

**CITY OF ELYSIAN
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 3, 2025**

The Elysian Planning and Zoning Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, June 3, 2025 at City Hall at 6:00 pm.

Present were Chairperson Paul Hunter; Commissioners Patrick Ely, Dan Engebretson, and Doug Stanke; Zoning Administrator Lorri Kopischke. Absent: Commissioner Kim Denn.

On motion by Stanke, seconded by Ely, all voting in favor, to approve the agenda of the June 3, 2025 meeting as presented.

On motion by Stanke, seconded by Ely, all voting in favor, to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2025 Regular Meeting as presented.

Mike and Donna Brage have submitted a revised request for a variance to build a garage. The Brages originally presented at the May 6, 2025 Planning and Zoning meeting to build a 30' x 40' garage with removal of impervious lot coverage on their property. Based on the measurements provided by the Brages, it was determined that the current lot coverage was 64.3% and the proposed additions/deletions in the variance request would result in a final lot coverage of 64.3%. The proposal did not increase or decrease the impervious lot coverage. Several ideas were discussed, and the Commissioners asked the Brages to look at some options to reduce the impervious lot coverage and to return to the June 3rd Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to discuss options.

The Brages did submit new calculations and drawings for consideration at the June 3rd meeting. Donna Brage was present to discuss.

The lot according to Le Sueur County is 12,850 square feet.

The current impervious surface is as follows:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Measurement</u>	<u>Sq. Ft.</u>
House / Deck /		
Ramp	63' x 42'	2,646
Rip/Rap	63 ½' x 9' 4"	590
Rock / Porch	60' x 8'	480
Sidewalk	60' x 4'	240
Cement after ramp	7.5' x 4'	30
Rocks east of Drive	55' x 8'	440
Driveway	55' x 57'	<u>3,135</u>
Total		7,561 / 58.8% lot coverage

The proposed impervious surface is as follows:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Measurement</u>	<u>Sq. Ft.</u>
House / Deck /		
Ramp	63' x 42'	2,646

Rip/Rap	63 ½' x 9' 4"	590
Porch	10' x 6.5'	66
Sidewalk	60' x 4'	240
Cement after ramp	7.5' x 4'	30
Garage	40' x 28'	1,120
Driveway	55' x 27'	<u>1,485</u>
Total		6,177 / 48% lot coverage

The proposal will result in a 1,384 square foot reduction in lot coverage – 10.8% reduction.

This reduction results from an error of the driveway measurements in the original calculations, removal of additional rock to be replaced with grass, removal of additional cement driveway, and reduction of the proposed size of the garage from 40' by 30' to 40' by 28'.

Brage reported that they have researched pervious products with Patio Town and independent contractors and have been told that a pervious driveway would be 2.5 to 3 times more expensive than a cement driveway and that there are questions about durability and ongoing maintenance issues due to Minnesota winters and frost.

The Commissioners provided suggestions to reduce the impervious surface.

One option was to further reduce the size of the garage. Brage did not agree to reduce the size of the garage any further

The Commissioners suggested reducing the driveway width to 24 feet and shifting the garage three feet to the west. The northern 19' by 24' area of the driveway could be pervious material. The small garage door could be located in that area and that area could be used to store lake toys and side by side, items that are not as heavy. That would reduce the impervious by 456 square feet (19' by 24'), 45 square feet (3' by 15') to the south of the new location of the garage, and 120 square feet (3' by 40') to the east of the new location of the garage. Making this change would decrease the impervious surface by 621 square feet for a total of 5,556 square feet or 43.2% lot coverage.

Hunter recognized and acknowledged the Brages' efforts to reduce the impervious surface on the lot. The proposed 48% lot coverage is still an improvement over the way it sits today. This is the first request for a variance that he has seen that reduces the impervious surface on the property. The Commissioners would like to work with the Brages to see the lot coverage reduced a bit more.

Engebretson stated that he could not justify allowing 48% coverage. He hoped there was a solution to provide for more than a 10% reduction. He just wants to see what is best for the lake.

Engebretson noted that the DNR had suggested that deep rooted native grasses be seeded the entire length of the property along the shoreline above the existing rip rap (minus a 6' walkway to the dock) at a width of 25' landward of the lake. The plantings did not necessarily need to be native grasses. They could include any types of plants with deep roots such as hostas, coneflowers, or black eyed susan. He also suggested the use of terracing. The sediment and chemicals are then filtered as the water moves through each level of terrace.

