



Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA)

Wednesday, February 8, 2017
Regular Meeting

Item -1

Blight Study Request at CHAAP

Staff Contact: Chad

February 2, 2017

From: Chad Nabity, AICP Director

To: CRA Board

Re: Planning Commission Recommendation on Blight and Substandard Study for the Cornhusker Army Ammunition Plant (CHAAP)

Background:

The State of Nebraska changed the Community Development Law in 2013 and gave the power to approve redevelopment plans for the use of Tax Increment Financing to cities of the first class on formerly used defense sites located in the same county as the city of the first class. Hall County has one formerly used defense site, CHAAP, and one city of the first class, Grand Island.

At the January 4, meeting of the Hall County Regional Planning Commission a blighted and substandard study for Grand Island Redevelopment Area 20 was considered and recommended for approval. Area 20 is a 285 acre portion of the almost 20 square miles that encompass this formerly used defense site. A second study Area 22, another 280 acres, was considered and recommended for approval at the February 1, 2017 Planning Commission meeting.

Concern was expressed by Planning Commissioners that these studies were coming in piecemeal. The question was asked about declaring all, or a large portion, of CHAAP blighted and substandard with a single study. The smaller studies were done at the request of the property owners and they paid for the studies, limiting those studies to areas that they had an interest in. The Planning Commission interest extends beyond the benefits to a single or small group of property owners and asked that an item be placed on the February meeting agenda to discuss, and possibly take action, on a wider view of the redevelopment of CHAAP.

At the February meeting the Planning Commission took up the topic of how much of CHAAP should be included in blight studies. After a significant amount of discussion they recommended that a single study should be conducted for the balance of the plant property. The draft minutes from that portion of the meeting are attached.

The CHAAP is located between Airport Road and Husker Highway on the north and south and 60th Road and Schauppsville Road on the east and west. There are four primary zoning districts as defined by the approved reuse plan for the ammunition plant.

AG-SE-Special Agriculture/Events Zone (Husker Harvest Days)

Intent This special use district is to allow for agricultural uses as well as special agricultural demonstration event, expositions and trade shows that require large land areas, in accordance with the Cornhusker Army Ammunition Plant (CAAP) Comprehensive Reuse Plan. Ranch and farm dwellings are not allowed due to Environmental Protection Agency issues with the CAAP site. Adult Establishments are permitted uses in this Zoning District, but are regulated to control the negative secondary effects of these uses, as set forth in Article 3, Section 3.29. Reference Resolution 15-067 Adopted, November 3, 2015

AG-SI-Special Agriculture/Industrial Zone (Old Load Lines)

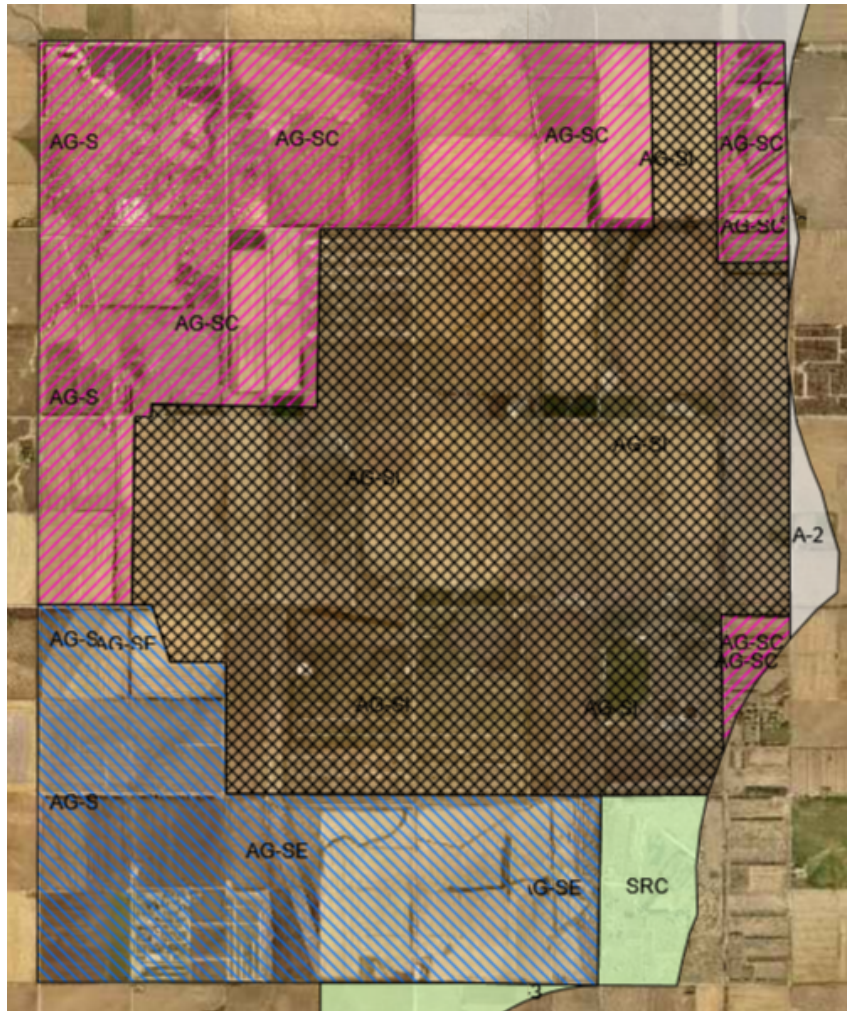
Intent This special use district is to allow for agricultural uses as well as manufacturing, processing, fabrication, research, warehousing, storage and wholesaling facilities in accordance with the Cornhusker Army Ammunition Plant (CAAP) Comprehensive Reuse Plan. Ranch and farm dwellings are not allowed due to the Environmental Protection Agency issues with the CAAP site. Adult Establishments are permitted uses in this Zoning District, but are regulated to control the negative secondary effects of these uses, as set forth in Article 3, Section 3.29.

