

**Becker County Planning Commission**  
**October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Members Present:** Acting Chairman Jeff Moritz, Tom Disse, Kohl Skalin, County Commissioner Erica Jepson, Harvey Aho, Nick Bowers, Steve Lindow, Kim Mattson, Commissioner John Okeson, Craig Hall, Mary Seaberg, and Zoning Director Kyle Vareberg.  
**Members Absent:** Dave Blomseth and Tommy Ailie.

Acting Chairman Jeff Moritz called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:04 pm. Introductions were given. Becker County Zoning Technician Nicole Bradbury recorded the minutes.

Harvey Aho made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Special meeting and the September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023, meeting. Disse second. All members in favor. Motion carried.

Acting Chairman Jeff Moritz explained the protocol for the meeting and stated that the recommendations of the Planning Commission will be forwarded to the County Board of Commissioners for final action.

**New Business:**

- 1. APPLICANT: Brad Snelling & Leah Snelling** 27205 Witter Ave Park Rapids, MN 56470 **Project Location:** 55011 Grant St Osage MN 56570 **LEGAL LAND DESCRIPTION:** Tax ID Number: **21.0101.001** Section 16 Township 140 Range 036; N1/2 NW1/4 NW1/4 **APPLICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Request a Conditional Use Permit to operate a salvage yard.

Brad Snelling presented the application. He explained that he used to be a Part of Dick's Auto Wrecking in Park Rapids, MN. He worked there for 21 years and had owned it since 2012 until the Partnership dissolved. He stated his desire to downsize and operate a salvage yard on this property. He said that he likes things organized and that he left a border of trees to help block the view.

In regard to a letter that was received before the meeting, Hall asked how he would address the concern for noise with equipment and beeping from backing up.

Snelling said he wouldn't be operating the full 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, that it would just be in and out. He stated that it's only him working, and as one person he can only make so much noise. He said there would be no more noise than a standard diesel truck.

Lindow asked if he was just planning to use the area to bring in vehicles, store them, and then haul them somewhere else for processing.

46 Snelling said yes, he would buy them, store them, and then when the markets go up, he would  
47 haul them to the processors.  
48  
49 Skalin asked if he was going to sell parts off the vehicles.  
50  
51 Snelling said he doesn't have the manpower. He said if he were to move fully into selling parts,  
52 he would have to hire more people, and for at least the next couple years he plans for it to just be  
53 him running the salvage yard.  
54  
55 Lindow asked what he would do if a vehicle was leaking fluids.  
56  
57 Snelling said he would bring it in to the shop and drain it. He would then call the appropriate  
58 people to take away the fluids.  
59  
60 Lindow asked how long he would hold the vehicles.  
61  
62 Snelling said he watches the iron markets to make that determination.  
63  
64 Lindow asked how many vehicles he was capable of storing.  
65  
66 Snelling said it's hard to say for sure, but possibly two hundred (200) to four hundred (400). He  
67 said in times when the iron market is low, he will have more cars on the property.  
68  
69 Disse asked if he already had the equipment needed for this.  
70  
71 Snelling said yes.  
72  
73 Lindow asked if there would be a fence around the whole salvage yard.  
74  
75 Snelling said he left the woods in hopes that would shield everything, but that with the leaves  
76 off, it is a bit visible.  
77  
78 Lindow asked if most salvage yards have a fence.  
79  
80 Skalin said State law only requires screening on State Highways.  
81  
82 Snelling explained that he is putting a fence extending twenty (20) feet off each side of the  
83 building to shield vehicles from view.  
84  
85 Jepson asked how close the closest residence is.  
86  
87 Vareberg said approximately one thousand (1000) feet.  
88  
89 Mortiz asked what the total area is cleared for car storage.  
90

91 Snelling thought about three (3) acres, but stated if he would ever expand it would be ten (10)  
92 acres or less.

93  
94 Moritz asked how many acres he could live with now if they were to put a stipulation on how  
95 many now and then require him to come back if he wanted to expand.

96  
97 Snelling said at least six (6) acres.

98  
99 Lindow asked what would happen inside the shop.

100  
101 Snelling said he will store equipment and if something would need to be drained, he could do it  
102 in there.

103  
104 Lindow asked who regulates salvage yards.

105  
106 Snelling said the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

107  
108 Angel Weasner, neighbor spoke and stated they purchased the property because they enjoy quiet.  
109 She said she understands wanting a business, but they don't want a salvage yard there. She said it  
110 will be hard to sell their property if needed when it's next to a salvage yard. She also stated that  
111 she doesn't feel he will be able to remove all contaminants and referenced a warning letter his  
112 former business received from the MPCA in 2015. She asked that if the application is approved  
113 that there be several stipulations attached to the permit.

