



STEELE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Steele County Board Room - 630 Florence Avenue -
Owatonna, MN 55060

Steele County's Mission:
Driven to deliver quality services in a respectful and fiscally responsible way.

MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2026 at 7:00 PM
Steele County Boardroom

Agenda

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Spatenka at 7:00pm. Members present were Spatenka, Cole, Smith, Hansen, Gillis. Also present were Commissioner Brady, and staff member Brooks.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approve Agenda

Motion by Cole, seconded by Hansen to approve the agenda as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Approve Minutes

Motion by Hansen, seconded by Cole to approve the May and June Meeting Minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Review Building Permits

Building permits for June and July were reviewed.

Public Hearing:

6. Bond Discussion — Proposed Addition to Section 1524

Brooks presented draft language for bonding requirements.

There was discussion on the gravel tax history and equity between CUP/IUP operations.

Commissioner Brady requested a detailed update on the Aggregate Tax fund balance, along with information from neighboring counties regarding whether they impose an aggregate tax, require financial assurance or bonding, have ever collected on such a bond, and whether they have had to reclaim a mining site.

There was discussion of the need for a joint meeting with the County Board.

Discussion was opened to the public.

Brian Cook commented that approximately four months earlier, the Planning Commission had voted that a bond was not necessary. However, the Commissioners reinstated the bond. Cook stated that this was the second time he believed the County Board had not followed the recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

As there were no additional questions or comments from the public, the public discussion was closed.

No further discussion was had by the planning commission.

No action was taken.

7. CUP #447 WHKS / Steele County — Place Fill in a Floodplain

Amber Hershey on behalf of WHKS and Steele County, has requested a permit to place fill in a floodplain on property located in the NW ¼ of the NW ¼ of Section 22, Berlin Township on property owned by Steele County.

Questions and comments of the commission:

Hansen: asked whether the project would result in any wetland impacts. He noted that the area appears to be a wetland and questioned whether, if wetlands were impacted, the County would be required to replace those wetlands in accordance with applicable regulations.

Brooks: responded that the project team has been working closely with the Department of Natural Resources to ensure the local area hydrologist is aware of the project and that all applicable requirements are met.

As there were no additional questions or comments from the commission, the public hearing was opened.

Rick Johnson with Berlin Township, questioned wetland impacts.

Barry & Jane Braaten stated that the property is still owned by them.

As there were no additional questions or comments from the public, the public hearing was closed.

Planning commission members discussed the unclear property ownership, the need for additional clarification on the project, and lack of representation.

No further discussion was had by the planning commission.

Motion by Smith, seconded by Hansen, to table discussion of CUP #447 until August 31st Meeting.

Motion Passes

8. Review of CUP # 302 Martin Marietta (Owatonna Quarry)

The review of CUP #302 allowing Martin Marietta to quarry limestone on property located in the SE ¼ and the E1/2 of the NE ¼, Section 33, Clinton Falls Township. The property address is 1478 NW 26th St.

Questions and comments of the commission:

Spatenka questioned whether Martin Marietta would be okay with adding a bond.

Jim (Martin Marietta): stated that Amber had been very clear from the beginning regarding the proposed reclamation bond requirements. He explained that recycling is an important part of Martin Marietta's operations, and the company wants to continue accepting recyclable materials and reusing them whenever possible. He stated that the additional bonding requirement was acceptable to the company to continue those operations.

Christina Morrison (Martin Marietta): provided an overview of the company's aggregate and recycling operations. She stated that limiting recycled materials to those generated within Steele County unnecessarily restricts operations and emphasized the importance of providing a local recycling site for homeowners, contractors, and public agencies. Morrison expressed support for reclamation bonding requirements and requested that the allowable recycled aggregate volume be increased from 50,000 to 100,000 cubic yards to better align with the company's other facilities.

Spatenka: asked whether Martin Marietta would be comfortable providing the proposed reclamation bond at the rate of \$5,000 per acre.

Jim (Martin Marietta) responded that the company would be comfortable with that requirement.

As there were no additional questions or comments from the commission, the public hearing was opened.

Residents expressed concerns regarding dust, noise, and ongoing blasting; reported issues such as potential cracks in foundations, plumbing problems, and potential radon impacts; requested improved and more precise blast notifications; voiced worries about increased truck traffic if recyclable materials are imported from outside the county; and sought clarification on future reclamation plans and the long-term use of the site.

Jim and Christina (Martin Marietta) addressed many of these questions during the meeting and provided their contact information for any further inquiries. Martin Marietta also offers a blast-notification system that is open to anyone who wishes to sign up.

As there were no further questions or comments from the public, the public hearing was closed.

