



City of Blaine

Planning Commission

November 12, 2024 | 7:00 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

The Planning Commission is an advisory board to the City Council. One of the Commission's functions is to hold public hearings and make recommendations to the City Council. The City Council makes all final decisions on these matters. For each agenda item the Commission will receive reports prepared by the City staff, open the public hearing, discuss and act on the application.

Public comments prior to the meeting must be received by Noon on the Monday prior to the meeting date. Email comments to: Planning@BlaineMN.gov or phone 763-785-6180.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Minutes

- 3.1.** 2024-262 Approval of the October 8, 2024 Planning Commission Minutes.
Sponsors:

4. Public Hearing

- 4.1.** 2024-507 Case File No. 24-0061 // Minnesota Education Trust (MAS Blaine) // 12175 Aberdeen Street NE
The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit to allow continued operations of a mosque (place of worship) in the Regional Commercial (B-3) zoning district.
Sponsors: Sheila Sellman, City Planner

5. Adjournment



City of Blaine

Planning Commission

October 8, 2024 | 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, October 8, 2024. Chair Goracke called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

2. Roll Call

Members Present: Commission Members Deonauth, Gorzycki, Halpern, Olson, Swanson, and Chair Goracke.

Members Absent: Commission Member Homan.

Staff Present: Shawn Kaye, Planner
Elizabeth Showalter, Community Development Specialist
Shelia Sellman, City Planner
Teresa Barnes, Project Engineer

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1. 2024-261 Approval of the September 10, 2024 Planning Commission Minutes.
Sponsors:

Motion by Commissioner Olson to approve the minutes of September 10, 2024, as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Halpern. The motion passed 6-0.

4. Public Hearing

4.1. 2024-433 Case File No. 24-0058 // Walters Recycling & Refuse, Inc. // 10191 Xylite Street NE
The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit amendment to increase the annual capacity at a solid waste transfer and recycling facility in the Heavy Industrial (I-2) zoning district.

The report to the planning commission was presented by Shawn Kaye, Planner.

Jeff Newsom, Chief Operating Officer at Walter's Recycling & Refuse, commented on his project noting there would be a significant benefit to the environment, residents of Blaine and the north metro. He explained how organic waste has become a focus, noting the State of Minnesota has mandated a 75% recycling rate by 2030 and noted the only way to hit this target was to separate organics from the waste stream. He indicated the most cost effective and efficient manner to accomplish this task was to dispose of organics in a compostable food scrap bag and to have these bags separated after collection. He stated this method would not require an additional cart or more trucks on the streets. He further commented on the addition that would be built to assist with this sorting for Blaine and other communities in the metro area. He understood there were neighbors that were opposed to this effort, driven by the fear of odors from the facility. He indicated he was in full compliance with all city, county and state partners. He described the litter control efforts that have been put in place to address concerns. He described the odor management system that was put in place, noting he was not required to do so. He reported samples are taken three times per week in order to provide sound odor practices. He explained he wanted to continue to be a good neighbor and would be investing in a \$300,000 odor system in the new sorting system. He reported his use was permitted and he would continue to work to manage organics into the future as mandated by the state. He commented further on the site improvements and encouraged the planning commission to support his request.

The public hearing for Case File 24-0058 was opened at 7:15PM.

James DePoint, 2893 103rd Court NE, explained he lived just north of the Walter's facility. He stated he had a lot of neighbors in attendance from The Sanctuary. He understood The Sanctuary neighborhood began building homes in 2002 and Walters built on their land in 2012. He stated in 2012 Walter's was granted a permit to build on their land and manage 99,000 tons of garbage. He reported he moved into his home in 2012 and never smelled garbage. However, this would change in 2018 when Walter's was allowed to manage 140,000 tons of garbage per year. He indicated he could now smell garbage consistently and the smell has gotten worse over the years. He explained he has been emailing and calling Walter's with his concerns and has been told they were doing everything they can, but the end result was he can still smell garbage. He discussed how the odor impacts his quality of life and would adversely impact his property value. He commented that during the summer he can smell garbage for a solid 34 days straight. He indicated he had three young boys who have to come inside because it smells terrible outside. He questioned if it was fair for homeowners to have to be dealing with this issue. He noted he purchased his home with none of these issues. He requested Walter's be held responsible for controlling the odors coming from their property. He asked who would purchase his home when all people could smell was garbage. He expressed concern with how an increase to 340,000 tons of garbage on this site would adversely impact his property. He asked when the city would say enough is enough. He was of the opinion this site has already reach the limit because the odor cannot be controlled. He indicated if Walter's was not sharing a backyard with a residential neighborhood he would support the increased capacity, but because the property line was in his backyard, this was a concern. He feared the odor would be doubled. He noted there

were other transfer stations that were under 100,000 tons of usage that were not next to a neighborhood and would love to take on the extra tonage. He noted he visited these facilities and noted Blaine has other options for its organics recycling. He recommended another location be considered for the Walter's expansion. He discussed how the city's new \$750 million entertainment district could be adversely impacted by the Walter's expansion given the odor that would be coming from this property as it was only one-half mile from the 105th Avenue Redevelopment District. He encouraged the city to be proactive instead of reactive when it comes to this expansion. He reported he visited the Newport transfer station, that processed roughly 400,000 tons of garbage, and stated at one-half mile he could still smell garbage. He recommended other options be considered by the city and Walter's.

