

**City of Columbus**  
**Public Hearing – 9218 Lake Drive IUP Application (PC-15-102)**  
**Applicant: Jonathan Peterson**  
**April 1, 2015**

The April 1, 2015 Public Hearing to receive testimony regarding the request of Jonathan Peterson for an Interim Use Permit to build a bulk storage bunker at 9218 Lake Drive, Columbus, MN was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chair Garth Sternberg at the City Hall. Present were Commission members Jim Watson, Pam Wolowski, Jesse Preiner, and Jody Krebs; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, Planner Dean Johnson, and Recording Secretary Karen Boland.

Also in attendance were City Council members Bill Krebs and Denny Peterson; Gordy Simanton of Solar Stone, Orville Sachs, Jeannine Sachs, John Waldoch, Jeff Joyer, Nick Waldoch, Sue and Steve Wagamon, Perry Wagamon, Frank Wagamon, Jon Peterson, Sherri Nase, Karl Gronquist, Mary Preiner, and Pat Preiner.

**Sternberg:** Next we'll have a Public Hearing and discussion for 9218 Lake Drive IUP application request, pages 1 through 19 and enclosure. And at this time I'd like to ask the recording secretary to read the, read the notes.

Notice was read at this time.

**Sternberg:** Thank you. At this time I'd like to ask the applicants to please come forward, and then state your name and address for the record.

**Peterson:** Jon Peterson with Peterson Companies and The Barn LLC. Uh, should I use the Columbus address? 9218 Lake Drive, Columbus.

**Sternberg:** Thank you. Can you please give us a little background on what it is that you're asking?

**Peterson:** Um, last fall we, uh, started to put up a couple of above-grade bunkers, I guess, if you will, for storing some salt that we had purchased. Um, you may or may not have heard the whole story I guess already, but the, uh, last fall and early winter, there was a severe salt shortage for the whole upper Midwest, due to last winter. And, uh, we were kind of struggling to find enough salt. We do a lot of hospitals and shopping malls and what-not for snow removal. Um, so we have to have salt, obviously. So we pre-bought a bunch of salt that we had found down south, and had it shipped up, and didn't have enough room at our location in Chisago City to store it all, so we put up a couple bunkers down here on the property, um, to store the salt. And, in the midst of it all, found out that we needed a permit to do so. We assumed that, seeing as how they weren't a structure, and there was no footings or anything – never even crossed our mind, I guess. So we started putting it up, and then come to find out that we had to get a permit for that. Which leads to the fact that it, uh, we had to get an interim use permit to do that – in order to get a building permit to put that temporary structure up. So, we're kind of doing this a little backwards, I guess, but, uh, I sure appreciate the Council's help last fall in getting us through the winter there, and, whatever – being able to finish up the bunker, so we could store the salt.

**Sternberg:** Sure.

**Mursko:** For those of you in the audience, this is the property we're talking about. (overhead map) It's at 9218 Lake Drive. This is Lake Drive. This is Zurich Street. This is the current building, and this would be the location of where the salt storing would be. So, it's directly behind the building.

**Sternberg:** Does the Planning Commission have any questions for the applicant?

**Preiner:** I can address that... Mr. Chairman. On Monday night Mrs. Krebs and I went, met Jon out there, and looked at the bunkers that he had. So, over the winter you had some greenhouse plastic over the top. Right?

**Peterson:** Yes.

**Preiner:** So now you...

**Mursko:** Excuse me. Can you kind of project? We can't hear you.

**Preiner:** Oop. So now you've taken that off in the last week, or you're taking it off?

**Peterson:** Well, actually, it actually blew off with the wind last weekend, but, uh, we cleaned that up and we're going to, uh, we're going to replace that plastic on the one structure that still has some salt left in it – with the greenhouse poly that goes over the top.

