



**PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
IN PERSON AND VIA ZOOM
TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026 – 4:00 PM
CITY HALL – SECOND FLOOR**

MINUTES

1. Call meeting to order

Chairperson Manager Houseman called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

2. Roll call

Present: Chairperson Manager Houseman, Director of Public Works Navin, Council Representative Schultz, Commissioner Ciccarelli. Also present: Clerk/Treasurer/Finance Director, Deputy Clerk, Director of Neighborhood and Building Services and the City Attorney (via zoom).

Absent: Commissioners Kessenich and Shull.

3. New Business

- a. *Review and possible action relating to the **minutes of the March 10, 2026, Plan Commission meeting** (Ebbert, Clerk/Treasurer/Finance Director)*
Ciccarelli moved, seconded by Schultz to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2026 Plan Commission meeting. Motion carried.
- b. *Review and possible action on a Conditional Use Permit relating to occupancy by a construction company, including indoor business activities and ancillary equipment storage at the property located at 525 Jefferson St. (CUP-2026-02) (Draeger, Director of Neighborhood and Building Services)*
Director Draeger stated that the proposed land uses and operations are generally consistent with the property's historic uses. The building and site were originally developed to accommodate commercial and industrial-type businesses, and the current proposal aligns with that established pattern. The applicant represents long-standing Fort Atkinson businesses that have outgrown their current locations and are seeking to remain and expand within the community. The subject property provides increased flexibility and opportunity for long-term operational growth while supporting the retention of established local businesses.

While the precise number of required parking spaces has not been fully determined as part of this analysis, a commonly used benchmark for a business of this type is

approximately one parking space per employee. Based on that general metric, the existing parking area located on the west side of the property, if paved and properly striped, would be capable of accommodating approximately 30 or more parking spaces. This supply would significantly exceed the current number of employees (approximately 10) and would also accommodate the applicant's projected future workforce of approximately 20 employees.

The Conditional Use Permit (CUP) will facilitate additional vehicle and truck traffic to and from the site as part of the expanded operations. While the applicant is proposing limited improvements, including paving one ADA-compliant handicap stall, painting the exterior of the building, and installing landscaping, additional site improvements are necessary to bring the broader property into greater compliance with City standards. These improvements include paving the existing gravel parking area, installing concrete aprons, and constructing sidewalk improvements at both west parking lot approaches to the site. Sidewalk installation is also required along Clarence and Lorman Streets.

The proposed paving will increase the amount of impervious surface on the site, which requires additional landscaping under City regulations. In the opinion of City staff, the landscaping plan proposed by the applicant satisfies these requirements and provides an appropriate level of site enhancement. City staff recommends that the sidewalk requirement along Jefferson Street be deferred at this time. Jefferson Street is anticipated to be reconstructed in the future, and sidewalk installation could be completed more efficiently as part of that coordinated public project.

Future reconstruction of Jefferson Street will likely impact a portion of the existing parking area on the east side of the property, as several of those spaces currently extend into the public right-of-way. When that reconstruction occurs, those spaces will likely be reduced. The additional parking capacity available on the west side of the property will help offset this future loss and ensure that adequate on-site parking remains available.

City staff have discussed these site improvement requirements with the applicant, and the applicant has acknowledged the need to complete them. Given the scope of the required improvements, particularly the sidewalk installations, consideration should be given to allow an extended timeline of up to one (1) year for completion. This approach would reduce the immediate financial burden while still ensuring the improvements are completed within a reasonable and defined timeframe.

It is also important to recognize that the City has placed significant emphasis on revitalizing this area through public investment, planning, and allocation of resources. While the proposed project includes modest building and site improvements, the project represents reinvestment in an existing commercial property and supports continued business activity in the area. The additional required enhancements beyond what is proposed by the applicant will further advance the City's long-term vision for the corridor. Staff acknowledges that several uncertainties identified in the Overview, particularly

related to final parking counts, site circulation, and the extent of required infrastructure improvements, remain at this stage of review. However, staff finds that these unknowns are appropriately addressed through the recommended conditions and required site improvements associated with the project. The paving and striping of the west parking area provide a clear path to achieving minimum parking needs, while required sidewalk installations, access improvements, and landscaping enhancements ensure compliance with City standards. Additionally, the ability to defer certain improvements, such as along Jefferson Street, and allow an extended timeline for completion, provides flexibility. Collectively, these recommendations establish a framework that mitigates current uncertainties and ensures the site can function effectively and in conformance with the City's zoning ordinance as the project moves forward.

