MINUTES OF THE CITY OF OKOBOJI PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 2026 – 5:30PM

The Planning and Zoning Commission met at the above date and time at Okoboji City Hall. Commissioners present were Barry Nadler, Doris Welle, Barbara Mendenhall, and Matt Lanfear. Commissioner McMahon was excused. Others present were City Administrator Michael Meyers, Matt Chizek, Nic Madsen, Jim Delperdang, Julie Delperdang, Richard Rosado, Mark Kramer, and Dustin Reynolds.

Motion made by Commissioner Lanfear and seconded by Commissioner Mendenhall to approve the previous meeting minutes from June 29, 2026. Commission members Lanfear, Nadler, Mendenhall, and Welle voted "AYE." Motion approved 4-0.

The Commission opened a public hearing to consider and make a recommendation on an application for lakeshore landscaping at 4317 Lake Shore Drive.

There were no comments received in favor of, in opposition to, or in a neutral position regarding the proposed project.

Dustin Reynolds, representing the property owner, discussed minor modifications to the lakeshore, including adding to an existing retaining wall and addressing drainage issues at the top of the lakeshore by adding a retaining wall. Reynolds also discussed repairs to the existing boathouse, including repairs to the structure and foundation.

Chairperson Welle clarified that the boathouse was not being relocated or undergoing any other substantive modifications. Reynolds confirmed that was not the case.

Commissioner Mendenhall inquired about drainage on the site. Reynolds advised that there were existing intakes at the top of the lakeshore and that drainage was already being captured at the existing lakeshore.

Commissioner Lanfear felt that the proposed work was more of a repair than anything else.

Motion made by Commissioner Nadler and seconded by Commissioner Mendenhall to recommend approval of the lakeshore landscaping project. Commission members Lanfear, Nadler, Mendenhall, and Welle voted "AYE." Motion approved 4-0.

The Commission opened a public hearing to consider and make a recommendation on an application for lakeshore landscaping at 7113 Lake Shore Drive.

There were no comments received in favor of, in opposition to, or in a neutral position regarding the proposed project.

Mark Kramer, representing the property owner, discussed the condition of the steps leading down to the dock at this location. Kramer advised that the steps were in poor condition and that he was proposing to replace them with Rosetta stone. Kramer discussed the steepness of the lakeshore and advised that he was planning to replace and install two 3½- to 4-foot walls of Rosetta stone. Kramer also discussed the plantings that would be installed in front of the retaining walls.

Commissioner Mendenhall inquired if there was a necessity to utilize the large limestone blocks. Kramer advised that was the preference of the client. Kramer noted that Rosetta stone has been used in other applications in the City.

Commissioner Mendenhall advised of her opposition to the use of Rosetta stone in most applications. Mendenhall read aloud portions of the zoning code that she felt spoke in opposition to the use of Rosetta stone and reinforced her belief that the lakeshore should have a green and natural appearance.

Jim Delperdang, a condo owner at 7113 Lake Shore Drive, discussed their desire to have more permanence with the stone walls and steps than their current wood structures.

Commissioner Mendenhall stated that she did not have an issue with the steps, but noted that she was concerned that the lakeshore was so full of block that it looked like a swimming pool.

Commissioner Lanfear discussed the differences between precast stone and naturally occurring or quarried stone. Lanfear discussed some past projects in which the Commission approved projects based on attractive renderings, but when completed, the projects appeared more like a stone monument. Lanfear felt that might be the case with the proposed application and encouraged the use of a more natural-looking stone wall.

Kramer asked if any naturally quarried stone would be considered natural.

Commissioner Mendenhall advised that when the lakeshore landscaping ordinance was crafted more than a decade ago, the intent was to make the lakeshore look as natural to the area as possible.

Commissioner Lanfear discussed that while the proposed project looks nice, he did not feel that it met the intent of the ordinance. Lanfear asked if there could be an additional tier to allow for more green cover.

Commissioner Nadler felt that the ordinance is written in the way that it is and that the Commission needs to make its judgment based on how the ordinance is written. Nadler felt that some of the things that had been mentioned were not necessarily addressed in the code and asked City Administrator Michael Meyers to read aloud the definition of stone. Nadler asked Meyers if Rosetta stone was an allowable stone, and Meyers noted that the Commission had previously approved Rosetta stone in other projects.

Motion made by Commissioner Nadler and seconded by Commissioner Welle to recommend approval of the lakeshore landscaping project. Commission members Nadler and Welle voted “AYE.” Commission members Lanfear and Mendenhall voted “NAY.” Motion failed 2-2.

