

**CITY OF COLUMBUS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY MEETING FORMAT
STATUTES SECTION 13D.021
04-06-2022**

The 04-06-2022 Regular Planning Commission meeting for the City of Columbus was called to order at 6:30pm by Chair Ron Hanegraaf at the City Hall. Present were Commission members Kris King, Barb Bobick and Bob Berens and City Associate Planner Ben Gutknecht.

In attendance via interactive technology were City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, Permit Coordinator Carissa Kranz and City Council member Shelly Logren.

Also, in attendance in person were Residents Myron and Cindy Angel, Resident John Young, Blaine Brothers Representatives Dean Dally, Mike Blass, Curt Strandlund and Tucker Dally, City Council member Janet Hegland and Mayor Jesse Preiner.

The meeting was held in an interactive technology meeting format.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER – REGULAR MEETING – 6:30PM**
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 3. MOTION – APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA** *Motion* Bobick to approve agenda as written. Second Berens. Motion carried with King, Hanegraaf, Bobick and Berens voting in favor.
- 4. MOTION – APPROVAL OF MARCH 16, 2022, PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES** *Motion* Bobick to approve 03-16-2022, Planning Commission Minutes as written. Second King. Motion carried with King, Hanegraaf, Bobick and Berens voting in favor.
- 5. MOTION – APPROVAL OF MARCH 16, 2022, PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES, 13528 LAKE DRIVE NE CUP AMENDMENT, BLAKE DRILLING CO.** *Motion* Berens to approve 03-16-2022, Planning Commission Public Hearing Minutes, 13528 Lake Drive NE CUP Amendment, Blake Drilling Co., as written. Second Bobick. Motion carried with King, Hanegraaf, Bobick and Berens voting in favor.
- 6. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION – BLAINE BROTHERS (TRUCKALINE) NON-BINDING CONCEPT REVIEW** Blaine Brothers is a family-owned business established in 1979 and includes four separate business entities. Currently, they have more than 350 employees and 13 locations throughout Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. The four separate business entities often work together to offer nearly every product and service related to the commercial transportation industry. These include medium to heavy duty truck and trailer parts, service, towing, hydraulic services, full-service frame, suspension, and alignment services. Blaine Brothers is proposing to move their TruckAline business to the City of Columbus. This specific business entity consists of full-service frame, suspension, and alignment services on both trucks and trailers. The purpose for the Non-Binding Concept Plan application is due to Blaine Brothers confirming that the proposed use as presented by TruckAline business meets the intent of the Highway Commercial district in the Freeway Corridor.

Representatives from Blaine Brothers Dean Dally (10011 Xylite St NE, Blaine, MN 55449), Mike Blass (2533 8th St White Bear Township, MN 55110), Curt Strandlund (18542 Ulysses St NE, East Bethel, MN 55011), Tucker Dally (10011 Xylite St NE, Blaine, MN 55449) gave an overview of their business and

concept plan for moving their TruckAline business to the City of Columbus. Planning Commissioners were able to share their thoughts and ask questions.

Staff Questions for Planning Commission Consideration:

1. Regardless of the Property location, is the proposed use consistent with purpose statement and definition of “Indoor vehicle service and repair” as indicated in the above staff report?
 - King originally answered as no, but then changed to yes, stating as long as the vehicle service and repair is being conducted indoor.
 - Bobick answered no.
 - Bernes answered no and stated concerns with outdoor and overnight parking.
 - Hanegraaf answered yes.
2. In relation to a vehicle service business, when vehicles and equipment are waiting for their turn to be serviced and are parked outside, does this count as outdoor storage that is regulated by the rule that requires “*outdoor storage of retail goods, vehicles, and equipment not exceeding 50% of the gross square feet of the combined building floor area.*”?
 - Berens indicated that he believes the parked vehicles and equipment waiting to be serviced would be considered outdoor storage.
 - King indicated that she believes the parked vehicles and equipment waiting to be serviced would be considered outdoor storage.
 - Bobick indicated she doesn’t believe it qualifies and is focused on the retail businesses and noted that she doesn’t believe this is a retail business and that it’s serving the transportation industry.
 - Hanegraaf indicated that he believes the parked vehicles and equipment waiting to be serviced would be considered outdoor storage.
3. Is the proposed architectural design consistent with the design standards for the Highway Commercial district?
 - Berens stated that the raised panels do not meet the standards for the Highway Commercial District, and it belongs more in an industrial district.
 - Hanegraaf disagreed with Berens stating that the ECOFUN building is raised panels. Berens stated that it takes architectural features to address the esthetic value.
 - King indicated that without a design it’s hard to say.
 - Barb had nothing to add.

