Town of Gnesen Planning Commission
September 16, 2026

Members Present: Sherri Underthun, Carol Jacobson, Dick Delano, Matt Thibodeau, Joe Ferguson, Kathy Buran, Nancy Poppenberg, Zoning Officer Rick Hogenson, P&Z Secretary Sarah Blix

Members Absent: Carter Williams, Pete Bergman

Others Present: Mickey Ferguson, Ben Potter, Adam Marzolf, Gil Kjorstad, Gary Juten, Tim Juten, Al Pitoscia, Ana Viele, Chad DeMenge, Jason Haller, Jeff Carlson, Randy Dulinski, Tom Kvas, Chris Juten

Approval of the agenda: Matt made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Joe. All vote in favor.

Approval of August 19, 2026, Muellenbach Variance Public Hearing Minutes: Joe made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Matt. All vote in favor.

Approval of August 19, 2026, Minutes: Joe made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Matt. All vote in favor.

Discussion: None

Public Hearing for CUP Reviews – KGM Snow Creek and Abramson – both pits had no noted issues and the review passed. Ulland Brothers Liberty, Oscar, and Palmer Pits – none of the Ulland pits had any noted issues and all three reviews passed. Viele Contracting – there was mention of three conveyors seen on site during pit inspections. It was suggested if the conveyors were not in use to dismantle and remove them. Ana Viele said two are in use. Sherri said she thought the third conveyor was getting repaired. Matt said he did not believe the equipment was in purview of what the Planning Commission can require action on and that Viele's should not have to remove any of the conveyors. No other issues noted and the review passed. Cedar Drive Excavating – no issues were noted and the review passed.

Old Business:
Data Centers – The Town Board passed a moratorium on data centers at their September 14, 2026 TB meeting. A notice has been put in the October newsletter seeking residents who might be interested in being part of a data center subcommittee.
Cease & Desist – A sample Stop Work Order was provided to the commission for their review. Kathy suggested changing the phrase "the following action" to read "the following conditions" so that it is consistent with the rest of the application. Joe made a motion to take Kathy's suggestion to change the wording and then approve the Stop Work Order and send it to the Town Board for their approval, seconded by Dick. All vote in favor.

New Business:
Sample Short Term Rental/IUP Ordinance Verbiage from Attorney – Joe questioned if the Town Board has discussed changing the STR Ordinance to be governed by an IUP, to which Nancy said no. It was suggested by our attorney to consider changing STR to IUP as he said it would have more teeth in a courtroom. There was discussion on the STR ordinance and the different attorney opinions on the best way to control STR's. Sarah said with an IUP comes more public hearings and room for inconsistencies. Sherri moved to leave the STR ordinance as is and not go down the IUP path. There was no second. Joe made a motion to send a recommendation to the TB stating that at this time the Planning Commission wants to take no action to change the STR ordinance to include IUP verbiage, seconded by Dick. All vote in favor.
Sample Driveway & Culvert Application – Rick said that a resident questioned the process for putting in a driveway off a township road. Rick found that Gnesen currently does not have an application to guide residents to and so he got a sample one from the City of Duluth and he and Sarah altered it to fit Gnesen's needs. Matt questioned why the township needs a driveway/culvert application. Gary Juten said people put driveways off township roads and if done improperly, culverts and ditches back up which then becomes a township problem. With the application, the township could guide people how to put in a driveway properly to eliminate problems.

Matt and Carol questioned if we have ordinance verbiage to support the application, to which Rick said not that he is aware of. After some discussion it was decided that ordinance verbiage could be created to support the application. Matt made a motion to approve the application and create ordinance verbiage then bring back to the Planning Commission at their October meeting for their approval, seconded by Joe. All vote in favor. Sarah and Rick will work on this ordinance verbiage.

Pitoscia – Campers on Van Road – Al Pitoscia was present at tonight's meeting to discuss a complaint that was made against his property regarding excessive camper use/potential campground. Al said his lot is used by family only. There used to be a cabin on the lot, however it was torn down and never rebuild due to increased construction costs. Sherri asked if the campers are ever removed. Al said often they stay on the property out of convenience but they could be removed. Al said electric was installed for each camper and an outhouse that gets cleaned every two weeks is on site. Gil Kjorstad, a neighbor of Al's, said there are currently six campers, a gazebo, boathouse, and a small cabin on the property and that Al is in violation of several sections of the ordinance. Al did not agree with Gil and also said there is no gazebo or cabin. Sherri said that campers can be located on a parcel for 120 days in a calendar year. Joe said the ordinance just does not allow this. Rick said the ordinance only allows two campers per parcel. Sherri said multiple campers for short time use such as a weekend is ok, long term use creates problems as then neighbors start viewing it as a campground. Al questioned the 120 days and how it could look. Sherri said 120 days between January 1st through December 31st. Rick said he would work with Al outside of the meeting to answer his questions.

Ordinance Change Proposal – Adam Marzolf, Carey Road, proposed an ordinance change to change the distance between STR's on riparian properties from 1500ft to 1000ft. Joe said he was not in support of this proposal. Sherri made a motion to send the proposal to the TB as written for their approval. There was discussion on how the Planning Commission needs to review the proposal then send a recommendation to the TB. After much discussion and clarification Kathy called for a roll call vote as to who was in favor of change and who wasn't.

Kathy – NOT in favor of change
Carol – NOT in favor of change
Matt – abstain
Joe – NOT in favor of change
Sherri – in favor of change
Dick – NOT in favor of change

A recommendation will be sent to the TB for their October 12, 2026 meeting stating that four commission members were NOT in favor of the change, one was in favor of the change, and one abstained.

Zoning Officer's Report: Rick gave his report about permits that he has been working on this past month. Rick said he is requesting clarification regarding FERC's riparian vs non-riparian classification and how that works with lake properties where FERC retained the shoreline.

Correspondence: None

Motion to Adjourn: Matt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 pm, seconded by Joe. All vote in favor.

Upcoming Meeting:
P&Z Meeting – October 21, 2026, 2026 - 7:00pm

Respectfully submitted,

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Sarah Blix, Planning and Zoning Secretary — Kathy Buran, Planning Commission Chair

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Date