

May 7, 2026

A meeting of the Plan Commission of the City of Eagle River was called to order at 5:00pm by Mayor Deb Brown.

Roll Call: Alex Forer, Mary Horant, Brad Adamovich, Adam Grassl, John Hletko, Kim Schaffer and Deb Brown. Also in attendance Becky Bolte. Robin Ginner was present via Zoom.

Motion by Schaffer, 2nd by Horant to approve the minutes of the 3-5-2026 meeting. Carried. Ayes: Forer, Hletko, Grassl, Schaffer Abstained: Adamovich

a) Conditional Use Permit Public Hearing: Request by the Eagle River Historical Society to place interpretive signs in Rotary Square, Silver Lake Beach Park and Riverview Park: Mayor Brown opened the public hearing at 5:05pm. Executive Director for the Eagle River Historical Society, Vito Bortolotti presented the plan for the signs to commemorate the 250 year celebration of American with local history. Former Executive Director Karen Sailer, 111 S 2nd, spoke in favor of the signs. Kathryn Craffey, 202 N 3rd, spoke on her concerns with the signs being cemented into the ground at the Square, soil testing before installation, Historical Society hearing application having blanks, concerns that the history of indigenous people was not presented on the proposed signs, concerns about sponsor recognition being disguised as advertising. Bortolotti responded that he wanted to maintain historical integrity and a second round of signs is in the planning stage that would include Native American history in the area, anticipating within two years. The ER Historical Society continues to search out the history of indigenous people in the area that dates back an estimated 10,000 years. Horant suggested affixing signs on the neighboring building at the Square in lieu of having signs on or through the astro turf. Bortolotti is working with Eagle River Revitalization on adjustments to signs and placement to avoid any damage to the turf. Alice Kramer, 828 Meta Loon Trail, Town of Lincoln, clarified inception of why those parks were chosen as the sites have geographical significance. Jessica Bortolotti, 112 Illinois, signs are a great addition but encouraged those opposed to feel free to fundraise and put up their own signs. Jay Johnstone, 112 Illinois, all for the signs, history of towns is great, but accuracy is important. Andy Lichtfuss, 8414 Squash Lake Ln, Town of Three Lakes, City of Eagle River business owner, stated not every sign is going to be able to capture all of our history but this is a good beginning. Chelsea Sims, 213 E Wall St, spoke from Zoom with concerns of the lack of representation of the indigenous people. Discussion. Horant asked that people be part of the solution, volunteer. Brown called for any other audience comments. Annette Numrich, 1533 E Dollar Lk Rd, Town of Lincoln, the City of Madison has information on their historical signs that reads; *We recognize that this land is seeded property of the indigenous peoples.* Ginner reminded the audience that the Planning Commission is not tasked with what someone can put on their signs citing First Amendment violation but instead on the physical sign structure not what is on the sign. Emails received were then read aloud by Clerk Bolte - Kira Oas, 1508 Sandstone Circle, Town of Lincoln requesting the signs include the highlights of the indigenous people here before us. Jim Holperin, the Square Representative, requested that signs placed at the Square be portable, avoiding any digging into the turf. Mayor Brown closed the Public Hearing at 5:28pm and brought conversation back to the Commissioners. Grassl asked about the city receiving copy of sign before being put up. Hletko stated signs should be portable and concerns with sponsorship portion being advertising. Schaffer spoke to the city allowing a small signature on murals. Adamovich asked that park signs be portable for plowing/mowing/events. Grassl asked about mounting signs onto buildings at parks. Bortolotti is open for discussion on mounting and placement options. *Motion by Horant, 2nd by Forer to recommend City Council approval of a conditional use permit to the Eagle River Historical Society to place interpretive signs at the Square, Silver Lake Beach Park, and Riverview park with the condition that placement be done in coordination with Public Works at City representatives' discretion. Carried on a roll call vote, all.*

b) Conditional Use Permit Public Hearing: Request by Amerco Real Estate Company/U-Haul for a conditional use permit to construct two (2) self-storage units totaling 51,977 square feet at 1100 N. Railroad Street, EagleRiver, computer number 221-1019-06, in accordance with Chapter 106, Article VI,

