



City of Blaine

City Council Workshop

January 17, 2024 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

AGENDA

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**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. New Business**
 - 3.1.** 2024-023 105th Redevelopment Plan Concept Discussion
Sponsors: Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director
 - 3.2.** 2024-024 Proposed Charter Amendment - Redetermination of Ward Boundaries
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk
 - 3.3.** 2024-025 Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute 13D.05 Subd.C(3). – Discuss Property Acquisition of PIDs 21-31-23-24-0009; 21-31-23-24-0014; 21-31-23-24-0025; 21-31-23-24-0024
Sponsors: Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director
- 4. Other Business**
- 5. Adjournment**



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2024-023

Agenda Date	Status
January 17, 2024	
In Control	File Type
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director

Agenda Item # 3.1

105th Redevelopment Plan Concept Discussion

Background

Since 2015, the City of Blaine Economic Development Authority has been acquiring certain property around 105th Avenue and Nassau Street for redevelopment. The area currently consists of older, antiquated industrial buildings that produce low employment and taxes. The redevelopment area consists of approximately 23.4 acres plus an additional 16 acres on MASC property. Redevelopment of this area has been discussed since the early 2000s when it was identified in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The project area is currently identified as a redevelopment area in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the City's Strategic Plan. The desire for a "downtown" area has also been expressed by residents to various elected officials and staff over the years.

In 2022, the City Council hired an architect to assist in a master planning/visioning process for the area. Given its proximity to the National Sports Center (NSC), the area is intended to be an entertainment district to capture visitors to the NSC and serve the regional population. The master plan identified public space, hotels, restaurants, retail, and residential uses.

In the Fall of 2022, the City, through an RFP process, solicited a master developer for the project. Four developers, all local to the Minneapolis/St. Paul region submitted proposals. Interviews/presentations were held in November 2022 with each development team. Elevage/Bader was chosen by the City Council as the master developer. A pre-development agreement was executed in December 2022.

In early 2023, the developer began preparing a master plan based on the principles identified in the 2022 council visioning process. The initial master plan created by the developer included sports-themed uses, hotels, public parking, office, retail, restaurants, residential and public space. This plan was presented to the city council at various workshops.

Discussions began in April 2023 between the MASC/NSC, the developer and the city to understand how

the developer can acquire development rights to a portion of the MASC property. MASC acquired approximately 75 acres on the east side of their campus in the late 1990s. Based on how the property was acquired, there is statutory language that allows the MASC to lease up to 16 acres of the property for private development. A ground lease can be executed for 30 years, with two extensions for an additional 30 years each (total of 90 years). The intent to allow MASC to lease the property was to provide a funding source for the National Sports Center Foundation (NSCF) that operates the day-to-day operations of the facility.

The NSC has significant deferred maintenance on the campus. Their primary source of funding for maintenance and capital improvements on the campus is from the State of Minnesota Legislature. Therefore, whenever the NSC needs capital improvement dollars, they must compete with other projects state-wide that are submitted to the legislature. In some years they are successful in getting bonding dollars from the legislature. However, it's not to the level needed to catch up on deferred maintenance or complete other projects (such as turf fields). In 2022, the City of Blaine provided \$3.8MM to the NSC to construct three new turf fields south of 105th Avenue. This money was a combination of ARP funds and EDA dollars. The City of Blaine recognizes the importance of the NSC as an economic driver to Blaine and therefore provided funding to improve the campus. The NSC has stated that the addition of 10 turf fields could increase revenue for the NSCF by 10-15%. It also allows them to compete for national tournaments that they are currently losing because they don't have the necessary fields to qualify and attract said tournaments.

Through negotiation, the MASC/NSC identified the need for turf fields as compensation for leasing property. An amount of \$12MM was identified which would allow for the installation of ten, lit turf fields. Turf will be installed on fields 25-32 and fields 55 and 56 (see attached map) and the work will be completed by Fall, 2024. The statutory language identified above would have allowed MASC/NSC to lease the property to the developer for an annual fee of \$300,000. Annual payments of this amount do not provide an opportunity for a significant, one-time investment on the campus. As such, the up-front commitment of \$12MM for improvements was negotiated.

Various agreements were negotiated and drafted by the MASC/NSC, developer and city that would allow for the following:

1. Ground lease of MASC land to the developer for up to 90 years.
2. Approximately four acres of public/gathering space on MASC land.
3. Ongoing maintenance dollars in the amount of \$200,000 annually, paid by the developer, for the NSC. This money is available after the debt is retired on the turf-field bond.
4. The city bonding for \$12MM to pay for the installation of ten lit turf fields.

