



City of Blaine

Planning Commission

July 8, 2025 | 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, July 8, 2025. Chair Goracke called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

2. Roll Call

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

Members Absent: Commission Members Geiselhart and Howard.

Staff Present: Shawn Kaye, Planner
Alex Koberoski, Zoning Technician
Sheila Sellman, Assistant Community Development Director
Teresa Barnes, Project Engineer

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1. 2024-479 Approval of the June 10, 2025 Planning Commission Minutes
Sponsors:

Motion by Commissioner Olson to approve the minutes of June 10, 2025, as presented.
Motion seconded by Commissioner Gorzycki. The motion passed 5-0.

4. Public Hearing

4.1. 2025-326 Case File No. 25-0023 // Alex Pepin // 1684 132nd Avenue NE
The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit to allow a detached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) in a Single Family Residential (R-1) zoning district.

The report to the planning commission was presented by Alex Koberoski, Zoning Technician.

The public hearing for Case File 25-0023 was opened at 7:08PM.

Michelle Kurak, 13196 Eldorado St NE, addressed the planning commission, noting the city failed to inform the public constituents in a timely manner regarding a major change concerning single family homes R-1 to R-2. She reported the proposed change would pack additional residential units into Blaine. She commented on how the ADU zoning law was changed in 2021 and was implemented in 2022. She indicated Blaine property owners were not informed of this drastic change. She questioned why Blaine residents were not informed in a timely manner, as now a major housing project would impact property values, safety concerns, watershed and population density. She stated Blaine was growing in population and the best way forward would be to reinstate the R-1 zoning district, with the language that was in place prior to 2021. She questioned why the city changed what has worked for decades. She discussed how ADU's or mother-in-law suites could be rented out to individuals or families that are not related to the property owner. She inquired if the city had changed the definition of an ADU since March 27, 2025.

Dave Heim, 1670 132nd Avenue NE, commented his main concern was that the R-1 lots in his neighborhood were not big enough to support two houses. He noted the signs he has placed in his yard were not done to be mean or vindictive, but rather pointed out the lot size does not lend itself to an ADU in the rear yard. He reported his development was designed for low density housing and the proposed ADU would negate this. He understood the applicant would like to house a displaced family member that has dementia. He stated an individual with dementia cannot be left alone and cannot have access to a stove as this would become a life safety issue. He noted a person with dementia needs to be in a memory care facility to ensure their safety. He believed if this ADU goes forward, a wooden privacy fence would have to be installed all the way around the entire back yard and up to the front of the garage. In addition, drain tile would have to be installed because the downspouts run into his yard, which was causing ponding in his rear yard. He questioned what would happen to the ADU when there was no longer a family member living in the unit.

John Connelly, 1614 132nd Lane NE, stated there was a pending litigation regarding the requested ADU. He understood Mr. Pepin was suing the city of Blaine for denying his ADU request. He questioned if a quarter acre R-1 lot was large enough for two homes. He feared a precedent would be set if this ADU were approved. He reported he has lived in his home for the past 40+ years and he did not support this request moving forward.

Pam Graves, 1729 132nd Avenue NE, explained she was sad this was happening in her neighborhood. She believed an ADU should be for a family member and not being used as a rental property.

Pat Heim, neighbor of the applicant, commented people may not realize that this approval would impact the entire city of Blaine. She questioned why the ADU ordinance did not come

before the residents for a vote. She explained her neighborhood had 90 signatures against the ADU. She requested the city use common sense when it comes to the ADU request. She indicated she did not believe a quarter acre lot was large enough for two homes. She expressed concern with the tree loss that would occur on Mr. Pepin's lot in order to accommodate the proposed ADU.

Darlene Brown, 1629 132nd Lane NE, stated this meeting was the only forum for the neighbors to voice their concern. She indicated Mr. Pepin has other options. She indicated Mr. Pepin could sell his home and move elsewhere where an ADU would be more suitable. She discussed how the entire neighborhood would have to suffer if this ADU were approved.

Dan Johnson, neighbor of the applicant, explained he purchased his home because it was a single-family dwelling and noted the ADU vastly change this. He stated the neighborhoods in Blaine would look very different if ADU's were now allowed in all rear yards.

Dan Carpenter, 13184 Eldorado Street NE, explained he agreed with Mr. Johnson and questioned how Blaine would look in five to ten years if the majority of R-1 lots had ADU's. He stated residential neighborhoods would change forever. He feared that developers would swoop in and buy up homes in order to add ADU's for investment purposes. He stated it was becoming harder and harder for young families to find single-family homes. He encouraged the city to rethink their position on ADU's.

Steve Guider, 13124 Eldorado Street NE, noted he has been a resident of Blaine since 1977. He indicated he missed the first planning commission meeting when this request was discussed. He stated he understood the applicant was requesting the ADU as a calling from God and that rent would be charged. He explained after the matter was reviewed by the city council, the scope of the ADU has shifted to a mother-in-law suite. He reported a church in Coon Rapids has offered up land and the building to this family to provide this unit. He stated he would like clarity on how the ADU would be used. He indicated he has had a family member suffer from dementia and noted an ADU was not safe because these individuals could not live alone. He stated it was also his understanding the Pepin family had enough living space within the home, which may be a better option for someone suffering from dementia. He asked that the applicant provide clarity on how the ADU will be used in the years to come and could the ADU be used as a rental.

