

**ELYSIAN CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
JULY 14, 2025**

The Elysian City Council met in regular session on Monday, July 14, 2025, at City Hall at 6:00 pm.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the US Flag.

Roll Call: Mayor Pro Tem Dennis Schnoor; Councilmembers Paul Hunter and Derek Westby; City Administrator Lorri Kopischke; Public Works Director Ron Greenwald. Absent: Mayor Tom McBroom, Sr., Councilmember Bobby Houlihan, and City Attorney Jason Moran.

On motion by Westby, seconded by Hunter, all voting in favor, to approve the agenda of the July 14, 2025 Regular Meeting with the following addition:

4a. County Commissioner Steve Rohlfig.

Le Sueur County Chief Deputy Nick Greenig reported that patrol has been increased on County Road 11 near the boat landing and also at the intersection of Main Street and County Road 11. The July 4<sup>th</sup> festivities went well with minimal incidents.

The Council complimented and thanked the Sheriff's Posse for their presence over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend.

Hunter expressed appreciation to the water patrol for giving up their July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend to patrol the area lakes. He asked that the water patrol continue to help with the personal watercraft. He has received comments from people that live on the lake that personal watercraft continues to zip by within 150 feet of the shoreline and operate outside of allowable hours.

Greenig will bring this information back to the water patrol.

Le Sueur County Commissioner Steve Rohlfig reported that the Commissioners are working on an EDA policy affecting the entire county that will operate via tax abatement. The main focuses are childcare centers, senior housing, and also includes a provision for blighted property. Commercial and residential properties will be eligible to make application, and the county board will approve.

Rohlfig reported that the county employees had participated in cyber security training. Road projects are wrapping up with a bridge replacement to be completed in the City of Cleveland in August. The budget process will begin in August taking into account the changes to the SNAP Program and Medicaid. There is a City, County, Township meeting scheduled for July 30<sup>th</sup> at The Bait Bucket Bar and Grill in the City of Cleveland.

Westby again expressed concern for the safety at the County Road 11 Glen's Beach curve. Rohlfig acknowledged the concern.

Public Comment: Mark Winter, Superintendent, Waterville Elysian Morristown Public Schools introduced himself to the Council. The Council welcomed him to the community.

On motion by Westby, seconded by Hunter, all voting in favor, to approve the Consent Agenda which included the following items:

- Minutes Approval – June 9, 2025 Workshop and June 9, 2025 Regular Meeting
- Bills, Payroll, and Transfers in the amount of \$525,458.62

- Resolution No. 956/25 – Accepting a Donation from the Elysian American Legion Post #311 for tax relief to the Elysian Area Chamber of Commerce.

Councilmember Westby introduced the resolution and was seconded by Councilmember Hunter.

CITY OF ELYSIAN  
LE SUEUR COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
RESOLUTION NO. 956/25  
RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING A DONATION FROM  
ELYSIAN AMERICAN LEGION POST #311

WHEREAS, the City of Elysian has received a donation in the amount of \$3,600.00 from the Elysian American Legion Post #311, for tax relief to the Elysian Area Chamber of Commerce for the purpose of funding toward the Parade, Fireworks, and Kid's Bingo during the July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF ELYSIAN, MINNESOTA THAT: the City Council of the City of Elysian acknowledges and accepts the donation from the Elysian American Legion Post #311 in the amount of \$3,600.00 for the purpose of funding toward the Parade, Fireworks, and the Kid's Bingo during the July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration.

Upon vote being taken:

Councilmember Westby introduced the resolution and was seconded by Councilmember Hunter.

Council Members voting in the affirmative: Hunter, Schnoor, Westby.

Council Members voting in the negative: None.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Elysian this 14<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025.

Approved:

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Dennis Schnoor, Mayor Pro Tem

Attested:

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Lorri Kopischke, City Administrator

On motion by Schnoor, seconded by Westby, all voting in favor, to close the Regular Meeting and open the Public Hearing at 6:11 pm.

The purpose of the public hearing is to allow public input from citizens on proposed Ordinance No. 129/25 – An Ordinance Creating an Administrative Lot Split and Combination Process.

This Ordinance will create a process for administrative review and approval of a lot split or combination when such action will not cause any portion of any lot or any structure to be in violation of any of the City's Municipal Code, Zoning Code, or other Codes, Ordinances, Rules or Statutes of the City or State. This will eliminate the need for the applicant to bring the request to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. The Ordinance also allows for a fee for this process that will be addressed in the fee schedule later in this meeting.

There were no public comments. No written comments were received.

On motion by Westby, seconded by Hunter, all voting in favor, to close the Public Hearing and open the Regular Meeting at 6:13 pm.

