

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the regularly scheduled meeting of the Spring Lake Park Planning Commission was held on April 28, 2025, at the City Hall, at 7:00 PM.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Hansen called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

Commissioner Sharon Weighous
Commissioner Delfs
Commissioner Rick Cobbs
Commissioner Eric Julien
Chairperson Hans Hansen

STAFF PRESENT

Administrator Daniel Buchholtz, Building Official Jeff Baker, Planner Kristin Baldonado, Planner Kribashini Moorthy

OTHERS PRESENT

Thomas NKem	1279 Norton Avenue NE	Fridley MN
Efuelateh NKengaleh	1129 Avenue NE	Spring Lake Park MN
Pierre Arnold	7883 173 rd Avenue SE	Becker MN
Augustine Awandem	13810 Jasmin Way	Rogers MN
Nicasius Ndemaze	14434 Empire Lane NE	Dayton MN

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes – January 27, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting

Motion made by Commissioner Cobbs, seconded by Commissioner Julien, to approve the minutes from the January 27, 2025, 2023 Planning Commission meeting.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Weighous, Commissioner Delfs, Commissioner Cobbs, Commissioner Julien, Chairperson Hansen. Motion carried.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Public Hearing – Conditional Use Permit – Big Chiefs Auto – 1810 County Highway 10 NE

Planner Kristen Baldonado, presented a conditional use permit application for Big Chief's Auto Center at 1810 County Highway 10 in Mounds View. She stated that the auto repair business—

which includes repair, body work, and tire sales—is occupying an existing building without making any structural changes. Ms. Baldonado noted the site is within a C2 zoning district, where such use is permitted as a conditional use. She said that per zoning regulations, all vehicle storage and work must occur indoors, vehicles must have current tabs, and no vehicle sales are allowed.

Ms. Baldonado stated that the staff is recommending approval of the conditional use permit, subject to the following conditions:

- All auto repairs must be conducted entirely within the building.
- Body work is permitted as part of the auto service and repair use.
- Tire sales are allowed as part of the conditional use.
- Car wash activities are limited to cleaning vehicles inside the building for repair customers only.
- Car rentals are restricted to courtesy loaners for repair customers; rentals to the general public are not permitted.
- Any proposed building or site modifications must be reviewed by city staff as a potential amendment to the conditional use permit.
- All vehicles on the premises must be legal and operable for use on public roads.
- Hours of operation are limited to 9:00 AM–9:00 PM, Monday through Friday, and 9:00 AM–6:00 PM on Saturdays.
- On-site lighting must remain confined to the premises; any changes require review and approval by the city engineer.
- Adequate off-street parking must be maintained.
- All applicable city standards for drainage and other site features must be followed; changes require city engineer approval.

Ms. Baldonado stated that the Planning Commission has three options for action:

- Recommend approval of the conditional use permit with the stated conditions and findings.
- Recommend denial of the permit with findings for denial.
- Continue the item to a future meeting to allow for further discussion or to gather additional information.

Chairperson Hansen opened the public hearing at 7:05 PM.

Mr. NKem, 1810 Highway 10 NE, stated that he represents a group of auto dealers and auto repair shops. He said that primary goal of the group is to bring positive change and improvement to the local auto repair industry, while also contributing to the community through job creation and compliance with city regulations.

Chair Hansen inquired about the number of bays located onsite. Building Official Baker stated that there are two oversized bays. Commissioners inquired about the number of people being employed. Mr. NKem stated that there are 4-5 employees.

Commissioner Cobbs asked for clarification on hours of operation. He was informed the hours were 9:00 am – 9:00 pm. Commissioner Julien inquired if the hours could be 9:00 am – 8:00 pm, due to the close approximating of residential houses.

Mr. Pierre Arnold, 7837 3rd Avenue SE, Becker, MN and a customer of the neighboring business, commented on Big Chief Auto working on vehicles without a CUP and selling vehicles without a dealer's license

Commissioner Delfs inquired of Mr. Arnold if Spring Lake Park Auto had contacted the City about the violations. Building Official Baker stated that he did go out and discuss the violations with Big Chief Auto. He informed Mr. Nkem that he could do paperwork but no other operations could be done.

Mr. Awande, Rogers MN, raised a question during the meeting regarding one of the rules being discussed, specifically about the requirement for activities to be conducted in "close proximity or inclusion of the building." He sought clarification on whether this meant that such activities must be fully inside the building or just within its surrounding premises.

