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**DATE:** August 4, 2021

**TO:** Planning Commission Chair and Commissioners

**FROM:** Jessica Jagoe, Senior Planner

**SUBJECT:** Planning Case #21-016 – No Public Hearing Required  
**Applicant:** Bolton & Menk  
**Property Location:** 3900 Bethel Drive  
**Request:** Site Plan Review

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**Requested Action**

Bolton & Menk (“The Applicant”), on behalf of Bethel University, is requesting a Site Plan Review for a proposed project at 3900 Bethel Drive (“Subject Property”) to update the scoreboard and sound system adjacent to the stadium field and track located in the southern quadrant of the Bethel University Campus. Specific improvements include replacing the electronic scoreboard to an LED/Video capable scoreboard with sound system upgrade.

**Background**

**1. Overview of Request**

Bethel University was approved a Conditional Use Permit Amendment on May 3, 2021 for stadium field upgrades which included the addition of a new track around it and practice fields to be converted into multi-purpose fields in the southern quadrant of their main campus at 3900 Bethel Drive. The CUP Amendment application noted that Bethel University was proposing changes to the scoreboard. Conditions of the CUP Amendment approval were that a separate permit shall be required for the scoreboard and that prior to replacement of sound system, Bethel University would be required to submit new sound system plans to the City Council for approval.

The Applicant is proposing to convert the existing electronic scoreboard to a LED/Video capable scoreboard with a sound system fully contained within the accessory structure.

## 2. Site Data

<b>Future Land Use Plan:</b>	Public and Institutional
<b>Existing Land Use:</b>	Public and Institutional
<b>Zoning:</b>	INST – Institutional District
<b>Size:</b>	191.32 Acres (Including main campus, athletic complex, and part of Lake Valentine)
<b>Topography:</b>	Varied topography across campus

## Plan Evaluation

### Chapter 13, Zoning Regulations Review

#### 1. District Requirements Chart (INST Institutional District) – *Section 1320.06*

Under the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the Bethel University campus is guided as Public & Institutional on the land use plan. The main Bethel University campus is located in the Institutional Zoning District. Higher education campus uses, including but not limited to classrooms and laboratories, are allowed conditional uses in this district. The proposed changes to the accessory structure that the Applicant proposes to add are complementary to the use of the Subject Property as an educational institution.

#### 2. General Requirements - *Sections 1325.01 and 1325.05*

##### A. Permanent Accessory Structures – *Meets Requirements*

The Applicant is proposing to replace the existing electronic scoreboard with an LED/Video capable scoreboard as an accessory structure which is allowed in the INST District. Permanent accessory structures in any district, except residential, shall be subject to Council approval. The exterior finish of accessory structures shall be compatible in appearance and material used with the principal structure served by the accessory structure. In this case, the Applicant is proposing enhanced aesthetic features which include the steel beams being brick encased with three columns for the base of the structure and a one (1) foot wide stucco/kasota stone perimeter around the sides and top of the scoreboard to match the brick appearance of the existing university buildings. These same materials will be visible in view of the backside of the scoreboard.

##### B. Height – *Meets Requirements*

Accessory structures in all other Zoning Districts, except residential, shall not exceed the height of the principal structure to which it is accessory. The current accessory structure has 308 square feet of scoreboard area (14' x 22') and is 26 feet tall. The Applicant is proposing to replace with a larger accessory structure that will be 560 square feet of scoreboard area (approx. 17' x 31') and a maximum of 35 feet tall. The maximum height requirement in the INST District is 35 feet. The Applicant notes the height of the pressbox adjacent to the stadium field is approximately 40 feet. The proposed accessory structure for Bethel University will stay in compliance with district height requirements.

**C. Setbacks – Meets Requirements**

Setbacks in the INST District are 50 feet in the front yard, 20 feet in the rear yard, and 10 feet in the side yard. Structures must be located a minimum of 100 feet from abutting residential property. There are currently no structures within 100 feet of abutting residential properties. The proposed scoreboard will be moved southwest of the existing scoreboard location and remains approximately 135 feet from the south property line. The Applicant is not proposing any structures within the 100 feet setback.

