City of Mt. Vernon
Board of Adjustment
October 12, 2026 6:30 PM
City Hall, 213 1st Street NW

MEETING PACKET

Remote / Zoom Access:

For those who are unable to attend please log onto Zoom 5-10 minutes prior to the meeting. Contact staff member Leigh Bradbury at (319) 929-6541 for a link to be emailed to you, or log on utilizing the meeting ID#: **687 626 2505**

City of Mount Vernon
Board of Adjustment
City Hall 213 First St NW
October 12, 2026 6:30 PM

AGENDA

1. Call to Order / Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes: September 15, 2026
3. Application for Conditional Use Permit – 421 1st Street NW / Alternative Energy Production

Mount Vernon
Board of Adjustment
Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2026

The Mount Vernon Board of Adjustment met at 6:30 p.m. on September 15, 2026, at City Hall, 213 First St NW, Mount Vernon, IA; with the option of attendance via Zoom.

Call to Order: At 6:32 p.m., the Chairman of the Board, Roch Player, called the meeting to order.

Roll Call: With one of five seats open at this time, all four board members were present for the meeting: Roch Player, Rachel Mosier and new members Jeff Schweibert and Alexander Kurjatko, both of which were appointed in the fall of 2026.

Agenda Approval: Motion to approve, Schweibert; seconded by Kurjatko. All in favor.

Approval of Minutes – July 28, 2025: Motion to approve, Mosier; seconded by Schweibert. All in favor.

Agenda Item #3: Memorandum - House File 652 (2025)

Staff member Bradbury provided a brief recap of House File 652, which took effect July 1, 2025, amending Iowa Code §414.12. This amendment provides a new standard for Boards of Adjustment to grant variances from area, dimensional and other numerically-related values.

Agenda Item #4: Variance Request – 130 Joseph Lane SE – Accessory Structure

Staff noted a correction on the allowable square footage for accessory structures at 130 Joseph Lane SE. Based on the confirmed footprint of the primary dwelling unit, the maximum allowable square footage for this parcel is 1,484 square feet. With the existing garage at 672 SF, this allows for an additional 812 SF. The proposed structure is 1,600 SF.

Owner Justine Haas was present and stated that since purchasing the property with husband Nathanual in the spring of 2026, they have found the existing detached garage space, designed with two 7'x9' overhead doors, insufficient in size and clearance to provide storage for their personal vehicles, equipment and mower. Haas also noted that the prior owner had access to the barns s at 196 Joseph Lane for tractors, etc.

The proposal is for construction of a second detached building, measuring 40’ x 40’, with a larger overhead door to accommodate taller vehicles and equipment. Haas noted that the building would not exceed the 20’ height restriction.

Board member Player noted that the image presented by the applicant of the proposed building did not appear to accurately represent the stated size of the building (40’x40’). Haas confirmed this, noting the image was provided to demonstrate the proposed style of building and desired exterior finish.

Board member Mosier stated that having inadequate storage space for personal vehicles and maintenance equipment could satisfy the state’s requirement for establishing a “practical difficulty”, while also noting that a requirement for matching styles between the home and accessory building seems appropriate. Haas confirmed their intention to paint the house to match or compliment the style of the accessory building in the spring of 2027.

Kurjatko noted that the proposal further satisfies additional requirements for granting a variance under the new standard. As the structure would only be partially visible at best to surrounding properties, it would likely not alter the character of the neighborhood, nor is it contrary to the public interest. Kurjatko further agreed that a practical difficulty had been demonstrated, based on the equipment necessary for maintaining properties in secluded locations and on a parcel of larger size. As the prior arrangement for storage of maintenance vehicles is not available, the applicant could argue the matter was not self-created, as it would exist with any resident at that address. Kurjatko also expressed concern regarding the proposed size of the structure.

Schweibert noted that his concern for setting a precedent was countered by three factors unique to the property and the owners’ proposal: the size of the lot (in excess of three acres), low visibility of the proposed location from the road (Country Club Drive SE) and the building being styled to look like a home (versus a pole barn). Schweibert further voiced appreciation for the new standard, noting it provides greater flexibility for granting variances on minor items, which will likely assist planning and zoning officials with economic development.

Board member Player also noted his support for approval of a variance, citing the appropriateness within an agricultural or rural setting, but also echoed concern regarding size. Player inquired whether the condition of the existing garage warranted or would be considered by the applicant for removal, as this would reduce the total square footage of accessory structures. Haas indicated this had been considered and decided against, based on the structure’s existing condition and useful life. Haas stated that the total square footage of accessory structures would be reduced to 120SF over the maximum, if the existing garage were eliminated, but noted a second time that their intent was to keep the structure, stating demolition would “make no sense” as it is still useful.

