

CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA
MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMISSION
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2025

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a meeting of the Hastings Planning Commission was conducted at the Hastings Municipal Airport, 3300 W 12th Street, Hastings, Nebraska, on October 21, 2025

Chair Sinner called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in Regular Session. The following members were present: Michelle Lewis, Greg Sinner, Shawn Rossi, Craig Hubbard, Shannon Adler, Joe Kindig, and Jody Stutzman. Absent: Chuck Rosenberg and Lou Kully.

The following City Officials were present: City Attorney, Jesse Oswald, Director/City Engineer, Lee Vrooman, Director of Development Services, Kevin Kubo, City Planner, Ember Batelaan, Community Risk Reduction Officer, Anthony Murphy, Utility IT Manager, Kirk Layton, Public Information Manager, Tony Herrman, and Administrative Assistant, Melissa Woodard.

Chair Sinner led the Commission in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

Chair Sinner called for a motion to adopt the current agenda for the October 21, 2025, meeting. Moved by Rossi, seconded by Hubbard, to adopt the current agenda. Ayes: Stutzman, Hubbard, Sinner, Rossi, Lewis, Adler, and Kindig. Nays: None. Motion carried: 7-0.

PUBLIC NOTICE - Official Notice of the Regular Meeting was published in the Hastings Tribune on Saturday, October 11, 2025. Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statutes Section 84-1412, the public is advised that a copy of today's agenda and all reproducible written material, which will be discussed at today's meeting, is available for public review. Also, a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is posted and accessible to members of the public.

Citizen Communications

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Meeting of September 16, 2025

Chair Sinner called for a motion to approve the September 16, 2025, minutes. Moved by Lewis, seconded by Stutzman: Roll Call: Ayes: Stutzman, Hubbard, Sinner, Lewis, Adler, Kindig, and Rossi. Nays: None. Motion Carried: 7-0.

Special Order of Business -None

Unfinished Business

- a. Continued Applications – None
- b. Tabled Applications- None
- c. Postponed Applications – None

Chair Sinner read the Public Hearing Rules.

Chair Sinner opened the Public Hearing.

Public Hearings

- a. **2025-495 Public hearing to consider a request for Plan Modification 2025-4 to Redevelopment Area #1 for the Middle School Redevelopment Project. The area of redevelopment is approximately 1.69 acres and is generally located northeast of the intersection of North Lincoln Avenue and West 5th Street in the City of Hastings, Adams County, Nebraska.** Batelaan presented the Staff Report to consider a request from Plan Modification to Redevelopment Area #1 for the Middle School Redevelopment Project. The area of redevelopment is approximately 1.69 acres and is generally located northeast of the intersection of North Lincoln Avenue and West 5th Street in the City of Hastings, Adams County, Nebraska. Staff recommended that the Planning Commission recommend approval to the City Council for Plan Modification to Redevelopment Area #1 for the Middle School Redevelopment Project, based on the findings provided in the staff report and the Redevelopment Plan Modification materials.

Randy Chick, 520 W 1st St, Hastings, NE, for the Community Redevelopment Authority. Chick began with the CRA purchase of the property in 2022, and it is a very challenging project. A group of local investors will be taking this on. It is a 15-million-dollar project. The sources of funds are bank financing and owner equity, almost ten million dollars. Then, using a slew of grants and loans, to make it financially feasible. The first step, the Cleanup Grant, is for asbestos removal, a \$450,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency. Chick outlined their timeline. Batelaan added that the developer provided a letter to the Planning Commission. Chick said Rippe had a grand launch for the Trailside Project at the same time as the meeting, which Councilman Kindig also attended.

Tom Genung, 902 E 7th St, Hastings, NE. Voiced his interest and support of the project. He has witnessed the lack of progress with the Middle School, and, along with supporting the proposal, thanked the commission for holding a public hearing.

Chair Sinner declared the Public Hearing closed.

Hubbard opened, saying he remembers some of the problems with the building. He doesn't see how spending 15 million and having it only worth 9 million with a 7.2% return investment makes sense and is not feasible. The City Council just had a nasty budget, with a developer grant of \$470,000.00 for asbestos abatement in this project. What did the city spend on the City Building asbestos removal? Where was that grant for City Hall?

Jesse Oswald, City Attorney, let them know that the grant couldn't be used for government buildings.

Hubbard pointed out that is how the taxpayer looks at it.

Stutzman said Dave Rippe is not here, but for all he has done for Hastings, she couldn't say enough about his personal investment in this project. She is all for this project and notes that if we don't show our appreciation, Hastings will not be a place where people want to invest.

Hubbard questioned whether Dave and his colleagues had done a project that didn't require funding from the taxpayers, whether a TIF or CDBG Grant?

Chick couldn't answer that question, and Rippe was not there to answer.

Hubbard asked how Rippe's different projects could be sustained with a fifty percent occupancy.