No additional discussion was had by the planning commission.

Motion by Hansen, seconded by Smith to recommend approval of CUP 302 with the following conditions:

1. Mining and quarrying is limited to areas identified as parcels C,D,E,F,G,H,I on the site map and the 7.82 acres north of parcel I.

2. Quarrying is limited to a bottom elevation of 1060 feet.
3. A 20-foot unexcavated buffer shall remain adjacent to all property lines including railroad and public road right-of-ways. Original soil (over burden) shall not be removed in a manner that creates a slope greater than 1 ½ feet horizontal to 1 foot vertical. Any erosion to neighboring properties as a result of this mine shall be corrected by the applicant.
4. Areas that are being reclaimed shall be monitored for sloughing soil and erosion. The Planning and Zoning Department shall document current conditions. Corrections shall be made a minimum of once per year.
5. A six feet high berm with 2:1 side slopes on the right-of-way side shall be installed along Cedar Ave. a minimum of 55 feet from the centerline of the road. This berm shall be seeded to the satisfaction of the County Engineer and extend a minimum of 100' north of the north edge of any excavation parallel to the road right-of-way. A similar berm shall be required along 26th street when mining takes place in parcels A, C, or D as identified on the site map.
6. Signage and other traffic warning devices shall be installed as directed by the Steele County Engineer.
7. Access to the quarry shall only use the existing entrance and exit on 26th St. and shall be gated.
8. The applicant shall control dust in the mine and the loading area.
9. No hazardous material may be stored in the floodplain areas. Stockpiles of aggregate material, recycled material, and any equipment in the floodplain shall not be placed in a manner that will impede water flow during a flood event.
10. Stockpiles of recycled material or aggregate material shall not encroach on right-of-way of the railroad or public roads.
11. Recyclable material will be limited to projects within Steele County and shall be limited to 50,000 cubic yards.
12. Applicant shall follow hours of operation as agreed to with area residents.
 - Rock crushing shall only occur Mondays through Thursdays from 6:00 AM until 7:00 PM.
 - Rock crushing may take place on Fridays from 6:00 AM until 5:00 PM.
 - Truck loading shall only occur Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM until 5:00 PM and from 6:00 AM until noon on Saturdays.
 - Truck loading may occur on Saturday from noon until 5:00 PM but only if

special projects warrant it.

13. Any material from solid waste dumpsites discovered during the mining process shall be disposed of in accordance with Federal, State, and Local regulations in an approved waste disposal facility. The applicant will negotiate with Steele County for disposal of any material prior to using another facility.

14. Blasting shall be done during periods of favorable weather conditions and according to standards established by the U.S. Bureau of Mines, the U.S. Office of Surface Mining, and the MSHA.

15. The applicant shall replace any neighboring wells that lose service as a result of the mining or dewatering activities.

16. A fence shall be maintained along the north side of the open excavation.

17. Applicant is responsible to obtain and follow all other federal, state, and local permits and regulations including but not limited to MN Pollution Control Agency NPDES permits, DNR Water Appropriation Permits, US Army Corp of Engineers wetland regulations, and Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act regulations.

18. Applicant shall submit a formal reclamation plan to the Steele County Plan and Zoning Office detailing reclamation activities, stages, and final appearance of the site.

19. The applicant shall submit the following items to the Steele County Planning and Zoning Office before mining commences west of the railroad.

- Evidence of an agreement between the mine operator and the railroad authority allowing an underground crossing.
- Certificate of wetland exemptions from the USACE and the Steele SWCD, or evidence of an approved wetland mitigation plan.
- A plan detailing mitigation measures that will be taken to provide wood turtle habitat during and after mining operations.

20. The applicant is responsible to inspect the dike at least twice per year. Any maintenance or reconstruction shall be completed in accordance with Minnesota Rules Chapter 6115.

21. Applicant is responsible to initiate renewal proceeding on or before July 1st, 2026 or this permit becomes invalid.

22. This permit replaces conditional use permits numbers 189 and 221 which are hereby repealed.

23. No asphalt plant shall be operated in this quarry.

24. This permit remains valid during times when the owner/operator is current on all

tax obligations including but not limited to aggregate taxes. In addition, if notified by the Auditor of a delinquency, the owner/operator is required to either pay the tax or file an appropriate challenge within 30 days or else the permit is null and void.

25. Three seismograph readings will be taken for each blast performed and the data provided to the planning and zoning office. Seismographs shall be located as close as possible to 1365 NW 36th Street, 3016 Northridge Lane NE and south of the quarry.

Motion Passed

Adjourn

Motion by D. Hansen, second by J. Smith to adjourn at 8:56pm. Motion