



**Variance Board Regular Meeting  
City Council Chambers, 2660 Civic Center Drive  
Minutes – Wednesday, April 1, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.**

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Aspnes called to order the regular meeting of the Variance Board meeting at approximately 6:00 p.m. and reviewed the role and purpose of the Variance Board.

**2. Roll Call & Introductions**

At the request of Chair Aspnes, City Planner Thomas Paschke called the Roll.

**Members Present:** Chair Aspnes, Members Cyra and Campbell Jensen

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** City Planner Thomas Paschke, Community Development Director Janice Gundlach, and Senior Planner Bryan Lloyd

**3. Approval of Agenda**

**MOTION**

**Member Cyra moved, seconded by Member Campbell Jensen, to approve the agenda as presented.**

**Ayes: 3**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion carried.**

**4. Review of Minutes: March 4, 2026**

**MOTION**

**Member Campbell Jensen moved, seconded by Member Cyra, to approve the March 4, 2026, meeting minutes.**

**Ayes: 3**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion carried.**

**5. Annual Organizational Business**

City Planner Paschke explained that in accordance with City Code Section 201.03.A, each advisory commission shall elect a chair and a vice-chair from among its appointed members for a term of one year.

**MOTION**

**Member Cyra moved, seconded by Member Campbell Jensen, to appoint Pamela Aspnes as Chair of the Variance Board.**

**Ayes: 3**  
**Nays: 0**  
**Motion carried.**

**MOTION**

**Member Aspnes moved, seconded by Member Cyra, to appoint Allison Campbell Jensen as Vice-Chair of the Variance Board.**

**Ayes: 3**  
**Nays: 0**  
**Motion carried.**

**6. Public Hearing**

**a. PLANNING FILE 26-003**

**Request to Allow Nonconforming Conditions in the Surface Parking Area for an Apartment Facility.**

Senior Planner Lloyd reviewed the variance request for this property, as detailed in the staff report dated April 1, 2026.

Senior Planner Lloyd explained that the application involves a parking area at 2610 Snelling Curve, where an apartment building currently has fewer parking spaces than required under the zoning code. The proposal is tied to adding an 18th unit, which increases the required number of parking stalls. The applicant plans to reconfigure the existing parking layout and add new spaces, with limited new paving, to increase overall parking capacity. While the site will remain nonconforming, the changes would make it less nonconforming than it is today.

Mr. Lloyd noted that the revised layout removes parking across the property boundary, reorganizes stalls within the site, and includes designated clear areas to meet fire department access requirements. He stated that staff supports the variance request, provided those clear access areas are maintained, and referenced a draft resolution recommending approval with that condition.

Chair Aspnes asked one question regarding off-street parking. She inquired whether any feedback had been received from neighbors regarding existing parking, particularly given that on-street parking would be used to help meet residents' additional parking needs.

Mr. Lloyd stated that no feedback had been received from nearby residents or homeowners regarding parking concerns. He explained that on-street parking is already available and currently used by some residents, and the proposal would not change the number of those spaces.

Mr. Lloyd noted that he received a phone call from an individual who misunderstood the public hearing notice and applied it to their own property. Still, no specific concerns were expressed about the site or the adjacent on-street parking.

Chair Aspnes noted that the site is an unusually shaped lot and referenced information in the packet indicating the fire department had no concerns about access. She asked for confirmation that the 20-foot-wide access area would be sufficient for fire vehicles to reach the building, even when parking spaces are occupied.

Mr. Lloyd explained that the drive aisle is narrower than what the zoning code typically requires for perpendicular parking stalls. He noted that, based on measurements from Ramsey County's online map, the width may approach the 24-foot standard, but regardless, the plan maintains at least 20 feet, which meets the fire department's access requirements and is addressed through the variance request.

Mr. Lloyd added that the fire department's primary requirements include designated five-foot clear access areas, specifically aligned with the sidewalk and along the north side of the building.

Chair Aspnes asked whether the applicant had any comments.

Mr. Thomas Brama introduced himself as the property owner and explained that he purchased the building approximately three years ago. He stated that the site currently has limited parking due to the building's age, the garage's placement, and the lot's irregular shape. He noted that there are currently 16 off-street parking spaces, while the City code requires 33, leaving many vehicles to rely on on-street parking.

