

DAKOTA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION: March 17, 2026 MINUTES

Notice of meeting was sent to the Dakota County Star on February 25, 2026 to be published in the March 5, 2026 edition of the Star to meet the 10-day meeting notice requirement.

The regular meeting of the Dakota County Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Chairman Martin Rohde and the Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

Roll Call: Present were: Ron Collins, Tim Decker, Gordon Hegge, Steven Lieber, Dick McCabe, Harold Moes, and Martin Rohde. Absent: Scott Bousquet, Ron Gill. Also, present: Planning and Zoning Administrator Joe O'Neill. Public present: See Attached List

Notice was made regarding the Open Meeting Act posted on the wall.

Moved by Steven Lieber, second by Ron Collins to excuse Scott Bousquet and Ron Gill. Consent Unanimous. Motion Carried.

Moved by Ron Collins, second by Harold Moes, to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2026 meeting minutes. Consent unanimous. Motion carried.

First item on the agenda is the re-organization of the board. Nomination made by Ron Collins, second by Tim Decker to keep all offices the same. Roll Call Vote. Unanimous. Motion carried. Marty Rohde will remain Chairman, Harold Moes vice-Chair, and Dick McCabe secretary.

Cindy Anderson addressed the commission regarding concerns pertaining to the rezoning from AG to HM for the sand/gravel/rock rail yard off of Hwy 110. She expressed her concern about how it will affect surrounding residents as well as the farmers with special attention brought to the CRP wetland ground in close proximity. Mrs. Anderson listed demands to be met before any zoning change, permit issuance or project approval. The demands consisted of an independent environmental impact study, independent economic and property value impact assessment, and denial of zoning or land-use changes favoring private expansion. She also presented a petition that 90 plus surrounding landowners and residents signed opposing the rezoning. She inquired whether or not the traffic study had been done as requested by the planning commission at the last meeting. Joe O'Neill said it was done and would be presented by Knife River later on. Three other residents stood up and voiced their opposition as well.

Chair Rohde opened public hearing at 7:22pm for the purpose of giving citizens the opportunity to offer support, opposition, or make neutral comments regarding a request from Knife River to rezone property west of Hwy 110 from Agricultural (AG) to Heavy Manufacturing (HM) for a Sand/Gravel/Rock rail yard on approximately 120 acres, Section 2, Township 28, Range 8, and Section 35, Township 29, Range 8, and Dakota County, NE. Representatives from Knife River began with giving some information about the project. He noted that they do have environmental safety quality employees on staff to make sure all environmental laws are followed. There are concerns about safety and they want to make sure it is not only safe for their employees but members of the traveling public as well. Another Knife River representative explained the lack of available aggregate in the area and the need to rail it in. To be good neighbors they reached out to the two landowners who have adjacent homes to the proposed site early on in the project and worked out agreements with them. Chris Winkel, Knife River representative, addressed the group. He explained the cost savings to the residents of Dakota County with having available aggregates so close and at about \$10/ton cost savings having it railed in. The amount of aggregate used by the county and residents and businesses is approximately 230,000 tons which totals a cost savings for public and private use of 2.3 million dollars. Safety concerns were brought up at the last meeting with the additional truck traffic. Knife River reached out to the District 3 engineer, Kevin Domogalla. He looked at the existing traffic study and added Knife Rivers numbers in. The state is making a lot of safety improvements. They are putting in wider turning lanes in both directions at the intersection of Hwy 35 and 110 and in their 5-year plan at the intersection of Hwy 20 and 110 the plan is to upgrade and lengthen turning lanes. With the added safety improvements, Mr. Domogalla had no concerns with the amount of truck traffic Knife River would be bringing into the area. Currently year 2026 there is roughly 2100 vehicles per day on Hwy 110 with 25% of them being trucks. Knife River would add

about 55 trucks per day resulting in a 2.5% increase in traffic. Mr. Domogalla summarized the traffic study by saying “with these improvements already in the plans and the ability to adjust binder grade for the Hwy 110 project I have no concerns that the additional traffic generated will severely impact the highway”.

Currently the road is 24 feet wide. What the state will do is add 2 feet on each side making it 4 feet wider along with an overlay. They will also add center line rumble strips and outside rumble strips on Hwy 110.