The Council considered Resolution No. 957/25 – Adopting Findings of Fact and Reasons for Approval for Variance Application of Michael and Donna Brage, 402 Lake Avenue NW.

The Brages made application to the City on April 9, 2025 for a variance to build a 30 by 40 feet garage on their property at 402 Lake Avenue NW. The Brages are planning to reside full-time in Elysian and need the garage for storage space. The Planning and Zoning Commission met with the Brages on May 6, June 3, and June 24, 2025 to discuss options to reduce the lot coverage and accommodate the desired garage.

The lot is located in the shoreland zone and is zoned R1 Residential. The lot size according to Le Sueur County is 12,850 square feet. The property has a large concrete driveway measuring 55 by 57 feet.

The original impervious lot coverage is 7,243 square feet / 56.4% lot coverage. The proposed impervious lot coverage upon completion of the addition of the garage and all landscaping will be 5,166 square feet / 40.2%. The reduction in impervious lot coverage is due to a reduction in the size of the proposed garage from 30 by 40 feet, a portion of the driveway reduced and replaced with grass, removal of rocks and sidewalks and replaced with grass, and the change in City Ordinance that allows decks with ¼" slats to be included as pervious coverage.

The Planning and Zoning Commission is recommending approval of the variance request of Michael and Donna Brage, 402 Lake Avenue, based on the following finding of facts:

1. Reasonableness: This request is reasonable as it improves the existing lot coverage from 7,243 square feet or 56.4% to 5,166 square feet or 40.2%. This is a 16.2% reduction in impervious surface on the lot.
2. Uniqueness: The small size of the lot at 12,850 square feet makes this property unique. This is a unique project in that the end result reduces the impervious lot coverage.
3. Essential Character: The removal of a portion of the concrete driveway, the addition of a garage that is complementary to the home in color scheme, and the addition of grass / landscaping will make the property more appealing and will improve the character of the neighborhood. The planting of screening trees / shrubs along the west property line will preserve the essential character of the neighborhood.

And the following conditions:

1. That deep rooted native plants / shrubs be planted the entire length of the property along the shoreline above the existing rip rap (minus a 6 foot walkway to the dock) at a width of 2 feet landward of the lake. Or that a combination of deep-rooted native plants / shrubs be planted along the rip rap and the northeast corner of the property to slow the runoff and provide filtration.
2. That a minimum of (4) four 4-6 foot (maturing to 8-12 foot) screening trees or shrubs be planted along the west property line to provide a break in the view and preserve the essential character of the neighborhood.

Hunter, Chairperson, Planning and Zoning Commission, stated that this was a good compromise. He appreciated the give and take between the Commissioners and the Brages.

Schnoor asked the timeframe for the project. Donna Brage stated that the worst-case scenario was that the garage would be built next spring.

Schnoor suggested a condition be added that placed a timeframe on the planting of the plants and trees/shrubs of June 1, 2027.

Councilmember Westby introduced the resolution and was seconded by Councilmember Hunter.

CITY OF ELYSIAN  
LE SUEUR COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
RESOLUTION NO. 957/25  
RESOLUTION ADOPTING FINDINGS OF FACT AND REASONS  
FOR APPROVAL FOR VARIANCE APPLICATION  
OF MIKE AND DONNA BRAGE AT 402 LAKE AVENUE NW

FACTS

1. Mike and Donna Brage are the owners of a parcel of land located at 402 Lake Avenue NW, Elysian, Minnesota; and,
2. The subject property is legally described as Lot 1 & East 37 ½ FT of Lot 2, Block-003, City of Elysian/Elysium, Le Sueur County, Minnesota; and,
3. Mike and Donna Brage have applied to the City for a variance to build a detached garage as described in Exhibit A.
4. The proposal would vary from Title XV: Land Usage. Chapter 156: Zoning Shoreland Overlay Zone §156.091 General Standards (B)(1)(a) 25% maximum lot coverage in that it would result in a lot coverage of 40.2%.
5. Following a public hearing on the application, the City of Elysian Planning and Zoning Commission has recommended approval of the variance on June 24, 2025 with the following conditions:
  - a. That deep rooted native plants/ shrubs be planted the entire length of the property along the shoreline above the existing rip rap (minus a 6-foot walkway to the dock) at a width of 2 feet landward of the lake. Or that a combination of deep-rooted native plants / shrubs be planted along the rip rap and the northeast corner of the property to slow the runoff and provide filtration.
  - b. That a minimum of (4) four 4-6 foot (maturing to 8-12 foot) screening trees or shrubs be planted along the west property line to provide a break in the view and preserve the essential character of the neighborhood.
6. The City Council of the City of Elysian reviewed the requested variance at its meeting of July 14, 2025.

