

CARVER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting – January 20, 2026
Minutes

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

Members Late: None

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Jason Mielke, Lauren Whetstone, Laura Jaunich

Pursuant to due call and published notice thereof, the January 20, 2026, regular meeting of the Carver County Planning Commission was called to order by Jason Mielke at 7:00 p.m.

The first order of business was the organization of the Planning Commission and election of the Chairman.

Office of the Chairman

Mielke called for nominations for the office of Chairman. Wakefield made a nomination for Matt Kerber for Chairman. Steinhagen seconded the nomination. No other nominations were made. Mielke asked for a motion to cease nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Matt Kerber as Chairman. Motion by Hoese to cease nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Matt Kerber as Planning Commission Chairman. Grazzini seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Office of the Vice-Chairman

Chairman Kerber called for nominations for the office of Vice-Chairman. Wakefield made a nomination for Greg Grazzini as Vice-Chairman. Hoese seconded the nomination. No other nominations were made. A motion was made by Hoese to cease nominations and cast a unanimous ballot to elect Greg Grazzini as Vice-Chairman. Fahey seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Appointment of the Secretary

Chairman Kerber acknowledged Land Management staff has traditionally served as secretary for the Planning Commission. A nomination was made by Steinhagen to appoint the Land Management staff as Secretary to the Planning Commission. Hoese seconded the nomination. No other nominations were made. A motion was made by Grazzini to cease nominations and elect Land Management staff as secretary to the Planning Commission. Hoese seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Appoint Representative to the Board of Adjustment

Chairman Kerber acknowledged appointing a representative to the Board of Adjustment. Wakefield made a nomination for Steinhagen to be the representative to the Board of Adjustment. Fahey seconded the nomination. A motion was made by Wakefield and seconded

by Hoese to cease nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Andy Steinhagen as the representative to the Board of Adjustment. All voted aye. Motion carried.

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

Minutes – A motion was made by Steinhagen and seconded by Fahey to approve the minutes from the December 16, 2025, regular meeting. All voted aye. Motion carried.

File #PZ20250049 – Laura Zimmerman/Carver Canines (continued) – Chairman Kerber called the continued public hearing to order at 7:08 p.m. to consider a request by Laura Zimmerman. The purpose of the public hearing was to consider a request to expand operations for an existing commercial dog kennel pursuant to Chapter 152 of the County Zoning Code. The property is in Section 31 of Waconia Township.

The following were present: Laura Zimmerman, Doug Pritchard, Lyle Braun, Dave Grandy, John Zimmerman, Shannon Lovich, Michael Lovich, Harlan Rieck

The following items were entered into the record:

Exhibit G – Legal Description

Exhibit H – Proof of Publication of the Hearing Notice

Exhibit I – Proof of Mailing of the Hearing Notice

Exhibit D – Site Plan

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

Exhibit F – Staff Report addressed to the Planning Commission and Waconia Township dated January 6, 2026, and all attachments.

Mielke confirmed this public hearing was continued from the November meeting to allow the applicant to make some modifications or clarifications to the request and to also return to the Township Board for a recommendation after hearing the changes. Mielke reviewed the history of the business with an approved CUP in 2023 for dog boarding and daycare using the existing building which was a former veterinary clinic. The CUP included a fenced area for the dogs' outdoor play and exercise and screening. A Variance was also approved for reduced setbacks to neighboring property owners and the reuse of an existing structure without homesteading. Mielke stated the current request is to expand the current use by extending the lobby hours of operation to 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM for dog drop off and pick up, increasing the number of dogs for overnight stays to 100, adding 5-10 more employees, and expanding the outdoor exercise/play areas. He reviewed the staff report and compared the existing permit considerations with the proposed conditions. Mielke used an aerial map to indicate the location of expanded fenced outdoor play areas. He stated the hours for dogs to be outside in these areas is from 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM on weekdays and 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM on weekends and holidays. He mentioned screening on the property was discussed at the previous meeting. Some of the trees on the north of the property were identified as screening for the outdoor areas and were diseased or dead and needed to be removed. The applicants proposed to plant a line of Black Hills Spruce or similar conifer trees in the spring of 2026 to help with noise reduction and replace the trees that were removed. They will

