

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING – PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Tuesday, December 2, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.**  
**Mississippi Room, Monticello Community Center**

Commissioners Present: Chair Andrew Tapper, Vice-Chair Melissa Robeck,  
Rick Kothenbeutel, Teri Lehner, Rob Stark  
Council Liaison Present: Councilmember Kip Christianson  
Staff Present: Angela Schumann, Steve Grittman, Bob Ferguson, Tyler Bevier

**1. General Business**

A. **Call to Order**

Chair Tapper called the regular meeting of the Monticello Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. **Roll Call**

Mr. Tapper called the roll.

C. **Consideration of Additional Agenda Items**

None

D. **Approval of Agenda**

ROB STARK MOVED TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 2, 2025 REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING. ANDREW TAPPER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 5-0.

E. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

RICK KOTHENBEUTEL MOVED TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 3, 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES. ANDREW TAPPER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED, 5-0.

RICK KOTHENBEUTEL MOVED TO APPROVE NOVEMBER 3, 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES. ANDREW TAPPER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED, 5-0.

F. **Citizen Comment**

None

**2. Public Hearings**

- A. **Consideration of an Amendment to the Monticello City Code, Title XV, Land Usage, Chapter 153: Zoning Ordinance, Sections 153.012 Definitions, 153.045 Industrial Base Zoning Districts, 153.046 Overlay Zoning Districts, 153.090 Use Table, 153.091 Use-Specific Standards, 153.092 Accessory Use Standards and any other related sections of text necessary to define and regulate data center and technology campus land uses within the City**  
**Applicant: City of Monticello**

City Administrator Rachel Leonard addressed the board members regarding the extensive research, discussion, and meetings to bring the matter for establishing a zoning ordinance for data centers forward. She explained that engagement from the public assisted in revising the drafted ordinance. Ms. Leonard indicated that the potential benefits for infrastructure and tax base for any potential development are considered while also evaluating community programs and policies. She specifically addressed development cost responsibility, which is the applicant or developer's responsibility. She explained the goal was to develop an ordinance specific to the City of Monticello.

City Planner Steve Grittman reviewed the recent amendments to the Monticello 2040 Vision + Plan, which establish definitions and policies relating to data center development in future-growth areas guided for Light Industrial Park (LIP). Mr. Grittman spoke to the extensive background and research by staff and public officials, factoring citizen feedback into the amendments and for tonight's opportunity to collect final comments from the public.

Mr. Grittman described the components of the proposed data center planned unit development (DCPUD) ordinance, which is intended to align with the 2040 Plan. The intentional structure of DCPUD is to provide the City a greater framework for discretion on land use consideration. He spoke of how the ordinance creates a defined approach to external site mitigation by understanding the potential development use, locations, and minimum impacts while understanding that uses operate differently internally.

Mr. Grittman provided background the workshops discussions and public hearings on the draft ordinance in August and September, which resulted in changes to the minimum performance standards. He then presented a timeline of events and details which led to the new public hearing for the additional ordinance amendments.

Mr. Grittman reviewed the draft ordinance in summary, including approval criteria, general and specific performance standards, application requirements, review process, a site improvement plan agreement (SIPA; comparable to a development agreement), and enforcement for data center requirements and all other applicable zoning elements.

Mr. Grittman highlighted each of the amended applicable Performance Standards in detail: development density; noise; setbacks and building height; site landscaping, screening and perimeter buffering; utility impacts; transportation and traffic; power consumption and internet capacity.

Mr. Grittman explained when creating an ordinance, the city is anticipating application proposals; he spoke to the proposed review process for a proposed DCPUD.

Mr. Grittmann walked through each step of the Review Process, from Pre-Design to Concept Stage, then Development Stage (including three land use applications for development stage DCPUD permit, preliminary plat, and rezoning to DCPUD), leading to the final stage, final plat and SIPA. Following board review and approval, Mr. Grittmann explained the Site Plan review process outlined in the draft ordinance.

Mr. Grittmann shared a list of the additional comments and discussion points for consideration in the draft amendment.

Mr. Grittmann stated that the staff recommendation is to approve the ordinance, with or without proposed amendments. He explained if the City were to deny the ordinance, it would need to consider other 2040 Plan discussion.

Mr. Tapper confirmed that the ordinance requires floor-area ratio (FAR) by phase for review during the development stage.

Commissioners addressed the evolutionary nature of technology for noise mitigation on generators and mechanical equipment, which is outside of City control.