Mr. Brama explained that the proposal would increase the number of off-street spaces to 23, while the updated requirement with an additional unit would be 34 spaces. As a result, the shortfall would be reduced from 17 to 11 spaces, meaning fewer vehicles would need to park on the street. He added that the plan was developed in coordination with City staff over the past year as a practical solution given the site's constraints and expressed willingness to answer questions.

Member Campbell Jensen commented that the proposed increase in off-street parking could provide added relief during winter conditions. She noted that when snowfall requires vehicles to be removed from the street, having additional on-site parking would help reduce the burden on residents.

Mr. Brama agreed that increasing off-street parking would help alleviate pressure on surrounding streets. He added that the benefit would extend beyond current residents, noting that the area includes nearby homes and may see additional single-family development. Mr. Brama indicated that reducing on-street parking demand now could help minimize impacts on future homeowners as the area continues to develop.

Chair Aspnes reviewed the protocol for Public Hearings and public comment and opened the Public Hearing at approximately 6:18 p.m.

**Mr. Jeff Johnson**

Mr. Johnson identified himself as a neighboring property owner to the south and asked whether a site plan showing existing conditions was available for comparison with the proposed layout. He expressed confusion about the location of current parking spaces, noting that vehicles also park along the adjacent area.

Mr. Johnson stated that his primary concern is that some of the proposed changes appear to encroach closer to his property and may create tight conditions, particularly for maneuvering vehicles such as garbage trucks accessing the dumpster. He added that despite these concerns, on-street parking is already very congested, and he supports adding more off-street parking. He also questioned how the proposal results in a net gain of spaces if some existing spots appear to be removed.

Mr. Lloyd explained that a trash enclosure is planned around the dumpster, if it has not already been constructed, and would be incorporated as the site improvements move forward. He noted that the existing site conditions did not include two parking stalls that extend beyond the property boundary, so they were not counted in the official parking total.

Mr. Lloyd clarified that the proposal includes a mix of reconfigured and newly striped spaces within the existing paved area, along with a few additional stalls. He stated that the net increase in parking results in part from the fact that previously uncounted, off-property stalls are not included in either the existing or proposed totals, so they are not considered lost under the revised plan.

Member Cyra asked whether parking in that area would be prohibited under the proposed plan, or if people would still attempt to park there despite the changes.

Mr. Lloyd explained that the paved area in question would be removed as part of the parking reconfiguration, eliminating its use for parking. He noted that while there is no formal parking plan for direct comparison, the current stall layout can be identified on Ramsey County's online mapping, which helps illustrate how the proposed arrangement differs from existing conditions.

Chair Aspnes asked for clarification on whether the parking spaces located on the adjacent property, which are not part of the subject site, were excluded from both the existing and proposed parking stall counts. She sought confirmation that those spaces were not included in either total.

Mr. Lloyd explained that a portion of the paved area extends beyond the property boundary, creating spaces that overrun onto the adjacent site. He clarified that those spaces are not included in the existing count of parking stalls.

Chair Aspnes confirmed that the parking spaces located off the property are not subject to an easement agreement and therefore cannot be counted toward the site's

parking totals. She clarified that those spaces were not included in the existing count and are not being considered in the proposed plan.

Chair Aspnes then asked if there were any additional questions or if any members of the public wished to come forward to speak.

**Ms. Linda Fearing, 2578 Pascal Street**

Ms. Fearing stated that she lives nearby on Pascal Street and, while not directly adjacent to the property, wanted to comment on the parking situation. She described on-street parking in the area as a significant issue and expressed support for efforts to move more vehicles off the street and onto the property.

Ms. Fearing suggested that, if feasible, removing one or two garage stalls to create additional parking behind the building could be considered, particularly with the addition of another unit. She also raised concerns about nearby properties across the street that appear to be in disrepair and accumulating items, as well as a landscaping truck that has been parked in the cul-de-sac for an extended period. She expressed hope that the city will proactively enforce applicable ordinances to help maintain neighborhood conditions and concluded by encouraging continued efforts to improve the situation.