Kari Collins, 2785 108th Lane NE, reported she was an employee with Ramsey County but was speaking as a resident of Blaine. She indicated she had a master's degree in urban and regional planning through the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. She understood the need to balance between the business community with the impact on adjacent land uses and that at times, this can be difficult. She stated if the city could go back in time, they would never guide heavy industrial land uses next to single-family residential. She reported when assessing neighborhood impacts, there would be, because there have been impacts. She indicated the smell hits on many days and there can be trash in the neighborhood. She reported Walter's and the neighboring homes were incompatible uses. She applauded the efforts of Walter's to screen the facility, but noted the reality was this was a heavy industrial waste management facility adjacent to a residential subdivision. She commented on how the impacted families may be too busy to advocate for themselves. She encouraged the city to consider how the intensification of industrial uses in this neighborhood was impacting the surrounding residential neighbors. She discussed how Walter's was required to manage litter and odor. She strongly urged the city to say enough was enough because the neighborhood was filled with trash and odor. She recommended the city and Walter's work together to find another location to properly expand their business. She also suggested the industrial uses in this area be down-zoned in prep for the next comprehensive plan update. She indicated this incompatible land use needs to have a ceiling on the activity given the fact this was a heavy industrial use adjacent to a residential neighborhood.

Bob Glamm, 10314 Xylite Street, reported he lived one-fourth mile north of the Walter's site. He explained he opposed the expansion of the use. He stated he runs after work three or four times a week and he always runs by the Walter's facility. He indicated he was familiar with the smell and requested that no further odors emanate from this facility. He stated he visited the Newport site and could smell the property from one-half mile away. He indicated the Newport facility was tucked away into an industrial property that was not surrounded by residential homes. He reported the venting system at Newport was wholly inadequate. He noted he was an engineer by trade and stated the proposed facility with proactive ventilation measures will not work. He commented there would be additional odor. He anticipated he would smell odors year round if this expansion was approved, which would tremendously impact the value of his property and quality of life. For this reason, he asked the commission to reject the conditional use permit.

Todd Wright, 2788 103rd Court NE, explained his backyard shares the wetlands with the new industrial building that was constructed, and he could see Walter's from his deck. He thanked the planning commission for their service to the community. He indicated he did

not have any special degree, but he was a dad, a husband and he loved the outdoors. He stated he has had enough of going outdoors and his children, and them asking to go back inside because it smells. He understood he was very close to the facility and noted he purchased his home three years ago. He believed Walter's was a good company, but he asked that the city look out for the interests of the community. He reported he has been in contact with the MPCA and understood they were putting regulations together to address odor. He urged the commission to listen to the concerns being voiced by the neighbors and to deny this request.

Carol Rachac, 10692 Sanctuary Drive, thanked the commission for allowing her to speak. She noted she agreed with all of the concerns that have been voiced by her neighbors. She reported she commuted to work which meant she had to drive through the intersection at Radisson Road and Xylite Street every day. She explained she has lived in her home for the past 22 years and stated it was hard to get through this intersection on the first light. She indicated with increased traffic it was getting increasingly more and more difficult to traverse through this intersection with the large truck traffic.

The public hearing was closed at 739PM.

Chair Goracke asked what the rules were when it came to odor.

Mr. Newsom explained there were rules from Anoka County and the MPCA when it comes to odor. He reported the rules address how the facility is managed, hours of use, type of material that was accepted, and how long the material can be at the site. He stated a system was in place to help deodorize potential odors onsite. He understood there may be other businesses in the community that could provide organic's recycling services. However, these businesses chose not to bid on certain contracts. He indicated he was a resident of Blaine and has lived in Blaine for the past 28 years. He understood resident's wanted Walter's to pick up and move somewhere else. He stated this was not realistic given the size of property that was needed. He reported it would take multiple years to get the proper permits in place and costs would go up dramatically for residents. He did not believe it was realistic to think the business could be moved. He commented further on how Walter's has been proactive in addressing odor concerns. He indicated someone would be brought in to assist with creating a customized deodorizer for the property.

Chair Goracke reported several neighbors visited the Newport facility and stated they could smell the site from one-half mile away. He asked if Mr. Newsom had been to the Newport facility.

Mr. Newsom indicated he has been to this facility. He commented on how smell was subjective and that some people were more sensitive to smells than others.

Commissioner Gorzycki questioned if there were other sites to move this increased volume to.

Mr. Newsom reported Walter's does not own any other land. He indicated this could happen, but would take years to complete and noted no matter where he went there would be opposition. He explained this was a service that had to be provided to residents and he was working to keep costs low for his customers.

Commissioner Halpern stated there is definitely a disconnect between the frequency of odor concerns and the impact this was having on neighbors. He anticipated odor concerns were happening more than a couple of times a year. He was unsettled by this and appreciated the fact Walter's had attempted to invest in odor mitigation technology, however this testing was still in progress. He suggested this case be deferred to allow for further consideration given the odor concerns that have been voiced.

Commissioner Olson explained she was familiar with the Newport area and noted she drives in this area frequently. She understood that facility smells at all times and she has one of those noses that can smell anything. She indicated she can smell the Walter's facility in Blaine, but at the same time she was thankful for the services Walter's provided to the community. She was in agreement that at some point, a cap has to be set on what can be done on this site because the smell has increased. She believed solutions had to be found to address odor. She noted she has lived in Blaine for the past 21 years and she wanted to see the city protected.

Motion by Commissioner Olson to recommend denial of Planning Case 24-0058 based on the following rationale:

Case 24-0058:

- 1. The volume of material requested was too high.**
- 2. The odor coming from this property was increasing.**

Motion seconded by Commissioner Gorzycki.

Mr. Newsom discussed how the volume of trash coming to this property would continue to increase as the population of Blaine increases and reported the proposed expansion would assist with diverting and managing the waste that would be better for the environment.