Chick pointed out how Dave Rippe is not the only partner. Chief Construction is one of the investors, so even if it takes them time to lease, they will get there. Chick explained how valuation works, between a 15-million-dollar new building and a 100-year-old building, where the assessor will slash and depreciate the building, it won't be appraised as high by the County Assessor, but using the TIF Calculation, in terms of return on investment, which the owners and project investors look at, they will receive tax benefits and appreciation.

Hubbard questioned whether the project had been put out for suggestions.

Chick said the CRA advertises quarterly on properties they own. The community knows they have been seeking a developer for this project. They had two developers interested, in Omaha and Lincoln, for a low-income tax credit project. That was not the preferred project; they wanted it to be at the market rate of low to moderate income for this building. That is the alternative if we can't find someone to do a market-rate project; we will be looking at a low-income housing tax credit project.

Lewis asked him to explain how TIF works, that it's not taking tax dollars.

Chick explained how TIF works, with the increased valuation. Increasing those

taxes by \$186,000.00. The developer goes out and borrows approximately 1.8 million and over fifteen years, as those new taxes come in, the CRA captures those, sending those to the holder of the TIF borrowing note to pay that down, no tax money comes out of the City coffers, so up to fifteen years, the city, schools, county, won't get their shares. When the fifteen-year period is over, there is a large influx of annual cash going to the taxing entities.

Sinner questioned if a structural engineer had gone through the building way back, and if it had ever been mitigated.

Chick said the CRA did not hire any structural engineers. The developer has had architects and engineers in the building multiple times. What are the deficiencies you are concerned with?

Sinner said that as an owner of an old building, he knows what happens once you get inside one through the remodel.

Chick said the developers know it's a challenging project.

Kindig stated that Rippe has many projects, with other partners, and is like the spokesman, with a lot of credibility, for getting from Point A to B to C. Kindig feels this project is really cool. There are a lot of rock-solid families involved in this project, to give clarity for Kindig's reason to abstain.

Chair Sinner requested a motion to recommend approval of 2025-495 on property generally located northeast of the intersection of North Lincoln Avenue and West 5th Street, City of Hastings, Adams County, Nebraska. Moved by Stutzman, seconded by Kindig. Ayes: Stutzman, Sinner, Lewis, and Rossi. Nays: Adler and Hubbard. Abstain: Kindig. Motion Failed: 4-2-1.

Chair Sinner opened the Public Hearing.

b. 2025-496 Public hearing for a change of zoning for property generally located northeast of the intersection of North Lincoln Avenue and West 5th Street, from C-2, Central Business District to RP-3, Multiple-Family Residential Planned District, and to amend the Official Zoning District Map.

Batelaan gave the Staff Report to consider the request for a change of zoning for property generally located northeast of the intersection of North Lincoln Avenue and West 5th Street, from C-2, Central Business District, to RP-3, Multiple-Family Residential Planned District, and to amend the Official Zoning District Map. Staff recommended that the Planning Commission recommend approval to the City Council for a change of zoning from C-2 to RP-3 and amend the Official Zoning District Map, based on the staff report, and the revival of a building that has been vacant for many years.

1. With the condition of being constructed as proposed.

Randy Chick, 520 W 1st St, Hastings, NE, for the Community Redevelopment

Authority. Without the change in zoning, it would be challenging to do the project as presented. We would appreciate the support of the rezone.

Tom Genung, 902 E 7th St, spoke in favor of the rezone application.

Chair Sinner closed the public hearing.

Chair Sinner asked for a motion to recommend approval to consider the request for a change of zoning from C-2 to RP-3 and to amend the Official Zoning District Map for property generally located northeast of the intersection of North Lincoln Avenue and West 5th Street, City of Hastings, Adams County, Nebraska. Moved by Lewis, seconded by Rossi. Ayes: Stutzman, Sinner, Rossi, and Lewis. Nays: Adler and Hubbard. Abstain: Kindig. Motion Failed: 4-2-1.

City Attorney Oswald asked for context on why the Commission failed the project, to give to the council.

Hubbard has a letter to give to the City Council for his reasons.

1. Heavy reliance on public funding. If the project fails, it will shift to the taxpayer.
2. Questionable Financial Feasibility.
3. Concentration of projects under one single developer.
4. Significant risk to the public.
5. Project diverts scarce public resources from other potential community priorities, such as infrastructure improvements, small business assistance, business recruitment, and job creation.
6. Discussed modest population fluctuation and Census Bureau projections.

Adler spoke about the taxpayer, whether they understand TIF or not, who sees it as tax dollars going out to an outside entity. Adler agrees with Hubbard on the overemphasis on the construction and development of housing in Hastings.

Rossi disagreed with a lot of what was said. He doesn't have a copy of the letter that was dropped on them. Rossi views TIF as an investment in the community, and it's paid back. Without that TIF, the building would sit at a lower valuation in our community, and he doesn't understand how this falls back on the taxpayer if the project fails. It is not our determination of whether a project fails or doesn't; we determine if it's right for the community. Rossi believes we do need housing, and the argument about housing is completely wrong. If there were nicer housing units, people would move to those housing units, and the problem arises that the people who own the less desirable units would have to put money into those homes to attract people.

Sinner reminded everyone that they had discussed this as requested by the City Attorney,

to pass on to the City Council.

