

**BIG LAKE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 5, 2026**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Odens called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Chair Lisa Odens, Alan Heidemann, Paul Seefeld, Bryce Tradewell, Tony Velishek, Mason Busch, and Jake Geroux. Also present: City Administrator Hanna Klimmek, Community Development Director Marie Popp, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, Planning Technician Tara Kohl, and Planning Consultant Kendra Lindahl from Landform Professional Services LLC.

Commissioners Heidemann and Geroux took their Oaths of Office.

4. ADOPT AGENDA

Commissioner Tradewell motioned to adopt the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Heidemann. Unanimous ayes, motion carried.

5. OPEN FORUM

Chair Odens opened the open forum at 6:02 p.m. No one came forward. Chair Odens closed the open forum at 6:02 p.m.

6. APPROVE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 1, 2025

Commissioner Heidemann motioned to approve the December 1, 2025 Planning Commission meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Velishek, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7. BUSINESS

7A. CONCEPT PLAN FOR SHORES OF ELK RIVER (PIDS # 10-00122-1115, 10-00122-1117, 10-00122-1116)

Kendra Lindahl reviewed that Mary Christenson, of MC Land Holdings, LLC, has submitted a concept plan for a residential Shoreland PUD development on 50-acres (three existing lots) located in Big Lake Township. The property is located north of the Hudson Woods housing development across 201st Avenue. The existing properties are currently farmed on the south side of the properties and wooded along the Elk River. There are structures on the site, and the applicant has indicated that the eastern home would be preserved as part of the plat (on Lot 24, Block 1). The parcels are split by the Elk River, and most of the 8-acre portion north of the river is within the shoreland overlay and shown as an undeveloped outlot in the proposed concept. The subject application is for a residential development concept with 79 single family home lots on varying lot widths (70 feet to 80 +/- feet) and ranging from 10,178 sq. ft. to 83,952 sq. ft. in size. Of those 79 lots, 15 lots are shown as abutting up to the Elk River. The proposed gross density of the development is approximately 2.45 units per acre. Lindahl explained that the property will need to be annexed prior to a formal application.

Applicant Todd Christenson spoke about the project and shared that they get entitlements, install infrastructure, and then sell the finished lots to the builders. He stated that they wanted to have larger lots, and the non-riverfront homes will be within the \$450,000 to \$600,000 range. He shared that they anticipate using local builders, and all homes will be custom and reviewed and approved by an architectural committee consisting of the applicant and others to ensure conformity. He stated that they have an area set aside for ponding but have not done stormwater calculations. He anticipates losing lots for additional ponding area and for access to adjoining lots.

Chair Odens asked if the portion of land north of the Elk River was going to be annexed as well. Popp responded that it is all part of one parcel and will need to be annexed.

Odens asked if the issues with the lot sizes that the applicant mentioned would be addressed with the revision of the Shoreland Ordinance.

Lindahl responded that outside of the R-5 District, there will likely always be larger lots required in the Shoreland District as part of the State's rules.

Odens asked the applicant if he saw issues with the Engineering comments.

The Applicant responded that he did not, and they do not think they will need a lift station based on preliminary engineering.

Odens asked what items still needed feedback from the Commission.

Lindahl responded that they could comment on which zoning district should apply, R-1 or R-2, and if they want to require a pedestrian walkway for the block that is longer than 900 feet.

Odens stated that she sees the value in a pedestrian walkway.

Commissioner Tradewell asked if there is any other place in Big Lake that has a road that has the pedestrian walkway.

Lindahl stated that it that it doesn't come up often as they prefer to not have streets that are that long.

Lindahl stated that this area is not included in the parks plan since it is not in the City and asked the Commission if they had any feedback on the need for any park or trails.

Commissioner Heidemann stated that he prefers to defer to the Parks Advisory Committee for those decisions.

Tradewell asked if there was interest in the parcel to the south and stated that if there is, it would make sense to extend the trails that are there, but if not, it doesn't make sense to enforce park requirements there.

