

TOWN OF UTICA

Plan Commission Meeting

Minutes

Thursday, August 6, 2026

7:30pm

"These meeting minutes are only a draft of the minutes of the meeting. They have not been approved yet. They are subject to change and you may not rely on their accuracy. For more information, please contact the clerk or a town board member."

1. Call the Meeting to Order

Chairman Tom Thiel called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

2. Take Roll Call:

Members Present – Terry Beck, Darwin Briggs, Ralph Kalies, Ben Sawall, Tom Thiel, Eric Whiting

Town Board Members Present – Leonard Schmick, Chuck Kuhrt

Present: Aaron Gibson from Fox River Valley Ethanol, 7 citizens

DRAFT

3. Approve June 4, 2026 Plan Commission Meeting Minutes

Darwin Briggs motions to accept as presented, seconded by Eric Whiting; Carried 6-0

4. Affidavit of Posting/Publication – Secretary and Plan Chairman to sign

5. Public Forum

Jon Groth asked about the amount of fuel coming in this area. Has the Fire dept look at this area and can they adequately fight a fire with the layout? Watched it on fire around 2006 which was just one building at the time. Would like that looked into. What would the traffic pattern be? Loop likes it is lined up with the Jasper's entrance. What would the operating hours be? Have all the previous conditional use permits for this parcel been looked at? They don't leave with the previous owners, it stays with the parcel. The Jasper's parking lot states it needs to be graded and paved. This was never done. Previous owners wanted a 3 year trial period to make sure the restaurant would be successful. Would like the conditional uses looked at and addressed. It would help solve a lot of problems.

Joe Dorsch stated we worked together at that plant. Is the fire system still available if there would be a massive blowout? Will the pump be utilized to help if anything goes wrong out there? Tom Thiel is not sure, the Plant still has that system, but not sure about the new building. Joe asked if the hydrants would still be available and closer to the cars?

Aaron Gibson is the Plant Manager for Fox River Valley Ethanol. The amount of fuel hasn't changed because the Plant is about 7 miles up the road. We work well with Jay and his team. Not sure if they have been approached on what we are doing. Jay is aware through conversation but not sure of their full understanding. Tom Thiel stated they would have support from other townships. Aaron stated the amount of ethanol that will be on site, compared to the ethanol site, will be tremendously less. A rail car will be about 28,000 gallons, with 5-6 cars loaded potentially at a time. Railroad will do all picks and switches. We use a transloader when loading. We load the cars where they are set; from the truck to the car.

Tom Thiel will look into if Jasper's parking needs to be paved.

The traffic pattern is still being worked on. It will probably come in on the entrance of Jasper's go up and come back around; on the ethanol side. Jon asked if it will be gated? Aaron stated not sure, but someone did drive through and they put blocks there.

Ben Sawall stated the fire dept hasn't looked into this project yet. We will get the fire department to look into it.

Jon Groth stated the Town Ordinance also states the Plan Commission should look into the safety and welfare of the citizens.

Walt Whiting stated the mutual aid we have in this community is phenomenal. The equipment we have is better than what most townships could ever dream of having. When he was an active member on the fire department, they would often call the ethanol plant, the drying plant, their "training center" because they would have about one fire a week. With now having the CO2 suppression system, it can smother itself.

Jon asked if the deep well is still being used? Chuck Kuhrt stated he believes the pump was being used for the marsh fire a couple years ago.

Ralph Kalies asked if there would be any increased liability than what was doing before? Aaron does not feel so. Ralph stated since someone asked about paying for any damages, just want to make sure you are adequately insured. Aaron stated their insurance covers the Plant and the second site.

Ben Sawall asked if there would be an increase in production, or why are we putting this spur in? Aaron stated the changes in the market and conditions, and the traffic patterns within the NE Wisconsin in regards to ethanol and co products. Plants have come online that were idled years ago, and have flooded the market. This allows us another avenue rather than straight trucking into saturated markets to explore new areas.

Jon asked if there is a pipeline down 91? Aaron stated that was abandoned before they purchased the property.

Jon asked if they will follow the same route as ash trucks are following? Aaron is not sure since it would be contract haulers, not direct to them. Jon thought there was an agreement with the previous Highway Commissioner to not haul down County Road FF loaded. Aaron stated that agreement is with them, they accepted that.

Aaron stated the hours will be market directed, when the switches are with the railroad and sales. Most would like to do during the day and light hours. No new lighting in the area. Will have lighting on the unit itself mainly to be used in the winter. Can't say it won't run late. Limited to 12 hours a day because of air permit.

Jon stated we need public safety involved; contact the fire department and Highway department. Need to do our due diligence.

Joe Dorsch asked if there will there be a containment area in case of a spill? Aaron stated due to the permit, we don't need to make a containment as we do best practices and is manned right there. If there would be a spill, we respond. Guys are trained in spill containment and cleanup.

Tom Thiel closed the public forum.

