



**CITY OF BALDWIN
SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA
Wednesday, September 9, 2026 at 7:00 P.M.
Baldwin City Hall**

- A. Call to Order:**
 - 1. Pledge of Allegiance
 - 2. Roll Call
 - 3. Planning Commission claim forms
- B. Approval of the Agenda**
- C. Approval of Minutes:**
 - 1. Special Meeting of August 12, 2026
- D. New Business:**
 - 1. Zoning Ordinance update; nonconforming shoreland plat lot requirements
- E. Old Business:**
 - 1. Planning Commission vacancy
- F. City Council Liaison Update**
- G. Commissioner Update**
- H. City Staff Update**
- I. Miscellaneous Information and Communications**
- J. Adjourn by 9:00 P.M.**

Notes:

- 1. Five copies of the agenda and two copies of the packet materials are available for review by the public.
- 2. The meeting will be video and audio recorded for transcription purposes only.
- 3. This agenda does not claim to be complete and is subject to change.
- 4. A quorum of the City Council may be present at the Planning Commission meeting.



SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 12, 2026

Call to Order: Chair Clarence Mattson called the Baldwin Special Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance: All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Present: Chair Clarence Mattson, Vice Chair Teresa Barnes, Commissioners Mary Larson, Ed Stofferahn, Sarah Bostock and Bruce West.

City Council members: Alan Walker, Scott Case, Jeff Holm and Tom Rush.

Also present: City Planner, Dan Licht and City Council Liaison, Jay Swanson.

All claim forms were filled out and returned to the Deputy Clerk.

Approval of the Agenda:

Commissioner Larson motioned to approve the agenda as written. Commissioner West seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes:

Special Planning Commission meeting of July 8, 2026

Commissioner West motioned to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Larson seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

City Council - Planning Commission Discussion:

Jeff Holm arrived at 7:05 pm.

Zoning Ordinance Update: Generational Housing

The City Council and the Planning Commission discussed options for updating the zoning ordinance regarding generational housing.

Zoning Ordinance Update: Telecommunications Tower

The City Council and the Planning Commission discussed options for updating the zoning ordinance regarding telecommunication towers.

Zoning Ordinance Update: Nonconforming Shoreland Plat Lot Requirements

The City Council and the Planning Commission discussed options for updating the zoning ordinance regarding nonconforming shoreland plat lot requirements.

Old Business:

Planning Commission Vacancy

The commissioners discussed the current vacancy.

City Council Liaison Update:

Mayor Swanson updated the Planning Commission on recent City Council discussions.

Commissioner Update: None.

City Staff Update:

City Planner Licht stated there are no current applications.

Commissioner West motioned to cancel the Planning Commission meeting for August 26, 2026. Commissioner Larson seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Miscellaneous Information and Communications: None.

Adjourn:

Commissioner Bostock motioned to adjourn the August 12, 2026 Special Planning Commission meeting at 9:03 pm. Commissioner West seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Submitted by: Kayla Nielsen
Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

Approved by: Clarence Mattson
Chair

Date

Attendees: Neil and Lisa Ness



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Baldwin Planning Commission

FROM: D. Daniel Licht

DATE: 17 July 2025

RE: Baldwin – Zoning Ordinance; Shoreland Overlay District Setback Requirements

TPC FILE: 269.01

BACKGROUND

Baldwin has many lakes within the City. These public waters historically provided opportunities for development of seasonal recreational cabins within the rural area northwest of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Many of these cabins were constructed on platted lots established prior to adoption of the Sherburne County Zoning Ordinance in 1971 or subsequent adoption of management regulations for shoreland areas. As a result, many of these platted lots of record do not comply with the minimum lot area and width requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, and existing structures often do not comply with applicable setback requirements from lot lines or the Ordinary High Water Level of the lake.

As development in Baldwin has occurred over time, these cabins are being proposed for expansion and/or redevelopment. Proposals to expand an existing non-conforming building or build a new residential dwelling upon an existing non-conforming lot are required to comply with the current requirements of the Zoning Ordinance or at least not increase the degree of non-conformity. Based on the dimensions of these existing platted lots of record or location of existing structures, proposals for expansion or redevelopment can involve consideration of one or more variances.

