

PLAN COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
TOWN OF GRANT  
April 15, 2026

**PRESENT:** Jodi Lomma (Chairperson), Jeanne Eggebrecht, Tom Reitter , Sharon Schwab (Commissioners) Andrea Musch (Zoning Administrator)  
**ATTENDEES/CITIZENS:** Lynn Markham UWSP Extension Land Use Specialist, Jared Repinski

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm by J. Lomma.

**STATE OF PUBLIC NOTICE**

It was stated that the agenda was posted at two posting stations (the Grant Town Hall and the Grant Transfer Station) and on the Town's website on April 13, 2026. There were no public citizen attendees at the start of the meeting. Mr. Repinski joined for the conditional use permit discussion.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS and CORRESPONDENCE**

J. Lomma stated that the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department reviewed and recommended approval of the Zoning Ordinance and the rezones at the March 24, 2026 meeting. One amendment was made during the meeting to change Appendix A, #6 setback for shoreland zoning from 100 feet to 75 feet. The amendment was reviewed in the Town of Grant Board meeting on April 8, 2026. The request will appear on the May 5, 2026 meeting of the Portage County Board for final approval.

The Solar Overlay Rationale is still in process. Rod Sutter is pending GIS shape files from Jon Baker from Vista Sands Solar to be able to make the changes to the Solar Overlay map. Once this is completed, it will be submitted to Portage County Planning and Zoning.

J. Lomma shared that there will be a Farmland Preservation discussion on May 13, 2026 at 5:00 pm in the Portage County Annex Building. Tim Jackson the Zoning Specialist with DATCP will be giving the presentation.

The Zoning Administrator, J. Lomma and S. Schwab received a complaint regarding Mr. Allen West activities related to Motor vehicle repair and sales from Ms. Crystal Kuhn. The Zoning Administrator has sent Mr. West a letter informing him of the complaint and that a Conditional Use Permit is required for motor vehicle repair and sales.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

S. Schwab recommended a few minor changes to the minutes from March 18, 2026. These changes include: Add Lynn Markham's full first name and title to page 4, change the word committee to commission on page 4, capitalize Zoning Ordinance on page 4. Add a period after the word Jefferson on page 5. It was also noted to change the reference to the City of Menomonie instead of Menominee. S. Schwab moved to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2026 meeting as corrected. J. Eggebrecht seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

**DATA CENTER ORDINANCE**

Lynn Markham Land Use Specialist with UW Extension joined us this evening for the Data Center Ordinance discussion. J. Lomma prepared a list of questions that were used as a guide for the discussion. The following are the key findings from the discussion:

Can the Town of Grant prevent a data center from locating in our town if this is the public sentiment, if so, what is the best approach? Not recommended to simply prohibit data centers using the Zoning Ordinance. The town can either map a district to specific lands in the town, or can use a floating unmapped zone/district. Other Wisconsin communities have found success using a floating, unmapped zone/district to effectively manage data centers. If the intent is to ensure local government control of a data center decision with the ability to restrict Data Centers in the Town of Grant, a floating/unmapped zone would be the best option.

Key points for a floating unmapped zone/district:

- A new district would be created in our existing Zoning Ordinance for the floating zone
- It could be named either generically (i.e.. I2 – Industrial,) or specifically i.e. ( I2 – Industrial Data Center)
- The Zoning Ordinance would need to be very clear on data centers. Need to include a definition, list in which districts it is permitted or conditional, and in which districts it is prohibited
- If Data Center is not listed as a permitted or conditional use, under Wisconsin Law it is by default a prohibited use. However, L. Markham recommends that the Town clearly indicate if Data Center is prohibited vs not mentioning it.
- If a floating/unmapped district is created, the Town could list Data Center as prohibited in the other districts and conditional in the floating/unmapped zone
- With a floating/unmapped zoning district, a request will need to be made to the Plan Commission and Town Board to rezone the property to the district that the Data Center is permitted in. The rezoning would be addressed first and separately from the conditional use. This is a legislative decision; therefore, the Town Board has the ability to approve or deny the request. The request then would also need to be reviewed and approved by the Portage County Planning and Zoning and the Portage County Board. If the rezone is approved, and Data Center is a conditional use for that zone/district, then the Conditional Use process would begin. If we only have one conditional use in our floating zone, the Town will have a good understanding of the intent, no matter what the LLC may be requesting the rezone.
- The floating zone will require at least one permitted use per Wisconsin Law– such as general farming
- If it is a permitted use, the Town cannot put conditions on the use. Recommendation is to list Data Center as a conditional use
- The rezone request would need to go through all the levels of approval that are required in Town of Grant.
- Conditions that are specific to Data Centers can be included in the ordinance. The conditions must be relevant to health, public safety and welfare. If they are not in the ordinance, they can be added to the conditional use permit
- Possible conditions to be considered include: height limitations to buildings to ensure that Fire protection is available. Limit on the amount of the parcel that can be impervious (not more than 50% of the parcel covered in impervious surfaces) Need to ensure that we have impervious surface defined – refer to the definition under Portage County Shoreland District for a definition. Noise – PSC 128 sets noise levels at 45 – 50 Decibels within a certain distance from the building. Lighting conditions, such as downward facing exterior lighting. These are just examples, the list of conditions will require additional review.

Recommendations on Moratorium on Data Center development. Without a moratorium, if a request is submitted today, it must be addressed under the existing Zoning Ordinance. The moratorium provides the plan commission time to complete the data center ordinance. L. Markham will provide additional guidelines on the use of a moratorium and examples. If a moratorium is not put in place, L. Markham recommended that the Plan Commission include the basics in the zoning ordinance, and then come back and add conditions and/or standards to enhance the ordinance.

Joint Development Agreement may be used to negotiate financial considerations, such as commitments to provide funding to community resource programs.  
Data Centers are not typically excluded from tax rolls.

Is Town of Grant a favorable location for Data Centers? L. Markham shared that data centers require:

- Water Capacity – either via surface water, high capacity well, or via water from municipal system. For Town of Grant, the only viable option is high capacity well.
- Electric demand – Multiple electric providers is desired. Solar is a low cost alternative for electricity. At this time, Town of Grant is serviced by two electric providers. Solar is being built along with necessary infrastructure.
- J. Lomma shared that Data Centers prefer cool climates to reduce load on cooling per research that has she has completed.
- Possibility of using geothermal to cool – Sandy soils easier to install the technology, however, may not be the best soil type for geothermal

**Town of Grant - Proposed Definition:** DATA CENTER means secure building or buildings used primarily for the storage, management, processing, and transmission of digital data, which houses computer or network equipment, systems, servers, appliances, and other associated components related to digital storage and operations. It powers digital services like cloud computing, artificial intelligence, cryptocurrency mining, blockchain transaction processing, server farms, streaming and online commerce. It does not include computers or telecommunications-related equipment that is secondary and customarily incidental to an otherwise permitted use on the property, such as servers associated with manufacturing or an office building.

L. Markham indicated it may be better to keep the definition more generic to avoid exclusion of a data center. She recommended that we not include the types of digital services that are being performed, in case there are other uses that do not fall into the list we provided.

There was some discussion around the last sentence that computers that are secondary and incidental to an otherwise permitted use on a property such as servers associated with an office building would be excluded. This is optional to include.

An example definition L. Markham referred to is from the City of Menomonie: Data Center means establishments used primarily for the storage, management, processing, and transmission of digital data, which houses computer or network equipment, systems, servers, appliances, and other associated components related to digital data storage and operations.

L. Markham suggested that we review the current Assembly bill being proposed in WI Legislature to fully understand what it will require.

T. Reitter provided description of how Data Centers are cooled and the mechanisms that are used such as geothermal and cooling towers to disburse the heat.