These agreements have been approved by the MASC board and Blaine City Council. With the execution of the agreements and term sheet that was approved by the City Council on November 20, 2023, the developer is moving forward with refining the master plan that was prepared in early 2023. The developer will present the new master plan to the City Council for feedback prior to advancing the plan and holding various public engagement sessions this spring. The developer is planning to begin construction on Phase 1 (west district) in 2024.

Staff Recommendation

Provide feedback to the developer on the concept master plan and next steps.

Questions for Council

1. Are you supportive of the concepts identified in the master plan?
2. What feedback do you have for the developer on the master plan?

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine

Staff Report

File Number: 2024-024

Agenda Date	Status
January 17, 2024	
In Control	File Type
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

Agenda Item # 3.2

Proposed Charter Amendment - Redetermination of Ward Boundaries

Executive Summary

Background

At their November 2023 meeting, the charter commission reviewed council's recommendation to postpone consideration of the proposed charter amendment regarding redetermination of ward boundaries until 2027 and include it as part of the comprehensive plan update. After discussion, the commission respectfully requested a joint workshop to better outline their reasons for the amendment and allow council to ask questions regarding this proposed amendment.

To recap, during the redistricting process in early 2022, council shared general support of the charter commission's recommendation to draft potential amendments that would allow the ability to consider possible ward boundaries and restructuring in the future as the city reaches full development. The commission's reasons for creating this ability for review was based on the potential benefits that a different ward structure could provide:

- smaller geographic areas that are more neighborhood-based
- more focus on topics and issues specific to neighborhoods
- more opportunity for residents to connect with their elected officials
- increased opportunity for those considering serving as elected officials

At the meetings there was discussion that should future councils/charter commissions ever wish to consider the possibility of more neighborhood-based wards there was no mechanism included in charter to allow for that review. Redistricting after the census allows for review and adjustment of established precinct boundaries, but work to review any potential ward structure changes needs to occur two to three years before the census. The language being proposed would provide a way to review population data before a census and provide future councils and charter commissions the ability to decide at that time if changes should be explored. The proposed amendment would not result in any ward structure changes but just allow the city to be proactive and provide an opportunity to review the data and make recommendations, which could certainly be that no ward boundary or structure changes should occur at all. If the conclusion by future councilmembers and commissioners was to amend the current ward structure, other amendments would then be presented for formal consideration, again that may or may not ultimately be adopted. To confirm, the proposed amendment being presented would just provide a mechanism for future review; no actual ward-structure changes are being recommended at this time.

Below is current language from charter establishing the number of election wards:

Sec. 2.03(a). Wards.

The City of Blaine shall be divided into three (3) council election wards.

The city manager shall re-evaluate the ward boundaries following the certification of the decennial census.

Council election wards shall be as equal in population as practicable and each ward shall be composed of compact, contiguous territory.

Ward boundaries shall follow visible, clearly recognizable physical features as required by state law. The city manager shall prepare a redistricting report which shall be submitted to the charter commission for review and comment.

The redistricting report, any charter commission comments, and a redistricting ordinance shall be submitted to the city council for consideration. If the city council does not adopt a redistricting ordinance within the period specified by state law, no compensation may be paid to the mayor or councilmembers until the wards of the city are newly redetermined as required by this charter and state law.

Below is the proposed amendment that if ultimately adopted would result in the charter commission being directed to review both ward boundaries as already outlined in charter as well as consider possible recommendations to the number of council election wards in the years between the census:

Sec. 2.03(b). Redetermination of Ward Boundaries.

Pursuant to City Charter Sec. 2.03(a). - Wards, the city council shall redetermine appropriate ward boundaries in years between the taking of a Federal decennial census whenever the city council finds that a deviation of more than five percent exists in the populations of the largest and smallest wards. For the purposes of this section, the city council, in making its findings as to populations, shall take into consideration changes in numbers of households since the last decennial census and household size in areas where changes have occurred as determined by the school district(s) and as outlined in the Metropolitan Council's annual preliminary population and household estimates released in April of each year pursuant to MN Statute 473.24. If after review of the findings, the city council determines the number of council election wards should be changed in addition to ward boundaries, the city council shall direct the charter commission to review said findings for recommendation for any appropriate city charter amendments Pursuant to City Charter Sec. 2.03(a). - Wards.

Strategic Plan Relationship

Board/Commission Review

Financial Impact

Public Outreach/Input

Staff Recommendation

No action is requested at this time.

Attachment List

1. 11-6-23 Council Workshop Minutes
2. 11-14-23 Draft Charter Commission Minutes

council received a pay increase and when the proposed increase would go into effect. She asked how many votes a charter commission amendment would need in order to pass. Ms. Sorensen reported the amendment required a unanimous vote of the council in order to move forward but the actual salary increase would be a majority vote of the council.

