

# ALTOONA PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

February 22, 2022

Altoona City Hall

Members Present in Person: Michelle Sloan, Jill Pudenz, Dan Narber, Scott Henry, Steve Moyna, Steve Chase

Members Present Virtually: None

Members Absent: Erin Herbold-Swalwell

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

Guests: Meeting was held in a virtual Zoom format and in-person; In-person and online guests included James Myers, Joe and Penny Shepherd, Doug and Stacy Wike, and others not signed in

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

## **1. Public Hearing for the consideration of a rezoning request from the Terrace View, LLC to rezone the property of 8267 NE 46th Avenue from A-1 (Agricultural District) to R-5 (Planned Unit Development).**

Wally Pelds (Pelds Design Services) presented the request. It is a townhome plat that they are looking to rezone from Agricultural to PUD because of the unique features, including the floodplain. He stated that he hadn't done the complete math on the unit densities. He said he thinks they picked 20 units per acre as a standard. If they include the whole parcel, they are at 4 units per acre. This was the best layout they could come up with, so as long as they could do that many units on the acreage shown, he wasn't sure that they had issues. They propose to make a connection from the south to the north to 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The only question he had was on density.

James Myers, one of the LLC owners, addressed the attempts to work through the challenges on the site, including topographical challenges and the Des Moines Water Works easement. They want to eliminate the eyesore that the property has been and bring new clients and a new product to Altoona. The townhomes would be in the high \$300,000s to mid \$400,000 price point and would help open the connection to 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

Henry asked Shaw if this were the site plan, since this was a rezoning. Shaw stated that they are presenting the development plan for the property, since it is a PUD. Their plan shows a maximum density of 20 units per acre. That would be considered high density residential. This is an area the City considers to be medium density residential. What they are showing is actually medium density residential. Staff has no problems with how they are showing the layout of the density of the units. The application and bulk regulations need to match what they are requesting. Pudenz asked what density is being shown. Shaw said they are around 4 units to the acre, but because it is a PUD, if they state on the drawing 20 units per acre, they could come back later with a changed plan to put apartments in there. They are not requesting to do that, and that is not what the City would want to allow there anyway. It is a transition area from low density to medium density.

Jason Holder (1127 20<sup>th</sup> Ave SE) said he counted 32 homes on the plan, which is a lot of homes and a lot of traffic. He felt there is enough traffic there, stating that the Police Chief [who lives in the area and was present at the meeting] could account for the traffic in the area. He expressed that if houses could go in there, they would sell immediately, as there isn't a single available lot in the 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE area. Six to eight \$500,000-plus homes could go in there. He asked about the plan for the 8<sup>th</sup> and 80<sup>th</sup> intersection with the already increased traffic from the retirement village. Henry asked Shaw about the plans for the intersection. Shaw explained the traffic study that was performed in conjunction with the new school being built and explained the first and second phases. The 8<sup>th</sup> and

80<sup>th</sup> intersection will probably be in the third phase of 8<sup>th</sup> Street improvements. The specific improvements have not been determined yet. There may be a traffic circle rather than a lit intersection and will likely occur in the 2024-2025 timeframe.

Doug Wike (931 Tuscany Dr SE) stated that he agrees with Holder. He said that they either need to make them houses or make them bigger. He also asked about HOAs for the new development. Shaw stated that with townhomes, they will have to have an HOA. Henry asked Myers about the size of the townhomes. Myers stated they range in size from 1,100 to 1,300 square feet on the main floor with downstairs finishes that are not calculated into overall square footage, which would add approximately another 700 square feet as well. They all have two car garages.

Pudenz addressed the traffic concerns, explaining that that is the reason for transition development planning and organization. Shaw stated for that area, it is nice to have additional access to a main street. Henry asked if that road lines up with another across the street. Shaw affirmed. Pudenz asked if the road was in already. Shaw affirmed. Someone from the audience stated it wasn't in, that the dirtwork was done but the road wasn't in. Shaw said it's not physically there, but it's there.