S. Schwab asked why there is increased number of Data Centers being built? What is driving the need for Data Centers? T. Reitter indicated that it is consumer demand. Data Centers themselves are not new, it is just we are seeing increased demand for large centers with some of the uses for Artificial intelligence, Crypto currency, cloud computing, ecommerce.

**Action: L. Markham to provide additional information on what is needed to create a moratorium that the Town of Grant Board could review.**

**Action: Plan commission to review the sample moratoriums from S. Schwab and L. Markham and develop a document to be reviewed by the Town Board.**

**Action: Possible collaboration with Iowa County and/or Columbia County as they are also working on their Zoning Ordinance and Moratoriums**

**Action: Plan Commission to begin drafting the changes needed to existing Zoning Ordinance**

#### **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

J. Lomma provided the report from the Zoning Administrator showing 3 permits totaling \$270. S. Schwab asked for more information on TAK(26-01), this is a broadband company out of Plover, WI.

#### **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT – JARED REPINSKI**

Jared Repinski joined the discussion at approximately 8:25 pm. He is requesting a conditional use permit so he can construct a 5000 Square foot accessory building on his property at 8121 State Hwy 54 East in the town of Grant. This property is zoned Low Density Residential and is 16.8 acres. He also owns a second property on County Hwy U that abuts this parcel. The commissioners reviewed the information he provided on his application. In summary, the accessory building is planned to be 50' x 100' x 16'. He did not know the peak height, and would have to get that from his builder but felt confident it would be less than 35 feet. The building cost will be greater than \$25,000, so a building permit will be required. The building will be stick built with metal roof and siding. He plans to match the colors and materials with the existing accessory building on the parcel. It will be located approximately 300 feet behind his home and existing accessory building. It will be used for unheated storage. He will follow the zoning ordinance requirements for setbacks from side yard. He is closest to the property line on the east side of the property. As indicated in the application, he does not plan to store any hazardous materials or chemicals and will not generate any waste materials. There will be no running water or bathrooms, however he does plan to have electricity eventually. He does plan to include a drain in the floor of the building, but does not plan to perform any commercial or industrial operations. There are two driveway access points to the parcel – one from State Highway 54 and the other from a parcel he owns on County Highway U. No additional driveways will be built.

The following conditions were discussed and were agreeable to both J. Repinski and the commissioners.

- 1) Owner shall adhere to the site plan depicting up to a 50' x 100' x 16' stick built accessory building
- 2) Peak height shall be less than 35 feet
- 3) The application documents are considered conditions of the permit
- 4) Owner shall not exceed 5,000 square feet in area
- 5) Owner shall use a solid color and similar materials to visually match the existing accessory building
- 6) Owner shall preserve existing trees and vegetation along property lines to shield the accessory building from neighboring property
- 7) The building shall be served by existing access points (2 driveways)
- 8) Exterior lighting shall be directed downward to minimize illumination of the night sky and neighboring properties.
- 9) Owner shall comply with the storm water management principle of no additional storm water runoff shall leave the parcel as a result of the development.

**J. Lomma made a motion for the Plan Commission to recommend approval of Jared Repinski conditional use permit with the specified conditions for an accessory building larger than 3500 square feet in Low Density Residential to the Town Board. T. Reitter seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**Action Items:**

**J. Lomma will draft the conditional use permit and send it to the commissioners and Jared Repinski for review.**

**J. Repinski to provide payment of \$150 for the public hearing**

**J. Lomma will work with the Town Clerk to prepare a public hearing notice for May 13, 2026.**

**S. Schwab will add this to the agenda for the Town Board meeting on May 13, 2026**

**FUTURE MEETING DATES AND SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS:**

4/21/26 – Annual Meeting

5/13/26 – Targeted Public Hearing date for the Conditional Use Permit and Town Board meeting

5/20/26 – Plan Commission Meeting

**Future Topics:**

- Data Center Moratorium
- Data Center Ordinance
- Fee Schedule
- Private burial plot ordinance

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 pm

Respectfully submitted,

*Jodi Lomma*

Plan Commission Chair

Approved