



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
northfieldmn.gov

Meeting Minutes - Draft Planning Commission

Thursday, March 19, 2026

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

6:00 PM - REGULAR AGENDA CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Vice Chair Schroeer called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

Also present: City Planner Mikayla Schmidt, Associate City Planner Mathias Hughey, Community Development Director Scott Wopata, Administrative Associate Alisha Hayes, Youth Representative Abby Pape, Carleton Vice President and Treasurer Eric Runestad and Associate Vice President for Facilities at Carleton College Linda Weingarten.

Present 4 - Commissioner Buckheit, Commissioner Holleran, Commissioner Schmidt, and Commissioner Schroeer

Absent 3 - Commissioner Nowak, Commissioner Kuhlmann, and Commissioner Lauer

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Buckheit, seconded by Commissioner Schmidt, to approve the agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 4- Commissioner Buckheit, Commissioner Holleran, Commissioner Schmidt, and Commissioner Schroeer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. [26-157](#) February 19, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [02-19-2026 PC Meeting Minutes](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Holleran, seconded by Commissioner Schmidt, to approve the February 19, 2026 Meeting Minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Commissioner Buckheit, Commissioner Holleran, Commissioner Schmidt, and Commissioner Schroeer

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this time

BOARD MEMBER AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Buckheit gave an update on attending the first meeting of Zoning Policy Advisory Committee and open house for zoning code reform and noted the survey is now available on City Website and process for that is officially underway.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Commissioner Schroeer opened Public Hearing by inviting staff, Mathias Hughey, to open application.

2. [26-158](#) Public Hearing on the Conditional Use Permit for Carleton College to make specified transportation facility improvements north of 1st St. E. within the Perimeter Transition Area.

Attachments: [1 - Public Hearing Notice Mailing](#)
[2 - Public Hearing Map](#)
[3 - SUPPLEMENTAL Memo No. 1 - Public Comments](#)
[4 - SUPPLEMENTAL Memo No. 2 - Public Comments](#)

Presentation Summary – Conditional Use Permit for Carleton College:

Carleton College representatives Eric Runestad, Vice President and Treasurer, and Linda Weingarten, Associate Vice President for Facilities, presented alongside civil engineers from ISG.

The presentation included: project background and context, overview of proposed plans, goals related to the potential closure of College Street, summary of campus and neighborhood input; including: traffic pattern changes, bus stop location, transit route adjustments, parking considerations, and site design updates and coordination with City staff.

The presentation concluded with a summary of key points and next steps.

City staff noted that a significant amount of public input was received later in the workday and was not included in the original agenda packet. To ensure full consideration by the commissioners: three supplemental memos were provided in total and two of these were newly prepared to capture the additional public input.

Commissioner Holmes arrived around 6:20pm.

A full record of each speaker's narrative is available in the official meeting recording.

- 1. Paul Hager - Not in support: previous Northfield Major and Council Member, wrong location, increase traffic and ignores impact of residential neighborhood and overall lack of detail in proposal.*
- 2. Bill North - Not in support: assumptions made that project will have no significant effect, what evidence do we have, worry that this is wishful thinking but not evidence based, has to be a better way.*
- 3. Steve Edwards - Not in support: already an excessive amount of traffic in neighborhood, pins in the doll, recommend to be tabled or denied.*
- 4. Joel Weisberg - Not in support: request in strongest terms for PC to delay vote, cheated to vote on something that does not use citizen input, lighting ordinance- dark sky friendly, take more time to read submissions*
- 5. Veronica- couldn't make out last name -Not in support: no proper studies and lots of assumptions, high traffic area, lights glare, six immediate blocks 31 children, reject CUP and look at alternative location.*

6. Margot Zsolnay - Not in support: mother of three children, decrease safety and cost to neighborhood, impede character neighborhood.

7. Kate Flory - Not in support: neighborhood rep, need more time to read letters and public comment, this should not be voted on right now. Incomplete package. Live across the street from Carleton--"it is not for everyone, it is totally for us". It is wrong that this won't change the character of the neighborhood, a ton of neighborhood activity--so poses safety concerns.