Mr. Tapper reminded the audience of the nature of the agenda item as a consideration of a zoning ordinance for regulating a data center.

Mr. Tapper opened the public hearing portion of the agenda item.

- Shawn Oen, (4333 87th Street NE), requested more language regarding specific MPCA decibels be written into the ordinance. Mr. Oen also requested that water demand and supply “loop system” be written into the development agreement.
- Alexander Cutchey, (9379 Edmonson Ave), explained his experience with utility regulation and with large energy infrastructure development. Mr. Cutchey spoke to the nuclear plant tax base as a benefit to the community and to the City’s goal to diversify the taxbase, as a data center may also benefit and alleviate past levy burdens. Mr. Cutchey suggested to Commissioners to move forward with a data center ordinance, creating a framework to address development, and credited the efforts put forth in the presented draft.
- Bill Herzog, Eaton Circle, noted requirements for hearing protection in his occupational field in manufacturing and said surrounding homes will need sound protection. Mr. Herzog asked what benefit, beside tax base, will come to the City.

- Joe Kraft, (4313 87th Street NE), stated concerns about the noise setbacks from residential, and concerns over wildlife issues if the Board approves data center development.
- Tony Weiss, 4012 County Road 37 NE, Monticello Township, addressed concerns regarding the notice area and requirements on proposed data center sites.
- Shawn Oen suggested to wait until Xcel Energy moves campus locations to consider data centers and locations.
- Rylee Averill, Lake Street South, Big Lake, spoke of her concerns for diminishing farmland and asked how the City will mitigate drought and raising costs on food. Ms. Averill asked how the hypothetical data center will impact reservoir areas or bodies of water. She also noted concerns regarding contaminants and traffic.

Mr. Tapper stated that the subject matter is not for decision on a particular project, but for the ordinance itself.

- Dennis Dufrane, (4130 89<sup>th</sup> Street NE), expressed concerns regarding the potential for phased building over eight to ten years and concern on the proposed setbacks and screening measures for sound, equipment, and parking and potential impacts. Mr. Dufrane suggested the drafted DCPUD does not address potential hyperscale data centers from a real estate perspective and asked members to consider the effects to the residential neighborhoods' surrounding the subject parcel.
- Mark Quigley, 4269 87<sup>th</sup> Street NE, stated concern that data center development is becoming a done-deal noting the multiple discussions and meetings by Commission to date. Mr. Quigley asked if the data center will be taxed for resource consumption and what would occur if the site were vacated. He also expressed enforcement concerns.

Councilmember Christianson emphasized the careful planning and considerations over the last year to ensure that both the end-user and developer cover all infrastructure costs related to the proposed project.

- Bethany Olivares, 5175 87<sup>th</sup> Street NE, said the positives cited by the City are financially based and asked what other benefits might become from a data center.

Councilmember Christianson highlighted discussions from the Q&A session regarding community values and financial impacts, noting Monticello's unique amenities developed through decades of planning.

He emphasized maintaining development diversity by establishing guidelines tailored specifically to the community. Mr. Christianson spoke to the need to address growth and form the most intuitive development measures while maintaining the community quality of life.

Ms. Olivares cited pollution concerns and stated her preference to pay more taxes over allowing a data center and asked decision-makers to consider the residents' health and overall wellbeing.

- Nancy Kopff, 1490 75<sup>th</sup> Street NE, echoed questions presented by the previous citizens. Ms. Kopff explained her background in planning and land use and stated that the proposal does not align with community values as it favors developers over citizens and questioned decision-makers' accountability and non-disclosure agreements. She also referenced online information regarding project proposals.

Councilmember Christianson responded that no one from the City, nor board or committee serving member, is involved in any non-disclosure agreement to date.

Ms. Kopff concluded her comments by expressing support for a more conservative approach to land use that considers property owner rights and economic impacts. She suggested the City should decline to proceed and allow the City's legal staff to prepare findings of fact to support a denial.

- Nakomi Redman Rudlong, 6239 Bakken Street expressed concern for plant and animal communities and encouraged education on data centers.
- A participant addressed the Commission regarding Minnesota noise pollution guidelines and low-frequency noise.
- Mary Haly, 9177 Orchard Ln., explained her concerns regarding the residual hearing effects caused by constant humming of equipment.
- Christina Johnson-Koshiol, 2485 Briar Oakes Blvd., stated noise concerns and inquired how the public comments will be addressed. Ms. Johnson-Koshiol stated her preference in paying more tax dollars than allowing a data center to contribute to the tax base. She spoke to distrust against corporations, for the needed stewardship of government officials, and potential litigation to follow.
- Terra Girard, 9414 Oriole Ln, Cardinal Hills Development, asked how the City will recoup the equity loss for homeowners given the potential noise.

