

From:

To: "[Ashley Grimm](mailto:Ashley.Grimm@StLouisCountyMN.gov)" <[GrimmA@StLouisCountyMN.gov](mailto:GrimmA@StLouisCountyMN.gov)>

Date: 1/30/2026 8:16:01 PM

Subject: RE: Media message

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Hi Ashley,

I appreciate you looking out for me, but I don't feel like I've been put in an awkward position.

Having signed the NDA, I'm not able to comment on the conversations I've been part of. Conversely, had I not signed the NDA, I also wouldn't have been able to comment because I wouldn't have been part of any conversations. Either way, my response has been/would be to direct people to the City of Hermantown.

(The uncomfortable part now is waiting to see which unflattering photo of me Mr. Ramos selects to post with the story. My guess is it'll be one of the pictures of me standing on a chair taking a photo at a Board meeting. He likes to make fun of those.)

I'm certainly not opposed to further conversation on this topic. I agree that Board direction would be a good thing to avoid any questions in the future.

BTW, here's the response I sent to Mr. Ramos:

I was asked to sign the NDA by Darren Jablonsky, our director of Economic and Community Development. The purpose of me signing was so that I could be made aware of the situation and be part of conversations related to it.

As communications manager, I am part of the leadership team, which means I am included in many conversations. This enables me to assist with messaging when needed as well as voice the concerns that I would anticipate being raised so that we'd have accurate and helpful information ready to share should this proposal ever move beyond the evaluation stage.

My response to media inquiries has been to direct them to the City of Hermantown and their website because this is a project being considered for their jurisdiction where they are the zoning authority.

Have a good evening!

Dana Kazel

Communications Manager

218-725-5049 (office)

218-591-2219 (cell)



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**From:** Ashley Grimm

Sent: Thursday, October 23, 2025 11:35 AM

To: Kevin Gray ; Dana Kazel

Subject: Media message

I was given a heads up about the NDA signed by Dana. I wasn't aware of this when I brought the NDA ban forward. I really hope leadership responds and takes accountability because this is not the fault of individual staff members. County admin and the county board should have clear direction for staff and for elected officials around NDAs that takes into consideration our roles to the public. In absence of that we have put our communications staff in a position she does not deserve to be in, and should not be put in again.

Ashley

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