APPLICABLE LAW

7. Minnesota Statute Section 462.357, subd. 6 provides:
  - a. Variances shall only be permitted (a) when they are in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the ordinance and (b) when the variances are consistent with the comprehensive plan.
  - b. Variances may be granted when the applicant for the variance establishes that there are practical difficulties in complying with the zoning ordinance. "Practical difficulties," as used in connection with the granting of a variance, means that (a)

the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the zoning ordinance; (b) the plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner; and (c) the variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.

#### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

8. The requested variance is in harmony with the purposes and intent of the ordinance.
9. The requested variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan.
10. The property owner does propose to use the property in a reasonable manner because the proposal will improve the existing lot coverage from 7,243 square feet or 56.4% to 5,166 square feet or 40.2%. This is a 16.2% reduction in impervious surface on the lot.
11. There are unique circumstances to the property not created by the landowner because the small size of the lot makes it unique. This is a unique project in that the end result reduces the impervious lot coverage rather than increasing the impervious lot coverage.
12. The variance will maintain the essential character of the locality because the removal of a portion of the concrete driveway, the addition of a garage that is complementary to the home in color scheme, and the addition of grass / landscaping will make the property more appealing and will improve the character of the neighborhood. The planting of screening trees / shrubs along the west property line will preserve the essential character of the neighborhood.
13. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Elysian, Minnesota, that the application to issue a variance to allow Mike and Donna Brage to build a detached garage as described in Exhibit A so as to deviate from Title XV: Land Usage. Chapter 156: Zoning Shoreland Overlay Zone §156.091 General Standards (B)(1)(a) 25% maximum lot coverage in that it would result in a lot coverage of 40.2% is hereby approved with the following conditions:
  - a. That deep rooted native plants/ shrubs be planted the entire length of the property along the shoreline above the existing rip rap (minus a 6-foot walkway to the dock) at a width of 2 feet landward of the lake. Or that a combination of deep-rooted native plants / shrubs be planted along the rip rap and the northeast corner of the property to slow the runoff and provide filtration.
  - b. That a minimum of (4) four 4-6 foot (maturing to 8-12 foot) screening trees or shrubs be planted along the west property line to provide a break in the view and preserve the essential character of the neighborhood.
  - c. That the plantings of the plants / shrubs lakeside and screening trees or shrubs along the west side of the property be completed no later than June 1, 2027.

Upon vote being taken:

Council Members voting in the affirmative: Hunter, Schnoor, Westby

Council Members voting in the negative: None

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Elysian on this 14<sup>th</sup> day of July 2025.

Approved:

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Dennis Schnoor, Mayor Pro Tem

Attested:

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Lorri Kopischke, City Administrator

On motion by Hunter, seconded by Westby, all voting in favor, to close the Regular Meeting and open the Public Hearing at 6:22 pm.

The purpose of the public hearing is to allow public input from citizens on proposed Ordinance No. 130/25 – An Ordinance Amending Elysian City Code §156.0`5 – Definitions – Impervious Coverage.

This Ordinance will amend the definition of impervious coverage as follows:

***IMPERVIOUS COVERAGE.*** A structure or a surface that has been compacted or covered with a layer of material so that it is highly resistant to infiltration by water. It may include surfaces such as compacted sand, lime rock or clay, concrete, bituminous, asphalt, pavers, as well as most conventionally surfaced streets, roofs, sidewalks, parking lots, and other similar structures. It shall not include gravel grades 1 through 5 with no fines where the underlayment is pervious. It shall not include decks or ramps where the boards or slats are ¼ inch or greater in separation where the underlayment is pervious.

Public Comments: Tina King, 5 Cedar Point Drive NW, expressed concern with the City allowing increased impervious surface coverage around the lake while the Lake Association is looking at decreasing the amount of water that goes into the lake. Lake Francis is the legacy of everyone who lives around the lake. The lake will be here longer than us and we are the keepers of the lake.

King asked if the County allows this in their code. Staff responded that they do not. King stated that that once again there is a difference between the County and the City and the City is more lenient. Staff noted that there are several neighboring Cities that do allow this.

King stated that there are many places on the lake that want to continue to add gravel decking and moving in that direction concerns her that we are giving up the greatest resource in Elysian and the greatest tax base as well.

King stated that Lake Francis has a 19-year retention rate which means that whatever goes into Lake Francis takes 19 years to come back out. We need to think about what we put into the lake and especially with such a small outlet. People are having to sandbag and now we are still putting more water into the lake.

