

City of Vergas Planning Commission Minutes
Monday, June 23, 2025 at 6:00 pm
Government Services Building and Zoom

The City of Vergas Planning Commission held a regular hybrid meeting on Monday, June 23, 2025, on Zoom and at the Vergas Government Services Building with the following members present: Alex Ohman, Bruce Albright, Jim Courneya, Shane Hasse, and Rebecca Hasse. Absent: None. Also present: Clerk-Treasurer Julie Lammers and Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane; citizens: Rosemary Sandau, Dave Johnston, Dean Haarstick; Mark Sand and Gravel employees Brianne Balcer, and Brandon Brusven; and Engineer Blaine Green.

Call to Order

Chairman Ohman called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Agenda Additions and Deletions

Motion by Albright, seconded by Courneya, to approve the agenda with the following addition: Otter Tail Preliminary Plat. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes

Motion by Ohman, seconded by Albright, to approve minutes for May 19, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Status of Council Recommendations

None.

Construction Permits.

Active Construction permits

Albright and Courneya will review active permits for next month's meeting.

Approved by Clerk-Treasurer

1. 100 S Railway Ave - Convert the backroom into two offices
2. 105 E Main St - Turtle (child) sign - on city property
3. 158 E Main St - Remove and replace flat roof
4. 201 W Main St - Replace steps in back porch
5. 150 E Herman St - Windows, siding, and drywall
6. 320 South Pelican Ave - Redoing the chimney blocks

Proposed Fee Waiver.

110 Main St E. – Install sign sculpture in sitting area by the Loons Nest.

Motion by Albright, seconded by R. Hasse, to waive the permit fee for the sculpture in the Loons Nest Park. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Otter Tail County Preliminary Plat

Lammers reviewed the proposed preliminary plat received from Otter Tail County. They have notified the city of single-family home developments being built on both sides of 316th Avenue, near East Loon Lake. This area is within two miles of the city limits, requiring the county to notify the city of the plans for these new homes. A Public Hearing on the Preliminary Plat will be held on July 9th at 6 pm. All members have put on record that the city has received and acknowledged the information provided and have no comment on being for or against it.

Gravel Pit Survey

Green presented a compliance report for the annual gravel pit permitting process. The report indicates that the site generally meets requirements for fencing, screening, access roads, slopes, and excavation limits. However, there are some setback violations, mostly from existing non-compliances that are being addressed. Based on the report, Green recommends granting the permit and allowing continued mining, with the expectation that efforts to bring the pit into full compliance will continue. The report is on file at the City Clerk's Office and online at www.cityofvergas.com. Motion by Albright, seconded by R. Hasse, to approve the report. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Interim Use Permit

Motion by Ohman, seconded by S. Hasse to approve Interim Use Permit for Mark Sand and Gravel. The motion passed unanimously.

Nuisance Properties

Sandua discusses the challenges faced in demolishing old farm buildings due to environmental regulations. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency representative advised that burning painted wood is prohibited, and proper disposal of materials like shingles requires certified contractors, making the process expensive. It is \$1,100.00 per load, and they estimate 8 to 10 loads for just one building. The concern is the potential contamination of groundwater when burying buildings and trespassing on the properties. Motion by Albright, seconded by Courneya to remove the Sandua and Engel properties from their nuisance list in light of these difficulties. Motion passed unanimously.

The Planning Commissioners discuss the issue of unlicensed and inoperable vehicles in the city, particularly focusing on a property known as the Homestead Inn. They reviewed the city ordinance regarding inoperable motor vehicles, which prohibits keeping unlicensed or non-operational vehicles visible from the street. The Planning Commission decided to send a second letter to the property owner, giving them 10 days to license the vehicle in question, regardless of whether it has a "for sale" sign. They also clarify that simply putting a "for sale" sign on a vehicle does not exempt it from licensing requirements.

The Planning Commission discussed several properties with potential nuisance violations. The Planning Commission agrees to send a letter to the owner of 213 Main Street due to ongoing issues. They also discussed the need for legal action on a problematic garage and express concerns about a confrontational property owner, suggesting police presence when delivering future notices. Motion by Albright, seconded by Courneya to table or remove 491 Townline Rd S, 1001 Townline Rd, 160 S 1st Ave, 260 1st Ave S, 101 E Mill St, 341 Unit Ave and 390 S Pelican Ave. Attorney will be handling notices going to 339 E Frazee Ave. Motion passed unanimously.

The Planning Commission discussed a cover letter to accompany code violation notices. The Planning Commission thanked Ohman for writing the letter. Motion by Albright, seconded by R. Hasse to approve cover letter aiming to make communication more approachable. The motion passed unanimously.

The Planning Commission addressed a property with an improperly installed water system and pit, agreeing to investigate further and review applicable ordinances.

City Ordinance Update

An update on the city ordinance revision process is provided, with chapters 1, 3, and 5 shared for review. The Planning Commission plans to review the remaining chapters by the next meeting and then seek approval from the City Council.

Adjournment

Motion by S. Hasse, seconded by Courneya, to adjourn at 7:00 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Recorded by Rachel Nustad

Secretary,
Julie Lammers, CMC
Vergas City Clerk-Treasurer

Council Recommendations: None.