

# Wadena County, MN Board Action Form



<b>Action Requested</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action/Motion	<input type="checkbox"/> Report
<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/> Information Item	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent Agenda Item	

<b>Accept Condensed Draft Minutes of the 12-18-2025 Meeting of the Planning Commission</b>	
Date of Meeting: 1-6-2026	Total time requested:
Department Requesting Action: Planning & Zoning	
Presenting Board Action/Discussion at Meeting: Deana Malone, if needed	
<b>Background</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporting Documentation enclosed	
Draft Condensed Minutes attached	
<b>Options</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Documentation enclosed	
<b>Recommendation</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Wadena County Board of Commissioners approves the following by Motion:	
To accept the draft condensed minutes of the December 18, 2025, meeting of the Planning Commission	
<b>Financial Implications</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Funding Source: (see comments)	
Budgeted: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Action	Voting in Favor	Voting Against
Motion:	<input type="checkbox"/> Noon	<input type="checkbox"/> Noon
Second:	<input type="checkbox"/> Winkels	<input type="checkbox"/> Winkels
<input type="checkbox"/> Passed	<input type="checkbox"/> Stearns	<input type="checkbox"/> Stearns
<input type="checkbox"/> Failed	<input type="checkbox"/> Kreklau	<input type="checkbox"/> Kreklau
<input type="checkbox"/> Tabled	<input type="checkbox"/> Kangas	<input type="checkbox"/> Kangas

**Signatures**

STATE OF MINNESOTA}  
 COUNTY OF Wadena}

I, Heather Olson, County Auditor/Treasurer, Wadena County, Minnesota hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of the proceedings of the County Board of said County with the original record thereof on file in the Administration Office of Wadena County in Wadena, Minnesota as stated in the minutes of the proceedings of said board and that the same is a true and correct copy of said original record and of the whole thereof, and that said motion was duly passed by said board at said meeting. Witness my hand and seal:

## Planning Commission Meeting, December 18, 2025

Chair Linda Youngbauer called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M. She asked if there were any additions or corrections to the agenda. Motion by Commissioner Randy Wenthold, second by Commissioner Randy Becker, to approve the agenda. Motion carried. Commissioner Wenthold made a motion to approve the minutes of October 16, 2025, as circulated, seconded by Commissioner Trisha Kraemer. Motion carried. Having no corrections to the minutes of November 20, 2025, Commissioner Wenthold made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Becker. Motion carried.

Deana started with a draft of proposed amendments that were a result of the November discussion and the Planning Commission went line by line through it. Deana said that platting would be a separate portion of that, and she would plan time with the GIS Coordinator, along with the Highway Engineer, and Recorder to go through it because their input would be needed for much of it.

After going through the draft, and having discussion on each part of it, the following language was determined to be acceptable, after revisions were made, and they would review the amended document at their January meeting, suggest further changes, and determine a date for public hearing.

### **SECTION VII-IX: CONVEYANCE BY METES AND BOUNDS**—*(highlighted areas indicate changes to the current Section of the Subdivision Ordinance)*

#### A. Compliance

No conveyance of land to which these regulations ~~are applicable~~ apply shall be filed or recorded with the County Recorder if the land is not described in the conveyance by metes and bounds, or is by reference to an unapproved registered land survey. No subdivision shall be approved if a violation of any Wadena County Ordinances exists on the parcel that is the subject of the subdivision application at the time of such application. The foregoing provisions shall not apply to a conveyance if the land described:

1. ~~Was a separate parcel of record on the date of adoption of this Ordinance.~~

2. ~~Was the subject of a written agreement to convey entered into prior to the date of adoption of this Ordinance.~~

3. ~~Is a single parcel of land of not less than two and one-half (2 1/2) acres and having a width and depth of not less than 300 feet. (Amended 5/4/93)~~

1. Is a parcel of land to be conveyed for the purpose of ingress and egress or for establishment of a required public utility.