Ms. Gundlach addressed the concerns raised about outdoor debris and a potentially improperly parked commercial vehicle. She explained that the City does not conduct proactive nuisance code enforcement but does respond to complaints.

Ms. Gundlach stated that residents should contact the Community Development Department if they observe such issues, and staff will investigate and follow up on any violations. She added that she would treat the comment as a complaint and arrange for an inspection of the area the following day.

Chair Aspnes closed the public hearing at 6:26 p.m.

**MOTION**

**Member Campbell Jensen moved, seconded by Member Cyra, for the adoption of Variance Board Resolution No. 178 (Attachment 4), entitled “A Resolution Approving a Variance to Surface Parking Standards About an Apartment at 2610 Snelling Curve (PF26-003).”**

**Ayes: 3**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion carried.**

**b. PLANNING FILE 26-005**

**Request by Hempel Real Estate, in Cooperation with 2700 Snelling Avenue LLC, for a Variance from Table 1013.04-2, Minimum Number of Required Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) and §1013.01.D.2.1 Regarding the Required Number of Electric Vehicle Service Equipment (EVSE) (PF26-005).**

City Planner Paschke reviewed the variance request for this property, as detailed in the staff report dated April 1, 2026.

Mr. Paschke explained that the request relates to redevelopment at 2700 Snelling Avenue, where an office building and parking structure have been removed, and the site is being prepared for new construction. He noted that the City adopted standards in March 2023 requiring a minimum number of electric vehicle charging stations and supporting infrastructure based on parking capacity, which apply to this project.

Mr. Paschke stated that the site is planned to include approximately 528 parking stalls, which would require 26 charging stations and 53 pieces of supporting electrical infrastructure under the ordinance. However, the applicant has proposed a reduced number of charging stations and service equipment installations based on operational needs, including 8 charging stations and 22 service equipment installations. He explained that staff reviewed the request against variance criteria and determined the proposal meets the standards, noting that the requirement may be excessive given the nature of the site, its private use, and infrastructure considerations. He added that staff supports the variance, concluding it remains consistent with the intent of the ordinance while allowing reasonable use of the property.

Member Cyra asked for clarification on how the city envisioned evaluating and potentially adjusting the electric vehicle charging ordinance adopted in 2023. He referenced language indicating a “wait and see” approach. He inquired whether adjustments were expected to occur through the variance process or through future review and revisions by the City Council.

Mr. Paschke explained that the “wait and see” approach relies on real projects coming forward, as the City cannot fully understand how the ordinance functions until it is applied to actual developments. He noted that project size and context vary, and while smaller projects have generally met the requirements without issue, larger developments can present challenges.

Mr. Paschke stated that the variance process serves as a key tool for evaluating how the ordinance performs in practice. He indicated that, after reviewing several variance requests, the City can better assess whether adjustments are needed, particularly for larger sites with extensive parking. He added that recent cases, including the Rosedale project and the current proposal, provide useful benchmarks for considering future modifications to the ordinance.

Ms. Gundlach added that evaluating the ordinance requires real-world application through projects, especially since few cities had comparable EV charging requirements in place when the ordinance was adopted. She explained that the City implemented the standards proactively, with few external examples to guide it.

Ms. Gundlach noted that while the City could revise the ordinance rather than grant variances, doing so could delay projects as staff studies potential changes. She stated

that relying on the variance process allows projects to move forward in the short term while the City gathers information to inform future adjustments.

Member Campbell Jensen commented on the growth of electric vehicle adoption, noting that Minnesota has seen an increase from approximately 2.3% to 8% in recent years, with national figures around 10%. She stated that, given these trends, she found the proposed reduction in ordinance requirements significant and expressed concern that the reduced number of charging spaces may not adequately meet future demand.

Member Campbell Jensen indicated that, in her view, a percentage closer to 10% of parking capacity would be more appropriate, particularly for a site with multiple shifts, where employees may need to charge vehicles during the workday. She acknowledged the importance of supporting business development but emphasized the need to balance that with long-term infrastructure needs.

Member Campbell Jensen also noted limitations in alternative transportation options in the area, stating that public transit access is limited and that walking or biking may not be practical for many people, particularly during winter months.