No written comments were received.

On motion by Hunter, seconded by Westby, all voting in favor, to close the Public Hearing and open the Regular Meeting at 6:27 pm.

Councilmember Westby introduced the ordinance and was seconded by Councilmember Hunter.

CITY OF ELYSIAN  
LE SUEUR COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
ORDINANCE NO. 129/25  
AN ORDINANCE CREATING AN  
ADMINISTRATIVE LOT SPLIT AND COMBINATION PROCESS

WHEREAS, the City Council for the City of Elysian, Le Sueur County, Minnesota met this 14<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025, and discussed the need to create an Administrative Lot Split and Combination Process whereby one (1) or two (2) parcels, tracts, or lots of land are split, divided, or combined into one (1) or two (2) parcels, tracts, or lots of land.

WHEREAS, the City Council is empowered to regulate this type of real estate transfer or combination; and

NOW THEREFORE, the City Council for the City of Elysian, hereby and herein Ordains as follows:

Section 1. Lot Split. The simple division of a single parcel, tract, or lot to create no more than two (2) lots and the newly created property line will not cause any portion of any lot or any structure to be in violation of any of the City's Municipal Code, Zoning Code, or other Codes, Ordinances, Rules or Statutes of the City or State.

Section 2. Lot Combination. The simple combining of two (2) parcels, tracts, or lots to create no more than one (1) lot and the newly created property line will not cause any portion of any lot or any structure to be in violation of any of the City's Municipal Code, Zoning Code, or other Codes, Ordinances, Rules or Statutes of the City or State.

Section 3. Process. Whenever any parcel, tract, or lot is to be split or combined as set forth herein an Application shall be made to the City's Zoning Administrator for the same along with the following requirements met:

- A. An application shall be completed by the Applicant requesting a combination or splitting of land; and
- B. A certificate of survey shall be prepared by a licensed land surveyor identifying any split of a parcel, tract, or lot. For a combination of parcels no survey is needed; and
- C. A correct legal description for the land to be split or combined shall be provided; and
- D. For a lot split, two new deeds presented in recordable fashion shall be provided containing the new legal descriptions along with evidence of ownership for each such parcel. For a lot combination, evidence of ownership of both parcels to be combined shall be sufficient; and
- E. Any applicable split or combination fee shall be submitted with the application with said fee being established according to the City's Fee Schedule as it may be Amended from time to time; and
- F. Any and all other necessary relevant information and documentation as reasonably requested by the City; and
- G. The Zoning Administrator shall then make a recommendation to the City Administrator on the application. The Zoning Administrator shall either approve the split or combination or deny the same. Any denial shall be in writing and shall state the specific reasons for denial. Any

applicant may appeal the administrative decision of the City Administrator directly to the City Council within thirty (30) days of receiving the City Administrators decision on the split or combination application.

Section 4. Recording. If the administrative lot split or combination is approved by the City Administrator, the Administrator's decision shall then be recorded with the County Recorder by the applicant. Any and all recording fees, survey costs, or other such related County Recording requirements shall be paid by the applicant. The City Administrator's decision on the combination or split shall be null and void if not recorded with the County Recorder within ninety (90) days after the approval date.

Section 5. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall be effective upon publication of the same.

Upon motion made by Westby, duly seconded by Hunter, and passed unanimously on this 14<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025.

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Dennis Schnoor, Mayor Pro Tem

Attest:

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Lorri Kopischke, City Administrator

Councilmember Westby introduced the ordinance and was seconded by Councilmember Hunter.

CITY OF ELYSIAN  
LE SUEUR COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
ORDINANCE NO. 130/25  
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ELYSIAN CITY CODE §156.015-DEFINITIONS-IMPERVIOUS  
COVERAGE

WHEREAS, the City of Elysian has a Zoning Code in place; and

WHEREAS, at §156.015, the term "Impervious Coverage" is specifically defined; and

WHEREAS, the City Council for the City of Elysian, does hereby and herein Ordain that the term "Impervious Coverage" shall be defined as follows:

IMPERVIOUS COVERAGE. A structure or a surface that has been compacted or covered with a layer of material so that it is highly resistant to infiltration by water. It may include surfaces such as compacted sand, lime rock or clay, concrete, bituminous, asphalt, pavers, as well as most conventionally surfaced streets, roofs, sidewalks, parking lots, and other similar structures. It shall not include gravel grades 1 through 5 with no fines where the underlayment is pervious. It shall not include decks or ramps where the boards or slats are ¼ inch or greater in separation where the underlayment is pervious.

This Ordinance shall be effective upon passage and publication as required by Law.

