

CITY OF GRANT
MINUTES

DATE : June 2, 2026
TIME STARTED : 6:30 p.m.
TIME ENDED : 8:08 p.m.
MEMBERS PRESENT : Councilmembers Cornett, Rog, Anderson,
and Mayor Giefer
MEMBERS ABSENT : Council Member Cremona

Staff members present: City Planner Jennifer Haskamp (virtually), City Attorney Amanda Johnson and Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer Lacey Smieja.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Giefer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**APPROVAL OF REGULAR AGENDA**

Council Member Cornett moved to approve the agenda, as presented. Council Member Rog seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

PUBLIC INPUT

Steve Schwartz, 10660 62nd St N, wanted the Council to know that the County said they did a study and due to the lower density, the cost-benefit analysis indicates noise barriers will not be implemented on the Lake Elmo/Hwy 17 road project. He wanted to know what, if anything, Grant can say or do about that.

Lisa Dau, 7611 Jamaca Ave. N, wanted to draw attention to the last page of the packet about a code violation complaint at 7559 Jamaca Ave. N. She said that is an inaccurate report; there is a video that shows washing of the vehicles did happen at that date and time. She noted she wants to ensure that the complaint process in Grant is fair and accurate and represents the evidence that was submitted.

Emily Dahdah, 6166 Jarvis Ave. N, wanted to thank the City Council for their attentiveness and responsiveness to her prior concerns and needs.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. May 2026 Bill List, \$155,882.68
- B. May 5, 2026 City Council Meeting Minutes
- C. May 20, 2026 Special City Council Meeting Minutes
- D. Approve Cooperative Agreement Between the City of Grant and Washington County for Project Costs of CSAH 12 Safe Routes to School Trail Project
- E. Approve Amended Technology Use Policy

Council Member Anderson moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Council Member Cornett seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

REGULAR AGENDA

A. PUBLIC HEARING: Consideration of Conditional Use Permit to operate a Buddhist Temple at 8650 60th Street - City Planner Jennifer Haskamp

City Planner Jennifer Haskamp provided background on the request for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a Buddhist Temple with residential uses, events and gathering. The request was initially submitted in 2022, but was incomplete at that time. The Applicant was notified several times since the initial 2022 application was submitted that while the request for Conditional Use Permit remained active, and incomplete, they were not permitted to operate the Buddhist Temple at the property. Additional information for the request was submitted by the Applicant and their representative in March 2026, the applicant indicated their request was complete, and a Public Hearing was ordered.

The Proposed Use follows:

The Applicant's narrative describes the proposed use as a Buddhist Temple. Per Section 32-245 Table of Uses, subsection (b) "...When a specific use is not listed, the closest or similar listed use shall determine the restrictions and conditions which apply." Buddhist Temples are not identified specifically on the table of uses, however, the described activities are similar to churches, which includes places of worship and congregating which requires a conditional use permit.

The narrative describes a maximum of 11 events per year on site. The maximum occupancy projected for each event is 50 attendees. On non-event days, visitors will come to meet with the monks on site and presumably in the home during daytime hours. The daily activities associated with visiting and meetings with the monks are associated with the described Buddhist Temple activities and are subject to the CUP process and requirements.

However, the use of the principal structure (home) for the monks and elders living quarters is a permitted residential use. No special permits or approvals for the residential uses are required.

City Planner Jennifer Haskamp provided a detailed analysis of the request. Based on the analysis, City Planner Haskamp recommended denial of the request for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a Buddhist Temple on the subject property based upon the following findings of fact:

1. Section 32-145 Burden of Proof, of the City Code states, "The applicant shall have the burden of proving that the proposed use is suitable and that all of the standards set forth have been met." As provided in this Staff Report, the Applicant's submission fails to comply with the minimum ordinance requirements for site plan, architectural/building plans, and stormwater management plans. The submitted materials do not adequately demonstrate that the proposed use is suitable for the intensity described within the narrative. The occupancy

1 identified in the narrative requires certain site improvements that are not designed, and with
2 respect to the parking, were overtly rejected by the Applicant.

3 2. Section 32-146 Standards, subsection (a) established the criteria by which the city council
4 may grant a conditional use permit. The ordinance requires that the city council find that the
5 Applicant has proven to a reasonable degree of certainty that the following standards are met.
6 The following findings regarding each standard, as numbered within the ordinance, is
7 provided:

8 1) The proposed use is designated in section 32-245 as a conditional use for the
9 appropriate zoning district.

10 **Finding:** The proposed Buddhist Temple is similar to a church or other place of
11 worship and is designated in section 32-245 as a conditional use within the A2 zoning
12 district. **This standard is met.**

13
14 2) The proposed use conforms to the city's comprehensive plan.