Recommendation from the Commissioners is for Blaine Brothers to consider parcels Light Industrial District as opposed to the Highway Commercial District they are currently looking in.

7. DISCUSSION – CHAPTER 7 COMMERCIAL STANDARDS ORDINANCE AMENDMENT PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHEET DISCUSSION. On 03-22-2022 Associate Planner Gutknecht sent out a worksheet for Planning Commission members to fill out and submit back to staff prior to this 04-06-2022 meeting.

Commissioner King asked for current definition of masonry within the City’s Ordinance in which Gutknecht stated that the ordinance doesn’t reference a direct definition for masonry but does list masonry products as brick, stone, stucco, decorative block, tile, cast stone, pre-cast textured concrete panels. Bobick researched definitions and provided the following: Masonry is a construction method that uses individual units, like brick and stone, bound together with mortar.

At this time Gutknecht read the backgrounds of each question and let each member state their answers and reasonings.

1. Background: Currently, our Zoning Ordinance describes masonry products as follows, *“Building materials may include masonry products (brick, stone, stucco, decorative block, tile, cast stone, pre-cast textured concrete panels)”*.
 - a. When the City Code describes required design standards as *“35% of the building must be masonry”*, does masonry include veneer products?
 - King stated that she does not believe that veneer qualifies as a masonry product.
 - Hanegraaf stated yes, but to a certain point.
 - Bobick stated she does not see veneer as a masonry product. Also, she indicated that a lot of the 35% allowed masonry product will be used in the foundation of most buildings and that’s where they want the strength and veneers are just plywood frames and you adhere brick to and there is not strength there, it looks nice, but you want the solid foundation in her opinion.
 - Berens stated yes it should be included, in his opinion veneer is esthetic, it’s not structural and he doesn’t believe that building codes allow for building structures that do not meet state and local codes to build a structure that’s noncompliant and it’s not going to support the structure that’s being built. The argument that masonry means it has to be more structural sound he doesn’t agree with, he thinks to allow for veneer such as Hardie board, which is a concrete product, should be allowed and if it makes the building more esthetically pleasing then it should be included.

2. Background: Hardie Board has been described as a durable and adequate masonry alternative. It is also easily installed and manipulated to various designs and colors. The product is made from cement, sand and cellulose fibers. Previously, Hardie Board was considered by the Planning Commission and City Council not to be a masonry product.
 - a. Do you consider Hardie Board to be a masonry product that would count towards the total masonry percentage requirement?
 - King stated that she is on the fence because if it’s a veneer she said no it is not a masonry product but if they look at it as a concrete product then it’s a concrete product.
 - Hanegraaf stated it’s a tricky question and is worried about the wording *“total”* when looking at building small size of Caribou in his opinion a full concrete building didn’t look right but when they put Hardie board on it looked better. Hanegraaf answered no and his reasoning is no it should not count towards the total masonry percentage.
 - Bobick stated she looked up the construction industries definition of Hardie board and according to them it is not considered a masonry product. She does not have a problem with it being a part of a building, but it shouldn’t be a major part as it is derivate not stable.
 - Berens answered yes.

