



Chair Larry Murphy  
Connie Steiner  
Jody Bjornson  
Brian Madsen  
Victoria Nurmi

**City of Menahga  
Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting  
Thursday, September 4, 2025**

**5:30 pm**

City Council Chambers  
115 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NE  
Menahga MN 56464

[www.cityofmenahga.com](http://www.cityofmenahga.com)

Livestreamed at [www.youtube.com/@CityofMenahga](http://www.youtube.com/@CityofMenahga)

## **Agenda**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Approval of Minutes

05 June 2025 P&Z Minutes  
04 August 2025 P&Z Minutes

6. New Business
  - a. Permitting update
  - b. Possible Cannabis and Nuisance Language recap if back from legal.
  - c. Variance discussion
  - d. Victoria Nurmi
7. Old Business
8. Adjournment

Comments from visitors must be informational in nature and not exceed five (5) minutes per issue. The City Council cannot engage in a discussion or debate in those five minutes but will take the information and find answers if that is appropriate. As part of the City Council protocol, it is unacceptable for any speaker to slander or engage in character assassination at a public council meeting.

We ask that once the meeting is over, that everyone leave the building so that it can be locked. Anyone wishing to speak must be recognized by the presiding officer.

**City of Menahga  
Planning & Zoning Minutes  
Thursday, June 05, 2025**

**1. Call to Order**

The Menahga Planning and Zoning Commission held their Regular Monthly Meeting on Thursday, June 05, 2025.

Chairman Larry Murphy called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

**2. Roll Call**

Comprising a quorum of the commission, the following members were present: Larry Murphy, Brian Madsen, Jody Bjornson and Connie Steiner.

Also present was City Clerk/Treasurer Brett Gagnonpalick.

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

**4. Approval of the Agenda**

Brett Gagnonpalick requested adding an item to the agenda regarding telecommunications equipment modification as new business item d. The Commission discussed the addition.

**Main Motion: To approve the agenda as amended.**

Moved by:	Bjornson
Seconded by:	Madsen
Action:	Motion carried by a 4-0 vote
In favor:	Murphy, Madsen, Steiner, Bjornson
Opposed:	None.

**5. Approval of Minutes**

Gagnonpalick noted there were a couple of errors in the May 1 meeting minutes where "her" was used instead of "him" and stated he would make those corrections.

**Main Motion: To approve the minutes from May 1st, 2025 Regular Meeting as presented.**

Moved by:	Bjornson
Seconded by:	Steiner
Action:	Motion carried by a 4-0 vote
In favor:	Murphy, Madsen, Steiner, Bjornson
Opposed:	None.

**6. Public Hearing - None**

**7. New Business**

**Permitting Update**

Jody Bjornson reported that there had been a couple of permits issued since the last meeting, specifically mentioning Kareem and Zane for a fence and a small addition. No action was required from the Commission on this update.

**Informational - Mural – Going on Ted's Hardware**

Brett Gagnonpalick explained that Ted's Hardware, which has a new owner, wants to put a mural on the north-facing side of the building. He investigated the city ordinances and determined that murals are allowed. The owner had inquired about potential funding opportunities to help with supplies.

Brett mentioned that while the city doesn't offer direct funding for such projects, the owner could seek donations from organizations like the VFW, Enbridge, Todd Wadd, and CNC.

Jody Bjornson added that according to Facebook posts, the owners are looking for ideas for the "Welcome to Menahga Mural" and have already arranged for a local artist who works for the high school to paint it.

The Commission discussed other potential funding sources, including the 5 Wings Art Council, which contributes to the Sound of Spirit events. Larry Murphy suggested checking if funding might be available through arts taxes.

The Commission agreed that the mural would be beneficial for the community, noting that Park Rapids has similar murals that enhance their buildings. They discussed the possibility of involving school art classes for separate panels of the mural.

Brett Gagnonpalick stated he would reach out to the business owner to provide information about potential funding sources. He also shared that he had included the sign regulations in the meeting packet, confirming that murals located on buildings used primarily for commercial or industrial purposes are permitted.

**Transient Businesses**

Brett Gagnonpalick opened a discussion about transient businesses, noting that the city's ordinance doesn't contain much detail on this topic. He explained that the main question that comes to the city is where food trucks can park. The ordinance is clear that operating on city property requires permission and payment of a fee, as the liquor store is doing in support of midsummers.

Jody Bjornson raised concerns about a recent situation with a food truck parked at the Holiday station. Police had been called because Holiday does not want the food trucks there as they sell food in their store. Bjornson expressed concern that these transient food vendors could take business away from tax-paying establishments like Nordic and Cottey without contributing to the city.

