

ALTOONA PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

October 31, 2023

Altoona City Hall

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

Members Present Virtually: None

Members Absent: Dan Dove, Erin Herbold-Swalwell

Staff: John Shaw, Jenn Naylor, Natalie Jacobson

Guests: Meeting was held in a virtual Zoom format and in-person; In-person and online guests included Mike Whalen, Jenny Drake, Josh Trygstad, Chuck, and others not signed in.

Chairperson Jill Pudenz called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

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

2. Public hearing to consider a request from Chantal Porter to amend the Altoona Zoning Map to change the land use of 1.16 acres from A-1 to C-2.

The applicant withdrew her application. Pudenz opened the public hearing. With no public comments, Pudenz closed the public hearing.

3. Consideration and recommendation of the Meadowland Industrial Plat 1 Site Plan.

Kirby Caraveo (Berkey Home Builders) presented the request. He explained that they are adjusting the site plan. They have added more concrete to the south side of the buildings, added a fueling station to the east of the buildings, and added storage east of the buildings. He said there's a sidewalk easement coming in from 9th down to their building that has been adjusted from going to reach the parking lot to stopping now before the fence. There is a building on the southeast corner that is located on the neighboring lot, and they are planning to move it to a location on their property on the southeast corner. Caraveo said there was also a retaining wall that he did not catch that he sent pictures of, which were displayed for the Commission. He explained it is concrete block wall two rows high. He provided the measurements and locations on another plan that was shown. Henry asked if the retaining wall was built to code. Shaw said since it's a commercial site, it might need a railing. It will be per the Building Department. Henry asked when it was originally approved. Caraveo stated two years ago.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Moyna, for recommendation of the Meadowland Industrial Plat 1 Site Plan, subject to deficiencies, including ensuring the retaining wall is to code.

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

4. Consideration and recommendation of the Equipment Share Site Plan.

The item was removed from the agenda.

5. Consideration and recommendation of Brook Ridge Plat 4 Final Plat.

No one was in the audience or online to present this item. Jacobson stated that the applicant received the agenda, but they never confirmed they would be online or in person to present. Shaw explained it is a final plat. He said deficiencies include mostly paperwork items, inspection fees, legal documents for recording, and bond submittal. Pudenz asked if this dead ended or connected to the north. Shaw said it would eventually connect to the development to the east.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Pudenz, for recommendation of Brook Ridge Plat 4 Final Plat, subject to deficiencies.

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

6. Consideration and recommendation of Prairie Crossing Plat 6 Lot P Site Plan.

Mike Whalen (CEO, Heart of America) presented the request. He said he brought the site plan to clarify what they are trying to accomplish after reading the minutes of the last meeting. He passed out a document to the Commissioners and held it up while explaining. He said if you look at the whole site plan of Prairie Crossing, they are trying to add basically the storm water plan to handle most of an area he indicated on a drawing. It requires the building of a fairly large retention lake just south of the lake here, at which he pointed. He said basically the question is if they can handle the rain that God sends them that they have to take care of and figure out how to get it to the Mississippi River and eventually the Gulf of Mexico. Unless it is built, they are pretty much foreclosed from building anything in an area he indicated on the drawing. He said it's basically a question if Prairie Crossing sits still and doesn't really develop out. Whalen stated that this is the last critical piece of infrastructure that needs to be done. He said it's basically the same plan that was submitted and approved by the City back in 2018. He said there were reasons that they had some various disagreements with some elements of the City regarding the development agreement, which he stated was eventually resolved by the courts. They want to continue to move this project ahead and get this last piece done. He stated they want to make clear that they have some pending LOIs for users on a piece of ground he indicated on the drawing. They had plans for residential that they had developed pre-COVID. He said they are on hold until they can tell people for sure that they can handle the storm water. He said it's not a sexy thing to do, but it's something they have to do. Whalen explained that it's not that they decide where these things go, because they don't. He said you can kind of say simply that God generally decides which way the water flows. He added you can, to a certain extent, change the water flow by topography and moving yellow pieces of equipment. He showed the direction of the water flow on the drawing. He said they are taking in water that's offsite from Prairie Crossing and will eventually be retained by a pond he pointed to on the drawing, sent over to the other pond, and eventually distributed out into the general thing. It is a connection to a giant public system that handles the water. He said Josh is a Civil Engineer who can talk more elegantly about the things that are there. Whalen said he wanted to clarify that this isn't a discretionary choice of where they put things or how big the retention is. It is strictly Engineering calculations.

