

MINUTES OF THE ALBERT LEA PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
October 7, 2025
5:30 pm – City Center

Chairman Lucas Schuster called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Wyeth Anderson, Vice-Chair
Leon Axtman
Matt Dorman
Matt Maras
Lucas Schuster, Chair
Steve Thompson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Rachel Christensen, Ex-Officio
Jared Dawson

STAFF PRESENT

Megan Boeck, City Planner
Cierra Maras, Administrative Assistant

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Axtman and second by Dorman to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Anderson and second by Dorman to approve the September 2, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Staff report prepared by Megan Boeck, City Planner, is to become part of these minutes by reference.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Re-zone 642 Marshall St from R-2 to B-2 (RZ2025-003)

Sorensen reviewed the staff report. He explained that the applicant would like to re-zone from R-2 to B-2 to allow for future expansion of parking and building areas for Security Bank.

Schuster opened the hearing to the public at 5:46 p.m.

Schuster called three times for comment. No one was present to speak.

Schuster closed the hearing to the public at 5:47 p.m.

Motion by Maras and second by Dorman to approve the application to re-zone 642 Marshall Street from One to Four Family Residence District (R-2) to Community Business District (B-2).

Motion passed on a 6-0 voiced vote.

2. Re-zone 21133 and 21135 778th Ave from R-1 to IDD (RZ2025-004)

Sorensen said the applicant has applied to re-zone both properties from R-1 to IDD to proactively plan for selling the properties. He noted that there have been developers interested in developing these properties and that the properties are not being utilized right now.

Schuster opened the hearing to the public at 5:58 p.m.

Barb Beseman stated that there are families with small children in the area and that there have been more accidents since Love's Travel Stop was built. She also stated that the more properties that are re-zoned for more business, the more accidents there will be.

Terri Jensen, representative for the applicants, stated that both properties have been on the market for a long period of time and that the potential buyers see that the location is right near the I-35 ramp and it will work well for commercial business – especially with Love's, Holiday Inn Express, and Trails Travel Center also in close proximity.

Sorensen stated that the re-zoning will make the properties more attractive to buyers and that letting developers know what they can and cannot do with a property is an important part of every project. In addition, he stated that there are processes in place to prevent eye sores, run off, and traffic patterns to lessen the impact on neighbors in the area. Lastly, he stated that it is safe to say that the highest and best use of the properties is not residential given all of the commercial businesses that have developed near the property within the last 10-15 years.

Schuster questioned when the last residential listing was for either property. Jensen stated it has been several years and neither property attracts interested residential developers.

Sorensen stated that the City has been marketing this entire area as IDD for a lengthy period of time and also provided a list of what uses the IDD zoning district would and would not allow. He also stated that if the re-zone is approved, the property owners do have a right to develop their property within the parameters of the IDD code.

Beseman stated that the property values in the area went down after Love's developed and that the same thing is going to happen when these properties develop.

Schuster stated that the economic times around 2008 when Love's developed probably had more to do with the tax impact than the development of Love's.

Schuster closed the hearing to the public at 6:17 p.m.

Motion by Schuster and second by Dorman to re-zone 21133 775th Avenue and 21135 77th Avenue from Single Family Residence District (R-1) to Interstate Development District (IDD).

Motion passed on a 5-0 voiced vote with Thompson abstaining.

COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION

None.

STAFF COMMUNICATION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Axtman and second by Dorman to adjourn the meeting at 6:29 p.m. Motion carried.

Cierra Maras, Planning Commission Secretary

Lucas Schuster, Chairman