



"OPEN MEETINGS ACT"

**Planning Commission Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
October 7, 2025 - 7:00 PM**

A Copy of the "Open Meetings Act" Has Been Posted at Both Exits

AGENDA

NOTE: A current copy of the agenda can be obtained at the City Clerk's Office at 218 S. 16th Street, Blair, Nebraska or on the City website at www.blairnebraska.org. The City Council reserves the right to go into Executive Session at any time.

- 1.Meeting called to order and introductions at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Boesiger.
- 2.Roll call of members.
- 3.Approval of minutes from the September 2,2025, meeting.
- 4.Chairman Boesiger opens a public hearing to consider a Conditional Use Permit submitted by Ken Gruber, Omaha Rapid Response, 1925 Soren Drive, Blair, Nebraska, to allow the use of residential accessory structures by a private charitable institution for an office, meeting & training rooms and equipment storage, per any restrictions or requirements of the Nebraska State Fire Marshal, on Tax Lot 125 (Part of Tax Lot 123 located in the Southeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter and the Northeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter) of Section 2, Township 18 North, Range 11, East of the 6th P.M., Washington County, Nebraska (1925 Soren Drive) for 10 years.
- 5.Chairman Boesiger opens a public hearing to consider an amendment to the City of Blair Zoning Regulations, Article 8, Section 801, ACH - Agricultural/Highway Commercial District, 801.04 EXCEPTIONS: (20) Storage, Indoor and Outdoor: Removing "This use shall not be permitted on lots with highway frontage."
- 6.Report from Staff
- 7.Motion and second by Commission members to adjourn the meeting.

A Copy of the "Open Meetings Act" Has Been Posted at Both Exits

Planning Commission Regular Meeting

Tuesday September 2, 2025

Chairman Boesiger called the Blair Planning Commission to order at 7:00 P.M. Members present were Darrel Boesiger, Milt Heinrich, Melanie Kaeding, Joe Peleska, Travis Radnor, and Ryan Schroeter. Kiley Huber, Chris Boswell, and Jim Pounds: Absent. Others present were City Administrator Green, Assistant City Administrator Barrow, Non-Lawyer Assistant Ferrari, Community Development Director Beiermann.

The Chairman publicly stated to all in attendance that a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was available for review and indicated the location of such copy posted in the room where the meeting was being held. Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Enterprise or the Pilot -Tribune as shown by the affidavit of publication filed in the City Clerk's office. Notice of the meeting was simultaneously given to the Planning Commission members, and the agenda is filed in the City Clerk's office. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the advance notice and in the notice to the Planning Commission of this meeting. All proceedings shown hereafter were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Agenda Item #1 & 2 – Chairman Boesiger called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by a roll call of members.

Agenda Item #3 – Motion by Travis Radnor, second by Joe Peleska to approve the August 5, 2025, minutes as presented. Commission members voted as follows: Darrel Boesiger: Yea, Chris Boswell: Absent, Milt Heinrich: Yea, Kiley Huber: Absent, Melanie Kaeding: Abstain, Joe Peleska: Yea, Jim Pounds: Absent, Travis Radnor: Yea, Ryan Schroeter: Yea. Commission members present voted: Yea: 5, Nay: 0, Absent: 3, Abstain: 1. Chairman Boesiger declared the motion carried.

Agenda Item #4 – Chairman Boesiger opens a public hearing to consider a Conditional Use Permit Renewal Application submitted by Royce Rentals, LLC, Mike Royce & Associates, 15707 S. 234th St, Gretna, Nebraska, for the continuation of a contractor's yard and office on the West 15 feet of Lot 14 and all of Lot 15, Block 16, in the City of Blair, Washington County, Nebraska, together with part of vacated street adjoining (330 N. 16th Street) for ten (10) years. Community Development Director Beiermann stated the zoning district is A/ML - Agricultural Light Industrial & Manufacturing District. The property is covered by an overlay district: SUR 1011.01: The Special Use Near Residential (SUR) District is an overlay district for use in commercial and industrial districts intended to protect nearby residential districts which may be adversely impacted by businesses. To encourage increased public input, all permitted business uses and structures within this overlay district which are also within three hundred (300) feet of a residential district are considered exceptions and require a Conditional Use Permit. There are three bays in this building. This is all an industrial area. Parking meets the off-street requirements. There were no other comments from the floor or in writing. Chairman Boesiger closed the public hearing. Motion by Ryan Schroeter, second by Travis Radnor to recommend approval of the Conditional Use Permit Renewal Application submitted by Royce Rentals as presented. Commission members voted as follows: Darrel Boesiger: Yea, Chris Boswell: Absent,

Milt Heinrich: Yea, Kiley Huber: Absent, Melanie Kaeding: Yea, Joe Peleska: Yea, Jim Pounds: Absent, Travis Radnor: Yea, Ryan Schroeter: Yea. Commission members present voted: Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 3. Chairman Boesiger declared the motion carried.

