

ALTOONA PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

April 25, 2023

Altoona City Hall

Members Present in Person: Michelle Sloan, Scott Henry, Erin Herbold-Swalwell, Dan Narber, Steve Moyna

Members Present Virtually: None

Members Absent: Jill Pudenz, Steve Chase

Staff: John Shaw, Jenn Naylor, Marina Smart, Natalie Jacobson

Guests: Meeting was held in a virtual Zoom format and in-person; In-person and online guests included Wally Pelds, Terry Coady, Sasi Karuturi, Josh Trygstad, and others not signed in.

Vice Chairperson Erin Herbold-Swalwell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Roll Call. Roll call was taken. Five commissioners were present at roll call.

2. Vote to add “Consideration and recommendation of the Final Plat for the Townhomes at Scenic Ridge” to the agenda as an amendment to Item 2.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Narber, to add “Consideration and recommendation of the Site Plan for the Townhomes at Scenic Ridge” to the agenda as an amendment to Item 2.

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

3. Consideration and recommendation of the Final Plat for the Townhomes at Scenic Ridge.

Wally Pelds (Pelds Design Services) presented the request. They’ve been working with Staff to get a couple of final items figured out. He said he believed they had most of them resolved with a few outstanding comments left to address. He said he was certain they could get them hammered out, but some items were beyond their control, one being what the DNR tells them they need to do. It’s a little different arrangement because of the flood plain and the grading. Henry asked Shaw if this was right on 8th Street. Shaw affirmed. Henry asked if this was where the house was where the zebra used to be. Shaw affirmed. Herbold-Swalwell asked for any other comments from the public. With no comments, she asked for a motion.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Sloan, for recommendation of the Final Plat for the Townhomes at Scenic Ridge, subject to deficiencies.

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

4. Consideration and recommendation of the Site Plan for the Townhomes at Scenic Ridge.

Wally Pelds (Pelds Design Services) presented the request with nothing further to add. Shaw added a clarification regarding meeting with the DNR about the flood plain, flood way, and detention basin. He said that if the detention basin can’t be there and has to be moved, that affects the rest of the development. Henry asked if all the buildings fell outside the flood plain. Pelds affirmed. Herbold-Swalwell asked for any other comments from the panel or the public. With no comments, she asked for a motion.

Motion by Sloan, seconded by Narber, for recommendation of the Site Plan for the Townhomes at Scenic Ridge, subject to deficiencies.

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

5. Consideration and recommendation of the Preliminary Plat for the Atherton-Brown Family Trust Plat 1 Preliminary Plat (County Plat).

Terry Coady (Snyder & Associates) presented the request. He said the property is located in rural Polk County and is currently zoned Ag. It consists of 9.98 acres and is located at the northeast corner of NE 78th Avenue and NE 46th Street. It lies within two miles of Altoona's jurisdiction at 0.9 miles northwest of Altoona, one mile east of Ankeny, and 1.7 miles west of Bondurant. His client would like to separate the existing homestead from the ag property and create a lot for the existing homestead and create two future lots and an outlot, which would encompass the remaining ag property. The existing homestead has septic and water provided by Des Moines Water Works, and Lot 2 would have the same. The preliminary plat has been revised based on City comments, and they are still going through the review and approval process on the preliminary plat with Polk County. Herbold-Swalwell asked for any other comments from the panel or the public. With no comments, she asked for a motion.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Sloan, for recommendation of the Preliminary Plat for the Atherton-Brown Family Trust Plat 1 Preliminary Plat (County Plat).

Votes: Yes – Henry, Sloan, Herbold-Swalwell, Narber, Moyna. No—None. Abstain – None. Motion approved, 5-0-0.

6. Consideration and recommendation of an amendment to the Altoona Urban Renewal Plan.

John Shaw explained that this is in regard to a number of lots in the I-80 Business Park. They are looking at redoing the plan specifically for that area. Part of the procedure is that City Council has to get recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission. A map was shown. He recalled the site plan for Plat 2 for the Opus warehouses and indicated the area on the map. He said they are entering into a development agreement with the developer, so the plan for that area needs to be amended. Herbold-Swalwell asked for any other comments from the panel or the public. With no comments, she asked for a motion.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Sloan, for recommendation of an amendment to the Altoona Urban Renewal Plan

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

7. Discussion and recommendation regarding the amendment of the C- 7 (Regional Commercial) zoning district to allow auto repair services as a principal use.

With no one immediately available online to address this item, John Shaw explained that the property owner wants to allow auto repair shops in the Prairie Crossing area. They are currently allowed as an accessory use to a larger use. A good example would be the car dealerships. Looking at the general retail and big box users, they do have limited automotive services that they provide. That's why that language is in there. He said once it is allowed as a principal use, it becomes more like a C-2 use, and it kind of degrades or dilutes the potential of that area. Like uses generally like to be associated or next to each other, so consideration has to be given regarding what else would want to go in there if car repair places are allowed. Herbold-Swalwell asked about the availability of C-2 and if there was any reason to allow extra. Shaw said there are hundreds and hundreds of acres zoned C-2. Henry stated his thoughts were that the City was sold this plan ten to fifteen years ago, and they are still struggling to fulfill the plan. He stated he has tried to be consistent with this area. He said he voted no on the car wash, even though City Council went ahead and approved the car wash. The taxpayers of Altoona have put significant funds into this project. He said he will be a no on this item. Sloan stated she will also be a no on this item. She was a part of City Council when they started this, and this was not the projected vision of what they were hoping for in that area. She doesn't feel it's a good idea to start this trend now. Narber echoed their comments. To make the change is opening up for all other potential uses like that, and it will take away from other retail types of services that they'd want to have out there. Herbold-Swalwell stated she also agreed, based on Shaw's comment of availability of other areas to place these. She asked for any other comments.

Josh Trygstad (Civil Design Advantage) was on Zoom and addressed the issue. He said the request was put in by Heart of America Group. He said the Commission was noting that there were multiple acres of commercial ground available that would allow this use. He said this area has been undeveloped for a substantial amount of time. Heart of America was approached by a user who wanted to build an automotive repair shop in this corridor. They are sitting on ground that has been left undeveloped for a while, and it's hard to get traction to bring in a user. That is why they are requesting this amendment to the C-7. Henry said the good news is that he can go directly to City Council as they are just a recommendation board. Trygstad said he just wanted to give an explanation of it. Henry said he completely understands both sides of the issue. Herbold-Swalwell asked for any additional comments from the panel or the public. With no comments, she asked for a motion.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Sloan, to deny recommendation regarding the amendment of the C- 7 (Regional Commercial) zoning district to allow auto repair services as a principal use.

Votes: Yes – Henry, Sloan, Herbold-Swalwell, Narber. No – Moyna. Abstain – None. Motion approved, 4-1-0.

8. Minutes of the March 28, 2023 meeting.

Motion by Narber, seconded by Moyna, to approve the minutes.

Votes: Yes – Narber, Moyna. No – None. Abstain – Sloan, Henry, Herbold-Swalwell. Motion approved, 2-0-3.

7. Old/New Business

Henry asked about the C-7 area and if apartments are allowed. Shaw said that residential is allowed in that zoning classification on second floor and above, a mixed use. If they wanted to change that plan, the zoning would have to be amended first. Then they'd have to amend their development plan. Henry asked if medical was allowed out there. Shaw stated that Chad Quick and Randy Pierce have been meeting with all the different large medical groups in the metro area the last few weeks.

Motion by Sloan, seconded by Narber, to adjourn.

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m. Next regular meeting is May 30, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Naylor
Office Assistant