



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

May 19, 2026 Meeting Summary

7:00 PM

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Joe Peterson; Corey Kolquist; Beth Wentzlaff; John Stauber; Kevin Hagen; Matthew Fournier; and Ryan Johnson

Members Absent: Amanda Radzak

Others Present: Eric Johnson, Community Development Director; John Mulder, City Administrator; Joe Wicklund, Asst. City Administrator; Chad Ronchetti, Econ. Dev. Dir.; Dave Chura, Duluth; Kim Parmeter, Hermantown; Lucas Mistelske, Grand Lake Township; Brian Hanson, Duluth; Rachel Johnson, Duluth; Derek Pederson, Proctor; Michael Koppy, Hermantown; Rebecca Grandorf, Hermantown; Delaine Carlson, Hermantown, Julie Anderson, Hermantown, Jonathan Thornton, Hermantown; Jackie Dolentz, Hermantown; Kelley O'Leary, Hermantown; Jen Kangas, Hermantown; Toni Doup, Pike Lake; Jim Resberg, Hermantown; Clarissa Ek, Hermantown; Jeff & Kelli Alseth, Proctor; Tom and Mrs. Bates, Hermantown; Brea Schminski, Duluth; Sarah Lofald, Hermantown; JoAnne Bates, Hermantown; A Scarbrough, Duluth, Meagan Elling, Solway Township; and Doug Olsen, Hermantown.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Corey Kolquist to approve the May 19, 2026 agenda as presented. Seconded by Matthew Fournier. Motion carried 5-0.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by John Stauber to approve the April 21, 2026 minutes as presented. Seconded by Kevin Hagen. Motion carried 5-0.

4. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

The following people spoke:

Jackie Dolentz, Hermantown – 2045 Comprehensive Plan

Tom Bates, Hermantown – opposition to the Data Center

5. PUBLIC HEARING

5A. An application for a Special Use Permit by Kyle Kloss for grading and filling in a General Development Environment Shoreland Area for the purpose of building a new residential structure and driveway. The property is located at 56xx Hwy 194.

The application has been withdrawn.

5B. An application by Levi Stauber/Cottage Life Investments LLC for a Subdivision to create a 136-foot-wide parcel of 0.65 acres and a 4.18-acre lot accessed by way of a flag lot of 30-foot width at 5245 Maple Grove Road. The property is located in an R-3 zoning district.

Eric Johnson, Community Development Director, presented an application from Levi Stauber/Cottage Lake Investments, LLC, for a 4.83-acre property at 5245 Maple Grove Road.

The proposal would create a new flag lot along the eastern property line, dividing the property into Parcel A (0.65 acres) and Parcel B (4.18 acres). The existing home and one outbuilding would remain on Parcel B, while another outbuilding would be relocated onto Parcel A.

The owner plans to market or develop the new lot in the future. Any future home construction will require coordination for utilities and driveway access. Because the City does not allow lots with only accessory structures, the applicant must provide a \$5,000 escrow until a primary structure is built on Parcel B.

In addition, part of the existing circular driveway must be removed to eliminate the shared driveway access between the two parcels.

Daniel Hill, Hermantown, asked about the placement of the driveway. Eric responded that the driveway may be removed for the installation of utilities and could be rebuilt further from the property line.

Motion made by Corey Kolquist to approve the application by Levi Stauber/Cottage Life Investments LLC for a Subdivision to create a 136-foot-wide parcel of 0.65 acres and a 4.18-acre lot accessed by way of a flag lot of 30-foot width at 5245 Maple Grove Road. The property is located in an R-3 zoning district. Seconded by Kevin Hagen. Motion carried. 4-0. John Stauber abstained.

5C. An application by JLG Enterprises of Hermantown LLP for a Wetland Replacement Plan for 13,503 square feet of wetland impacts in the 63-acre Peyton Acres residential development located at the formerly addressed 3956 Stebner Road and is located in an R-3 zoning district.