Commissioner Deonauth reported she was conflicted by this request. She understood people were generating more and more garbage as corporations continued to create single use items. She indicated the state was mandating organics recycling and Walter's was offering a solution for this mandate. However, she also understood the facility had impacts on the surrounding residential property.

Commissioner Swanson stated the community had to find new ways to manage the garbage that was produced. She stated Walter's was proposing a solution to meet the upcoming state mandates and this should be taken into consideration. She questioned if action on this item could be delayed.

Chair Goracke questioned if the item had been brought to a city council workshop meeting.

Planner Kaye reported this item had not been brought to a city council workshop meeting.

Commissioner Olson indicated Walter's was asking for permission to handle more garbage and noted this was not connected to the 2030 comprehensive plan.

Planner Kaye explained this request was not tied to the 2030 plan.

Commissioner Swanson asked if this request was tied to state mandates.

Planner Kaye indicated she did not have the details on this, but it was her understanding, this was the position of Walter's.

The motion passed 5-1 (Commissioner Deonauth opposed).

Chair Goracke noted this would be on the agenda of the November 4, 2024 city council meeting.

- 4.2.** 2024-425 Case File No. 24-0057 // Lexington Crossings (HJ Development) // Southwest Corner Lexington Avenue and 125th Avenue NE
The applicant is requesting a comprehensive plan amendment to change from Planned Commercial (PC) to High Density Residential 2 (HDR2).
Sponsors: Sheila Sellman, City Planner

The report to the planning commission was presented by Sheila Sellman, City Planner.

Chris Moe, HJ Development, thanked the commission for considering his request. He explained he was requesting a comprehensive plan amendment that will allow a small portion of the 40 acres to be developed for multi-family housing with a 120 unit apartment building. He indicated the site would also have commercial, open space and a high end grocery store called Jerry's Foods. He discussed how his company works to create mixed use developments throughout the metro area. He stated he has worked to maintain open space throughout the project and that this would be an all or nothing type development.

The public hearing for Case File 24-0057 was opened at 8:04PM.

Barb Bailey explained she has been a resident of Blaine for the past 18 years. She asked if Jerry's Foods would go in by itself and not be tied to the apartment building. She expressed concern with the fact the developer was proposing a five story apartment building within this development, noting Sunrise School was already over capacity. She was of opinion this area did not need another apartment building. She recommended more research be done before the city rubber stamps a project.

Aren Dela, 12550 Zest Street, explained he has lived in Blaine for the past 17 years. He reported he owns apartment buildings that are surrounded by amenities and public transportation. He expressed concern with the fact the proposed apartment building had no public transportation in the area. He was of the opinion this was a great spot for commercial, but recommended the apartment building not be included.

Dawn Yedder stated she has been a resident of Blaine for the past 45 years and lives in The Lakes. She commented she saved all of her life in order to be able to live in this neighborhood. She believed the proposed development did not fit with the surrounding

neighborhood. She expressed concern with how traffic has increased in the past several years and noted this development would compound her concerns. She indicated the city already had so many grocery stores and she did not believe Blaine needed another grocery store. In addition, she opposed the multi-family apartment building.

Abby Kjos, 3568 122nd Circle, explained she was the first neighborhood just south of Stepping Stones. She was of the opinion adding a stop sign at Zest would not benefit anyone. She commented she was against the proposed comprehensive plan amendment. She indicated the city was not required to add this high density residential as the city has already met the Met Council's requirements. She stated she was not okay with a grocer telling the city needs apartments and recommended the city hear the voices of its residents instead of developers. She encouraged the city to learn from the mistakes that were made with Hy-Vee near the Blaine High School and stated there were no guarantees the grocer would come into the community. She recommended the request be denied.

Dale Sprouse, 12880 Lexington Avenue, stated he was the owner of Papa's Organics and has lived in the community for the past 30 years. He indicated he was totally opposed to rezoning this property. He commented in the last 12 months a different developer requested high density on the opposite corner and this request was not approved. He understood the developer has stated this was an all or nothing type of development. He reiterated that Sunrise Elementary was already over capacity. He anticipated 180 more people would live on this corner if the multi-family were approved. He did not believe this development was a good use for this corner and urged the commission to deny this request. He commented further on how the land around him has developed over the years and begged the commission to not approve this request.

Jeannie Shaw stated she was a 14 year resident of Blaine. She indicated she was opposed to the plan. She commented she did not see what the benefit of this project would be for current residents. She stated she did not like the all or nothing impression of this development. She expressed concern with the fact the apartment building could be constructed and Jerry's Foods could back out. She discussed how there would be studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartment units, along with a daycare within the development. She feared how Sunrise Elementary would be impacted by this development.

Shawn Leet stated he was concerned with how the schools and traffic in the area would be impacted. He questioned how much more traffic this area of Blaine could handle. He inquired if a study has been completed on this area, noting traffic has been getting worse and worse.

Jeremy Olsen stated he has been a resident of Blaine since 1998. He was of the opinion this project would put the carriage in front of the horse. He did not believe the city needed another apartment complex and noted the schools were already crowded. He explained he opposed the proposed change.

A resident of the Lakes expressed concern with the traffic in his neighborhood as well as with the addition of new traffic signals. He commented on how his commute to work has been impacted by the new stop lights. He recommended the 120 unit apartment complex not move forward.

Aristo Galiov at 12123 Waconia Circle NE, a resident of The Lakes. He reported comprehensive plan amendments should not be taken lightly because a great deal of thought went into the original plan. He indicated there was no guarantee that if the apartment building was approved that the grocery store would be constructed. He discussed how traffic in his neighborhood has increased over the years and commented on how traffic would increase in this area if the proposed development were approved. He recommended the city not move forward with this request because the current infrastructure was already being taxed.