The Commissioners suggested the removal of the sidewalk on the south of the house (60' by 4' = 240 square feet) and also the small chunk of cement after the ramp (7.5' by 4' = 30 square feet). That would result in 5,286 square feet of impervious surface or 41.1% lot coverage.

A lot coverage of 41.1% would be a reduction of 17.7% from the current lot coverage of 58.8%.

With that reduction of lot coverage, the Commissioners discussed the amount of deep-rooted plant buffer that would be sufficient on this lot. Brage stated that there is not much lawn on the lakeside of the lot. Viewing the property on Beacon it appears that there is approximately 50 feet from the lakeshore to the house with approximately 10 feet of rip rap on the lake edge.

The Commissioners agreed that a 10' buffer between the rip rap and the house with a 6' walkway to the dock would be sufficient.

On motion by Stanke, seconded by Ely, all voting in favor, to recommend that the City Council approve the variance request from Mike and Donna Brage, 402 Lake Avenue NW, to construct a garage on the property resulting in a impervious surface lot coverage in the amount of 41.1% or 5,286 square feet as described in the attached diagram with the following condition:

1. That deep rooted native plants / grasses be seeded the entire length of the property along the shoreline above the existing rip rap (minus a 6' walkway to the dock) at a width of 10' landward of the lake. This filter strip should be left alone and not mowed after it is established.

This recommendation is made based on the following findings of fact:

1. Reasonableness: This request is reasonable as it improves the existing lot coverage from 7,561 square feet or 58.8% to 5,286 square feet or 41.1%. This is a 17.7% reduction in impervious surface on the lot.
2. Uniqueness: The small size of the lot at 12,850 square feet.
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 City Council will consider this recommendation at their meeting on June 9, 2025.

The Planning and Zoning Commission discussed a proposed amendment to the Driveway Ordinance No. 86/17. The Ordinance currently states that "All driveways and required off-street parking spaces shall be surfaced with concrete, bituminous or pavers." With the requests to build larger homes on the small lakeshore lots, there has been an increase in replacing the existing impervious driveways with pervious driveways. In discussing this with the City Attorney, he has suggested the following amendment to the Ordinance:

All driveways and required off-street parking spaces shall be surfaced with concrete, bituminous or pavers, *"unless otherwise approved by the City Council based on non-conformity and impervious surface coverage concerns. Any property owner requesting an exception from the requirements of this section shall apply to the City Administrator for an exception and the City Administrator shall then forward that application on to the City Council for approval. Any exception granted by the City Council shall be duly noted on the permit."* All existing driveways that are not surfaced with concrete, bituminous or pavers shall be upgraded to be surfaced "a minimum of 24 feet from the street" within one-year of sale of the property to a new owner.

On motion by Stanke, seconded by Ely, all voting in favor, to recommend the amendment to the Driveway Ordinance as drafted by the City Attorney to address pervious driveways as approved by the City Council based on non-conformity and impervious coverage concerns.

The Commissioners discussed the current Elysian Ordinance definition of "Impervious Coverage". It currently states:

“IMPERVIOUS COVERAGE: A structure or a surface that has been compacted or covered with a layer of material so that is highly resistant to infiltration by water. It may include surfaces such as compacted sand, lime rock or clay, as well as most conventionally surfaced streets, roofs, sidewalks, parking lots and other similar structures.”

There was consensus to amend the definition to include as impervious coverage only those decks where the boards or slats are less than ¼ inch separation and have an impervious underlayment. Also to consider adding that gravel grade 1-5 with no fines and a pervious underlayment would not be considered impervious coverage.

Staff was directed to submit the proposed amendment to the City Attorney for comment.

On motion by Ely, seconded by Stanke, all voting in favor, to cancel the July 1, 2025 Regular Planning and Zoning Meeting and that the next meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission will be held on August 5, 2025.

There was no further business to come before the Commission.

On motion by Engebretson, seconded by Ely, all voting in favor, the meeting adjourned at 7:29 pm.

Attest:

Paul Hunter, Chairperson

Lorri Kopischke, Zoning Administrator