

**BIG LAKE PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 8, 2020**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Heidemann called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Alan Heidemann, Scott Marotz, Lisa Odens, Ketti Green, Shane Shatka, and Scott Zettervall. Commissioners absent: Dustin Vickerman. Also present: City Planner Lucinda Meyers, Consultant Planner Kevin Shay, Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek, and Recreation and Communication Coordinator Corrie Scott.

3A. WELCOME/OATH OF OFFICE: PLANNING COMMISSIONER SHANE SHATKA

Chair Heidemann welcomed newly appointed Planning Commission Shane Shatka and Mr. Shatka took the Planning Commission Oath of Office.

4. ADOPT AGENDA

Commissioner Green moved to adopt the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Zettervall, unanimous ayes, agenda adopted.

5. OPEN FORUM

Chair Heidemann opened the Open Forum at 6:02 p.m. No one came forward for comment. Chair Heidemann closed the Open Forum at 6:02 p.m.

6. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES

6A. APPROVE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 5, 2020

Commissioner Zettervall motioned to approve the August 5, 2020 Regular Meeting

Minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Green, unanimous ayes, Minutes approved.

7. BUSINESS

7A. PUBLIC HEARING: DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION FOR SITE PLAN, VARIANCE AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR LIBERTY BANK (PID 65-538-0105)

Shay reviewed that Miller Architects & Builders LLC, on behalf of Liberty Bank Minnesota, the applicant, has submitted a development application requesting the following:

- Site Plan approval
- Conditional Use Permit for a “Changeable Electronic Sign”
- A variance to exceed the maximum square footage allowed for a “Changeable Electronic Sign”

The subject application is for a 2,813 sq. ft. bank with four drive-through lanes, three teller lanes and one ATM lane. As part of the request, the applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the use of a Changeable Electronic Sign and a variance to exceed the allowable area of an electronic sign.

Staff is recommending approval of the Site Plan and CUP and denial of the Variance for the Liberty Bank project. Staff’s recommendation of approval comes with the following conditions:

1. The site plan shall be approved, in accordance with the approved plans and the following:
 - a. The landscaping plan shall be revised in the following ways:
 - i. The landscaping plan shall show one (1) more overstory tree to be in compliance with the landscaping requirements.
 - ii. The Amur Maple shall be substituted with an approved tree from the City’s list of approved trees.
 - iii. Plant E (Purple Leaf Sand Cherry) shall be listed as a shrub in the planting details.
 - iv. Plant I (Viburnum American Cranberry) shall have it’s spelling corrected to accurately reflect what will be planted.
 - b. Plans shall be revised to show an irrigation system for all landscaping.
 - c. Drainage and utility easements must be shown on the utility plan.
 - d. Detail sheets shall be provided for the lighting fixtures.
 - e. The freestanding sign shall be redesigned to comply with the requirements in Section 1300.08 Subd. 1.
2. The applicant shall comply with the Engineer’s Memos, dated August 21, 2020 and August 24, 2020.

Big Lake Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: September 8, 2020

Page 3 of 9

3. The review and approval of the site improvement pursuant to the requirements of City adopted building and fires codes shall be in addition to the site plan review process. The site plan approval process does not imply compliance with the requirements of these codes.
4. All construction plans officially submitted to the City shall be treated as a formal agreement between the Applicant and the City. Once approved, no changes, modifications, or alterations shall be made to any plan detail, standard, or specification without prior submittal of a plan modifications request to the City Planner for review and approval.
5. Prior to the issuance of any permit for land alteration, the applicant shall provide a financial guarantee (letter of credit or escrow payment) in the amount 125% of the estimated cost to furnish and plant materials including irrigation, mulch, and other landscape materials.
6. The security shall be maintained for at least one (1) year after the date that the last landscape materials have been planted. Upon a showing by the applicant and such inspection as may be made by the City, that portion of the security may be released by the City equal to one hundred twenty-five percent (125%) of the estimated cost of the landscape materials which are alive and healthy at the end of such year. Any portion of the security not entitled to be released at the end of the year shall be maintained and shall secure the applicant's responsibility to remove and replant landscape materials which are not alive or are unhealthy at the end of such year and to replant missing trees. Upon completion of replanting said landscape materials, the entire security may be released. Any ornamental grass planted shall be guaranteed for a full two (2) years from the time planting is completed.
7. Sewer Access Charges (SAC) and Water Access Charges (WAC) will be collected at the time of building permit issuance.
8. Signs are not approved as part of the site plan approval and must obtain a sign permit.
9. Building permits must be obtained in addition to sign permits for sign structures exceeding eight (8) feet six (6) inches in height.
10. Any conditions of the Planning Commission, City Council, Staff, consultants, or other agencies responsible for the review of this development application shall be addressed.

