

Regular July Plan Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 13th, 2026

The meeting was posted on July 9th, 2026 at the Town Hall Bulletin Board and the town website. Plan Commission Chairman Chuck Finn and Commissioners Carol Fahrenkrog, Annalisa Bermel, Mick Parent, Robert Feyen, Jim Steffenson, and Nan Swift were present. Clerk Kelly Faye was also in attendance. Chairman Finn called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

Welcome to new Plan Commission Member Mick Parent: Commissioners welcomed Mick and showed appreciation for his willingness to serve on the Plan Commission.

Public Comment:

-Robert Croll, local landowner at 33730 Kennedy Road commented on the request for the three Class A Special Use Permit Applications submitted by Dwayne Truhlsen and Sarah Gasper that is on the meeting agenda. He expressed environmental concerns with the request as the location is quite wet. He stated he considered purchasing the property but decided against it due to this concern. He also noted that regeneration of cedar trees is taking place at the location which he claimed is rare in Bayfield County. He also stated concerns about the possibility of short-term rentals in the future. He was particularly concerned with the potential of bad behavior by renters that are on vacation and may not be concerned about following regulations or respecting the nearby residents.

-Randy Fahrenkrog, local landowner at 83165 Highway 13, also stated his concern that the Truhlsen/Gasper property is wet and may not be appropriate for their planned use. He noted that his son, who is an environmental engineer and wetland delineator, considered purchasing the property but decided against it as he did not think it was a buildable lot. He questioned why an inspection of the property had not already been required for their intended purpose. He also expressed concerns that if the site is developed into short-term rentals that renters will trespass on his land to access his beach.

Correspondence: Notice of Data Center Impact and Rural Communities Information Sessions- July 27th and July 28th.

Approval of minutes of Regular Plan Commission Meeting of June 8th, 2026: The minutes were provided to the Plan Commission members. It was decided to table approval until the August meeting.

Old Business

Update on Bayfield County Zoning Department Zoning Code Rewrite Process: Finn reported that the newest release of the draft of the Zoning Code will be delayed. He has asked the Zoning Department to extend the amount of time for the public to review and comment on

draft to be released in August. Bermel mentioned the upcoming deadlines to submit comments for the sections of the draft that have already been released.

New Business

Discussion and possible recommendation to the Bayfield Town Board related to three Class A Special Use Permit Application submitted by Swayne Truhlsen and Sarah Gasper for the placement of three RVs for over four months located on 5.55-acres at 33970 Old Kennedy Road (Tax ID #39672) to be used as tiny homes for personal use and possible future short-term rentals use:

-Finn reported he has had conversations with Emily Macgillivray- Bayfield County Assistant Zoning Administrator related to this issue. The applications are for licensed RVs that they are requesting to leave at the site for over four months.

-Fahrenkrog stated it has visited this site and has knowledge that the applicant has lived there since October of 2025. She questioned if they had been cited by the Zoning Department for that violation.

-Discussion took place and it was noted that if the applicant decides to use the location for short-term rentals they will need to be classified as a campground which requires a Conditional Use Permit. Their current application is only for the placement of the RVs. Fahrenkrog questioned who will be ensuring that short-term rentals are not taking place before they request that use through a Conditional Use Permit.

-Sarah Gasper was in attendance via Zoom. She explained that the tiny home has been on the property since fall 2025. She stated that she talked with Emily Macfillivray before even closing on the property. The current location of the RV is only for storage until the permanent location is established. She reported that they do not live there but hope to in the future. She stated that she and her husband have adult children and hope to use the property to provide a place for their family to stay in separate tiny homes when visiting the area. There is one RV at the location now and two others have been purchased. She added that the proposal to use the homes as short-term rentals is not part of the current plan but wanted to bring up the option if the opportunity arises in the future. She wanted the option to legally do so if they decide to pursue that venture. She understands the neighbor's concerns about short-term rentals and the issues that could arise with renters. She apologized for not introducing herself to her neighbors sooner. They are hoping to have a place to visit and possibly eventually build on the site. Finn asked if the tiny homes are licensed RVs. Gasper confirmed that they are licensed.

-Finn stated that approval of these applications would not allow the homes to be rented as short-term rentals, which would require being approved as a campground.

-Bermel asked why the applicants aren't considering just building on the site now. Gasper responded that the cost of building and their interest in tiny home influenced the decision. She stated that each home sleeps two-three adults. It allows family to visit without building a larger building. If they decide to live there permanently, a structure would probably need to be built.