also plant white pine or similar conifer and deciduous trees, a minimum of six-feet in height and 15-feet off-center in two staggered rows as shown on the site plan. Trees will be added to the northeast of the building also. There was discussion from the previous meeting about traffic safety entering and exiting onto Hwy 5. The applicants have agreed to work to alleviate some of the traffic concerns by using signage and creating a traffic flow pattern on the property, having clients enter at the Rome Av access, which has turn lanes, and exiting onto Hwy 5. The property has a monument sign identifying the business and no other signage is being proposed. The application was reviewed by Lori Brinkman, Senior Environmentalist, reported on the lab results from a water use meter and stated the waste strength analysis is within residential waste strength parameters which means the current mound system is capable of adequately treating the wastewater. No new comments were received from the DNR or the Carver County WMO. An email from Regina Burstein, MnDOT Senior Transportation Planner stated, *MnDOT has no comments to make on this dog kennel expansion. The expansion will have minimal impacts to MnDOT ROW.* Mielke noted that a letter had been received from neighboring homeowners at the November meeting, which was included in this staff report, to highlight the concerns expressed. He explained that Lyle Braun, the property owner, addressed the lighting issues expressed at the November meeting. He went to a residence across the lake to see and understand their concern. He hired an electrician to replace a bright light with a fixture that can be directed to reflect downward. Mr. Braun reported this change made a big difference and presumed that when the trees have leaves and there is no reflection from the snow, the light will likely be hidden from view. Mielke stated the applicants went to the Waconia Township meeting in December and the board reviewed and recommended approval of their proposed changes. He read the proposed conditions for consideration if the Planning Commission recommends approval of the request. Mielke noted the current CUP allows for 50 dogs and 20 employees. The request is to increase the number of dogs to a maximum of 100 for overnight stays and a maximum number of employees to 30. He noted that the neighbors expressed concern at the previous meeting that more dogs will generate more noise. He stated the Planning Commission can adjust this number if they feel the request is too much and should be modified to a compromised capacity, also noting that the applicants have expressed their reasons for expansion of the business and have proposed measures for noise mitigation and screening. 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., and the current Conditional Use Permit with the current conditions will remain in effect. Mielke also explained the 60-day Law which requires a decision on a request be acted upon within 60 days of application. This notice was sent to the applicants and with the timing of the meetings, the County Board decision would be after the 60-day deadline. The applicants would need to provide a statement in writing to waive their right to a decision within the 60 days.

Chairman Kerber asked the applicant for any additional comments.

Laura Zimmerman, 2253 Naples Av, acknowledged they addressed the concerns of lighting, traffic flow and safety and screening and noise mitigation expressed by the neighbors at the previous meeting. She confirmed the lighting issued has already been resolved and the tree plantings will take place in the spring.

Doug Pritchard, 2253 Naples Av, further explained the tree plantings near the outside play/exercise areas on the site plan. He stated they are aware that noise is a big concern for the

neighbors and assured that the request is to have a maximum of 100 dogs, but not all of the dogs are outside at the same time. He stated they try to group dogs by size, energy level, and temperament to reduce conflict and noise when they are outdoors. They will also remove a dog from a group if it is reacting negatively.

Chairman Kerber asked the applicants if they agree with the proposed conditions for the request.

Mr. Pritchard confirmed they agree with the conditions. He also clarified the request for the expanded hours is to accommodate clients encountering a situation that would not allow them to pick up or drop off their dog during the more typical 7:00am – 7:00pm hours. He guaranteed that dogs would not be outside in the play areas at 10:00 p.m.

Mielke expanded on the comment concerning the hours. He stated it would be impossible to enforce the time before 7:00 am or after 7:00 pm as pertaining to a customer's 'special situation' as opposed to the 'typical' 7:00 am to 7:00 pm hours. That is why the distinction was made for the hours of operation to change to 6:00 am to 10:00 pm, with specific hours for the dogs to be outside 7:00 am to 7:00 pm on weekdays and 7:00 am – 6:00 pm on weekends and holidays.

Grazzini confirmed the current hours of operation are 7:00 am to 7:00 pm.

Mielke acknowledged that to be correct, citing the requested extended hours from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm is to allow clients suitable hours for pick up and drop off with the outdoor hours for the dogs to remain the same as the current CUP.

Fahey described a situation of a client dropping off a dog at 6:00 am or picking up a dog at 9:30 pm with the dog barking while outside from the car to the building. He asked how this would be handled if it generated a complaint from a neighbor.

Mielke stated with any complaint, staff will contact the owner to relay the information and discuss what happened to cause the complaint. Hopefully, this will not be a frequent occurrence as the owners are also aware of the permit conditions and the neighbors' concerns. If violations continue without resolution, then the situation will become an enforcement issue.