Agenda Item #5 – Chairman Boesiger opens a public hearing to consider Conditional Use Permit Application submitted by Michael Bierman, 10930 Lariat Lane, Blair, Nebraska, for the use of part of the building for golf driving-range simulators on Tax Lot 257, Section 12, Township 18 North, Range 11, East of the 6th P.M., City of Blair, Washington County, Nebraska (660 Grant Street) for five (5) years. Community Development Director Beiermann stated the zoning is A/ML - Agricultural Light Industrial & Manufacturing District. Looking through the exceptions for this district, golf driving ranges, golf courses, miniature golf courses, and bowling alleys is the closest thing we have in the zoning book for this type of work. A pamphlet was attached with the Sparq meeting. From the applicant's proposal: Tee'd Up will be housed within the Bierman Inc building at 660 Grant Street, offering a spacious and accessible environment for golf enthusiasts. The facility features ample paved parking, handicap accessibility, restrooms, and plenty of room for multiple players to enjoy the simulators comfortably. Its convenient location and well-equipped space make it the ideal setting for a premium self-service golf experience. Staff have no objections to this application. Commission member Boesiger questioned whether there needs to be a handicapped parking spot. Beiermann stated if there would not be one, this could be a stipulation for the application. Michael Bierman, 10930 Lariat Lane, Blair, applicant, would like to have this in another part of town although with a family member owning the building, this is a steppingstone and cost-effective. You will need to have membership with approximately one hundred (100) memberships available. This will be by keypad only. There will be a lounge room with possible vending machines available. There were no other comments from the floor or in writing. Chairman Boesiger closed the public hearing. Motion by Melanie Kaeding, second by Joe Peleska to recommend approval of the Conditional Use Permit Application submitted by Michael Bierman, for the use of part of the building for golf driving-range simulators as presented. Commission members voted as follows: Darrel Boesiger: Yea, Chris Boswell: Absent, Milt Heinrich: Yea, Kiley Huber: Absent, Melanie Kaeding: Yea, Joe Peleska: Yea, Jim Pounds: Absent, Travis Radnor: Yea, Ryan Schroeter: Yea. Commission members present voted: Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 3. Chairman Boesiger declared the motion carried.

Agenda Item #6 – **Postponed from the Aug. 5, 2025 Planning Commission meeting:** Chairman Boesiger opened a public hearing to consider an amendment to the City of Blair Zoning Regulations, Article 7, Section 701, RRE - Rural Residential Estate District and other Rural Residential Estate references in the zoning book by removing "Rural" from "Rural Residential Estate" titles and descriptions and modifying Article 7, Section 701, to include "inside the city limits and in the city's Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)". Community Development Director Beiermann stated staff wants to make this change for the possibility of any future annexations. Biermann showed the red-line items for Section 701.01 INTENT: This district is intended primarily for application to subdivision of land in agricultural and scenic areas to: (a) permit the opportunity of developing estate-type lots ~~which, because of their size, cannot be economically accommodated within urban areas~~ inside the city limits and in the city's Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ); and (b) to encourage the provision of estate type lots as a subdivision of land which will assure the provisions of at least those minimum physical improvements necessary to protect the health, safety and general welfare of people living on

estate type lots or parcels. This change is to make clear Residential Estates are allowed within our city limits as well as our extraterritorial jurisdiction. One late e-mail was received at 6:07 tonight as opposed to the change. This will permit those larger estates that are going to be on the edge of the boundary, either inside or outside city limits, to exist and exist with everything that comes with it now. Also, with the changes to the municipal code, your animals, your chickens, things like that will be allowed in the city limits. Richard Zelinsky, 8697 Victory Lane, spoke against the amendment, would like the change to be made only to the properties inside the city limits. There were no other comments from the floor or in writing. Chairman Boesiger closed the public hearing. Motion by Travis Radnor, second by Melanie Kaeding to recommend approval as presented. Commission members voted as follows: Darrel Boesiger: Yea, Chris Boswell: Absent, Milt Heinrich: Yea, Kiley Huber: Absent, Melanie Kaeding: Yea, Joe Peleska: Yea, Jim Pounds: Absent, Travis Radnor: Yea, Ryan Schroeter: Yea. Commission members present voted: Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 3. Chairman Boesiger declared the motion carried.