The Commission discussed additional concerns including:

- Whether food trucks have proper health certificates and business licenses
- The city's lack of oversight for these operations within city limits
- The need for property owner permission for food truck locations
- Potential fee structures for transient merchants

Jody Bjornson mentioned that the city had previously charged transient merchants \$10 per day. The Commission discussed appropriate fee levels and timing, with Brett noting that the existing fee schedule includes \$10 per day, \$150 per month, or \$400 for a 4-month season for vendors on city property.

The Commission agreed that the policy should be expanded to cover all transient food vendors within city limits, not just those on city property. They determined that vendors should be required to:

1. Have a valid business license
2. Possess proper health certificates for prepared food
3. Obtain written permission from property owners
4. Pay the appropriate fee to the city

Brett Gagnonpalick agreed to develop a proposal for the City Council meeting on Monday, including amending the fee schedule and creating a policy for transient businesses preparing food. The Commission also discussed how to inform vendors of these requirements, suggesting that the police department could assist with enforcement.

### **Telecommunications Equipment Modification**

Brett Gagnonpalick explained that he was approached by Mark Kumpula who wanted to replace antennas on an existing telecommunications tower. Brett clarified that they are not changing the existing tower structure or adding any accessory structures, but simply removing one antenna and installing another.

Brett noted that this type of modification does not require Planning and Zoning action according to city ordinances. However, if they were to add an accessory structure, that would require a recommendation from the Commission. Brett requested that the company submit a building permit request for the city's records, even though no fee would be charged.

## **Old Business**

### **Feedback from County Planning and Zoning Meeting**

Brett Gagnonpalick reported on his attendance at the County Planning and Zoning meeting regarding proposed changes to business district zoning along highways. He explained that the county originally wanted to designate 640 feet (versus the 1,320 feet/quarter mile proposed by commissioners) along highways as business districts.

When the County Board of Commissioners sent the proposal back requesting the full quarter mile, Brett attended the meeting to express the city's concerns. He emphasized that the city wanted to ensure the county's ordinance would not encroach on city limits, which the county acknowledged. The county's planning commission subsequently recommended 730 feet as a compromise.

Jody Bjornson added that she had spoken with Commissioner Kangas, who indicated that the commissioners were still pursuing the 1,320 feet designation because they wanted to allow room for larger businesses along the corridors. Bjornson clarified that the tax rate would remain the same for property owners until the land was actually developed as a business property.

Brett noted that he had recommended making the county regulations more restrictive to encourage businesses to build within city limits where infrastructure already exists, rather than along highway corridors outside the city.

## **I. Adjournment**

### **Main Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 6:03 pm.**

Moved by:	Bjornson
Seconded by:	Madsen
Action:	Motion carried by a 4-0 vote
In favor:	Madsen, Murphy, Steiner, Bjornson
Opposed:	None.

---

Brett Gagnonpalick, City Clerk/Treasurer

---

Chairman, Larry Murphy

**City of Menahga  
Planning & Zoning Minutes  
Thursday, August 07, 2025**

**1. Call to Order**

The Menahga Planning and Zoning Commission held their Regular Monthly Meeting on Thursday, August 07, 2025.

Chairman Larry Murphy called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

**2. Roll Call**

Comprising a quorum of the commission, the following members were present: Larry Murphy, Brian Madsen, Jody Bjornson and Connie Steiner.

Also present was City Clerk/Treasurer Brett Gagnonpalick and Chief of Police Amy Lane.

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

**4. Approval of the Agenda**

**Main Motion: To approve the agenda.**

Moved by:	Bjornson
Seconded by:	Madsen
Action:	Motion carried by a 4-0 vote
In favor:	Murphy, Madsen, Steiner, Bjornson
Opposed:	None.

**5. Approval of Minutes**

City Clerk/Treasurer Brett Gagnonpalick noted that the June 5th minutes were not available and would be presented at the September meeting along with the minutes from this meeting.

**6. Public Hearing - None**

**7. New Business**

**Permitting Update**

City Clerk/Treasurer Brett Gagnonpalick presented the latest permit tracker to the Commission. He noted several permits of interest:

- Rose Haven assisted living facility was approved for a solar array installation, which required some research but was ultimately approved and already installed.
- A cell tower at the south edge of town required permits for antenna replacement. Gagnonpalick mentioned that the applicant was very thorough with questions, and after reviewing the ordinance, they were able to determine that replacing antennas was permitted.
- A new home was permitted on Elm Street, bringing the total of new homes in South Gate to nine so far this year.