Zettervall asked shay comment on the comprehensive plan. Shay stated that the Comprehensive Plan didn't address signage and that their request is in line with the

Big Lake Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: September 8, 2020

Page 4 of 9

Comprehensive Plan

Chair Heidemann opened the public hearing at 6:20 p.m.

Brad Torok with Miller Architects & Builders LLC commented that they are not opposed to leaving the sign area at the City's ordinance requirement of 24 feet. He stated that they will also meet staff requirements regarding landscaping. Zettervall asked if they are using that same size electronic sign in other communities. Torack stated that they are currently using that size in St. Cloud, but they are not opposed to meeting Big Lake's smaller size requirements for signage.

Dan Miller with Miller Architects & Builders LLC commented that a number of communities have ordinances that require smaller signage much like Big Lake. He stated that the main reason they would use the sign is for community messaging and occasional sales messages.

Chair Heidemann closed the public hearing at 6:25 p.m.

Marotz stated that providing a variance without a practical difficulty is not a fair to other businesses. He stated that it would be a better decision to change the sign ordinance for all rather than provide a variance in this case if the Commission wants to allow the applicant or other businesses to have larger electronic signage. Odens stated that at this point the only other example of an electronic sign that the commission has allowed a variance is for a menu board that wouldn't be visible off of main roadways.

Marotz stated that the tree included on the invasive species list is mainly considered invasive in natural settings that are not continually maintained. In a commercial setting that is manicured, it is not considered as invasive.

Commissioner Odens motioned to recommend approval of the Site Plan and CUP and denial of the Variance for the Liberty Bank project to City Council. Seconded by Commissioner Marotz, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7B. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Klimmek reviewed the following update:

1. Current Development Activity (as of 9/2/20):

Housing:

- Single-Family New Construction Issued Permits 34
- Single-Family New Construction in Review 01
- Multi-Family New Construction
 - The Crossings Phase II – 38 Affordable Townhome Rental Units
 - Extended their Partial C/O

Big Lake Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: September 8, 2020

Page 5 of 9

- Station Street Apartments Phase I and Phase II – 70 Market Rate Rental Units
 - Developer – Kuepers, Inc.
 - In Construction
- Sandhill Villas (HOA) – 12-Unit Single-Family Development Project
 - Developer – Jesse Hartung
 - Fully Approved – Received extension to record documents
- Avalon Estates – 108 Units for 55+ (Patio Homes, Twin Homes, Apt. Building)
 - Developer – Avalon Homes
 - Concept Phase
- Big Lake Station Apartments – 55 Affordable Multi-Family Units; 70 Affordable Units for 55+
 - Developer – Aeon
 - Concept Phase
- Marketplace Crossing I & II – 120 Affordable and Market Rate Multi-Family Rental Units (2, 60-unit buildings)
 - Developer – CommonBond
 - Concept Phase

Commercial/Industrial:

- ❖ Big Lake Car Condo's
 - Project is on hold
- ❖ Wastewater Treatment Expansion Project
 - In Construction – Expecting completion by the end of September 2020
- ❖ Great River Federal Credit Union
 - Need to submit applications for final approvals
 - Building Permit Application has been submitted
- ❖ Nystrom & Associates Treatment Facility
 - Has received final approvals from the City Council
 - Reviewing Building Permit Application
- ❖ Liberty Savings Bank
 - Working Through Site Plan, CUP, and Variance
- ❖ Metro-Transit (North Star Commuter Rail) Facility Expansion
 - Administrative Site-Plan Review
- ❖ Blackbird Group, LLC
 - BLEDA Provided a 1-Year Extension

2. BLEDA:

- Priority has been CARES Act funding and granting funds to the Big Lake Business Community.
 - Application deadline was 4 pm on 8/5/20

Big Lake Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: September 8, 2020

Page 6 of 9

- Received 33 eligible applications requesting total of \$1,513,698.91
 - Non-essential – 23 applications requesting total of \$1,188,187.98
 - Essential – 10 applications requesting total of \$325,510.93
- Staff is comfortable awarding \$550,000 at this time, which will leave the City \$313,098 to capture its own COVID related expenses
- Big Lake City Council approved EDA's recommendation of awards on August 26th – Staff is currently distributing funds
- Looking forward to getting back on track with the BLEDA Strategic Plan and marketing/branding initiatives
- Big Lake Manufacturing Week is scheduled for the beginning of October

3. Planning & Zoning:

- Hired Lucinda Meyers – Start date was August 24th
- The Code Revision Task Force has been created. Kick-off meeting was held on August 18th.
 - Task Force members include:
 - Mayor Mike Wallen
 - Ken Geroux – BLEDA Vice President
 - Lisa Odens – Planning Commissioner
 - Doug Peterson – Parks Advisory Committee Vice Chair
 - Goals of the Code Revision Task Force:
 - Provide the least amount of Code to protect property rights and public safety
 - Minimize the need for CUP's, IUP's, PUD's, Variances, etc.