Agenda Item #7 – Report from staff. There was nothing to report.

Agenda Item #8 – Motion by Ryan Schroeter, second by Melanie Kaeding adjourn the meeting 7:35. Commission members voted as follows: Darrel Boesiger: Yea, Chris Boswell: Absent, Milt Heinrich: Yea, Kiley Huber: Absent, Melanie Kaeding: Yea, Joe Peleska: Yea, Jim Pounds: Absent, Travis Radnor: Yea, Ryan Schroeter: Yea. Commission members present voted: Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 3. Chairman Boesiger declared the motion carried.

Shelly Jones, Secretary

Filing Date 9/17/2025

Receipt Number 203923

APPLICATION FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

1. Rapid Response; Omaha's Disaster Relief Team 1925 Soren Dr, Blair, NE 68008 402-305-3053
Applicant's Name **Mailing Address** **Telephone**

Email: ken@rapidresponseamerica.org

2. Ken Gruber 402-305-3053
Agent's Name **Mailing Address** **Telephone**

3. Rapid Response; Omaha's Disaster Relief Team PO BOX 53, BOYS TOWN, NE 68010 402-305-3053
Owner's Name **Mailing Address** **Telephone**

4. 1925 Soren Dr, Blair, NE 68008
Address and Legal Description of Location - Subject Property

Current Zoning: Tax Lot 125 (Part of Tax Lot 123 located in the Southeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter and the Northeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter) of Section 2, Township 18 North, Range 11 East of the 6th P.M., Washington County, Nebraska

5. **Describe the requested Conditional Use**
The property will contain an office and property manager's residence while also supporting limited nonprofit use for Rapid Response; Omaha's Disaster Relief Team, including administrative work, volunteer coordination, and small training sessions. Activities will be modest in scale, with minimal traffic and no commercial operations, ensuring the property fits naturally within the neighborhood while serving the organization's disaster relief mission.

6. **Length of request:** 10 Year with the option to renew

(All permits approved are for one (1) year unless otherwise noted)

Signature of Owner(s) **Date** _____
Signature of Owner(s) **Date**

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

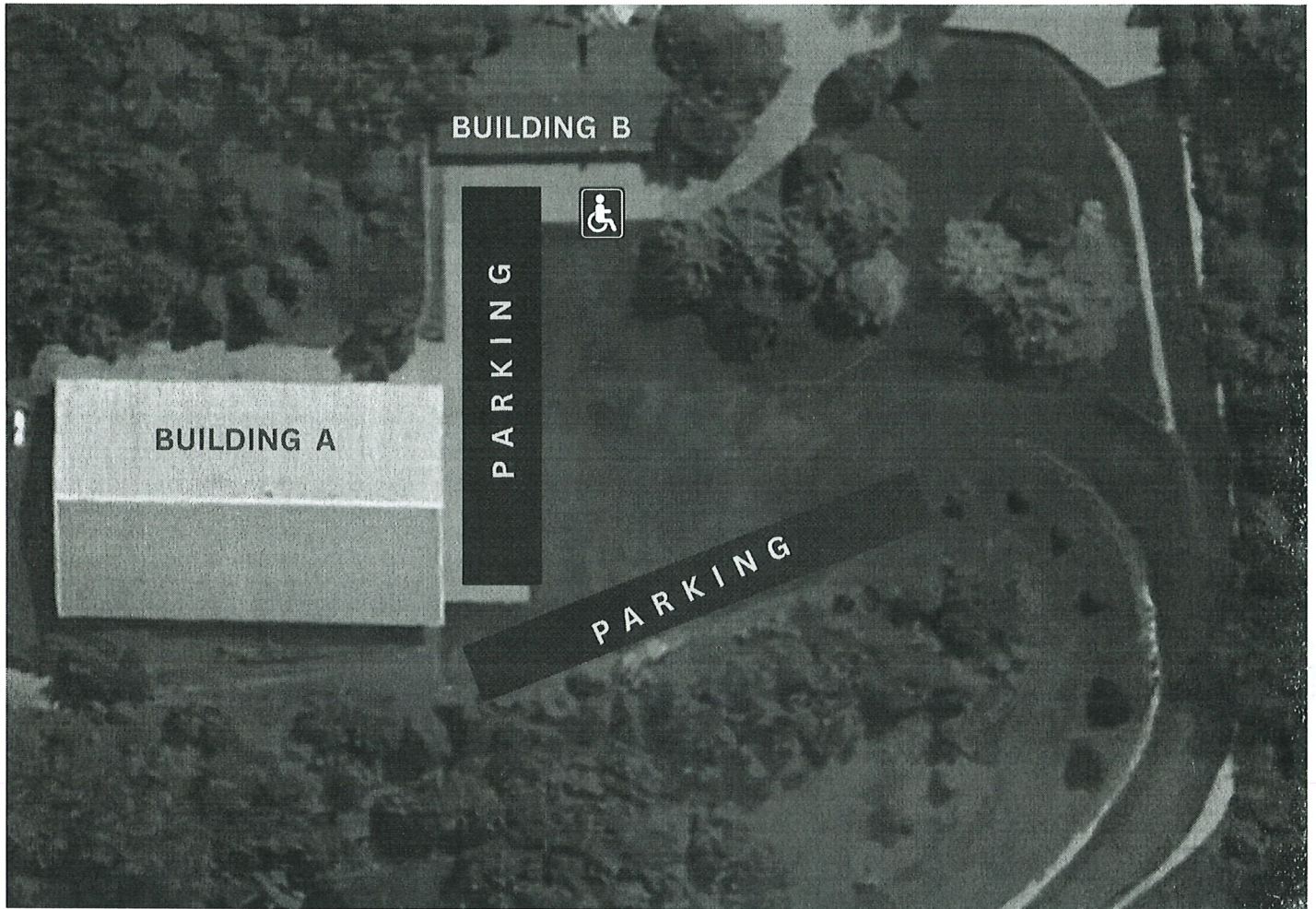
PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

