THE OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY OF GERING PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING, MAY 19, 2026

A regular meeting of the City of Gering Planning Commission was held in open session on May 19, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Gering City Hall Council Chambers at 1025 P Street, Gering, NE. Present were Commissioners Waterman, Keener, C. Kaufman, Hauck and Alvizar. Absent: Commissioners T. Kaufman, Miles, Taylor and Crews. Also present were City Engineer Annie Folck and Secretary Karen Heins. Notice of the meeting was given in advance by publication in the Star-Herald, the designated method of giving notice. All proceedings hereafter were taken while the meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Call to Order and Roll Call:
Chairman Keener called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and noted that a quorum of the Planning Commission was present and business could be conducted.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance**

2. **Open Meetings Act - Neb. Rev. Stat. Chapter 84, Article14**

Chairman Keener stated: As required by State Law, public bodies shall make available at least one current copy of the Open Meetings Act posted in the meeting room. Agenda items may be moved up or down on the agenda at the discretion of the Chairperson. Additions may not be made to this agenda less than 24 hours before the beginning of the meeting unless they are considered under this section of the agenda and the Planning Commission determines that the matter requires emergency action.

3. **Approval of Minutes of the April 7, 2026, regular Planning Commission meeting**

   A motion was made by Commissioner C. Kaufman to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2026 regular Planning Commission meeting. Seconded by Chairman Waterman. There was no discussion. The Secretary called the roll. "AYES": Alvizar, Keener, Hauck, Waterman and C. Kaufman. "NAYS": None. Abstain: None. Absent: T. Kaufman, Miles, Taylor and Crews. Motion carried.

4. **Current Business:**

   A. **Public Hearing to consider a Redevelopment Plan submitted by Oikos Development Corporation for the Hobbs Horizon Housing Development Project described as Block 1, Hobbs Horizon Subdivision, City of Gering, Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska, and adjacent public right of way.**

      i. **Review and take action on Resolution PC5-26-1 regarding a recommendation on the Redevelopment Plan for the Hobbs Horizon Housing Development Project**

Chairman Keener opened the Public Hearing at 6:03 p.m. to consider a Redevelopment Plan submitted by Oikos Development Corporation for the Hobbs Horizon Housing Development Project described as Block 1, Hobbs Horizon Subdivision, City of Gering, Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska, and adjacent public right of way. He invited City Engineer Annie Folck to provide the staff report and recommendation.

Engineer Folck stated that most of the Commission was likely familiar with the project, as it had been in development for some time. She explained that the proposal is for a housing development located near McClellan Park. She noted that McClellan Park is adjacent to the site and that the developer has recently completed the final plat, which had been previously recommended by the Planning Commission.

She stated that the developer is now moving forward with construction of fourplex housing units but is also requesting Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance to help make the project financially feasible.

Ms. Folck explained that the information being presented was part of a draft Redevelopment Plan, noting that the City's TIF Attorney is still reviewing the application details and verifying eligible expenses. She stated that final numbers would be confirmed prior to consideration by the City Council and that the figures presented should be considered approximate, though expected to be close.

She reported that the proposal includes 44 housing units with an estimated completion value of $1,977,000. She clarified that this figure represents the projected assessed value of the completed project, not the actual construction cost. She explained that because the development is a workforce housing project utilizing tax credits and other incentives, rents will be below market value, and the property will be assessed based on income rather than construction cost.

Ms. Folck stated that the current base value of the property is $10,500. She explained that, if the property reaches the estimated assessed value, it would generate an estimated TIF increment of $620,563.98. She again emphasized that these figures are estimates.

She continued, noting that the developer has identified approximately $2.7 million in eligible expenses, subject to final review and verification. She stated that even with adjustments, the eligible expenses significantly exceed the anticipated TIF increment.

Ms. Folck explained that the developer is requesting TIF assistance primarily to help fund infrastructure costs, particularly roadway construction estimated at approximately $525,000 for concrete, along with additional grading and earthwork costs. The total project cost is estimated to exceed $13 million.

She then explained that the Planning Commission's role is to determine whether the proposed development is in conformance with the City's Comprehensive Plan. She noted that the Comprehensive Plan identifies the area within the East Gering Neighborhood District and encourages a mix of housing types, densities, and price points in new neighborhood development.

Ms. Folck stated that the proposal aligns with these goals, as the development would provide housing types that are currently limited in the community, particularly townhomes and workforce housing. She noted that estimated rents of $1,000 to $1,400 per month are consistent with workforce housing objectives.

She further stated that the City's Future Land Use Map designates the area for high-density residential development. She referenced additional Comprehensive Plan policies applicable to the proposal including Policy 3.1.A, which calls for increasing housing choices and diversity for all lifestyles to meet community housing needs. She also cited Policy 3.2.D, which encourages infill development on vacant and underutilized sites, and Policy 3.2.E, which promotes compatible infill and redevelopment that fits Gering's neighborhoods and is consistent with the desired future character of the area.