114  
115 Skalin asked Snelling about the MPCA warning letter from 2015.

116  
117 Snelling said it was a situation of a disgruntled employee filing a complaint. He said three (3)  
118 people from the MPCA came and went through everything they needed to. The warning letter  
119 stated what needed to be corrected in order to avoid a violation and that was all taken care of.

120  
121 There were two letters received and read by the Planning Commission Members before the  
122 meeting. Those letters are entered into record below:

This reply is in reference for a request for a conditional use permit #CUP2023-92 for parcel 21.0101.001 to operate a salvage yard that I have some concerns about. If you follow the Becker County Zoning Ordinance language for Chapter 1 sec 1 item D it reads "To preserve the value of properties and encourage the most appropriate use of agricultural land". It is a well known fact that having a parcel of land near a new junk yard does not increase the value and will de-value the property due to the nature of pollution associated with auto salvage like lead, mercury, gas, diesel, oils, and noise from junkyard heavy equipment like backup alarms and engine noise. I recently did a search and found no property listings that said that they were located near a junkyard as an amenity. The applicant currently owns parcel 21.0010.006 that is 30 acres compared to the 20 acres that the CUP is for. Since the new driveway for the proposed parcel and the frontage of the larger parcel are both on an Osage township road, I propose that it be considered at the larger parcel near where the applicant has a homestead and not near my homestead.

Becker County Zoning Ordinance Chapter 8 section 2 sub A Notice Requirements says in the last sentence, The notification to affected property owners shall include both a legal description and a common description of the property in question with a brief explanation of the intended purpose for which application is filed.

Becker County Zoning Ordinance Chapter 8 section 2 sub sec b says, In the case of conditional use permits, to owners of record within one quarter mile of the affected property or to ten (10) properties nearest to the affected property, whichever would provide notice to the greatest number of owners.

My reply to the last two is that I would have been considered one of the up to 10 property owners and was not notified per Becker County Zoning Ordinance.

I looked at CUP2023-92 online and have some input on a few items that are the Under the Conditional Use Details Review section.

Item 1 says it is bordered by trees and will not be seen once building is up. My reply to that is I drove past there yesterday and items are visible from the township road on the north. I noticed a front end loader and a vehicle.

Item 2 says it will not have negative effect on neighboring properties. My reply is I would like to know how that a junkyard in a moderately populated area does not have a negative effect on neighboring properties. I would have not purchased our homestead if the junkyard was already established in the proposed location prior to me buying our parcel.

Item 3 says applicant put in a driveway off the township road and would like to fence off the building to keep junk cars out of sight and unseen from any roads. My reply is that is says to fence off the building only and my concern is that junk cars away from building would be visible.

Under the Business Plan Review section.

The section for Hours and Days of Service says 7:00-7:00.

My reply is that it could be 84 hours a week and it doesn't say am or pm and no days of the week are listed. The noise and commotion with a junkyard would be new to people already living in a quiet area.

Also under the Known Environmental Hazards it says n/a.

My reply is that the State of Minnesota has pages of pollutants that are from junkyards like heavy metals, fuels, oils, greases, coolants, and refrigerants to name a few. My concern is that none are listed in the area of the CUP application.

Thank you for considering these facts.

Duane Johanning

124  
125

County of Becker  
Planning & Zoning

I Thomas May &  
Sandra

Vote NO For

Brad Snelling on

Giving him a  
Conditional Use Permit  
To operate a  
Salvage yard

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128

As there was no one else to speak for or against the application, Testimony closed.

129  
130 Skalin stated that he thinks 7:00 am to 7:00 pm is excessive.

131  
132 Mary asked what the days of operation would be.

133  
134 Snelling said Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 5:30 pm would be fine with him, but there  
135 could be times when something breaks down on a weekend and needs to be hauled in.

136  
137 Seaberg said she thinks there should be a fence.

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139  
140  
141 **MOTION: Aho motioned to approve the application as presented with the**  
142 **stipulation that operating hours be 8:00 am to 5:30 pm.; Disse second.**

143  
144  
145 Skalin said he thinks there should be more stipulation. Kohl said he has twenty (20) acres, and he  
146 is only requesting to use ten (10) and to operate on six (6), so it should be stipulated that beyond  
147 that he would have to come back, because that would be another impact to the neighborhood.