Joe Shepherd (8324 NE 46<sup>th</sup> Ave) asked if there was going to be a turn lane installed. As the north development is further along, traffic turning left from 8<sup>th</sup> Street into the north development will back up traffic on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Henry said he hoped that there would be in the future. Shaw explained that as this is the main street through Altoona, there will be improvements to it as needed and that development has another access off of 80<sup>th</sup>. It's good when developments have multiple choices. He explained that they keep traffic counts and implement improvements as needed.

Motion by Pudenz, seconded by Moyna, for recommendation of a rezoning request from the Terrace View, LLC to rezone the property of 8267 NE 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue from A-1 (Agricultural District) to R-5 (Planned Unit Development), subject to deficiencies and engineering comments.

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

## **2. Consideration and recommendation of a preliminary plat for Brookhaven Estates Plat 4.**

Grae Herold (Civil Design Advantage) presented the request. They have already completed Plats 1, 2, and 3 and are seeking to continue that development. Henry asked if it was single family. Shaw affirmed. Henry asked about issues out there. Shaw explained a previous temporary drainage situation that runs into the Plat 4 area. Pudenz asked about how the streets run through the development. Herold said 6<sup>th</sup> Street will run all the way north. Pudenz asked if this were being phased from south to north. Shaw affirmed. Henry asked if anyone from the public had any comments. Hearing none, Henry asked about bike trails. Shaw said there were not bike trails in this immediate area, but there are some currently to the south, on the south side of Clay Elementary.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Pudenz, for recommendation a preliminary plat for Brookhaven Estates Plat 4.

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

## **3. Consideration and recommendation of a preliminary plat for Tuscany Townhomes Plat 4.**

Caleb Smith (McClure Engineering) presented the request. This project will complete the south loop of townhomes. The project includes 24 buildings with 48 units. It is the same product type as what

was done to the north in Plat 3. Both sides of the street are generally different units. The sewer and water main are public with private streets and private storm sewer. There is a planned open space area. The previous PUD had one more building shown in the area. They decided to pull it out to give more space between units. Henry asked about the size of the open space. Shaw stated it was 42,528 square feet. Pudenz asked if there were any issues in the area to the north. Smith said their biggest issue was the grade transition through there. They tried to design better this time around. Taking out the unit made a huge difference. Pudenz asked about water issues. Smith said there were none at this time. Henry asked why the Commission wasn't given pictures of the townhomes for the last item, as they had pictures of this project's townhomes, and asked them to consider that for the future. Henry asked Shaw how traffic has performed out there. Shaw stated there has been cut-through construction traffic that the neighbors have complained about. The Building Department worked with the contractors on that issue. Henry asked if Hubbell were done platting out there now. Smith said there was one more to go later this year with 20-some houses.

Motion by Pudenz, seconded by Chase, for recommendation of a preliminary plat for Tuscan Townhomes Plat 4, subject to deficiencies.

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

#### **4. Consideration and recommendation of the Site Plan Amendment to approve the updated architectural elevations for Gurley Leep Honda.**

Eric Cannon (Snyder & Associates) presented the request. He explained that Honda has released a new store prototype in the last month, so in all transparency, they wanted to get this in front of the Commission as fast as possible. It is hot off the press and will be nationwide. There is more glass to it. Staff had asked for stone columns, and the architect will get on that to get those elements added. Some of the elements will need to be tweaked to incorporate the prairie theme. Henry stated to the Commission that his thoughts on this are that most of the stuff presented, they have no thoughts on it, because they have no authority on it, and it's a City Council issue. They could feel free to ask any questions. Pudenz commented that she preferred the design without the "waves." Henry asked about Council's decision regarding the setbacks. Shaw said they just left it at is. Henry asked if they wanted a motion on this issue. Shaw affirmed and reminded them that this is the C-7 District, and this the architectural elements are part of the zoning approval. That is an area where the Commission does have jurisdiction. Henry stated that City Council overrode them last time.

Motion by Pudenz, seconded by Moyna, for recommendation of the Site Plan Amendment to approve the updated architectural elevations for Gurley Leep Honda.

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

Pudenz asked if this will be the first store with this new look. Cannon said he didn't know, since it was a nationwide branding campaign. Shaw stated that they received an email stating that this was one of the first two in the country.