Ms. Folck reiterated that the Planning Commission's role is to recommend to the City Council whether the proposed project is in conformance with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. She stated that if the Commission finds the project to be in conformance, it should be recommended for approval to the CDA and City Council.

She noted that a Resolution had been drafted reflecting a finding of conformance and stated that the Commission could adopt it as written or modify it as part of its motion if desired. She added that if the Commission did not feel the project conformed, it could modify the Resolution accordingly and include those conditions in its motion.

Ms. Folck stated that staff recommends approval, as they believe the project does meet the requirements of the Comprehensive Plan. She also noted that a memorandum from the City Attorney had been provided outlining the Commission's standard of review, and concluded by asking if there were any questions.

Commissioner Hauck asked Ms. Folck to explain the TIF process and whether the City was "giving them some money" for the project.

Engineer Folck explained that Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is generated from the additional property taxes created after a property is developed. She stated that when the project goes to City Council, Council must apply a "but-for" test to determine whether the project would occur without the use of TIF.

She explained that the incremental increase in property taxes resulting from the development is captured and may be reimbursed to the developer for up to 15 years to help cover eligible project expenses. She noted that TIF funds can only be used for eligible public improvement costs, such as streets and infrastructure, and cannot be used for actual building construction.

Commissioner Hauck asked for clarification on where the money comes from and what entity is providing it. Engineer Folck explained that the property currently generates approximately $10,500 in annual property tax value. She stated that once developed, the property is estimated to increase significantly in value, resulting in approximately $41,000 per year in additional property taxes.

She explained that the TIF mechanism captures this increase in tax revenue and allows those additional taxes to be used toward eligible redevelopment costs. She emphasized that if the project did not occur, the increased tax revenue would not exist.

In response to further questions, she explained that the taxes are collected through Scotts Bluff County. The County distributes the tax revenue as normal, and the incremental portion is then redirected back through the process to the City and ultimately to the redeveloper.

Commissioner Hauck asked whether the Commission would be voting on the TIF. Engineer Folck clarified that the Planning Commission is not voting on the TIF itself, but rather only on whether the proposed multi-family development is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. She stated that the TIF request would be considered separately by the City Council.

With no further questions for Ms. Folck, Chairman Keener asked if there was anyone present in the Council Chambers wishing to speak regarding the application and invited any such individuals to come forward to the podium and state their name and address.

After a brief pause with no response, he noted there were no further comments and closed the public hearing at 6:14 p.m.

Commissioner C. Kaufman made a motion to approve Resolution PC5-26-1. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Waterman. The Secretary called the roll. "AYES": Waterman, Keener, C. Kaufman and Alvizar. "NAYS": Hauck. Abstain: None. Absent: T. Kaufman, Miles, Taylor and Crews. The motion carried.

B. Public Hearing to consider a Conditional Use Permit for storage units to be located on Block 2, Shadow Lane Estates, City of Gering.

i. Approve or Deny Resolution PC5-26-2

Chairman Keener opened a public hearing at 6:16 p.m. to consider a conditional use permit for storage units to be located on Block 2 of Shadow Lane Estates in the City of Gering. He invited City Engineer Annie Folck to provide the staff report and recommendation.

Engineer Folck reminded the Commission that the property had been briefly discussed at a prior meeting in connection with a rezoning request. She explained that the site, consisting of two lots and an alleyway, includes a former bar building that is now being used as a daycare, and that the remaining portion of the property is proposed for development of storage units. She noted that the property has long maintained a commercial character and has since been rezoned to commercial, which makes the conditional use application permissible.

Ms. Folck presented the proposed site plan, which included a 40-foot by 80-foot storage building. She stated that staff had no concerns regarding the storage units themselves. However, staff recommended approval with the condition that the subdivision of the lot be vacated prior to construction, as the proposed improvements would otherwise cross existing lot lines and an alleyway, and noted that she would go into more detail on that process with the following agenda item.

She further explained that the conditional use criteria in Section 2.2.2.D of the zoning code had been reviewed. For ingress and egress, she stated the property is a double frontage site and the proposed storage units would be located on a corner, with excellent access to both N Street and Shadow Lane, allowing for easy entry and exit.

Regarding off-street parking and loading areas, she explained the lot is large enough to accommodate the proposed building with ample space for vehicles to pull off the street to load and unload at the storage units.

For refuse and service areas, she noted there are already two dumpsters located on the east side of the structure, providing a place for disposal of items. She added that storage facilities function better when there is another use on the property, as it helps discourage dumping, and stated that the existing daycare and on-site activity would help ensure proper disposal of materials.

In terms of utilities, she stated that electric service is available to the property and that water and sewer are not required for the proposed use.

She noted that no screening or buffering is proposed, as the site has already been significantly cleaned up and is highly commercial in character, though the Commission could require such measures if desired.

She further stated that no signage was proposed and that the project will meet all required setbacks and open space requirements.

Finally, regarding compatibility with surrounding properties and the zoning district, she stated the proposed use is considered compatible and may provide a service to nearby multifamily and manufactured housing developments.

