



# NORTH BRANCH

## —Minnesota—

Sara Paul  
Chair

Dennis Johnson  
Vice Chair

Jessica Thelander  
Commissioner

Marshall Saunders  
Commissioner

Patrick Meachem  
Councilmember

Cassie Koecher  
Commissioner

Kevin Schieber  
Mayor

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
REGULAR AGENDA  
TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026 @ 3:30 PM  
CITY HALL, 6408 ELM STREET, NORTH  
BRANCH, MN 55056**

### MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH BRANCH IN THE COUNTY OF CHISAGO AND IN THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

#### REGULAR MEETING

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sara Paul called the Economic Development Authority Meeting to order at 3:30PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Sara Paul led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

**Present:** Mayor Kevin Schieber, Councilmember Patrick Meacham, Commissioner Sara Paul, Commissioner Dennis Johnson, Commissioner Jessica Thelander, Commissioner Cassi Koecher

**Absent:** Commissioner Marshall Saunders

**Remote:**

**Others Present:**

**Notes:**

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

*Provides an opportunity for the public to address the Council on items that are not on the Agenda. Please raise your hand to be recognized. Please state your name and address for the record. This section is for the express purpose of addressing concerns of City services and operations. It shall not be used to clarify individual's views for political purposes.*

5. AGENDA APPROVAL

a. Approve Agenda

ACTION

**RESULT: Passed**

**MOVER: Jessica Thelander**

**SECONDER: Dennis Johnson**

**AYES: Kevin Schieber, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Kecher**

**ABSENT:**

**NOTES:**

6. CONSENT AGENDA

*All matters listed under Consent Agenda are considered routine and/or non-controversial and will be approved by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Councilmember or citizen so requests, in which case the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the Agenda.*

a. Approval of March 17, 2026 EDA meeting minutes

ACTION

**RESULT: Passed**

**MOVER: Jessica Thelander**

**SECONDER: Dennis Johnson**

**AYES: Kevin Schieber, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Kecher**

**ABSENT:**

**NOTES:**

7. REPORTS

a. Consider Approval of a Storefront Facade Application Request for North Branch Barbers at 6420 Main Street ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented the consideration of approval of a Storefront Facade Application Request for North Branch Barbers at 6420 Main Street. The Economic Development Authority (EDA) budget for Fiscal Year 2024 included \$75,000, allowing the EDA to establish a Storefront Rehabilitation Grant Program. The funding is intended to help incentivize façade restoration and enhancements by businesses and/or property owners that restore the “historic” existing buildings within the old downtown area. The program funding is set up as technically a 0% forgivable loan over a five (5) year term, with repayment waived 20% each year through the end of the term. At that time, the funding becomes a “grant.” Should the property change hands at any time during the five (5) year timeline, the remaining balance would be due at the time of said transaction. The property owners would be required to agree to either a mortgage or some type of loan security.

The policy funds covering 50% of the improvement cost up to \$25,000. This would allow for up to three (3) “grants”. The EDA has discretion to approve a larger funding award to a business, if the project

meets the program intent and also meets the program goals with the district, and also supports the vision and goals for the Central Business District / Downtown area. The program establishes guidelines and defines eligible and ineligible improvements for the funding, as well as maintenance requirements.

Funding is intended to restore the storefronts of the existing buildings to their original appearances as they existed at the time of their construction. Given the age of many of the buildings, and historic photos, those storefronts included large floor-to-ceiling windows with recessed doors. Most of the buildings were brick facades.

Although the focus is on restoration of existing buildings, the guidelines can serve as guidance to new buildings and/or restoration of newer buildings. Thus, the EDA has discretion to award funding to update and upgrade non-historic buildings within the district, but are still important to fund such improvements.

There has been interest expressed in the program and an application has been submitted by Timothy Kropper from North Branch Barbers for improvements to their building located at 6420 Main Street.

Motion for Approval of a Storefront Facade Application Request for North Branch Barbers at 6420 Main Street.

**RESULT:** Passed  
**MOVER:** Jessica Thelander  
**SECONDER:** Cassie Kecher  
**AYES:** Kevin Schieber, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Kecher  
**ABSENT:** Marshall Saunders  
**NOTES:**

b. Consider Approval of a Storefront Facade Application Request for The Hungry Farmer at 6241 Main St ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented the consideration of Approval of a Storefront Facade Application Request for the Hungry Farmer at 6241 Main Street. The Economic Development Authority (EDA) budget for Fiscal Year 2024 included \$75,000, allowing the EDA to establish a Storefront Rehabilitation Grant Program. The funding is intended to help incentivize facade restoration and enhancements by businesses and/or property owners that restore the “historic” existing buildings within the old downtown area. The program funding is set up as technically a 0% forgivable loan over a five (5) year term, with repayment waived 20% each year through the end of the term. At that time, the funding becomes a “grant.” Should the property change hands at any time during the five (5) year timeline, the remaining balance would be due at the time of said transaction. The property owners would be required to agree to either a mortgage or some type of loan security.