#### **5. Continue Public Hearing of Update to the Altoona Comprehensive Plan.**

John Peterson (Peterson Planning Strategies) presented an overview of the 2022 Altoona Comprehensive Amendment. He explained that it creates the value that the City wants to place on the community and the vision of where they want it to go. Some of the highlights are as follows:

Population: With current rates of growth, in 30 years, the population of Altoona could be 60,000 to 65,000 people. There are approximately 5,000 people per square mile, and there are approximately four square miles developed. Altoona would need to look for 8-9 more sections of ground to accommodate future growth.

Economy: Hospitality, retail, and healthcare are the majority of businesses here. The people who live here to travel elsewhere, which is 89% of Altoona residents, work in business/finance, administrative support, and management. One key business target could be to bring them home to work here by bringing those businesses to the community. Creating an entrepreneurial center to support small business growth here is a target.

Housing: Constructing additional higher-end housing is a target, possibly around the golf course as that area develops. The community told them that was something they wanted to see. Peterson said that people have the perception that there is too much multi-family housing, because it is built where it is visible, off of main roads. Single family home construction isn't as visible, because it's back in neighborhoods. Altoona has a lower ratio of multi-family to single-family than other suburban communities. Entry-level housing could be a target. Changes to the Zoning Code and subdivision regulations could aid in balancing the housing stock available.

Land Use: He presented the land use map. Changes include a new interstate interchange to the east near 96<sup>th</sup>. Around that are land uses regional in nature in Mixed Use 3, a mix of light industrial, commercial, multi-family residential. It may be 15 to 20 years before that interchange happens. Growth has to justify it for funding purposes. Another big idea is changing the way we look at draining and creating bluebelts, so Altoona could own the waterways and properly maintain them. Setting aside bluebelts and making them part of the storm water system first, getting enough land to manage the drainage and maintenance, and placing linear parks or greenways next to them where there would be a trail would be something to look at. One community concern was that some areas of the trails feel unsafe, because they are closed in. This would involve changes to subdivision regulations and design standards.

Parks and Streets: Start with the idea of how to move people safely and then how to move vehicles. The majority of respondents to the survey stated they prefer a side path over a bike lane. Additional right-of-ways and park land could help with that. Uncoupling tax abatement from park dedication is also an idea. There could be a three-to-five-acre neighborhood playgrounds within a five minute walk of every home. There would also be neighborhood parks (10 to 20 acres) and community parks (40-80 acres) with trails and sidewalks connecting them all. Shaw stated that Burget Park is in the community park range.

Other: Auxiliary fire stations to improve response times should be expected in the future. The library and rec center would eventually need to be expanded. The library could include workspace, training facilities, makerspace, generally places to gather for events and activities.

Henry stated he would like to have seen a better comparison between Altoona and other communities regarding housing. Peterson said the housing study is included in Appendix 2. Shaw explained the deeper dive into housing and reiterated the need for more executive homes and attached housing. Pudenz asked how they got public input. Peterson stated there were two public meetings, as well as Parks Board meetings and the survey. Around 100 people responded to the survey. The most surprising comment Peterson said he heard was that people choose Altoona because they have a tie to Altoona. That says that we aren't marketing Altoona outside of Altoona. Having a little more ego about what Altoona does have could help in marketing. The metro considers anyone this side of the river not quite up to par, so there is a lot of advertising to do. Chad Quick, as the new Economic

Development Director, can help growth. Creating commercial nodes where people can park once and walk around rather than stretching commercial out along the roadways is something to consider.

Motion by Narber, seconded by Sloan, for recommendation of the Altoona Comprehensive Plan.

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

## **6. Minutes of the January 25, 2022 meeting.**

Motion by Pudenz, seconded by Sloan, to approve the minutes.

Votes: Yes – Pudenz, Sloan, Narber, Moyna, Chase. No - None. Abstain – Henry. Motion approved, 5-0-1.

## **7. Old/New Business**

Pudenz asked about Quick's new position. Shaw stated that previously, they were a member of EPIC, but EPIC's executive director left that position. In the interim, they've been doing the same thing, working in-house by committee, and the mayor and City Council wanted to elevate a position in-house to do that. Quick is still doing planning. His position will grow over time. There is an ad out for an additional planner.

Motion by Sloan, seconded by Pudenz, to adjourn.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m. Next regular meeting is March 29, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Naylor  
Office Assistant