- Lisa Keenan, 8270 State Highway 25 NE, Monticello Township, suggested continuous construction on data center sites will become a nuisance. She asked about mitigation of private well impacts for surrounding township residents, suspecting potential issues to come. She also commented on the potential for chemical pollutants in farm soil during and following construction of a data center. She suggested reviewing the incidents of other communities for consideration.
- Alexander Coady, 2760 Oakview Court, asked the Planning Commission to generally explain how City government processes are operated relative to the 2040 Plan and specifically for financial data centers contributing to community growth.

Mr. Christianson clarified that the 2040 Plan is a comprehensive land-use plan. Data centers were not considered within the designated Light Industrial Park (LIP) at the time the Monticello 2040 Vision + Plan was first approved by the Council. Amendments were established to position the City to exert authority to assess and regulate suitable data center development proposals.

Mr. Tapper agreed, explaining an ordinance further supports regulation.

Mr. Coady stated he recommended for denial of the request.

- Traci Swanson, 5035 Martin Drive, referenced online employment postings for proposed data center projects. She cited concerns regarding vacated buildings, impact to the river, and long-term impact to the community.

Mr. Tapper explained that these online activities are outside of City municipal authority. The City has seen concept proposals as part of public workshops that may come forward if the ordinance passes.

- Scott Cutsforth, (8634 Fairhill Lane), a recognized the efforts by City staff and Board members. He spoke to favoring the proposal for tax base reasons at onset but is now opposed. He stated concern regarding low-frequency noise and construction issues on-site impacting neighboring residential.
- Jami Vokaty, 2760 Oakview Ct., asked who specifically asked for data center language be placed into the 2040 Plan and requested additional ordinance discussion. Ms. Vokaty asked that residents receive clear and transparent information regarding future land use applications.

Mr. Tapper explained the process to enact comprehensive plan amendments and the process to draft the most comprehensive and detailed ordinance possible.

Mr. Tapper spoke generally regarding the Planning Commission's purpose and advisory responsibility for the most appropriate mitigation measures.

Administrator Leonard explained that the 2040 Plan was developed before data centers uses were evaluated as a potential land use. As questions regarding the possibility of the use came forward, the City reviewed how its guiding documents should address the use.

Ms. Leonard said while a passage of an ordinance may or may not take place, approval of the ordinance creates the tools for review and consideration in formal public hearing forums.

- Scott Crawford, 8674 Dalton Ave. NE, Monticello Township, asked if data centers might be allowed under the current light industrial development criteria if the data center ordinance is not adopted.

Mr. Tapper said the City would likely revisit the Monticello 2040 Plan language to determine how to proceed.

- Sam Murdoff, 9368 Golden Pond Lane N, stated that the role of the Planning Commission is to set standards for development given the public concerns for water, electricity, carbon emissions, and property values. Mr. Murdoff recommended strong standards and addressed other examples of health and finance impacts around data center development outstate. He also encouraged Commissioners to enforce stricter regulations for clean energy use and suggested language pertaining to scheduled mitigation.
- Chelsea Dunlay, 9127 State Highway 25 NE, spoke about poor water quality experienced during well maintenance at a Monticello mobile home park. She suggested that the ordinance include stronger enforcement provisions to protect community values. Ms. Dunlay emphasized the need for accountability. She also discussed long-term sustainability following the initial increase in the tax base and highlighted the need for housing for individuals who work within the City. Ms. Dunlay recommended that developers be required to demonstrate their value to the community prior to development approval.
- Ricky Yackel, (4345 86<sup>th</sup> Street NE), spoke generally about air, water, noise, and energy consumption concerns, and chemical and electronic

waste relating to health concerns. Mr. Yackel suggested for proposals to be further from residential areas.

