

The meeting was held in-person, participation via Zoom was not available.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Kris Kopitzke called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **ROLL CALL** – Present: Justin Sykora, Kris Kopitzke, Alison Miller, Chris Bursack, Doug Parker, Sally Doherty, Kate McGinn. Absent was Kuchen Hale (excused) & Christian Dawson. A quorum was present.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – City Administrator Ron Moorse, Council member mayor Palmquist

4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** –  
Motion/Second McGinn/Kopitzke to approve the agenda for the December 1, 2025 Planning Commission meeting Passed 7-0.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** –  
Motion/Second Sykora/Parker to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2025 Planning Commission meeting. Passed 6-0-1 (Doherty abstain).

6. **REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

None

7. **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

A. Luke Appert Minor Subdivision and Variance Application at 4558 Trading Post Tr S

Chair Kopitzke opened the public hearing at 7:04 pm.

Claire Stickler, City Planner, provided a summary of the application which is for a variance as part of a minor subdivision at 4558 Trading Post Trail South (PID: 28.028.20.31.0001). The proposal would split one lot into two lots measuring 23.07 acres (Parcel 1) and 9.91 acres (Parcel 2). The variance request is for the proposed driveway on Parcel 2 as presented it does not meet the 300-foot separation requirement for driveways on local streets, due to the location of the existing driveway for 4696 Trading Post Trail (Property directly south). § 153.059(B)(3) of Afton’s code, requires the driveways to be separated at least 300 feet, and be located 10 feet from a property line. While the southern portion of a new driveway could be 300 feet away from the neighbor’s driveway, the northern portion of a 16 foot wide driveway would be about 12 feet north of the north property line which is not feasible. The applicant cannot move the lot line to the north either, due to the City’s requirement in the Agricultural District that lots over 10 acres, cannot exceed a 1:3 width to length ratio. Also, the accessory building on the larger lot is 55 feet from the proposed new side property line. If the property line was to be moved more than 5 feet to the north, the accessory building would no longer meet the 50 foot side setback requirement. The existing location of the driveway at 4696 Trading Post Trails S has created the alleged practical difficulty.

Luke Appert, applicant, was present for questions and explained his request.

There were no other comments

**Motion/Second Sykora/Parker to close public hearing. Passed 7-0.**

Hearing closed at 7:08 pm.

Chair Kopitzke asked about the 300’ of frontage and how a driveway doesn’t fit.

Claire Stickler stated the driveway has to be at least 10’ from property line.

Doherty noted that if the neighbors weren’t in violation of their setback then this would not be a problem.

Parker asked about 3 per 40 quarter section. (This would fill the section).

**Motion/Second Doherty/Sykora to recommend approval of the variance at 4558 Trading Post Tr with additional condition that the driveway placement on parcel 2 be at least 250 feet centerline to centerline from the south driveway placement on the lot not owned. Passed 7-0.**

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Claire Stickler, City Planner provided information on the minor subdivision which would split one lot into two lots measuring 23.07 acres (Parcel 1) and 9.91 acres (Parcel 2). Access to all lots would be from existing roads and no new road infrastructure is needed. It appears that the proposed driveway on Parcel 2 would not meet the 300-foot separation requirement for driveways in the Ag Zone, due to the location of the existing driveway for 4696 Trading Post Trail. § 153.059(B)(3) of Afton’s code requires the driveways to be separated at least 300 feet. The applicant has applied for a variance to allow the driveway to be less than 300 feet from the neighbor’s driveway.

Discussion was held on the 3 per 40 per quarter section rule.

**Motion/Second Doherty/Kopitzke to recommend approval of the minor subdivision at 4558 Trading Post Tr with two additional conditions: 1) this fills the 3 per 40 in the quarter section and 2) the triangular piece to the east which goes into the next quarter-quarter section cannot have a dwelling unit. Passed 7-0.**

B. Shannon Weilandt Variance Application at 13663 34<sup>th</sup> St S

Chair Kopitzke opened the public hearing at 7:30 pm.

Claire Stickler, City Planner, provided a summary of the application which is a variance request to replace an existing shed with a 16’ x 24’ accessory structure at the subject property. The proposal requires a 224-square foot variance from the 1,000 square footage maximum for accessory structures and a variance from the one structure maximum (Sec. 153.077 of the Afton City Code) for Rural Residential parcels under 5 acres in size. The property is zoned Rural Residential (RR) and is 4.4 acres in size. The lot contains an existing single-family home, 840 ft<sup>2</sup> detached garage, 110 ft<sup>2</sup> gazebo, and 160 ft<sup>2</sup> shed. According to the applicant, the shed is currently used for storage and is in poor shape; she is seeking to replace this shed with a 384 ft<sup>2</sup> accessory structure located elsewhere in the rear yard of the property, in order to provide additional storage space. Since the property is located in the Rural Residential district and is under 5 acres, only one accessory structure (excluding a small storage shed, which does not require a building permit) under 1,000 ft<sup>2</sup> is permitted. Since the property already contains one accessory structure that nearly meets this size requirement – the detached garage – the additional proposed accessory structure does not comply with this requirement.

In late October, a miscommunication with City staff led to the property owner placing a down payment on the proposed accessory structure. There has been no approved building permit, only initial correspondence with staff. According to the applicant, alleged practical difficulty comes from the constricted size of the existing shed and the down payment cost already sunk into the project.

Based on the findings of fact, planning staff does not believe that the requested variances meet the three criteria for practical difficulties, and therefore recommend denial of both variances.

Shannon Weilandt, applicant, explained that the existing structure is in bad disrepair and she would like to build a larger usable shed.

There were no other comments

**Motion/Second Parker/Sykora to close public hearing. Passed 7-0.**

Hearing closed at 7:33 pm.

McGinn asked about the square footage as it is an extra 224 sq feet over the ordinance not 24 as written in the packet. Also the side setback is required at 50’ in the ordinance.

Discussion was held on the setback which is determined by the size of building and lot size. This lot is less than 5 and created before 1970 it can have a 25’ side setback, 50 from back.

Doherty stated if the proposed structure was smaller (10x16) it would be considered a shed and would not need a variance. But because it’s a 16x24’ structure it is asking for an additional building.

Chair Kopitzke stated there are two required variances: one for the total size and one for the additional outbuilding.

Sykora stated this seems in character with the area.

Doherty stated it doesn’t meet the variance. If it was smaller it wouldn’t need a variance. All the other lots around it are sub 5 acres and will be in the same boat. It’s a sub 5 acre lot that’s allowed one accessory building.

Chair Kopitzke stated it doesn’t meet the ordinance requirements.

Parker stated the commission has to stay consistent with the rules; the city council can decide if it’s acceptable.

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109 **Motion/Second Doherty/Parker to recommend denial of the Variance application at 13663 34<sup>th</sup> St S.**  
110 **Passed 7-0.**

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113 **8. NEW BUSINESS**

114 None

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116 **9. OLD BUSINESS -**

117 A. Draft Ag Conservation Development Ordinance

118 Administrator Moore provided a summary of council feedback and ag preservation committee feedback.

119 Discussion was held on what happens to the land at the end of ag use.

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121 B. Update on City Council Actions  
122 Mayor Palmquist provided a summary of the November 18, 2025 Council meeting.

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124 **10. ADJOURN –**

125 **Motion/Second Parker/Sykora to adjourn. Passed**

126 Meeting adjourned at 8:43pm.

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131 Respectfully submitted by:

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133 JY  
134 Julie Yoho, City Clerk

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137 To be approved on  
138 January 5, 2025 as (check one): Presented: \_\_\_\_\_ or Amended: \_\_\_\_\_  
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