**MINUTES**
**PLAN COMMISSION MEETING – TOWN OF POLK**
**January 6, 2026**

## I. Public Hearing

### A. Official Public Hearing Notification

Chairman Schulteis stated the required Class 2 notice was sent to the West Bend Daily News, posted on the town's website, on the town bulletin board and parties of interest were notified.

### B. Public Hearing Procedures

Chairman Schulteis explained the public hearing procedures, asking attendees to sign in and limit comments to two minutes. He noted that the commission could not respond during the hearing but would address comments during the planning commission meeting.

### C. Public Hearing on Request by Gary Zurn to amend the Town of Polk Comprehensive Plan: 2023 Addendum – Future Land Use Map

by changing the Plan Designation for an approximately 19 acre parcel from Agricultural to Commercial, the Woodland designations will remain unchanged. The subject property is located in the SE ¼ of Section 20, T10N R19E, Town of Polk. More specifically the property is located on State Hwy 175, Tax Parcel T9-066500Z.

Ben Greenberg provided an overview of the request, explaining that this was the first step in a two-part process, with a zoning map amendment to follow. He noted the request was to change the designation from agricultural to commercial, while the woodland designations would remain unchanged. Ben mentioned that the area in question, while designated as agricultural on the land use map, was surrounded by more industrial uses, creating some misalignment between the current land use designation and actual uses in the area.

Don Thoma, Accurate Surveying, representing Gary Zurn, clarified that the actual parcel size was 20.9 acres because the rezoning goes to the centerline of Highway 175, which explained the difference from the 19 acres mentioned. He stated that Mr. Zurn has a potential buyer for the parcel, though a detailed site plan had not yet been prepared.

With no public comments, the Chair closed the public hearing on this item.

### D. Public Hearing on Request by Gary Zurn to amend the Town of Polk Zoning Map

for an approximately 19 acre parcel from the A-1 General Agricultural Zoning District to the M-1 Light Manufacturing District. The subject property is located in the SE ¼ of Section 20, T10N R19E, Town of Polk. More specifically the property is located on State Hwy 175, Tax Parcel T9-066500Z

Ben explained that this was a tandem request with the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map amendment request.

With no public comments, the Chair closed this portion of the public hearing.

### E. Public Hearing on Request by the Town of Polk

to amend Article IX – Site Plan Review of the Town of Polk Zoning Ordinance. More specifically, the amendments are intended to modernize and clarify the Site Plan Review process; establish streamlined administrative review procedures for certain low-impact tenant changes; incorporate updated decision-making standards consistent with Wisconsin Statutes; and strengthen coordination with Fire, Police, and County sanitary review authorities.

Ben provided background on the proposed amendments, explaining that the issue arose with the Rise Development and Storage Shop USA projects. He noted confusion among applicants who were not aware they needed to go through an approval process for tenant changes in these pre-approved spaces. The proposed amendments would create a streamlined administrative review process for certain low-impact tenant changes, while maintaining plan commission review for more significant changes.

With no public comments, the Chair closed the public hearing at 7:19 PM.

**II. Call Meeting to Order**

A. Pledge of Allegiance
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. Official Meeting Notification
Chairman Schulteis confirmed that the official meeting notice was sent to the West Bend Daily News, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, WTKM radio station, posted on the town's website, and on the bulletin board.

C. Roll Call
All commission members were present, constituting a quorum. Guest: Robert Roecker and Kelly Eschenfelder, Zoning Secretary. The Zoning Administrator, Ben Greenberg from Cedar Corp was also in attendance.

D. Moment of Silent Prayer
A moment of silent prayer was observed.

E. Approval of Plan Commission Minutes
The minutes from the December 2, 2025, meeting were presented for approval.

*Jenny Zignego moved to approve the minutes with one correction, adding "Cedar Corp" to identify where Kristen Hoss was from. Dennis Sang seconded the motion. The motion carried.*

**III. Request by Gary Zurn to amend the Town of Polk Comprehensive Plan: 2023 Addendum – Future Land Use Map** by changing the Plan Designation for an approximately 19 acre parcel from Agricultural to Commercial, the Woodland designations will remain unchanged. The subject property is located in the SE ¼ of Section 20, T10N R19E, Town of Polk. More specifically the property is located on State Hwy 175, Tax Parcel T9-066500Z.

Ben and Don had no additional information to provide regarding this item. Chairman Schulteis noted that considering the existing land uses in the area, including the railroad to the south, this seemed to be an appropriate use for the property.

*Dennis Sang made a motion to recommend approval to the Town Board for the request to amend the Town of Polk Comprehensive Plan: 2023 Addendum – Future Land Use Map by changing the designation for the parcel from Agricultural to Commercial. Rod Bartlow seconded the motion. The motion carried.*

**IV. Request by Gary Zurn to amend the Town of Polk Zoning Map** for an approximately 19 acre parcel from the A-1 General Agricultural Zoning District to the M-1 Light Manufacturing District. The subject property is located in the SE ¼ of Section 20, T10N R19E, Town of Polk. More specifically the property is located on State Hwy 175, Tax Parcel T9-066500Z.

Ben explained that this zoning request was consistent with the land use plan amendment just approved. He emphasized two key considerations: consistency with the comprehensive land use plan and compatibility with adjacent uses. Ben noted that the land to the west is already zoned M-1, and the area is in a unique triangle configuration that makes it suitable for the requested zoning. He added that there did not appear to be any significant impact to residential areas from this change.