The public hearing was closed at 8:27PM.

Chair Goracke asked if a traffic study was completed for the proposed project.

Project Engineer Barnes reported 125th and Lexington Avenue are managed by Anoka County. She indicated the County has done the studies they need to do, and are responding to the growth in the area. She noted a light was proposed at Zest and 125th in response to the increase in traffic.

Chair Goracke questioned if the city has been in contact with the school district.

City Planner Sellman reported she received an email from the Chief Operations Officer noting there was room for growth at Sunrise Elementary School, but there were concerns with the growth in the city. In addition, the COO reported there tends to not be a large increase in enrollment from apartment buildings.

Chair Goracke inquired if Jerry's Food was contingent upon the multi-family development.

Mr. Moe reported this was the case. He explained this came down to economics and making the project work financially.

Commissioner Halpern asked what was unique about this site and questioned why it has taken two years to bring about a plan.

Mr. Moe indicated there were a lot of wetlands on the property, which was challenging to work around. He commented some of the wetlands were tied to the city's transportation network. He explained the other roads connecting to The Lakes had already been acquired by the city. In addition, there are endangered species on this site. He stated this was not rare, but was part of developing in this area. He reported the water table also led to increased engineering costs.

Commissioner Gorzycki reported in the past few months the city has had developments that moved from high density to medium or low density. He questioned how this project was not in complete contradiction to these efforts.

City Planner Sellman commented that effort was driven by the city council and was site specific for properties within the comprehensive plan.

Chair Goracke inquired what percentage of property in Blaine was apartments and how did this compare to other communities.

Ms. Kjos reported 1,487 apartments have been built in Blaine in the last 10 years. She noted there was currently 22 apartment buildings in Blaine and three more would be constructed within the 105th Avenue Redevelopment Area.

Community Development Specialist Showalter commented there was very little apartment construction from the 1980's until the mid-2010's. She noted apartments make up 10% of the housing in Blaine and when compared to peer cities, Blaine was the second lowest. She noted Lakeville was at 11%, Maple Grove was at 14%, Woodbury was at 23% and Inver Grove Heights was at 26%.

Commissioner Olson asked what was currently allowed on this property per the comprehensive plan.

City Planner Sellman explained if the comprehensive plan amendment were approved, the applicant would request a rezoning. She noted the current zoning for the property was B-5, Town Commercial. She clarified Jerry's Foods could go into this property without the apartment based on the current zoning, but the developer is proposing them together and contingent upon one another.

Mr. Moe reported he was making the request to include multi-family based on the economics of the project. He reiterated that he was only asking for a change to three of the 40 acres.

Commissioner Halpern commented he has lived in the community for 20 years and noted there has been an uptick in requests for increased density, which goes against the city's comprehensive plan. He stated the proposed plan had estimates in place that correlate with school capacity and amenities for the community. While he understood what the applicant was trying to do when it came to the economics of this project, he expressed concern with the disconnect on what the city's plans were for this area.

Mr. Moe stated it was fairly common to have comprehensive plans adjusted as plans move forward, in order to adjust to reality and market forces.

Motion by Commissioner Halpern to recommend denial of Planning Case 24-0057 based on the following rationale:

Case 24-0057:

- 1. Increased density was not in alignment with the comprehensive plan for this property.**

Motion seconded by Commissioner Deonauth. The motion passed 6-0.

Chair Goracke noted this would be on the agenda of the November 4, 2024 city council meeting.

- 4.3.** 2024-316 Case File No. 24-0050 // EB Blaine Development LLC (Blaine Town Center Stadium) // 1985 105th Avenue NE
The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit for a multi-purpose stadium, building over 50 feet in height, and lighting over 50 feet in height, in the 105th Redevelopment District (RD).
Sponsors: Sheila Sellman, City Planner

The report to the planning commission was presented by Sheila Sellman, City Planner.

Will O'Keefe, EB Blaine Development, explained he was looking to move the design plans for the stadium portion of the development forward. He thanked the commission for considering his request and noted he was available for questions or comments.

The public hearing for Case File 24-0050 was opened at 8:49PM.

Matthew Kleiner, 10560 Sanctuary Drive NE, explained he loved baseball and he has been waiting for some type of sporting event center to come into Blaine besides soccer and hockey. He indicated his only concern with this project was how the stadium noise and lights would impact his neighborhood.

The public hearing was closed at 8:51PM.

Chair Goracke questioned what time of night sporting events would end at the stadium.

Mr. O'Keefe stated he was uncertain, noting a project of this nature required an AUAR and stated best practices would be followed when it comes to noise.

Chair Goracke requested further information regarding the lighting.

Mr. O'Keefe reported the stadium lighting would be down lit and would meet all city requirements.

Motion by Commissioner Deonauth to recommend approval of Planning Case 24-0050 based on the following conditions:

Case 24-0050:

- 1. Lighting is limited to the locations and heights shown on the attached site plan.**
- 2. Lighting is subject to approval by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Proof of FAA approval shall be submitted to the City prior to approval of building permits for the lighting installation.**
- 3. Post-installation light intensity readings shall be provided along the northern edge of the northern property area (adjacent to the 109th Avenue right-of-way).**
- 4. Installation of cellular equipment is not permitted on the light poles without a separate Conditional Use Permit (CUP).**
- 5. The lot in which the stadium will be built on must be platted into a lot and block before any building permits will be issued.**

6. Temporary parking must be a hard surface and meet all applicable code requirements.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Olson. The motion passed 6-0.

Chair Goracke noted this would be on the agenda of the October 21, 2024 city council meeting.