**D. Lighting – Meets Requirements**

As part of the CUP Amendment, the Applicant was approved stadium lighting around the football field and track subject to providing photometric calculations for lighting at the property lines of all adjacent residential properties indicating the plan meets ordinance requirements. The Applicant is not proposing any new lighting as part of this application. Section 1325.05 Subd. 3 requires lighting in all districts to direct light away from adjoining lots and public streets. Direct or sky-reflected glare, from floodlights or high temperature processes such as combustion or welding, shall not be directed at any adjoining lots or public streets. In addition, Section 1325.05 Subd. 3 also requires the source of illumination to be hooded, concealed or controlled in a manner so as to direct the lighting pattern only on the site to which the lighting is intended.

The proposed scoreboard will be a full color approximately 17’ tall by 31’ wide LED video display. The Applicant has stated that the LED/Video scoreboard display is not anticipated to output additional lighting beyond the intensity of the approved lighting fixtures for the stadium. The proposed location of the LED/Video capable scoreboard in the SW corner of the stadium is positioned in a manner to direct the light pattern towards the stadium. The Applicant did not provide as part of this application a photometric plan with illumination levels including the LED/Video display.

**E. Building and Landscaping Coverage – Meets Requirements**

The Zoning Code requirements for the INST District allow a maximum building footprint of 35% and a minimum landscape area of 25%. Landscaping is defined as all plantings, including trees, grass, and shrubs.

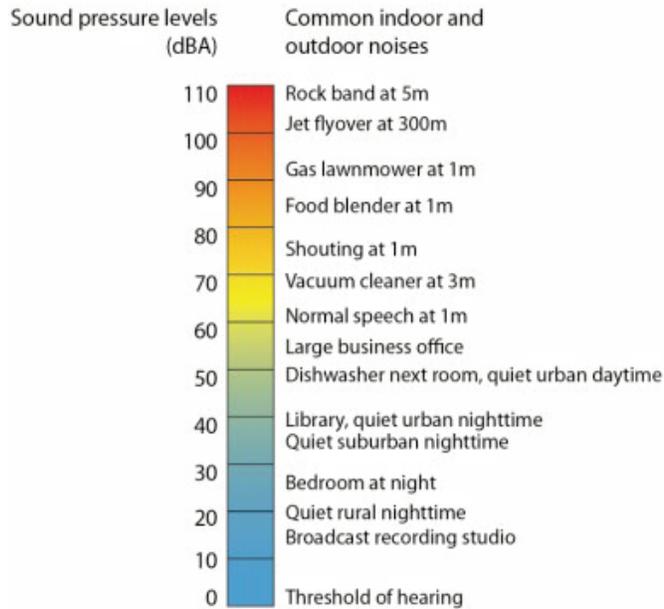
The proposed scoreboard would not result in much of any additional structure coverage on the Subject Property since the replacing an existing structure. The Applicant is not proposing any changes to landscape. The approved CUP for the campus limits the total lot coverage of impervious surfaces to 25% and requires a minimum landscape lot area of 75%. As proposed, the replacement accessory structure would not exceed the lot coverage requirements for the campus.

**F. Noise – Meets Requirements**

As a condition of the CUP Amendment, the Applicant is required to submit new sound system plans to the City Council for approval. The proposed sound system model will be SP-1000 Stadium Pro Sound from Nevco. The Applicant is proposing a fully embedded sound cabinet within the scoreboard accessory structure. The sound cabinet is approximately 4’ tall by 6’ wide located atop of the LED screen. The sound cabinet is completely surrounded by a 1” thick acoustic foam. The purpose of the foam is to reduce sound wave vibrations to the mechanical structure of the scoreboard display products, but also dampens the sound waves leaving the rear of the display. There are no other sound system amplification or speakers proposed as part of the stadium

upgrades. Previous review and discussion included speakers attached to lighting, but that has been eliminated. The sound cabinet will feature two speakers and one subwoofer.

