



# City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota Minutes

Blaine City Hall  
10801 Town Sq Dr NE  
Blaine MN 55449

## Planning Commission

*The Planning Commission is an advisory body to the City Council. One of the Commission's functions is to hold public hearings and make recommendations to the City Council. The City Council makes all final decisions on these matters. Blaine City Ordinances require that certain documents and information be included in applications. The Planning Commission may postpone consideration of an application that is incomplete and may, for other reasons, postpone final action on an application. For each item the Commission will receive reports prepared by the City staff, open the hearing to the public, and discuss and act on the application.*

*This meeting will be a hybrid of Zoom and in-person. The Mayor has signed a declaration allowing members of the commission, staff, and the public to attend the meeting remotely via Zoom as has been done during the COVID-19 pandemic. The council chambers will have limited seating, with audience chairs being set up at least six feet apart. There will be an overflow area where the meeting can be watched in the Cloverleaf Farms Room, also with chairs set up at least six feet apart.*

*Please note that all visitors to city hall are required to wear a face mask while inside the building.*

*Public comment options prior to the meeting must be received by 4:30 PM on Monday, September 7. Email comments to: [probinson@BlaineMN.gov](mailto:probinson@BlaineMN.gov) or phone 763-785-6180.*

*Zoom is for members of the public who want to comment remotely during the meeting on an agenda item. Join Zoom Webinar at <https://blainemn.zoom.us/j/91547522627>*

*Ways to watch if not commenting on an agenda item:  
[BlaineMN.gov/Video](https://blainemn.gov/Video) or North Metro TV on Comcast, Apple TV,  
or Roku*

*Questions? Email - [Communications@BlaineMN.gov](mailto:Communications@BlaineMN.gov)*

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Wednesday, August 12, 2020

7:00 PM Council Chambers and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, city meetings will also be held as virtual meetings

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### 1. Roll Call

The Blaine Planning Commission met in the City Hall Chambers on Wednesday, August 12, 2020. Chair Ouellette called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this hybrid meeting was held both virtually and in person.

Members Present: Commission Members: Deonauth, Halpern, Homan, Olson, Villella, and Chair Ouellette. Also present was Adjunct Member Drew Brown.

Members Absent: Commission Member Goracke.

Staff Present: Elizabeth Showalter, Planning/Economic Development Technician  
Teresa Barnes, Project Engineer  
Ben Hayle, Communications Manager

**Present:** 6 - Chair Ouellette, Commissioner Homan, Commissioner Olson, Commissioner Halpern, Deonauth, and Villella

**Absent:** 1 - Commissioner Goracke

## 2. Approval of Minutes

### 2.-1 Approval of July 14, 2020 Planning Commission Minutes

**Attachments:** [Unapproved Minutes](#)

**Motion by Commissioner Homan to approve the minutes of July 14, 2020, as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Villella. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.**

**Aye:** 6 - Chair Ouellette, Commissioner Homan, Commissioner Olson, Commissioner Halpern, Deonauth, and Villella

## 3. Old Business

None.

## 4. New Business

### 4.-1 Public Hearing Case File No. 20-0026 // Avington Place Association // Club West 5th and 7th Additions

The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit amendment to allow for the construction of detached accessory buildings up to 150 square feet in Club West 5th and 7th Additions which are located in a DF (Development Flex) zoning district.

**Attachments:** [Attachments](#)

The report to the Planning Commission was presented by Elizabeth Showalter, Planning/Economic Development Technician. The public hearing for Case File 20-0026 was opened at 7:08 p.m.

Jesse Debuke, resident of New Brighton, explained he was a representative and General Manager for Avington Place. He thanked staff for providing the Commission with a detailed staff report.

The public hearing was closed at 7:10 p.m.

Commissioner Homan stated she lives in a neighborhood that is governed by an HOA. She explained that if the HOA supported the construction of detached accessories, then she would also support the matter.

Chair Ouellette agreed.

**Motion by Commissioner Olson to recommend approval of Planning Case 20-0026 based on the following conditions:**

**Case 20-0026:**

**1. All conditions of Resolution 01-48 remain unchanged except for Accessory Uses item 1 and Standards item 7.**

**2. Accessory Uses item 1 is amended to read:**

**Private garages - no detached accessory structures, except for accessory buildings up to 150 square feet in the 5th and 7th additions.**

**3. Standards item 7 is amended to read:**

**It shall be required for all single family dwellings that there be an attached garage constructed of a minimum of four hundred (400) square feet, with no dimension less than 20 feet. Total garage space shall not exceed one thousand (1,000) square feet. Detached garages or accessory buildings are not permitted except for homes in the 5th and 7th additions which may have one (1) detached accessory building up to one hundred fifty (150) square feet provided it is located in the rear yard and meets a five (5) foot setback from all property lines. The architectural style and color of accessory buildings shall be compatible with the principal building. Accessory buildings located within a drainage and utility easement shall not be placed or constructed, in the easement, in a manner to limit the use of the easement or alter storm drainage in any way as to negatively impact other property. Accessory buildings placed within a drainage and utility easement are placed, by the owner, at the owner's risk of removal by the city or other agencies that may have legal use of the easement.**

**Motion seconded by Commissioner Homan. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.**

**Aye:** 6 - Chair Ouellette, Commissioner Homan, Commissioner Olson, Commissioner Halpern, Deonath, and Villella

Chair Ouellette noted this would be on the agenda of the September 9, 2020 City Council meeting.

