



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, FEBRUARY 17, 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, February 17, 2026

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

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

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Sara Paul led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **ROLL CALL**

Present: Mayor Kevin Schieber, Commissioner Marshall Saunders, Commissioner Sara Paul, Commissioner Dennis Johnson, Commissioner Jessica Thelander

Absent: Councilmember Patrick Meacham, Commissioner Cassie Koecher

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: Marshall Saunders

AYES: Kevin Schieber, Marshall Saunders, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander

ABSENT: Patrick Meacham, Cassie Keocher

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 January 20, 2026 EDA meeting minutes

ACTION

RESULT: Passed

MOVER: Jessica Thelander

SECONDER: Marshall Saunders

AYES: Kevin Schieber, Marshall Saunders, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander

ABSENT: Patrick Meacham, Cassie Keocher

NOTES:

7. REPORTS

a. Chisago County HRA-EDA Update

VERBAL
UPDATE

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol gave the Chisago County HRA-EDA update for Nancy Hoffman, who was unable to attend the meeting. At the HRA-EDA meeting, Nancy had mentioned that they had some grants available, and they approved four grants with that program. One of the grants is the She Shed Company, which is located here in North Branch. There is a trade analysis that's going to be taking place at the library this Thursday, February 19th, from 2-4 PM. We strongly encourage you to attend.

b. North Branch Area Chamber of Commerce Update

VERBAL
UPDATE

No update for the North Branch Area Chamber of Commerce.

c. North Branch Area Schools Update

VERBAL
UPDATE

Chair Sara Paul gave the North Branch Area Schools update. The School District is very fortunate to be partnering to address the shortage of childcare opportunities across the County. On January 31st, there was the 2nd annual Child Care Champions event. There were 85 registrants, and 81 attended. We're very thankful for all the people working together to ensure those opportunities are available to our families. Sara wanted to highlight a student as a Viking spotlight. His name is Mattias BigBear. He competed in the World hoop dancing competition, he is up to dancing with 30 hoops, and he does this to honor his father, who passed away from an overdose of drugs.

The School District had our special election on Tuesday last week, and voters did not approve the

renewal of our capital projects Levy, so we'll be pausing right now to reflect and engage in some learning, hearing some feedback, before we determine the next steps.

d. EDA Executive Director Update

VERBAL
UPDATE

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol gave the EDA Executive Director Update. The Comp Plan Committee will be meeting tomorrow evening, February 18th, at 6:00 PM. We'll have the Planning Commission, the Parks Commission, the City Council, and then some members of the community. County Market has been rebranded as Jerry's Foods. There will be a ribbon cutting on March 27th; we don't have a time as of yet.

March 17th is EDAM Day at the Capitol, so that's a possibility for us to engage with our legislators to explain the importance of the need for funding and budgeting. In November, there is an industrial summit at the Minnesota Real Estate Journal, where we're planning on doing a presentation, and really hoping that we complete the land sale, and would like to talk about that project and promote and market our industrial park at that time as well. In other things, the old fire hall, a purchase agreement has been approved with the planning commission, so we're working with the business to set a closing date.

There are some developments that are coming up. Meadows Ridge, that's up off of Flink Avenue. They will be having a pre-construction meeting at the end of February, so we're anticipating a Spring construction start. A couple of other projects that are going to be coming forward are the old Cedar Ridge development, just south of Falcon Avenue. They had some apartment buildings, and they've actually worked with a group called Unique Opportunities, LLC. They're looking at restructuring how that's originally planned, to have apartment buildings that are going on the North end. They're looking at having 236 units. They're requesting TIF with that, so that'll be going to the City Council for initial discussion at their meeting on the 25th of February. Looking at three buildings, two being 88 units, one being 60 units.

Another project that was discussed about a year and a half ago was senior housing off of 386th Street. The developer is looking into establishing an independent active senior living facility at this location with a 105-unit building. This would offer an extension of street utilities, to really try to help act as a catalyst for that area in the Southwest corner of 95. This will be coming to the Council as soon as it goes through some of those initial steps.

e. Downtown Storefront Facade Program - 6354 Main St

ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented an amendment request for an existing approved storefront facade applicant at 6354 Main Street.

Submitted by Chet Morgan from Acoustic Avenue for improvements to their building located at 6354 Main Street. The proposed improvements included masonry repair, painting, and signage.

During the beginning of the construction process, it was determined by Mr. Morgan's contractor that additional work would be required to complete masonry improvements to the building that they were not capable of completing. Mr. Morgan consulted with another contractor and obtained a quote of \$19,640 from MW Concrete LLC, which is \$7,119.19 more than the previously approved masonry repair quote of \$12,520.81. Attached is the updated quote.

Mr. Morgan is requesting approval to amend the agreement to cover the increased costs for the masonry repair. This would result in an additional grant award of \$3,559.60, bringing the total grant award of \$14,044.50.