*Decibel levels of common noise sources from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency:*



The Applicant has indicated that the existing scoreboard current PA system is max upper 70 dB's at the property line and as you move closer to the pressbox will climb to the mid 80's. Levels standing on the bleachers in front of the speakers did reach 90 dB, but never reached 100 dB. It is anticipated the SP-1000 enclosure will be in the lower frequency levels of 70-80 dB's. The SP-1000 speakers are directional speakers. The Applicant intends to aim the speakers at the home bleachers, so that sound travels away from the adjacent residences. The new scoreboard location in the SW corner of the stadium field is positioned to further direct sound towards the home bleachers. Included with the submission is an example of sound modeling to illustrate scoreboard sound system dB levels with the projected levels at distances within the field.

**3. Signage Requirements – Section 1250**

**A. Section 1250.05 - Meets Requirements**

In Section 1250.05, Permanent Scoreboard Signs for Athletic Fields at Mounds View High School, Bethel University, and Northwestern College it states that athletic fields may be permitted signage that is clearly secondary to the overall appearance of the scoreboard. Such signage shall face the field of play so that the impact of the signage is directed only to those utilizing the field or watching the sporting event, and not surrounding property owners. The content of scoreboard signage shall comply with the sponsorship sign regulations as established by Bethel University. The Applicant

has indicated the video capable scoreboard will be used for game-related activities and will not be used for advertising or sponsorship.

**B. Section 1250.06 – Meets Requirements**

In Section 1250.06, Permanent Signs for Athletic at Mounds View High School, Bethel University, and Northwestern College is permitted as an entrance gate style sign, affixed to a pressbox/grandstand, or signage included on the scoreboard. Such signage shall not be lit by a direct lighting source and constructed of durable materials (finished metal, finished wood, plastic). Under Subd. 1, Sign Area, the scoreboard field naming signage shall not exceed 40% of the total scoreboard area.

The Applicant is not proposing signage that will be visible from a public roadway or from outside Bethel University. The scoreboard will feature a 4' x 31' field naming placard constructed of finished metal that is not illuminated. The “Bethel University” signage calculates to be approximately 22% of the total scoreboard area.

**1355.04 Procedural Requirements for Specific Applications**

Section 1355.04, Subd. 5 of the Arden Hills Zoning Code states that a public hearing is not required for Site Plan Review, but neighboring property owners shall be notified. Notification was prepared in accordance with City policy.

**Findings of Fact**

The Planning Commission must make a finding as to whether or not the proposed application would adversely affect the surrounding neighborhood or the community as a whole based on the aforementioned factors. Staff offers the following findings for consideration:

*General Findings:*

1. The Bethel University main campus at 3900 Bethel Drive is located in the Institutional Zoning District.
2. A Higher Education, College Campus is a Conditional Use in the Institutional District.
3. Bethel University operates under a Conditional Use Permit Master Plan.
4. Athletic fields and accessory equipment are permitted under the CUP Master and Amended Plan for Bethel University.
5. Bethel University has requested Site Plan Review approval for installation of a new scoreboard and sound system in the stadium fields and track area.
6. The accessory structure and lighting would be in compliance with all provisions of the Zoning Code.
7. A public hearing is not required for Site Plan Review.
8. The proposed application meets all setback requirements.

*Site Plan Review Evaluation Findings:*

9. The proposed plan is not anticipated to have any impact on traffic or parking conditions because the additions do not include an increase in football field seating.
10. The proposed plan includes the addition of LED lights and will within a reasonable level increase illumination around the stadium fields.