City Administrator Meyers discussed that, due to the lack of a fifth member, the motion failed.

Commissioner Mendenhall discussed that the project needed to come back looking more natural and that it lacked the intent of the ordinance.

Jim Delperdang asked why the stone could be approved in previous applications but not this one.

Dustin Reynolds advised that he did not represent the property owner, but that he had a project coming up in the coming months that would be large and similar to this one. Reynolds noted that it was right next door to another application where Rosetta stone was used. Reynolds stated that, in discussion with City Staff, he could not get a straight answer as to what the project should look like because it was up to the Board's opinion as to whether something was allowable or not. Reynolds defended the use of Rosetta

stone, stating that it meets the definition of the ordinance and has been approved previously. Reynolds noted that this was giving homeowners and contractors a difficult time designing and keeping projects within a reasonable budget. Commissioner Welle agreed with Reynolds.

Commissioner Lanfear discussed the ambiguity of the language in the ordinance but again discussed previously approved projects that certainly did not fit the intent of the ordinance.

Commissioner Nadler defended that the material had been approved before and that the ordinance allows for it. Nadler felt that the application met the definitions of the ordinance and did not feel that the City had the authority to be the architect for the property owners.

Commissioner Mendenhall again advised that the intent was for the lakeshore to look original and natural and felt that this design certainly did not meet that intent.

Jim Delperdang asked if they could put natural riprap in front of the lower wall and boulders. Commissioner Mendenhall felt that would be better.

Mark Kramer discussed how challenging it is to engineer a boulder-only wall.

Commissioner Mendenhall discussed that she would be happy if there were boulders and good plantings in front of the lower wall of the project.

Dustin Reynolds advised that their next project is about 40 feet in height and asked the Commission how they could possibly do that with boulder walls. Commissioner Lanfear encouraged terracing and plantings.

Reynolds asked if the applicant had put bushes in front of the walls if that would be allowable.

Commissioner Mendenhall noted that it would be much better, but she again discussed previously approved projects that she felt were not living up to the intent of the ordinance and stated that she needed to see more native landscape.

Jim Delperdang asked if there was agreement that they could add more riprap, boulders, and plantings in front of the lower wall.

There was general agreement that these additions would help soften the appearance of the project.

City Administrator Meyers advised on the process. Meyers advised the Commission that if they were going to allow for this, they needed to make a motion to reconsider and then another motion to vote on the matter again.

Motion made by Commissioner Nadler and seconded by Commissioner Lanfear to reconsider the application for lakeshore landscaping at 7113 Lake Shore Drive. Commission members Lanfear, Mendenhall, Nadler, and Welle voted “AYE.” Motion approved 4-0.

Motion made by Commissioner Nadler and seconded by Commissioner Lanfear to recommend approval of the lakeshore landscaping project with the addition of boulders and foliage to cover the walls as discussed. Commission members Lanfear, Mendenhall, Nadler, and Welle voted “AYE.” Motion approved 4-0.

The Commission opened a public hearing to consider and make a recommendation pertaining to an amendment of the 2013 Okoboji Zoning Ordinance by amending Article XX relating to subdivisions.

There were no comments received in favor of, in opposition to, or in a neutral position regarding the proposed amendment.

Chairperson Welle stated how surprised she was to learn that the City was not in line with all other jurisdictions on this matter.

City Administrator Meyers provided an overview of the definition of subdivision under the City of Okoboji's current zoning regulations. Under the City's current regulations, a “SUBDIVISION” is triggered when a property owner creates one additional lot. For example, if a property owner has a large property and wishes to divide it into two lots, the current ordinance considers that a subdivision and requires the property owner to go through the City's full subdivision process.

City Staff is recommending that the threshold be changed so that the full subdivision process is triggered when a property owner proposes to divide land into three or more lots.

In other words, a simple subdivision of one existing parcel into two conforming parcels would no longer be considered a subdivision, while dividing land into three or more parcels would continue to be subject to the City's subdivision regulations. Meyers noted that Iowa law and every jurisdiction he reviewed defines subdivisions as three or more lots.

Meyers noted that there is a project that has been the catalyst for this amendment, but emphasized that it is a citywide change.

Motion made by Commissioner Nadler and seconded by Commissioner Mendenhall to recommend the zoning amendment to the City Council. Commission members Lanfear, Mendenhall, Nadler, and Welle voted “AYE.” Motion approved 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:13PM.

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Michael Meyers, City Administrator