Lindahl responded that there is someone looking at developing that parcel but there is not a trail connection that runs through the site.

Odens asked if the people in this development would have access to Hudson Woods Park.

Lindahl responded that they would.

Odens stated that it looks like a nice development and is complementary to the land and adjacent uses.

Commissioner Seefeld asked if the street connection from east to west is required by code.

Lindahl responded that it came from the Engineer's comments and she will need to look it up, but she believes it is. Lindahl stated that generally they require developments to stub infrastructure to adjacent parcels which includes streets and utilities.

Seefeld asked the applicant if Outlot A was going to be future ponding.

The applicant responded that it was.

Seefeld stated that he is good with everything and is happy that they are keeping the existing house.

Odens stated that she does not see any issues that would stop the project from moving forward if they address the Engineer's comments.

7B. SELECTION OF CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR, AND PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC) LIAISON POSITIONS

Tara Kohl reviewed that in 2025, the Planning Commission Chair, Vice-Chair, and PAC Liaison

positions were held by Lisa Odens, Tony Velishek, and Lisa Odens, respectively. In 2024, the Planning Commission Chair, Vice-Chair, and Parks Advisory (PAC) Liaison Committee positions were held by Alan Heidemann, Tony Velishek and Lisa Odens, respectively.

Commissioner Velishek stated that he would like to step back from the Vice-Chair position and nominated Commissioner Heidemann for the position.

Commissioner Heidemann responded that he would accept.

Chair Odens stated that she could continue as Chair and Parks Advisory Committee Liaison if no one was interested.

Commissioner Velishek motioned to appoint Commissioner Odens as Chair and Commissioner Heidemann as Vice-Chair. Seconded by Commissioner Tradewell, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Commissioner Velishek motioned to appoint Commissioner Odens as Parks Advisory Committee Liaison. Seconded by Commissioner Seefeld, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7C. PLANNING COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN

Tara Kohl reviewed the staff memo regarding the current strategic plan and presented the proposed modifications for discussion.

Chair Odens suggested breaking down items on the strategic plan by timelines.

Odens asked for clarification about the section that includes reviewing subdivision applications to ensure street designs incorporate tree preservation.

Commissioner Heidemann responded that he believes it was regarding boulevards and leaving existing trees along the road.

Odens asked if this would be changing our code.

Commissioner Seefeld stated that it sounds like it is adding tree preservation to street design.

Odens asked for clarity on what the goal of that item was and would like to refine or get rid of it.

Popp stated that we do have street trees in our code.

Lindahl stated that the previous discussion may have been about trying to layout the roads around the trees.

Seefeld suggested that they could reword it as promoting boulevard and street trees instead of tree preservation and creation of streets.

Commissioner Tradewell stated that having it in the strategic plan is redundant since it will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Seefeld stated that tree preservation applies to lot creation and asked if it applies to street creation.

Odens suggested changing it to say review benefits and detriments of street trees and recommend potential code revisions to Council.

Heidemann agreed with the suggestion.

Odens suggested adding reviewing codes on building height to the strategic plan.

Popp stated that we could include it with the other code revisions on the plan.

Odens stated that we could also review the 900-foot long street pedestrian requirement.

Odens asked for the Commission's thoughts on the wording of item two under transportation.

Odens suggested changing walking and biking to multimodal.

Commissioner Busch suggested saying pedestrian travel.

8. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Marie Popp reviewed the Community Development Department update and 2025 Planning Commission Year in Review. Popp reviewed ongoing projects including BLEDA-owned 421 Foley Avenue, Prairie Meadows 5th Addition, and the upcoming Big Lake Economic Development Authority Public Hearing for the establishment of an Economic Development District. Popp also shared that the new Community Development Coordinator position has been posted and is now accepting applications.

9. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS - None.

10. OTHER - None.

11. ADJOURN

Commissioner Seefeld motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:58 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Tradewell unanimous ayes, motion carried.