11. The proposed project is reasonable because scoreboards considered an accessory structures are addressed in the Code as reasonable uses within educational athletic facilities.
12. The proposed plan will not produce any permanent noise, odors, vibration, smoke, dust, air pollution, heat, liquid, or solid waste, and other nuisance characteristics.
13. The proposed plan will impact drainage on the site.
14. The proposed plan will not impact school population density.
15. The proposed plan is not expected to have a visual impact on surrounding properties or on land use compatibility with uses and structures on surrounding land or adjoining land values because of distance and existing foliage the new accessory structure will not be easily visible from outside the Bethel University campus.
16. Park dedication requirements are not applicable.
17. The proposed plan does not conflict with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Code or the Comprehensive Development Plan for the City.

### **Proposed Motion Language**

Staff has provided the following options and motion language for this case.

1. Recommend Approval with Conditions: Motion to recommend *approval* of Planning Case 21-016 for Site Plan Review at 3900 Bethel Drive, based on the findings of fact and the submitted plans, as amended by the conditions in the August 4, 2021, Report to the Planning Commission:
  - a) All conditions of the original Condition Use Permit and Amendments shall remain in full force and effect.
  - b) That the project shall be completed in accordance with the plans submitted as amended by the conditions of approval. Any significant changes to these plans, as determined by the Senior Planner, shall require review and approval by the Planning Commission and City Council.
  - c) The proposed structure shall conform to all other regulations in the City Code.
  - d) A building permit shall be obtained for the proposed scoreboard.
  - e) That all building and setback requirements shall be met.
  - f) The scoreboard height shall not exceed 35 feet.
  - g) That the sound system being installed within the scoreboard shall meet all applicable standards set by the EPA and MPCA.
  - h) A separate sign permit shall be required and scoreboard signage must meet all requirements of City Code Section 1250.
  - i) That the scoreboard shall not be used as a dynamic sign to display sponsorship advertising, messages or videos.
  - j) A Bethel employee shall control the lighting and sound system at the football field.
  - k) The use of the sound system and lights at the football field be capped at 10:00 PM, except on nights that have a Bethel University sponsored events.
  - l) That an automatic dimmer module shall be installed to reduce the nighttime light output of the LED lighting of the scoreboard based on ambient light levels.
  - m) That the applicant shall cooperate with all reasonable requests from the City to modify direction and intensity of light and sound emitted from the scoreboard to mitigate its impact.

- n) The Applicant shall be required to provide photometric calculations for the stadium lighting including the LED lighting of the scoreboard at the property lines of all adjacent residential properties indicating the plan meets ordinance requirements.
2. Recommend Approval as Submitted: Motion to recommend *approval* of Planning Case 21-016 for a Site Plan Review at 3900 Bethel Drive, based on the findings of fact and the submitted plans in the August 4, 2021 Report to the Planning Commission.
  3. Recommend Denial: Motion to recommend *denial* of Planning Case 21-016 Site Plan Review at 3900 Bethel Drive, based on the following findings of fact: *findings to deny should specifically reference the reasons for denial*.
  4. Table: Motion to *table* Planning Case 21-016 for Site Plan Review at 3900 Bethel Drive: *a specific reason and/or information request should be included with a motion to table*.

### **Public Notice and Comments**

Staff published a notice in the *Pioneer Press* as per City procedure. Public notices were mailed out on July 22, 2021. The mailing was sent to neighbors within 500 feet of the subject parcel. Staff has received two inquiries for information regarding this application as of July 27, 2021.

### **Deadline for Agency Actions**

The City of Arden Hills received the completed application for this request on July 20, 2021. Pursuant to Minnesota State Statute, the City must act on this request by September 18, 2021 (60 days), unless the City provides the petitioner with written reasons for an additional 60-day review period. With consent of the applicant, the City may extend the review period beyond the initial 120 days.

### **Attachments**

- A. Land Use Application
- B. Location Map
- C. Narrative
- D. Site Plans
- E. Existing Scoreboard
- F. Proposed Scoreboard
- G. Sound System