- Scott Harper, 4334 86th Street NE, stated that well owners did not receive notification of an alternative-use document. He suggested that deeper wells be drilled at the developer's expense for both the proposed development and neighboring properties. He suggested that the proposal primarily served the City's financial interests and encouraged consideration of alternative options rather than expedited action. Mr. Harper expressed concerns related to cooling system failures and well-drilling processes associated with large facilities, recommending the use of environmentally responsible practices. Mr. Harper commented on potential infrastructure, including power generation requirements and the use of diesel-fueled equipment. He also shared observations regarding the visual impacts of data center facilities. Mr. Harper referenced federal guidance related to water reuse, as well as state water-use guidelines. Mr. Harper acknowledged the efforts of City staff and board members but stated that he had not seen a comprehensive financial analysis related to the proposal. He also offered comments regarding land-use classification for data centers, potential legal considerations, and encouraged the City to research green-energy requirements adopted by other municipalities nationwide.

Mr. Tapper called for a 10-minute recess at 9:34 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened at 9:44 p.m.

- Jeremy Iverson, 3363 87th Street NE, Monticello Township, commented that data center developers may encounter significant financial challenges related to restitution and mitigation requirements. Mr. Iverson requested an amendment to the notification language to expand beyond the statutory requirement (350 feet) to a radius of two miles due to the nature of the request. He also asked the Commission to postpone consideration. Additionally, Mr. Iverson emphasized the importance of being a "good neighbor" through transparent communication with all parties who may be affected by the potential development of a data center in an adjacent community.
- Jenna Van Den Boom, Featherstone [2nd] Development (4414 87th Street NE), echoed sentiments shared previously by others and urged the Commissioners not to move the ordinance forward.
- Holly Neuman, 840 Powell Street N, Big Lake, asked if the Commissioners were aware of the construction of the I-94 corridor noise wall and asked if a tall wall surrounding a potential data center would be allowed.

Councilmember Christianson responded that this consideration was one of many noise-related factors evaluated during the drafting of the ordinance.

Ms. Neuman also asked questions regarding the future ownership of the Xcel Energy nuclear plant.

Mr. Tapper stated that these questions were outside the scope of the Planning Commission.

- Nita Ceron, 1129 River Street W., asked if eminent domain may be possible, either by the City or State.

Mr. Grittmann explained reservation of eminent domain practices for legitimate City public-use properties; he was unable to answer on behalf of the State's authority.

Ms. Ceron addressed the public comments received from a developer and asked if the ordinance will continue to be revised per the direction of the developer for their benefit, expressing concern that such changes could make the decision-making process appear inconsistent.

Mr. Tapper clarified that all comments received as part of public comment, including those of the developer are considered. He also indicated that all serving board members, Council and Planning Commissioners, are residents of the City of Monticello and to the dedication of staff.

Mr. Christianson concurred that anyone has the right to make a public comment for the record.

Members of the Commission noted that the City Council makes the final decision and the Planning Commission is a recommending board.

- Joe Holthaus, 7370 Cahill Avenue NE, Monticello Township spoke on behalf of residents generally opposed to data centers, and recommended the Board listen to their comments.
- Scott Harper suggested MPCA review and evaluation per their required standards be added to the ordinance.

Ms. Schumann explained that public comments received after the agenda was posted were made available to review in printed form and will become available on the City website the following business day. She listed the summary of items from those comments, including concerns for resource consumption, water, energy, impact on infrastructure,

potential for environmental impacts, questions about community benefits, questions about noise and impacts, permanent employment, costs to the community, proximity to residences and neighborhoods, power supply impacts, changes in technology and technology bubbles. She also noted comments received for technical clarification on the ordinance from potential developers and experts in the field.

Mr. Tapper closed the public hearing portion of the agenda item.

ANDREW TAPPER MOVED TO POSTPONE ACTION ON RESOLUTION NO. PC-2025-41 RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE MONTICELLO CITY CODE, TITLE XV, LAND USAGE, CHAPTER 153: ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTIONS 153.012 DEFINITIONS, 153.045 INDUSTRIAL BASE ZONING DISTRICTS, 153.046 OVERLAY ZONING DISTRICTS, 153.090 USE TABLE, 153.091 USE-SPECIFIC STANDARDS, 153.092 ACCESSORY USE STANDARDS AND OTHER RELATED SECTIONS OF TEXT NECESSARY TO DEFINE AND REGULATE DATA CENTER AND TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS LAND USES WITHIN THE CITY. TERI LEHNER SECONDED THE MOTION.

The Commission members referred to the comments taken at public hearing and those written comments received, indicating that they should be taken into consideration before moving forward.

Mr. Tapper suggested an additional joint workshop with City Council before consideration and to discuss whether to move forward with the zoning ordinance for this land use.

Commissioner Lehner confirmed that the item would come back to the Commission as part of the January Commission meeting, with action to postpone if necessary.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 5-0.