Engineer Folck stated that a Resolution was being presented for the Commission's consideration that would grant approval of the storage units. She noted that the Resolution was drafted with the sole condition that the required vacation of the subdivision be completed, and added that the Commission could modify or add conditions if desired.

In response to questions from the Commissioners, she confirmed that completing the vacation would result in the property being consolidated into one lot. And she further explained that a rezoning had recently been completed because the property was previously split between two different zoning designations. She stated that staff did not want to proceed with the vacation until the entire property was under a single zoning designation to avoid creating split zoning situations. She also stated that utilities were not present in the alleyway that would be vacated. She added that staff would address the vacation and utility issue in conjunction with the related agenda item and confirmed that locate requests had been completed to verify the absence of fiber or other utilities. She noted that the area was clear and no utilities were found.

Chairman Keener opened the floor for public comment. No members of the public came forward, and the public hearing was closed at 6:21 p.m.

Commissioner C. Kaufman made a motion to approve Resolution PC5-26-2 with the condition that the vacation be completed prior to construction. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Alvizar. There was no further discussion. The Secretary called the roll. "AYES": Waterman, Keener, Alvizar, C. Kaufman and Hauck. "NAYS": None. Abstain: None. Absent: T. Kaufman, Miles, Taylor and Crews. Motion carried.

C. **Consider petition to vacate the Subdivision of Block 2 of Shadow Lane Estates, Book 180, Page 99.**

i. **Review and make recommendation to City Council**

Chairman Keener introduced the next agenda item, stating that the Planning Commission would consider a petition to vacate the Subdivision of Block 2 of Shadow Lane Estates, Book 180, Page 99. He asked if the applicants were present should the Commissioners have any questions. He then requested that Engineer Folck provide the recommendation and report.

Engineer Folck stated that most of the background had already been covered and reiterated that there were no utilities located within the alleyway proposed for vacation. She added a process clarification, explaining that vacating a subdivision typically requires a plat or some type of drawing. She noted that in this case, Block 2 was originally platted as one entire lot.

She explained that the property was later subdivided many years after the original plat into Lot 1, Lot 2, and an alleyway under the Subdivision of Block 2, Shadow Lane Estates. She stated that the current request would vacate that subdivision of Block 2, specifically referencing Book 180, Page 99 to ensure the correct legal description is used. She further explained that once the vacation is completed, the property would revert back to Block 2, Shadow Lane Estates as it was originally platted in the 1960s, effectively removing the later subdivision so that the lot split would no longer exist and the property would again be considered one parcel.

Chairman Keener asked if there were any questions for staff.

Commissioner Alvizar asked whether there was any benefit to keeping the property split for parcel or tax purposes. Engineer Folck responded that it depends on intended use, but in this case the applicant's intent is to construct improvements across existing lot lines. She added that she could not speak to the original reason for the subdivision but speculated it may have related to zoning changes and a different use on that portion of the property.

Another individual stated that the subdivision likely related to a prior use involving a trailer and living quarters on the site, which required a different zoning designation at that time.

Chairman Keener asked if there were any further questions.

Commissioner C. Kaufman made a motion to recommend approval of the petition to vacate the subdivision of Block 2. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Waterman. There was no further discussion. The Secretary called the roll. "AYES": Waterman, Hauck, C. Kaufman, Keener and Alvizar. "NAYS": None. Abstain: None. Absent: T. Kaufman, Miles, Taylor and Crews. Motion carried.

5. City Engineer Report

Chairman Keener invited City Engineer Annie Folck to provide the City Engineer report.

Engineer Folck stated that there was not much to report. She noted that there were currently no applications scheduled for the June meeting, and as a result, the Commission may not meet until July. She stated that staff continues to work with applicants and is hopeful that the housing development project will begin construction later in the fall, but no additional applications were currently anticipated.

Commissioner Hauck asked about the status of the racetrack project. Engineer Folck stated that the project is still held up at the state level and that staff is waiting for state action before it can move forward.

Commissioner Hauck asked whether both Kimball and Gering were the two proposed sites in the area. Engineer Folck responded that no applications had been submitted yet for either location. She stated that the group's focus was currently on completing the Ogallala facility and they are operating under a temporary license there and are working toward obtaining a permanent license before shifting attention to the Gering project.

Commissioner Hauck also asked about a previously discussed proposal related to storage sheds for housing. Engineer Folck stated that the proposal is on hold indefinitely and that the applicants are not currently seeking to move forward.

Chairman Keener thanked Ms. Folck for her report.

6. OPEN COMMENT: Discussion or action by the Planning Commission regarding unscheduled business will not take place. This section is for citizen comment only.

There was no comment.

7. Adjourn

A motion was made by Commissioner Waterman to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Alvizar. There was no discussion. The Secretary called the roll. "AYES": Alvizar, C. Kaufman, Keener, Hauck and Waterman. "NAYS": None. Abstain: None. Absent: T. Kaufman, Miles, Taylor and Crews. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

Levi Keener, Chairman

ATTEST:

Karen Heins

Karen Heins, Administrative Secretary