Eric presented an application from JLG Enterprises for the final phase of the Peyton Acres development. Since 2020, the applicant has worked with the City of Hermantown Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) on wetland permits and approvals. Phase 4 exceeds the de minimis wetland impact threshold, requiring the purchase of wetland credits.

The Hermantown TEP conditionally approved the project on April 8, 2026, pending proof of wetland credit purchase. The developer has secured credits for 13,503 square feet of wetlands.

Staff recommends approval of the Wetland Replacement Plan with conditions including purchase of wetland credits, payment of a \$2,025.45 wetland fee, inclusion of conservation covenants, signed consent to approval conditions, and a \$750 administrative fine for violations.

Motion made by Corey Kolquist to approve the application by JLG Enterprises of Hermantown LLP for a Wetland Replacement Plan for 13,503 square feet of wetland impacts in the 63-acre Peyton Acres residential development located at the formerly addressed 3956 Stebner Road and is located in an R-3 zoning district. Seconded by Beth Wentzlaff. Motion carried. 5-0.

5D. An application by Scannell Properties for a Wetland Replacement Plan for 2.31 acres of wetland impacts associated with the 231,000 square foot office/freight distribution facility located at 531x Miller Trunk Highway and is located in a BP – Hermantown Business Park zoning district.

Eric presented an application from Scannell Properties #791, LLC, for approval of a Wetland Replacement Plan related to the proposed Hawkline Business Park development at Highway 53 and Lavaque Bypass Road. The project includes construction of a 231,000-square-foot warehouse/distribution facility in the BP zoning district.

The Hermantown TEP reviewed the project in February and April 2026 and directed Stantec to prepare a wetland replacement plan. The TEP also required future wetland impacts from a planned access road to be included in future replacement calculations.

Stantec submitted a plan for impacts to 2.31 acres of wetlands, while the City anticipates additional wetland impacts for the future access road and plans to submit a separate replacement plan later in 2026.

Sarah Lofald, gave a brief background on the site, which was designated a Superfund site by the EPA.

Motion made by John Stauber to approve the application by Scannell Properties for a Wetland Replacement Plan for 2.31 acres of wetland impacts associated with the 231,000 square foot office/freight distribution facility located at 531x Miller Trunk Highway and is located in a BP – Hermantown Business Park zoning district. Seconded by Matthew Fournier. Motion carried. 5-0.

5E. An application by 1 LLC for a Special Use Permit for a 103-unit, 4 story apartment building on a 5.8 -acre site located at 4818 Maple Grove Road. The property is located in an HM – Hermantown Marketplace zoning district.

Eric presented an application from 1 LLC for the proposed Hermantown Apartment project on 5.8 acres of a 30-acre property. The project includes a four-story, 103-unit apartment building on currently undeveloped land with wetlands located throughout the site. Access would be from Maple Grove Road using the existing Stebner Park driveway until future road connections are developed.

The development includes studio, one-, and two-bedroom units, a 45-foot-tall building with a 19,370-square-foot footprint, and 206 surface parking spaces meeting City requirements. A paved 10-foot-wide trail would also connect the apartment building to the City trail system south of the site.

Beth Wentzlaff asked how much wetland would be impacted, and Eric stated approximately 9,500 square feet.

Corey Kolquist asked about existing utility setbacks and snow removal. Eric explained utilities currently extend to the restroom building near the southern park fields and said snow removal is anticipated to be maintained by the City.

Matthew Fournier raised concerns about driveway access and infrastructure planning before development proceeds, including road design, safety near the soccer fields and park, and whether upgrades such as streetlights or sidewalks would be required. Eric stated staff are still discussing future roadway plans and acknowledged the existing driveway will eventually need to be upgraded.

The following people spoke:

Sarah Lofald of Hermantown, who has strong ties to the soccer fields, expressed concerns about how the development could impact the local environment, wetlands, public parks, community character, and traffic management.

Dan Linde, Hermantown Soccer Association is concerned about the current access road being changed to an actual road or that the developer has their own separate access road.

