

A. ROLL CALL Chair Robinson called the meeting to order.

Commissioners Present: Mayor Froelich, Leingang, Mudder, Buchmiller, Gardner, Smith, Hammond, Huber, McLean, Robinson. Absent: Horn, Intveld.

B. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. *December 18, 2024 Minutes. Commissioner Smith motioned to approve the December 18, 2024 minutes. Commissioner McLean seconded the motion. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.*

C. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. *Consider a preliminary plat for MDU Addition..* City Principal Planner Stromme presented.

Montana Dakota Utilities requested approval of a preliminary plat for MDU Addition. The intent is to reorganize parcels in the area for two lots to be created from the current four lots. One of the lots will serve as the home for Montana Dakota Utilities Lineman Training Facility. The lot currently has an array of outdoor training facilities and the proposed investment would create an indoor climate-controlled environment for employee training.

Property History

Since the construction of the RM Heskett Station south of the subject property, the site has been encumbered by various electrical transmission facilities to support plant operations and transmit power to users. The property does not appear to have been previously developed and until 2009 it was used as a tilled agricultural field. In 2010, a substation was constructed in the center of the plat, spanning multiple lots. In 2021, an outdoor linemen training facility was built on the northern end of the property adjacent to 37th Street.

Preliminary Plat

The Preliminary Plat encompasses 113.57 acres of land, consisting of two lots in one block. Lot 1 is an 11.28-acre parcel designated for the training center, wherein Lot 2 spans 100.22 acres and is not planned for further development at this time. The plat includes 2.07 acres of right-of-way dedications for a 50-foot ROW dedication from the centerline of 37th Street, which appears consistent with ROW dedications for subdivisions to the west. The plat highlights numerous utility lines and easements, including major and minor utility transmission easements for multiple electrical utilities and a Morton County Water Resource District easement.

Adjacent Properties Zoning, Land Use, and Future Land Use

The property is zoned Ag - Agriculture. Adjacent properties to the west are zoned Ag - Agriculture and CB - Commercial. Properties to the north are zoned Ag - Agriculture and County Residential. Properties to the north are County Industrial and property to the south are zoned Ag - Agriculture and County Industrial.

Additional Information and Public Outreach

- The application was received on December 26, 2024.

- This item was published in the Mandan News as required. Twenty-seven (27) letters were sent to adjacent property owners on January 9, 2025. There has been no opposition and no comments received.

Staff Comments

- Staff accepted a zone change application for this project; however, the application cannot currently be processed because the appropriate zoning district for the site is being developed as part of the updated zoning ordinance project.
- What the applicants propose does not alter the use but will improve the form and condition of the existing use, which would be permitted more clearly under either the existing A - Agriculture district or the proposed MX - Industrial district. Alternatively, the proposed lot that will house the training facility could be rezoned to an industrial or commercial district that permits the training use and the remaining 100 acres could remain in the AG district. This approach would avoid creating a large industrial tract of land and associated entitlements without a current development plan, which could present challenges. A future zoning change could occur on the balance of the property at a time a development plan is proposed.

Findings of Fact Preliminary Plat

1. All technical requirements for consideration of a preliminary plat have been met;
2. The proposed subdivision would likely not have substantial effects on the safety and circulation of public roadways in the vicinity, and therefore no traffic impact study is required;
3. The proposed plat includes sufficient easements and rights-of-way to provide for orderly development and provision of municipal services beyond the boundaries of the subdivision for projects identified in City masterplans;
4. The City of Mandan and other agencies would be able to provide necessary public services, facilities, and programs to serve the development allowed by the proposed subdivision at the time of development.
5. The proposed subdivision is not located in the Special Flood Hazard Area, and while the property includes a wetland, it is outside the area of proposed development and will not be affected, and therefore the development will not adversely impact water quality, environmentally sensitive lands, or areas topographically unsuited for development.
6. The proposed subdivision is consistent with the general intent and purpose of the zoning ordinance;
7. The proposed subdivision is generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the Future Land Use Plan, and other plans and studies, policies and accepted planning practice;
8. The proposed subdivision would not adversely affect the public health, safety and general welfare.

