

Oronoco Town Board
Special Meeting Minutes
Lake Zumbro Park Phase 2
May 26, 2026, 5pm

A special meeting of the Oronoco Town Board was held on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. at the Oronoco Community Center, located at 115 Second Street SW, Oronoco, Minnesota.

Supervisor Ken Mergen called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Supervisor Matzke stated that the Olmsted County Planning Department sent notice of a public hearing to be held on Thursday, June 4, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. The request is for a variance permit for a 1,400-square-foot open-air picnic shelter to be located within the shoreland setback of Lake Zumbro, approximately 33 feet from the shoreline.

Resident Dana DeWitz expressed disagreement with the variance request. She stated that she previously had to reconfigure her driveway because a variance was not approved on her property. Her garage was located 75 feet from the water, and the DNR determined it was within the shoreland ordinance and required a 100-foot setback. She questioned why Olmsted County would not be required to follow the same guidelines as residents. She also stated that there is no parking available in the area on weekends and that it creates a significant safety concern, as vehicles are parked along the roadway and traffic cannot safely enter or exit.

Concerns for the variance include: Erosion with the shelter that close to the water, traffic and safety of residents that live in the area, monitoring of the park, keeping trash and bathrooms clean.

Supervisor Johanningmeier stated that there are not any no parking signs in the area and that parking extended all the way to Zumbro Haven over Memorial Day weekend.

Supervisor Johanningmeier also stated that he spoke with Nicole Lehmann of the DNR on May 26, 2026. She indicated that there was no written letter of support or opposition regarding the variance request. Supervisor Johanningmeier noted that the shoreland ordinance does not distinguish between public and private structures. He further stated that residents are watching this matter closely because it may set a precedent for future variance requests within the shoreland district.

Supervisor Matzke stated that she contacted Olmsted County Public Works and noted that the department is not happy with the amount of traffic in the area. Supervisor Matzke would like to see no-wake signs installed on County Road 112 before vehicles turn onto Fisherman's Inn Road. She would also like signs posted indicating when the parking lot is full so visitors are not driving in only to turn around and leave.

There was also discussion regarding after-hours monitoring of the park. Questions were raised regarding enforcement of the 10:00 p.m. boat launch closure, including who would enforce the closure, who would close the launch, and how boaters would retrieve their boats if they were not back before 10:00 p.m.

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The Board agreed that it does not support the variance request because it could set a precedent for residents seeking future variances. The Board also noted that the shoreland ordinance does not distinguish between public and private entities and stated that there should be no special treatment because the applicant is Olmsted County.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Supervisor Mergen and seconded by Supervisor Johannningmeier. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Clerk Jody Schroeder

Tammy Matzke

Ken Mergen

Joel Johannningmeier