



City of Blaine

City Council Workshop

August 4, 2025 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING

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

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Robertson at 5:35PM.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT: Mayor Tim Sanders (arrived at 5:45PM), Councilmembers Terra Fleming, Chris Ford, Leslie Larson, Chris Massoglia, Tom Newland, and Jess Robertson.

ABSENT: None.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: Interim City Manager/Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; Safety Services Director/Police Chief Brian Podany; Finance Director Jason Zimmerman; Director of Administrative Services Scott Johnson; Director of Engineering Dan Schluender; City Attorney Eric Larson; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3. New Business

- 3.1.** 2025-172 Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute Section 13D.05, Subd. 3(b) Attorney Client Privileged Discussion Regarding Pending Litigation
Sponsors: Erik Thorvig, Interim City Manager/Community Development Director

After motion and second the council moved into a closed session pursuant to Minnesota Statute Section 13D. 05, Subd. 3(b) in order to hold an attorney-client privileged discussion regarding pending litigation.

3.2. 2025-173 Sunset Townhomes - Northwest Corner of 109th Avenue and Sunset Avenue
Sponsors: Sheila Sellman, Assistant Community Development Director

Interim City Manager/Community Development Director Thorvig stated the applicant is requesting concept plan review for a 175-unit townhome development at the northwest corner of 109th Avenue and Sunset Avenue. Since the project has more than 50 units, concept plan review is required. The subject property is 27 acres and has been vacant since the home on the property was demolished in 1992. The property has been on and off the market for many years and previous developers have struggled with how to develop the property with the constraint of the large wetland in the center of the property, endangered plants on the north side of the property, and poor soils throughout the property. Additionally, a regionally sized lift station will be required to be constructed as part of the sanitary sewer service to the property, which increases the development cost. Staff have encouraged all prospective developers to consider the high visibility of the site from both 35W and 109th in their site design as well as buffering for the neighboring rural-style residential lots that surround the property. Staff requested the council provide feedback on rezoning, townhome elevations and general layout of the proposal. Keep in mind that the property is guided for the proposed use (HDR) in the Comprehensive Plan, but feedback regarding the specific zoning (DF) to be consistent with the comprehensive plan is needed.

Councilmember Larson asked if some of the units would be three-level. She proposed the three-level units be moved further away from the existing residential units. The applicant shared more about the height of the three-level townhomes, which would be shorter than apartments by 10 feet with a smaller roof pitch and felt there was significant distance between the neighborhood to the west.

Councilmember Robertson indicated she was open to rezoning the property to development flex but recommended the developer go before the watershed district first. She supported the three-story units being moved further away from the existing residential units. She stated she appreciated the elevated design of the proposed townhome units.

Councilmember Newland commented he believed this was a great use for this site and appreciated how this development would create another unit type for the housing mix in Blaine.

Councilmember Ford indicated he supported the proposed development as well, noting he liked the three-story townhome units.

Councilmember Fleming believed this was a well-thought-out plan and agreed the exterior of the units was well done.

Council was supportive of the rezoning to DF but suggested applying to the watershed first to ensure the applicant would receive approval. Council supported this project for this site as it adds to the city's residential housing mix and suggested considering extended turn lanes for additional safety. The council recommended relocating the three-story further

away from the neighborhood to the west and liked the proposed elevations as being something different and suggested windows not face the existing residential.

3.3. 2025-174 Montean Meadows Concept for Property at 3621 131st Avenue NE
Sponsors: Sheila Sellman, Assistant Community Development Director

Mr. Thorvig stated a concept plan application has been submitted for properties located at 3621 131st Avenue NE (two parcels). The two subject properties are a total of approximately 40 acres and have an existing single-family home with accessory buildings on the smaller parcel. The larger eastern parcel is vacant with some of the land being recently farmed. The properties are zoned Farm Residential (FR) and guided for Low Density Residential (LDR) development at a density of 2.5-6 units per acre. The applicant's concept plan is for 101 single-family homes, which would be 2.54 units/acre for density. The parcels to the west, east and south are zoned FR and guided LDR and are vacant. The parcels to the north are in the City of Ham Lake. The concept proposes:

Single Family

- 80 foot - 8 lots
- 70 foot - 45 lots
- 65 foot - 48 lots
- House size - 3,000 s.f. and above
- 2 - stories

Mr. Thorvig reported the site has some wetlands. The developer has stated they will do their best to preserve significant trees. The existing tree cover on the west and north sides of the development will be preserved to provide backyard privacy. Staff provided further information regarding the concept plan and requested the council provide feedback on rezoning, single-family elevations, and general layout of the proposal.

Councilmember Massoglia stated he believed this project was very close to meeting the city council's vision for this property. He understood this was a challenging parce and indicated he would be able to support DF rezoning but would like to see 70-foot-wide lots throughout the entire development.

Councilmember Newland requested further information regarding the lift station and city-owned property/open space. Director of Engineering Schluender explained these parcels were moved from Sewer District 7 to Sewer District 6, which allows them to develop. He indicated that in bringing this development forward, a lift station would be required. He stated at this time a wood chip trail traverses through the city-owned property and connects to the development on the south and west of the property.

Councilmember Ford stated he supported the proposed development and supported the project moving forward.

Councilmember Fleming indicated she believed this development was close as well. She understood the developer was bringing forward elevated houses, but asked that the

developer pursue 70-foot-wide lots.

Councilmember Larson agreed noting this property was zoned R-1 and wanted to see this project blend in better with the developments to the north.

Councilmember Ford stated his concern was not Ham Lake but rather with Blaine and recommended the lots be 70 feet wide.

Councilmember Robertson agreed Blaine was not Ham Lake then explained she liked seeing different mixes of housing in the community and stated this development provided an opportunity to bring a new housing type to Blaine.

Council appreciated the elevated project, proposed different housing types, and larger lot sizes but would like to see 70-foot lots throughout and would be open to DF and discuss the need to connect Harpers Street to 131st Avenue as well.

4. Other Business

Mr. Thorvig shared schedule updates regarding a special meeting that would be held on August 11 and noted RFP interviews for a cannabis dispensary would be held on August 25.

Mayor Sanders explained he would like to reconvene the workshop after the regular meeting to discuss the city manager recruitment process.

5. Adjournment

The workshop recessed at 6:49PM and reconvened at 8:00PM.

Mr. Larson provided an update on the city manager recruitment process. After discussion, the Mayor adjourned the workshop meeting at 9:00PM.



Signed by

Tim Sanders, Mayor

Signed by

Catherine M. Sorensen, City Clerk