Chair Aspnes stated that she has some reservations about the proposal, noting that the ordinance imposes a higher requirement than the applicant is requesting. She referenced a discussion in the presentation about potential future expansion and asked whether it referred to adding more active charging stations over time.

Chair Aspnes indicated her understanding that the proposal includes a smaller number of installed charging stations, with additional infrastructure in place to allow more units to be brought online later, and sought confirmation that this interpretation was correct.

Mr. Paschke clarified that the proposal does not include plans to add additional electrical service equipment beyond what has been proposed for the site.

Chair Aspnes asked whether the total number of electric vehicle charging-related spaces would be capped at 30 under the proposal. She also asked who would determine when the additional 22 pre-wired spaces would be activated, given the ordinance's current structure.

Mr. Paschke explained that the property owner or operator would decide whether to activate additional charging stations. He noted that as demand increases, they would install additional charging stations using the pre-wired infrastructure.

Chair Aspnes sought confirmation that the decision to install additional charging stations would be within the applicant's control.

Mr. Paschke confirmed that, as a private business, the applicant would control when additional charging stations are installed. He explained that if employee demand

increases, the applicant could add more chargers using the pre-installed infrastructure to bring additional stations online.

Chair Aspnes stated that the proposal includes eight active charging stations with the potential for 22 additional units. Still, they noted that those additional stations may never be installed, and asked for confirmation of that understanding.

Member Cyra asked for clarification on the appeals process, specifically whether the applicant could appeal a denied variance to the City Council within 10 days. He also inquired about the timeline for when the City Council would consider such an appeal and make a decision.

Mr. Paschke stated that while he was not certain of the exact language of the ordinance, his understanding is that the City Council would need to consider the appeal within approximately 30 days. He added that the intent would be to bring the matter before the Council as quickly as possible.

Chair Aspnes asked whether the applicant had any comments.

Mr. Josh McKinney, representing the applicant as a consultant, stated that he understood concerns about the significant reduction from ordinance requirements to the proposed number of charging stations. He explained that there are technical and infrastructure limitations that impact the project, particularly for a site of this size.

Mr. McKinney noted that each charging station requires substantial electrical capacity, and meeting the full ordinance requirement would necessitate a transformer comparable to powering the entire facility. He indicated that the site does not currently have sufficient electrical capacity to support that level of demand and that coordination with the utility provider has been limited. He added that, working with engineering consultants, the team developed a plan to initially install eight charging stations, with infrastructure in place for an additional 22, while still maintaining adequate power for the building overall.

Member Campbell Jensen acknowledged the applicant's explanation regarding electrical capacity constraints but emphasized the broader importance of expanding energy infrastructure. She cited examples of solar installations, such as those at the University of Minnesota and a local church, noting that alternative energy solutions can help meet electrical demand, even though they may pose challenges for grid integration.

Member Campbell Jensen expressed her longstanding concern about climate issues and stated that increasing support for electric vehicles is an important step toward a more sustainable future. She indicated that, while she understands the project's limitations, she is inclined to support stronger encouragement of EV infrastructure in line with the City's ordinance.

Chair Aspnes asked about the placement of the electric vehicle charging stalls, noting that they are located near the front of the building. She confirmed that the green stalls represent those to be installed initially and the orange stalls represent future installations.

Chair Aspnes then asked for clarification on the reasoning behind this location and who is primarily expected to use those charging spaces.

Mr. McKinney explained that the charging stations are intended for use by employees of the facility, which is a private medical research lab. He noted that the site is not designed to function as a public charging location.

Chair Aspnes clarified that she was asking whether the facility would have frequent foot traffic, rather than about public access to the charging stations.

Mr. McKinney stated that the facility is expected to operate primarily on employee shifts rather than with frequent visitor traffic. He indicated that it would not function as a high-turnover or transient-use site.

Mr. McKinney also explained that the charging stations are located near the front of the building because they are positioned as close as possible to the electrical room. He noted that minimizing the distance for electrical runs helps reduce costs associated with installing the charging infrastructure.

Chair Aspnes acknowledged that practical considerations drive the placement of the charging stations. She contrasted the project with a previous variance request for Dick's Sporting Goods, noting that retail locations experience more transient traffic with customers coming and going who may use charging stations during visits. She clarified that, unlike a retail setting, this facility is not expected to have regular visitor traffic and instead primarily serves employees.

