

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL JOINT WORKSHOP
BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION
Tuesday, June 14, 2022

6:00PM
Cloverleaf Farm Room A
10801 Town Square Drive

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Tim Sanders, Councilmembers Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson, Chris Massoglia, Tom Newland, Richard Paul, and Jess Robertson.

ALSO PRESENT: Planning Commissioners Lauren Deonauth, Al Goracke, John Gorzycki, Jason Halpern, Maisa Olson and Nicole Swanson.

ABSENT: None.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; City Planner Sheila Sellman; Planner Shawn Kaye; Community Development Specialist Elizabeth Showalter; and Project Engineer Teresa Barnes.

3.1 Joint Planning Commission/City Council Meeting.

Community Development Director Thorvig stated he would like the Council and Planning Commission to discuss the role of the Planning Commission and Council expectations for development project review, City Council identified priority areas, economic development efforts to attract business and any other items the Council or Planning Commission may have.

Mayor Sanders stated he believed the Council needed to work more closely with the planning commission with so much redevelopment coming to the City. He indicated it was overwhelming hearing from residents that want new, innovative and creative amenities to come to Blaine. He explained the Council was working extremely hard to pursue those types of attractions and amenities. He reported the city has a real perception problem and a shift needs to be made in order to show the best of Blaine. He believed residents were proud of

this community and wanted to remain in this community for their family gatherings and visits to restaurants. He noted Blaine has over 7.5 million visitors each year for sporting events. He indicated the Council was working to build synergies and cohesion within the City when areas redevelop. He commented further on how the Council was working hard to bring new amenities to the community and discussed how the City would build fully out in the coming years.

Councilmember Hovland stated the City installed oversized sewer lines in order to accommodate the full build out of the City. He reported 15 years ago it was estimated the City would have a population of 70,000 upon full build out, but this number has been surpassed and there was still development to that has yet to be completed. He discussed the number of water treatment plants and wells the City has installed in order to meet the needs of its residents and business owners. He commented further on the Council's vision for the future and encouraged the planning commissioners to contact any of the Councilmembers at any time with comments or questions. He also recommended the Planning Commissioners read through the City's comprehensive plan to learn more about the City's vision for the future.

Councilmember Robertson encouraged the commissioners to reach out to the Council at any time. She commented on the "EDA super development squad" that was formed of Councilmembers in order to pursue and address the amount of redevelopment that was coming to the City. She discussed the economic development summit that was held in Blaine that allowed City officials to reach out to developers.

Commissioner Halpern thanked the City Council for inviting the Planning Commission to this joint meeting. He stated he appreciated the work the Council was doing to bring redevelopment to the community. He discussed the focus of the planning commission noting this was an advisory group to the City Council.

Commissioner Goracke thanked staff for all of their efforts on behalf of the planning commission. He discussed some of the contentious matters that have been reviewed by the planning commission and stated he always appreciated the support and recommendations of City staff.

Mr. Thorvig commented on how the City has developed over the past 20 years noting the City was working at the will of developers. He indicated this Council would like the pendulum to swing back to the Council a bit in order to have developments with more cohesion and purpose. He reported the Council's two main areas of focus for redevelopment at this time were Northtown and 105th Avenue. He explained the City has purchased eight properties around 105th Avenue so far in order to facilitate change. He stated the City has been working with a consultant to create a vision for the 105th Avenue area that would create a downtown core. He indicated the highlight of the plan was the lake feature that was surrounded by commercial uses. He reported Invictus supports the plan, as well as the City bringing in more

breweries. He explained the area would include housing and office uses. He anticipated this plan would take a number of years to complete, but it helped that the City owned a number of parcels in the area already. He stated the NSC supported the proposed plan and was working to get more artificial turf fields.

Councilmember Hovland discussed the Riverwalk in San Antonio and how the surrounding area developed. He explained the Council has been bringing together ideas from all over the country in order to create a vision for the 105th Avenue redevelopment area. Mr. Thorvig stated Centennial Lakes in Edina was another area the Council had modeled their vision after.

Mayor Sanders commented it was important for residents to know that this area was being planned and visioned for the people of Blaine while also working to attract others to the community. He stated the redevelopment area was 40 acres in size and he believed the City could create an amazing space for people to gather. He indicated the City was also working with the Minnesota United Soccer Club and noted a mini Allianz may be constructed for practice purposes.

Councilmember Jeppson stated she believed Blaine was unique. She indicated she did not want this community to be another Maple Grove or Edina, but rather wanted the community to remain uniquely Blaine. She reported Blaine was known for sports and recreation and she wanted the City to embrace this and move forward with its vision. She supported the City Council partnering with the Planning Commission in order for the City's vision to come to fruition.

Councilmember Robertson explained the Council was pursuing unique amenities such as a Smash Park, the Puttery, and a Drive Shack. She stated Blaine wanted to be the first community in Minnesota to have these facilities.

Councilmember Newland commented a great mental shift would have to occur in order to draw people from Maple Grove to Blaine for its amenities. He appreciated the fact that this was part of the City's vision.

Councilmember Jeppson discussed how there was an even greater overreaching vision for the City that included TH65, Lexington Avenue and the Northtown Mall area.

Mayor Sanders stated the Council wanted to have a conversation with the planning commission in order to better understand the vision for the 105th Avenue and Northtown areas. He reported the areas were going to be restricted in order to bring about the intentional and unique goals of the City.

Councilmember Jeppson encouraged the commissioners to come with the Council if they have unique ideas or concepts for these redevelopment areas.

Mr. Thorvig stated the rezoning changes for the 105th Avenue area would be coming before the planning commission this evening. He then turned the discussion to the redevelopment plans for the Northtown Mall area. He discussed how other communities were making adjustments to regional malls and noted the City was working with a consultant to revision this area in order to bring in new uses and vibrancy. He stated the new plan would introduce new housing, greenspace and would highlight the creek. He anticipated this plan would take 20 to 30 years to complete. He noted the EDA has very little land control in this area which meant redevelopment would be developer led. He reported the mall owner understood the City's vision and stated the City was hoping to turn the mall into a life style center with a mix of uses and a main street. He indicated the City has talked with the county regarding County Road 10 about redesigning this roadway. He stated pedestrian safety would be addressed along with transportation improvements. He explained this project would be a public/private partnership. He noted the City was seeking investors or developers that were interested in redeveloping these areas as well as finding dollars that would assist with rebuilding the infrastructure.

Mayor Sanders asked for comments or feedback from the planning commissioners.

Commissioner Swanson stated she loved the Council's proposed vision for these areas. She questioned if the Council was considering eminent domain for the properties not yet owned by the City in the 105th Avenue area.

Mayor Sanders discussed how and when eminent domain would be appropriate noting he would rather have conversations with these property owners in order to have a proper sale of the properties.

Commissioner Olson encouraged the City Council to better communicate their plans for these two areas in order to create more buy in from the community.

Commissioner Deonauth stated she was very excited about the proposed redevelopments. She believed the ideas were unique and forward thinking.

The Workshop was adjourned at 6:53PM.

Tim Sanders, Mayor

ATTEST:

Catherine Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk

Submitted by Minute Maker Secretarial