

ALTOONA PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

July 27, 2021

Altoona City Hall

Members Present in Person: Jill Pudenz, Scott Henry, Dan Narber, Erin Herbold-Swalwell, Steve Chase

Members Present Virtually: Michelle Sloan

Members Absent: Kenny Hodges

Staff: Jenn Naylor, John Shaw, Chad Quick, Marina Reasoner

Guests: Meeting was held in a virtual Zoom format and in-person; In-person guests included Matt Kray and others not signing in.

Chairperson Dan Narber called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. Roll call was taken. Six commissioners were present at roll call.

Prior to beginning the agenda, Narber introduced three new members: Steve Chase is a new commissioner, replacing Dan Dove; Erin Herbold-Swalwell is a new commissioner and was present at last month's meeting; and Marina Reasoner is a new Planner for the Planning & Zoning Department.

1. Public hearing, consideration and recommendation of a rezoning request from CCRC of Altoona and Prairie Vista Village to rezone approximately 4.0 acres from C-2 (General Commercial) to R-3 (Multi-family Residential).

Keith Weggen (Civil Design Advantage) presented the request. The rezoning is for four acres immediately north of the existing Prairie Vista Village facility. The current zoning is C-2, and the request is to rezone to R-3 to accommodate future memory care and independent living facilities just north of the site. He showed a drawing. The proposed memory care facility would be to the east and would house 32 living units. There would be parking in front of the facility. West of the memory care facility is a future independent living facility that would have approximately 40 units. Along the west would be surface parking. On the north and south of the building are attached garages, and to the east are detached garages. Access to the site would be through the existing facility to the south in a couple of different locations, utilizing the existing access off of 1st Ave. There's a potential future connection to the north as well. Storm water detention would be provided in a couple different locations. There is an existing basin north of the memory care facility, which is sized to accommodate the proposed improvements for the memory care portion of the project. West of the future memory care facility is a proposed storm water detention basin as well. Water and sanitary services are already in place along the south property line with service stubs available. There will be landscaping throughout the site. Pudenz asked Staff if EMS and Fire Department have reviewed and approved the access. Shaw said modifications have been made based on Staff's comments, including the Fire Department. Henry asked if this facility would be detached from the existing facility. Weggen affirmed. Herbold-Swalwell asked if this facility was intended to be a locked facility or different than the current memory care. Jordan Anderson (Scenic Development) stated that the current facility does not include memory care services. This would allow them to retain residents who have deteriorated past a certain stage and need memory care services. It will be a locked unit, and there will be a fence in the back that allows residents to get outdoor space.

Narber asked for any further questions or comments from Commissioners or from the public. Pudenz asked if it was a single or multi-story building. Weggen stated it would be a single story, while the independent living would be multi-story. Anderson affirmed.

With no public comments, Narber asked for a motion.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Pudenz, for recommendation of a rezoning request from CCRC of Altoona and Prairie Vista Village to rezone approximately 4.0 acres from C-2 (General Commercial) to R-3 (Multi-family Residential), subject to deficiencies.

Votes: Yes – Henry, Pudenz, Sloan, Narber, Herbold-Swalwell, Chase. No - None. Abstain – None. Motion approved, 6-0-0.

2. Public hearing, consideration and recommendation of a rezoning request from Adventurelands of America, Inc. and Blue Ridge Apartment, LLC to rezone approximately 6.7 acres from C-2 (General Commercial) to R-3 (Multi-family Residential).

Ed Arp (Civil Engineering Consultants) presented the request. The property is just north of the Iowa State University Extension offices on Adventureland Drive, east of 17th Ave. A connection would be made between 11th and 17th for circulation. Properties to the east are residential in nature. They see 17th Street as a natural divide between residential and commercial. Staff concerns include that the piece is landlocked right now, to which he stated there will eventually have to be a street there, whether residential or commercial. Utilities to the lot are available, and they'd have to go through rezoning and a site plan. If it stays commercial, it might be there a long while. As it sits behind commercial buildings, sometimes those lots aren't the most desirable. They feel there is a need for apartments in that neighborhood. Henry asked Shaw if they were just rezoning and the drawing was just a conceptual sketch. Shaw affirmed it was just rezoning. Herbold-Swalwell asked Shaw for the current plans for that area and any background. Shaw explained the commercial zoning, including La Quinta and Shriners' Parkway. There was a previous rezoning, in which part of the land to the northeast was zoned residential. As far as residential, it's disconnected from any other neighborhood. It backs up to currently under-construction residential. Henry asked what road the Blue Ridge development was using. Shaw stated Adventureland Drive.