15 **Finding:** The proposed Buddhist Temple is similar in intensity and scale to other
16 churches, places of worship and congregation in the city. The adopted 2040
17 Comprehensive Plan supports a limited mix of uses in the Rural
18 Residential/Agricultural land use designation but emphasizes that the use must be
19 compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed Buddhist Temple may
20 be compatible with the adopted Comprehensive Plan, however, not enough details
21 were provided to ensure that the intensity of the proposed operations will not adversely
22 impact adjacent properties. **This standard is not met.**

23
24 3) The proposed use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety or
25 general welfare of the city, its residents, or the existing neighborhood.

26 **Finding:** The Applicant's submission does not include a plan for onsite parking,
27 driveway expansion, or stormwater management. Detailed engineering plans were
28 requested repeatedly for the past 3.5 years, but the information was not submitted. The
29 proposed event occupancy of up to 50 attendees requires an improved parking lot
30 and/or parking spaces to adequately accommodate all visitors and the Applicant has
31 refused to install and/or provide plans that identify the required parking. The access
32 driveway must be upgraded from the current 12-foot-wide traveled surface to 20-feet
33 wide to meet the fire lane standards. The existing driveway does not allow for two-
34 way traffic and in an emergency a fire truck could not safely travel north on the
35 driveway while a passenger vehicle traveled south. This does not meet the minimums
36 safety requirements and could be detrimental or endanger not only occupants of the
37 Buddhist Temple, but emergency personnel trying to access the site. Details, including
38 architectural schematics, were not provided to clearly show how the existing
39 Accessory Building will be converted for a prayer facility for up to 50 occupants. The
40 Accessory Building must be brought to commercial standards to ensure that the
41 facility meets the safety and accessibility requirements of the MN Building Code. As
42 submitted, the proposed Buddhist Temple use may be detrimental or endanger the
43 public's health and safety. **This standard is not met.**

44
45 4) The proposed use is compatible with the existing neighborhood.

1 **Finding:** The Applicant's narrative describes two primary activities on the site; first,
2 the conversion of the accessory building for a prayer facility for larger gatherings and
3 events; and second, the use of the principal structure (home) for the Buddhist monks
4 and elder meetings and visitation. Based on the materials submitted, the larger events
5 or gatherings cannot be satisfactorily handled onsite without parking or other site
6 improvements. Additionally, it is unclear if outdoor activities are proposed and, if so,
7 where such activities would occur. Additionally, the City has been notified by
8 neighbors in the surrounding area that the Applicant has intermittently operated onsite
9 including events and possibly outdoor activities over the past 3.5 years, despite not
10 having a permit. Without further site details regarding the driveway, parking and
11 operations the city cannot determine if the activities are compatible with the existing
12 neighborhood, and therefore this standard is not met with respect to the larger events
13 and gatherings. With respect to the use of the home for the Buddhist monks and elders,
14 small scale visitation and meetings are not likely to adversely impact the surrounding
15 neighborhood provided activities occur indoors and are generally happening during the
16 daytime hours. For this use, the standard is met. However, the Applicant did not
17 provide adequate information to determine if events as well as meetings with the
18 monks and elders could happen concurrently, which could affect the needed parking
19 and other site improvements. Therefore, without mitigation and required site
20 improvements, **this standard is not met.**

21
22 5) The proposed use meets conditions or standards adopted by the city through
23 resolutions or other ordinances.

24 **Finding:** The Applicant's submission did not include a to-scale site plan, details of the
25 proposed driveway enlargement, a wetland delineation, a parking plan, architectural
26 schematic plan or stormwater management plan. This information was requested
27 repeatedly over the past 3.5 years from the Applicant and the Applicant's
28 representatives, including civil engineer, and it has not been submitted. The
29 information submitted does not meet the city's ordinances or city code. **This standard**
30 **is not met.**

31
32 6) The proposed use will not create additional requirements for facilities and services
33 at public costs beyond the city's normal low-density residential and agricultural uses.

34 **Finding:** The Applicant provided information to demonstrate that the onsite utilities,
35 including septic system, have been upgraded and can support the proposed Buddhist
36 Temple use. However, the Applicant's submission did not include adequate details to
37 ensure that emergency services can access the site in an emergency specifically related
38 to traffic flow, and plans to upgrade the driveway to meet fire lane standards. **This**
39 **standard is not met.**

40
41 7) The proposed use will not involve uses, activities, processes, materials, equipment
42 of conditions of operation that will be detrimental to people, property, or the general
43 welfare because of production of traffic, noise, smoke, fumes, glare, odors or any other
44 nuisance.