The policy funds covering 50% of the improvement cost up to \$25,000. This would allow for up to three (3) “grants.” The EDA has discretion to approve a larger funding award to a business, if the project meets the program intent and also meets the program goals of the district, and also supports the vision and goals for the Central Business District / Downtown area. The program establishes guidelines and defines eligible and ineligible improvements for the funding, as well as maintenance requirements.

Funding is intended to restore the storefronts of the existing buildings to their original appearances as they existed at the time of their construction. Given the age of many of the buildings, and historic photos, those storefronts included large floor-to-ceiling windows with recessed doors. Most of the buildings were brick facades.

Although the focus is on restoration of existing buildings, the guidelines can serve as guidance to new buildings and/or restoration of newer buildings. Thus, the EDA has discretion to award funding to update and upgrade non-historic buildings within the district, but is still important to fund such improvements.

There has been interest expressed in the program and an application has been submitted by The Hungry Farmer to their building located at 6241 Main Street. The applicant is proposing improvements to the site include siding, paint, lighting, signage and concrete. The proposed project is located outside the current downtown storefront facade program boundary. However it is located within the central business zoning district.

There was some discussion regarding the project being located outside the current downtown, as it is located within the central business zone district. It's in line with a lot of what the program was intended to do. Nate was requesting discussion and direction from the EDA related to the boundary. The Hungry Farmer would like to start the project on May 1st.

Motion to Approve the Storefront Facade Application Request for the Hungry Farmer at 6241 Main Street up to \$20,000.

**RESULT:** Passed  
**MOVER:** Jessica Thelander  
**SECONDER:** Dennis Johnson  
**AYES:** Kevin Schieber, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Kecher  
**ABSENT:** Marshall Saunders  
**NOTES:**

- c. Consider Approval of Resolution R-321-2026 approving engineering and environmental oversight agreement for building removal at 6247 410th Street ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented the consideration Approval of building removal at 6247 410th Street. The EDA approved a purchase agreement with Louisiana Pacific (LP) is proposing a minimum of a 200,000 square foot facility manufacturing facility on 120 acres located in the northeast portion of the Interstate Business Park on December 9, 2025. The manufacturing at this facility will include LP's Expert finish facility which specializes in pre-finishing engineered wood siding trim with durable, factory applied paint in various colors, reducing the installation time and labor for builders by eliminating field painting and caulking needs. The site will require the outdoor storage of materials on the site.

The EDA approved the 1st Amendment to the purchase agreement at the March 17, 2026 that allowed for the removal of the structures on the property post closing date, establishing a closing date of April 21, 2026 and removal of the fixed wireless tower within 90 days of the termination of the tower lease.

Staff have been in the process of obtaining quotes for the removal and engineering/environmental services for the project.

Staff is requesting the following approvals:

1. Approval of Demo Service Environmental/Engineering Contract with WSB
2. Approval of Quitclaim Bill of Sale and Building Removal Agreement
3. Approval of Low Quote for Building Demolition and Site Clearance

Motion to Approve Resolution R-321-2026 Approving Environmental and Engineering Oversight Agreement for 6247 410th Street.

**RESULT:** Passed  
**MOVER:** Jessica Thelander  
**SECONDER:** Patrick Meacham  
**AYES:** Kevin Schieber, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Koecher  
**ABSENT:** Marshall Saunders  
**NOTES:**

Motion to Approve R-322-2026 Approving Quitclaim Bill of Sale and Removal Agreement.

**RESULT:** Passed  
**MOVER:** Jessica Thelander  
**SECONDER:** Patrick Meacham  
**AYES:** Kevin Schieber, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Koecher  
**ABSENT:** Marshall Saunders  
**NOTES:**

Motion to Approve R-323-2026 Approving a Demolition and Site Clearing Agreement at 6247 410th Street.