Pudenz asked if the Commission was still reviewing whether it switches with the lot to the northwest. Whalen said no, that they talked about doing Plat 9. In the five years since 2018, they had a chance to take a look at it. Shifting it to Plat 9 would save some money. Functionally, it does the same thing. He gestured to three different locations on the map, stating they could put a pond in those locations, and it doesn't add or subtract in terms of buildable land. It's a straight calculation as to how much water you have to retain under the rules, and he thinks they have shifted a little bit since 2018. He said last time Shaw expressed the desire as to why they didn't just go with the original plan. They were trying to achieve some cost savings, but this plan works, and they have people wanting to come to Prairie Crossing, so he'd like to get it done.

Josh Trygstad (Civil Design Advantage) stated that they are in agreement with Items 1 through 4, and they will get those addressed. They are working on comments for the Engineering Department, and they'll get those addressed. The only deficiency they are objecting to is Item 5, which gives a conditional site plan approval, based off of either Lot 1 or Lot 2 installing the access drive across Lot P. He said ultimately that is going to be a decision when Heart of America or whoever they sell the lot to, whether that's crucial to the development of Lot 1 or 2. He said it may come up where they don't want cross-access installed, so he doesn't think it should be a condition of approval for this site plan. He said ultimately Heart of America controls all of this plat, regardless. Lot 2 could still be developed and have access via Outlot Z in the actual pre-determined full access point on Bass Pro Drive. He said he'd be happy to answer any questions or technical questions that Mike may not be able to.

Pudenz asked Trygstad if he were saying that it might not be developed possibly at all or just that until both are developed. Trygstad answered that it might not be constructed at all. They are still evaluating what end users would be there, and Lot 2 would have access. He asked Jacobson to scroll back to sheet 2. He showed the existing access off of Bass Pro Drive near Lot 2. He said Lot 2 has full access through there. Lot 1 has full access via the existing entrance into Fairfield Inn & Suites and the Water Entertainment Area. He said it's not crucial, but it depends on the end users for Lots 1 and 2. Pudenz asked if the Fire Department would want at least two points of access. Whalen said presently they intend to develop the lot that would be south of Fairfield

Inn. There would be a Heart of America development that would be totally self-contained there. It would not require public ingress and egress. It would share the main ingress and egress that the Outlet center and the Fairfield and the other hotels and restaurants contain. It would have the same two points of access on each side of the lake. Pudenz said she was more concerned about the corner one, to only have one point of entry could be a possible issue for access. Whalen said he's not really sure what will end up there. In their heart of hearts, they'd love to see a major, class A office user or a health facility user right there. He said they don't get to decide that; the market does. He said they just had a very nice end user come to them and talk about wanting to be opposite of the main entrance way across the street from the HyVee Fast & Fresh. He said they would like to have them there, as it is someone they have been courting for better part of ten years, and now the potential end user is calling them occasionally. He said it might change, and he doesn't know what it will end up looking like.

Pudenz asked Shaw about the deficiencies. Shaw said when this was first approved, the lot was designed for the Hyper Energy Bar, a small drive-up coffee shop. It was relying on the drive across there for one-way traffic. It's a very narrow lot, so there are limitations on how it can be built out and serve it with parking as well as circulating on that lot. Given the nature of the layout of the lot, it's hard to see how that's not going to need access to the west for circulation purposes. He said it gets to be like the chicken and the egg. If you're going to build on there, especially if it's like a drive-up coffee or something like that, how does that segment of Lot P get built across there? Whalen agreed that if something would be proposed there, obviously they would need to make sure there was a dual-sided connection to it. Until the time at which there is an end user, he's not sure it's prudent or makes any sense to put in pavement that probably wouldn't be utilized. He said if they came in with a user, the Commission would probably rightly say he'd have to do that now, and he said he would agree. Pudenz said that it sounded like Trygstad's point was that there's a possibility that condition would not remain in the future. Whalen said there is that possibility. They could see a drive-oriented user going onto that site. If one does come across their way, if they would add value and be a positive addition to Prairie Crossing, they would try to figure out how to put the user there.