Planner Stromme recommended approval of the request for a preliminary plat for MDU Addition. He said that he will defer to MDU for the timeline to start and complete the project noting that he believes it will start in the spring of 2025. Abe Ulmer from Independent Land Surveying came forward and stated that the plan is to break ground the spring of 2025 with a completion date in the spring of 2026.

Chair Robinson inquired if there were any comments or questions. Hearing none, the public hearing was opened.

Open Public Hearing

Chair Robinson opened the public hearing and invited anyone calling in or present, to come forward to speak for or against the request for the preliminary plat for MDU Addition.

Abe Ulmer an engineer from Independent Land Surveying came forward and stated that the size of the building is approximately 13,500 sq ft for the base bid with an additional 20'x65' addition is being considered. Ultimately the plan is for a 195x65 sq. ft. building with the majority of it being shop area; there will be approximately ten (10) offices. Northwest Contracting is working with MDU regarding the height of the building that are projected to be 20 ft. sidewalls along with a determination of parking areas. The driveway will be east of the existing gravel driveway that leads to the substation to the east. The existing outdoor training area will remain the same. There will be ten (10) offices, that will employ 20-30 during the training periods.

Tom Anseth, a resident who lives at Rock Haven Harbor, southeast of the plot being discussed, came forward and inquired about what this project entails, and that the plan was not to put up other industrial buildings creating problems with transmissions and noise such as is happening near the substations in Williston. He stated he is not opposed to MDU building a shop and training facility. He stated the residents in this project area were previously assessed \$18,000 in specials when the county came in to do the roads and assessed only the Industrial lands wherein the Agricultural did not get assessed any specials to maintain the roads. He said that is not in favor of changing the zoning to Industrial due to concerns of what might be allowed there in the future.

Chair Robinson provided a second and third invitation to come forward.

Chair Robinson inquired if there were any comments or questions.

Close Public Hearing

Chair Robinson inquired if there were any comments or questions. Hearing none, this portion of the public hearing was closed.

Commission Action

Chair Robinson inquired if there were any further comments or questions from members of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Planner Stromme clarified that this action does not include any zone change. Upon completion of the Zone Ordinance Study, changing the zoning for this will be addressed at a later time. He said that any questions or concerns with the roads in this area should be addressed with Morton County. He stated that city staff would assist individuals who to contact at Morton County, if needed.

Commissioner McLean moved to recommend approval of the request for a preliminary plat MDU Addition. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Chair Robinson called for a roll call vote: Leingang: Yes; Huber: Yes; Mudder: Yes; Mayor Froelich: Yes; McLean: Yes; Buchmiller: Yes; Smith: Yes; Hammond: Yes; Gardner: Yes; Robinson: Yes. The motion passed

D. OTHER BUSINESS

1. *Update on Zoning Ordinance study.* Planner Stromme stated the final draft of the document comprised of approximately 400 pages, is available for the public to review at cityofmandanzoningordinances.com. It can also be found under the Planning Department web page by clicking on ‘Zoning Study.’

The Zoning Ordinance Study ready to roll out with the final public and stakeholder engagements scheduled and the final adoption planned for April or May, 2025. The upcoming meetings with development stakeholders are:

- Meeting 1: February 5, 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM
- Follow-up Q&A 1: February 18, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
- Follow-up Q&A 2: March 3, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

The main highlights are that Ordinance 101 replaces Ordinances 101 and 105 so in essence, everything will be located under Ordinance 101 with consolidations and no gaps. He briefly reviewed some of the other final revisions. He encouraged residents to contact his office for answers to questions they may have or to provide comments.

E. ADJOURN *There being no further business to discuss or come before the Board, a motion was made by Commissioner Mudder and seconded by Commissioner Hammond to adjourn the meeting. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.