

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Thursday, June 7, 2018

6:30 p.m.
Cloverleaf Farm Room
10801 Town Square Drive

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ryan at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Tom Ryan, Councilmembers Andy Garvais, Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson, Jason King, and Dick Swanson.

ABSENT: Councilmember Dave Clark.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Clark Arneson; Planning and Community Development Director Bryan Schafer; Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Brian Podany; Finance Director Joe Huss; Economic Development Coordinator Erik Thorvig; Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Bob Therres; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Senior Engineering Technician Jason Sundeen; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 Twin City Transport (Towing Facility) Land Use Discussion – Flowerfield Road.

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer stated Twin City Transport purchased the former Auto Medics use at 3760 Flowerfield Road a couple years ago. Similar to Auto Medics they are a vehicle towing and short-term storage or impound facility. Auto Medics also did major auto repair which Twin City Transport does not do. The land use and zoning for this facility is HI (Heavy Industrial) and I-2A (Heavy Industrial). Twin City Transport (TCT) has been trying to expand their yard and attempted to buy the vacant industrial lot to the west, but the land was not available for purchase.

Mr. Schafer explained the church (Sonlight Church of the Nazarene) which owns the building and four (4) acres to the east of the site approached TCT and asked if they wanted to buy a portion of their lot as the church is small and does not need all of the parking that they have. That in turn resulted in a tentative agreement for TCT to purchase all of the church property and then TCT would lease the church the building and the parking they need. TCT would propose to subdivide the church property and create an acre parcel that would be combined to the TCT property. The new parcel would need to be rezoned and guided from B-2 to I-2A. The expansion of the TCT yard would be governed by the I-2A zoning standards (permitted use) and Site Plan Approval which can address site issues such as providing 100% screening (landscaping and fencing). The remaining 3 acres used (leased) by the church would remain zoned B-2 (Community Commercial). Staff discussed the differences between the I-2 and I-2A zoning districts, and requested feedback from the Council on how to proceed. Mr. Schafer noted that another option to consider is to gain concurrence from TCT and have the entire parcel rezoned to I-2 rather than the heavier I-2A as it would address the expansion in the same manner but would eliminate the possibility of a trucking facility in the future.

Councilmember King questioned how the hours of operation would change if the property were rezoned. John from Twin City Transport, thanked the Council for their time and consideration. He explained he was requesting an expansion to store vehicles long-term. He discussed the hours of operation for his business and noted the location of the parking lot lights.

Councilmember Swanson stated he could support the lower zoning of I-2 noting he did not want to see heavy trucking at this location. He asked if the lower zoning would impact this businesses operation. Mr. Schafer stated this would not impact the impound lot business. He explained Twin City Transport was not a trucking company.

Councilmember Hovland questioned if this business towed 24/7. John from Twin City Transport reported this was the case.

Councilmember Hovland expressed concern with how idling diesel trucks at 1:00 a.m. would impact the adjacent neighborhood. John commented Twin City Towing has been in operation for the past 30 years and has a great reputation with no complaints from the City. He indicated all trucks could drive in and out of the west entrance, which was further away from the residential homes. He explained it was critical for him to be a good neighbor.

Councilmember Jeppson asked if there were any concerns with rezoning this property to I-2 knowing that it abuts a commercial property. Mr. Schafer explained the properties already abutted and that only a change to the property line would occur. He reported Twin City Towing would be the new owners of this property and stated it made more sense to rezone the property.

Councilmember Garvais stated he could support the I-2 zoning for this property and requested more detail regarding the lighting and landscaping for the expansion property. Mr. Schafer said that detail would be included in the formal application and shared as the item move forward through the formal review process.

Council consensus was to support the I-2 zoning with no future trucking.

3.2 Draft Discussion II – Debt Management, TIF/Abatement Policies.

Finance Director Huss stated at the April 12 Workshop, staff presented to Council drafts of new policies for Debt Management, Tax Increment Financing and Tax Abatement. Council suggested further revisions to the policies, notably, shortening the policies by removing redundant statutory requirements and incorporating these statutory requirements by reference in the policies. Pursuant to that direction, staff reviewed the revised drafts of the policies with the Council.

Councilmember King asked if policies could be changed by the Council. Mr. Huss explained policies were a little more flexible and served as guidelines to the City Council but could be changed by the Council without adoption of a resolution or ordinance.

Councilmember King questioned if any of these policies were written into the City's Charter. Mr. Huss reported these policies were not written into the Charter.

Mayor Ryan stated he was proud of the City's conservative TIF policy.

Councilmember Hovland asked if the City had any future projects in mind that would utilize TIF. Economic Development Coordinator Thorvig discussed several redevelopment projects that could potentially use TIF.

Council consensus was to direct staff to bring this item back to the Council on June 21st for adoption.

OTHER BUSINESS

City Manager Arneson reported the City received a AA+ bond rating and noted the Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View joint cities meeting would be held on June 12 at Fire Station 3.

Councilmember Hovland requested staff work with residents that live in Blaine but have a Circle Pines address to ensure they are able to receive a parking permit for the beach.

Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres noted the RFPs for the Senior Center were due on June 8.

Councilmember Hovland requested staff and the Council consider how to address panhandling that was taking place in Blaine. Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Podany explained the City did not have a formal policy in place to address panhandling but noted he has been reviewing policies from other communities. He commented the Police Department addressed panhandling on a complaint driven basis.

Councilmember Garvais recommended the City pursue a diversion program prior to issuing citations for panhandling.

Councilmember Jeppson suggested the Council consider how they would like to define “help” when addressing the panhandlers. She noted there were very good local service providers that could assist the City with addressing this concern.

Councilmember King supported the Police Department addressing these concerns versus the City Council making a policy to address this issue.

Councilmember Garvais agreed.

Mr. Arneson provided the Council with an update on TH 65 and noted MnDOT would be starting scope of work soon for their project which included the frontage road proposal on the west side of TH 65. He noted staff would be contacting the Council with details on the parade.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

Catherine Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk
Submitted by TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.