



City of Blaine

City Council Workshop

April 10, 2023 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING

In accordance with the provisions of Section 3.01 of the Blaine City Charter, a Council Workshop meeting is scheduled for the following purpose:

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sanders at 5:30PM.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Tim Sanders, Councilmembers Terra Fleming, Chris Massoglia, Tom Newland, Jess Robertson, and Lori Saroya.

ABSENT: None.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Eric Thorvig; City Planner Sheila Sellman; Safety Services Director/Police Chief Brian Podany; Finance Director Joe Huss; Public Works Director Nick Fleischhacker; City Attorney Tom Loonan; Parks & Recreation Manager Jerome Krieger; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

2. New Business

- 2.1.** 2023-110 Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute 13D.05(3)(c)(3) - Property Acquisitions Related to 105th Avenue Development Area
Sponsors: Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director

The Council met in closed session pursuant to MN Statute 13D.05 (3)(c)(3) to discuss

property acquisitions related to 105th Avenue Development Area.

2.2. 2023-111 Veterans Memorial Park Update
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

City Manager Wolfe reported staff invited the representatives from Veterans Memorial Park to provide an update. She discussed the work being done at this park by a private entity. She explained staff was interested in finding better ways to work together, while also planning for the park's future. She stated staff was creating a map of the park noting the infrastructure that was already in place to assist with future planning needs. In addition, she noted an agreement must be in place with the 501C3.

Steve Guider provided the Council with an update on Veterans Memorial Park. He commented on the history of the park and reviewed photos of the park's transformation. He described the vision for the park and described how the landscaping of the park had been enhanced. He stated the neighbors in the apartments have thanked him for improving the park. He discussed the relationship he has with Ryan at Fergus Falls Monuments. He reviewed the monuments that were already within the park and noted the monuments that would be added. The plans for the women in the military and POW MIA monuments were further described. He indicated donor bricks were available at the park for individuals, families, and businesses, along with monument sponsorship opportunities. He commented further on the research he did for each of the monuments and noted the veterans that were being honored. He explained he has partnered with the Anoka County Master Gardeners to improve the landscaping at the park. He discussed his fundraising efforts and noted the individual that would be recognized on Memorial Day noting a freedom rock would be added to the park this fall.

Councilmember Fleming thanked Mr. Guider for his efforts on behalf of the City of Blaine.

Councilmember Massoglia thanked Mr. Guider for his genuine care and heart serving those in the military and veterans.

Councilmember Robertson stated she has attended a number of the monument dedications and programs at Blaine High School. She appreciated the fact Blaine was telling the stories of its military heroes. She thanked Mr. Guider for his tremendous efforts on Veterans Memorial Park.

Mr. Guider introduced the members on his board that were in attendance and described how each individual assisted with fundraising or maintenance of the park.

Councilmember Newland requested staff place the PowerPoint presentation on the City's website to provide the public with further information on Veteran's Memorial Park. He suggested a short informational video be created for the park and that this be posted to the City's website as well.

Councilmember Saroya asked if tours were available for the park. Mr. Guider stated he has thought about providing tours on Saturdays.

Councilmember Saroya encouraged Mr. Guider to apply for grants to assist with funding future monuments in the park. She noted she wrote grants for her profession and would be willing to assist Mr. Guider with this task.

Mayor Sanders thanked Mr. Guider for creating an inspiring destination park for both residents and visitors to Blaine.

Mr. Guider invited the Council to attend the Blaine High School Memorial Program as well as the Memorial Day program at the Veterans Memorial Park.

Mayor Sanders recessed the workshop meeting at 6:19PM.

Mayor Sanders reconvened the workshop meeting at 6:30PM.