SRC-Special Recreation/Conservation Zone (Shooting Park)

Intent This district use is to allow for special outdoor recreational shooting facilities, recreational vehicle campgrounds as well as low impact recreational uses associated with pedestrian and equestrian trails, in accordance with the Cornhusker Army Ammunition Plant (CAAP) Comprehensive Reuse Plan.

AG-SC Special Agriculture/Conservation Zone (Burning Grounds and Wildlife Refuges)

Intent This special use district is to maintain lands in a predominately agricultural use, yet allow for limited, low impact recreational uses associated with pedestrian and equestrian trails, in accordance with the Cornhusker Army Ammunition Plant (CAAP) Comprehensive Reuse Plan. Ranch and farm dwellings are not allowed due to Environmental Protection Agency issues with the CAAP site.



Zoning at CHAAP

The Planning Commission does not have a budget to hire a consultant to prepare a blight study. Blight studies have generally been conducted and paid for either by the Community Redevelopment Authority or a property owner or interested party. The Planning Commission with their motion directed planning staff to work with the CRA, Grand Island Area Economic Development, Southern Public Power, The Grand Island Chamber of Commerce and any other potential partners that can be identified to bring forward a single study for the area of the plant.

The CRA could move forward with a study on their own or could take action to encourage partnerships with some or all of those other entities for completion of a study.

If the CRA chooses to fund or partially fund the study they could look at recouping the cost of the study from projects that come forward in the area. At the time those projects are approved a line item could be added to the contract until such time as the cost of the study is repaid. All of the entities participating in the study could be repaid via this mechanism.

Excerpted from the Minutes of the February 1 Planning Commission Meeting

9. Discussion and Possible Action of Overall Blight Study on the entire Cornhusker Army Ammunition Plant or on a substantial portion of the plant, not including those areas separately declared.

Nabity said the Planning Commission had expressed interest in looking at a more comprehensive blight and substandard study for the 20-square mile former Cornhusker Army Ammunition Plant, after seeing two separate studies for 281 acres and 285 acres.

Although the commission doesn't have the funds to conduct a study, Nabity said there may be other entities that could cost share a study. He said those entities could include the Community Redevelopment Authority, the Grand Island Area Economic Development Corp., Hall County and Southern Public Power.

Nabity said studying all 20 square miles may be a little excessive considering some of the uses are for wildlife conservation or for the city-owned Heartland Public Shooting Park. He felt that the land zoned AG-SI (Ag-Special Industrial) where the load lines, some rail and Southern Energy Park are located, as well as land zoned AG-SE (Ag-Special Events) where Husker Harvest Days is located is best suited for a blight study.

O'Neill spoke in favor of adding in the shooting park area for study. Robb favored adding in the wildlife areas too. Ruge said he was leaning toward all the areas just so all the land could be reviewed at once, instead of having a piecemeal approach with studies coming in one at a time. Ruge said Game and Parks could maybe help with the study cost. O'Neill said the Husker Harvest Day site makes sense too because updates there have already been publicly requested.

Hoggatt first made a motion for a blight and substandard study on the CHAAP land, except for the Game and Parks wildlife conservation area, but had no second and changed his motion to include all 20 square miles except for the two existing study areas (Proposed Areas 20 and 22). Commissioners hoped by including in the wildlife conservation areas, there could be some trail development there.

O'Neill said he had some concerns about blighting cornfields and wondered if TIF requests would be made for irrigation pivots. Nabity said all the area qualifies for a review due to its former defense site status, regardless of the row crops there now. Hoggatt said the CRA would be the gatekeeper for any TIF request and he didn't see pivots as qualifying.

The motion by Hoggatt was seconded by Ruge to recommend a blight and substandard study be done on the entire 20 square mile CHAAP plant, excluding those areas already under study or separately declared.

The motion carried with 10 members voting in favor (Allan, O'Neill, Ruge, Maurer, Robb, Monter, Rubio, Sears, Hoggatt and Kjar.) No members voted no, Rainforth abstained.