Councilmember Fleming questioned why the charter commission didn't set the pay increase but instead provided a range. Ms. Sorensen explained the charter commission did not feel comfortable setting an actual salary as they understood how uncomfortable this process can be so instead proposed a range for the council to consider.

Councilmember Fleming supported the council having a COLA mechanism in place going forward for council pay and requested the charter commission set the actual pay for the council.

Commissioner Robertson requested staff go back to the charter commission and ask that they set the pay increase so this decision does not have to be made by the city council.

Council generally supported the charter language amendment but wanted more direction from the charter commission on the actual proposed salary amounts. Council requested the topic be presented again after the charter commission met to discuss this matter.

2.3. 2023-500 Proposed Charter Commission Amendment - Redetermination of Ward Boundaries

Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

Ms. Sorensen stated as part of the redistricting process in early 2022, council shared general support of the charter commission's recommendation to draft potential amendments that would allow the ability to consider possible ward boundaries and restructuring in the future as the city reaches full development. The commission's reasons for creating this ability was based on the potential benefits of more neighborhood-based wards. Staff presented proposed redistricting plans to council and the charter commission at workshops on February 14 and March 7, 2022, with first reading on March 7 and second reading and adoption on March 21, 2022. Factors used to determine the adopted ward boundaries and precincts included:

- 2020 census population
- projected population growth
- registered voters and estimated voters
- wards that were bounded by precinct lines, compact in area, and composed of contiguous territory
- wards that were as equal in population as practicable within the required 5% population threshold
- polling place management

Ms. Sorensen reported at the meetings there was discussion that should future councils/charter commissions ever wish to consider the possibility of more neighborhood-based wards there was no mechanism included in charter to allow for that

review. Redistricting after the census allows for review and adjustment of established precinct boundaries, but work to review any potential ward structure changes needs to occur two to three years before the census. The language being proposed would provide a way to review population data before a census and provide future councils and charter commissions the ability to decide at that time if changes should be explored. The proposed amendment would not result in any ward structure changes but just allow the city to be proactive and provide an opportunity to review the data and make recommendations, which a recommendation could certainly be that no ward boundary or structure changes should occur at all. If the conclusion by future councilmembers and commissioners was to amend the current ward structure, other amendments would then be presented for formal consideration. She confirmed the proposed amendment being presented would just provide a mechanism for future review; no actual ward-structure changes are being recommended at this time.

Councilmember Fleming inquired why this item was brought forward and asked if the current ward system was not working. Mayor Sanders stated the city will always have wards but the council was is being asked if they want to have the ability to restructure in the future with at-large councilmembers for example or possibly a different number of wards.

Councilmember Robertson indicated the census prompts staff to look at the wards due to population shifts.

Councilmember Massoglia stated he did not recall the council giving the charter commission direction to pursue this matter. Ms. Sorensen agreed the council did not direct the charter commission to take on this task but there was general consensus during redistricting to have the charter commission explore this idea.

Ms. Wolfe reported staff researched the minutes and noted the council discussed the fact that there might have been interest in exploring a different way to do the wards. She indicated there was no mechanism for having any discussion about how the wards were structured except for using census data. She commented that as the city continues to grow, the council may want to have further conversations on how wards should be structured.

Councilmember Fleming asked when was the right time to have this discussion. Ms. Sorensen stated two or three years prior to the next census would be the right time. She indicated staff could then monitor growth in the community and consider how this growth was impacting the city's wards and have the charter commission bring forward potential options for consideration.

Councilmember Robertson supported a potential new ward structure discussion being tied to future comprehensive plan discussions. The council was in agreement.

Council supported this amendment being considered later in 2027 as part of the comprehensive plan discussions.

2.4. 2023-520 Closed Session to Discuss Non-Public Data Relating to an Active Investigation Pursuant to MN Statute 13D.05 Subd. 2(2)

DRAFT

City of Blaine
Anoka County, Minnesota
Minutes of the Meeting
Blaine Charter Commission

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

6:00 PM
Community Room
10801 Town Square Drive NE

1. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Roll Call

Present: Chair Jeffrey Lester, Commissioners Ken Anderson, Alan Goracke, Jason Halpern, Terri Homan, Ayman Khan, Arman Tagarro

Absent: Commissioners Jason Hartmann, Dick Swanson, Nyle Zikmund

Also Present: City Clerk/Staff Liaison Cathy Sorensen

Quorum present.

3. Approval Of Minutes – October 10, 2023

Moved by Commissioner Homan, seconded by Commissioner Goracke, that the minutes of October 10, 2023, be approved as presented.