2.3. 2023-69 35W Logistics Center (Corner of 109th and Sunset)
Sponsors: Sheila Sellman, City Planner

City Planner Sellman stated the subject property is 27 acres and has been vacant since the home on the property was demolished in 1992. The property was guided for medium and high-density residential development in the Northeast Area Plan (adopted in 2002). The use was then changed to HDR/PC (High Density Residential/Planned Commercial) in the 2030 Comp Plan (adopted in 2009) and HDR/PI (High Density Residential/Planned Industrial) in the 2040 Comp Plan (adopted in 2018). The property has been on and off the market for many years and previous developers have struggled with how to develop the property with the constraint of the large wetland in the center of the property and poor soils throughout the property. Additionally, a lift station is needed for sewer service to the property, which increases the development cost. Staff have encouraged all prospective developers to consider the high visibility of the site from both 35W and 109th in their site design as well as buffering for the neighboring rural style residential lots that surround the property. The surrounding properties are all zoned FR (Farm Residential), but are guided LDR (Low Density Residential), which calls for suburban style residential development at a density of 2.5 to 6 units per acre.

Ms. Sellman explained this property was reviewed by the City Council at the fall retreat in 2022 as part of a proactive review of properties with HDR (High Density Residential) land uses and the feedback at the time was to retain the existing HDR/PI land use. Capital Partners is proposing construction of two 189,000 square foot speculative light industrial buildings. Capital Partners recently completed construction of Naples Office/Warehouse (at the northern end of Naples Street across from the gun club) and is currently developing Naples Office/Warehouse II immediately to the south. Staff commented further on the approvals that would be required to move this project forward and requested feedback from the Council on how proceed.

Councilmember Robertson discussed the current zoning and guidance for this property. She understood staff was asking if the Council supported rezoning the property to PBD or I-1. She indicated she preferred PBD over HDR or I-1. She stated she could not envision this

property as industrial because it was surrounded by residential. She supported a traffic study being completed for this property to better understand how semi-truck traffic would impact the area. She reported the proposed buildings were nine hundred feet long, which was massive. She supported the size of the proposed buildings being scaled down.

Councilmember Newland stated this site was challenging due to access. He indicated the proposed buildings were large, but noted he could support industrial over HDR.

Councilmember Massoglia indicated he supported the proposed use being industrial. He explained he would support high density as well. He agreed the south entrance would be an issue due to the curve, which would create traffic issues.

Tim McShane, Capital Partners, introduced himself to the Council and thanked the Council for considering his project.

Joel Raddick, Capital Partners, explained he was comfortable with the truck traffic on the site. He reviewed how trucks would flow to and through the site. He noted the location of the primary truck entrance and stated he would be happy to complete a traffic analysis for the Council. He reported, industrial uses have less traffic than residential uses.

Councilmember Robertson asked if the proposed buildings had to be this large. Mr. Raddick explained he would need a certain amount of square footage to make the economies of the project work. He commented further on the proposed setbacks for the project. Mr. McShane discussed how the front elevation would be broken up with articulations.

Ms. Sellman reported the property would have 100-foot setbacks if it were zoned I-1. She noted a PBD zoning district would require 15-foot setbacks, however these could be increased through the conditions.

Community Development Director Thorvig discussed the finish standards for PBD versus industrial. He indicated the developer was meeting the PBD finish standards. He stated the main concern for the developer at this time was how the space had to be divided within the buildings, noting the buildings would be built on spec.

Councilmember Robertson reported she supported the property being rezoned PBD as this would allow the City to have more control over the future development of this property.

Mr. McShane questioned if the PBD could move forward while relaxing the space percentages.

Councilmember Robertson stated she could support this. Ms. Sellman reported this would require an ordinance amendment or a variance.

Councilmember Massoglia indicated he could support light industrial on the property, but he understood Councilmember Robertson's concerns.

Councilmember Newland stated he supported the property being rezoned to I-1. Councilmember Fleming supported the property having larger setbacks if the site were rezoned to industrial.

Councilmember Saroya commented she was pleased the property was not being proposed for apartments. She did not see an issue with rezoning the property to PBD or I-1. She supported a traffic study being completed for this project.