Move to approve a variance requested from Chapter 165, Section 710 of the Mount Vernon Code of Ordinances, governing the maximum size restriction for Accessory Building in the Suburban Residential zoning district, with the following special conditions: accessory building not to exceed 40' by 40'. Motion seconded by Schweibert. All members voting in favor.

Agenda Item #4: Conditional Use Permit at 421 1st Street NW for Alternative Energy Production

Applicant T-Mobile was not represented at this meeting. Staff member Bradbury presented a brief history of the project.

Kurjatko inquired of the applicant's reference to manual removal of precipitation from the secondary containment area. Staff noted that an enclosure is required for the generator to prevent accumulations. Memorial Park lies within a historic district, so the design of that enclosure will be subject to approval by the Historic Preservation Commission. The site plan will also need to go before the Planning and Zoning Commission, with final approval provided by City Council.

Mosier requested additional information on the purpose, frequency and duration of test cycles, which were indicated in the application as "periodic". Mosier noted the generator's proximity to residential structures causes concern for both noise levels and exhaust, particularly with multiple generators located in the same area.

Staff noted that the City's generator (which predates IDNR regulation of diesel secondary containment and is therefore not enclosed), is reserved for support of City infrastructure only. This proposal is for sole support of T-Mobile's equipment, which is located on the City's water tower, per a lease agreement. Staff noted that T-Mobile is not the only lease holder on the tower that provides cellular service. It is, therefore and to Mosier's point, not unreasonable to expect additional applications if this one is approved.

Schweibert asked whether natural gas was available at this location and if it had been considered as an alternative to diesel. Schweibert further noted the advantage of having a continuous supply in times of emergency and the better application for this particular location when compared with diesel exhaust.

Chairman Player suggested tabling the matter with a request to the applicant to respond on the potential use of natural gas and consideration of shared-use with other entities to eliminate the need for multiple generators.

Moved by Schweibert to table the application by T-Mobile for a Conditional Use Permit allowing Alternative Energy Production at 421 1st Street NW, to allow the applicant to respond to questions regarding use of a natural gas-powered

generator and exploration of shared-use with other entities. Seconded by Kurjatko. All member voting in favor.

Major Tom Wieseler was present to express his gratitude to the Board members for their service, and to welcome new members Jeff Schweibert and Alex Kurjatko to the Board. The Mayor noted that one position remains open on the board at this time.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 12, 2026
To: Board of Adjustment
From: Leigh Bradbury, Planner I
Re: Natural Gas & Shared-Use

On September 15, 2026, the Board tabled a decision on T-Mobile's application for a Conditional Use Permit allowing Alternative Energy Production in Memorial Park, 421 1st Street. The Board requested additional information on the following questions:

- Has T-Mobile considered powering the generator with natural gas?
- Has T-Mobile approached any other providers who are currently leasing space on the tower about potentially sharing a generator?
- Has T-Mobile approached the City about sharing a generator?
- Is the City's generator in need of upgrade at this time? Could replacement make financial sense if done collaboratively?
- Is there a gas main in the vicinity?

To answer these questions, I reached out to the following individuals:

Chris Nosbisch, City Administrator
Cherrelle James, Site Acquisition Specialist with Concordia Wireless (on behalf of T-Mobile)
Dave Schechinger, Veenstra & Kim, Inc.
Andrew Christ , Alliant Energy

Shared Use

Angie Bauer of Concordia Wireless was the City's original contact for T-Mobile's proposal, followed by Cherrell James, who is our current contact. Ms. Bauer communicated with City Administrator Chris Nosbisch on several occasions between February 2025 and June 2025 regarding possible installation of a generator in Memorial Park. In responding, Nosbisch noted its location within a public park and historic district, the limited available space, and on three separate occasions, made direct requests for T-Mobile to pursue collaboration with other entities, including other carriers and the City for shared-use of one generator.

Natural Gas-Powered Generators

In June, 2025, Dave Schechinger of Veenstra and Kimm, Inc. reviewed T-Mobile's proposal on behalf of the City. Schechinger noted that the proposed site would be in violation of IDNR policy for diesel storage, due to a nearby well. He further indicated that the site would not be in violation if the fueld source were natural gas. Options were provided for T-Mobile's consideration, including a non-diesel installation. In July, 2025, T-Mobile chose to change the proposed location and provide secondary containment in order to comply with IDNR regulations.