2. Is a parcel of land to be added to an existent adjacent parcel under the same parcel identification and the resulting parcels will not be less than the minimum required size and dimensions ~~owner or owners~~. ~~In situations where an adjacent parcel cannot be combined, in a technical sense, to the parcel to which it is meant to be combined, including, but not limited to, adjacent land is located in an adjacent section, land is located outside of a platted area, or adjacent land is being purchased on a contract for deed, and cannot be split and considered as a separate parcel under the terms of the subdivision ordinance, the recorded document, conveying the parcel to the adjacent land owner, shall stipulate the parcel being added is not to be considered separate from the parcel to which it adjoins, that it is not to be sold separately from said parcel, and must identify the factor which does not allow the technical combination of the two parcels. (Amended May 3, 2016)~~

3. Subdivisions creating cemetery lots;
4. Transfers of small parcels, not meeting minimum requirements, to governmental units in case of encroachments, road right-of-way, or utility easements;
5. Splits resulting from court orders or mortgage foreclosures;
6. Common property line adjustments;

### C. Variance

In any case in which compliance with the foregoing provisions ~~restrictions~~ will create an unnecessary hardship and failure to comply does not interfere with the purpose of these subdivision regulations, the Board of Adjustment shall have the authority to order the issuance of a variance, as provided by law, and in accordance with the Wadena County Zoning Ordinance.

~~C. Notwithstanding the provisions of Subdivision A.3 above, only one division per ¼ ¼ Section or Government Lot will be allowed except when adding a parcel to an existent parcel under the same owner or owners. Any further division of the remaining land must be by plat duly approved and recorded in accordance with laws and regulations in such case made and provided. Any further conveyance of land by metes and bounds description may be handled as a variance by the Board of Adjustment. (Amended 5/3/2016)~~

### D. Administrative Subdivisions

Administrative Subdivisions will be allowed in the Agricultural Zoning districts in accordance with the standards set forth herein for the purpose of encouraging and establishing residential housing in the County. Where Shoreland Rules apply, the standards outlined in the Wadena County Zoning Ordinance shall pre-empt these standards. The standards outlined herein are considered the minimum requirements; however, the County Board may impose additional, reasonable standards to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

#### 1. Minimum Standards:

- a. A maximum of four (4) splits of a ¼ ¼ Section will be allowed through an administrative subdivision process.
- b. No split shall be proposed that is less than 2.5 acres in size and having a minimum lot width of 300 feet and a minimum lot depth of 300 feet.
- c. Legal access to the proposed parcel must be provided either through direct access in accordance with the Wadena County Highway Department access policy(s) and access policy(s) for the township within which the proposed parcel is situated, or through a legal permanent easement.
- d. Suitable soils to support onsite sewage treatment must be submitted.
- e. Plan for permanent residential home construction and habitation to take place on the proposed parcel within a two (2) year time frame. Camping trailers, RV's, storage containers, and other temporary or transient type housing will not be considered permanent residential construction.
- e. A survey of the proposed parcel(s) shall be required.

#### 2. Application and Pre-Approval Requirements:

- a. An application for Administrative Subdivision on a form provided by Wadena County must be completed and signed by the owner of the parcel being subdivided.
- b. Application must be submitted to the Wadena County Zoning Office along with any required attachments and the fee for pre-approval set by the Wadena County Board of Commissioners.
- c. Upon receipt of the application the County will determine the proposed split(s) are compliant with the provisions of this ordinance or if further information is required, and notification of approval to the applicant will be provided once it is determined all requirements are met.
- d. After pre-approval is achieved, the applicant must submit to the County a survey from a registered land surveyor for the parcel(s) that is to be created before the deed to create said parcel is submitted to the County Recorder for recording.

Discussion points during the review of the draft were:

Why it could not be by the parcel instead of a  $\frac{1}{4}$   $\frac{1}{4}$  section, and a comment about the County controlling what people can do on their land. It is the easiest way to track, technically a "parcel" could be 80 acres or 160 acres, etc., and it is the way most counties plan for population density. Commissioner Wenthold made the point later, that if it was by the parcel you could have a never ending amount of splits. To clarify, you would not have to own a full 40 acre tract in order to split a piece of land. All agreed that while the County is moving forward with availability for land to build homes on, it should still be looking at protecting open spaces and forests for agriculture and forestry and the forms of economic impact each of those industries have on the county, as well as the fact that open spaces help protect the environment and natural resources which also have an economic affect on the county.