4. Building: PERMIT ACTIVITY REPORT – THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2020

Permit Type	Permits Issued in August of 2020	2020 Total
Single-Family	7	34
Multi-Family	0	2
Commercial New / Remodel / Addition	1	17
Remodel / Decks / Misc.	36	254
HVAC / Mechanical	7	62
Plumbing	2	57
Zoning	26	143
Land Alteration	0	9

Big Lake Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: September 8, 2020

Page 7 of 9

Fire	0	13
TOTAL	79	591

	Permit Fee	Plan Review	TOTAL
Total Fees in August 2020	\$37,181.75	\$9,959.00	\$47,140.75

YTD 2020 Total Valuation (through 8/31/20)	YTD 2020 Permit Fee + Plan Review (through 8/31/20)
\$22,460,225.90	\$312,820.01

PREVIOUS YEAR COMPARISON – THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2019

Permit Type	Permits Issued in August of 2019	2019 Total
Single-Family	15	64
Multi-Family	0	2
Commercial New / Remodel / Addition	0	15
Remodel / Decks / Misc.	24	198
HVAC / Mechanical	6	53
Plumbing	7	39
Zoning	18	123
Land Alteration	0	0
Fire	0	0
TOTAL	70	494

	Permit Fee	Plan Review	TOTAL
Total Fees in August 2019	\$40,416.35	\$9,959.00	\$50,375.35

YTD 2019 Total Valuation (through 8/31/19)	YTD 2019 Permit Fee + Plan Review (through 8/31/19)
\$30,040,985.00	\$397,640.11

5. Recreation & Communication:

- The Farmers Market has had a record year for both vendors and patrons of the Market.
- In the planning stage for the Winter Farmers Market – planning efforts have increased due to limitations with COVID-19
- Movie in the Park – September 18th – Drive-In Style

6. Streets & Parks:

- Current jobs include:
 - Painting crosswalks, stop bars, and arrows on streets
 - Mowing (new zero turns have decreased time spent mowing)
 - Cleaning up vandalism
 - Cleaning up trees that have fallen over
 - Added picnic tables and garbage cans with concrete pads at Sanford Park
 - Added a picnic table and garbage can with concrete pads at Keller Lake Park
 - Added a concrete pad and picnic table at Lakeridge Park
 - Added a concrete pad (waiting on the bench) for Rose Johnson at Lakeside Park
 - Cleaning up the weeds on the East side of the City and into the Big Lake Industrial Park
 - Starting to get ready for winter

Green asked if STS can help with cleaning up the weeds in the industrial park. Klimmek stated that they would be welcomed to reach out to staff throughout the year to find out if there are parks projects that could use volunteers.

8. PLANNER'S REPORT

Meyers stated that she has met with some of the Planning Commission Members over the last week and has a few more meetings this upcoming week. She stated that about eight development applications have come in for the October meeting with multiple Public Hearings, so to be aware that the upcoming Planning meeting will likely be a long one. Meyers stated that staff has considered removing the second monthly Planning meeting from May-August from code as they have been cancelled the majority of them over the past few years. Green stated that she prefers having them scheduled and cancelling them if they are not needed. Zettervall agreed with Green's comment. Odens asked if there is a possibility of hosting a second meeting based on an increase of

agenda items rather than summer months. Zettervall stated that the second monthly meeting could be utilized to do busy-work or set goals when there aren't other agenda items for those meetings.

9. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Shatka asked about the Car Condo project and expressed concerns of there being speeding in that area and potentially drinking and driving as it is very close to a bar. Zettervall stated that they would ask the Police Department to keep an eye on the area if that ever became an issue. Green stated that this specific project is geared more toward individuals working on their vehicles and other car show events.

Odens stated that the Code Revision Task Force has an end goal of reducing the city code to make it easier for developers to come in. Odens stated that she has concerns on reducing code too much and not considering community character. Green stated that they should be cautious when reducing the code too much. Marotz stated that he likes the community character aspect of the code, but that there are some contradictions throughout the code and those should be considered priority to reduce. He stated he wants to make the code friendly to businesses but also keep in mind the residents and their preference of keeping a small town feel and that using the Comprehensive Plan as a guide to decide what is valuable and should stay in the code would be helpful.

Heideman stated that during the last EDA meeting, local businesses applied for emergency funding and the EDA wasn't able to award the full amount requested from the business community due to limited funding. Klimmek stated that Big Lake businesses also had the opportunity to apply for Sherburne County funding.

10. OTHER

11. ADJOURN

Commissioner Zettervall motioned to adjourn at 7:09 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Green, unanimous ayes, motion carried.