Finally, Wisconsin State Statutes (2017 Wisconsin Act 67) limit a municipality's ability to regulate improvements beyond those required by the zoning ordinance through the Conditional Use process. Under state law, denial of a Conditional Use Permit must be supported by substantial evidence demonstrating that the proposal does not meet ordinance standards.

In summary, the proposed development appears capable of meeting applicable City ordinances and is generally consistent with adopted City plans. The proposal supports reinvestment in an existing building and the continued operation and expansion of established local businesses, subject to compliance with the identified site and infrastructure improvements.

Schultz moved, seconded by Ciccarelli, to approve the Conditional Use Permit with the following conditions:

- 1) Those conditions as listed in Section 15.10.32(9) (CUP procedure) shall apply to all Conditional Uses.
- 2) The Conditional Use permit only applies to permitting a Vehicle Service and Repair land use on the subject property for the applicant and their associated business. If any other Conditional Use in the UMU zoning district were to be requested in the future by the applicant or a different entity on the subject property, it shall require the completion of a full new Conditional Use process (Section 15.10.32).
- 3) The Vehicle Service and Repair land use shall be limited to only indoor activities (Section 15.03.10(20)) as proposed by the applicant. If any outdoor activities are requested in the future, an updated Site Plan shall be required to be provided to the Plan Commission for review and approval in accordance with all applicable zoning standards (Section 15.03.10(20)(a)-(c)).
- 4) Outdoor activity shall be limited to only those permitted by right land uses within the UMU zoning district, including, but not limited to, Outdoor Display (Section 15.03.10(4)) and Incidental Outdoor Storage (15.03.28(17)). All applicable land use requirements associated with any outdoor activity shall be met and maintained in compliance with all the requirements of the City of Fort Atkinson Municipal Code.
- 5) Require all parking areas be paved with a hard surface per City Standard (15.06.06(19)).

6. Require a parking/stripping plan be submitted and approved by City Staff, which meets City ordinances.
- 7) Require all approaches be constructed of 6" of concrete per City Standard (15.06.06(19)).
- 8) Require the installation of a public sidewalk along Clarence and Lorman streets within one year of final approval of this CUP.
- 9) Require bicycle parking when Jefferson Street is reconstructed by the City.
- 10) The applicant must obtain all required permits prior to construction.
- 11) Minor changes to this CUP can be approved administratively, but any substantial change to the conditions or use of the property must be approved by the Plan Commission through amending this CUP.
- 12) Any other recommendations of City staff and the Plan Commission.

Ciccarelli stated that the current municipal code does not distinguish between short-term (visitors) and long-term (occupants) bike storage. Suggest that over the next year staff work to change the code to align with the terminology used by other cities.

c. *Presentation to the Plan Commission on **Premier Real Estate Management LLC, Concept Plan** for four 24-unit multifamily buildings located at 550 McMillen St. (Draeger, Director of Neighborhood and Building Services)*

The City has an identified need for additional housing, and the proposed conceptual plan for multifamily development would contribute additional dwelling units within the City. Future development of this parcel would be consistent with and complementary to ongoing development patterns in the surrounding area. Including the recent renovation to the Fort Healthcare Facility, which moved most care options back to the existing main campus. The move created several redevelopment opportunities in the area.

A Group Development permits multiple principal structures on a site while requiring compliance with all applicable density, intensity, and bulk regulations. This type of development is reviewed through the Conditional Use Permit process and allows for multiple buildings on a single site. The proposed project would consist of up to four 24-unit residential buildings. Each unit would include one or two bedrooms, one or two bathrooms, underground and surface parking, with unit sizes ranging from approximately 780 to 1,164 square feet. The development would also include office space and a centralized mail pickup area.

The project would generate limited employment opportunities within the City, including one full-time property management position and up to two part-time positions for maintenance and housekeeping. The applicant has experience constructing similar developments in other communities, including the City of Reedsburg and the City of Portage. The building design incorporates an underground parking garage, which provides covered parking while minimizing additional impervious surface area that would otherwise be created by detached garage structures or garage banks.

Overall, City staff find that the proposed concept is compatible with the character and

pattern of surrounding development, would contribute additional high-quality housing options to the City's inventory, and would generate modest employment opportunities. Furthermore, the presence of adjacent properties zoned Institutional (I), which permit residential uses and currently accommodate multifamily senior housing developments, reinforces the appropriateness of the proposed use within this area. Note that, due to the preliminary nature of this concept plan, City staff has not vetted this project relating to emergency access, utilities, traffic, or other items. A thorough review will be conducted during the next phases of the project.