Ben further clarified that while typically a rezone request might be tied to a specific development concept, in this case a general rezone to M-1 seemed appropriate given the surrounding area. He noted that even if the current concept doesn't materialize, the location still makes sense for M-1 zoning due to its buffered position from neighboring properties.

The Chair agreed that given the surrounding land uses, including the railroad, this was an appropriate use for the property.

*Randy Rothman made a motion to recommend approval to the Town Board for the request to amend the Town of Polk Zoning Map for the parcel from A-1 General Agricultural Zoning District to M-1 Light Manufacturing District. Chuck Nehm seconded the motion. The motion carried.*

**V. Request by by the Town of Polk** to amend Article IX – Site Plan Review of the Town of Polk Zoning Ordinance. More specifically, the amendments are intended to modernize and clarify the Site Plan Review process; establish streamlined administrative review procedures for certain low-impact tenant changes; incorporate updated decision-making standards consistent with Wisconsin Statutes; and strengthen coordination with Fire, Police, and County sanitary review authorities.

Ben emphasized that the amendments would establish clear conditions under which staff-level review would be appropriate, similar to a checklist approach used by Washington County. He noted that the building inspector had not yet had a chance to review the proposed changes due to the holidays, but was aware of the general concept.

The Chair added that this change would benefit tenants by potentially reducing the approval time from two months to two weeks for simple tenant changes, while still ensuring proper regulation. He mentioned a recent meeting with an owner and tenant that reinforced the need for this streamlined process, as tenants weren't always being told the complete requirements by property owners.

Ben agreed and noted that more intensive uses, such as the recent Coffeeville application which involved coffee roasting and packaging, would still come to the plan commission. He provided a draft checklist for the commission to review, noting that input from the building inspector and fire department would still be needed

*Dennis Sang made a motion to recommend approval to the Town Board for the proposed amendments to Article IX – Site Plan Review of the Town of Polk Zoning Ordinance, subject to review by the Building Inspector. Mark Peters seconded the motion. The motion carried.*

**VI. Item previously Tabled – Staff to provide additional research. Discussion only. No action anticipated. Petition by Kevin Zimmer** to amend various sections of the Land Division Ordinance.

Ben presented research on the petition and explained that the request aimed to allow development of lots without the required amount of road frontage in certain zoning districts. Ben outlined the pros and cons of such amendments:

Pros:

- Reduced need for public roads, lowering maintenance costs for the town
- Fewer driveway entrances on section roads through shared accesses
- Added flexibility for property owners
- Preservation benefits for properties with natural features near the road

Cons:

- Precedent creep, where exceptions become the norm
- Long-term planning conflicts due to irregular lot patterns
- Civil matters between property owners becoming government issues when shared driveway agreements break down

Ben presented data showing that of the 217 unimproved lots of 10+ acres in the town, about 62% have no frontage or less than 600 feet of frontage, meaning they couldn't get two lots of density under current rules. He noted that many of these are farm tracts.

The Chair mentioned that when he first joined the plan commission, these types of arrangements were allowed, and there were never any issues with parcels that had easements along one side with two home sites. He couldn't recall why the policy had been changed.

Ben suggested that planners generally prefer public roads over private arrangements to avoid potential headaches. He acknowledged that there might be appropriate circumstances for these arrangements, particularly for infill development in areas already surrounded by development.

The commission engaged in discussion about whether this type of development should be allowed again, with members noting the need to be selective about when it would be appropriate rather than making it available "carte blanche" to everyone. They also discussed specifics about driveway standards, particularly regarding width requirements. One member advocated for maintaining a 66-foot width to ensure proper access for fire equipment, especially in areas without fire hydrants. Another member argued that a 66-foot width wasn't necessary for the driveway itself, suggesting that a 22-foot wide driving surface would be sufficient.

A former fire chief present at the meeting provided input, stating that while better access is always good, the main concern with driveways is their ability to accommodate large emergency vehicles, particularly around corners and turns. He noted that straight driveways present fewer problems than those with 90-degree turns, and that as long as there's about 12 feet of clear space, fire trucks can navigate in and out in most cases.

The discussion evolved to consider limiting such provisions to smaller "infill" parcels of 10-15 acres, particularly those that are surrounded by already-developed land where there would never be a need for a through road. Several

members expressed support for this more limited approach, focusing on parcels where it makes sense to allow slightly more density.

After discussion, the Commission decided to table the item for 60 days to allow time for further consideration.

*Dennis Sang made a motion to table the item to the March meeting. Mark Peters seconded the motion. The motion carried.*

**VII. Zoning Administrator Report**

Updates were provided on two pending site plan reviews:

- Elevate Dumpsters LLC – The survey work has been completed and the applicant was in contact that day. They will be working on their site plan to prepare for next month's meeting.
- Rocketmen Investments LLC (dba NuGen Homes, Home Wire & Gatsby Sheds) – The applicant had requested a 30 day grace period due to issues with completing their survey. There was discussion about a discrepancy in the lot line at the northeast corner of the property. The Washington County GIS had shown an angular cutout which apparently does not actually exist according to courthouse records.

Ben also mentioned that Act 68 had been passed, affecting land division ordinances. The new law establishes a statutory requirement for conceptual review and shifts some responsibilities from developers to property owners. The Town's current practices were noted as already being in compliance with many of the new requirements, but some updates to the ordinance language will be needed.

**VIII. Correspondence/Informational Items**

Chairman Schulteis informed the Commission about upcoming Wisconsin DOT projects in the area.

**IX. Adjournment**

*Rod Bartlow moved to adjourn the meeting. Chuck Nehm seconded the motion. The motion carried.*

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.