Mr. Winkel touched on the economic impact on the region. They are estimating 14 direct and indirect jobs with an annual compensation of 1.1 million and an annual spend of 5.3 million. These estimates are based on the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

Commission member Ron Collins asked for clarification on a few things. He referenced back to what Mr. Winkel said about the 5.3 million spend. Mr. Collins asked if that was 5.3 million spend in the county? Mr. Winkel said those numbers were provided by the State of Nebraska’s Economic Development Department. He said Knife River does not have their numbers yet but that number came from a generalization of the industry or the type of business they are. They pulled the general numbers, or average numbers of spend of the data that Knife River provided of what they are spending and of what they are doing. Mr. Collins also asked for clarification on the number of cars per day. It is a minimum of 3 truckloads per car and 100 cars per week. The train would come and cars dropped off in their yard and they would unload it and then the empty cars would be picked up so there would not be any backlog of train cars on the train track. A resident referred back to the traffic study and asked about the current number of trucks averaged per day. Mr. Winkel responded that the average annual vehicle traffic count per day was 2,145 with 25% of those being trucks. The resident asked how much of an increase with the new business. He restated it is about a 2.5% increase in traffic. They are estimating 55 trucks per day based on the 230,000 ton per year. That would be an average day with higher level during the summer and less in the spring and fall. A resident asked if Knife River currently had a railyard in Sioux City. Mr. Winkel said they did currently have a rail yard in Sioux City. The resident said that everyone could just use that since it is not that far. Knife River representative said that it was served by another railroad. Another resident brought up air quality issues and that is why they live away from the city. Concerns were brought up about increased dust with a south wind. The possibility of an asphalt plant was brought up. Mr. Winkel stated that if there was a highway project in the area and would last 2-3 weeks, they would set up an asphalt plant and then move it out when the project is done. The farthest away an asphalt plant could be on a hot day is about 100 miles but that is not recommended. The closer the asphalt plant is to the project the better it is. Dust and water quality were brought up. All the water that leaves the site will have to be tested on a monthly basis or after a rain event of about 3 inches, he didn’t have the exact number of inches but they would have to follow the SWPPP which stands for Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. The water is retained when leaving the site in retention ponds. A question was brought up about the amount of water used. Knife River said it would have pretty minimal water usage.

Chairman Rohde opened up the floor to anyone in favor of the rail yard with comments being limited to 2-3 minutes.

One resident from Dakota County who also works for Knife River got up and spoke about his and Knife Rivers commitment to be good neighbors and address any concerns and will work with the residents when they have concerns.

Mr. O’Neill said they would open up the floor to anyone not in favor, but keep it short since there were a lot of people attending and not a lot of repetition and keep it orderly.

One individual stood up and said he was not comfortable with Knife River reporting on the traffic study from the State of Nebraska, it should have come from the source. Cindy Anderson raised concerns about her CRP, they need to burn every 5 years and the fire department won’t burn if there is an asphalt plant there. Another resident brought up the dust could potentially kill the CRP grasses. More questions were brought up on the traffic count and how long ago it was conducted. Mr. Winkel read again the direct quote from Kevin Domogalla the District 3 engineer for NDOT and it referenced traffic count from 2026. There was a lengthy discussion on safety concerns and the main problem being at the intersection of Hwy 110 and Hwy 20 and it could be a few years since that will be addresses since that work is on the 5-year plan. The public hearing was closed and the Planning Commission returned to regular session.

Steven Lieber made a motion against rezoning the property. Commissioner Bousquet recommended another Planning Commission member be the one to make a motion for or against since Mr. Lieber has family involved within the area. A motion was made by Tim Decker to not approve the request for rezoning due to safety. Until more is done with the Hwy 20 and Hwy 110 intersection, he cannot safely recommend this. Motion was seconded by Gordon Hegge. Roll Call Vote. Unanimous. Motion Carried. This recommendation will be sent the Board of Commissioners for their final decision.

The Planning Commission discussed regulations pertaining to Battery Energy Storage systems (BESS). Joe stated that BESS was a hot topic at the NPZA. They reviewed some regulations that Joe gave them last month. The commission was pleased with them and Joe will take them to SIMPCO to help incorporate them into our regulations.

Miscellaneous and old business. Joe said at the conference last month renewable energy was a big deal. They brought up nuclear, but that seems to be about 10 years out. Also, they passed a law that every board member, commissioner and county attorney must do 2 hours of education. You can meet the requirements if you attend the NPZA conference. It would be 2 hours a term and no penalty. The conditional use permits will have more restrictions for counties. Tabled item regarding the 66 Conditional Use Permits from Summit Carbon Solutions will be removed from the table since no new developments. Permits: Informational Statements issued to Peter & Anna Speiser -sheep barn- Emerson

Marty opened up the floor to public comment. Rick Bousquet brought up issues with light pollution that should be addressed in the future as well as setback rules regarding livestock.

Moved by Ron Collins, second by Harold Moes to adjourn. Consent unanimous. Motion carried

Meeting was duly adjourned at 8:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Jolene Gubbels