Upon motion made by Westby, duly seconded by Hunter, and passed unanimously on this 14<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025.

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Dennis Schnoor, Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST:

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Lorri Kopischke, City Administrator

Public Works Director Greenwald reported that Empire had completed the sanitary and storm sewer televising. The sewer main in Shoreview Drive, Roemhildts Water Edge 3<sup>rd</sup> Addition was televised and the area of pipe that had gaps does have roots coming in from a nearby tree. SEH Engineering is suggesting in-line repair and quotes will be provided at the next Council meeting. There is also a section of pipe on Third Street NE where the top of the pipe has caved in at two locations. This will also require an inline repair, and quotes will be provided at the next Council meeting. Empire also discovered a sewer lateral in that vicinity that is plugged with roots. The homeowner will be contacted and advised of the issue.

Greenwald presented a quote from Volkman Electric in the amount of \$11,200.00 for electrical work to install the generator at Lift Station #2 (Pit Stop). He noted that there will be other costs associated with the hook up that he does not have quotes for at this time such as (2) two VFDs, concrete pad, and fencing around the generator. There was Council consensus to wait and consider all quotes at the same time as part of one project.

Greenwald addressed the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestation. Although this has not been a huge problem in Elysian yet, the Council should look at the issue and develop a plan to address the treatment or removal of these trees.

The Council directed Greenwald to develop a map of the affected trees and rate by degree of infection. The Council also requested options and costs to treat and/or to remove the trees.

Greenwald reported that the water tower inspection by SEH Engineering has been completed. A report will be available at the next Council meeting.

The Council thanked the Public Works Department and complimented them on the work they did for the July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration. The City looked outstanding and all ran smoothly.

On motion by Schnoor, seconded by Westby, all voting in favor, to accept the resignation as Fire Fighter from the Elysian Fire Department from Jared LaFrance effective June 26, 2025.

The City of Elysian entered into an agreement with the Minnesota DNR effective July 1, 2022 for joint operation and maintenance of the Wayside Rest Building. The custodial agreement at that time was provided through Green View, Inc. That agreement was extended and covered one employee for an average of 15 hours per week. The cost is \$955.00 per month. Green View, Inc. will not be renewing the contract as of July 30, 2025. The Council could offer the position to the current person hired by Green View, Inc. or the Public Works Department could take over the cleaning and maintenance of the building.

On motion by Schnoor, seconded by Hunter, to offer the position of maintenance worker at the Wayside Rest building to the current worker, John Reintjes, at a rate of \$15.00 for approximately 16 hours per week.

T-Mobile is interested in mounting antennas on the water tower. They have studied the tower and are not able to locate the antennas on the top of the tower because there is no room. They have submitted a proposal to mount the antennas on the north, southeast and southwest of the tank just above the crown.

On motion by Schnoor, seconded by Hunter, all voting in favor, to NOT approve the T-Mobile proposal to mount the antennas on the north, southeast, and southwest of the water tower as proposed. The Council would consider the mounting of the antennas on the top of the water tower or would work with T-Mobile to determine a location in the City for the construction of their own tower to mount the antennas.

On motion by Westby, seconded by Hunter, all voting in favor, to approve the amended fee schedule to include "Administrative Lot Split / Combination - \$250".

On motion by Schnoor, seconded by Hunter, all voting in favor, to approve a proposal from Midwest IT Systems, Inc. in the amount of \$1,815.20 for a desktop computer, monitor, webcam, and installation.

On motion by Westby, seconded by Hunter, all voting in favor, to set a budget workshop meeting for Monday, August 18, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

Reminder of Minnesota Valley Council of Governments Elected Officials Training on August 6, 2025 at 5:30 pm at the Intergovernmental Center, Mankato MN.

The Kilkenny ATV Ride will be stopping in Elysian on Saturday, August 9, 2025.

The Council expressed appreciation to the Elysian Area Chamber, the Elysian Area Fire Department, Lake Area Women, City staff, businesses, sponsors, and countless volunteers for the safe and enjoyable 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration.

National Night Out will be held Tuesday, August 5, 2025 at Lake Francis Park from 5:30 to 7:30 pm.

Public Comment: Mark Sybilrud, 514 Lake Avenue NW, noted that Shane Bugeja, University of Minnesota – Mankato, had visited Elysian and looked at some of the area trees. He would be a good "expert" for consultation on the Emerald Ash Borer Infestation options.

On motion by Hunter, seconded by Westby, all voting in favor, to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 pm.

Approved:

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Dennis Schnoor, Mayor Pro Tem

Attested:

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Lorri Kopischke, City Administrator