Building Official Baker clarified that the rule means activities must be completely inside the building with the garage door shut. He stated confirmed that any vehicle outside the building must be street legal, operational, have valid license plates, and no expired tabs.

Commissioner Weighous raised a question about the practical implications of the rule requiring all vehicles on the property to be operational. She referred to a situation where a repair shop has two double bays with vehicles inside and the garage doors shut. She asked whether a tow truck driver bringing in a third, non-operational vehicle would need to be turned away under this rule. Commissioner Weighous specifically questioned how after-hours drop-offs would be handled—such as when a service like AAA tows a non-operational car to the shop after business hours. Her concern was that, while the vehicle would not be operational at the time, it was being brought there for legitimate repairs.

Building Official Baker stated that per City Code any vehicle that is parked outside of a garage does have to be operational.

Commissioner Julien asked Mr. Nkem where are the tires being stored once they are removed from the vehicle. Mr. Nkem stated that he has been in contact with a company for disposal, and that the tires will be stored inside until they are picked up for recycling.

Commissioner Cobbs inquired if there were two lots. Administrator Buchholtz confirmed there are two lots under common ownership.

Chairperson Hansen closed the public hearing at 7:32 PM.

Administrator Buchholtz addressed the topic of Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) and enforcement procedures. He reaffirmed as stated by Planner Baldonado, CUPs are presumed

to be permitted as long as reasonable conditions are met. He explained that there is a clear process in the city code for revoking CUPs in cases of ongoing ordinance violations. He noted that when code enforcement receives complaints, they will investigate, document, and attempt to correct the violations. Administrator Buchholtz stated that if violations continue to accumulate, the matter can be brought before the City Council with a recommendation for a revocation hearing.

Administrator Buchholtz emphasized that this process is designed to unfold over time and is intended to ensure compliance. He expressed hope that revocation won't be necessary in this case, but he assured the commission that there is an established enforcement mechanism in place to address repeated non-compliance.

Commissioner Delfs addressed concerns primarily for the benefit of the business owner, highlighting that Spring Lake Park has a long history of issues with late-night vehicle drop-offs and inoperative or unlicensed cars being left in parking lots. He noted that these issues have been significant in the past, prompting the commission's current scrutiny and questions. Commissioner Delfs emphasized that the situation has improved over time, suggesting that past enforcement efforts have had a positive impact.

Motion made by Commissioner Cobbs, seconded Commissioner Julien to Approve the Conditional Use Permit for Big Chiefs Auto with the following conditions, except for changing the hours of operation from 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday through Friday and 9:00 AM to 6 PM on Saturday.

- All auto repairs must be conducted entirely within the building.
- Body work is permitted as part of the auto service and repair use.
- Tire sales are allowed as part of the conditional use.
- Car wash activities are limited to cleaning vehicles inside the building for repair customers only.
- Car rentals are restricted to courtesy loaners for repair customers; rentals to the general public are not permitted.
- Any proposed building or site modifications must be reviewed by city staff as a potential amendment to the conditional use permit.
- All vehicles on the premises must be legal and operable for use on public roads.
- Hours of operation are limited to 9:00 AM–8:00 PM, Monday through Friday, and 9:00 AM–6:00 PM on Saturdays.
- On-site lighting must remain confined to the premises; any changes require review and approval by the city engineer.
- Adequate off-street parking must be maintained.
- All applicable city standards for drainage and other site features must be followed; changes require city engineer approval.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Weighous, Commissioner Delfs, Commissioner Cobbs, Commissioner Julien, Chairperson Hansen. Motion carried.

6. OTHER

Administrator Buchholtz gave an update on activities happening at the City. He began by welcoming everyone to the newly remodeled City Hall, noting that the audiovisual setup is now complete and expressing satisfaction with the renovation, which he believes will serve the city well for many years.

Administrator Buchholtz announced an upcoming City Hall Open House scheduled for Thursday, May 22, from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. He said the event will include tours, cookies, and light refreshments, and formal invitations will be sent out, but he encouraged everyone to save the date.

Administrator Buchholtz also provided an update on a key city development project. He stated the city has recently acquired the Guangzhou property and has a pending purchase agreement for the larger mall at the southwest corner of Highway 65 and 85th Avenue. He noted that once it is finalized, the city will have full control of the site. He did note that existing leases will need to expire before any redevelopment can begin, so visible progress will take time.

7. ADJOURN

Motion made by Commissioner Julien, seconded by Commissioner Cobbs to adjourn.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Weighous, Commissioner Delfs, Commissioner Cobbs, Commissioner Julien, Chairperson Hansen. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM.