

CARVER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting – December 16, 2025
Minutes

Members Present: Matthew Kerber, Greg Grazzini, Scott Wakefield, Andy Steinhagen, John P Fahey

Members Late: None

Members Absent: Scott Hoese, Frank Mendez

Staff Present: Jason Mielke, Donovan Hart, Lauren Whetstone, Jennifer Tichey

Pursuant to due call and published notice thereof, the December 16, 2025, regular meeting of the Carver County Planning Commission was called to order by Vice Chairman Greg Grazzini at 7:00 p.m.

Vice Chairman Grazzini acknowledged five board members are present with the absence of Scott Hoese and Frank Mendez.

Agenda – A motion was made by Wakefield to approve the agenda. Kerber seconded the motion. Vice Chairman Grazzini called for a vote on the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Minutes – A motion was made by Fahey and seconded by Steinhagen to approve the minutes from the November 18, 2025, regular meeting. Vice Chairman Grazzini called for a vote on the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

File #PZ20250051 –Karl Gerber – Vice Chairman Grazzini called the public hearing to order at 7:02 p.m. to consider a request by Karl Gerber. The purpose of the public hearing was to consider a request to construct a wireless communications monopole for Verizon Wireless pursuant to Chapter 152 of the County Zoning Code. The property is in Section 27 of Waconia Township.

The following was present: Karl Gerber, Kevin Costello

The following items were entered into the record:

Exhibit A – Legal Description

Exhibit B – Proof of Publication of the Hearing Notice

Exhibit C – Proof of Mailing of the Hearing Notice

Exhibit D – Site Plan

Exhibit E – Letter from the applicant dated October 8, 2025

Exhibit F – Staff Report addressed to the Planning Commission and Waconia Township dated December 8, 2025, and all attachments.

Exhibit G – Township Recommendation form signed on December 14, 2025

Exhibit H – Email from Kevin Costello dated December 15, 2025

Exhibit I – Email from Karl Gerber dated December 16, 2025, in response to Kevin Costello's email

Whetstone explained the subject parcel is an approximately 17.38-acre parcel owned by Patrick & Jayne Butler and improved with a house and two accessory structures. The applicant, Karl Gerber, representing Vertical Bridge The Towers, LLC, is requesting a CUP to construct a 199-foot private telecommunications monopole to improve wireless coverage for Verizon Wireless and two future carriers on the subject parcel.

The tower would be located within a 100-foot by 100-foot leased area on the northwest side of Orchard Rd with a 12-foot gravel driveway and parking area. The proposed tower complies with required setbacks and will be 110 feet from the eastern property line, and at least 209 feet from nearest existing structures on adjacent properties. The minimum property line setback is 50 feet and the setback from existing structures is the structure height plus 10 feet. The tower includes space for 3 carriers which meets the Zoning Code requirements. Twenty-five spruce trees planted at 6 feet tall and growing to a mature height of 20 – 40 feet will be planted outside of the fenced area to provide visual screening. A six-foot chain link fence with fabric, with a one-foot section of barbed wire at the top and a locked gate for security purposes are proposed for the site. The proposed signage will include six signs located on the fence with safety and equipment information, which complies with local and Federal regulations. Whetstone explained the MIN Sparrow coverage maps illustrating the signal coverage area before and after the monopole installation. There are no other towers within 1.5 miles of this site supporting the need for this installation. She stated the FAA reviewed the application information and determined the monopole does not pose a hazard to air navigation and noted that marking and lighting are not required. The Carver County Water Management Organization reviewed the request and stated that an Erosion and Sediment Control Permit would be required because the proposed monopole is located within 50 feet of a wetland. County staff received two emails regarding lighting and 5G regulations for the proposed tower which were answered by staff. One formal comment was received from Kevin Costello on December 15, 2025, regarding views from his residence. The applicant, Karl Gerber, provided an email response to staff, which was forwarded to the Planning Commission. The City of Waconia received the request information and has not provided any comments about the application to date. The Waconia Township Board reviewed the request at their November 24, 2025, meeting and recommended approval. Staff received the Twp recommendation form signed on December 14, 2025, which was entered into the record. Whetstone read the proposed conditions for consideration if the Planning Commission recommends approval of the request. If the Planning Commission recommends denial of the permit application, the deficiencies identified in Section 152.251 of the Carver County Zoning Code should be referenced.

Vice Chairman Grazzini asked the applicant if he had any additional comments.

Karl Gerber, representing Vertical Bridge The Towers, LLC, referenced some of the concerns that were expressed about the project. The tower height of less than 200 feet removes any lighting requirement and does not need to be registered with the FAA. Often times, the companies will register the towers so that it will be identified to other carriers looking to add coverage in an area. He commented about a concern of RF emissions being a potential issue and told the Board that Federal agencies are the scientific expert in regard to RF safety emissions and Section 704A of the Telecom Act expressly prohibits local authorities to discuss it as a condition and part of the permitting process. He stated he has worked for over a year to try and find an appropriate location that will meet the carrier's needs for coverage and not be directly in someone's backyard. He stated these property owners were willing to lease a portion of their property for this purpose.

Vice Chairman Grazzini asked Mr. Gerber if he agrees with all the proposed conditions.

Mr. Gerber stated he read and agrees with the proposed conditions.

John Zimmerman, speaking for Waconia Township Board, stated he had no additional comments.

Kevin Costello, 1250 Orchard Ct, acknowledged he had submitted an email opposing the request but had nothing else to add. He offered to elaborate more about his complaint if anyone had questions and invited the Board members to visit his property to view the site if they wanted.

A motion was made by Wakefield to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Steinhagen. Vice Chairman Grazzini called for a vote on the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried. The public hearing was closed at 7:11 p.m.

A motion was made by Fahey to **approve and adopt Resolution #25-19** incorporating the findings of fact with staff considerations for a wireless communications monopole. Kerber seconded the motion for approval. All voted aye. Motion carried.

File #PZ20250052 – Brooks Ellingson/Timber Creek Golf Course – Vice Chairman Grazzini called the public hearing to order at 7:13 p.m. to consider a request by Brooks Ellington. The purpose of the public hearing was to consider a request to expand operations for an existing golf course pursuant to Chapter 152 of the County Zoning Code. The property is in Section 12 of Watertown Township.

The following were present: Brooks Ellingson

The following items were entered into the record:

Exhibit A – Legal Description

Exhibit B – Proof of Publication of the Hearing Notice

Exhibit C – Proof of Mailing of the Hearing Notice

Exhibit D – Site Plan

Exhibit E – Letter from the applicant dated November 21, 2025

Exhibit F – Staff Report addressed to the Planning Commission and Waconia Township dated December 8, 2025, and all attachments.

Hart used an aerial map to illustrate the three parcels included with Timber Creek Golf Course consisting of approximately 146.44 acres of land. The property is improved with an 18-hole golf course, a club house/pro shop, parking lot and several large sheds for equipment storage, supplies and repair activities. The applicant is proposing to extend the golfing season and daily operating hours, increase the maximum number of employees, expand the parking lot and construct a 6,000 square foot shed to house electric golf carts. The proposal also includes a grounds renovation plan that will involve importing about 4,200 cubic yards of materials to do routine golf course maintenance and site improvements without requiring a separate administrative permit. These construction improvements would include relocating eight to ten greens, repairing, leveling and re-grassing tee boxes and fairways, replacement of old drain tile and adjustment of eight golf holes to improve playability and golfer safety. The construction renovation is expected to take about four to six months, during which the golf course would be closed for play. One condition for a Large-Scale Activity is for adequate fencing to deter trespassing onto neighboring properties. The applicant indicates the fairways are designed to minimize golf ball intrusion onto adjacent parcels. There have been no reported incidents of golfers trespassing onto private property and the zoning code provides that this requirement may be waived by the County Board for golf courses that were once in existence and are being reactivated. The original CUP for the golf course did not require fencing. Septic compliance is not required for this request as no existing or proposed structures are located within the shoreland area. The request was reviewed by Abigail Ernst, Water Resources Program Analyst with the Carver County Water Management Organization, who provided the comments: *“The applicant will need to apply for an erosion control permit and we will need a final accounting of the impervious added. I don’t believe they will pass the acre threshold based on the pole barn and parking lot expansion, but we will need to document as they add on so if they do cross the acre threshold, stormwater treatment will be needed. It looks like the impervious on site currently was added pre-2002. Additionally, the ESC permit*

will help us understand the redesign more clearly so we can see if there are any impacts to any of the historical wetlands. Regardless of if there are impacts, we will request a no loss application if there are any changes to the incidental wetlands found during the delineation, for record keeping purposes.” Drew Pflaumer, Carver County Transportation Planner, indicated that Public Works had no comments with this request concerning the access. Taylor Huinker, Mn DNR Watershed Specialist, reviewed the request and offered this statement, *“My only comment would be for the applicant to know that any work in the wetland or stream adjacent to the golf course would be subject to DNR regulation.”* The application materials were sent to the City of Minnetrista for review and comment which was *“Thanks for sharing the information. All good from our standpoint!”* Staff received an email from Steven Washburn expressing support for the application. The Watertown Town Board reviewed the request at their December 1, 2025, meeting and recommended approval, affirming that Timber Creek Golf Course is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. Hart read the proposed conditions for consideration if the Planning Commission recommends approval of the request. If the Planning Commission recommends denial of the permit application, the deficiencies identified in Section 152.251 of the Carver County Zoning Code should be referenced. Hart indicated that if the CUP application was denied, the current CUP would remain in full force and effect.

Vice Chairman Grazzini asked the applicant if he had any additional comments.

Brooks Ellingson, mentioned his experience with developing golf courses from the ground up and stated he is well aware of the requirements for silt fencing with construction around wetlands and water sensitive areas. He stated their goal is to meet or exceed the minimum requirements. He identified the creek and wetlands as being an asset to the golf course atmosphere and he wants to preserve and protect that natural resource.

Vice Chairman Grazzini asked Mr. Ellingson if he agrees with the proposed conditions of the permit.

Mr. Ellingson confirmed he agrees with the proposed conditions.

No one was present to represent the Watertown Town Board.

No one was present for public comment.

A motion was made by Wakefield to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Kerber. All voted aye. Motion carried. The public hearing was closed at 7:24 p.m.

A motion was made by Wakefield to **approve and adopt Resolution #25-20** incorporating the findings of fact with staff considerations for the operation and expansion of the golf course as a Large-Scale Activity. Steinhagen seconded the motion for approval. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Wakefield and seconded by Kerber to adjourn the meeting. All voted aye. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.