The public hearing was closed at 7:25PM.

Alex Pepin, 1684 132nd Avenue NE, explained this application was a result of the first application being denied. He reported the hang-up seemed to be on the intent because ADU's were to be for family only. He indicated he was now requesting an ADU for family. He stated he filed suit against the city yesterday appealing the previous application where he would be allowed to rent to families that were facing hardship, which was separate from this application. He commented he did not want to have a family member in an unsafe situation, but rather he was trying to care for people in need. He did not believe the concern regarding developers would come to fruition because the property owner had to occupy one of the structures.

Chair Goracke asked if the applicant would be willing to install drain tile.

Mr. Pepin explained he was an environmental engineer with a masters in civil engineering. He commented he did not want water ponding on his property or the neighbors, and noted he could change the location of the downspout. He was of the opinion drain tile was not needed when the water could be redirected. He thanked staff for all of their assistance with this request over the past several months.

Chair Goracke questioned what type of zoning change occurred in 2021.

Assistant Community Development Director Sellman explained a rezoning did not occur in 2021, rather an ordinance amendment was approved to allow for ADU's in specific zoning districts. She reported ordinance amendments hold public hearings and the public hearings are advertised in the paper and online. She stated the ordinance amendment requires two hearings at the city council level prior to receiving approval.

Commissioner Swanson inquired if an ADU has been considered in Blaine on this size of property.

Assistant Community Development Director Sellman reported this was the first application for an ADU.

Commissioner Swanson asked if staff had seen the signatures against this request that were discussed by the neighbors.

Assistant Community Development Director Sellman stated she saw a petition with X's on it, but she did not see anything with signatures on it.

Commissioner Olson questioned if a 600 square foot detached garage would be allowed on this lot.

Assistant Community Development Director Sellman reported the applicant would be allowed to have up to 1200 square feet of total attached and detached garage space.

Chair Goracke inquired how the city would go about enforcing or ensuring only family occupied the ADU.

Zoning Technician Koberoski reported Condition 3 addressed this concern and if a complaint was received by the city, documentation will need to be provided for who was living in the ADU.

Commissioner Halpern asked if the applicant had considered building off the back of the home, versus requesting an ADU.

Mr. Pepin stated this was something that was explored with staff. He reported there would be considerable additional costs because he would have to alter his roof line and his deck would have to be removed. He indicated this would not be a financially feasible option for him.

Commissioner Halpern commented the concept of the ADU in higher density developments

has created challenges and this was a valid concern. He explained the comments made about what this could lead to were valid as well and he appreciated the fact the council put a moratorium in place to further study this topic.

Motion by Commissioner Olson to recommend approval of Planning Case 25-0023 based on the following conditions:

Case 25-0023:

- 1. Occupancy of the ADU is limited to up to two adult individuals and the parents and children of each, with no more than one person per 150 square feet.**
- 2. The ADU shall only be used for family members. The ADU shall not be used as a rental dwelling as defined in Blaine City Code, Section 18-501: *Rental dwelling* means any structure or portion thereof which is designated or used for residential occupancy by one or more persons who are not the owner or a member of the owner's family.**
- 3. Upon request, and no more than once every six months, documentation will be provided as to who is currently living in the ADU, and their relation to the applicant.**
- 4. No home occupations involving outside customers coming to the property shall occur in the ADU.**
- 5. The principal structure and ADU must remain on the same parcel and shall not be divided through any means, including, but not limited to, filing of a plat, a waiver of platting, or a Common Interest Community (CIC).**
- 6. An escrow of \$1,200 for tree replacement or a \$1,200 payment into the City's reforestation fund is due at time of building permit application.**
- 7. The additional parking space shown on the site plan must be constructed before a Certificate of Occupancy (C/O) is issued to the ADU.**
- 8. A Certificate of Survey shall be provided with the building permit application. This Certificate of Survey will show the proposed grading around the ADU and will be required to maintain the overall existing drainage patterns.**
- 9. An as-built survey is required to verify structure elevations, custom grading requirements, and final lot grading elevations.**
- 10. A sidewalk/hard surface is required for ingress/egress from the proposed new car parking pad to the front door of the ADU.**
- 11. The proposed ADU is required to obtain utility connections from the primary structure. Utility drawings showing the location of the proposed connections will need to be provided with the building permit application.**
- 12. Standard water and sanitary sewer access charges (WAC & SAC) become due with each building permit at the rate established at the time the building permit is issued.**
- 13. A 6-foot privacy fence shall be constructed along the entirety of the rear yard, and no windows are permitted on the west side of the ADU. These requirements will need to be met prior to issuance of the C/O.**

Motion seconded by Commissioner Swanson. The motion passed 5-0.

Chair Goracke noted this would be on the agenda of the August 4, 2025 city council meeting.