Ciccarelli met with Director Draeger and provided written comments regarding the project. He wanted to highlight some of the ideas for the Plan Commission. The proposed plan has Schumacher Way ending in a cul de sac. He would like to propose extending Handeyside Lane to Schumacher Way and possibly even further to Memorial Drive. Furthermore, if the street plan were to change, the placement of the buildings could align more with the street to provide a more urban feel.

Ciccarelli further questioned whether the proposed plan requires the number of outdoor parking spaces since the site will also have underground parking. There is a berm behind the planned buildings and the existing Wellington Meadows. The berm could potentially shield the view of the parking from Wellington Meadows.

Manager Houseman is pleased with the concept plan moving forward as it's been in the works for several years.

Council Representative Schultz stated that he doesn't think the parking spaces need to be moved to the back of the building. When the parking is in front of the building and close to the street, it is less opportunistic for criminal activity than when hidden from road view.

No action taken.

- d. *Review and possible action relating to a **Site Plan Review** for signage at MBE CPA, 524 Whitewater Ave. (SPR-2026-02) (Draeger, Director of Neighborhood and Building Services)*
- The subject parcel lies within the Central Neighborhoods Planning Area and is identified as Mixed Use within the City's Comprehensive Plan. The opportunities included in this planning area include:
- Urban living experience
 - Single family neighborhood character
 - Historic preservation balanced with modernization
 - Bed & Breakfast Opportunities
 - Schools, parks & downtown as gathering places
 - Neighborhood retail revitalization, along Janesville, Madison & Whitewater Avenues

The subject property is also shown as Neighborhood Commercial on the Future Land Use Map. The Neighborhood Commercial future land use category is intended for small-scale, neighborhood supporting retail, service, and office uses. Neighborhood Commercial uses

are typically smaller in scale and have fewer traffic and other impacts than Community Commercial land uses. City Staff believe the proposed sign is in concert with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Ciccarelli moved, seconded by Schultz to approve the Site Plan Review for signage. Motioned carried.

e. *Review and possible action relating to the **Habitat for Humanity Fort Atkinson Critical Repair Program** guidelines (Houseman, City Manager)*

Manager Houseman stated that resolution set forth by the City Council requires that this committee review and approve the eligibility guidelines for The Habitat for Humanity Fort Atkinson Critical Repair Program guidelines.

Proof of Ownership (deed or title documentation)

- Proof of Homeowner's Insurance (current policy declarations page)
- Verification of Residence – Owner Occupied (applicant must reside in the home as primary residence)
- Current on Property Taxes (no delinquent taxes)
- Minimum property ownership duration of 1 year prior to application date
- Title Search (clear title required; no unresolved liens that would prevent project completion)

To qualify, total gross household income must fall at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Required Income & Financial Documentation

- Credit Report (pulled by Habitat for Humanity representative upon signed authorization)
- Two (2) most recent pay stubs for every household member age 18 or older *
- Two (2) most recent years of federal tax returns (all pages and schedules) *
- Verification of current status on Property Taxes (county tax statement or online printout, dated within 30 days)
- Two (2) most recent bank statements – all accounts, all pages
- Verification of current status on Mortgage Payments (most recent mortgage statement showing payment history)
- ACH Payment Authorization

Habitat will serve as the general contractor; responsible for scope of work, homeowner applications, communication, project management and quality control. We will hire local, licensed and insured subcontractors who specialize in our scope of work needs while supporting Habitat's mission when possible. In some cases, contractors outside of Jefferson County may be required.

- Each project cap is \$20,000
- Primary focus are exterior critical home repairs which include:

- Roofing
- Windows
- Siding
- Soffit/Fascia/Gutters
- Code remediation
- Some accessibility modifications
- At the discretion of Habitat staff scope of work may include:
 - Plumbing
 - Electrical
 - HVAC
 - Foundation repair

Ciccarelli questioned if there would be project completion reports. Manager Houseman responded that there will be monthly reports from staff and an annual update from Habitat. We will need to maintain privacy for individual homeowners since the program has income requirements, but there will be before and after pictures as a way to celebrate wins in our community.

Ciccarelli moved, seconded by Schultz to approve the Habitat for Humanity Fort Atkinson Critical Repair Program guidelines.

f. Update on previously approved projects (Houseman)

Chairperson Manager Houseman stated that the City Council did a 1st reading of two zoning amendments and staff are preparing for a 2nd and 3rd/final reading; the zoning map amendment for Mehta Lane and the zoning map amendment PUD for the Premier Bank Parking lot downtown. City Council did a 1st reading and prepared for a 2nd and 3rd/final reading of the zoning text amendments that make the changes to the City's signage code. They will all go back to City Council on April 9, 2026.

No action was taken.

4. Adjournment

Schultz moved, seconded by Ciccarreli to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney Thom
Deputy Clerk