8. Andrew Flory - Not in support: married to Kate, closing College St. a good idea, inconsistencies and questions, effect to campus and not neighborhood, flood of letters with potential negative effects, consider future growth.

9. Richard Miller - consulting company in Iowa doesn't understand the community of Carleton/neighborhood or town of Northfield, POV of Carleton College only, doubling lights, statements about nothing changed (not true for neighborhood) difficult document to be working.

10. William Goff - Not in support- lack of regard for neighborhood, no coordination with community or outreach, nervous as hell being on this side of the roster, strongly suggest a traffic study and college operating in a vacuum

11. Amy Gernin (no address provided)- Charter Commission Meeting Member for City) Not in support: urge to take time with thoughtful letters/delay voting and value of bike lanes and this permit will impact those.

12. Alice Thomas - Not in support: shift the problems of safety to neighborhood, outside of college zone, need more active citizen engagement, change the essential quality and character of the neighborhood, need a better plan.

13. Melissa Hagar - Not in support: lucky to raise three kids in neighborhood (33 years in house and respect for the college), property dollars go down, zone that will benefit neither party.

A motion was made by Commissioner Buckheit, seconded by Commissioner Schmidt, to close the public hearing. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Commissioner Buckheit, Commissioner Holleran, Commissioner Schmidt, and Commissioner Schroeer

- 3. [PC Res. 2026-002](#) Consideration of a Conditional Use Permit for Carleton College to Make Transportation Facility Improvements within the Perimeter Transition Area North of 1st St. E.

- Attachments:** [1 - PC Resolution](#)
[2 - Carleton Neighborhood Meeting Presentation](#)
[3 - Carleton College Transit Study](#)
[4 - Carleton Neighborhood Meeting Comments](#)
[5 - Modified Routes](#)
[6 - 03-19-26 Planning Commission Meeting SUPPLEMENTAL 1](#)
[7 - 03-19-26 Planning Commission Meeting SUPPLEMENTAL 2](#)
[8 - 03-19-26 Planning Commission Meeting SUPPLEMENTAL 3](#)
[9 - POST MTG - 03-19-26 Planning Commission Meeting SUPPLEMENTAL 4](#)

City staff referenced the Comprehensive Plan, which supports improving transit access and infrastructure.

Break at 7:35am

Resume meeting at 7:38pm

A motion was made by Commissioner Buckheit, seconded by Commissioner Schmidt to postpone this item to give staff more time to include the following:

- 1. Bring more specific and detailed information to a future meeting, provide more concrete data and analysis before moving forward, consider general requests for additional information in subsequent discussions.**
- 2. Potential Mitigation Ideas: Conduct a more thorough traffic impact analysis, address concerns about campus expansion into residential areas, encourage collaboration between the college and the city to; identify neighborhood-specific issues and develop mitigation strategies.**

Yes: Commissioner Buckheit, Commissioner Holleran, Commissioner Schmidt, and Commissioner Schroer

STAFF UPDATES

4. [26-159](#) Staff Updates.

- Attachments:** [1 - Upcoming Council Agenda Items](#)
[2 - Hyperlink to the Northfield Comprehensive Plan - Vision and Guiding Values](#)
[3 - Hyperlink to Northfield Construction & Development Projects](#)
[4 - Hyperlink to Maryland Department of Planning Webinars](#)
[5 - Hyperlink to the Zoning Code Update Website](#)

Staff updates presented by City Staff, Mikayla Schmidt.

Council Member Holmes added a Board Member update, as she was not in attendance earlier in the meeting when that agenda item was presented. She shared that the Ames Mill Dam is a current focus, with the City applying for a grant. This is a hot-button topic for the community and will require extensive engagement.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Buckheit, seconded by Commissioner Holleran to adjourn the meeting at 8:21pm. Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Commissioner Buckheit, Commissioner Holleran, Commissioner Schmidt, and Commissioner Schroerer