Motion made by Matthew Fournier to table the application by 1 LLC for a Special Use Permit for a 103-unit, 4 story apartment building on a 5.8 -acre site located at 4818 Maple Grove Road. The property is located in an HM – Hermantown Marketplace zoning district. Seconded by Kevin Hagen. Motion tabled 5-0.

5F. A public hearing for an amendment to the City of Hermantown’s Comprehensive Plan’s transportation and utilities chapter pertaining to the expansion of the urban services area.

According to Eric, the City of Hermantown adopted its updated 2045 Comprehensive Plan in the spring 2025. The plan includes seven chapters covering vision and purpose, background and trends, natural resources and recreation, land use, economic and housing development, transportation and utilities, and implementation.

The City of Hermantown has been discussing the extension of sanitary sewer and water services to the Adolph area with St. Louis County and WLSSD, driven by the 2045 Comprehensive Plan and the proposed Google Data Center. The proposed utility extension would follow W. Arrowhead Road to Midway Road and continue south to the Adolph/Section 31 area.

WLSSD determined the City’s Urban Service Boundary (USB) in the 2045 Comprehensive Plan does not align with the WLSSD boundary and recommended amendments. The updated plan would expand the USB to encompass the entire city while identifying short- and long-term growth areas and updating utility planning language and maps accordingly.

Key updates include revised USB maps, expanded narrative language, updated references to the 2001 USB, and new goals supporting phased utility expansion and economic development opportunities throughout the city.

Beth said some proposed changes are being driven by WLSSD requirements and felt the commission’s prior input was not fully reflected in the final plan. She expressed concern that the review process is moving too quickly and that the agenda packet lacked enough detail for a thorough review.

Corey asked for clarification, and Beth explained that extending water and sewer along Midway Road has long been considered a future project that would require a lift station and additional planning. She stressed the importance of a careful process over a fast one.

Matthew asked about WLSSD’s urban service boundary map differing from Hermantown’s map. Eric explained that the City can utilize WLSSD’s system, so the City’s map should align with WLSSD’s rather than the reverse. He noted WLSSD last updated its map around May 2025.

Dave Chura, Duluth – Spoke to concerns about protecting the rural character and the local environment.

Kim Parmeter, Midway Township – Spoke about readiness for jobs, investment, and future business growth in Hermantown.

Lucas Mistelske, Grand Island Township – Shared his 14 years of data center industry experience and offered himself as a resource.

Brian Hanson, Duluth, – Voiced support for business growth and strong public planning processes.

Rachel Johnson, Duluth, – Supported approval of the Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Derek Pederson, Proctor, – Discussed his organization’s role in providing living wages for Northland families.

Rebecca Grandorf, Hermantown – Spoke to page 82 of the Comprehensive Plan, which states that a secondary sanitary sewer trunk line for western Hermantown is not expected to be needed within the next 20 years for residential growth, but could instead support future business development in the southwest portion of the city.

Jill Anderson, Hermantown – Owns a small horse farm and she’s concerned about the Data Center and water concerns and that people are going to be out-taxed.

Jonathon Thornton, Hermantown – Jonathan discussed why he does not want water and sewer extended to his property, noting that those with larger parcels may view the issue differently. He emphasized the importance of the 2022–2024 Comprehensive Plan and stated his belief that decisions surrounding the plan were influenced by the proposed data center. He also believed the 2045 Comprehensive Plan was revised after July 11, 2024, to meet criteria requested by Google.

Jackie Dolentz, Hermantown – She stated that she is not opposed to development, but is opposed to inappropriate development in a residential area. Referencing page 1 of the Comprehensive Plan, she noted the plan emphasizes preserving natural beauty, including creeks, wetlands, and wooded areas, and said the community had no input on changes affecting the southwest corner of Hermantown.

David Thornton, Hermantown – He stated that Hermantown is a diverse city that respects its origins. As a large landowner on the western side of the city, he noted there are few large parcels remaining and questioned whether the Comprehensive Plan truly reflects majority community support.