Division 7, Sec 106-473 Uses permitted by conditional grant, (8) Storage buildings not used for habitation – human or animal. Shawn Odden, representative for U-Haul Company of WI, was present. Mayor Brown confirmed a two-minute time limit for public comments. Odden stated they would like to partner with the city to develop the property at 1100 N Railroad with approximately 520 climate controlled self-storage units, 419 of which would be inside access. The approximate value of the facility would be \$5 million at completion. Schaffer asked petitioner; “Why this property” with Odden responding accessibility, price, visibility and location. There will be one restroom in each building and estimating two people will be employed. Schaffer stated city sewer and water was designed for higher usage and that our sewer and water system would be underutilized by design. Ginner reminded all the standards to be applied from City Ordinance; (c) Standards. No conditional use will be granted by the council or recommended by the plan commission unless the use: (1) Addresses expected harmful project impacts. (2) Is so designed, located and proposed to be operated that the public health, safety and welfare will be protected. (3) Will not cause substantial injury to the value of other property in the neighborhood in which it is located. Mayor Brown opened the floor for public comments at 5:40PM. Vic Washelesky, 173 River St, spoke on engineering background and presented information on expected project harmful impacts. Washelesky presented calculations that with a 57,000 Sq Ft building on the property, allowing for 20% without structure as required impervious surface, the comparison of rainfall runoff without project and with would result in 6x the amount of rainfall runoff with nowhere to go. Washelesky spoke on the height of Bluebird Road, lack of a ditch, and citing water pooling already a problem. Vito Bortolotti, 319 N Main, spoke on the detrimental impacts on his family owned business of Bortolotti’s Cin Cin, including aesthetics, light pollution and visibility. Karen Sailer, 111 S 2nd, objected to the project, stating Eagle River is a tourist destination and Eagle River Revitalization spends a lot of time and money to make the area beautiful to attract tourism and business. Kathryn Craffey, 202 N 3rd, questioned the total number of units to be built, reported unreadable information in the public packets, concerns for lack of policies, storage units do not support the largest industry of tourism, reported lack of land use and growth management policies, wanted a minimum of a plan that is more aesthetically pleasing, suggested land be used for affordable housing or retail. Jess Bortolotti, 112 Illinois and business at 1114 Bluebird, stated flooding is a major issue in that area and they have had to put in drainage pond at their business. Advertising is geared towards small town feel and nature and feels storage units are the wrong image for the city. The project would not bring in jobs or service into the area. Andy Lichtfuss, 8414 Squash Lake Rd, Three Lakes, VP Chamber of Commerce, ERRP Board, owner of Andy’s Pontoon Saloon on Wall St, spoke with WI Economic Develop for stats, the city is small with less than 1700 residents with 765,000 tourists visiting annually. Lichtfuss stated there are better uses for that property that would benefit tourism and locals. Jay Stock, Tribute Brewing, 1106 N Bluebird, the project would be detrimental to his business agreeing with opposition already provided, citing location by airport restrictions in height of and signage problems. Annette Numrich, 1533 E Dollar Lake Rd, Town of Lincoln, concerns with aesthetics as people approach the city, stated the city is losing what draws people to our area with billboards and metal buildings. Taylor Garrison, 319 N Main, stated that area is near the Northland Pines Schools and snowmobiling events, stating the project would impact the residents and tourists. Shawn Odden, petitioner, replied: U-Haul civil engineers can look at water detention/run-off control, the building will have a low profile blocking visibility less than what could go in there, proposal has a few options for building design, there will be no unit access doors to the street side, his data shows there is a huge demand for storage. Odden reported U-Haul uses the highest level of security, code access to get into the main building, getting notices when people access the units and notices if any unit has been accessed for more than four hours. U-Haul is open to landscaping. Letters received where then read into record. In Opposition to the proposed storage unit project: Alice Kramer - President of the ER Historical Society, Jessica Bortolotti - 112 Illinois Rd and 112 Illinois and business at 1114 Bluebird, Karen Sailer - 111 S 2nd, Vito Bortolotti - 314 N Main, Chelsea Sims - 213 E Wall St, Wendy Harris - Town of Lincoln, Melissa Deal – 121 N Main, Deborah Magee – 537 N Bond, Kari Kirschbaum – property owners at 311 Spruce and 214 N 3rd, Carol Marshall – Town of Lincoln, Dottie Reeder – Town of Lincoln, Katherine Kolb – Town of Washington. At 6:45PM Mayor Brown closed to public comments and brought conversation up to the Commissioners. Discussion. Schaffer asked Vic Washelesky, who was an Engineer, what would have to be done to accommodate the runoff from a business that size. Washelesky stating it depends on different

