

**MELROSE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2026 – 6:00 P.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Melrose Planning and Zoning Commission met in a Regular Meeting on Monday, March 30, 2026, at 6:00 P.M. at the Melrose City Center pursuant to due notice being given thereof. Present were Commission Members David Berscheit, Joeline Wieling, Shawn Mayers, Joe Matt, Jason Seanger, and Jean McDonald, City Administrator Colleen Winter, and Community Development Director Sheila Hellermann. Commission Member Nick Shaw was absent. Chair Seanger called the meeting to order. The Commission then recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A motion was made by Commission Member Mayers, seconded by Vice Chair Berscheit, and unanimously carried to amend the agenda for City Administrator Winter to address the Commission.

3. CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

City Administrator Winter gave the following update. She stated that for people who do not already know, her last day with the City will be April 3, as she is moving to a new position. David Drown Associates has been hired as the search firm to conduct the hiring of the next City Administrator. Police Chief Craig Maus will be the point of contact for the City until the new City Administrator is hired. She stated that she wanted to talk with the Planning and Zoning Commission before she left to recognize that \$89 million in building permits have been approved in the city in the past six years. This is a huge number for a community of our size. The City of Melrose combined with Melrose Public Utilities has also invested \$32 million in the City within that same time period.

She stated that housing was also a priority that was identified by the City Council when she started as City Administrator. In the past six years, 136 units of housing have been added. This includes single-family and multi-family development. There are additional developments currently in the works as well, including the downtown Jennie-O redevelopment. The Sauk River bridge project was also being worked on when she started. Instead of changing it to an arch river rapids as originally proposed by the DNR, the project was able to be reworked to put in a new bridge, and renovate Sauk River Park to its current plan instead.

She stated that the development and achievements in her time as City Administrator were not something that she could have completed alone. City staff have been such a great team in accomplishing these projects. There are very good people who work for the city and she stated that you are in good hands moving forward. She stated thank you to the Planning & Zoning Commission for everything they have done in her time with the city

and their work on these and many more projects.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commission Member Mayers, seconded by Commission Member Wieling, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes from the Commission's January 26, 2026, Regular Meeting.

5. OATH OF OFFICE

At its January 6, 2026, meeting, the City Council appointed Joeline Wieling as the Council Representative to the Planning & Zoning Commission for a one-year term. Community Development Director Hellermann administered the oath of office to Commission Member Wieling.

6. REPORTS

6a. Community Development Director Report

Community Development Director Hellermann provided the following update. The sign ordinance is something that is being discussed as there is a sign up on a residential property that has been brought to the City's attention. Upon checking into this issue, this would most likely be protected by the First Amendment and free speech rights. The sign ordinance also really only covers commercial signage in the city. Commission Member Wieling stated that looking into Little Falls' ordinance could be something to research. Community Development Director Hellermann stated that St. Cloud also recently looked into an ordinance regarding signage due to large numbers of signs in yards around election season.

Regarding the Blenker property, it has been sold within the family. They are working on plans for a private development on the land. The City did not receive local road improvement funds for 9th Street, very few cities got these funds, and no one in Stearns County received them. It is still in the City budget for next year.

There is a question for the Planning & Zoning Commission regarding a shed in a R-1 residential zone. The owner wants to put steel siding on the shed. Hellermann has explained to the owner that exposed fasteners for the siding are not allowed as despite the building being industrial, it is still in a residential zoning area. Hellermann will let him know as things currently stand, he will need to use concealed fasteners for the siding. There was discussion about whether allowing any changes might create more issues and precedent for future properties in residential areas. Members discussed a potential variance that could be issued to the property owner to address those concerns. Community Development Director Hellermann stated that there is another property owner in Highlands Boulevard that wants to build a new shed, that any change here might affect what the property owner is requesting there as well. Members discussed that regardless of any specific language or variance that is granted for this property, it will still create a

lot of work for the City as people will want a similar exception but potentially not understand the full circumstances of why this particular variance was granted. Chair Seanger stated that he would want to see documentation of why a particular method was more cost effective or better before granting a variance. Members agreed with this approach.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7a. Pre-Application Review – Re-zoning

Community Development Director Hellermann presented. The Commission is being asked to review a pre-application for re-zoning from Birch Hill Community Church, who is looking at buying approximately 7 acres on the east side of parcel 66.36456.0005. This property is currently zoning industrial. Commission looked at a previous pre-application review to rezone this portion to residential. Costs of development have limited those options.

Nearby property are R-1 residential, R-3 multifamily residential, industrial and C-1 (Montessori School and part of 400 Riverside NW). Under our zoning ordinance, “public and semi-public building are such post offices, fire stations, libraries, museums, community centers and city offices” are allowed in C-1. Churches are allowed in R-1 by conditional use permit. Or it could be re-zoned public like the other churches in Melrose. Commission to discuss.

Members discussed the potential layout of the property and how the building and access road would fit into the parcel. Community Development Director Hellermann summarized the neighboring properties and her thoughts on the zoning. If the zoning is changed to R-1 residential, Birch Hill would need to apply for a conditional use permit to build a church on the land. If the church became really large there might be traffic and parking issues on this road. Needing a conditional use permit would require the property owner to address more of those concerns in their application. The Commission agreed that the City can begin working with Birch Hill on the zoning.

8. OLD BUSINESS

8a. 900 Kraft Drive SE – Re-zoning and CUP

Community Development Director Hellermann presented. Stearns Electric leadership is working on a lease agreement for a daycare facility at 900 Kraft Drive SE and a grant application for the build out has been submitted to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. Commission to review rezoning of both 900 and 700 Kraft Drive SE, how it affects the remainder of 900 Kraft Drive SE, and the need for a conditional use permit for a daycare facility.

Hellermann stated that since the daycare facility is moving ahead, she would recommend that an application be made by Stearns Electric to rezone 900 Kraft Drive SE to R-2.

There would also need to be a change made to 700 Kraft Drive SE to R-2 as well since it is one plot with two addresses and otherwise the zoning in the area would become inconsistent. The daycare will be for 94 children, with space for 16 infants. Grants have been applied for and hopefully the daycare will be able to be opened by the start of the school year as work is planned to start in April to renovate the space.

8b. JOTS Update

Community Development Director Hellermann presented. The City has received a grant of \$669,000 from the state to tear down the old downtown Jennie-O building. The grant from the state covers part of the property, and the state has told the City to apply again for the next funding cycle in August, for money to tear down the rest of the property the City is looking to demolish. The current plan is to sell a portion of the property to Leedstone outright. There has been interest from developers about surrounding areas already, including potential housing going where the Jennie-O parking lot currently is.

8c. Massmann Property

Community Development Director Hellermann presented. Under our subdivision ordinance, property which is platted can be divided into lots. There is discussion about three lots along 5th Avenue NW. Hellermann has stated that she has let the family know that a survey needs to be done to divide the lots for development and potential purchase by developers.

9. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

9a. The Commission's next meeting date is scheduled for Monday, April 27, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

There was discussion that Commission Members Wieling and Mayers may not be able to attend the next meeting.

10. ISSUES BY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEMBERS AND/OR STAFF

There were no issues discussed.

11. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Vice Chair Berscheit, seconded by Commission Member Wieling, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:52 P.M.



CONNOR KOCKLER – CITY CLERK