4.4. 2024-426 Case File No. 24-0059 // As-Suffah Islamic Center // 3629 95th Avenue NE
The applicant is requesting the following:

1. Rezoning from Planned Business District (PBD) to Development Flex (DF).
2. Conditional use permit to allow a mosque (place of worship), K-8 elementary school, and a daycare/pre-school in the Development Flex (DF) zoning district.

Sponsors: Shawn Kaye, Planner

The report to the planning commission was presented by Shawn Kaye, Planner.

Jay Smigielski, Attorney for Ferdinand F Peters Law Firm, introduced himself to the commission stating he was a representative for the applicant. He explained this was an existing school building that would be repurposed for another type of school. He indicated the only use that was not permitted on this site, was the elementary school, while secondary and post-secondary was allowed. He noted the same transportation routines would be followed for this school as was currently being done at their other site.

The public hearing for Case File 24-0059 was opened at 8:59PM.

Iman Asad, Executive Director of Muslim American Society of Minnesota, reported he was in favor of this application. He discussed how the community was seeing growth and alot of this growth was coming from Muslim families. He explained many of these families were sending their children to schools in Fridley and Brooklyn Park. He urged the commission to support this application.

Aleem Maahammad, 4780 128th Street, voiced his support for the As Suffah Islamic Center. He indicated he attended a recent city council meeting where the National Stem Champion Muminah Mohammed was recognized. He reported this student was a resident of Blaine and brings great pride to this community. He encouraged the planning commission to support the As Suffah Islamic Center as this would be a positive impact on the city of Blaine.

Adam, stated he supported the school moving into the city of Blaine, noting the community needed more schools. He urged the commission to support the proposed K-8 school.

Dr. Gassar explained he recently moved to Minnesota. He discussed how important this

school would be for his children and the community.

Barb Bailey asked if the Minnesota School of Business would be used for a mosque and school.

Chair Goracke reported this was the case but noted this was an entirely different request.

Ms. Bailey reported the two buildings that were being proposed for a mosque and school were less than one mile apart. She encouraged the commission to take under consideration the amount of funding that would leave the school district once these two new schools are open.

The public hearing was closed at 9:06PM.

Commissioner Olson explained she was able to choose where her children went to school, and she believed this was a great location for a K-8 school.

Motion by Commissioner Olson to recommend approval of Planning Case 24-0059A a rezoning from Planned Business District (PBD) to Development Flex (DF) with the following rationale:

Case 24-0059A:

- 1. The DF zoning district affords the City the opportunity to provide input on items that would benefit the surrounding neighborhoods and the City as a whole. The DF District also attempts to create a reasonable balance between the interests of the property owner in freely developing their property with greater flexibility in land uses.**
- 2. The DF zoning allows the City the opportunity to apply standards consistent with other recent developments.**

Motion by Commissioner Olson to recommend approval of Planning Case 24-0059B a conditional use permit to allow a mosque, K-8 elementary school, and a daycare/pre-school in the Development Flex (DF) zoning district with the following conditions:

Case 24-0059B:

- 1. Site plan approval is required as part of the building permit application. All site improvements, if any, to be included in the Site Improvement Performance Agreement (SIPA), and covered by an acceptable financial guarantee.**
- 2. The City reserves the right to require the mosque and school to provide on-site traffic management.**
- 3. All signage requires separate permits meeting the requirements of the zoning code.**
- 4. Directional signage shall be provided in the parking lot for the drop-off and pick-up area.**
- 5. Temporary uses such as outdoor events, are not permitted without a specific special event license issued by the City.**
- 6. School hours shall be limited to 8AM to 4PM.**

7. Each classroom is capped at 25 students.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Deonauth. The motion passed 6-0.

Chair Goracke noted this would be on the agenda of the November 4, 2024 city council meeting.

- 4.5.** 2024-424 Case File No. 24-0056 // 4th Dimension Properties, LLC // 100 Northtown Drive
The applicant is requesting preliminary plat approval to divide one existing lot into two lots to be known as Northtown Revitalization Second Addition.
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 24-0056 was opened at 9:10PM. As no one wished to appear, the public hearing was closed at 9:10PM.

Commissioner Halpern asked what was envisioned for this space.

Tom Goodwin, representative of the applicant, reported he does not have a specific tenant in mind, but noted there was a lot of excitement about this property.

Motion by Commissioner Halpern to recommend approval of Planning Case 24-0056 based on the following conditions:

Case 24-0056:

- 1. The applicant is responsible for recording plat mylars with Anoka County. Proof of recording must be provided to the City prior to issuance of building permits.**
- 2. The building official shall review and approve copies of dedicated access easements that permit the owners of portions of the building located on either side access to the other side for purposes of maintaining fire and life safety systems.**
- 3. The applicant is responsible for recording access easements and shared parking agreements with Anoka County.**

Motion seconded by Commissioner Gorzycki. The motion passed 6-0.

Chair Goracke noted this would be on the agenda of the November 4, 2024 city council meeting.

- 4.6.** 2024-427 Case File No. 24-0060 // City of Blaine
The City is proposing annual revisions to the Blaine Zoning Ordinance.
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 24-0060 was opened at 9:16PM.

Dale Strouth, 12880 Lexington Avenue, questioned if sheds were allowed in the city of Blaine.

Planner Kaye reported accessory buildings up to 120 square feet have always been allowed in most locations.

The public hearing was closed at 9:17PM.

Commissioner Halpern asked if the one foot setback for sheds would be opening this topic up for neighborly disagreements.

Community Development Specialist Showalter reported the vast majority of the single family lots in the R-1 district already have the one-foot setback requirement. She indicated the proposed change would bring the small minority of properties into alignment with the one-foot setback requirement.