- 4.2.** 2025-330 Case File No. 25-0028 // SNAP't Cat Rescue // 11708 Jefferson Street NE
The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit for a domestic animal indoor kennel (cat adoption center) in the Community Commercial (B-2) zoning district.
Sponsors: Shawn Kaye, Planner

The report to the planning commission was presented by Shawn Kaye, Planner. The public hearing for Case File 25-0028 was opened at 7:39PM. As no one wished to appear, the public hearing was closed at 7:39PM.

Chair Goracke stated he was very inspired by this concept and commended this organization for pursuing a location in Blaine.

Commissioner Halpern requested further information on how the facility would be staffed 24/7.

Sonja Larson, the applicant, explained she would like to live, work and grow SNAP't Cat Rescue in Blaine. She reported her business was foster-based with adoptions occurring at Pet Smart and other local events. She indicated the facility would be used as a home base for volunteers in need of foster supplies.

Motion by Commissioner Halpern to recommend approval of Planning Case 25-0028 based on the following conditions:

Case 25-0028:

- 1. All cats remain inside at all times.**
- 2. A Certificate of Occupancy is required prior to occupying the space.**
- 3. The interior tenant finish work to be completed with a building permit meeting all Building and Fire Code requirements.**

Motion seconded by Commissioner Gorzycki. The motion passed 5-0.

Chair Goracke noted this would be on the agenda of the August 4, 2025 city council meeting.

- 4.3.** 2025-327 Case File No.25-0029 // HJ Development LLP // Southwest Corner of Lexington Avenue and 125th Avenue NE.
The applicant is requesting preliminary plat approval to create four lots and two outlots to be known as Lexington Crossing Second Addition.
Sponsors: Sheila Sellman, Assistant Community Development Director

The report to the planning commission was presented by Sheila Sellman, Assistant Community Development Director. The public hearing for Case File 25-0029 was opened at 7:46PM. As no one wished to appear, the public hearing was closed at 7:46PM.

Motion by Commissioner Olson to recommend approval of Planning Case 25-0029 based on the following conditions:

Case 25-0029:

- 1. Park dedication is required for the development of 4 new lots, based on a rate of \$7,825 per acre. This results in a total park dedication fee of \$31,300, if paid in 2025. The fee must be paid prior to the issuance of a building permit and will be calculated using the per-acre rate in effect at the time payment is received by the City.**
- 2. One hundred and twelve (112) replacement trees for the lots that were preliminary platted (14 disturbed acres) is required. Further determination of replacement for this subdivision will be reviewed with final plat, breaking down what is required for the development and for the City.**
- 3. The developer will be responsible for Trunk Sanitary Sewer area charges. These charges become due with platting for upland acreage. The 2025 rate for Sanitary Sewer District 7 is \$8,760 per upland acre and will be applied to the acreage platted. This phase is proposing to develop 13 acres of upland for a total sewer area charge of \$113,880.**
- 4. The developer is responsible for submitting a traffic study and constructing all mitigation measures outlined in the study.**
- 5. The developer will be responsible for the deferred assessment for outlot B of this parcel. The 2025 amount is \$46,438.14.**
- 6. All development signage by separate review.**
- 7. Final plat is required within one year of approval.**
- 8. Execution and recording of a development agreement, which sets forth in greater detail the plat conditions as well as other responsibilities for the development of this plat.**
- 9. Site plan approval is required as part of the building permit application. All site improvements to be included in the Site Improvement Performance Agreement and covered by an acceptable financial guarantee.**

Motion seconded by Commissioner Swanson. The motion passed 5-0.

Chair Goracke noted this would be on the agenda of the August 4, 2025 city council meeting.

- 4.4.** 2025-328 Case File No. 25-0026 // HJ Development LLP // Southwest Corner of Lexington Avenue and 125th Avenue NE
The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit for a coffee shop with a drive-thru and a zero lot line and shared access in the Town Commercial (B-5) zoning district.
Sponsors: Sheila Sellman, Assistant Community Development Director

The report to the planning commission was presented by Sheila Sellman, Assistant Community Development Director. The public hearing for Case File 25-0026 was opened at 7:49PM. As no one wished to appear, the public hearing was closed at 7:49PM.

Commissioner Gorzycki asked what the other tenants would be for this multi-tenant building.

Assistant Community Development Director Sellman reported the site plan proposed a clinic, salon, small restaurant and Jerry's Food on a parcel to the north.

Motion by Commissioner Gorzycki to recommend approval of Planning Case 25-0026 based on the following conditions:

Case 25-0026:

- 1. Site plan approval will be required as a part of the building permit application. All site improvements to be included in the Site Improvement Performance Agreement (SIPA) and covered by an acceptable financial guarantee.**
- 2. All signage requires a separate permit meeting the requirements of the zoning ordinance.**
- 3. A copy of the shared access/parking agreement with the adjacent site must be submitted to the Planning Department prior to any work being allowed on site.**
- 4. Rear elevation be modified to include a third approved material.**

Motion seconded by Commissioner Swanson. The motion passed 5-0.

Chair Goracke noted this would be on the agenda of the August 4, 2025 city council meeting.

5. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Halpern to adjourn the regular planning commission meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Olson. The motion passed 5-0.

Adjournment time was 7:51 PM.