

City of Columbus
Public Hearing – Graffco Inc., CUP Amendment (PC-13-101)
13957 Lake Drive
January 16, 2013

The January 16, 2013 Public Hearing to receive testimony regarding the request of Graffco Inc., for an amendment to an existing Conditional Use Permit to allow a new business tenant at 13957 Lake Drive, Columbus, MN was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chair Barbara Hvass at the City Hall. Present were Commission members Andy Anderson, Myron Organ, Jesse Preiner, Jody Krebs, and Garth Sternberg; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, and Recording Secretary Karen Boland.

Also in attendance were City Council member Denny Peterson, and Daniel Graff.

Hvass: Now we will have a Public Hearing and discussion of Graffco Incorporated conditional use permit amendment application, pages 1-13. We'll ask our recording secretary to read the notice as it appeared in the paper.

Notice was read at this time.

Hvass: Thank you. Is there somebody here that wants to present? Would you come forward and have a seat? The microphones are just for recording purposes. They don't amplify.

Graff: Okay.

Hvass: Would you state your name and your address please.

Graff: Daniel Graff, uh, President of Graffco in Columbus Township.

Hvass: Pardon?

Graff: In Columbus Township. 13957 Lake Drive.

Hvass: Okay. And so you're asking us to amend your conditional use permit.

Graff: Correct.

Hvass: Is there anything else we should know?

Graff: No. Not really. No.

Hvass: Elizabeth?

Mursko: In your packet you have several materials. Some materials looking at the new business that's going to be on the property. And you do have a planning report with just kind of an overview of the new site. If you look at the screen, this is the Graffco site. It's quite large. It's at

13957, and it is this entire area. It's my understanding that Graffco has been in this location for quite some time—early '90s. It might even be before the early '90s.

Graff: Before that, yeah.

Mursko: But my understanding at this point is that you will still occupy the second building.

Graff: Correct.

Mursko: And their home offices are up in Harris. And so they're renting the front building and the front offices, uh, here. In your packet it explains that the new vendor, or the new tenant, is a commercial steel erector/contractor/builder, and he is relocating from Eagan, Minnesota. And, I think he's just going to have a front office and storage in that area. In the past we have asked all the vendors on Lake Drive, um, primarily to have a front yard and not to have exterior storage in the front yard. And I think this vendor has asked for some storage, and so I think it's primarily in this area...

Hvass: Yes.

Mursko: ...that they're going to be storing. And I don't know how many cranes they're planning on storing there.

Graff: I don't know either, but I don't think it's...you've got to keep it somewhat open so we can access. It can't be too many.

Hvass: I was out to the facility today and so was Jesse, and it looked like a pretty good set-up--mm-hmm-- for what they are doing.

Graff: They surely know what they...they won a lot of awards and stuff too.

Hvass: Have they?

Graff: Yeah. Yeah. They're highly...it's a...it is a...from my understanding they are a minority union.

Hvass: Yes. Mm-hmm.

Graff: And I think if you...I gave Elizabeth some of the—their website, off their website--some of the awards they've won. Um, I think it's...I'm very lucky to get someone of that caliber in there to lease it out to them. Especially, I don't have to chase down a rent (unintelligible)

Hvass: Right.

Anderson: Good. Yeah.

Graff: I'm sure they'll do a good job maintaining the property.

Hvass: It'd be nice if they'd stay for awhile.

Graff: Well that's...it's a good possibility 'cause he really likes it there, so, you never know.

Hvass: Are there additional questions?

Anderson: Um, I might note that I also was out to the site and met...I think it's Dave Bice?

Graff: Dave. Dave Bice, yeah.

Anderson: Bice. And it appeared to be a very clean operation, very nice. They employ 40 employees and they've been in business for 9 ½ years, and, uh, they don't do any painting on site and there's no chemicals on site. And the reason they're moving –they had a building in Eagan and it was sold and the new owner told them that ultimately they would be forced out. So, they made the move here. Um, I welcome them to the neighborhood. I think they're a fine addition to our City. By the way, we're no longer a township, we're a city.

Graff: A city now.

Hvass: Yup. We're a city.

Anderson: Everybody makes the same mistake who's been here awhile.

Graff: But the lease is for two years, so, you know, they'll get a good feeling of the area too, so...which is nice.

Krebs: Madam Chair, I have a question.

Hvass: Yes.

Krebs: Um, is it just crane equipment or is it other types of storage that they'll be...

Hvass: They have some trucks and stuff.

Graff: Trucks and stuff like that that they use on site for wherever they go.

Krebs: Okay. Thanks.

Hvass: It's a big building. I mean...

Graff: It's a big building!

Hvass: ...it really doesn't have...doesn't have much inside.

Graff: They probably won't use a whole lot of it.

Hvass: Yeah. How long is that building?

Graff: That's 10,000 square feet, that first one.

Organ: 200?

Graff: 50 by 200.

Anderson: It might also be noted that the forty employees operate out of their houses and they don't operate out of this site.

Krebs: Mm-hmm.

Hvass: Do they go to the job site?

Anderson: Yeah. So they go to the job site. And so as far as truck storage and so on, that would be somewhat minimal.

Organ: That was my question: How many on-site employees?

Hvass: There's how many...do you know how many there are on site? There's probably only about four or five?

Graff: I don't...yeah, every time I've been there, there's only been a couple, four or five guys max there, so...

Hvass: Are there any other questions of Planning Commission members?

Organ: I thought you were always down in Texas this time of year.

Graff: No. My dad. He's down in Florida, not Texas.

Organ: Okay. No questions.

Hvass: Well, is there anyone from the public that wishes to be heard? No? No one from the public? Okay. If you have no further questions, then I'm going to close the meeting with the right to reopen it if it becomes necessary.

Hearing closed at 7:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Karen Boland, Recording Secretary