Motion by Commissioner Deonauth to recommend approval of Planning Case 24-0060 based on the following conditions:

Case 24-0060:

- 1. Routine updates to the zoning code facilitate the code remaining current.**
- 2. The changes being proposed will improve the clarity of the code and address legal requirements.**
- 3. The changes to the parking requirements promote a balance between efficient use of land and provision of adequate parking.**
- 4. The changes continue to promote the health, safety and welfare of the residents, property owners and businesses within the City of Blaine.**

Motion seconded by Commissioner Gorzycki. The motion passed 6-0.

Chair Goracke noted this would be on the agenda of the November 4, 2024 city council meeting.

5. Adjournment

**Motion by Commissioner Olson to adjourn the regular planning commission meeting.
Motion seconded by Commissioner Deonauth. The motion passed 6-0.**

Adjournment time was 9:20PM.



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2024-507

Agenda Date	Status
November 12, 2024	
In Control	File Type
Planning Commission	Report

Public Hearing - Sheila Sellman, City Planner

Agenda Item # 4.1

Case File No. 24-0061 // Minnesota Education Trust (MAS Blaine) // 12175 Aberdeen Street NE
The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit to allow continued operations of a mosque (place of worship) in the Regional Commercial (B-3) zoning district.

Background

Zoning	Regional Commercial (B-3)
Land Use	Community Commercial (CC)
Area	3.45 Acres
Applicable Regulations	Sections 27.04 and 30.24
Attachments	Zoning and Location Map
Schedule	Planning Commission: 11/12/24 City Council: 12/02/24

Staff report prepared by Sheila Sellman, City Planner, and Teresa Barnes, Project Engineer

Evaluation of Request

Planning Analysis

Zoning

The subject site is zoned B-3 Regional Commercial and guided Community Commercial (CC).

Surrounding Zoning and Uses

Properties to the north, west and south are zoned B-3 and properties to the east are zoned R-1 single family residential. The property to the north is a daycare center. Properties to the west are across Aberdeen Street and are Wells Fargo and an eye care clinic.

Existing Conditions

The subject site is developed with the existing building and parking lot.

History

In 2007, a CUP was issued for a Charter School (Tiza Charter School). The school is no longer located at the subject and the CUP is no longer valid.

In 2017, MAS applied for a remodeling permit. No zoning review was conducted as Planning was not reviewing remodeling permits at that time.

In fall of 2023, staff met with MAS to discuss traffic concerns and the outstanding CUP. During that meeting, MAS officials indicated they were looking at ways to remedy the parking constraints and traffic volumes on site. Once they had a plan, they were going to apply for the CUP.

Request

The existing building is 28,249 square feet, nothing new is proposed for the building or site plan and no additional landscaping is required or proposed. The applicant has been operating a mosque at the subject site since 2017 without a CUP. The mosque holds daily prayer and hosts a range of educational programs and community programs. Youth programs are held on the weekends. Counseling services are available by appointment and are generally in the afternoon. This mosque will primarily serve as a place for the five daily prayers. Prayer times change regularly based on the lunar calendar and seasonal shifts. Daily prayers are typically 10–20 minutes long with about 10–50 participants. Friday prayer is on Fridays and there are four services. Friday services have the biggest turnout. Each service is about 15 minutes.

Friday services:

- First Service: 11:30am (100 attendees)
- Second Service: 12:30pm (250 attendees)
- Third Service: 1:30pm (250 attendees)
- Fourth Service: 2:30pm (100 attendees)

Parking

Parking requirements are one parking space for each four (4) seats in accordance with the design capacity of the main auditorium. According to the Fire Marshal, the occupancy for the worship area is 1500, which would require 375 parking stalls. The applicant states in their narrative that there are 200 designated spots. According to a site plan that was submitted in 2017, there are 135 parking stalls. In reviewing current aerial photos, there are 148 parking stalls (including accessible aisles). The parking requirements are not met. The applicant's narrative states they have arranged overflow parking with the neighboring church. In addition, Blaine Police officers are hired to direct traffic on Friday's to assist with traffic and parking. To prevent overcrowding and double parking, a barricade is set up once the parking lot is full.

Engineering Analysis

Grading/Storm Drainage

The proposed project does not include any alterations to the existing grading or storm water drainage patterns on the property.

Utilities

The proposed development will utilize the existing utilities into the building. No new connections are proposed.

Wetlands/Watershed/FEMA

The existing wetland on the south end of the property will remain unchanged. Encroachment will not be permitted.

A Coon Creek Watershed District review is not required.

Access/Street Design/Sidewalks/Trails

The development is currently proposed to utilize the two existing access points from Aberdeen Street to the existing parking area. No new access points will be granted onto Aberdeen Street. No additional street design, sidewalks or trails will be required.

Conditional Use Permit

A city exercises "quasi-judicial" authority when considering a CUP application. This means the city's role is limited to applying the standards in the ordinance to the facts presented by the application. The city acts like a judge in evaluating the facts against the standards.

Section 27.04 Criteria for granting conditional use permits:

The Blaine City Council shall consider the advice and recommendations of the Planning Commission and the effect of the proposed use on the comprehensive plan and upon the health, safety, and general welfare of occupants of surrounding lands. Among other things, the Council shall consider the following findings where applicable. (Ord. No. 20-2447, 7-20-2020)

1.The use shall not create an excessive burden on existing parks, schools, streets and other public facilities and utilities which serve or are proposed to serve the area.

- The subject site is heavily used on Friday's, which brings a lot of traffic to the area all at once. The applicant has hired Blaine Police Department to direct traffic. Traffic is backed up on Aberdeen and 121st Ave during these times. The police direct traffic in and out of the site on Aberdeen. A traffic management plan will be a condition of approval. The parking lot should be set up with one way traffic, one way in and one way out. The applicant should explore additional traffic controls/direction on 121st Avenue and work with the police department, this should be part of the management plan.