DATE OF NOTICE: _____ **DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING:** _____ **VOTE:** ____ **TO** _____ **TO** _____

CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING: _____
VOTE: ____ **TO** _____ **TO** _____

NOTE: THIS CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT IS SUBJECT TO VETO BY THE MAYOR UNTIL THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE BLAIR CITY COUNCIL.



BUILDING B



PARKING

BUILDING A

PARKING

Dear Members of the Planning Commission and City Council,

On behalf of Rapid Response America, I respectfully request approval of a conditional use permit to operate our nonprofit headquarters and training center at 1925 Soren Drive, located within the Residential Low Density (RL) District.

For 25 years, Rapid Response America, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, has served Blair, Washington County, and Nebraska communities affected by tornadoes, floods, windstorms, and other disasters. We mobilize trained volunteers to provide relief, recovery, and long-term support to families in crisis.

Under Section 702.04(3) of the Blair Zoning Ordinance, charitable institutions may be permitted within RL districts. Our use of the property will include:

- Administrative offices to support disaster relief operations
- Volunteer training and coordination for emergency response
- Storage of tools and relief supplies for mobilizations

We are committed to being good neighbors. Operations will be modest in scale, with minimal traffic and noise, as most volunteers are deployed to the disaster site and not to our location. Parking will be provided on-site in compliance with city requirements, and signage will meet all city regulations.

This headquarters will strengthen Blair's disaster readiness and ensure a rapid, organized response when the next crisis comes. We value the opportunity to serve alongside the City of Blair in building a safe and resilient community.

Thank you for your consideration.



Ken Gruber
President & CEO
ken@rapidresponseamerica.org
(402) 305-3053

"Committed to bringing Hope to the hopeless in the midst of crisis"

To: Planning Commission

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed "Conditional Use Permit" for 1925 Soren Drive in Deerfield, filed by Rapid Response.

We built our home at 2011 Soren Drive in 2001, specifically choosing this location for its quiet, residential character. We are deeply committed to preserving the integrity of this neighborhood as a residential area.

Rapid Response has stated that this property will serve as the headquarters for their international organization. CEO Ken Gruber publicly shared that they have converted a three-car garage on the property into a conference area, which now serves as a training site for up to "40 volunteers." He also mentioned that on-site training will include chainsaw operation, first aid, and both basic and advanced life support instruction. Furthermore, Gruber noted in the *Blair Enterprise* (August 12, 2025) that they intend to provide accommodations for trainees to avoid the need for hotel stays.

On July 14, 2025, Gruber spoke with KETV Channel 7 and reiterated that the Rapid Response international headquarters is located in Blair, NE. He stated that people from around the world would be coming to this location for training. He also remarked that, had they owned this property during a previous tornado event, they could have housed over 100 displaced individuals.