The Town Board and City Council have regularly approved variances involving expansion of existing non-conforming structures or redevelopment of non-conforming lots since assuming responsibility for administration of zoning regulations on 20 June 2022. While each variance application is evaluated independently of any other such requested based on the circumstances of the property and criteria established by the Zoning Ordinance, there has been a consistency in the City Council's actions. Because of the reduced width of these non-conforming platted lots, which are typically 50 feet or less, side yard setback variances have been approved. Likewise, because of the shallow depth of these lots, variances from front yard and Ordinary High Water Level setback requirements have also been approved. Variances to allow impervious surface to exceed 25 percent of the lot area and setback variances for Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems are also commonly approved based on the non-conforming area or lot dimensions of these platted lots of record.

The regular approval of variances suggests a need to evaluate whether the established performance standards are appropriate. The City cannot alter performance standards of the Shoreland Overlay District established in accordance with State statutes and rules, such as required minimum setbacks from the Ordinary High Water Level or maximum limits for impervious surface within a lot. However, requirements established by the City as part of the Zoning Ordinance not required by the State may be reviewed and amended. The City Council and Planning Commission discussed consideration and approval of variance applications for non-conforming Shoreland Overlay District lots at the Planning Commission special meeting on 19 August 2026.

The consensus of the City Council and Planning Commission was to consider amendment of the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the front yard and side yard setback requirements to allow greater flexibility in expansion of existing structures or redevelopment of these lots and encourage continued investment in these properties. With the City's ability to change only those standards applicable to Shoreland Overlay District lots not specified by State statute or rules, the proposed amendment will not eliminate the need for all variances for redevelopment of non-conforming lots or expansion of non-conforming structures. The intent of the City Council and Planning Commission is that amendment of the Zoning Ordinance will at least eliminate the need for future variance applications from the front yard and side yard setback requirements and that any such application that is made would be held to a high standard to demonstrate a practical difficulty to justify approval.

City staff has drafted a proposed amendment of the Zoning Ordinance that would reduce the front yard and side yard setback requirements for platted lots of record within the Shoreland Overlay District established prior to adoption of the Sherburne County Zoning Ordinance. The proposed setbacks would supersede those of the underlying R1, General Rural District allowing for a 20-foot front yard setback to City streets and seven-foot side yard setback to side lot lines. We have also included in the draft ordinance a reduced 30-foot front yard setback to roads under Sherburne County or Minnesota Department of Transportation jurisdiction. These setback standards are typical of the requirements applicable to urban lots with lot widths of 50-feet or less.

Exhibits:

- Draft ordinance

CONCLUSION

The Planning Commission will review the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment modifying the front and side yard setback requirements for non-conforming lots of record within the Shoreland Overlay District at its special meeting on 9 September 2026. City staff is requesting discussion and comments on the proposed amendment and direction to notice a public hearing to formally consider adoption.

- c. Joan Heinen, City Clerk/Treasurer
James Bedell, DNR

ORDINANCE NO.: 2026-XX

CITY OF BALDWIN
SHERBURNE COUNTY, MINNESOTA

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE
SETBACKS FOR NON-CONFORMING LOTS.

THE BALDWIN CITY COUNCIL ORDAINS:

Section 1. 900-90- 12.A of the Zoning Ordinance (Shoreland Overlay District; Non-Conformities) is hereby amended to include the following provisions with subsequent sections renumbered accordingly:

2. Platted lots of record in the office of the county recorder as of February 2, 1971 with a width of 50 feet or less, as defined by this Ordinance, shall be allowed the following minimum setback requirements, notwithstanding a greater setback required by the underlying zoning district:

<u>A. Front Yard or Side Yard Abutting a Public Street:</u>		<u>=</u>
	<u>City Street:</u>	<u>20 feet</u>
	<u>County Road:</u>	<u>30 feet</u>
	<u>County State Aid Highway:</u>	<u>30 feet</u>
	<u>US Highway 169:</u>	<u>30 feet</u>
<u>B. Side Yard:</u>		<u>7 feet</u>

Section 2. This ordinance shall be in full effect upon adoption and publication.

(remainder of page intentionally blank signatures follow)

ADOPTED by the Baldwin City Council this ____ day of _____, 2026.

MOTION BY:
SECONDED BY:
IN FAVOR:
OPPOSED:

CITY OF BALDWIN

Jay Swanson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Joan Heinen, City Clerk/Treasurer