

WOODLAND CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
6:00 P.M. MONDAY OCTOBER 13TH, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Vince Suerth called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Suerth and Councilmembers Tom Newberry, Dave Daniels, Hank Zucker and Juan Vazquez

Absent: None

Staff: City Administrator / Special Counsel Dan Madsen; Planning & Zoning Pat Smith

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion was made by Newberry and seconded by Vazquez to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

- A. Approve October 13th, 2025 City Council Meeting Minutes
- B. Approve Payment of Claims & Financial Report

Motion carried: voting in favor were Suerth, Newberry, Daniels, Zucker and Vazquez.

MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR:

None

PLANNING AND ZONING MATTERS:

A. Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS)

Smith presented the staff report. This is the first reading of amending the SSTS ordinance. State law requires a Compliant Inspection whenever a new bedroom is added. But cities are allowed to have other triggers that require a Compliance Inspection. The draft ordinance would require a Compliance Inspection whenever the property is sold or transferred, or when an addition is added.

Smith said he would not recommend transfer of sale as staff is never aware of when properties transfer ownership. Councilmember Zucker asked if there should be an exception for properties with seepage pits. Councilmember Newberry believes it could be an economic hardship as new systems are expensive. Councilmember Daniels thought there should be some criteria for determining when systems have to be replaced.

Mayor Suerth asked staff if other cities grant variances for hardships for having to replace a septic system. Smith did not know of any communities but would research other communities and bring back that information for the next City Council meeting.

Realtor Jerome D'Alessandro answered some questions of the City Council. He said the general public does not even know Woodland has septic systems. He believes having an ordinance that requires systems to be compliant at sale of a property would benefit the City's perception. The only issue he could foresee is the transaction during the winter. The ordinance requires an escrow for those situations.

Councilmember Vazquez asked about the definition of a maintenance operator. He says his company is inspecting his drain field as well as his tank. Mayor Suerth said if the drain field is not operating properly, a warning signal would turn on. Councilmember Zucker asked if staff could provide copies of pumping report to see what operators are reporting when maintaining systems.

B. Lake Yard Setback Variance for a Retaining Wall at 19725 Lakeview Avenue

Smith presented the staff report. According to Hennepin County Property Information, the existing house was constructed in 1910. The house is non-conforming due to the setbacks from the side yard and front yard. The existing hardcover is 35.8%. The applicant is proposing to raze the existing house and construct a new house that would require the following variances:

- a variance of 17 feet from the minimum required front yard setback.
- a variance of 11.9 feet from the minimum distance between two structures.
- a variance of 9.9 feet from the minimum required exterior side yard setback.
- a variance to exceed the lot coverage by 9.75%

Staff recommends that the City Council deny the variances as submitted. Some degree of variance that are more reasonable will probably be required in order to redevelop this site, but as proposed, staff believes the proposed variances do not meet the criteria for the City Council to approve them.

- The property is not unique to Groveland to justify the degree of variances being requested. Other properties have been redeveloped with new houses that did not need a variance to exceed the lot coverage limit.
- The proposed house with a two-car garage, exceeding the hardcover limit by 10.2% is contrary to the character of Groveland, which is smaller houses on smaller lots with many having one-car garages or no garages.
- The 55.2% lot coverage variance request seems unreasonable for Groveland as four other houses have been built since 2009 meeting the 45% lot coverage limit. The smaller lots in Groveland typically have no garages or one-car garages (79%). If a one-car garage (200 SF) was added onto the existing house, it would result in a lot coverage of 42.9%, which seems reasonable for this neighborhood.

Councilmember Vazquez said Groveland residents should look into the proposed drainage system for future projects. Mayor Suerth said the vast majority of stormwater goes to the common area. Councilmember Daniels said the City should consider requiring a stormwater system for Groveland.

Kyle Hunt, applicant, addressed the City Council. Sather-Berquist completed a study, not a survey, of Groveland that gives an estimated hardcover percentage. He discussed the need for a side yard setback variance. Hunt asked if the Council received the You Tube video that was submitted to staff. Council confirmed that they did receive the video.

Hunt gave an overview of the proposed stormwater storage system.

Mayor Suerth opened the public hearing at 7:09 pm.

Bill Carlson, 2835 West Road, long time member of the Groveland architectural committee, addressed the Council. Groveland Homeowners Association (GHA) has been enforcing the 45% hardcover as a tool to limit the size of homes on Groveland's small lots. He encourages the City Council to uphold Groveland's hardcover limit.

Councilmember Daniels asked about the neighboring house being closer to the property than the subject house. Bill Carlson said the stairway is closer to the property line than the house at 2765 West Road, but the house foundations of the two houses have the same setback from the common property line.