Mr. McKinney clarified that the facility is not expected to have a significant number of visitors. He explained that there is no operational need for large numbers of people coming and going, and that activity at the site will primarily involve employees.

Chair Aspnes confirmed that the charging stations are intended for employee use and asked whether eight initial stations would be sufficient. She also requested clarification on the total number of parking spaces used in the project calculations.

Mr. McKinney stated that the parking study identified approximately 528 parking spaces for the site, including some overlap due to shift changes. He explained that the proposed number of eight initial charging stations is based on data from the tenant's existing facilities, reflecting current usage patterns with an added allowance for future growth.

Chair Aspnes asked what process would be used to determine when, or if, the additional 22 charging stations would be brought online.

Mr. McKinney explained that the decision to bring additional charging stations online would be driven by employee demand. He noted that if the existing stations are consistently full and employees express the need for more, the additional pre-wired stations could be activated.

Chair Aspnes asked whether the employer has a formal process in place to monitor demand and determine when additional charging stations should be installed.

Mr. McKinney stated that, based on his discussions, the employer has established processes for gathering employee feedback and making decisions about facilities. While he is not directly involved in those internal operations, he indicated that the organization appears to have a structured approach to assessing demand and determining when additional charging stations would be needed.

Chair Aspnes expressed concern that, while the proposal includes infrastructure for additional charging stations, only eight would be installed initially, and the remaining 22 may never be activated. She noted that although the electrical infrastructure would be in place, there is no requirement to ensure that those additional stations would be brought online, meaning the approval could effectively result in only eight active charging spaces.

Mr. McKinney confirmed that the electrical infrastructure and capacity for the additional 22 charging stations would be installed upfront. He explained that the actual installation of those stations would occur later and would be driven by on-site demand.

Chair Aspnes asked for confirmation that the necessary electrical capacity would be installed upfront, so that additional charging stations could be added later without requiring further upgrades or approvals.

Mr. McKinney confirmed that the project would include the required electrical capacity up front, allowing additional charging stations to be added in the future without further major upgrades. He noted that meeting the full ordinance requirement would present significant technical and cost challenges, particularly related to electrical capacity and infrastructure, which could involve substantial expenses.

Chair Aspnes asked whether it would be possible to install an additional transformer to support more charging capacity.

Mr. McKinney explained that installing an additional transformer would be extremely costly, likely in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. He noted that this level of expense raises significant concerns about the project's overall financial feasibility.

Mr. Dan Gleason, representing the prospective tenant, explained that the facility will be an employee-focused operation and not open to the public. He noted that most employees who drive electric vehicles are expected to have home charging, meaning on-site charging would be a supplemental convenience rather than a primary need.

Mr. Gleason stated that the tenant typically does not provide charging stations at its other facilities and initially did not believe they were necessary for this site. He emphasized that the facility's primary focus is supporting its medical operations, including managing electrical capacity for core functions. He added that while the parking supply is strong, actual usage may vary due to shift changes, and the proposed number of charging stations reflects anticipated employee demand rather than broader public use.

Chair Aspnes asked Mr. Paschke whether the ordinance considered differences between retail uses, which tend to have more transient users, and private commercial or employee-based uses. She specifically inquired whether that distinction was discussed during the development of the ordinance.

Mr. Paschke stated that the ordinance did not specifically distinguish between retail or transient uses and private, employee-based operations. He noted that, at the time the ordinance was developed between 2022 and 2023, there was limited data and few comparable examples available to guide the development of those distinctions.

Mr. Paschke added that more information and case studies may now be available to help refine the ordinance, but researching and implementing those changes would take time.

Chair Aspnes stated that when considering variance requests, she evaluates whether the outcome will improve, worsen, or have no impact. She noted that, in this case, the proposal would result in eight new charging stations where none currently exist, which she viewed as a positive outcome.

Chair Aspnes added that there is also potential for 22 additional stations in the future if demand increases, further supporting the proposal's benefits compared to having no charging infrastructure at all.

Chair Aspnes opened and closed public comment at approximately 7:09 p.m.