**Preiner:** So, basically, what was on there? You're putting just new one back on.

**Peterson:** Yup. We'll do a little better job this time.

**Preiner:** So then, that just sits there, full of salt until winter?

**Peterson:** Correct. There's not a whole lot left. It's only, it's only maybe 20 percent full I would say, at the most, probably.

**Preiner:** Will you be refilling it then, for next winter? Or, how does that work?

**Peterson:** I guess it would depend on the situation next fall. If there's...

**From audience:** Would you have him speak into the microphone?

**Audience:** Or turn around to face us, so we can hear?

**Sternberg:** Those are actually not magnifying...all we can ask is that you speak louder.

**Preiner:** Slide over on this end of the table. Then you can sort of face everybody.

**Audience:** Thank you.

**Preiner:** So, my question was...so it's half full of salt, or a third full now. So you're going to put a cap on it, so it stays out of the rain. And then you're going to fill it next fall and re-use it, you think, or how does that work?

**Peterson:** It would depend on the season, and then if there's a shortage again, and if we have to pre-buy a lot of salt. If we do, then yes, we would put some more back in there. If it's a typical year, where you can just buy it as you need it throughout the winter, then we would probably just be able to host enough up at our storage facility in Chisago to get us by. That's where we load it all up anyways, up there. So, really what this was down here is, to bring it all in at once. It comes in by semi. Um, it'd be 15 to 20 semis usually, that would come in over the course of a, a couple, three, four weeks, um, dump it, push it in there, and then, we would just haul it up to our site up in Chisago as we need it, which is pretty minimal for the most part. We haul a couple semi loads at a time, put it in our building that we have up there, and that's where we loaded our actual salt truck every time it snowed. So to answer your question, if we do pre-buy a bunch, yes, we would fill it back up again next fall. I would say at the minimum, we'll probably fill it up half full.

**Preiner:** Okay. Otherwise, everything else stays the same?

**Peterson:** Yeah. Everything else on the property, or let me say that all that would be there is what's included on the permit, would be a front-end loader that would sit in there. And that thing we would park inside the actual storage deal and/or inside the building that's there. And, um, all that would happen, we would come in with a couple semis, load 'em up and they would go. It wouldn't be an ongoing thing where it's going around the clock or anything like that, by any means.

**Preiner:** Okay.

**Krebs:** Mr. Chair. Have you had a chance to read over the Findings of Fact and the Recommendations that, um, Dean put together?

**Peterson:** Yes.

**Krebs:** And what about the questions, um...? Did he receive those questions, Elizabeth? On page 8 and 9? 'Cause he answered...these are his answers to these questions...?

**Mursko:** I was going to say, these are his answers.

**Krebs:** Okay. And so, this IUP you're requesting for is for one year, correct?

**Peterson:** Correct.

**Krebs:** Okay. Um, I have another question, if that's okay, Mr. Chair. Um, I have a question on the dispensing of fuel. You're saying you're not going to do any of that. How can you keep your equipment...? I mean you've got to have some, right? I mean, we can't not let you have any.

**Peterson:** Um, I guess we didn't have any fuel there all winter. It's just a long loader that sits there, and when we do load, it's load up three, four, five trucks. I mean, you can't even burn much fuel doing that. You should be able to pick up the drive by and top it off, fill it up when you're down there. We plow, um, Running Aces right next door, actually, so we always have people coming and going through there anyways, throughout the day. So it really wouldn't be an issue.

**Krebs:** Okay. Okay.

**Peterson:** In the event that we did, I guess, for some reason or another, we have portable tanks that are dual-wall tanks, non-spillable, um, OSHA and PCA regulated, that we have on job sites anywhere we work so, in the event we would bring something in, that's what it would be anyway. So, it wouldn't be like a, a standard on-site thing that you would see at a location...

**Krebs:** Okay. Okay. And, of course, just looking at the hours – you're only just in there just to haul...

**Peterson:** Correct.

**Krebs:** ...the salt in and out? And that's pretty much working hours, unless we have a huge snowstorm or something like that?

