

**Beltrami County Planning Commission  
Minutes for Wednesday, November 13, 2024  
County Administration Building – County Board Room  
701 Minnesota Ave NW  
Bemidji, Minnesota 56601**

<b>General Business</b>
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Members present:     Bruce Poppel  
                              Todd Stanley  
                              Don Hazeman  
                              Bill Best  
                              Doug Underthun  
                              Craig Gaasvig

Members absent:     Ed Fussy

Others Present:     Brent Rud, Director, Beltrami County Environmental Services Department  
                              Rose Moore, Environmental Services Technician, Beltrami County  
                              Environmental Services Department  
                              Shannon Schmitt, Office Specialist, Beltrami County Environmental  
                              Services Department  
                              Tom Harmon, 5029 Summerset Ln SE, Bemidji MN 56601  
                              John Carlson, 2900 Birchmont Dr NE, Bemidji MN 56601  
                              Karen Gaasvig, PO Box 730, Bemidji MN 56619  
                              Patricia Heart, 22076 Pine Breeze Trl NE, Cass Lake MN 56633  
                              Christina Regas 17480 Grassy Island Ln NE, Hines MN 56647  
                              Brian Merschman, 407 Meadow Ct NE, Bemidji MN 56601  
                              Joleen Parker, 711 20<sup>th</sup> St NW, Bemidji MN 56601

Co-Chairman called the Planning Commission Meeting to order at 6:00 PM. **Board and staff introduced themselves to members of the audience. Brent Rud reviewed the meeting procedures and process for those in attendance.**

<b>Planning Commission</b>
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Brent Rud welcomed everyone in the room and gave a presentation on the Cannabis Legalization Implementation. Brent gave a brief overview of the State of Minnesota Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) and the 2023 law that legalized cannabis for recreational use in Minnesota. A county ordinance stipulating regulation of local Minnesota businesses and the operation of

cannabis or hemp businesses is needed. Brent went over important dates, such as January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, the due date for counties to have an ordinance and rules in place. ONLY retail cannabis businesses need to register with Beltrami County. ALL cannabis business types must be licensed with the State of Minnesota. The retail business registration process and the fact that cities and towns may delegate their registration authority to the county was discussed. Local governments may adopt an ordinance that limits the number of licensed retail cannabis businesses to one per 12,500 residents. Cannabis zoning was explained, noting counties will need to determine which cannabis businesses will be permitted/allowed in the different county zoning districts and if the businesses will need a conditional or interim use permit. Brent noted that this may vary for cultivation, manufacturing, and retail. Other concerns to be considered were listed, such as odor and ventilation, security, water use, temporary cannabis events and solid waste management/disposal. Brent went over a summary of zoning, low potency edibles, and then next steps for the cannabis ordinance.

The Co-Chairman opened the floor for public comment.

- **John Carlson** asked a question of the Board. If a client applied to be in the lottery to be a grower and then received a license, do they automatically get to be a retailer?
- **Christina Regas**, City of Blackduck Administrator, approached the podium and discussed issues the City of Blackduck is having since their business district is all located within 100' from their school. The City of Blackduck would like to have the possibility to allow a cannabis business in the Blackduck business district. Christina showed a map of the City of Blackduck business district and noted the furthest the cannabis business could be from the school, but still in the business district, would be 200'. Questions were asked from the Board to better understand the specifics of the type of cannabis businesses Blackduck would allow in the business district. It was noted later in the public hearing that Blackduck was planning to delegate authority to Beltrami County. Christina asked the Board to consider a 500' buffer rather than the 1000' buffer to have the possibility for cannabis businesses to be located next to The Pond Bar and Grill & Liquor store. The Board noted if Blackduck does not delegate regulation and registration to the county, the city could make their own buffer requirement. Christina concluded that due to the small administrative staff and limited police force, it would not be reasonable for Blackduck to have their own ordinance. The Board asked if the Blackduck school board was informed of the possibility of a cannabis business in the Blackduck business district. Christina noted that she gave a presentation to the school board about the possibility of having a cannabis business within the business district.
- **Joleen Parker** brought an OCM draft of "lottery to grow" process to the Board to explain the process. Joleen's son is currently working through the lottery process to become a licensed cannabis growing business. Joleen noted that there are 9 different licenses under the "lottery to grow" that could be applied for. Her son's business applied for the mezzo business license. Joleen also noted that with a mezzo business license, they are allowed a retail location in addition to the ability to grow. Joleen asked if her son's business would open a retail portion of his business, would his business count towards the county's

allotted cannabis business count? The Board discussed this question and asked clarifying questions about Joleen's son's business.

Finding no further public comment, the Co-Chairman closed the floor for public comment.

The Board discussed different business permits, such as mezzo business, and if the ordinance should specify between permits. Board members discussed if school boards should be directly involved if a city or township is deviating from the 1000' buffer. The Board discussed if the City of Blackduck could be listed in the Cannabis Ordinance as receiving approval to deviate from the 1000' buffer, and if this exception would be fair to other towns or cities. The Board discussed different options to remedy this. The Board and Brent Rud reviewed section 3.1 Minimum Buffer Requirements in the current Beltrami County draft Cannabis Ordinance and added language for towns or cities that delegate authority to Beltrami County to be able to reduce the minimum buffer requirements with a vote of support at a town or city meeting citing the specific business application and acceptable buffer distance.

**Motion by Bruce Poppel to amend section 3.1 Minimum Buffer Requirements of the draft Beltrami County Cannabis Ordinance and recommend approval of the ordinance to the Beltrami County Board. Doug Underthun seconded the motion.**


**Motion unanimously carried and approved.**

**Motion by Doug Underthun to adjourn the Planning Commission Public Meeting for November 13, 2024. Motion was seconded by Todd Stanley. Motion carried and approved. Co-Chair called the meeting for November 13, 2024, officially adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,



Brent Rud  
Beltrami County ESD Director

  
Vice Chairman  
Beltrami County Planning Commission