

City of Vergas Planning Commission Minutes
Monday, August 25, 2025 at 6:00 pm
Government Services Building and Zoom

The City of Vergas Planning Commission held a regular hybrid meeting on Monday, August 25, 2025, on Zoom and at the Vergas Government Services Building with the following members present: Alex Ohman, Bruce Albright, Shane Hasse, Rebecca Hasse, and Jim Courneya; Also present: Clerk-Treasurer Julie Lammers.

Call to Order

Chairman Ohman called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Agenda Additions or Deletions.

Motion by Albright seconded by Courneya to approve the agenda with the following addition: Variance. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes

Motion by Albright, seconded by Courneya, to approve the minutes of August 4, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Status of Council Recommendations

Sirens Survey

Albright reported that the Council had agreed to proceed with the survey regarding the city sirens, with some slight modifications. The Council wanted to know if respondents actually lived in town versus being outside the city limits.

Lammers reported that 215 survey responses had already been received, with 46 surveys completed within five minutes of posting the survey link on Facebook. She noted that signs had been placed at the liquor store and the bank, and the survey was available on the City of Vergas website. Paper copies were also available, though online submissions were preferred to avoid manual data entry. The survey would close on September 10th.

Lammers indicated that preliminary responses showed a range of opinions, with some suggesting compromise solutions such as limiting siren operation to weekdays only. She planned to discuss options with fire department representatives prior to the Council meeting.

Ohman mentioned concerns about accessibility for people with noise sensitivities, particularly children with neurodevelopmental disorders. Albright also stated this may be considered a noise violation within our ordinances.

Construction Permits

Approved by Clerk-Treasurer Permit

No permits were approved by the Clerk-Treasurer.

Approved by Otter Tail County

Lammers reported she did not have updated information on county-approved permits yet.

Permits Needing Approval

409 Dianne Ave – house

The Commission discussed a new house construction permit for 409 Dianne Avenue. Lammers reviewed the application details, noting the lot size is 18,550 square feet with 4,637.5 square feet available for impervious surface. The house (1,216 sq ft) and garage (546 sq ft) would use 1,762 square feet of impervious surface, leaving substantial space available. The property would have a gravel driveway. Prior to this discussion, the Commission addressed privacy concerns regarding the level of detail included in public permit documents. Several applicants had expressed concern about their information being publicly available online.

Motion by Albright, seconded by R. Hasse, that the Commission no longer post all permit data on the city website. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Albright, seconded by S. Hasse, to approve the construction permit for 409 Dianne Avenue. The motion passed unanimously.

Lammers also informed the Commission about a pending variance request from 880 Scharf Avenue.

Motion by Albright, seconded by Ohman, to schedule a public hearing for the variance request on September 22, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

The motion passed unanimously.

Active Construction Permits

Albright and Courneya reported they had visited properties with active permits to update the status list. They confirmed several completed projects.

Old Business

City Ordinance Update

Lammers presented the first three ordinance updates with additions highlighted in yellow and deletions in blue. She explained that the remaining ordinance updates would be available for the next meeting as they required more extensive revisions. The Commission agreed to review the presented ordinances and email any suggested changes. Ohman indicated he found no issues with the presented ordinance updates.

The Commission tabled further discussion until the next meeting.

Nuisance Properties

Albright and Courneya reported on their inspection of nuisance properties:

- 120 E Elm St. property: Cleaned up behind the house with no garbage or broken glass/windows observed.
- 261 W Hill St.: The property has been cleaned up, and the derby car previously noted is now gone.
- 350 S Pelican Ave: The property was in better condition than previous inspections, with mowed grass and cars parked in the driveway. The Commission discussed the garage that is required to be removed according to property records. Given the owner's financial situation, the Commission recommended getting the new city attorney's opinion on how to proceed.
- 371 S Pelican Ave: The previous demo car is gone, replaced with a trailer.
- 261 West Hill St.: No demo car was observed at this location.
- 201 W. Hill St.: The Commission found multiple unlicensed vehicles, including demo cars, engines, clutches, and transmissions on the property. While the property was neat and orderly with trimmed grass, the unlicensed vehicles violate city ordinance.
- 339 E Frazee Ave.: No nuisance violations were observed. Construction is ongoing but orderly.

Motion by Albright, seconded by Courneya, to have the attorney investigate the 350 S Pelican Ave property situation, send a first letter to 201 W Hill St. regarding unlicensed vehicles, and remove the remaining properties from the current nuisance list. The motion passed unanimously.

Albright noted that overall, the town has looked nice all summer with good mowing and maintenance.

New Business

No new business was presented.

Adjournment

Motion by Ohman, seconded by Albright, to adjourn the meeting at 6:28 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Recorded by Rachel Nustad (assisted by ClerkMinutes)

Secretary,

Julie Lammers, CMC

Vergas City Clerk-Treasurer

Council Recommendation

None