Motion approved unanimously.

4. Open Forum

No one appeared.

5. New Business

None.

6. Old Business

6.1 Council Salary Review/Recommendation Process

City Clerk/Staff Liaison Cathy Sorensen shared minutes from the council workshop regarding the council salary review/recommendation process and council's general support of the amendment for regular salary review but requested the charter commission propose a specific salary recommendation instead of a range as proposed.

Commissioner Goracke stated a specific recommendation would place the commission in a position of power and felt that should be up to council as they were elected by the people and the commission was providing more of a guardrail. He said he felt the recommended range of an amount up to a limit was responsible and allowed the elected officials something to accept or change, adding the charter commission was not an elected body but appointed. He said he felt good about the commission's work and that it was not appropriate to recommend an actual amount.

Chair Lester said he believed the decision should be made by council and that the recommendation was based on data analysis. He said he would support making a specific dollar recommendation if necessary of \$18,315.03 for mayor and \$13,461.54 for council but firmly believed it was ultimately for council to decide.

Commissioner Homan stated the commission made their decision based on data but did not have access to other information the council has such as budget impacts and supported the up to amount range recommendation.

The commission discussed recommending a not to exceed amount instead of an up to amount as a way to address council's concerns.

Commissioner Halpern supported making a specific salary recommendation for 2025 and using data based on COLA going forward.

Commissioner Arman suggested removing consideration of Bloomington and Hopkins from the data set and recommending salaries of \$17,000 and \$12,000 respectively.

Commissioner Anderson said he wanted the recommendation to be analytical and apolitical.

Moved by Commissioner Goracke, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, to remove reference of an "up to" amount and recommend a salary increase of \$18,315.03 for mayor and \$13,461.54 for council effective 2025 but to reiterate their original recommendation going forward that specific salary decisions should be made by city council and not the charter commission.

Motion approved unanimously.

6.2 Redetermination of Ward Boundaries

Ms. Sorensen shared minutes from the council workshop regarding discussion of possible redetermination of ward boundaries and the council's recommendation to reconsider the topic in 2027 as part of the next comprehensive plan update.

Commissioner Goracke said it could be too late if we wait until 2027 as the proposed amendment provided structure possibilities and was proactive instead of reactive and having the mechanism available could benefit the people of Blaine.

Commissioner Halpern noted with current term limits for Planning Commission there could be whole new commission in place by 2027.

Commissioner Anderson asked for reasons why the comprehensive plan was an important benchmark for ward redetermination and felt this was more election orientated and could be used as a reason to postpone consideration. He noted it was expensive to conduct a campaign and a smaller boundary/area may be more affordable and garner more interest for filing for election and create more opportunities.

Commissioner Halpern noted there is no guarantee of major changes in the comprehensive plan, noting residential will most likely still be residential.

Chair Lester suggested some councilmembers may have been caught off guard and suggested a joint workshop be scheduled instead to better explain the commission's reasons for their recommendation.

Commissioner Goracke agreed a joint workshop would provide a better avenue for discussion and questions on reasons for the recommendation.

Moved by Commissioner Goracke, seconded by Commissioner Halpern, to recommend a joint workshop be scheduled for first quarter 2024 to further discuss a possible charter amendment regarding redetermination of ward boundaries.

Motion approved unanimously.

6.3 Councilmember Recall Process

Ms. Sorensen shared minutes from the council workshop regarding their recommendation to the commission to remove reference to nonfeasance and decrease the threshold for petitions to 20% of registered voters.

Moved by Commissioner Goracke, seconded by Commissioner Homan, to remove the term "nonfeasance" and reduce the threshold from 25% to 20% as recommended by city council.

Motion approved unanimously.

Other Business

None.

Set Next Meeting Date

Staff will notify the Commission when these topics will be scheduled for Council discussion.

7. Adjournment

Moved by Commissioner Goracke, seconded by Commissioner Tagarro, to adjourn. Motion approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Catherine M. Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk
Staff Liaison/Blaine Charter Commission



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2024-025

Agenda Date

January 17, 2024

Status

In Control

City Council

File Type

Workshop Item

New Business - Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director

Agenda Item # 3.3

Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute 13D.05 Subd.C(3). – Discuss Property Acquisition of PIDs 21-31-23-24-0009; 21-31-23-24-0014; 21-31-23-24-0025; 21-31-23-24-0024

Background

The City Council/EDA will hold a closed session to discuss property acquisition of the following four parcels related to the 105th Avenue Redevelopment.

PIDs 21-31-23-24-0009; 21-31-23-24-0014; 21-31-23-24-0025; 21-31-23-24-0024

Staff Recommendation

Questions for Council

Attachment List

None