factors but recommended a condition that detention needs to be a certain way to address it and requiring a landscaping plan. Adamovich stated that currently the storm sewer is only on the highway, so Bluebird side would run down to Cin Cin and Tribute. Schaffer confirmed two expected employees and that the sewer water system would be underused with only two bathrooms. Hletko confirmed proposed height of building at 11'. Horant presented need for landscaping plan including buffers, lighting plan, confirmed the cut in would not be from highway, options for material used for siding, concerns of signage/visibility to the existing businesses on Bluebird and sign height near the airport, and stated the project doesn't address housing or job creation issues in the community. Horant reminded all that the property has remained for sale for decades with no one purchasing. U-Haul representative Odden responded they would be open to monument signage to address signs to neighboring businesses. Horant expressed concerns on impact of small businesses on Bluebird and stated with all buildings in proposed project, it's 57,000 Square Feet. Forer stated on site stormwater management is a must and expressed concerns on security and how taxing security would be on the ER Police Department. Adamovich asked how many people the project would bring into the building daily with Odden replying that an average would be 25 visits per day. Grassl, we want business, and we want a Northwoods aesthetic, we want job creation, and people can't find a place to live. The property has sat empty for 50 years. Grassl stated he was willing to compromise but that there was a lot to consider. Hletko, concern with water mitigation and reiterated that residents don't like storage units. Hletko also voiced that the property has sat empty for 50 years and any development would block the view to Cin Cin and Tribute. Odden stated underground water detention could be under driveway, but they would start with above ground options. Holly Tomlanovich confirmed the placement would not interfere with existing trail system. *Motion by Horant, 2nd by Hletko to postpone any action until June 4th, 2026, Planning Commission regular meeting when developer can come back with detailed plans to be reviewed by the Commissioners, including; water retention, landscaping, signage, lighting plan, and siding samples. Carried on a roll call vote, all.*

c) Ordinance Amendment Public Hearing: Ordinance to Amend Chapter 106 (Zoning) of the Municipal Code of the City of Eagle River, Wisconsin, by adding a Definition of "Excavation" to Section 106-1: *Motion by Hletko, 2nd by Grassl to recommend City Council adoption of presented ordinance, changing 500 cubic yards to 500 cubic feet, to read: Excavation. Any man-made cut, cavity, trench, depression, hole, or open pit in the earth's surface formed by the removal of soil, rock, earth, sand, gravel, or other materials, whether by mechanical equipment, hand tools, blasting, or other means. Excavation includes, but is not limited to, activities for foundations, basements, footings, trenches for utilities, grading for site preparation, or removal of unsuitable materials. This term does not include minor landscaping grading that does not exceed 12 inches in depth or 500 cubic feet in volume, or routine maintenance activities exempted under other provisions of this Code. Carried on a roll call vote, all.*

d) Dennis Meadows, Formal Request: Purchase of City-Owned Parcel Adjacent to 655 N Bond: Discussion with petitioner Dennis Meadows, Commission, and the public. Discussion. Concerns heard on selling public land and setting precedence. *Motion by Horant, 2nd by Forer to postpone to June 4, 2026, Planning Commission meeting to allow PC to obtain legal counsel. Carried on a roll call vote, all.*

e) Comprehensive Plan update: Eric Sonnleitner was present for North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. Mayor Brown stated letters requesting Riverside Park have been received and distributed to Commission members, but the discussion would remain on task with the agenda, by Commission members. Review of NCWRPC updates of Chapters 1-3 discussed at the March 5, 2026, Planning Commission meeting. Chapter 4 - Utilities & Community Facilities was read through by Sonnleitner with little input. Grassl called for adjournment citing lack of participation as meeting has been going for over three hours. Remaining agenda items to be addressed at the next meeting of the Plan Commission.

Motion by Grassl, 2nd by Horant to adjourn at 8:15PM. Carried, all.