

OWATONNA PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES FOR APRIL 14, 2026

The Owatonna Planning Commission met in regular session at 5:30 p.m. in the Crandall Center – Chambers with Chairperson Kelly Rooks conducting the meeting. Present at roll call were Commissioners Kelly Rooks, Rachel Springer-Gasner, John Eickhoff, Mark Wilson, Nick Peake, and Jim Joachim. Commissioner absent: Dave Effertz. Community Development Manager Greg Kruschke, Planning Specialist Emma Bransford, and Senior Administrative Technician Kristen Kopp were also present.

A motion was made by Wilson and seconded by Joachim to approve the minutes of regular meeting of March 10, 2026. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Application CUP-4 by Valerie and Jason Seath on behalf of Marchwick Industries LLC, requests for a conditional use permit to construct Happy Little Haven as a minor PUD for an overnight retreat designed for small groups, with a focus on crafting and creative activities, for the property located at 2373 7th Avenue NE, was presented by Planning Specialist Emma Bransford. (Refer to report on file.) She said that the applicants did hold an information neighborhood meeting on February 23, 2026. Public hearing for CUP-24 opened at 5:37 pm. Michelle O'Dell, who lives on 7th Avenue NE, said she didn't know about this before, but does not have any objections. She asked if they have started work on the interior of the building. She said no other neighbors are worried and that they should go for it. Sandra Sperry, 2445 7th Avenue NE, said she got a letter that invited them to the neighborhood meeting, and there were three or four households who came to that meeting. The public hearing closed at 5:38 pm. Community Development Manager Greg Kruschke said that they have not issued a building permit for this project, but there is a lot of work that can be done without permits like painting and flooring. Joachim said that he takes it all neighbors have been informed. Planning Specialist Bransford said that notices were sent for the public hearing. Eickhoff said aside from the overnight stays, it's not that much different than the previous church use. Springer-Gasner said it is a good use of the building, and it will be good that someone is maintaining it. A motion was made by Springer-Gasner and seconded by Wilson to recommend City Council approval of CUP-24, a request to construct Happy Little Haven as a minor PUD at 2373 7th Avenue NE with the following conditions:

1. All signage must obtain sign permits and comply with R-1 district standards.
2. A building permit must be approved prior to operation.
3. The applicant must obtain and maintain a MN lodging license prior to initiating overnight stays.
4. Overnight occupancy shall be limited to a maximum of 10 guests. Any increase in overnight occupancy, including that resulting from building expansion, shall require city approval.
5. Outdoor activities shall be limited in scale and shall not generate noise or disturbance inconsistent with the surrounding neighborhood.
6. Private social events, including but not limited to parties, celebrations, or receptions, shall be limited to a maximum of 50 occupants at any given time.
7. Only one retreat group, class, or event shall be permitted to operate at any given time.

8. All building codes, fire codes, and occupancy limits must be met at all times.
9. The number of events outside of the primary overnight retreat and class use shall be limited to one per week.

All commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Planning Specialist Emma Bransford said that Application VAR-25, a request by Robert Seykora, Rocon INC, on behalf of Cedar Valley Services INC for a curb cut variance to allow a 45-foot driveway access has been postponed. The applicant has requested that the request be postponed until the April 28, 2026 meeting as they are still figuring some things out. Public hearing opened at 5:41 pm. No comments were made regarding this request. Public hearing closed at 5:42 pm. A motion was made by Peake and seconded Joachim to table Application VAR-25 until April 28, 2026. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Community Development Manager Greg Kruschke and Planning Specialist Emma Bransford gave an update on the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Process. There was discussion on garage sidewall heights, side yard deck setbacks, and detached accessory dwelling units.

Community Development Manager Greg Kruschke gave an update on previous items and presented the monthly Building Permit Reports. He said that four single family house permits have been issued through March with seven house plans in review. There has also been a permit issued for a four-plex as well as a three-plex permit that is ready to go.

A motion was made by Joachim and seconded by Peake to adjourn the meeting at 6:11 pm. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Kruschke
Community Development Manager