

May Communities Council Meeting Minutes

May 18, 2026

Attending Meeting: Kirk Bustrom, Molly Schmidt and John Wade from RAEDI, Michele Peterson and Allison Bently from Chatfield, Elizabeth Howard and Mitch Massman from Pine Island, Ian Albers from Kasson, Bill Schimmel from Stewartville, Al Roder and Kelli Luhmann from Byron. Guests in attendance included Peter Fitzgerald and Bradey Partyka from Pine Island and Alex Saunders from K2 & Company.

Al Roder opened the meeting at 1 p.m.

Communities Round Robin

Pine Island - Mitch reported that Logic of English broke ground on a new 30,000 square foot warehouse in Pine Island, which will create 30 new jobs. Elizabeth mentioned that Pine Island received \$12 million in bonding bill funding for the North Zumbro sanitary sewer project.

Chatfield - Alison and Michelle discussed Chatfield's approved lot split and Chatfield businesses workforce challenges.

Stewartville - Bill reported that Stewartville is awaiting governor approval for potential \$3 million in state bonding assistance for road improvements.

Kasson - Ian Albers provided updates on Casson's town home development, and a new technical assistance program approved by their EDA for entrepreneurs.

Byron - Al Roder shared plans for strategic initiatives in commercial and industrial development, a roundabout project starting in June, and the addition of a park and rec intern. He also reported that funding has been secured for planning and design of interchanges on Highway 14, which will allow for right-of-way acquisition and potentially start construction in two years. The group also discussed the ongoing housing lot shortage in Byron.

Pine Island Data Center Update

Peter from Ryan Companies presented an update on the Pine Island data center project, explaining the timeline from initial planning in 2023 to Google's commitment as anchor tenant in February 2026. The project involves an 88-acre development with one data center and office building totaling 300,000 square feet, with potential for three additional buildings. Key next steps include awaiting PUC and MPCA approvals, with the PUC review expected to continue throughout 2026. John and Kirk discussed supporting the project through community outreach and sharing accurate information about the development.

Strategic Planning

The conversation ended with updates on strategic planning initiatives, including a potential new AI tool called Ignite-ify for community development and grant writing.

Meeting was adjourned at 2 p.m. by Al Roder. The next meeting is June 15, 2026 at 1 p.m.