Motion was approved for the amendment to the storefront facade grant with Acoustic Avenue, Chet

Morgan, to increase the grant award in the amount of \$3,559.60, bringing the total grant award to \$14,044.50.

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

f. Interstate Business Park Land Sale Update ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol gave an update on the Interstate Business Park Land Sale. I'd like to provide an update on where things stand with the land sale and the related development work. Overall, the project is progressing well and we are moving through the required contingencies.

The public hearing for the sale of the property was held on December 9 and the sale was approved. The buyer has submitted a concept layout for their facility, and that is the current site plan we have been working from. We are using that layout for their TIF application, Forward Fund application, and private financing efforts. All required materials have been submitted to date, and we are on schedule.

Regarding the TIF process, we have a timeline in place with specific deadlines and thresholds. Notifications to the school district and county are scheduled for February 20. The TIF resolution will be brought to the EDA in March, and the TIF public hearing is scheduled for March 25 at the City Council meeting. We are meeting with our financial advisors, bond counsel, and attorneys to finalize the TIF and development agreements, and LD is assisting with drafting to ensure everything is ready for those meetings.

On the west side of the site, the 80 acres previously purchased from the County HRA/EDA has now been fully paid off. The County HRA/EDA approved the release of the related documents earlier this month, and those documents are currently being drafted. We are also working with bond counsel and our attorneys on the partial release of revenue bonds, and that process is underway.

The subdivision and conditional use permits were reviewed at a public hearing before the Planning Commission and were recommended for approval. They are scheduled to go before the City Council on the 25th for final approval.

From a planning standpoint, the primary parcel needed for the buyer is approximately 120 acres. As part of the layout, we will be extending right-of-way access, which will allow us to create additional parcels along the interstate, including a 10-acre parcel, a 40-acre parcel, and a 20-acre parcel on the east side. These parcels will be readily available for development and will create additional opportunity and value. We have also included an alternate in the engineering plans that would allow for the creation of three two-acre lots, one one-acre lot, and one six-acre lot. The extension of streets and utilities will depend on final bid results, but the intent is to extend them as far as feasible. The sanitary trunk line will be extended along the site and connected to provide service to both the buyer's property and future development to the north.

We received the 30 percent design plans for the Fletcher Avenue utility extension today and forwarded them to LP for review to confirm elevations align with their site needs. We are also coordinating with private utility providers regarding extension routes, and the gas provider for the site is still being determined.

Regarding existing site conditions, we have had detailed discussions with Mr. Engdahl, who currently leases the property. He has been very supportive of the project and has agreed to vacate prior to closing. The existing farm site and buildings will need to be removed. Our intention is to terminate the lease prior to closing and remove the buildings after closing to protect all parties in the unlikely event that something unforeseen occurs. This approach has been verbally agreed to and will be incorporated into the TIF and development agreement.

There is also a tower located on the property. We have an existing agreement that requires a six-month notification for removal. We are working with the tower company on that process, and LP has been supportive as we continue to move forward.

Finally, the buyer has submitted a Forward Fund request to the state for \$10 million to support the project. We plan to attend that meeting next Wednesday. At this point, all components of the project are progressing as expected, and we are targeting a late March to early April closing.

g. Comprehensive Plan Update

INFO

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol gave a Comprehensive Plan Update. We're not really looking to revamp the entire plan, but we just want to see if what we currently have is what we feel are our goals and visions. The vision really is still the same as we had before. The intent is to get some feedback on the economic development section. It's easier to work in small groups, looking to new vision and really start driving goals and objectives, and having metrics to try and achieve those goals and objectives.

Chair Sara Paul brought up that she feels that what isn't captured in that vision is how much we talk about jobs, and when we think about growth, we really are focused on how we're attracting high-quality jobs, livable wage jobs, and how we've used that as a metric. Sara also brought up that if we're thinking about the next 3-5 years, maybe our broadband discussions are very different today than they were 5 years ago, as broadband or internet is pretty much completed throughout North Branch.

The next Comprehensive Plan Meeting is tomorrow night at 6 pm, February 25th. After tomorrow night, we can take the information back, try to compile it, and bring it back in March and April.

8. CLOSED SESSION

- a. Closed meeting pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, sub. 3 (c) to consider the sale of real property identified as Lot 3, Block 1, Essby Business Park, North Branch, Minnesota INFO

The Economic Development Authority meeting went into closed session at 4:05 PM pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, sub. 3 (c) to consider the sale of real property identified as Lot 3, Block 1, Essby Business Park, North Branch, Minnesota.

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

The Economic Development Authority Meeting went into open session at 4:22 PM.

9. NEXT MEETING - March 17, 2026 - 330PM

10. ADJOURNMENT

The North Branch Economic Development Authority meeting adjourned at 4:25 PM.