What would be the proof for permanent residency. It was acknowledged that the purpose of these amendments was to promote and encourage residential development in the County, and all agreed a permanent residence should have to be built, whether it was a standard home, a house, or barndominium. There was lengthy discussion on the time frame by which a home needed to be constructed and inhabited. Two years was initially suggested because a person could buy the property and immediately get a permit to build which is valid for 2 years. Commissioners did say they would consider that an extension could be granted by the Zoning Administrator with good cause. Commissioner Winkels agreed that there should be some language to make sure that they were nice looking and asked if someone is granted a split with the intention of building, but did not build, could an assessment of sorts be put in place that would add 'x' amount per year to their assessment. Deana said that would be a good question for the Assessor. He added that it could not be a little bit, it would have to be enough to hurt some. The Assessor was sought to see if he could come answer the question but he was not available. Deana will find out for next meeting. Commissioner Becker said that the City of Sebeka gave away lots for free because they could not sell them, but the criteria was that there was a timeframe for a structure to be built. He added that they had been sitting there for ten years with nothing on them. Commissioner Winkels said that if they looked at average median household value in the County and figured out what the assessment was, they could determine what they could be getting and take a decent chunk of what that would look like. Commissioner Wenthold and Kraemer both brought discussion about what would be considered "complete" because someone could get four walls up, get it insulated, heat, water and septic and live in it and finish as they go. All agreed this would be considered complete, but "habitable" was the word they decided to use vs. "complete", and a habitable residence could be a primary dwelling or a rental.

Discussion and consensus that platting would have to be done in an R-1 Residential District. Comments were made that the sprawl of residential development is best placed around the municipalities.

Discussion and consensus on not wanting disheveled neighborhoods to develop like they are in Otter Tail County.

Discussion on what should be on the application for administrative splitting. All agreed on the proposed requirements for the application process including that a survey should be required to help prevent disputes in the future and for accuracy in planning.

Was mentioned that although County Commissioners want more residential development, they know it is not going to fix their tax problems. Discussion was there will be increases in services that an increase in population is sure to generate. Deana commented that it was going to be more work for everyone from Planning and Zoning, the Auditor's Office, the Assessor's Office, and the Recorder's Office, and those departments already have their plates full with the limited number of staff they have. Commissioner Becker expounded on increased services for road maintenance for both county and townships. Other services were brought up such as: fire and rescue, and that all the fire departments in the County are volunteer, law enforcement, human services and public health. Consensus was there would be an increase in demand for these services with an increase in the population.

A lengthy discussion was had with regard to the need for business development and someone to lead that charge. The hiring of a new administrator was brought up and that this might be an area that person could focus on to help the county draw in business and industry.

Consensus was Deana would check with the assessor on the question for him, put the draft together and review at the next meeting. Members were asked to look at it closely and bring any other thoughts to the January meeting and they would most likely schedule for a February public hearing at least for this part of the Subdivision Ordinance, although she would have preferred to have a single document to bring. She said she would try to get with GIS, Highway and Recorder together so they could get through the rest of the platting stuff, and they could maybe take that and this section to the public hearing. Deana said that they would have one more meeting on this section and if she could get the other things put together for the platting process, they could review that and take it to a public hearing in February. Everyone agreed that it was reasonable. Deana added that they could have two meetings in January, if needed. Commissioner Winkels asked that depending on the public hearing, could it go to the County Board in February or March, and Deana said, yes.

Chair Youngbauer asked about the update on the Comprehensive Plan. Deana said that they were moving forward with Ben Olson from Hometown Planners in Alexandria. There will be a kickoff meeting with the County Board and the Planning Commission to start and Mr. Oelson could walk through the steps of the process at that time. She clarified this was not a re-write but an update of certain areas and they would be focusing more on goals and objectives within the Plan. Commissioner Wenthold made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Kraemer, and carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:19 P.M.

  
Deana Malone  
Secretary/Zoning Administrator

Members Present: Chair Linda Youngbauer, Randy Wenthold, Randy Becker, Commissioner Bryan Winkels, Trisha Kraemer

Members Absent: Mike Weyer

Guests Present: 0