Member Cyra reviewed the variance criteria and stated that he agreed the proposal is consistent with the comprehensive plan, represents a reasonable use of the property,

and would not alter the essential character of the locality. However, he expressed concern about the criteria related to alignment with the zoning ordinance's intent and the presence of unique circumstances.

Member Cyra indicated that the ordinance is relatively recent and clearly established, and questioned whether it is appropriate for the variance board to apply it effectively. He suggested that revisiting or modifying the ordinance would be more appropriately handled by the Planning Commission and City Council. He also noted that, while denying the variance could delay the project, the City has the option to reevaluate or revise the ordinance through its formal legislative process.

Member Campbell Jensen added that, based on information she reviewed on the City of Roseville website, the ordinance aligns with broader state-level actions. She noted that in March 2023, the Minnesota State Legislature approved adding EV charging requirements to the State Building Code for commercial and multifamily properties with on-site parking. She indicated that, at the time, additional guidance from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry was expected and suggested that more up-to-date information or research may now be available to help inform future decisions regarding EV charging requirements.

Ms. Gundlach provided additional background, explaining that the City has been waiting for the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry to release guidance on how EV charging requirements may be incorporated into the State Building Code. She noted that a Technical Advisory Committee has been convened to study the issue, but no final determinations have been made.

Ms. Gundlach stated that any future recommendations from the state could be considered when the city revisits its ordinance, with the Planning Commission leading that review and staff providing technical support.

#### **MOTION**

**Member Aspnes moved, adoption of Variance Board Resolution No. 179 (Attachment 5), entitled “A Table 1013.04-2. Minimum Number of Required Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) and §1013.04D2D1 Regarding the Required Number of Electrical Vehicle Service Equipment (EVSE) Required for the 528-Stall Parking Lot Associated with the Proposed 125,400 Square Foot Medical Office, Research, and Laboratory Facility at 2700 Snelling Avenue (PF26-005).”**

Chair Aspnes stated that both the applicant and staff presented a reasonable case for approving the variance, particularly given the unusually large size of the parking lot and the employee-based nature of the site. She indicated that requiring the full number of charging stations under the ordinance did not seem reasonable in this context and viewed the proposal for eight initial stations, with the potential for 22 more, as a practical compromise and an improvement over having none.

Chair Aspnes noted that broader concerns about the ordinance should be addressed through future discussions with the Planning Commission and City Council, which would take time. She encouraged the applicant to remain responsive to employee demand and consider activating additional stations if needed.

Chair Aspnes asked if there was a second to the motion. There was not a second.

Ms. Gundlach stated that the motion failed for lack of a second. She noted that staff had recommended approval of the variance and that, if the Commission intends to deny the request, a motion should be made with clearly stated findings to support the denial for the record.

**MOTION**

**Member Cyra moved, seconded by Member Campbell Jensen, denying the variance (PF26-005)."**

Member Cyra stated that his reason for moving to deny the variance was that he does not believe the request meets the five required criteria for approval.

Chair Aspnes asked whether the motion for denial should include more specific findings, particularly identifying which criteria the request fails to meet.

Mr. Paschke indicated that it would be appropriate to specify which criteria are not being met, so that the record clearly reflects the basis for denying the variance.

Member Cyra elaborated that, in his view, the proposal does not meet specific variance criteria. He stated that, for the criterion related to unique circumstances, he does not believe the property qualifies, as it is a new development and is not constrained in a way that would prevent compliance with the code.

Member Cyra also stated that the proposal does not align with the zoning ordinance's intent, noting that the ordinance clearly establishes requirements for electric vehicle charging infrastructure that the request does not meet.

**Ayes: 2**  
**Nays: 1 (Aspnes)**  
**Motion carried.**

Chair Aspnes stated that the variance board's decision is final unless an appeal is filed within 10 days. She explained that the applicant may submit an appeal, or any Roseville property owner may, and that it must be filed in writing with the City Manager by noon on April 13, 2026, to be heard by the City Council.

**7. Adjourn**

**MOTION**

**Variance Board Meeting**

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**Member Campbell Jensen, seconded by Member Cyra, to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m.**

**Ayes: 3**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion carried.**