Mayor Suerth gave an overview of the GHA regulations over the past 20 years. Mayor Suerth is asking if the City approves the hardcover variance what stops another developer from asking for the same variance. Councilmember Vazquez believes the height of the proposed house seems too high for the neighborhood. Bill Carlson said he believes a nice house could be rebuilt on the subject lot within the City's requirements. Councilmember Vazquez agreed.

Dave Grover, 17720 Front Street, said when the porches were added over 20 years ago, there were no lot lines. Dave Grover said since he's been on the Groveland Architectural Committee that they have not approved anything that increased the non-conformity of a lot in Groveland. He believes if the front yard setback requirement is ignored and the new house is allowed to be 17 feet into the front yard setback, that would greatly change the character of the neighborhood. Allowing the front yard setback would greatly reduce the amount of sunlight that reaches inside his house and to his garden.

Councilmember Zucker asked if a one-car garage addition would impact Dave Grover as much as a two-car garage extension. Dave Grover said a one-car addition would be a significant improvement over the current design. Councilmember Vazquez said the height of the house is a legitimate concern. Mayor Suerth said technically the architectural committee denied the building plans on a 2-2 vote as tie votes are a denial.

Don Nelson, 2830 West Road, addressed the City Council. Has lived in Groveland for 50 years. Has raised five kids in the neighborhood. His neighbor put a second-story on his home but stayed

within the building footprint. He would like to see the Erickson's use the property as they are planning.

Nancy Broshat, 17720 Front Street, addressed the City Council. When she purchased her house, she was told she could not get a garage. She said that the nice little houses are perfect for families to move into.

Tom Erickson, property owner of the subject lot, addressed the City Council. He always wanted to live on Lake Minnetonka. He said the community is excited to see the existing house being razed. He did not submit a sunlight study to the City.

Kyle Hunt addressed the Council. He stated that the Groveland HOA approved a house footprint, but the plans did not include window wells or patio.

Dave Grover addressed the Council. He said the previous owner was not proposing a full-basement and the height of the house was much lower. The hardcover of the original plan was under 45%.

Councilmember Newberry moved the public hearing be closed. Councilmember Daniels seconded. Motion carried 5/0.

Mayor Suerth said his biggest concern of going from 45% to 55% is effectively changing the rules that Groveland has. The Woodland City Council asked the HGA to establish their land use rules and then they were adopted by the City Council. Councilmember Zucker said he would approve this house but is handcuffed by the ordinance. The Council's job is to uphold the rules but approved exceptions when it's a unique circumstance. He thought the height regulation may be too high for the Groveland neighborhood.

Councilmember Vazquez said the City Council is bounded by the ordinances but also has to be considerate for the people moving into Woodland.

Councilmember Newberry moved to accept the findings and recommendations of staff and deny the four requested variances, Mayor Suerth seconded. Motion carried 4-1.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Moving Election Polling Place

Administrator / Counsel Madsen explained that the City of Woodland had traditionally not had a permanent or public polling place. Calvary Church, located at 18360 Minnetonka Boulevard, offered to serve as Woodland's polling place for elections for 2026 and thereafter. There would

be some efficiencies with this location, as the City of Deephaven currently uses Calvary Church as a polling place, and with Deephaven running elections for Woodland, having this dual location would likely provide better service and support for Woodland residents.

Madsen also explained that Minn. Stat. §204B.16, Subd. 1, regulates polling places for cities in Minnesota. Polling places must be located within one mile of the corporate boundaries of a municipality, this proposed location satisfies that requirement. Additionally, changing a polling place must be filed or otherwise submitted to the State before December 31st of each year. If approved by the Council, the Resolution attached would be sent to the County satisfying this requirement.

After additional discussion and review, including how the space would be designed to avoid confusion for voters, how notice of this change would be provided to the Community, and other logistical questions, Motion was made by Newberry, and seconded by Daniels, to approve Resolution #07-25 Establishing the Polling Place for the City of Woodland.

Motion carried: voting in favor were Suerth, Newberry, Daniels, Zucker and Vazquez.

ADJOURNMENT:

Members of the Council and Staff generally discussed the 2026 Budget Process, website navigation, adding Dry Hydrants to the January Council Agenda and adding the tax rebate offered by the State on property taxes that increased in excess of twelve percent into the Fall Newsletter. Motion was then made by Zucker and seconded by Daniels to adjourn the Meeting at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Motion carried: voting in favor were Suerth, Newberry, Daniels, Zucker and Vazquez.

Typed this 6th Day of November, 2025
Dan Madsen
City Administrator ./ Special Counsel
Woodland, Minnesota