Chair Murphy noted that the city had to adopt an ordinance for antennas previously due to issues they had encountered.

**Cannabis Ordinance – final look before going to Public Hearing**

City Clerk/Treasurer Brett Gagnonpalick explained that the cannabis ordinance had previously gone to the City Council with some cosmetic changes needed. He wanted the Planning and Zoning Commission to give it one final review before moving forward.

Chief of Police Amy Lane requested adding language to the ordinance regarding minor possession and use of THC. She explained that when Minnesota legalized THC, there were no laws allowing enforcement against minors possessing or using it unless they were in school. She described the current situation where 15-year-old children could walk around smoking THC vapes with no legal consequences. Chief Lane had consulted with the city's criminal attorney who advised that a city ordinance would be needed to address this issue.

Chief Lane provided proposed language for the ordinance which included sections on prohibited acts, exceptions (such as medical marijuana), penalties, and authorization to seize products as evidence. She proposed these additions be included as Section 6 of the cannabis ordinance.

Clerk Gagnonpalick and the Commission reviewed the proposed language and agreed it could be readily incorporated into the existing draft ordinance.

**Main Motion: To include Section 6 of the proposed language into the city's draft cannabis ordinance.**

Moved by:	Madsen
Seconded by:	Bjornson
Action:	Motion carried by a 4-0 vote
In favor:	Murphy, Madsen, Steiner, Bjornson
Opposed:	None.

**Guest – Chief Amy Lane to discuss Chapter 92 - Nuisances**

Chief Lane presented proposed changes to Chapter 92.10 regarding the city's abatement procedure for nuisance properties. She explained that the current criminal enforcement process through the court system was ineffective, citing a problematic property that has been in the

system for two years with minimal progress. The property, located in South Gate, continues to accumulate more debris while the case moves slowly through court proceedings.

Chief Lane shared that she had researched how other cities handle nuisance properties, including Verndale, Wadena, and Staples. She provided the Commission with a copy of Wadena's nuisance abatement ordinance, which allows for more direct action. Under this approach, the police would:

- Identify nuisance properties
- Meet with property owners to review violations
- Set a timeline for compliance
- Clean up the property if compliance is not achieved, with costs assessed to the property taxes

Chief Lane explained that while the current ordinance only allows for immediate abatement in emergency situations that endanger public safety, the proposed changes would provide more efficient options for addressing ongoing nuisance issues. She acknowledged that while the abatement process involves upfront costs to the city, these would eventually be recovered through tax assessment.

The Commission discussed the specific property causing concern, with Chair Murphy asking if the owners were refusing to clean up or unable to do so. Chief Lane indicated she believed they were refusing. Chair Murphy also noted this was likely the same property that residents had complained about over a year ago.

Jody Bjornson pointed out that implementing these changes would take approximately three months due to the process of amending the ordinance, holding public hearings, and codification. Chief Lane acknowledged this timeline and stated that having the process in place by next summer would be beneficial.

The Commission reviewed the nuisance definitions from Wadena's ordinance, noting they included items like accumulation of refuse/debris, vehicles, and excessive grass and weed growth (over eight inches). They agreed all elements of Wadena's approach seemed reasonable for implementation in Menahga.

**Main Motion: To proceed to amend the nuisance ordinance.**

Moved by:	Bjornson
Seconded by:	Madsen
Action:	Motion carried by a 4-0 vote
In favor:	Murphy, Madsen, Steiner, Bjornson
Opposed:	None.

**I. Adjournment**

**Main Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 5:51 pm.**

Moved by:	Bjornson
Seconded by:	Madsen
Action:	Motion carried by a 4-0 vote
In favor:	Madsen, Murphy, Steiner, Bjornson
Opposed:	None.