She stated that the tiny homes look nice. Bermel explained that the Zoning Department does not allow permanent residence with this application.

-Gasper explained that they will use a 3,000 gallon holding tank and that the Zoning Department confirmed that this is of adequate size for the tiny houses. Parent asked if a septic truck can access the site in the winter. Fahrenkrog stated that she believed it would be able to gain access year-round.

-Fahrenkrog asked Gasper if they reached out to Bayfield Electric related to using their right-of-way for the driveway, or if Bayfield Electric reached out to them, and when did it happen.

Gasper stated that they sent Bayfield Electric an email and that they met with Troy in person.

-Fahrenkrog questioned Gasper why they lived on-site starting in the fall even though she knew it was not allowed. Gasper stated that they used it when they visited to snowmobile and worked on the house. They thought they were just setting it there for storage and there was some misunderstanding about the requirements.

-Discussion took place about whether the location has wetlands. Gasper was asked if they have done anything to test for wetlands and she replied that they have not, but that Emily Macgillivray checked no on the wetland box on the application. Bermel stated that a conditional use application for a future campground would require the wetland delineation process.

-Bermel also thanked Gasper for working with the town as the Plan Commission does their due diligence. She noted this decision could set a precedent for similar future requests.

-Fahrenkrog asked how many loads of fill they brought in. Gasper stated she did not know but could find out.

-Bermel asked if they were advised to do a stormwater permit. Gasper responded that they were issued a driveway permit from the Town of Bayfield.

-Fahrenkrog stated she is upset they lived at the location for nine months before they applied for a permit, considering Zoning told them the requirements in the fall.

Feyen made a motion, seconded by Steffenson, to deny the applications. Discussion took place. Feyen implied there are too many unknowns and he doesn't think that will change. He noted that he knows the land well and doesn't think that everyone always understands what wetlands are.

Bermel questioned if it would be more effective to approve the applications with specific conditions. Fahrenkrog brought up that the electric, septic, etc is already done and that she hopes that if this is denied others will go through the process correctly. Finn noted that the Town of Bayfield is advisory to Bayfield County. Feyen brought up his concerns about the property possibly being a wetland, the timing of events, and the right of way over electrical easements. Bermel shared her concerns about setting precedents, the possibility of a future campground evolving from what was not originally planned/approved, and the lack of DNR involvement. Parent asked if DNR involvement could be a condition imposed. Finn stated there are no conditions on denials. Finn shared concerns about possible wetlands, the after-the-fact timing and the possibility of a future campground near to Lake Superior. There was discussion about the possibility that future owners of the parcel could develop it into a larger campground if given

that classification now. Other concerns discussed include grading/excavation of fill close to the shoreline, possible need for a stormwater permit, lack of wetland delineation, and the lack of knowledge if what was done to date meets DNR regulations. Finn summarized the concerns and motion to deny. Fahrenkrog mentioned that in the letter sent to the town explaining the application, it stated they would like to have short-term rentals. Bermel stated she is in favor of families visiting the area but maybe not multiple RVs on the property. A vote on the motion to deny was taken. Bermel-yes, Parent-yes, Finn-no, Swift-yes, Steffenson-yes, Feyen-yes, Fahrenkrog-yes. Motion to deny carried with a vote of 6-yes, 1-no.

Discussion and possible action/recommendation to the Bayfield Town Board on variance request submitted by Stephen C. Nold and Susan E. Lindahl, owners of a .87-acre parcel Zoned RRB in a shoreland zone, Tax ID 4287, seeking to construct a 1,906 sq foot residence, install holding tank, and extend a driveway on a property with existing garage and driveway scheduled for a Bayfield County Board of Adjustment Public Hearing on Thursday, July 30th, 2026 at 9:00 AM:

- Bermel asked if this request requires DNR notice. Finn listed several agencies involved.
- It was explained that Bayfield County denied the request so that the Board of Adjustment committee could consider it.

- Fahrenkrog made a motion, seconded by Steffenson, to accept Bayfield County's original decision and deny the request. Bermel commented her concern about setting precedent. A vote was taken on the motion to deny. Motion to deny carried with a vote of 7-yes, 0-no.

Set date and time for August Plan Commission Meeting: Due to the Partisan Primary Election on August 11th, it was decided the Plan Commission Meeting would take place on August 17th at 4:30 PM.

Adjourn: A motion was made by Bermel, seconded by Parent, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by: Kelly Faye, Clerk.