6. Discuss/Recommend to the Town Board: *A Conditional Use Permit from property owner: Fox River Valley Ethanol 6510/6574 State Road 44 Pickett, WI 54964; for parcel number: 024-0624-01 (18.69 acres zoned ID – Industrial) for installation of rail spur for loading of ethanol by truck to railcar.*

Eric Whiting asked about spill containment and not needing a containment site because it is only loading and no storage there? Have hauled corn into Fox Valley on 91 and is familiar with the storage tanks inside the concrete wall. The Co-op has gravel berms. Since this will be a transfer point, don't need a containment? Aaron stated correct, since we are manning it immediately ourselves and going into a loader that has emergency stops and practicing best practices; the spill likelihood and volume is minimal. Eric stated since this is all mobile, there should be safe-stops and could have 150,000 gallons on wheels with no containment. Aaron stated these are the same cars and trucks that go up and down the tracks and roads, no way to contain everything on the rails. Eric asked if they will own your cars or someone else will? Aaron stated they are leasing ethanol-dedicated railcars and are always on the mercy of the rails depending on their switches. We cannot control the rail on their switches. We will know approximately when those switches are, but they may be running behind or ahead of schedule, it could impact time. There could be an occasion they we may load at midnight, but we will try to avoid that. The system is set up with an air balancer. The air that we displace in the tanker as we are loading it, goes back into the ethanol tanker and goes back to the ethanol plant, where it is flared off. That is the system we have, rather than let it escape into the atmosphere. Eric mentioned the rolling average numbers for a year of railcars and volume of ethanol. Aaron stated they may not have 5-6 cars sitting there all the time. There may be additional cars on the side track, there may be 2-3 in the spur, it's hard to put a definitive number on it. Currently looking to go into Canada, which could be a 27-29 day turnaround on cars, from the time they leave to the time they are back. Eric ran some numbers; around 10 cars per month, 30 trucks per month, or 10 for 3 days; could cause some traffic issues in that area. With the effects on the community and businesses in that area, which is Jasper's, which leads to their parking lot and customers. It is a concern. Will you have planned fire suppression in the vicinity or part of the plan? Aaron stated not on this plan. Eric asked about future plans. Do you haul out dry ddgs now? Aaron replied no. Eric asked if there is a plan to head in that direction? Aaron stated he wouldn't say never, but for this setup, that situation would not work. Eric asked if they will have hired haulers, designated trucks that your company will work with to haul the tanks? Aaron stated it's not designated companies, whoever we are marketing through, would acquire the trucking to us, but would be the same ones hauling now, they aren't new to the area.

Darwin Briggs is not sure if our fire dept has pre-planning. Would you work with them for pre-planning and mavis system? Aaron stated yes, we work pretty close with the Utica fire dept already. About once a year we go through the plant. Would open this up for them. From the main plant, we have the connections for assisted water, as we can. Darwin asked it's possible to have 6 full cars on the spur at one time? Aaron replied correct.

Tom Thiel said it will be a big change in Pickett. Our fire dept knows the plant already, they just need to know about the rail cars. I don't have an issue with it as long as you keep to the plan that we got. If anything arises,

we will check it out as we go. Since there is a Conditional Use, we can come over anytime we want to see if there are any issues or if there are any complaints to bring back to the Board.

Eric Whiting asked about the expected timeframe for construction? Aaron stated about 6 weeks. Hoping to start construction as soon as possible. We have the ifc drawings from engineering, our grading contractor is starting to free up, and we are already refurbishing the rail for WSOR for the side track; should be just about done with that.

Steve Plantz asked if they will be using the existing spur or adding another one? Aaron stated they will be adding a spur for the transloading, off of the existing spur. We will put in a turnout and run it out to the grass area.

Eric Whiting asked about the 3.3 million, 12-month rolling; is that a state statue or what sets that as your limit? Aaron stated that is what we decided our limit would be based on what we anticipate for potentially putting it through. We worked with the DNR for permitting, that's where we set the volume at; we cannot exceed that on the rolling 12.

Eric asked who has the records or access to those records? Aaron stated we have to submit report to DNR every year. No different than what we do at the main plant. Would think it would become public knowledge once submitted to the DNR. Went through training with the Railroad and hazmat chemicals; checking railcars for identification and if they are rail-ready.

Eric asked about the possibility of future storage tanks for ethanol or syrup, or any of your products? Aaron stated CO2 would be different, but for ethanol and syrup, wouldn't see that as a feasible option since better off to load immediately and ship it out right away; could be a possibility.

Ben Sawall moves that we approve and recommend to the Town Board; seconded by Tom Thiel. Carried 6-0

Eric Whiting – aye
Terry Beck – aye
Darwin Briggs – aye
Tom Thiel – aye
Ben Sawall – aye
Ralph Kalies – aye

7. Informal Opinions

No comments

8. Future Agenda Items

No comments

9. Adjournment

8:17pm

Jenny Sonnleitner, Clerk

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Plan Commission Chairman

Plan Commission Secretary