**RESULT:** Passed  
**MOVER:** Jessica Thelander  
**SECONDER:** Patrick Meacham  
**AYES:** Kevin Schieber, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Koecher  
**ABSENT:** Marshall Saunders  
**NOTES:**

- i. Consider Approval of Resolution R-322-2026 approving quitclaim bill of sale ACTION and removal agreement
- ii. Consider Approval of Resolution R-323-2026 approving site demolition and ACTION clearing agreement at 6247 410th Street

d. Comprehensive Plan Update INFO

City Administrator Matthew Hill gave a Comprehensive Plan Update. Matthew said that in the last couple of months, there have been some steering committee meetings and work sessions. The City has gotten some really great feedback. We will be providing that feedback to the City Council in May as part of the larger group, along with all the information that we received from the values and vision portion of the comp plan as well. We will hopefully have everything ready for a June approval and get it documented for prosperity's sake.

e. Chisago County HRA-EDA Update VERBAL UPDATE

Community Development Director gave the Chisago County HRA-EDA Update due to Nancy Hoffman being unable to attend. There a Real Estate Redevelopment Event on Wednesday, May 13, 2026 from 11:30am-3pm. The cost is \$40 per person. Registration deadline is May 6th, 2026.

f. North Branch Area Chamber of Commerce Update

VERBAL  
UPDATE

Chair Sara Paul gave a shout-out to the President of the Chamber of Commerce, Clink Link, appreciating the time he gives to the Chamber.

g. North Branch Area Schools Update

VERBAL  
UPDATE

Chair Sara Paul gave the North Branch Area Schools Update. An interesting challenge in education is that while data is valuable, it often arrives with significant delays due to state processing. For example, our Class of 2025 graduated last June, but we only received official graduation data from the state two weeks ago. This lag is largely due to tracking student cohorts from ninth grade through graduation and ensuring the data is accurate. That said, the results are worth celebrating. The statewide graduation rate is 84%, while North Branch reached 93%. That's a reflection of years of intentional work. When I joined six years ago, one of our district's strategic priorities was redesigning the high school experience to better prepare students for their futures. I credit our school board for having the courage to rethink and reshape that model.

We're proud of the 93%—one of the highest rates in the region—but what matters most is our commitment to every student. While we celebrate those who graduate on time, we also support students who need more time, ensuring they leave with a meaningful plan that fits their life.

It's an exciting time in our district beyond academics as well. We have concerts coming up, a production of Mamma Mia!, and a full slate of spring activities—from softball and baseball to track. There's always something happening in North Branch.

h. EDA Executive Director Update

VERBAL UPDATE

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol gave the EDA Executive Director Update. Just a few quick updates on development projects: Valvoline has submitted a building permit, with plans to locate near Holiday, in front of Cartfull. Their application is currently under city review.

We also have a battery energy storage project moving through the Public Utilities Commission. This site is planned near County Road 14 and Lincoln Road, in the southeastern part of the area by the substation. In addition, we've met with another company exploring a separate battery storage project on the west side, just south of that location. We'll share more details as that progresses.

Jersey Mike's has submitted a building permit as well, which is a great addition to the community.

Finally, we received a TIF application for the Westside Commons senior housing project. This proposal includes a 105-unit building and is an important step in expanding local housing options and will be discussed at a meeting on April 28, 2026 at 6pm

i. Consider approval of signage in Interstate Business Park

ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented the approval of signage in Interstate Business Park. The North Branch EDA has discussed and identified marketing of the Interstate Business Park as one of its top priorities, and has discussed the purchase and installation of new marketing signage for the Interstate Business Park as a way to help meet those efforts.

The addition of new signage would be intended to enhance the visibility and marketability of the industrial park and reinforce a cohesive, professional brand identity. Updated signage will better showcase available spaces, attract prospective tenants, and support ongoing efforts. The cost would be around \$2,500 for one side and there is money budgeted for marketing. Commissioner Cassie Koecher brought up the idea of utilizing QR codes for updates.

Motion to approve signage in the Interstate Business Park up to \$3,000 in cost.

**RESULT:** Passed  
**MOVER:** Dennis Johnson  
**SECONDER:** Jessica Thelander  
**AYES:** Kevin Schieber, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Koecher  
**ABSENT:** Marshall Saunders  
**NOTES:**

8. CLOSED SESSION

- a. Closed meeting pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, sub. 3 (c) to consider the sale of INFO real property in the Interstate Business Park

Motion to enter closed meeting pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, sub. 3 (c) to consider the sale of real property in the Interstate Business Park at 5:02 PM.

**RESULT:** Passed  
**MOVER:** Jessica Thelander  
**SECONDER:** Dennis Johnson  
**AYES:** Kevin Schieber, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Koecher  
**ABSENT:** Marshall Saunders  
**NOTES:**

Entered into open session at 5:25 PM.

9. NEXT MEETING - May 19, 2026 - 330 PM

10. ADJOURNMENT

The Economic Development Authority meeting adjourned at 5:25 PM.

**RESULT:** Passed  
**MOVER:** Dennis Johnson  
**SECONDER:** Patrick Meacham  
**AYES:** Kevin Schieber, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Koecher  
**ABSENT:** Marshall Saunders  
**NOTES:**