With no further questions or comments from Commissioners, Narber asked for any public comments. With no public comments, Narber asked for a motion. Pudenz asked about the availability of other R-3 properties in the Comp Plan. Shaw stated there are areas in the southern parts of Altoona and eastern growth regions, and to the southwest as well. Sloan asked if people will want to live right off of I-80. Arp stated that people are living along I-80 as you look to the east. This project looks like a continuation of what is currently happening. Marketwise, the interstate isn't an impediment to that. It's convenience and location. Henry stated that although he'd like to see it remain commercial, it has been sitting bare for a long time.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Sloan, for recommendation of a rezoning request from Adventurelands of America, Inc. and Blue Ridge Apartment, LLC to rezone approximately 6.7 acres from C-2 (General Commercial) to R-3 (Multi-family Residential), subject to any deficiencies.

Votes: Yes – Henry, Sloan, Pudenz, Narber, Herbold-Swalwell, Chase. No - None. Abstain – None. Motion approved, 6-0-0.

3. Consideration and recommendation of a preliminary plat for Meadowland Industrial plat.

Eric Cannon (Snyder & Associates) presented the request. He showed the locations of the lots as south of 9th and east of 1st. One lot would front 9th. It would be mixed use with office space and cold storage. Access would be on west, while access on the east is a topic still in discussions with staff. Staff had questions about the panels fronting 9th, and there are updated elevations. Henry asked for an update on the status of the deficiencies. Shaw stated that offsite utilities will need to be brought in

to serve this project. The plat and the site plan would be subject to those things being worked out with Staff. Part of the request includes outside storage, which requires a conditional use permit from the Board of Adjustment. The meeting has been scheduled. The Commission's approval should be subject to action by the Board of Adjustment. Henry asked if they were not paving the storage yard. Shaw stated the Board of Adjustment has allowed a chip seal, which is a dust-free surface. Henry stated there was a fencing issue, but that he didn't see it in the deficiencies. Shaw stated that the fencing and screening requirements will be reviewed by the Board of Adjustment.

With no further questions or comments from Commissioners, Narber opened the public hearing. With no public comments, Narber asked for a motion.

Motion by Herbold-Swalwell, seconded by Pudenz, for recommendation of a preliminary plat for Meadowland Industrial plat, subject to deficiencies being re-reviewed by engineering staff, submittal of building elevations subject to review and approval of the conditional use permit, and the variance for the asphalt millings that is scheduled for the Board of Adjustment.

Votes: Yes – Herbold-Swalwell, Pudenz, Sloan, Henry, Narber, Chase. No - None. Abstain – None. Motion approved, 6-0-0.

4. Consideration and recommendation of a final plat for Meadowland Industrial plat.

Eric Cannon (Snyder & Associates) presented the request with no further information.

With no further questions or comments from Commissioners, Narber opened the public hearing. With no public comments, Narber asked for a motion.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Herbold-Swalwell, for recommendation of a final plat for Meadowland Industrial plat, subject to deficiencies, including the same deficiencies as Item 3.

Votes: Yes – Henry, Herbold-Swalwell, Sloan, Pudenz, Narber, Chase. No - None. Abstain – None. Motion approved, 6-0-0.

5. Consideration and recommendation of a site plan for Meadowland Industrial.

Eric Cannon (Snyder & Associates) presented the request with no further information.

With no further questions or comments from Commissioners, Narber opened the public hearing. With no public comments, Narber asked for a motion.

Motion by Herbold-Swalwell, seconded by Pudenz, for recommendation of a site plan for Meadowland Industrial, subject to deficiencies, including Staff recommendations and Board of Adjustment approval.

Votes: Yes – Herbold-Swalwell, Pudenz, Sloan, Henry, Narber, Chase. No - None. Abstain – None. Motion approved, 6-0-0.

6. Consideration and recommendation of a preliminary plat for Bauer Heights (County Plat).

Eric Cannon (Snyder & Associates) presented the request, which is within the two-mile jurisdiction of Altoona. Henry asked if we would make them get on City sewer. Shaw stated that currently sanitary sewer is not in Polk County's jurisdiction. At this time, they would be on septic. There will be a

trunkline to serve the northwest area, north of Facebook. At some point when there is an agreement with Ankeny about service areas, then the review area will be pulled back to just the service area.

With no further questions or comments from Commissioners, Narber opened the public hearing. With no public comments, Narber asked for a motion.