City staff were asked to coordinate the next scheduled round of workshops for discussion.

Mr. Stark recognized staff’s efforts and resources to obtain information and amendments to the zoning ordinance thus far.

- B. **Consideration of a request for an amendment to the Monticello Zoning Ordinance, Section 153.048, Pointes at Cedar District to allow Public Warehousing as an Interim Use Permit, and to establish required use standards, and consideration of an Interim Use Permit for Public Warehousing, Temporary in the Pointes at Cedar (PCD) District**  
**Applicant: City of Monticello**

Ms. Schumann explained the City’s Public Works request to extend an Interim Use Permit (IUP) for seasonal storage of equipment and materials on a temporary basis within The Pointes at Cedar District. She stated that the original IUP was approved for five years in November 2020. She outlined two considerations – an amendment to the zoning ordinance to allow continuation of existing IUPs under the non-conformity clause of the PCD and for an IUP for temporary public warehousing with a five-year timeline for the City as it transitions storage facility options.

Ms. Schumann provided high-level information on The Points at Cedar (PCD) ordinance adoption in 2022 and the proposed revisions for non-conforming uses to include an extension or renewal of IUPs.

She shared the specificities of the temporary storage and facility - the nature of use, the location of the subject buildings, and the seasonal equipment storage components.

Ms. Schumann outlined the applicable ordinance requirements for the prior IUP approval; stating the proposed storage continues to comply with the prior approval and the additional criteria to limit the term of the lease or 5 years, on the earlier of the two.

Mr. Tapper opened the public hearing portion of the agenda item.

Mr. Tapper closed the public hearing portion of the agenda item.

ROB STARK MOVED TO RECOMMEND ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE 8XX AMENDING THE MONTICELLO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 153.048, POINTES AT CEDAR DISTRICT TO ALLOW CONTINUATION OF EXISTING INTERIM USE PERMITS UNDER THE NON-CONFORMITY CLAUSE. MELISSA ROBECK SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 5-0.

MELISSA ROBECK MOVED TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. PC-2025-40, RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF AN INTERIM USE PERMIT FOR PUBLIC WAREHOUSING, TEMPORARY, IN THE WESTERN-MOST BUILDING AT 1305 EDMONSON AVE. NE, FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 5 YEARS, OR WHEN THE LEASE FOR SUCH STORAGE TERMINATES, WHICHEVER IS SOONER, SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS IN EXHIBIT Z AND BASED ON FINDINGS IN SAID RESOLUTION. TERI LEHNER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 5-0.

Both matters for consideration will be placed on the January 6, 2026 City Council Consent Agenda.

**3. Regular Agenda**

A. **Consideration of a recommendation of reappointment of Melissa Robeck to the Planning Commission**

Ms. Schumann explained that Commissioner Robeck’s term expires at the end of December 2025. Ms. Robeck has agreed to serve another three-year term, therefore, the Commission is asked to make a recommendation on the appointment to the City Council.

ANDREW TAPPER MOVED TO RECOMMEND COMMISSIONER MELISSA ROBECK FOR A THREE-YEAR TERM TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2026. ROB STARK SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 5-0.

4. **Other Business**

A. **Community Development Director’s Report**

Ms. Schumann said no land use applications were received for November Planning Commission consideration; therefore, no decisions were made for City Council consideration. She provided info from the events taken place in November including the bi-annual Rental Connections meeting on the 19th and Downtown Rounds hosted by Cocoa Maas on November 20.

She reported on the MOAA Board Meeting, held November 12, regarding two IUP requests submitted by Schafer Contracting for the proposed Broadway Plaza site - one IUP proposed locating a concrete batch plant on the site as part of the I-94 expansion project, for temporary use only and the second for a land alteration permit for site grading and depositing of excess fill at the subject site. Both IUPs were approved by the board.

Ms. Schumann touched on updates to the 2017 Downtown Small Area Plan by the Economic Development Authority (EDA) and project updates, available to review in the agenda packet.

Mr. Tapper asked for an update on the construction activities taking place next to Five Below within Union Crossings.

Chief Building Official Bob Ferguson confirmed a Famous Footwear retailer is moving into the unit and should be opening for operation soon.

5. **Adjournment**

ROB STARK MOVED TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER 2, 2025 REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING. TERI LEHNER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 5-0. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:37 P.M.

Recorded by: Anne Mueller AW

Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes – December 2, 2025

Approval Date: January 6, 2026

Attest:



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Angela Schumann, Community Development Director