

City of Vergas Planning Commission Public Hearing
Monday, September 22, 2025 at 6:00 pm
Government Services Building and Zoom

The City of Vergas Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on Monday, September 22, 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. Absent: Utilities Superintendent Mike Dufrane. Also present: Clerk-Treasurer Julie Lammers; and citizens Marcia Huddleston, Cindy Hurt, Bruce Hurt, Tami Rust, Brian Lende, Kadin Lende, Tyler Lende and Mike Strege.

Call to Order

Chairman Ohman called the public hearing to order at 6:00 PM.

Variance request for 880 E Scharf Ave. Strege, explained that he was requesting a variance for a retaining wall approximately 25 feet from the lake where the land slopes down about 8-10 feet. The purpose was to level the area to make it more accessible for mowing and according to Scott Orvig from Crossroads, it would also help with drainage to the lake.

The applicant clarified that his lot is 115 feet wide, and the retaining wall would be 1 foot wide across the full 115 feet. He estimated that approximately 20-25 feet could be used without a variance, so they were seeking a variance of roughly 1 percent.

Ohman called three times for public comments. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing at 6:03 PM.

City of Vergas Planning Commission Minutes
Monday, September 22, 2025 at 6:00 pm
Government Services Building and Zoom

The City of Vergas Planning Commission held a regular hybrid meeting on Monday, September 22, 2025, on Zoom and at the Vergas Government Services Building.

2025	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alex Ohman, Chair	A	P	P	P	P	P	N/A	P/P	P			
Bruce Albright, Liaison	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A	P/P	P			
Shane Hasse, Member	P	P	A	P	P	P	N/A	A/P	P			
Rebecca Hasse, Member	P	P	P	P	A	P	N/A	P/P	P			
Jim Courneya, Member	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A	A/P	P			
Julie Lammers, Clerk-Treasurer	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A	P/P	P			
Mike Dufrane, Utilities Superintendent	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A	A/P	A			

P: Present. A: Absent N/A: No Meeting

Also present: Citizens; Marcia Huddleston, Cindy Hurt, Bruce Hurt, Tami Rust, Brian Lende, Kadin Lende, Tyler Lende and Mike Strege.

Call to Order

Chair Ohman called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

Agenda Additions or Deletions

None.

Minutes

Motion by Ohman, seconded by Courneya, to approve the minutes of August 25, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Status of Council Recommendations

Lammers reported that the council discussed the sirens that the Planning Commission had brought to their attention. After reviewing a survey and considering the options, the council decided to leave the sirens as they currently are. Ohman noted that the sirens are quite loud, sharing that he recently had to cover his daughter's ears when they went off during a walk.

Variance for Impervious Surface – 880 E Scharf Ave

Lammers confirmed that the county did not have issues with the proposal, noting that while the county handles permits, the city is responsible for variances and conditional use permits. Ohman remarked that one percent seemed like a reasonable variance request. No further discussion followed.

Motion by Ohman, seconded by R. Hasse to approve the variance for 880 E Scharf Ave. The motion passed unanimously.

Following the approval, Strege thanked the commission.

Lot Split of Oak Circle

C. Hurt presented a request to split a portion of her property. She explained that they had purchased lots 2 and 3 and joined them together last year. Now, her neighbor on lot 1 would like to purchase 0.44 acres from her property. The neighbor would then adjoin this portion to her existing property, making it one parcel.

Upon questioning from Ohman, it was clarified that the split would add approximately 31 feet of lakeshore and 37 feet at about 30 feet back from the shoreline to the neighbor's property. C. Hurt explained that her house is on one portion of the property and the neighbor's house is on another, with the neighbor wanting the prairie area while the Hurts preferred to keep the wooded area.

Motion by Albright, seconded by Courneya to approve the split as designated in the correspondence reviewed. The motions passed unanimously.

Construction Permits

Active Construction Permits

The commission reviewed the active construction permits. No significant discussion occurred.

Approved by Clerk-Treasurer Permit

None.

Approved by Otter Tail County

Lammers reported that Otter Tail County had approved one structure and shoreline alteration permit for the Hurts. C. Hurt mentioned that the approval was for a cold storage shop that would match the look of their house, noting that the county was primarily concerned with location rather than aesthetics.

Permits needing approval

None.

Old Business

Nuisance Properties

B. Lende addressed the commission regarding his property that had been listed under nuisance properties. He explained that his cars were now registered and licensed and maintained that his property was clean and well-kept. He emphasized that the cars were not visible from the street and were kept alongside his garage. B. Lende noted he lives on a dead end street and requested a sign to notify the public it is a dead end street.

B. Lende shared that the derby cars served as therapy for a family member with mental health issues, noting that working on the cars was part of the therapeutic treatment recommended by the therapist. He mentioned that he had spent \$500 on licensing two cars that would never be driven on public roads.

He further explained that the cars were part of their hobby of participating in demolition derbies, and that the vehicles come and go as they are built, used in competitions, and then replaced. He stated that he respects his neighbors by limiting work on the cars to reasonable hours.

Albright, who had participated in an inspection of the property, confirmed that B. Lende's property was very orderly and neat. He also noted that no formal complaints had been filed against B. Lende's property.

Motion by Ohman, seconded by R. Hasse, to remove the nuisance designation from Mr. Lende's property. The motion passed unanimously.

Regarding the other nuisance property listed (350 S Pelican Ave), Lammers reported that she was still consulting with the attorney about how to proceed. Albright noted that they needed to review what had occurred previously, including any court orders, before determining next steps. He mentioned that the city already has a lien on the property and that the attorney is reviewing all relevant information.

City Ordinance Update

None.

New Business

Ohman added a discussion item regarding demo car ordinances. He noted that there were multiple properties in town with demolition derby or autocross cars, and there might be a need for clarification in the ordinances.

The commission discussed the current ordinance language, with Lammers reading the relevant section prohibiting motor vehicles that are not in operating condition, partially dismantled, or not properly licensed. She noted that the ordinance does not specifically address demolition cars.

B. Lende suggested that demolition cars should be treated differently from abandoned vehicles since they are actively used for recreation and competition. He proposed language that would allow demo cars to be kept on properties as long as they are stored neatly and not visible from the street.

Various commission members offered perspectives, with Albright suggesting that the current language, which exempts vehicles kept out of view from streets, roads, or alleys, might be sufficient. Ohman proposed new language stating that "vehicles used for demo derbies or autocross may be exempt from the requirement to be licensed so long as they are stored neatly."

Motion by Ohman seconded by R. Hasse, to have the city attorney review language around demo vehicles used for demo derbies or autocross and how they might fit into section 92.2 of the Minnesota code. Voting yes: Ohman, Courneya, R. Hasse and S. Hasse. Voting no: Albright. Motion passed.

Adjournment

Motion by Courneya, seconded by S. Hasse, to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Recorded by Rachel Nustad (assisted by ClerkMinutes)

Secretary,

Julie Lammers, CMC

Vergas City Clerk-Treasurer

Council Recommendations

None.

Follow Up Actions

- City attorney to review language in section 92.2 of the Minnesota Code.
- Dufrane to install Dead End street sign on B. Lende's road.