Motion by Pudenz, seconded by Herbold-Swalwell, for recommendation of a preliminary plat for Bauer Heights (County Plat).

Votes: Yes – Pudenz, Herbold-Swalwell, Sloan, Henry, Narber, Chase. No - Henry. Abstain – None. Motion approved, 6-0-0.

7. Consideration and recommendation of an amendment to Chapter 168.13 – C-7 Regional Commercial to amend the Principal Permitted Uses to add vehicles sales and ancillary services such as car wash, body shop and maintenance facilities.

Herbold-Swalwell recused herself due to the presenter being her law partner.

Pat Burk (Brick Gentry Law Firm) presented the request. He stated it was an exciting opportunity to bring a Smart Honda dealership to Outlot Y in Prairie Crossing, just west of Bass Pro Drive. He introduced a number of people involved in the project. They are not requesting that there be a lot of vehicle dealerships all throughout Prairie Crossing. In order for them to proceed, they are bound by the requirements of Honda, one of which are garages that face the roadway.

Eric Cannon (Snyder & Associates) said the main goal is to understand if this is something that the City of Altoona wants. The main challenge is that Honda is very specific in its design criteria. The frontage is a deal-breaker for the site. There will be architectural details to work through. They don't want to come across as piecemeal, as it has been a very methodical approach.

James Lee stated that they have the opportunity to purchase the Marshalltown Honda dealership and move it to Altoona because of growth and customer base. They've been selling and servicing cars in Iowa for fifteen years. They're looking to duplicate the operations on the west side here to make it convenient for the growing customer demand on the east side. At Smart Honda of Des Moines, they employ about 100 people, and they will exceed \$100M in sales and service this year. They believe they will be able to duplicate that here. It's about a \$15M commitment.

Chip Walker (Custom Facilities, Indianapolis, IN) builds dealerships. He explained Honda's specifics from materials to strategic locations of drives, logos, colors, and scheme. He showed renderings of a typical Honda Gen 3 facility. He said the exterior aluminum composite material is very low maintenance and stays clean. Henry asked about future dealerships. Walker stated it couldn't be another Honda dealership. Pudenz asked if there was an opportunity to change the zoning. Shaw stated that vehicle sales and service also includes vehicles like Harrison Trucking, Peterbilt, International, and Central Trailer. Currently this is not an allowed use in the C-7 district, so they are requesting to amend the C-7 district, which is Prairie Crossing, to allow car dealerships. Pudenz asked if this would allow another dealership to go in to the east of the outlet mall. Shaw said the C-7 is a planned commercial district with a development plan, design criteria that dictates the layout of the property, design elements, architectural, landscaping, lighting, signage, and other elements. This property is subject to all of those things. The way the dealership design is currently doesn't comply with all of these elements. Pudenz clarified that if the C-7 is changed, it applies to the whole area. Shaw stated that if they didn't like this spot, they could pick another area, which would have to be approved. It could also allow multiple car dealerships to move in. Cannon added that they are only asking for this specific property. They would be fully supportive of a condition or deed restriction.

There is no interest in a dealership anywhere else in Prairie Crossing. It is just this piece of real estate. Sloan asked if they could do a landlocked area for the car dealership, or if it had to be the whole grand scheme of land. Burk stated the specific request was just for Outlot Y. He said asking for an M-1 for just that lot creates spot zoning. Shaw said creating zoning ordinances is broad and applies to all properties in the zone, which makes it legal. If you take a zoning district and then pick and choose specifics, you are spot zoning. Theoretically, it could be on all the properties in the district. Shaw stated he appreciates what they are asking, but it's in how it is applied. Sloan asked if there was a way to portion off this parcel for just the cars. Shaw stated the zoning use would have to be applied across all of Prairie Crossing. Sloan asked if it were the whole parcel they would have to vote on. Shaw reiterated that it is allowing this use within the C-7 district.