The following correspondence from Concordia is in response to the Board's questions:

From: Cherrelle James <cjames@concordiawireless.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2026 10:34 AM
To: Leigh Bradbury <LBradbury@cityofmtvernon-ia.gov>
Cc: Angie Bauer <abauer@concordiawireless.com>; Brittanie Hitter <bhitter@concordiawireless.com>
Subject: Re: Sound for Zoom / T-Mobile Site ID: DM05340A

Good morning Leigh -

Please see the responses below to the Board's questions:

- Natural Gas has not been considered for this site. Generally, in public / municipal areas, a more contained diesel fuel solution is preferred by the property owner over the option of having natural gas pipes running under public land. T-Mobile cannot guarantee that a worker, contractor, or park guest will not dig and hit the natural gas line. A natural gas solution is a more viable option when the gas lines can be in plain sight, such as up the wall of a commercial building.
  We have been working since early 2025 with Chris Nosbisch and Leah Bradbury at the City of Mount Vernon. After presenting initial diesel fuel plans to Chris with the generator proposed near the base of the tower, Chris's request was that the generator be on the east side of the grassy area, further from the base of the tower. The proposed location is near proximity to the other existing shelter in the park, at the City's request. We have accommodated this location request and will have the secondary containment structure installed (meeting the historic preservation districts approval) to keep the area dry.

  - Please reconsider, based on feedback above. Natural gas is not the safest option for a public park or its guests.

  - T-Mobile is only interested in providing their own generator for their own power source. This is common for the industry, as it gets complicated for carriers to deal with other regarding generator maintenance, fuel supply, etc. (same response for item #4)

Upon review and the BOA feedback, let me know when the next meeting will be scheduled for. Please let me know if you may need anything else at this time.

Thank you.

Cherrelle James
Site Acquisition Specialist III
***Concordia** Wireless*
Engineers, Surveyors & Constructors
cjames@concordiawireless.com
http://www.concordiawireless.com

In talking with Chris Nosbisch, the City's generator continues to pass periodic testing at this time and is therefore not scheduled for replacement in the immediate future. It is, however, fairly old and predates IDNR regulation for secondary containment. As indicated in correspondence with Angie Bauer, the benefit derived from establishing a shared-use generator would make replacement worthy of consideration.

Finally, in answer to the Board's question, Andrew Christ of Alliant Energy has confirmed that gas main is "well within reach" of the proposed location, and Alliant would cover installation of the service line up to 100'.

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
September 15, 2026
Staff Report

Prepared by: Leigh Bradbury, City Planner

AGENDA ITEM #5 Conditional Use Permit

Applicant:	T-Mobile / Generator Installation
Owner:	City of Mount Vernon
Parcel:	#17103-26006-00000 / Memorial Park
Zoning District:	Traditional Residential (TR) / Cornell College Historic District
Land Use:	Alternative Energy Production

The Conditional Use Permit Procedure provides Board of Adjustment approval for uses within zoning districts which have unusual site development or operating characteristics that could adversely affect surrounding properties. Following publication and public hearing, the Board of Adjustment shall review, evaluate, and act upon all applications submitted to this procedure (MV165.1309)

Background Information:

T-Mobile has a lease with the City of Mount Vernon for space on the water tower in Memorial Park. As part of a national network hardening effort, T-Mobile has requested to install a diesel-powered generator on site.

The site plan has been reviewed by V&K Engineering and determined to comply with Iowa DNR policy for diesel storage within 200 feet of a wellhead located within the park. An enclosure is required and currently under design. This structure remains subject to review by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Alternative Energy Production is identified as a Conditional Use for Traditional Residential (TR) zoning districts, which makes it subject to Board of Adjustment approval.

The City of Mount Vernon has a diesel generator in this same location, east of the water tower, northwest of the Visitor's Center. The generator would be located in the same area of the park.

Staff Recommendation:

Alternative Energy Production is an established use upon the property at this time. Network hardening serves a public purpose by supporting communications during natural disasters and other emergency situations.

Operating characteristics would include periodic testing and cycling of the equipment, which can be accomplished during established business hours. An alleyway immediately east of the intended location, provides an access point for maintenance staff, vehicles and equipment.

Action Required:

Public Hearing

The Board is to review and act upon the request, based on the criteria established in Table 1313-A (attached).

The Board may:

- Apply a permit to a specific owner or applicant.
- Establish special site development or operation regulations as a condition for approval.