We oppose this conditional use permit for the following reasons:

- **Safety Concerns for Pedestrian and Vehicular Traffic**
Deerfield is home to many children who walk, bike, or use scooters to travel to and from school (Deerfield Elementary and other Blair schools). The neighborhood also includes a walking trail that brings additional foot traffic. Our streets already struggle to manage the existing volume of vehicles. Introducing more traffic due to training sessions or temporary housing for displaced individuals would significantly increase congestion and pose safety risks to residents.
- **Noise Disruption**
Some of the proposed training activities may generate excessive noise that is inappropriate for a residential area. The transport of large equipment to and from the site could also be disruptive. For example, the Rapid Response website lists a "Chainsaw Operation and Safety" training scheduled at 1925 Soren Drive from Monday, October 6 through Friday, October 10.
- **Potential Decline in Property Values**
Operating a business of this scale within a residential neighborhood could negatively impact property values in the surrounding area.

We firmly believe that Deerfield should remain a residential neighborhood to ensure the safety, peace, and well-being of its current residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Brian and Jennifer Bogdanoff
2011 Soren Drive

1235 Pinewood Drive
P.O. Box 346
Blair, Nebraska 68008
October 6, 2025

Darrel Boesiger, Chairman, and
Planning Board Members
218 S. 16th Street
Blair, Nebraska 68008

Re: The Conditional Use Permit Application Submitted by Ken
Gruber, Omaha Rapid Response, 1925 Soren Drive, Blair,
Nebraska.

Dear Members of the Planning Board Commission:

My husband and I own a home within 300 feet of the address
submitting this application for the conditional use permit. The
zoning code for our property is RL.

I would like to express the following concerns regarding this
application:

- 1) Although described as a charitable organization which
would qualify the property for the conditional use permit,
Omaha Rapid Response is a “quasi-industrial” business, not
the usual library or church. A warehouse on the property will
be used to store supplies. Large trailers and equipment will
be entering and exiting this property.
- 2) Normally these “property exceptions” are located near major
traffic thoroughfares, giving direct access to the property. In
the case of Omaha Rapid Response, whether through the
Deerfield entrance or the entrance on Joann Drive, the traffic
will have to meander through residential neighborhoods.

- 3) The Pilot-Tribune article (Tuesday, August 12, 2025) stated the organization had 20,000 volunteers, 80-90% within 100 miles of Blair. (16,000-18,000 volunteers). The training room capacity is 45. Theoretically, large numbers of people could be transiting to and from the property.
- 4) Mr. Gruber indicated future construction could include a dormitory facility to house people temporarily displaced from their homes. Further expansion could be overwhelming to the surrounding homes and properties.
- 5) Currently the Omaha Rapid Response property is surrounded by 3 neighborhoods. A 4th neighborhood is tentatively being planned just to the north. Mr. Gruber's venture, albeit a wonderful resource for those in need, is still a business. Locating the business in these residential neighborhoods is inappropriate.

Thank you for taking my concerns into consideration when making your decision regarding this Conditional Use Permit.

Sincerely,

Betsy Anderson

SECTION 801 ACH AGRICULTURAL/HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

801.01 INTENT: The ACH Agricultural/Highway Commercial District is intended primarily for application to areas along major highway entrances to a community in accord with policies of the comprehensive plan for controlled access to the highway is afforded for the convenience of patrons traveling the highway. For the purposes of Section 77-1343 R.R.S. Neb. the predominant use for this district is agricultural and horticultural uses.

801.04 EXCEPTIONS: After the provisions of this Ordinance relating to exceptions have been fulfilled, the City Council may permit the following conditional uses as exceptions in the A/CH Highway Commercial District in accordance with ARTICLE 14 of this Ordinance.

- | (20) Storage, Indoor and Outdoor: ~~This use shall not be permitted on lots with highway frontage.~~
All outdoor storage areas which are located within one hundred feet (100') of the right of way, or within five hundred feet (500') of a Federal Aid Primary or Federal Aid Secondary designated street or highway, shall be hard surfaced with concrete, asphalt, recycled asphalt or asphalt millings.

SECTION 801 ACH AGRICULTURAL/HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

801.01 INTENT: The ACH Agricultural/Highway Commercial District is intended primarily for application to areas along major highway entrances to a community in accord with policies of the comprehensive plan for controlled access to the highway is afforded for the convenience of patrons traveling the highway. For the purposes of Section 77-1343 R.R.S. Neb. the predominant use for this district is agricultural and horticultural uses.

801.04 EXCEPTIONS: After the provisions of this Ordinance relating to exceptions have been fulfilled, the City Council may permit the following conditional uses as exceptions in the A/CH Highway Commercial District in accordance with ARTICLE 14 of this Ordinance.

(20) Storage, Indoor and Outdoor: All outdoor storage areas which are located within one hundred feet (100') of the right of way, or within five hundred feet (500') of a Federal Aid Primary or Federal Aid Secondary designated street or highway, shall be hard surfaced with concrete, asphalt, recycled asphalt or asphalt millings.