Mike Wayland (Heart of America) explained that when he first started to assemble this land in the 1990s, people thought he was crazy. He felt that eventually there would be both a western and an eastern cluster of multi-use retail, and this is where it would be. There are still 150 acres of developable land at Prairie Crossing. He feels it's a great regional draw. People will come to shop for cars or get their car serviced, they will eat, and they will shop. When they approached the City two decades ago about how to zone it, that's when the C-7 was created to be able to assemble the appropriate uses together, because it doesn't fit into any regular zoning box. Auto dealerships may have been an oversight in the original design of the C-7, but he thinks it fits in really well. Henry stated that they would love to have the dealership. Shaw agreed, adding there is great I-80 visibility. Henry added they appreciate Mike Wayland coming to this community. Pudenz said she feels the same way. They'd love to have Honda here, and she's trying to find a way around this, other than amending the C-7. She asked if the C-3 could wrap around and dealerships could be added to that. Sloan added that she agrees that people will come to eat and shop, but with the whole area, it's hard. Pudenz stated that the area is perfect for it, since it backs to the I-80 and Highway 65. Sloan stated that people will travel from all over the state to come to this community. Henry asked with the overhead door requirement, if they would not be allowed to build anywhere in Altoona. Shaw stated there are two ordinance sections that address this. In the C-7 district, there is a requirement for surface doors to be at the functional back of the building and screened. The Outlets all face in, but the service doors are screened. There is four-sided architecture that way. There is also the ordinance that says overhead doors are not allowed to face public streets. Pudenz asked if that could go to the Board of Adjustment. Shaw affirmed. Pudenz stated it was a good point that was made that the doors to the service center are the front doors for the vehicle. Cannon stated that they were all trying to get to the same finish line, but find the right avenue. He said the direction they were told to go was to amend the C-7 ordinance. If there's a way to put a condition on it, if there's a different way to get there, they are willing to take that path. If there's a way to do a conditional zoning, they will do it. Shaw stated that when the applicants talked to Staff, this was discussed. The issue is that if the dealership is allowed, are they willing to build it to the design criteria and development plan already in place for the Prairie Crossing area? The prototype that Honda requires them to build doesn't fit—a white metal building with overhead doors. In order to build that specific building, the C-7 district would have to be gutted. Pudenz said Bass Pro doesn't take on that strong identity, which is why she suggested the C-3 wrap, grabbing this property as C-3, and amending the C-3 instead. Henry stated he likes the idea if it works, but he doesn't think Honda is going change how they're building their buildings to fit our C-7 district. Pudenz added it's part of their identity, just like we want to have an identity. Henry stated that he thinks there are at least three Commissioners that would vote yes on something, but he wasn't sure what that something is. Wayland asked how you address the multitude of uses within it. C-7 was designed to try to create flexibility. It's designated in comprehensive land use by commercial establishments that offer a variety of goods and services to consumers and is primarily intended for establishments that have large customer draw and regional pull. Wayland continued to read the description of the C-7 in the Ordinance. He stated this project is a continuation of the vision. Henry stated that he thinks everyone is in agreement, but the question is if they can get out of C-7 and into C-3. Wayland said they were under the understanding that they were only asking about Outlot Y, that

it wasn't about amending the entire C-7. You can say it's spot zoning, but he felt that that is what C-7 is meant to do, to provide that flexibility. Pudenz addressed that the agenda item as presented was to amend all of C-7. Burk said the application and request was specific to Outlot Y. Shaw stated that they understand that, but the first step is allowing it in the zoning district itself. Herbold-Swalwell said although she recused herself, she had a question. She asked about the process about investigating whether a C-3 could work and how they would get it back in front of them. Henry stated they could table it. There could be a special meeting if they didn't want to wait 30 days. Burk said because of a time crunch, he would ask that they vote on the C-7 amendment. He hopes they don't recommend denial, but tabling it delays them from getting it before City Council. Cannon stated they'd be willing to do a deed restriction on the property. If the C-7 was amended to allow the uses, all the other property would be deed restricted to covenants that would disallow dealerships on the rest of the property. Narber asked Shaw if the Commission passes this on, if deed restriction is something they could put as recommendation. Shaw explained that the way the C-7 is structured and set up, what they want does not comply. There's prairie-style architecture. All commercial districts require some percentage of brick or stone, which is not part of what they build. The C-3 would have to be investigated, and the City attorney would have to be consulted. If they want the Commission to act upon this as item as submitted, knowing they can't and don't desire to comply with the Prairie Crossing development plan and design criteria, he'd recommend denial. The applicants can go to City Council. If C-3 is a better avenue, it would still have to come back before the Commission. Henry said as a Commission, they are not allowed to waive architectural standards. Wayland expressed his frustration after twenty years of work that the C-7 was designed to be unique to the site and is now restricting uses to be brought in that the City of Altoona believes are appropriate. He explained how he spent the better part of half a decade trying to bring in a Costco, but they would probably not provide much architectural flexibility. Users like a prototype look. Heart of America has turned people down that they thought didn't have the appropriate architectural look. The Honda dealership has a product that people want. He encouraged finding a way forward and reiterated the deed restriction as a possibility.