Councilmember Robertson anticipated the neighbors would have a difficult time with any type of change on this property because it has sat vacant for so long. She reiterated that she supported the property being rezoned to PBD because this would offer the City more control over the future redevelopment.

Mayor Sanders stated this property had significant tree coverage which would help screen the proposed use from the neighboring properties. He indicated he did not believe the PBD requirement would be worth the risk, knowing that the developer was willing to work with the City and the industrial zoning district would provide larger setbacks for the neighbors. He stated he did not have a problem rezoning the property to industrial so long as the developer continues to work with the City and the county.

Councilmember Robertson explained she would be willing to door knock and speak with the neighbors to make them aware of the proposed development.

Council consensus was to direct the applicant to continue working with staff on this project.

2.4. 2023-104 Fleet Rightsizing Discussion

Sponsors: Joe Huss, Finance Director/Asst. City Manager

Finance Director Huss stated in late 2020, toward the end of the 2021 budget process, the City manager proposed a fleet rightsizing initiative. The desired outcomes of the study were to deliver data-driven information that would provide the most cost effective, economical processes for determining fleet additions and replacements such that the optimal number of vehicles and equipment needed to support operations would be achieved; and to bring operational efficiencies to vehicle maintenance, including the creation of a separate Fleet Services operations internal service fund and establishing a reliable method of charging departments to fund fleet maintenance operations and capital additions and replacement.

Mr. Huss explained in November 2021, the Council approved a contract with Management Partners for a Fleet Rightsizing study. The study was completed in May 2022 with Management Partners providing a comprehensive report containing 63 recommendations. Since that time, staff has worked diligently with Management Partners to understand the recommendations and determine the feasibility of implementing the recommendations. To facilitate implementation, the recommendations were placed into eight categories. For each category, cross-functional teams, representing departments across the City, were formed and have been assigned responsibility for the implementation of the recommendations that fell into their respective categories. Staff commented further on the software being used to assist with managing the City's fleet, work that has been completed to date and the actions remaining for full implementation of the plan.

Councilmember Newland asked what it would cost the City to implement the next phase of

this plan. Mr. Huss explained there were very few incremental costs. He commented on the cost of the contracts with Management Partners. He stated the recommendations were still being considered by staff taking into consideration the growth of the City.

Councilmember Newland asked if City staff was already using the Dossier software program. Mr. Huss described how staff was already taking advantage of this program. Public Works Director Fleischhacker commented further on how his staff was utilizing Dossier.

Councilmember Massoglia indicated he did not understand why the EDA or staff had to have a line item charging back to an internal fund for fleet right sizing. Mr. Huss explained this was based on users and users of vehicles. He reported the majority of vehicles were assigned to public works, engineering, community standards, and the police department. He commented further on how fleet expenses would be charged to specific departments going forward. It was noted the same money would be expended, but now the proper departments would be charged.

Councilmember Robertson explained she would like to further discuss the fleet right sizing when the Council holds budget discussions.

Councilmember Massoglia reported the 2023 budget was not on the City's website. He asked that this be posted to the website.

3. Other Business

Ms. Wolfe reported with the election being held on Tuesday, April 11, the canvas for the election will occur on Monday, April 17. It was noted the oath of office for the newly elected Councilmember would occur at the first Council meeting in May.

Ms. Wolfe explained she needed feedback from the Council regarding upcoming town hall ideas.

Ms. Wolfe indicated the strategic plan would be updated at the end of May, along with a SWAT analysis.

City Clerk Sorensen asked if the Council supported fire board applications being collected April 14 through May 15. The Council supported this recommendation.

Ms. Wolfe stated staff received a bid for the sod replacement (along Jefferson Street) and the low bid came in over \$900,000. She reported the Council would be discussing this topic further on April 17. Staff estimated that almost four hundred residents submitted a request to have their sod replaced and it would cost almost \$3,000 per property.

4. Adjournment

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:43PM.