

Planning and Zoning Board Meeting
February 5, 2025
7:00 PM

The monthly meeting was called to order by Chair Dean Holthaus with members Robin Caufman, Ron Mehr, Jerry Hemmesch, and Clerk/Zoning Administrator Lynn Burg present.

Supervisor Matt Burg and Clerk Kathy Hemmesch were also present.

Minutes from the December 4, 2025 meeting were read. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Hemmesch, seconded by Mehr. Motion carried 4-0.

Holthaus asked about when each board member started and the length of their terms. Clerk Kathy Hemmesch stated that terms are three years and will be placed on the Town Board agenda in October or November for members wishing to continue serving.

Board terms are as follows:

- Dean Holthaus – 12/2028
- Ron Mehr – 12/2026
- Robin Caufman – 12/2026
- Jerry Hemmesch – 12/2027

Chair and Co-Chair positions will be revisited in 2027 to determine how long each position will be held. A motion to revisit these positions in 2027 was made by Hemmesch, seconded by Caufman. Motion carried 4-0.

A motion was made by Mehr, seconded by Hemmesch, to keep Dean Holthaus as Chair and Robin Caufman as Co-Chair. Motion carried 4-0.

Holthaus brought up permit fees, and the board reviewed each fee. They would like to bring the information to the Town Board.

Holthaus stated that the comprehensive plan (growth map) will be reviewed at the April meeting.

Holthaus asked Supervisor Burg if the board should review Stearns County's Solar and Wind ordinances at this meeting or at a separate meeting. Supervisor Burg suggested reviewing the ordinances and returning for discussion.

A motion to extend the meeting to March 5, 2026 at 7:00 PM to review the Solar and Wind ordinances was made by Hemmesch, seconded by Caufman. Motion carried 4-0.

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The extended meeting was called to order by Chair Dean Holthaus with members Robin Caufman, Ron Mehr, Jerry Hemmesch, Sheila Gaebel, and Clerk/Zoning Administrator Lynn Burg present.

Supervisor Matt Burg was also present.

The board discussed wind energy, including impacts on wildlife, noise, turbine disposal, and responsibility for decommissioning costs. Setbacks from homes, lakes, and other structures were also discussed. Stearns County allows landowners within a 5-mile radius to have wind turbines and requires a public hearing.

Board member positions on wind turbines:

- Holthaus, Gaebel, Mehr, and Hemmesch do not support wind turbines.
- Caufman supports small-scale turbines for home use (up to 5.99 kW).

The board agreed on a 2,000-foot setback in the A80 District.

The board discussed solar farms. They noted that solar does not produce noise and that disposal costs are approximately \$0.50–\$0.60 per pound. Holthaus supports solar for home use but has concerns about solar fields, especially runoff in clay areas. Mehr asked whether bonding should be required for removal of solar farms. Gaebel supports solar for home use but not solar farms.

A motion to place Wind and Solar on next month's agenda for continued discussion was made by Hemmesch, seconded by Gaebel. Motion carried 5-0.

A motion to adjourn was made by Hemmesch, seconded by Mehr. Motion carried 5-0.

The next Planning and Zoning Board meeting will be held on April 2, 2026 at 7:00 PM.