Tim Resberg, Hermantown – He stated that many people move to Hermantown for its rural and residential character and expressed concern that development of a data center could discourage future residents and negatively impact the community.

Clarissa Ek, Hermantown – She stated that she lives on 10 acres within a quarter mile of the proposed data center and said the project would directly impact her property. Drawing on her experience as a veteran, former union member, and longtime public servant, she expressed strong concerns about the government’s handling of the process.

Joanne Bates, Hermantown – She referenced comments from a St. Louis County Commissioner meeting stating that approximately 30,000 gallons of leachate containing PFAS is entering Lake Superior. She said WLSSD accepts waste from outside areas but claimed Duluth lacks treatment capability for PFAS, resulting in discharge into the lake. She also mentioned a partially funded

reverse osmosis plant in Canyon that requires state bonding approval. Additionally, she noted claims that data centers may involve PFAS through coolants and fire suppression materials, and said WLSSD had indicated to the Hermantown City Council they could handle wastewater from the proposed data center.

Sarah Lofald, Hermantown – She said the committee has an opportunity to regain community trust, but expressed concern that the process has instead been eroding trust in the City Council and staff. She added that repeated calls for transparency have not been adequately addressed.

Jim Klukkert, Duluth – He spoke about non-disclosure agreements, stating his belief that government agencies allowing employees to sign them forfeit public trust.

Alexis Scarbrough, Duluth – She expressed concern that planning is not adequately forward-looking and that the process is moving too quickly based on unproven promises.

Meagan Elling, Solway Township – She expressed concerns about water and sewer extensions, stating she believes they are being extended primarily for the data center and would not otherwise be expanded. She also opposed urbanization of Hermantown, raised concerns about future infrastructure maintenance costs, and questioned who is responsible for the Comprehensive Plan changes.

Doug Olsen, Hermantown – He stated he supports development and economic growth, as well as people and the community, and emphasized the importance of following the Constitution. He referenced the “4 P’s” from his business experience—people, product, process, and profit—saying they must work together, and he called for a better process in the current situation.

Corey Kolquist, commission member, Hermantown – He said he grew up in Hermantown and has served on the committee for 10 years, describing it as a passion to improve the community and future opportunities for children. He stated his involvement is not driven by other motives and expressed support for responsible growth and development.

Beth Wentzlaff, commission member, Hermantown – She reflected on her husband’s family having lived in Hermantown since 1906 and described it as a privilege. She said she would not have approved the Comprehensive Plan change and believes more time is needed to pause and discuss it further.

Ryan Johnson, commission member, Hermantown – He said he is interested in the 2045 Comprehensive Plan and noted projections that St. Louis County may see population decline while Hermantown is expected to grow. He stated that accommodating developments such as a data center that require utilities could help support that projected growth and address broader regional trends.

Motion made by Corey Kolquist to approve the amendment to the City of Hermantown’s Comprehensive Plan’s transportation and utilities chapter pertaining to the expansion of the urban services area. Seconded by John Stauber. Motion carried. 4-2.

6. CONTINUING BUSINESS

Eric brought up about staff bringing up the ADU and that will move forward at a date soon, maybe July.

7. NEW BUSINESS

None.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

Correspondence 2026-037 – 026-123; 2026-125 – 2026-135; 2026-140 – 2026-149; 2026-152 – 2026-155; 2026-167 – 2026-206; 2026-211 – 2026-235; 2026-239 – 2026-314; 2026-316 – 2026-324.

9. COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS

- Joe Peterson – None
- Corey Kolquist – None
- Beth Wentzlaff – None
- Kevin Hagen – None
- Matthew Fournier – None
- John Stauber – None
- Amanda Radzak – Absent
- Ryan Johnson – None

ADJOURN

Motion made by John Stauber to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Corey Kolquist. Meeting adjourned at 9:26 pm.

Officiated by:

Transcribed by:

Joe Peterson, Chairman

Mary Melde, Administrative Assistant