45 **Finding:** The proposed use of the property for a Buddhist Temple is reasonable,
46 provided the site is improved to support the intensity of the operation. As submitted,

the Applicant did not provide to-scale plans depicting the site plan, architectural schematic, or parking plans and therefore it cannot be determined that the site can support the proposed operations in a manner that will not adversely impact traffic or noise. As noted throughout this report, the City repeatedly requested this information and the Applicant did not provide or submit the needed plans. **This standard is not met.**

8) The proposed use will not result in the destruction, loss or damage of natural, scenic or historic features of importance.

Finding: The proposed use of the property for Buddhist Temple with the occupancy identified requires the driveway to be upgraded to meet the fire lane standard, and onsite parking must be provided. Despite several requests by City Staff, an accurate engineered site plan was not provided and therefore it cannot be determined if the improvements needed will comply with the wetland and wetland buffer setback requirements. As such, it cannot be determined based on the level of information provided if there would be a loss of wetland area or wetland buffer areas as a result of the necessary site improvements. **This standard is not met.**

9) The proposed use will not increase flood potential or create additional water runoff onto surrounding properties.

Finding: The Applicant did not submit a to-scale site plan that complies with the ordinance requirements or a stormwater management plan. Impervious surface coverage will increase due to the expansion of the driveway and needed parking, and as such the improvements will likely exceed the minimum threshold for preparing a stormwater plan. Given the lack of details, it cannot be determined that the additional water runoff will be managed onsite. **This standard is not met.**

10) The standards apply in addition to specific conditions as may be specified through the city's ordinances.

Finding: As noted within the staff report, the ordinance standards and conditions related to the site plan, architectural schematic plans, stormwater plans, and other operational details were not provided. This information was requested repeatedly over the past 3.5 years, but was not provided in the last submission. **This standard is not met.**

Motion by Council Member Cornett, seconded by Council Member Rog to open the public hearing at 7:12 p.m. Motion approved 4-0.

Vong Thao, applicant's representative, requested that there be collaboration to address the technical items pointed out. He indicated the project started in 2022 and the applicants have already spent close to/over \$100,000 to try to meet the condition requirements, \$80,000 on septic alone, surveys, and architectural and wetland delineations. He indicated he came on board about a year ago to try to help the applicant. He said there's no change to the existing structure. They are asking for approval with conditions so they can continue to invest and move forward. The applicant has spent a significant amount of money to get to this point of a public hearing, and they believe it would be hard to spend another \$100,000+ just to get to the next phase of meeting compliance. A bid for the driveway alone

1 was \$150,000. They don't want to spend three, four, five-hundred-thousand-dollar range and then not
2 get a conditional use permit. Therefore, they are asking for approval with conditions so they can
3 move forward.

4
5 Naw Kin, 8650 60th St. N, provided a history of the Karen people and the Buddhism faith and the
6 importance of the temple. She indicated that they apologize for not understanding some of the rules
7 and regulations, but they are committed to working together and are hoping for understanding. She
8 understands some have raised concerns about noise and the number of people. She said most of the
9 time the gatherings are small and quiet, but for important dates there are a larger number of people
10 who come together to celebrate. She also indicated that they apologize for a recent incident of
11 burning leaves and wood; they were cleaning the grounds and were not aware that open burning
12 wasn't allowed without a permit. They are open to learning about local regulations, they want to be
13 respectful neighbors, and want to work together to find solutions that respect everyone involved.

14
15 Indoboe, 8650 60th St. N, is an elder monk speaking as a member of the Karen Buddhist Society of
16 Minnesota. He said this temple is very important to them. He said that they don't understand some of
17 the rules and regulations but if they get the permit they will follow every step.

18
19 Colleen McGuire Ales, 6161 Inwood Ct. N, said that she thinks they knew they were moving into a
20 residential facility knowing they were going to turn this into a temple with large gatherings. They
21 came in and did what they wanted without permission, and are now asking for forgiveness. She said
22 that they've tried to talk and communicate with them about the large gatherings and nothing would
23 stop them. She said the loud music would start at 8 or 9 in the morning on Saturday and Sunday and
24 go until sunset, for multiple weekends. She said that there has been increased traffic and increased
25 garbage on the road and the watershed. She's requesting denial of the permit.

26
27 Amy Hunn, 6206 Inwood Ct. N, said that she's concerned that if they didn't have an understanding of
28 the requirements before, will they have an understanding now? She said that they are now being
29 surrounded by commercial properties and she's concerned about quality of life and property values.

