



City of Blaine

Planning Commission

September 12, 2023 | 7:00 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The Blaine planning commission met in the City Hall Chambers on Tuesday, September 12, 2023. Acting Chair Halpern called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

2. Roll Call

Members Present: Commission Members Gorzycki, Halpern, Homan, Olson.

Members Absent: Commissioner Member Deonauth, Swanson and Chair Goracke.

Staff Present: Elizabeth Showalter, Community Development Specialist
Teresa Barnes, Project Engineer

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1. 2023-391 Approval of the August 8, 2023 Planning Commission Minutes
Sponsors:

Motion by Commissioner Olson to approve the minutes of August 8, 2023, as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Homan. The motion passed 4-0.

4. Public Hearing

4.1. 2023-390 Case File No. 23-0067 // Stinson Electric // 8888 Xylite Street NE
The applicant is requesting a rezoning from I-1 (Light Industrial) to I-1A (Light Industrial).
Sponsors: Elizabeth Showalter, Community Development Specialist

The report to the planning commission was presented by Elizabeth Showalter, Community Development Specialist. The public hearing for Case File 23-0067 was opened at 7:09PM.

Paul Archambault, Stinson Electric representative, introduced himself to the planning commission and thanked staff for the detailed report. He reviewed his office hours noting there would be no one onsite after 5:30PM and discussed the type of activity that would occur onsite. He stated he would have very little traffic entering and exiting the property on a daily basis. He reported the west side of the property abutted the airport and noted the trees to the north would remain undisturbed. He commented on the landscaping that would be installed along the remaining property lines. He stated the building would be scaled back to 20,000 square feet or 11% of the acreage. The storage yard would be 9,600 square feet or 5.5% of the acreage. He described the equipment that would be stored outdoors, which included spare service vans, long light poles and trenching equipment.

Caitlyn Reggy, 8867 Xylite Street, explained she lived directly across from the subject property. She reported she attended the neighborhood meeting and she heard the plans for this site. She stated she still had concerns because this business would be directly facing her home. She asked that the request not be considered because this would add extra traffic and outdoor storage to the neighborhood. She stated she had concerns with theft and vandalism and how that would impact her neighborhood. She understood there were grandfathered businesses in her neighborhood with outdoor storage. She commented on how she has to call the city regularly in order to address the outdoor and trucking storage concerns. She feared how yet another business in the neighborhood would impact her quality of life. She did not want to have to continually monitor and police the businesses surrounding her residential home. She urged the city to further consider how the storage pond will impact the neighborhood, noting she wants the groundwater protected. She expressed concern with the number of semi-trucks that would be visiting this property on a weekly basis. She reported she recently paid for a new street and she did not want to have to pay additional assessments to fix her street. Lastly, she feared how the value of her property would be impacted by the new business. She encouraged the commission to not support this request because it was not a good fit for the neighborhood.

Acting Chair Halpern requested staff speak to how business operation violations are handled by the city.

Community Development Specialist Showalter explained the property to the south has substantial grandfathering rights. She noted this property received a CUP in 1985 and requirements were very different at that time. She reported the city could not hold them to anything stricter than what was approved in 1985. As such, this business has substantially more storage than would be allowed today. She indicated code enforcement staff was very familiar with this property and works to rectify concerns when staff becomes aware of them. She stated the city addresses code enforcement concerns on a proactive basis in conjunction with fire inspections, or if there is a complaint. It was noted the subject property would have no grandfathering rights.

Acting Chair Halpern requested comment from staff regarding the proposed ponding.

Community Development Specialist Showalter explained the plans for this site would have to be reviewed by the watershed district to ensure that water quality and quantity would be managed and the review would include making sure there is adequate separation between ground water and any stormwater treatment that infiltrates water.

Acting Chair Halpern questioned what the differences were between I-1 and I-1A.

Community Development Specialist Showalter reported I-1 was more restrictive than I-1A and I-1A was more restrictive than I-2. It was noted I-1 does not permit outside storage, I-1A permits limited outside storage and I-2 permits general outside storage.

Jody Coleman, 2610 Rice Creek, stated her main concern was with how traffic along this roadway would be impacted, especially if the number of large trucks were increased.

Project Engineer Teresa Barnes explained whether the property remained I-1 or was rezoned to I-1A, a similar building would be constructed and there would be business traffic. She indicated the city could potentially require all truck traffic to use the south access point as part of a conditional use permit.

Mr. Archambo stated when researching this property he understood a 70,000 square foot building could be constructed that was 50 feet tall. He reported he was proposing to build a 20,000 square foot building that was 30 feet tall. He stated he was proposing to have regular business hours with very limited traffic. He indicated the site could house a warehouse business that runs in three shifts. He was of the opinion that his business was a much better fit for the neighborhood than what could be located on this property. He noted he was proposing to construct his building 400 feet (one city block) back from the street, which would further buffer the building from the neighbors. He explained he was requesting the rezoning in order to allow for minor outdoor storage, which would be properly screened.

Dustin Dobitz, 8847 Xylite Street NE, questioned what other tenant would be located on the site. He stated he had concerns regarding what the hours of operation would be for this other tenant.

The public hearing was closed at 7:37PM.

Commissioner Homan asked if residents would be able to contact Mr. Archambo directly should a concern arise from the neighbors.

Mr. Archambo stated he has a staff member onsite 11 hours a day and the neighbors would be able to call should a concern arise. He explained he did not want to tarnish his business reputation by being a bad tenant or landlord in the community.

Commissioner Homan questioned who the other tenant would be on the property.

Mr. Archambo explained he was constructing the building to meet the future needs of the company, so he does not have to move in the future. He commented on what the potential rental rates would be for the business space and stated he would choose wisely when considering a tenant.

Commissioner Olson reported the commission was being asked to consider if outside storage should be allowed on this property. She indicated a CUP would still be required for the outside storage. She stated she supported the proposed business moving forward on this property.

Motion by Commissioner Olson to recommend approval of Planning Case 23-0067 based on the following rationale:

Case 23-0067:

1. The I-1A (Light Industrial) zoning is consistent with the industrial properties to the south, including the adjacent auto repair use with extensive outside storage of vehicles.
2. The I-1A district provides sufficient controls on the outside storage in 31.15(l) and the ability to add additional conditions through a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) provides sufficient protection to ensure outside storage is compatible with adjacent residential uses.
3. The I-1A district is consistent with the LI (Light Industrial) land use designation.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Gorzycki. The motion passed 4-0.

5. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Homan to adjourn the regular planning commission meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Olson. The motion passed 4-0.

Adjournment time was 7:41 PM.