**Peterson:** Yup. Yeah

**Krebs:** Okay.

**Wolowski:** How frequent is that?

**Peterson:** How frequent are we hauling it out?

**Wolowski:** Yup.

**Peterson:** Um, the busiest time would be in the fall when we haul it in. Um, you know, we're only talking, it could be 300 tons, it could be 1000 tons, something like that. One semi is 25 tons, so it's not too many of those. That takes us through the whole winter. Obviously this winter wasn't very busy from a snow account, but I think we used 3 or 4 hundred ton this winter – total.

**Wolowski:** And then on the typical...Mr. Chair?

**Sternberg:** Yes, go ahead.

**Wolowski:** On a typical storm, how much, when you're coming...how often are you coming out to grab loads to...? You're not, from what I'm understanding from your saying, is that you're not using it to load all the separate trucks and go off. You're just taking it and moving it to a...?

**Peterson:** Yup.

**Wolowski:** Okay. So what can we expect there?

**Peterson:** Um, I would say on the typical snow events, um, in most cases we actually wouldn't even show up there. 'Cause we'll already have our salt up at our site where we load from. In the event that a truck were to be down in the cities and ran short and needed a little extra or whatever, rather than come all the way back to our site, um, they could grab one load out there, whatever, which is, you know, takes five minutes to load it up...

**Wolowski:** So just an occasional use?

**Peterson:** Yes. And then, uh, the semis that would come haul it out, it would be one or two at a time, and, if there was snow...if there was a busy winter like two winters ago, um, we were getting a semi load a week. That's all it would actually be, so, one load per week.

**Wolowski:** Okay. So that's not a lot of volume then.

**Peterson:** No, it's...

**Wolowski:** And we had a nice winter this last winter. Well, maybe not so much for you, but... All right. Thank you.

**Preiner:** That's it for me.

**Sternberg:** Any further questions?

**Preiner:** No.

**Sternberg:** Okay, at this time I'd like to, uh, open the meeting to the public. Anyone from the public have anything to say on the matter?

**Sachs:** Um, I would like to speak now. My husband can't right now. He's had some health problems. We own the property right across Zurich...

**Sternberg:** If I could ask you, if I could ask you to please come forward and state your name and address for the record.

**Sachs:** Okay. Name is Jeannine Sachs. 9428 Lake Drive, just across Zurich from the property that they're talking about. Um, I couldn't hear the first half, because the microphone wasn't loud enough. What type of a bunker is it going to be?

**Peterson:** It's actually already built. It's standing right now.

**Sachs:** Oh, it's already built?

**Peterson:** Yeah. It got put up last fall.

**Sachs:** And now you're asking permission, after it's built?

**Peterson:** Yes.

**Sachs:** Well, that sounds typical. I shouldn't be surprised.

**Peterson:** Well, you probably didn't hear me when I first started...

**Sachs:** I understand you have property is in Chisago too? Chisago City?

**Peterson:** Yes, Ma'am.

**Sachs:** Okay. Why aren't you using that property? I've been by there many times.

**Peterson:** Um, our bunker that we have there isn't large enough to hold all the salt that we...

**Sachs:** But you have much more land around it.

**Peterson:** Um, no. Our land is full, actually.

**Sachs:** It's full, but it's adjustable. Land can be adjustable. Why aren't you building up there? Why are you coming down next to where there's houses and people living?

**Peterson:** Um, well, last fall when this all took place – and you probably didn't hear me when I started out, but there was a salt shortage in the whole upper Mid-west, very little salt. Um, so we had to purchase a full year's supply of salt in the fall of the year, which is kind of abnormal. Normally we buy it through the whole winter, you know, we buy a couple hundred ton a month or whatever. Um, there was a salt shortage, and it was going to be hard to come by, and rumor on the street was that it was going to be a normal winter – which, of course, it wasn't. If it was going to be a normal winter, there would be no salt left, um, by the middle of February. None to be had, you couldn't buy it, whatever. So, we bought our whole year's supply last fall, which is three times, four times more than we normally buy in the fall. So, we weren't set up to handle that. Um, our bunker wasn't large enough, and there wasn't time to build a new bunker or pre-configure our old parking lot. Um, we had the property, we own the property down here, and we thought there would be no harm done by putting up a pile of salt down here.