3. Background: After review of recent applications in the Freeway districts, the required masonry percentage has come into question. Primarily, is it too high and therefore unreasonable/prohibitive to desired future development? At the time of this question the Planning Commission was speaking specifically about the Mixed-Use High Density (MU-H) District which currently requires commercial buildings to have 80% masonry.
 - a. Do we need to lower our required percentage of masonry in the MU-H district?

- Berens stated he doesn't have the background on why the ordinance states 80% and wondered if there's survey data to back up the reasoning. In his opinion 80% seems excessive in this zoning district and he would lower the percentage to 70%.
 - Bobick stated she believes the percentages came from City Planner Dean Johnson and was talked about in length with the City Council and Planning Commission. Gutknecht confirmed that during the design standard conversation the Council and Commission members wanted to stay as close to the original ordinance, which was 100% brick/masonry and didn't want it to be too stringent and the percentages were not a recommendation from staff it was a decision made by the policy makers.
 - Hanegraaf answered no keep the 80% standard.
 - King answered no to keep the building standards high.
- b. The remaining districts in the Freeway Corridor require the following percentage of masonry: MU-M= 70% | CC= 80% | GC= 70% | HC= 70% | GB= 50% | LI= 30%. If we lower the MU-H district's required masonry percentage, would you lower the other Freeway Corridor districts as well?
- All members answered no and that the percentages did seem to be accurate.
 - King mentioned looking at the size of the building but answered no to the overall question.
4. Background: The existing controls regarding light/illumination in our current Zoning Ordinance does not specify as to what type of lights the controls are applicable to. Rather, it was an attempt to create catch all language that resulted in the inability for businesses the use of low lumen decorative lights. Staff believes the original interpretation is that the controls are for security and site lighting only, not decorative. However, the sentence does little to confirm this and leaves the ordinance open to interpretation.
- a. The current Ordinance, Section 7A-813 B. reads: *"Lighting. All newly installed, repaired, or replaced outdoor lighting fixtures shall include cutoff luminaires and shall be directed away from residential property and public streets in such a way that residential structures shall be shielded from direct rays of light and so as not to exceed an intensity of illumination greater than one (1) foot-candle (one lumen per square foot) measured at the residential property line."*
- b. Staff Recommend replacing the above, with the following: *"All exterior lighting and illuminating devices shall be provided with lenses, reflectors or shades so as to concentrate illumination on the property of the owner or operator of the lighting or illuminating devices. Rays of light or illumination shall not pass beyond the property lines of the premises utilizing the lights or illumination at an intensity greater than 0.5 footcandle measured at property lines abutting property zoned residential and one footcandle measured at property lines abutting streets or property zoned nonresidential. No light source, lamp or luminaire shall be directed beyond the boundaries of the lighted or illuminated premises."*
- c. Does the proposed Ordinance Language adequately address the concerns regarding the lighting controls?
- All members answered yes that this language appears to antequely address concerns.

5. Background: During the Chapter 7A Ordinance amendment, minimum building sizes were briefly discussed. To address the concern regarding smaller buildings being constructed, the policy makers agreed to create a minimum outdoor storage ratio, thus promoting those who want more storage to have larger buildings.
- a. Do we need to investigate different methods for creating minimum building size standards in the freeway districts?
 - All members answered yes.
 - King also mentioned design standards, if we have smaller buildings, we need to look into altering our percentages.
6. Background: With a recent Variance application approval, the question has been raised as to whether or not the City needs to further clarify what is permitted in regard to the allowance of corporate identity design standards. Currently, each of our new Zoning districts has the following language: *“Colors shall be earth tone, such as shades of brown and soft neutral colors. Multiple color schemes are permitted, provided they are complementary and compatible with the primarily masonry exterior. The use of contrasting, yet harmonious colors may also be permitted provided they are compatible with the primarily masonry exterior.”* Staff interprets this as an attempt to recognize that there may be colors that do not match the required earth tones, (Home Depot, Caribou Cabins, McDonalds, etc.) while allowing them to keep their corporate identity and still remaining compliant with the required masonry percentage and appearance. However, the recent variance approval showed that when the masonry percentage was decreased, the bulk of the building was the “corporate identity” and not earth tone or masonry. (Unless Hardie Board ultimately is considered masonry).
- a. Do we need to investigate other controls used to measure corporate identity and colors that do not match earth tone that are related to corporate colors?
 - All members answered yes.
7. Does the Planning Commission want to investigate the permissibility of kiosk/drive thru business concepts in the Commercial districts?
- King stated yes because when they were meeting to discuss uses, they did not want drive thru only businesses they were supposed to be accessories.
 - Hanegraaf stated yes because businesses have changed their business plans and are looking at different approaches to deliver their products to the public and we should look at this concept again.
 - Bobick stated yes, she does not like the idea of these kiosk businesses. In her opinion there’s too many downsides to them and thinks they’re primarily for driver convince and they create excessive pollution, and they are a poor use of our limited uplands.
 - Berens answered no, in his opinion they should be looking at individual opportunities. Applicants should have the opportunity to apply for a variance request and part of their job is to consider any changes to the ordinance or to the request that they are looking at the time. He doesn’t believe that the ordinance should be so restrictive and definitive that we can’t have variance requests.