148  
149 Skalin asked if they don't stipulate could he clear all twenty acres.

150  
151 Vareberg said it is required by ordinance to screen the salvage yard. He said an approval would  
152 include plans for screening approved by the Planning Commission and the County Board of  
153 Commissioners, and then it becomes law abiding. He said whether that's trees or the building.  
154 From what it looked like on site, the trees and building could be sufficient to screen it and stated  
155 that Snelling could not clear-cut the property.

156  
157 Hall asked Skalin if they were to amend the motion to include up to ten (10) acres if he would  
158 support it.

159  
160 Skalin said yes, he would like that on there.

161  
162  
163 **Aho and Disse accepted the change to the motion to add the stipulation that no more**  
164 **than ten (10) acres be used for the salvage yard. Roll Call; Disse, Skalin, Seaberg,**  
165 **Mattson, Bowers, Aho, and Hall in favor. Moritz and Lindow opposed. Motion**  
166 **carried.**

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170  
171 **2. APPLICANT: Derek A Haug 35601 100<sup>th</sup> Ave Ulen, MN 56585 Project Location:**  
172 **35601 100<sup>th</sup> Ave Ulen, MN 56585 LEGAL LAND DESCRIPTION: Tax ID**  
173 **Number: 35.0115.003 Section 30 Township 142 Range 043; PT NW1/4: COMM SW**  
174 **COR NW1/4, E 950', N 1100', W 950', S 1100' TO POB. APPLICATION AND**

175                   **DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Request a Conditional Use Permit to operate a  
176 firearms business.  
177

178  
179 Haug was unable to attend to present the application.  
180

181 Vareberg explained that he's selling new and used firearms online. There are no onsite retail  
182 sales or a gun range. He stated that the ATF regulates this, but it is a commercial use, so he is  
183 required to get Conditional Use Permit.  
184

185 As there was no one to speak for or against the application, Testimony closed.  
186  
187

188                   **MOTION: Hall motioned to approve the application as presented. Seaberg second.**  
189 **Roll Call; All in favor. Motion carried.**  
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194                   **3. APPLICANT: NMG LLC** 18550 Hwy 59 Detroit Lakes, MN 56501 **Project**  
195 **Location:** 24724 Co Hwy 6 Detroit Lakes, MN 56501 **LEGAL LAND**  
196 **DESCRIPTION:** Tax ID Number: **19.0076.004** Section 05 Township 138 Range  
197 041; 5-138-41 PT GOVT LOT 6: COMM E QTR COR SEC 5, W 947.32' TO POB;  
198 N 446.13', NE 125.43 TO ST CLAIR LK, NLY AL LK 1129.08', W 11', S 1336.83',  
199 E 384.08' TO POB. **APPLICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:**  
200 Request a Conditional Use Permit to operate a plumbing, and heating, ventilation, and  
201 air conditioning (HVAC) business.  
202  
203

204 Nick Green presented the application. He explained that the location of the existing business has  
205 sold, and they have relocated to this new location. He said this will be used for an office, shop,  
206 and storing equipment, inventory, and vehicles.  
207

208 Vareberg asked the members if they were familiar with the existing business that's been in  
209 operation since 1928.  
210

211 Disse said it's a nice building out there.  
212

213 Okeson agreed, and asked how the business has been received by the church next door.  
214

215 Green said they are happy that he's there, and he has full intentions of maintaining a good  
216 relationship with them.  
217

218 Skalin asked if there were plans for a fence.  
219

220 Green said yes.

221  
222 Lindow asked what steps he was taking to prevent water runoff to the lake.  
223

224 Green said there is a berm between the site and the lake. He stated that he has worked with Apex  
225 Engineering, the MPCA, and the Pelican River Watershed regarding this.  
226

227 As there was no one to speak for or against this application, Testimony closed.  
228  
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230 **MOTION: Skalin motioned to approve the application. Seaberg second. Roll Call;**  
231 **All in favor. Motion carried.**  
232  
233

234 **Other Business:**  
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236 I) **Tentative Date for Next Informational Meeting: November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023; 8:00 am; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**  
237 **Meeting Room in the Becker County Courthouse, Detroit Lakes, MN.**  
238  
239

240 **Since there was no further business to come before the Board, Hall made a motion to**  
241 **adjourn. Aho second. All in favor. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:02 pm.**  
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244 \_\_\_\_\_  
245 **David Blomseth, Chairman**  
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\_\_\_\_\_ **Jeff Moritz, Secretary**

247 ATTEST  
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249

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Kyle Vareberg, Zoning Administrator