a home for their children. Their existing patio is constantly needing to be repaired. Sara does not believe the addition would not affect the character of the neighborhood because the addition is in the rear of the house.

Commissioner Goodrich asked about the stairs. Sara Baratz said she does not believe they were constructed correctly.

Cassy and Tom Jones, 20455 Park Place, addressed the Planning Commission. She questions the stormwater runoff from the addition that does not drain toward the rain garden. She is concerned about the size of the addition. She wonders about the location of trees and shrubs. Tom questions if the survey used is up-to-date. Planning Director Smith stated the survey is from December 8, 2025.

Paul Dubruiel, addressed the Planning Commission again. The streetcar office was removed from a backyard when a new house was constructed on Park Place.

Arien Yineman, Measured Inc., addressed the Planning Commission again.

Mike Derosier, 20425 Park Place, addressed the Planning Commission. Has lived in the house for seven years. He is concerned about the projection of the proposed addition. Currently all the rear elevations of the homes along Park Place all line up. He is concerned the addition would eliminate that consistency. The addition is two-stories and would affect his views. He is concerned that more stormwater will come his direction, which his rear yard is already saturated.

Acting-Chair Carlson closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Donlin stated that the proposed addition is optional and too large of an ask. If one yard is already saturated, then the area is already over built. He is also concerned with the sightlines.

Commissioner D'Alessandro stated that the effective hardcover is being reduced to 21.2% so it should help with the neighboring property. Commissioner Ahrens can sympathize with the sight lines. Commissioner



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Goodrich stated sightlines falls outside of city ordinances. On paper it looks like a nice addition but seems to be too large for the lot.

Arien Yineman requested that the Planning Commission continue the public hearing to the February Planning Commission meeting to give the owners time to address the concerns of the Planning Commission and neighbors. Motion by Commissioner Goodrich, seconded by Commissioner D'Alessandro, to continue the public hearing to the February 17, 2026, Planning Commission meeting. Motion carried 5/0.

c) Maximum Building Footprint

Smith presented the staff report. Staff recommends having a maximum building footprint that provides more guidance for architects and homeowners when designing additions and new homes.

Nancy Lauritsen thinks a maximum footprint on a sliding scale is a great idea. She thinks it would be well received. Would like more of a notice for a public hearing. Paul Dubruiel addressed the Planning Commission.

Betty Bright, thanked the City for the trail survey. Paul Dubruiel addressed the Planning Commission. He would like more notification for variance requests and zoning ordinance amendments.

Acting-Chair Carlson closed the public hearing.

Acting-Chair Carlson said the Planning Commission identified last year that the Planning Commission wanted to address to be more consistent. Commissioner Goodrich would prefer if the cap on the maximum building coverage was lower than what is recommended. Smith stated the Planning Commission should review what those houses would be affected and if they seem to be oversized for the property.

Commissioner Donlin motioned, Commissioner Goodrich seconded, to recommend the City Council amend the zoning ordinance to have a sliding scale for the building coverage of residential lots.

d) Comprehensive Plan Amendment – Trails and Sidewalks

Acting-Chair Carlson opened the public hearing. No one spoke. Acting-Chair Carlson closed the public hearing.



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Acting-Chair Carlson motioned, Commissioner Donlin seconded, to recommend the City Council amend the Comprehensive Plan and include a section on pedestrian trails.

**3. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**4. LIAISON REPORT**

Councilmember Scherschligt presented the Liaison Report. She said the City Council approved the setback variance for the pool on Hooper Lake Road that was retroactive. City Council approved hiring a new Permit Clerk Maria Borell.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Commissioner D'Alessandro to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 p.m.  
Motion seconded by Commissioner Goodrich. Motion carried 5/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Smith  
Planning Director