30
31 Nancy Moses, 6129 Inwood Ct. N, said her family has lived here since 1964. She said that a
32 conditional use permit is a permit to authorize a use that is not otherwise allowed and would impose
33 conditions before the use begins. People need to go through the process first and needs to apply
34 equally to all. She wants to know: will the City uphold its ordinances, fairly and consistently, or not?
35 Her and her husband are requesting denial of the permit.

36
37 Mark Kersey owns a 30 acre parcel directly east & north of this property. He agrees that people need
38 to get approval before you develop, not after.

39
40 **Motion by Council Member Cornett, seconded by Council Member Anderson to close the**
41 **public hearing at 7:37 p.m. Motion approved 4-0.**

42
43 Council discussion followed.

44
45 Council Member Rog asked Planner Haskamp what could or should be done since the use has already
46 been happening without the permit.

1
2 Planner Haskamp said that the applicant has been notified numerous times that they are not permitted
3 to have operations conducted at this time and have been notified of that since 2022. She said the
4 residential use is obviously permitted, but they've been notified that the temple use is not permitted
5 and it shouldn't be operating.

6
7 Council Member Cornett said there seems to be a lot of unknowns still. He asked if there's a path
8 forward for the applicant.

9
10 Planner Haskamp indicated that City Staff has discussed what the best way to move forward is
11 several times. She said that since the original application in 2022 the City has deemed the application
12 as incomplete and has requested additional information to complete the application, but the
13 documentation and information that the applicant submitted has actually gotten less detailed over
14 time. She said that as it stands, the City has not been successful in receiving the information they've
15 requested. So she confirmed with the applicant that the information they recently submitted was the
16 information that they wanted the City to consider and they said that it was. It's been complicated by
17 the fact that it's been reported that they are in fact operating.

18
19 Council Member Cornett with Planner Haskamp that it's been communicated multiple times to the
20 applicant that we need specific information.

21
22 Council Member Anderson reiterated that in 2022 the application was deemed incomplete and that
23 the City has acted in good faith by considering it incomplete and attempting to work with the
24 applicant for several years. He said he understands that not understanding the rules and requests for a
25 few months is understandable, but after years we need to move forward.

26
27 Mayor Giefer summarized the findings from City Planner Haskamp which indicate most of the
28 conditions have not been met, and seeing as the health, safety and welfare concerns haven't been
29 sufficiently addressed in the current application, there's no reason to even discuss the other conditions
30 at this time.

31
32 Council Member Rog asked City Attorney Amanda Johnson if she could comment about the ongoing
33 activities without a CUP.

34
35 Attorney Amanda Johnson indicated that there are two separate issues. Code enforcement for
36 violations of City Code, which would potentially be engaging in the church activities without the
37 CUP. And then there's what's before the Council today, which is the proposed Conditional Use
38 Permit. They cannot consider the applicants' current failure to comply with the code as a reason to
39 deny the CUP request, they need to look at the standards as laid out by Planner Haskamp. If the
40 Council decides to deny the CUP request, then the Council could direct Staff to either give them time
41 to come into compliance or escalate code enforcement if that doesn't happen.

42
43 Mayor Giefer stated that denial would not preclude the applicant from re-applying and he said that he
44 would encourage them to work with City staff to develop a comprehensive plan to fully address the
45 concerns.

1 Council Member Anderson re-stated that this has been dragging on and it's time for a decision.

2
3 **Motion by Council Member Rog, seconded by Council Member Cornett to deny the request for**
4 **a Conditional Use Permit as presented and based on the findings of fact outlined by City**
5 **Planner Haskamp in the Staff Report. Motion approved 4-0.**

6
7 **B. Waste Management Annual Update**

8
9 Vanessa and Matt, representatives from Waste Management, provided an update on local drivers and
10 operations. They indicated that there were a few staffing changes in the last year or so, but things
11 should have improved and they are committed to great customer service and responsiveness. Vanessa
12 said that she provides her cell phone number to provide better customer service directly to residents.

13
14 Mayor Giefer confirmed with Vanessa that the number of calls she receives is approximately one or
15 two per month. Council Member Anderson said he took an unofficial poll at the Clean Up Day and
16 most residents are happy with the service and use it.

17
18 Council directed Administrator Smieja to move forward and negotiate a continued contract with
19 Waste Management.

20
21 Mayor Giefer brought forward the possibility of broadband franchising. Discussion ensued for a
22 future presentation to occur. Administrator Smieja will coordinate with Cindy and Mike Bradley.

23
24 **ADJOURNMENT**

25 **Motion by Council Member Cornett, seconded by Council Member to adjourn at 8:08 p.m.**
26 **Motion carried 4-0.**

27 These minutes were considered and approved at the regular Council Meeting on July 7, 2026.

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34 _____
35 Lacey L. Smieja
36 Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer

37 _____
Jeff Giefer
Mayor