John Zimmerman, Waconia Town Board supervisor, confirmed the board unanimously approved the applicant's proposed changes, including the maximum 100 dog capacity. He asked for clarification about the 1,000-foot setback for a kennel from a residence. He stated an adjacent parcel owner has an eligibility and wants to subdivide and sell a residential lot.

Mielke clarified the 1,000-foot setback applies for a new commercial kennel and existing houses, not the reciprocal. A new house would be allowed to be constructed within 1,000 feet of an existing kennel without any variance. The setback is not reciprocal.

Wakefield asked if the adjacent property owner wanted improvements made to Rome Av.

Mr. Zimmerman stated the access should be made wider to allow easier access for additional traffic.

Mielke cited the condition language-*The Permittee shall comply with the road authority's (Rome Av-Waconia Township AND Hwy 5-MnDOT) access requirements, improvements and/or standards, if applicable. Parking along Township and County rights-of-way shall be prohibited.* He clarified the Township is the road authority and the permittee should work with them for any improvement requirements.

Ms. Zimmerman stated they were not requesting any improvements to the Rome Av access. She understood that the property owner of the farm field was requesting the Rome Av access be made wider to accommodate the large farm equipment that he was using on that field. She stated the improvements would not be related to their business and felt they should not be held responsible for those improvements.

Mielke stated this would need to be reviewed with the Township, as they are the road authority. He also mentioned any widening or improvements made within the Hwy 5 right-of-way should be addressed with MnDOT also, as they are the road authority for Hwy 5.

Chairman Kerber opened the public hearing to allow any members of the public to speak on the request.

Harlan Rieck, 12460 Hwy 5, asked if MnDOT had offered any comments about the request.

Mielke repeated the email response from MnDOT on December 16, 2025, stating, *MnDOT has no comments to make on this dog kennel expansion. The expansion will have minimal impacts to MnDOT ROW.* It appears that the expansion request does not create a concern for Hwy 5.

Mr. Rieck stated he was concerned about the (kennel) access on Rome Av and customer traffic being able to see around his large farm machinery.

Shannon Lovich, 10625 Rome Av, recapped the three main items of concern stated in the letter from neighbors. They felt the expanded hours allow more activity and additional noise and the current hours should be tenable to maintain a business based on their research. She was pleased to hear about the proposed plantings for noise mitigation. She stated that they will report barking when they hear it to provide a record. She stated there is a concern that the proposed chain-link fencing with slats is not the same as what is currently in place and may be less noise mitigating. Ms. Lovich acknowledged the lighting change as a significant improvement and mentioned there is still some visible lighting directed toward Rome Av.

Chairman Kerber asked if the lights could be dimmed at a designated time.

Lyle Braun, 15795 102nd St, owner of the property, stated two of the lights along Hwy 5 are in place to illuminate the flag. A light at the peak of the building is for the front parking area. He used the map to illustrate the changes that were made to the lighting and stated he could move one light further down on the building but would like to wait until the weather is more desirable. Chairman asked the applicant for any additional comments.

Mr. Pritchard stated there is a motion-sensored light in one of the fenced outdoor play areas that is very motion sensitive. He said they will have the employees manually turn that light off at the end of the day so it does not remain on at night. He stated there will be two lights added in the new outdoor play area which they will consciously direct downward and away from Rome Av.

Mielke asked if lighting is proposed on the expanded north play area.

Mr. Pritchard stated that is a future space for growth and is not planned to be used immediately. Their current focus will be the area to the southwest.

A motion was made by Hoeser to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Wakefield. Chairman Hoeser called for a vote on the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried. The public hearing was closed at 7:49 p.m.

Hoeser commented that he lives on Hwy 7 and was surprised that no one has commented on how noisy the highway traffic can be at times. He felt that some of the dog noise might be overshadowed by traffic noise.

Mr. Braun agreed that there is a lot of traffic noise which he hears when maintaining the property.

Chairman Kerber the board for any additional discussion about the request.

Wakefield commented that the Township heard and approved the recommendation to increase the hours of operation and request a maximum of 100 dogs.

Wakefield made a motion to **approve and adopt Resolution #26-01** incorporating the findings of fact and staff recommendations allowing for a commercial kennel expansion on the parcel legally described in Exhibit A. Grazzini seconded the motion for approval. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Steinhagen and seconded by Hoeser to adjourn the meeting. All voted aye. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.