**Sachs:** So, what other surprises do you have for us on that property?

**Sternberg:** Ma'am, if you could please address the Planning Commission, up here.

**Sachs:** Talk to you?

**Sternberg:** Yeah. Talk to us.

**Sachs:** ...instead of asking him?

**Sternberg:** Yeah. Just ask us the questions, and he can listen and he can answer.

**Sachs:** Okay. Well, I just kind of wonder why he's already got the bunker there and, when we didn't know about this, when our property's right next door.

**Sternberg:** Well, I'll give you a little background. It was, basically, he thought it was a temporary structure. He owns the land. He was, he was trying to build something to keep his salt dry. Um, looking at the pictures, I actually agree with him. I would've thought it was a temporary structure also, and I'm surprised that it required a building permit. But, apparently it did. It was an honest mistake, and now he's trying to correct it. So, that's why we're here today.

**Sachs:** Well, we've owned the property at 9148 for quite a few years, and when you came in with your changing the zoning here, we decided to find a house that would be suitable retirement, on one level, and we found nice property up north. However, in the eight years we've been there, my husband is developing allergies to the oak trees, the forced-air furnace, and quite a few other things. So we are on, in the process of trying to figure out should we stay... which house shall we stay at and which one shall we sell. But, why should we have to have this next door to us?

**Sternberg:** Well, it is a commercial, it's zoned commercial, so there's...

**Sachs:** Then there's things that I can do to my property even though that, even though it's residential, we're living there, there's things that we can do to our property too? 'Cause there's some improvements I'd like to make. And can I just go ahead and do them without getting okay?

**Sternberg:** We would have to...I'd have to see your property on the map.

**Sachs:** It's an ordinary house, with a garage. I guess he knows where it is. He's seen it many times.

**Preiner:** (referring to map) Yeah, right to the...yeah, right next door. Right across the street.

**Sternberg:** Yeah. So there'd be a process, correct? Um, I'm assuming you're residential?

**Mursko:** Depending on what, what improvements there were, um, yes.

**Sachs:** Well, it's still our house and it's still residential, because we own it, and we still will be owning it until we can sell it. And if we move back there, there's some, there're some things I want to do to improve the property. So, does that mean I can just go ahead and do it, and then you okay it afterwards? Is that the way it goes?

**Mursko:** Well, depending on what, depending on what you plan to do, you may not need a permit, and then, you wouldn't need the permission, but...

**Sachs:** Well, that's what I'm thinking. Why should I bother asking, if I can just go ahead and do it, and then, and then ask for permission afterwards? Is that the way it goes? Doesn't sound logical to me. Thanks a lot.

**Sternberg:** Thank you. Anyone else from the public to speak on the matter?

**From audience:** That's a 'no' vote.

**Gronquist:** I would. My name is Karl Gronquist. I live right next door to the property that, um, Peterson Brothers owns.

**Sternberg:** Could you just state your address?

**Gronquist:** Yeah. It's 9252 Lake Drive. And, uh, when I sit in my office, I look out the window every day - I just came from there - and I look, I can see the buildings next door. I mean, they own a, kind of a large, beat-up old building, and the buildings that he has built up, and to my way of thinking, don't add or detract from the property. So, I mean, I have no objections, and I'm the one - it's right in my lap. So, I just thought I'd say that.

**Krebs:** Thank you.

**Wolowski:** Thank you. Appreciate that.

**Sternberg:** Anyone else from the public? At this time I'll close the, uh, close the meeting with the right to re-open if it becomes necessary.

Hearing closed at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Karen Boland, Recording Secretary