City Staff Ordinance Amendment Questions:

8. Background: In the past, staff has been asked by existing business about changing the height of their *security fence*, however, to do this they must change the site plan, meaning they technically must go through the land use entitlement process such as a Site Plan review or CUP Amendment. Staff wanted to inquire with the Planning Commission as to whether or not they would be amenable to amending the Ordinance to allow for administrative review and approval in the following scenarios:
- a. Security Fence installation and/or height and materials changes after the approval of a CUP or Site Plan. This would not include changes to the screening plan or other site expansions.
 - b. Minor changes in landscape plans, provided that they meet the requirements of ordinance. This would not include changes to the screening plan or other site expansions.
- Berens answered yes for staff to present an amendment to the Council with language allowing for administrative review and approval of commercial properties that are requesting minor changes to security fencing and landscaping. Also, he feels fencing is an issue and that the project owner should decide what the security fence height and material should be.
 - Bobick noted she didn't understand the question and has hesitations to let people do anything without things in writing but wants to make things easier for staff to make decisions on clear cut requests.
 - Hanegraaf answered yes because if it's a fence they aren't going to ask to lower it, if it's screening, they aren't going to ask to cut them all down, so in his opinion it's common sense for staff to handle it.
 - King agreed for minor changes staff can handle the administrative review.
9. Background: The previous Zoning Ordinance Chapter 7A-801, which governed dimensional standards for the Zoning Districts, used to have a provision that stated, "Parking *may not occupy more than 1/3rd of required front yard area in the CR, C/S, or LI Districts*". During the amendment, staff amended the language to state that "*Parking may not occupy more than 1/3rd of required front yard area in all commercial and industrial districts*". This was done in an attempt to make the Ordinance consistent. However, this change resulted in the no parking shall occupy more than 1/3rd of the front yard area rule suddenly applying to the C/I District. Staff want to ask the Planning Commission if this is language they'd like to keep in the new Ordinance?
- All members stated to leave it as it is.

Gutknecht thanked the Commissioners for completing the handout and for sharing their opinions. Commissioners can send any literature that they would like added to the discussion at the 04-20-2022 meeting. The goal of that meeting is to come out with action items, motion to the City Council and direction to staff to draft an ordinance amendment.

8. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM Nothing at this time.

9. PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS' REPORT Bernes asked about the car lot that appeared on the Waldoch property on the west side of Lake Drive. Mursko stated that we are aware of the situation and are looking into it.

10. ATTENDANCE FOR UPCOMING MEETINGS Berens is to attend the 04-13-2022 City Council meeting.

11. MOTION TO ADJOURN *Motion* by King to adjourn, seconded by Hanegraaf. Motion carried with King, Hanegraaf, Bobick and Berens voting in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Carissa Kranz

Respectfully Submitted: Carissa Kranz, Recording Secretary