

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL AND BIG LAKE TOWNSHIP BOARD
JOINT PLANNING MEETING MINUTES**

OCTOBER 12, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Knier called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. ROLL CALL

Council Members present: Mayor Paul Knier, Council Members Ken Halverson, Sam Hanson, Kim Noding, and Paul Seefeld.

Big Lake Township Supervisors present: Chair Bruce Aubol, Supervisors Larry Alfords, Dean Brenteson, Mark Hedstrom, and Norm Leslie.

Also present: City Administrator Hanna Klimmek, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, City Planner Lucinda Spanier, City Engineer Layne Otteson, , Building Official Lenny Rutledge, Streets/Parks/Fleet Superintendent Norm Michels, Water/Wastewater Superintendent Dan Childs, and Big Lake Township Clerk Brenda Kimberly-Maas.

4. PROPOSED AGENDA

Council Member Seefeld motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda as presented. Seconded by Council Member Halverson, unanimous ayes, Agenda adopted.

5. BUSINESS

5A. Mega Storage USA Parcel No. 65-553-0115 (Variance and Site Plan Applications)

Lucinda Spanier reviewed the planners report for the site plan and variance applications for parcel no. 65-553-0115 from the property owner, John Allen of Industrial Equities – Big Lake LLC and the applicant, John Nightingale from Reprise Design. The 20-acre site is vacant, heavily forested, and located south of 198th Avenue, north of the BNSF railroad, and sits between Lisi Medical and Howmat. The Applicant is proposing to construct a large-scale self-storage facility in two phases. The City's Development Review Committee has reviewed the site plan for compliance with land development regulations and has provided comments to ensure compliance with all applicable development regulations. Spanier noted that a Site Improvement Performance Agreement will be required to ensure satisfactory completion of erosion control, landscaping, and work in the right-of-way. Spanier reviewed that the Applicant is requesting a variance from the exterior building material requirement which restricts the use of metal beyond 50% of the building façade. They are

proposing to locate the non-compliant buildings, which would be 100% constructed with metal panels, in the interior of the site. Buildings located on the perimeter of the site are proposed to be constructed with 50% metal and 50% manufactured brick material. Spanier reviewed Big Lake City Code Section 1040.07 that regulates exterior building materials for Industrial buildings, and criteria that must be met for the City and Township to approve the variance as requested.

Supervisor Aubol asked if the entire site will be cleared during phase I of the project. Spanier responded that the developer has indicated that their plan is to clear the entire area of trees. Supervisor Brenteson discussed that this is a two-phased project and asked if the drainage/ponding area by the railroad will be constructed during phase I or II. Civil Engineer Patrick Sarver from Civil Site Group discussed that the developer will be harvesting the trees for lumber and expects that from a constructability standpoint, the site drains north and south along the phase line so the portion of the stormwater pond that is to the south is not required to be built as a part of the initial construction. It could be built in stands, complete and compliant with all stormwater requirements with the construction of the north portion only. They have the option to leave the trees in place or to take them out.

Lenny Rutledge asked if all the project hard surfaces will be installed at once, or phased in. Sarver indicated that they will be phased in, noting that storage unit buildings lend themselves to be built on a very flat site, which this site is, explaining that elevations of each building are almost identical. The benefit of using a high-quality, upgraded paving material like concrete is that they can really dial in the grading and slope of the concrete for efficient drainage. Sarver stated that there is great soil in Big Lake.

Supervisor Brenteson discussed the developers phasing plan compared to the exterior building materials being proposed. Brenteson noted that if the developer decides not to complete the second phase, there would be exposed steel showing. Sarver indicated that the buildings on the southside wouldn't be built with the first phase, and they could save more trees to provide a buffer.

