

**Beltrami County Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment Meeting
Minutes for Monday, April 07, 2025
County Administration Building – County Board Room
701 Minnesota Ave NW
Bemidji, Minnesota 56601**

General Business

Members present: Ed Fussy
 Don Hazeman
 Bruce Poppel
 Bill Best
 Doug Underthun
 Craig Gaasvig
 Todd Stanley

Members absent: None

Others Present: Brent Rud, Director, Beltrami County Environmental Services Department
 Greg Larson, Beltrami County Environmental Services Department
 Alec Wilcox, Beltrami County Environmental Services Department
 Shannon Schmidt, Beltrami County Environmental Services Department
 Matt Murray, 304 3rd St NW, Bemidji, MN 56601
 John Carlson, 2900 Birchmont Dr NE, Bemidji, MN 56601
 Curtiss Hunt, 9217 Oman Rd NE, Bemidji, MN 56601

Chairman called the Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment Meeting to order at 6:00 PM. **Board and staff introduced themselves to members of the audience. Brent reviewed the meeting procedures and process, as well as the agenda, for those in attendance.** The meeting minutes for February 24, 2025, were brought forward for approval. **Bruce Poppel moved to approve the meeting minutes of February 24, 2025. Motion seconded by Bill Best.**

Motion carried and approved.

Old Business

Brent Rud, Environmental Services Director, provided a synopsis to review revisions made to the Shoreland Management Ordinance. The Shoreland Management Ordinance was originally adopted in 1992 and has not been revised since 2006. Clarification was asked for by Board members on the difference between an accessory structure and a water-oriented accessory structure. Some confusion on the “top of bluff” definition was also expressed. In definitions, it isn’t clear whether “sub-standard” has the same meaning as “non-conforming”. It was clarified in Section 906.C that “feed lots” are not the same as “pasture”.

Brent explained that unnecessary sections and standards were deleted. Existing practices were clarified. New tables and appendices for lakes and rivers were created to reduce confusion. Several definitions, including “top of bluff” have changed. The definition of a deck versus a patio has changed from 12” separation to 30”. Patios and platforms may now be placed within the lake setback with a permit and shall not exceed 400 square feet in size combined. Platforms must not be more than 1’ above or below the ground with a maximum size of 200 square feet and at least 10’ from the ordinary high-water level. Patios will be handled similar to non-conforming deck standards.

The Use Table has been revised. More uses are being allowed in more lake classes than the current version of the ordinance allows. Required lot sizes for parcels on a General Development Lake have increased. Lot size requirements for sewer lots in General Development lakes have been added. Lot size requirements have also been added for parcels on a river. Minnesota DNR harbor setbacks will be reduced to half of the normal required setback.

Guest quarters will now be allowed an increased height of 20’ (up from 15’). Language dictating a guest quarter’s location and the required use of the same septic system as the principal structure have been removed from the ordinance.

Two small accessory structures will be allowed on a parcel without a permit, as long as all setbacks can be met, and the combined size does not exceed 250 square feet.

Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) information has been removed from the Shoreland Management Ordinance and will be referenced in the County SSTS Ordinance.

Solar collectors will be limited to residential use only (7.5 kW) without a Conditional Use Permit. Solar collectors must meet all setbacks. Ordinance now clarifies when a permit for a solar collector is required and when it is not.

A provision was added to the ordinance whereby larger earthmoving projects would be required to obtain a Conditional Use Permit. Clarification on what permit is required for any size earth moving project has been added. No new “beaches” will be allowed where one does not already

exist. New standards for residential “beach blankets” or other beach options have also been added.

Resorts and campgrounds now have their own section in the ordinance created specifically for them. New density standards to increase allowable density and create an easier planning process for resort owners to expand or upgrade have been created.

****Permits will now be valid for TWO years (currently only valid for one year).****

The Planning Commission opened the floor for public comments.

- **Curtiss Hunt:** Would like more information on the solar section of the ordinance and how it will affect residents.
- **Matt Murray:** Matt expressed his disagreement with the shoreland buffer provision. Matt feels that the County should accept the State of Minnesota’s Chapter 103F.48 state drainage definition which allows mowing, rather than the more restrictive Beltrami County “no mow zone” buffer guidelines. “Mowing keeps shoreline vegetation healthy.” Matt feels that residents with lake/riverfront property should be allowed to mow right down to the water’s edge and that it would be a disincentive to move to the area if they are not allowed to do so.

Matt also expressed his concerns with the ordinance section on Commercial PUDs and the allowed density on conversions. Property owners do NOT want to have to eliminate structures when converting from a resort to a Planned Unit Development (PUD). Matt would like the current conversion language to remain.

Matt discussed that Northern Township has sewerred and unsewerred lots on Lake Bemidji. Sewerred lots should have reduced setbacks. Guest quarters are allowed currently on parcels of a 5-acre minimum size. The revised ordinance is changing this to 7.5 acres. Matt does not agree with the idea of a “beach blanket” either. Property owners would find the idea of riprap, then a buffer, and then a sand beach very undesirable.

Finding no further public comment, the Chairman closed the floor for public comment on the Shoreland Management Ordinance review.

Brent Rud put the Solar Collector section of the revised ordinance up on the big screen for Curtiss Hunt to look over. Curtiss was fine with what he read and did not have any additional questions.

A Board member asked if the Board should meet again to address comments from tonight’s meeting. Brent agreed to review contested sections of the revised ordinance again and provide another revised version of the ordinance via email before the next Planning Commission meeting. Final revisions could then be discussed at the April 28, 2025, meeting.

Chairman then closed the Planning Commission Public Hearing on the Shoreland Management Ordinance revisions.

Motion by Bruce Poppel to adjourn the Planning Commission Public Hearing for April 07, 2025. Motion was seconded by Todd Stanley. Motion carried and approved. Chair called the meeting for April 07, 2025, officially adjourned. The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 28, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Brent Rud
Beltrami County ESD Director



Chairman
Beltrami County Planning Commission