---

Brett Gagnonpalick, City Clerk/Treasurer

---

Chairman, Larry Murphy

## 2025 Menahga Building Permit Tracker

Date	Name	Address	Parcel Number	Project	District	Shoreland Yes/No	Permit Number	Fee	Notes
1 28-Mar-25	Zach Hillstrom	622 Main St SE	R176200160	Build Home	R2	n	2025-1	\$300	H
2 29-Mar-25	Alex Hillstrom	742 1st St NW	R176200165	Build Home	R2	n	2025-2	\$300	H
3 31-Mar-25	Lyle Matson	18948 County HWY 38	R176200070	Build Home	R1	n	2025-3	\$300	R
4 31-Mar-25	Lyle Matson	18949 County HWY 38	R176200065	Build Home	R1	n	2025-4	\$300	R
5 31-Mar-25	Lyle Matson	18950 County HWY 38	R176200060	Build Home	R1	n	2025-5	\$300	R
6 31-Mar-25	Lyle Matson	18951 County HWY 38	R176200075	Build Home	R1	n	2025-6	\$300	R
7 11-Apr-25	Aaron Hillstrom	845 E Blueberry River Dr.	R176900010	Extension	R1	n	2025-7	\$75	
8 18-Apr-25	Mike Wetland	58 Juniper Ave NW	R175400030	Fence	R1	y	2025-8	\$50	
9 18-Apr-25	Mike Wetland	58 Juniper Ave NW	R175400030	Accessory Structure	R1	y	2025-9	\$100	
10 21-Apr-25	Brandon Vredenburg	161 Aspin Ave SE	R173200480	Lot Split	R1	n	2025-10	\$100	
11 23-Apr-25	Dave Lake	722 Cedar	R176200190	Build Home	R2	n	2025-11	\$200	H
12 23-Apr-25	Julie Koep	427 2nd st NW	R175500100	Boundary Line Adj.	R1	n	2025-12	\$100	
13 29-Apr-25	Daryl Kimball	16189 530th Ave	R176200250	House Building	R2	n	2025-13	\$300	H
14 1-May-25	Gorline Neisess	20412 330th St	R173800400	Deck / Accessory	R2	n	2025-14	\$300	
15 13-May-25	Zayne Janssen	216 Cottonwood Ave	R174100190	Fence Replacement	R2	n	2025-15	\$0	
16 22-May-25	Shawn Andres	18 Hickory Ave NW	R175400160	Driveway replacement	R1	y	2025-16	\$0	
17 4-Jun-25	Travis Howard	15 Birch Ave	R173000390	Accessory Structure	CB	n	2025-16	100	
18 20-Jun-25	Rose Haven Assisted Living	37 6th Street SE	R176200402	Solar Array	R1	n	2025-17	\$300	
19 2-Jul-25	Diane Hillikka	226 Main St	R173500620	Deck / Accessory	R1	y	2025-18	\$75	
20 7-Jul-25	Tammy Beck	1036 Fern Ave	R175700080	Fence	R1	n	2025-19	\$50	
21 21-Jul-25	Bret Kilpala	846 Elm Ave	R170213025	Build Home	RR	n	2025-20	\$300	
22 23-Jul-25	Bryan Pettow	752 Aspen Ave	R177300040	Boundary Line Adj.	C2	n	2025-21	\$100	
23 6-Aug-25	American Tower	12490 350th Street	R170284040	Replace Commo Equipment	RR	n	2025-22	\$0	
24 7-Aug-25	Michael Merjama	394 Main St	R173500810	Pave Driveway	R1	y	2025-23	\$0	
25 11-Aug-25	City of Menahga	Liquor Store	R173001340	Cold Storage Expansion	CB	n	2025-24	\$0	
26 14-Aug-25	Brian Black	692 Main St SE	R173800270	Shed under 200 sq ft	R2	n	2025-25	\$0	
27 14-Aug-25	Ralph and Jen Turchi	424 Main St SW	R174800010/R17470	Addition	R1	y	2025-26	\$100	23%
28 2-Sep-25	Gari Parvi	221 3rd St NW	R174400410	Addition	R1	y	2025-27	\$100	8.87%
	Mohawk Land LLC	46 11th St SE	R175600200	Addition	I	n	2025-28	\$75	

Not big enough for change

## City Clerk-Treasurer

---

**From:** City Clerk-Treasurer  
**Sent:** Friday, August 15, 2025 1:38 PM  
**To:** City Clerk-Treasurer  
**Cc:** Deputy Clerk  
**Subject:** Requesting Input  
**Attachments:** Possible Variance.jpg

Commission:

I have an individual who wishes to split the lot in this picture. I'd appreciate if you could send me your thoughts on this.

The problem is the length – the performance standards for R2 is 75ft. The lot length on the road is ~140ft. Which means he's 10 foot short.

I have recommended that this gentleman go the variance route.

I have below my thoughts on the FOR and AGAINST.

I am inclined to support this request based on the following:

Each of the residences on this property have their own water/sewer hook up. The original owner was assessed twice when water/sewer was put in.

Each has a different tenant.

Two lots = more tax revenue.

One lot to the west is only 56 foot. Clearly grandfathered in.

I am inclined to not support this change because it's taking one conforming lot and then creating two non-conforming lots.

V/r

**Brett Gagnonpalick**

City Clerk/Treasurer

City of Menahga

Com: 218-564-4557

[cmenahga@cityofmenahga.com](mailto:cmenahga@cityofmenahga.com)

<https://www.cityofmenahga.com/>