

**UNAPPROVED
CITY OF BLAINE
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
January 14, 2020**

The Blaine Planning Commission met in the City Hall Chambers on Tuesday, January 14, 2020. Chair Ouellette called the meeting to order at 7PM.

Members Present: Commission Members: Goracke, Homan, Olson, Ponds, and Chair Ouellette. Also present was Adjunct Member Drew Brown.

Members Absent: Commission Member Halpern.

Staff Present: Shawn Kaye, Associate Planner
Stefan Higgins, Assistant City Engineer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Goracke to approve the minutes of December 10, 2019, as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Homan. The motion passed 4-0-1 (Olson abstained).

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Item 4.1 – Case File No. 19-0050 – Public Hearing – The City is proposing a Code Amendment to the PBD (Planned Business District) zoning district to add meeting/assembly halls under 6,000 square feet as a use allowed by a conditional use permit.
CITY OF BLAINE.

The report to the Planning Commission was presented by Shawn Kaye, Associate Planner. The public hearing for Case File 19-0050 was opened at 7:10PM.

Dennis Bott, 4298 124th Avenue, commented he lived directly behind the subject property. He explained he opposed the proposed the city code amendment. He feared how the change would adversely impact his neighborhood.

Kathie Kelly, 4285 124th Avenue NE, asked what would happen if the city were to take no action on this item.

Chair Ouellette reported the site was currently zoned PBD and could have a restaurant.

Ms. Kelly expressed concern with the amount of traffic that would be coming in and out of the retail center onto Fraizer Street. She recommended the Planning Commission not approve the requested zoning change as this would adversely impact her neighborhood.

The public hearing was closed at 7:14PM.

Chair Ouellette stated he was having trouble with supporting the proposed location for the event center. He indicated the old Best Buy or Gander Mountain sites would be better suited as an event center. He commented an event center would be hosting weddings and reunions. He noted restaurants tend to ebb and flow and were not busy after 10PM. He anticipated an event center would be busy until midnight. He explained he was having a tough time with this request.

Commissioner Goracke asked what other cities do with event centers.

Associate Planner, Shawn Kaye reported event centers were viewed as being similar to restaurants and at this location the proposed event center would be regulated to be no more than 6,000 square feet. She explained other cities would regulate event centers in a commercial district in the same manner.

Commissioner Olson indicated there would be restrictions to the event centers size and parking. In addition, conditions for approval would be recommended by staff. She commented the size and scope of events held on this property would be limited by these conditions.

Commissioner Homan questioned what would happen if the Planning Commission were to recommend denial of the city code amendment.

Associate Planner, Shawn Kaye indicated the city council would make the final decision and if the council determined the code should not be changed, the use would not be allowed. She commented further on how the PBD zoning district for this property benefitted the city as this limited the amount of use and required a conditional use permit for all uses.

Chair Ouellette stated he was still concerned with the proposed location for this event center. He noted BeBop's had been at its location along 109th Avenue for a number of years prior to any houses being built.

Motion by Commissioner Olson to recommend denial of Planning Case 19-0050 a code amendment with the following rationale:

Case 19-0050:

1. The proposed use does not fit with the surrounding neighborhood.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Goracke. The motion passed 4-1 (Commissioner Ponds opposed).

Chair Ouellette noted this would be on the agenda of the February 3, 2020 City Council meeting.

Item 4.2 – Case File No. 19-0051 – Public Hearing – The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit to operate a 5,500 square foot event center with outdoor dining in a multi-tenant retail building in a PBD (Planned Business District). EXQUISITE RECEPTIONS EVENT CENTER (PLL PROPERTIES LLC), 12475 LEXINGTON AVENUE NE.

The report to the Planning Commission was presented by Shawn Kaye, Associate Planner. The public hearing for Case File 19-0051 was opened at 7:27PM.

Chair Ouellette anticipated if more conditions were added regarding the location of the event center, this item may be approved.

Commissioner Goracke asked staff how the Planning Commission should proceed.

Associate Planner, Shawn Kaye recommended the commission open the public hearing, take comments from the public and make a recommendation on this planning case to the city council.

Rochelle Springer, 4257 124th Avenue NE, stated she has attended each of the Planning Commission meetings related to this site. She explained she opposed the proposed use and how it would increase traffic in her neighborhood. She questioned if the data sheet was prepared by staff.

Associate Planner, Shawn Kaye reported the data sheet was prepared by the applicant.

Ms. Springer commented she believed the data within the sheet was a statement of opinion and not of fact. She discussed how drunk driving was on the rise in Blaine given the fact the population of the city was increasing. She explained she lives directly adjacent (less than 250 feet) to the proposed event center. She indicated she would have never bought her home if she knew an event center would be located behind her home. She encouraged the city to not compare itself to Minneapolis and rather to find the proper use for this site that would compliment the neighborhood.

Dennis Bott, 4298 124th Avenue, discussed how the traffic flows in and out of BeBop noting no traffic flows into a residential neighborhood. He explained the proposed event center would dump all of its traffic directly into a senior housing development. He urged the commission to deny the proposed request and that another site be pursued.

Kathie Kelly, 4285 124th Avenue NE, stated she agreed with Mr. Bott and Ms. Springer. She reported when she purchased her home she was told a church and maybe a daycare would be located on this property. She encouraged the commission to not pass this request as it would negatively impact her neighborhood.

Brian Diffley, 12449 Isetta Court, explained he could see the proposed property from his front porch. He stated he supported the opinions that have been shared and recommended the Planning Commission deny the request for the event center. He suggested a use be approved that would be more fitting for the surrounding neighborhoods.

Pat Anderson, 4274 124th Avenue, indicated her street was private. She objected to the city putting a large volume of traffic onto her private street given the fact she would be charged for maintaining this roadway. She recommended all of the traffic flow out of the site onto Lexington Avenue and Main Street.

John Lero, 4282 124th Lane, reported all of the event center traffic would be driving by his house. He noted he attended the September meeting and expressed frustration with the fact that the development was a foregone conclusion.

Chair Ouellette explained the final decision on this development would be made by the city council.

Ms. Springer asked what the logic was of putting all of the traffic onto Frazier Street. She commented on how dangerous the traffic was at 122nd Ave and Lexington Ave. She understood that in a couple years this intersection may be getting a traffic signal. She encouraged the city to look at the development holistically and how it would impact safety, the roadways and the adjacent neighborhood.

Jeanne Bott, 4298 124th Avenue NE, stated weddings and reunions are being planned every night of the week these days. She feared how her neighborhood would be impacted if the event center was in use every night of the week.

The public hearing was closed at 7:46PM.

Commissioner Homan explained she was concerned about how the event center would be accessed. She did not believe it was right to push all of this traffic into the adjacent neighborhood. She encouraged the city council to address this concern with the county.

Commissioner Ponds was of the opinion the proposed event center would be operating in a very similar manner to the previously approved restaurant. She commented she did not like the traffic situation in this neighborhood.

Commissioner Goracke stated he did not believe this discussion was relevant given the fact the code amendment was denied. He recommended the commission not discuss this item. He reported there was a change or shift that was occurring with special events and they were now being held every day of the week. He stated he feared how this neighborhood would be adversely impacted if an event center were to be located on this property.

Associate Planner, Shawn Kaye explained the commission could make no recommendation on the planning case and this information will be forwarded to the city council.

Chair Ouellette noted this would be on the agenda of the February 3, 2020 city council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Olson to adjourn the Regular Planning Commission meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Homan. The motion passed 5-0. Adjournment time was 7:58PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Guenther
Minute Maker Secretarial