With no further questions or comments from Commissioners, Narber asked for a motion.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Pudenz, for recommendation of an amendment to Chapter 168.13 – C-7 Regional Commercial to amend the Principal Permitted Uses to add vehicles sales and ancillary services such as car wash, body shop and maintenance facilities, subject to a deed restriction. He added that he prefers that someone looks into a rezoning to C-3 before the City Council meeting and if a special meeting is needed, they would hold one.

Votes: Yes – Henry, Pudenz, Sloan, Narber, Chase. No - Henry. Abstain – Herbold-Swalwell. Motion approved, 5-0-1.

8. Consideration and recommendation of an amendment to Chapter 168.13(6)(J) “to permit overhead doors to be in front of the building and adjacent roadway”.

Narber asked if they needed to proceed with this item. Pudenz asked if they would make a motion, rather than amending the chapter, to have the Board of Adjustment waiver. Burk stated he would appreciate a vote on the item.

Pudenz asked Shaw if amending Chapter 168 changes it for the entire city. Shaw stated that this was just for that portion of C-7.

Motion by Pudenz, seconded by Sloan, recommendation of an amendment to Chapter 168.13(6)(J) “to permit overhead doors to be in front of the building and adjacent roadway”, similar to the last motion, subject to a modification being made that it could become a C-3 rather than staying C-7, but if not, that there would be deed restrictions on this as well, limited to Outlot Y.

Votes: Yes – Pudenz, Sloan, Henry, Narber, Chase. No - Henry. Abstain – Herbold-Swallwell. Motion approved, 5-0-1.

9. Update on the Altoona Comprehensive Plan.

John Peterson explained the scope of work he's been doing includes the east and south regarding growth. Altoona has roughly a 4% growth rate, so by 2050, it could be 60,000 people. He added that comp plans don't change anything. It doesn't make owners sell their ground. It gives owners an idea of what the City is looking for. It's a guidance document that helps shape capital improvement programs and can prompt annexations. Altoona today houses about 5,000 people per square mile. The east and the south give the space needed for future growth. He reviewed some points of the 2014 Comp Plan and explained how and why communities are laid out the way they are. He touched on the idea of adding public plaza areas, like the one behind Hy-Vee, to parks. Peterson explained other land use influences, including existing roads, developments, county roads, storm water considerations, creeks and tributaries, terrain, railroads, existing infrastructure, and water and sewer services. He listed possible areas for redevelopment, including Hubbell Avenue, 34th Avenue, Adventureland Drive, and Old Town. Another consideration is looking at uses that aren't necessarily compatible with older uses, things that weren't built to existing standards or site planning or materials. Looking at whether those uses are types that we want to continue or encourage to be located there is important. For instance, between I-80 and Adventureland Drive, there are truck-oriented businesses. Considering what those would be if we could start over and if we would still have the same thoughts about those uses is helpful in looking at future development. The Old Town area was also looked at. He showed and explained some renderings of land use maps. Shaw added that the land use maps will be digitized and colorized. Shaw said they are working on gathering public input. Herbold-Swalwell stated she liked the fact that they are focusing on redeveloping older areas. Shaw mentioned the retrofitting of 8th Street. Peterson explained how commercial areas were historically laid out along roadways, and the idea was to drive to a place, then hop in the car, and drive down the street to the next place. This necessitates the construction of extra lanes. In newer areas, now there are commercial centers where you can park once and walk to different places. It's a shopping experience. We don't know the future of retail due to the effects of COVID, that stores could be turned into business' distribution centers. Quick mentioned the topic of driverless delivery vehicles and whether to allow them on sidewalks. Peterson said Amazon proposed a change in the State code to allow land-based drone delivery vehicles on sidewalks.

10. Minutes of the June 29, 2021 meeting.

Motion by Herbold-Swalwell, seconded by Pudenz, to approve the minutes. Henry left prior to the vote.

Votes: Yes – Herbold-Swallwell, Pudenz, Sloan, Narber, Chase. No - None. Abstain – None. Motion approved, 5-0-0.

11. Old Business.

None.

12. New Business.

None

Motion by Herbold-Swalwell, seconded by Pudenz, to adjourn.

Votes: Yes – Herbold-Swalwell, Pudenz, Sloan, Narber, Chase. No - None. Abstain – None. Motion approved, 5-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m. Next regular meeting is August 31, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Naylor
Office Assistant