2. The use will be located, designed, maintained, and operated to be compatible with adjoining properties and the existing or intended character of the zoning district.

- The B-3 zoning district is Intended to provide retailing and services of both a convenience and durable nature to shoppers, such as apparel, furniture, food, banking and financial services for a regional trade area. A mosque serves a regional area. The adjoining properties are commercial and residential. Places of worship are compatible with these uses.

3.The use shall have an appearance that will not have an adverse effect upon adjacent properties.

- The use is in an building is existing and does not have an adverse effect on adjacent properties.

4. The use, in the opinion of the City Council, shall be reasonably related to the overall needs of the City and to the existing land use.

5. The use shall be consistent with the purposes of the zoning code and purposes of the zoning district in which the applicant intends to locate the proposed use.

- The B-3 zoning district is intended to provide retailing and services of both a convenience and durable nature to shoppers, such as apparel, furniture, food, banking and financial services for a regional trade area. A mosque serves a regional area.

6. The use shall not be in conflict with the comprehensive plan of the City.

- The property is zoned Community Commercial for retailing and services that serve larger areas, from neighborhood to regional scale. Typical uses include apparel, food, financial services, furniture, and commercial centers. A mosque is not in conflict with the comprehensive plan.

7. The use will not cause traffic hazards or congestion.

- The existing operation of the site has created traffic congestion for short periods of time during the arrival and dismissal of worship gatherings. The applicant has met and continues to meet with the Police Department to try to address the issues and currently hires the Police Department to control traffic during these times. The Police Department presence has alleviated some of the congestion but ongoing collaboration between the Engineering and Police Departments along with the applicant to mitigate the ongoing traffic along Aberdeen Street and the surrounding network of streets is necessary.

8. The use shall have adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and necessary facilities.

- The existing structure is served with the required utility services, adequate roadway infrastructure and necessary drainage facilities to service the proposed uses.

Recommendation

In Planning Case File No. 24-0061, it is recommended that the Planning Commission recommend approval of a conditional use permit to allow continued operations of a mosque (place of worship) in the Regional Commercial (B-3) zoning district with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall explore additional traffic controls/direction on 121st Avenue and work with the police department and Engineering department and included in the traffic management plan.
2. A traffic mitigation plan shall be submitted and approved by the City no later than January 31, 2025.

3. One-way traffic flow is required, directional signage shall be painted on the parking lot no later than June 1, 2025. Temporary signage shall be displayed until the lot is painted.
4. Any off-site parking requires a parking agreement that must be submitted to the city no later than January 31, 2025.
5. Any off-site parking shall require a shuttle service provided by the applicant.
6. Temporary uses such as outdoor events are not permitted without a specific special event license issued by the City.

Attachment List

1. Attachments



BlaineMN.gov

Case File No. 24-0061
Minnesota Education Trust (MAS Blaine)

Blaine Planning Department / 10801 Town Square Dr NE / Blaine, MN 55449 / (763) 785-6180



Blaine Masjid Usage and Services

Prayer Services Blaine Masjid will primarily serve as a place for the five daily prayers, which are central to Muslim religious practice. Given that prayer times change regularly based on the lunar calendar and seasonal shifts, updated prayer times can be accessed directly at the Masjidal Prayer

Times website: https://masjidal.com/widget/monthly/?masjid_id=xdNPqnLV

□ **Daily Prayers:** These gatherings are typically 10-20 minutes long, with attendance ranging from 20 to 50 congregants, though Isha may draw a larger number.

Weekly Friday (Jumu'ah) Prayer

□ **Jumu'ah Prayer Times:** The masjid holds four Jumu'ah services every Friday at the following times:

○ **First Service:** 11:30 AM (100 attendees)

○ **Second Service:** 12:30 PM (250 attendees)

○ **Third Service:** 1:30 PM (250 attendees)

○ **Fourth Service:** 2:30 PM (100 attendees)

□ **Duration:** Each service includes a 15-minute sermon (khutbah).

Educational and Community Services The Masjid will also host a range of educational programs and community services:

□ **Youth Programs:** Held on weekends between Dhuhr and Asr.

□ **Counseling Services:** Available by appointment, generally in the afternoons.

□ **Community Events:** Monthly gatherings, lectures, and interfaith dialogues.

Status and Importance of the Masjid in Islam In Islam, the masjid (mosque) holds a unique and revered place as both a house of worship and a community hub. Establishing a masjid fulfills a communal obligation to provide a space for Muslims to perform the five daily prayers, which are one of the Five Pillars of Islam. These prayers are viewed as a direct connection between worshippers and Allah (God), offering a time for reflection, humility, and spiritual renewal throughout the day.

Moreover, the masjid serves as a space for fostering unity, offering educational and social services, and promoting community cohesion and support. The Quran and Hadith (teachings of Prophet Muhammad) emphasize the reward of praying in congregation, particularly within the masjid, as a means to strengthen faith and a sense of solidarity among community members. This importance extends to the Friday congregational (Jumu'ah) prayer, a weekly gathering that holds additional significance, as Muslims come together to hear a sermon, reflect on their faith, and engage with their community.

Traffic Management Plan

□ **Parking Facilities:** Blaine Masjid includes a parking area with 200 designated spots. We have also arranged overflow parking with the neighboring church to accommodate larger gatherings.

□ **Building Capacity:** The building's maximum capacity is 700 people.

□ **Traffic Control:** Two police officers and two staff members will be on-site every Friday to assist with traffic and parking.