4.-2

Public Hearing Case File No. 20-0027 // A & C Automotive // 611  
109th Avenue NE

The applicant is requesting a variance to allow for a freestanding sign that does not currently meet the monument style as required by section 34.00 of the zoning ordinance. The applicant is also requesting a 7-foot variance to the maximum 14-foot height requirement for monument signs. The variance, if granted, would allow the sign to be 21 feet tall and would allow the sign to remain as is, without meeting the monument style requirements as outlined in the zoning ordinance.

**Attachments:** Attachments

The report to the Planning Commission was presented by Elizabeth Showalter, Planning/Economic Development Technician. The public hearing for Case File 20-0027 was opened at 7:18 p.m. As no one wished to appear, the public hearing was closed at 7:18 p.m.

Chair Ouellette recalled this issue coming to the Commission a year or so ago. He noted the Planning Commission doesn't have the same latitude as the City Council. He explained the Planning Commission has to review items based on the zoning code requirements. He asked if the applicant had any comments at this time.

Tim Lininger, A & C Automotive, thanked the Commission for their consideration. He stated he hoped to start a long term relationship with the City of Blaine. He noted he was willing to work with the City on the sign. He explained he has lived in Blaine for the past ten years and his partner has been servicing the neighborhood for the past eight years. He discussed the improvements he had completed on the building. He explained he has been blessed to be supported by the neighborhood over the past two years. He stated his neighbors have vocalized their support of the sign as it has become a fabric of the community. He indicated the existing sign assisted with brand identity and by removing the sign his business would be hindered. He discussed how COVID has impacted his business and understood this pandemic was not over. He noted he was leasing this site with an option to buy. It was his hope he could work with the City in order to continue to improve this corner of Blaine. He stated his business was surviving and the only way to approach thriving would be to maintain capital and reduce loans. He commented he was trying to provide his customers with the best possible price and labor. He requested the Commission consider his variance request.

Commissioner Olson asked if the property owner was present.

Chair Ouellette reported the property owner was not in attendance.

Commissioner Olson stated her thoughts on this was that the property owner should be responsible.

Planning/Economic Development Technician, Elizabeth Showalter explained if a citation were issued this would be issued to the property owner. She indicated the property owner and the tenant may have their own understanding as to who is responsible for making the site improvements.

Commissioner Olson commented this may be an issue that has to be worked out between the tenant and the property owner. She recommended the Commission deny the request and allow these two parties to come to a resolution.

Mr. Lininger reported he was told, when he signed the lease, that the sign was grandfathered in. He stated he was provided minutes from the previous tenant. He explained he was present on behalf of himself and John because the sign was an asset to the business. He was hoping he wouldn't have to spend a month's worth of payroll to move this sign.

Chair Ouellette discussed how a monument sign could be placed to fit on the site.

Mr. Lininger explained he was open to considering modifications to the existing sign.

Chair Ouellette stated the Planning Commission only had so much latitude with respect to this request and would have to follow the zoning requirements. He questioned what type of citation was issued to this property.

Planning/Economic Development Technician, Elizabeth Showalter reported staff could issue a City citation or a County citation could be issued which would require a court appearance.

Commissioner Olson stated she believed this was an issue that should be addressed by the property owner. She recommended the Commission deny the variance request.

Chair Ouellette indicated the property owner was not in compliance at this time and it was the property owner's duty to install a conforming sign.

**Motion by Commissioner Olson to recommend denial of Planning Case 20-0027 based on the following rationale:**

**Case 20-0027:**

1. Exceptional or extraordinary circumstances do not apply to the property or to other properties in the same zone or vicinity. In fact, two properties in the same vicinity are meeting the current code requirements for freestanding signs and also had to locate monument style signs on corner lots and meet sight distance requirements.

2. Economic considerations alone shall not be considered a hardship.

3. Granting of the variance requested will confer on the applicant special privileges that are denied by this ordinance to other owners of lands, structures or buildings within the same vicinity.

4. A variance, if granted, would be materially detrimental to the purposes of this ordinance, or to other property in the same zone.

**Motion seconded by Commissioner Homan. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.**

**Aye:** 6 - Chair Ouellette, Commissioner Homan, Commissioner Olson, Commissioner Halpern, Deonath, and Villella

Chair Ouellette noted this would be on the agenda of the September 9, 2020 City Council meeting.

## **Adjournment**

Adjournment time was 7:38 p.m.

**Motion by Commissioner Halpern to adjourn the Regular Planning Commission meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Deonath. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.**

**Aye:** 6 - Chair Ouellette, Commissioner Homan, Commissioner Olson, Commissioner Halpern, Deonath, and Villella