Trygstad said they could always look at a right-in, right-out access on Bass Pro Drive, as long as it didn't have a detrimental effect on the full access points. It is something that can be evaluated. The bottom line is they are asking it not to be a condition of Lot P. If it's ever a condition on anything, it should be a condition of Lot 2 when it is actually developed, as he said Whalen alluded to. Moyna said it makes sense to put it with Lot 2. Pudenz repeated Staff's recommendation, and asked if that was correct, that whichever lot is developed first, 1 or 2, they would have to put the drive in. Shaw said when they did the site plan last time, they were putting in the drive with it at that time. So now it raises questions, how does it get across there? Who does it? What's the timing? He said there is also going to be some coordination. If Lot 1 develops, there is an access easement that they have to facilitate through that lot to drive across. Whalen agreed there would have to be coordination. Pudenz asked if it had to be a condition of this approval, or how it would be tied to a future development. Shaw said they are bringing this back for re-approval. They've made some changes. They are dropping off the drive across there. If they do a site plan approval with the condition, or if they'd offer up an alternative of how that is going to be across there, that's ultimately what they're seeing. They are all agreeing on what needs to happen. It's a matter of timing to make sure that's set in place. It won't be tomorrow. They don't know when it is going to happen. Staff just wants to make sure it's taken care of. Whalen said he thinks the time to address it is if they do their planned development on one side, at which he pointed, and then south of the current Fairfield parking lot. That site plan would have to incorporate the potential to have the driveway be connected. Shaw asked where he was talking about. Whalen said if something was built on the site, pointing at the area, he thinks on the internal site plan the traffic flow would have the foresight to accommodate if that road would ever be put in. In other words, it's going to be a dead-end parking thing. It would have to be capable of accommodating that being built at a later date.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Pudenz, for recommendation of Prairie Crossing Plat 6 Lot P Site Plan, subject to deficiencies 1, 2, 3, 4, and Engineering item 1, with City Council to decide on deficiency 5.

Votes: Yes – Henry, Pudenz, Narber. No – Chase. Abstain – Moyna. Motion approved, 3-1-1.

7. Urban Renewal Area Amendment

Shaw explained that City Council is doing an update to their Urban Renewal Plan, adding a handful of other locations. He explained that state law requires the Planning & Zoning Commission to have the opportunity to comment. He said the packets contain the legal description and their locations. Henry asked if that gives the opportunity for TIF. Shaw affirmed. A map with the additional areas marked in red was displayed for the Commission. Henry asked what the five red properties were. Shaw explained that one was a property north of Facebook, and it would have potential warehousing. Two others were also warehousing projects. Another area is north of Walmart, and the last is just south of City Hall. He added they are looking at that for the Public Works Maintenance Facility building. Henry asked if they always do it property-by-property rather than just take a whole area and say it's all Urban Renewal. Shaw explained it is areas they are adding to the existing Urban Renewal areas, and the properties are not small. There might be multiple parcels in each. Pudenz asked if there was a map of what was already included in the Urban Renewal area. Shaw affirmed. Jacobson said she could find one for the next meeting. Henry asked if they needed approval, or if Shaw was just informing the Commission. Shaw said they were being informed, and they could review and comment if they desired. Henry stated he didn't have any comments. Pudenz agreed.

8. Minutes of the September 26, 2023 meeting.

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

Votes: Yes – Henry, Pudenz, Narber, Moyna. No – None. Abstain – Chase. Motion approved, 4-0-1.

Old/New Business

Shaw discussed a meeting held with Facebook earlier in the day to discuss plans for their closeout package. They will be coming back with a proposal. They will also be converting a temporary building to a permanent building, and they will need official site plan approval for that.

Jacobson asked the Commission if December 19, 2023 will work for the December P&Z meeting, so that application deadlines can be adjusted. Commissioners confirmed.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Chase, to adjourn.

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

Meeting adjourned 7:06 p.m. Next regular meeting is November 28, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Naylor
Office Assistant