Hubbard discussed the median income and affordable housing, asking what this overall housing does to the community.

Subdivisions

- a. **2025-497 Final Plat for Ponderosa Park Subdivision, generally located southeast of the intersection of North Kansas Avenue and West 22nd Street, in the City of Hastings, Adams County, Nebraska.** Kubo gave the Staff Report to consider the Final Plat for Ponderosa Park Subdivision, generally located southeast of the intersection of North Kansas Avenue and West 22nd Street, in the City of Hastings, Adams County, Nebraska. Staff recommended that the Planning Commission recommend approval to the City Council to consider the Final Plat for Ponderosa Park Subdivision, based on the staff report.

Chair Sinner called for a motion to approve the Final Plat for Ponderosa Park Subdivision. Moved by Hubbard to recommend the approval of the Final Plat for Ponderosa Park Subdivision to the City Council, seconded by Kindig. Roll Call: Ayes: Sinner, Hubbard, Stutzman, Lewis, Adler, Kindig, and Rossi. Nays: None. Motion carried 7-0.

Reports

- a. **Committee Reports:** None.
- b. **Chairman Comments:** Sinner enjoyed the discussion. They will pass this up to the City Council to understand what we do here.
- c. **Staff Reports:** Kubo said Tommy's Car Wash is in the process of excavating the ground. Les Schwab Tire is prepping the site to put in the sewer, and the water is in. Cedar Park and D Street, the site is prepped, and the next step is the construction of the street. Trailside is moving along; they have four set up. They are having an open house today, and he encouraged everyone to go.
- d. Murphy said they have been busy, still in the throes of Fire Prevention month. Educational opportunities for hundreds of kids. Working on all the construction projects as well.

Mayor Beckby asked Chick about the median income of \$61,000.00 in Hastings. Aren't these apartments \$1300.00? Chick stated these are studios, mostly one-bedroom apartments. The 2-bedroom units are up in the

\$1400.00 range. Mayor Beckby asked if the average is 1300-1400 for these units? Chick said it's less than that. Mayor Beckby said if his figures are correct, the household number of \$1300 would be under 20% of income and easily fall within the parameter of no more than 30% of income being spent on housing costs.

Chick stated the citizens online are asking how all the apartments are being built and where all the people are coming from, as they are sitting empty. So, Chick reached out to the most recent project owners. Perry Reid Properties has several thousand apartments across the state. They have 300-400 apartments here. They are owners of Pioneer Trails Flats, an 84-unit complex, built years ago, with 98.6% occupancy. Across the state, their occupancy is 96.8%. The owners of the Hangar 55 Project, a 70+ unit for a 55 plus apartment complex. They aren't full yet, but the restrictive nature of the tenant base, it takes 18-36 months. The new project by Scott Reid indicates there is still a shortage across the state. They say 12-18 months is the lease-up period. Their first 22-unit building has 21 out of the 22 units leased. The building that is not open yet is 50% leased. He has also been asked how all of these fill up, and where people come from. Chick stated that Ember was residing in Grand Island and moved to Hastings, and now lives at the apartment complex, because a year or so ago, nothing was available.

Mayor Beckby stated that Shannon Landauer, with Hastings Economic Development Corporation, had a Housing Report available, which shows a lot of people living in Grand Island who work here. Chick said around 7,000 people. In the housing study, they identified another 800-900 units needed. The Developers and the State are still telling us we have a housing shortage.

Mayor Beckby asked Chick to explain what happens if a TIF project fails. Chick explained that a TIF Loan is done by the same bank that does the financing, they personally guarantee those loans, and a commercial appraisal is done before and after. Chick explained the other loans as well. Banks in first position, TIF is guaranteed and serviced by a bank, so if it goes wrong, the bank will take over the project. Only one project didn't go through. The Bank had to take care of the TIF, recruited a new developer, and finished the units for Low Income Seniors, and the TIF paid the city off for the Water and Sewer. Only interest was lost.

Mayor Beckby asked Hubbard, "What is the fear here? Over 66% is financed through a bank; the building isn't worth anything right now, so where is the fear level coming from?"

Sinner said that this discussion went further than he intended, but it should be picked up in front of the Council. Sinner asked Kubo what was on the next agenda. Kubo said there were seven items on the next agenda.

Sinner asked Kubo for one last comment. Kubo appreciates the Planning Commission's thought processes and understands their concerns, however, we have development in the city, we are growing, we don't see the numbers to show we are growing, but sees the houses that are being built, the businesses that are being invested in, and we have new construction being built all the time, and has faith in this community. We are growing and need to continue to grow. The tools are only given to us to grow. The individuals are investing in us and the community. Kubo appreciates what the Planning Commission does, but keep in mind, we are growing.

Adjourn

Chair Sinner called for a motion to adjourn at 5:23 p.m. Motioned by Stutzman, seconded by Rossi. Roll Call: Ayes: Sinner, Kindig, Adler, Stutzman, Hubbard, Rossi, and Lewis. Nays: None. Motion carried: 7-0

Chair Greg Sinner