Council Member Halverson asked who the developer will be marketing the units to. Architect John Nightingale from Reprise Architecture, Inc. reviewed the size of the units, noting that doors will be 12 feet high. This would facilitate storage for specialty vehicles and boats. There is a total of 24 units proposed of various sizes. Spanier clarified that there are 24 buildings being proposed, with each having eight to nine units per building. Halverson asked if a Certificate of Occupancy is issued when a structure is occupiable. Rutledge clarified that a Certificate of Occupancy gets issued at the time a project is deemed completed. Halverson also asked if there is power proposed for these units, and referenced an advertisement for the developer's Morehead facility, which will use a substantial amount of power. Halverson expressed that this high-power usage concerns him that someone could run a business out of a unit. Nightingale stressed that there would be no occupancy allowed, that the units will have no plumbing, heating or cooling, and that all units will just be a storage space. Mayor Knier noted that the City has ordinances in place to restrict a business operating out of a storage unit. Supervisor Alford's asked Sarver to answer Halverson's power question. Sarver indicated that he would need to check with the client to get specifics on

the type of power they are proposing for each unit.

Council Member Halverson stated that he doesn't mind if the perimeter buildings fully meet the Code, but stressed that he doesn't like that the interior structures are proposed with zero building exterior compliancy. Nightingale explained that the project would be designed like a single warehouse where the perimeter would screen the interior buildings. Their goal is to maintain a high-quality development, and having a single finish product would be easier to maintain. Nightingale discussed that the project will consist of 361 units, with 13 of the structures being constructed of 17 units, and 10 structures being constructed with 14 units.

Council member Noding discussed parking at the site. With a 55-foot space between structures, she questioned if larger vehicles including fire trucks would be able to navigate these areas. Nightingale indicated that the 55-foot width has been used in multiple projects without a problem. Council Member Halverson noted that the Fire Department is planning to purchase a larger truck in the future. Lenny Rutledge stated that the project would certainly need to allow for space for our largest emergency vehicle to have access, noting that MN Fire Code requires we have apparatus access within 150 feet. Nightingale stated that any of them can easily accommodate 55 feet of clear space at intersections, and they have absolute confidence that a fire truck will be able to maneuver better than any other site. Halverson noted that there could be issues in the area that goes from 28 feet to 55 feet. Spanier noted that staff will ask the Fire Department for vehicle specifications for the 2026 equipment and will provide to the developer's engineer.

Supervisor Aubol discussed the area in the front of the development that they are proposing to leave a row of existing trees, noting that he feels those remaining trees won't make it. Their mortality rate will be low due to wind and exposure.

Council Member Halverson discussed drainage at the site. Nightingale indicated that he is highly confident that all of the grading would be done at one time, noting that he is a landscape architect and they will make their best effort to keep as much of a mass of trees as they can. In the cluster area, they are planning to keep the grading south of the site.

Supervisor Alford asked what type of security they plan to have at the site. Nightingale discussed that security will be comprised of a series of cameras and electronic information, and the site will be heavily protected. They are not proposing to provide a security fence as it would detract from the quality of look of the project, and would catch debris. Discussion was held that people aren't going to rent units without adequate security.

Council Member Noding asked how the site will be managed and how people will rent a unit. Nightingale explained that the project will be run by a management company, and most communication is handled electronically, although they will hire a local individual to manage the site. Supervisor Hedstrom asked if there will be an office at the site. Nightingale indicated that there will not be an office at the Big Lake location.

Supervisor Brenteson discussed the set of buildings located to the right of the breaking point, and asked if that should be considered a perimeter building in case phase II doesn't happen. Discussion was held on making it part of the agreement to put in upgraded material if phase II doesn't occur.

Patrick Sarver reviewed that after discussing with the developer, they plan to install 20 amp to 30 amp throughout the buildings.

Mayor Knier opened the public hearing at 4:44 p.m. No one came forward. Mayor Knier closed the public hearing at 4:44 p.m.

Motion by Council Member Noding to recommend approval of the site plan for parcel no. 65-553-0115 subject to the conditions outlined by staff and any additional conditions identified by the Joint Planning Board. Seconded by Council Member Seefeld, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Motion by Council Member Hanson to recommend approval of the variance request for parcel no. 65-553-0115 with modifications to include brick exterior materials on all perimeter buildings. Seconded by Council Member Halverson, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

6. ADJOURN

Supervisor Hedstrom motioned to adjourn at 4:47 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Seefeld, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
Recorder

10.26.22
Date Approved by the City and Township