

Town of Black Earth
Minutes of Plan Commission Meeting
Tuesday, October 7, 2025

1. Meeting call to Order. Plan Commission Chair Steve Parrell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Plan Commission members Peter Weil, Joann Bennett, Tom Ripp, Bruce Johnson, Chuck Bruhn, Pat Helmenstine, and Clerk Stephanie Zwettler were present. Also in attendance: Barb Parrell, Brenda Kahl, Jason Handel, Scott Parrell, Levi Yoder, Joas and Rachel Bontrager, Marion Otto, Connie Bruhn, Terry Frey, Jim and Marie Pecquex, Chris Knipfel, Bill and Brenda Pulvermacher, Andrew and Michelle Harris, Lacey Green, and Kurtis Hahn.
2. Proof of Posting. An affidavit of posting was provided.
3. Approval of the Agenda. Tom Ripp moved and Bruce Johnson seconded a motion to approve the agenda. Motion carried. 7-0
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting – September 2, 2025. Joann Bennett moved and Pat Helmenstine seconded the motion to approve the minutes from September 2, 2025, as presented. Motion carried. 7-0
5. Levi Yoder, north of 5250 John Wilkinson Rd – land division and zoning changes to create (2) residential lots, from FP-35 to RM-16 for 35 acres, and to RM-8 for 12 acres, and include the transfer of (1) development right; Dane Co. Petition Number DCPREZ-2025-12211.

Neighboring residents on John Wilkinson Road expressed opposition to the rezones and the proposed shared driveway:

- Stated that the land quality is inadequate for the proposed houses and driveway.
- Believe runoff from the hill will flood the fields and cause erosion problems.
- Raised concerns about horse manure, metal siding, too many buildings, and numerous houses.
- Asked the applicant if electricity would be used and how many people would be housed.
- Expressed concern that three driveways in the same area on John Wilkinson Rd will lead to vehicle and bus traffic congestion and pose a safety risk.
- Opined that the proposed development will decrease the value of nearby properties.
- Suggested that the applicant use the existing driveway at the Bontrager residence on Midland Rd instead of John Wilkinson Rd.
- Claimed that the RM zoning district is not appropriate for the property because it would allow multiple buildings, is unlikely to be approved by Dane County, and could cause usage issues for future owners.
- Indicated that the RR zoning district would be more suitable with additional restrictions.
- Wish to preserve the current farmland and scenic rural character.
- Stated that the rezone conflicts with the goals of the Town's Comprehensive Plan.
- Proposed development is on wet and agricultural land.
- Expressed concern with the proposed transfer of development rights included in the application.

Chairman Steve Parrell read aloud the three letters of opposition that were submitted. He discussed the TDR program and stressed that agriculture is a top priority. Plan Commission member Tom Ripp inquired whether a proposal for a traditional dairy farm would face the same opposition from neighbors. Applicant Levi Yoder explained that each of the two proposed parcels will include one house, one barn, and a few outbuildings. Joas Bontrager outlined the farm plans and will reconsider the location of the driveway.

Pat Helmenstine moved and Chuck Bruhn seconded the motion to postpone action until the next meeting on November 4, 2025. Motion carried. 7-0

6. Discussion of future agenda items.
7. Adjourn. Joann Bennett moved and Pat Helmenstine seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephanie Zwettler, Town Clerk