□ **No Double Parking:** To prevent overcrowding and ensure safety, we will enforce a strict "no double parking" rule by barricading the lot once it is filled.

□ **Carpooling Initiatives:** We will encourage carpooling by communicating through community channels and designating carpool parking spaces to reduce overall vehicle count.

□ **Tow Truck Readiness:** A tow truck will be available on Fridays to assist with any vehicles violating parking regulations, ensuring clear access and safety for all attendees.

This application details Blaine Masjid's functions, emphasizing the masjid's importance as both a spiritual and community-centered establishment within Blaine, MN, while ensuring seamless integration into the local area through thorough traffic and parking management plans.

Thank you

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions

Walid Shadi

Imam of Blaine Mosque

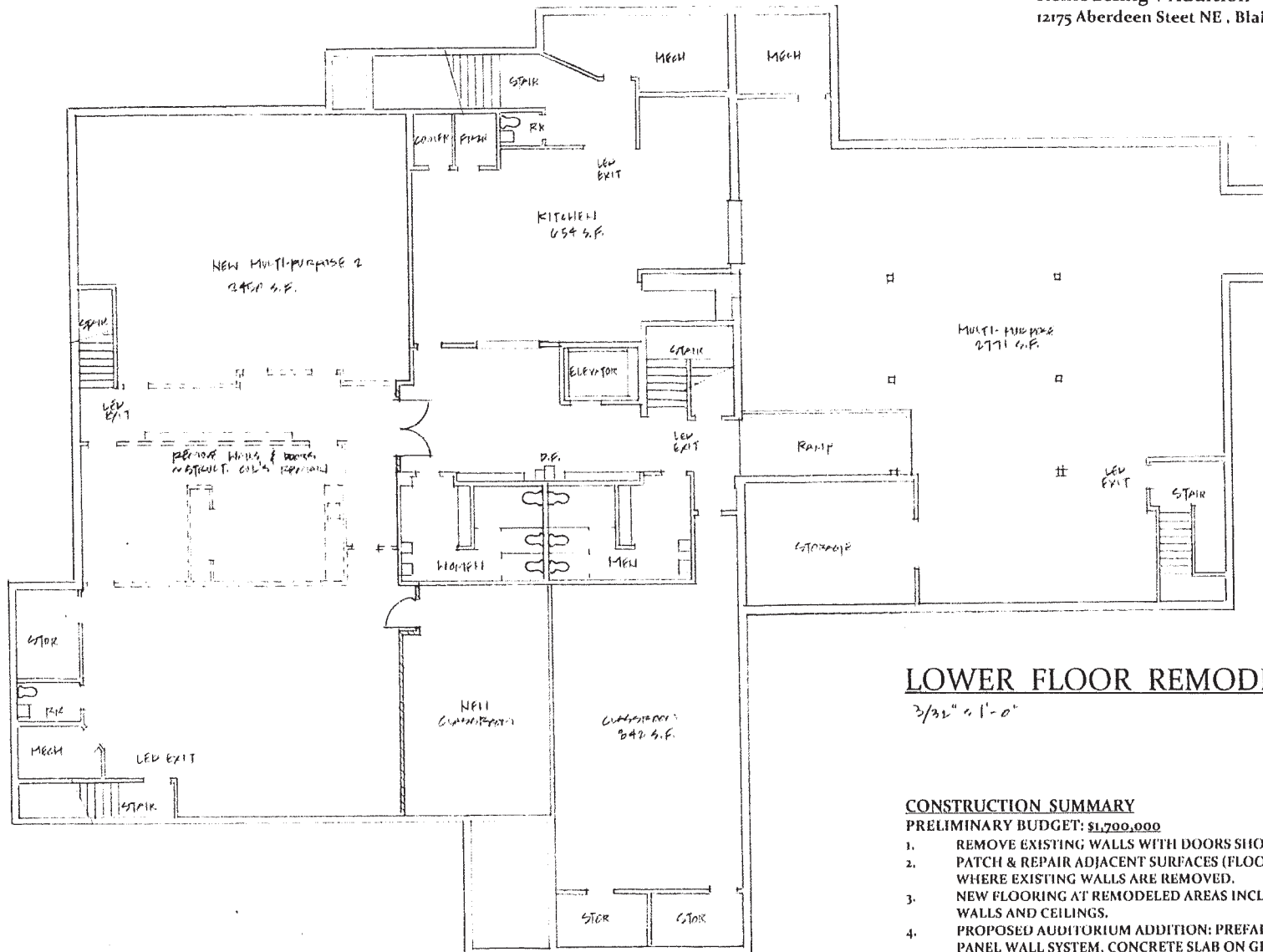
612-518-6923

Minnesota Education Trust
Remodeling + Addition
12175 Aberdeen Street NE, Blaine, MN



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11/30/2021



LOWER FLOOR REMODEL CONCEPT

3/32" = 1'-0"

CONSTRUCTION SUMMARY

PRELIMINARY BUDGET: \$1,700,000

1. REMOVE EXISTING WALLS WITH DOORS SHOWN DASHED.
2. PATCH & REPAIR ADJACENT SURFACES (FLOORS/WALLS/CEILINGS) WHERE EXISTING WALLS ARE REMOVED.
3. NEW FLOORING AT REMODELED AREAS INCLUDING PAINTED WALLS AND CEILINGS.
4. PROPOSED AUDITORIUM ADDITION: PREFABRICATED CONCRETE PANEL WALL SYSTEM, CONCRETE SLAB ON GRADE, STEEL BAR JOIST ROOF SYSTEM. ASSOCIATED SITE WORK AND PARKING LOT MODIFICATION.