

# ALTOONA PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

February 27, 2024

Altoona City Hall

Members Present in Person: Michelle Sloan, Scott Henry, Erin Herbold-Swalwell, Jill Pudenz

Members Present Virtually: None

Members Absent: Dan Narber, Steve Moyna, Steve Chase

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 Seth Sunderman, Dirk Bliss, David Miller, Libby Miller, Doug Mandernach, BTW Companies, Mark VanderTuig, Pennie Carroll, Dennis Carroll, Les Lourens, Ajay Sharma, Taryn, Branden Stubbs, Ed Pelds, Chris's Otter Pilot, Jacob's Otter Pilot, and others not signing in.

Chairperson Erin Herbold-Swalwell called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

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

**2. Perfecting and approval of the agenda.**

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

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

**3. Public hearing to consider a Comprehensive Plan update for the 2018 Altoona Comprehensive Plan Northwest Amendment.**

John Shaw presented this item, explaining it is the northwest part of Altoona around the Meta campus. Sanitary sewer service has been expanded to that area, so the Comprehensive Plan needs to be updated. He explained that the industrial needs in the area have grown faster than their projections from the last Comp Plan update. The plans have been modified to reflect that growth in accordance with the service capabilities. A map was displayed for the Commission. Henry asked about the existing low-density residential. Shaw stated that in the northwest, the topography gets to be more rolling and isn't conducive to industrial development compared to areas that are next to the interstate or around Facebook. There is already a set pattern of residential development and ag purposes.

Herbold-Swalwell asked for any further comments or questions from the Commission. Hearing none, she opened the public hearing. With no public comments, she closed the public hearing.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Pudenz, to recommend a Comprehensive Plan update for the 2018 Altoona Comprehensive Plan Northwest Amendment.

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

**4. Public hearing to consider a request from BTW Companies LLC to amend the Altoona Zoning Map to change 4 parcels totaling 4.194 acres from their respective zoning districts of C-2 (General Commercial), R-2 (One and Two Family Residential), R-2 (One and Two Family Residential), and R-3 (Multi-Family Residential) to C-4 (Village Commercial).**

Seth Sunderman (Bishop Engineering) presented this item, seeking a rezoning of four parcels to allow for the construction of a five-story, mixed use building. It is a combination of studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments with commercial retail on the ground floor and covered parking. The building elevations were shown to the Commission. It is a C-style building layout with a proposed courtyard in the middle. There is also a building outlined as a proposed coffee shop. The main access is off of 8<sup>th</sup> Street with possible shared access to the east to Family Video and west to Dollar General. There may be a future access out to 5<sup>th</sup> Street on the east side. Sunderman explained there are 200 units broken down into 76 studio apartments, 76 one-bedroom apartments, and 48 two-bedroom apartments. The commercial area is 7,500 square feet. He said there are 278

stalls shown on the plan and acknowledged that they were short on parking stalls, as their current floorplan layout requires 365 stalls. They are working with Staff on the parking requirements. They may be seeking a reduction in stall width from the required 9.5' wide to 9' wide.

Herbold-Swalwell asked about the intended uses for the commercial space. Sunderman stated they are flexible on that at the moment to meet the community's needs. They would be happy to hear any recommendations. Herbold-Swalwell asked how the garages would be utilized and if they would be included with the apartments or if they'd be rented separately. Brian Jones (BTW Companies) explained that renters can separately rent the garages. Herbold-Swalwell asked if only tenants could rent them. Jones affirmed. Pudenz asked if they are usually full. Jones stated that everyone likes extra storage and if they have an extra car, they can park it in there. Henry asked Shaw about the layout. Shaw explained it using the displayed renderings. The garages were identified. Henry asked how tall the apartments near the campus are. Shaw said they are three stories, but the mixed use building across from the City Plaza is four stories. Herbold-Swalwell asked how this rezoning fits into the Comprehensive Plan. Shaw said the Comp Plan says this is the new commercially-based City Center area. This property is within that zone. Staff is looking at updating and expanding that area. Herbold-Swalwell asked if Altoona Elementary had been consulted at all. Shaw stated no. Herbold-Swalwell asked if any others wanted to speak on behalf of the applicant. With no responses, she opened the public hearing.

Dirk Bliss, 700 5<sup>th</sup> Ave SW, stated that his house backs up to this land. He asked about the water runoff and how they were going to prevent his back yard from turning into a swamp. Pudenz stated that storm water detention was on the list of Staff comments. Sunderman explained that they will manage the water within the parcel. They are proposing oversized perimeter pipes and underground detention to meet the storm water detention requirements. All will be handled on site. Herbold-Swalwell asked if they would work with the surrounding landowners. Sunderman affirmed. Pudenz asked about requirements for onsite detention. Shaw explained that if the rezoning is successful and goes forward, the applicant would submit a plat to plat it into two pieces and a site plan that details the construction of the site. A part of that would be the grading plan. They are not allowed to divert water onto the neighbors' properties. Any existing problems will be addressed and corrected. They are required to capture their storm water and divert it to the storm sewer works on 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

Bliss then asked about privacy. He said there will be a multistory building with cars driving by. He was hoping they'd install a fence so he wouldn't see the traffic and trees so that he wasn't being overlooked by everyone in the apartment building. Shaw explained that at the time of the site plan, they are required to do buffer yards. They provide space for things such as berms, fencing, and trees. Staff encourages them to work with the neighbors regarding the types to be flexible. Bliss asked if they would discuss with the neighbors what kind of resolutions they have for that. Shaw said the Ordinance has hard and fast criteria regarding buffer yards if an agreement cannot be reached. Bliss asked who he talks to if he sees water entering his backyard. Shaw said he would talk with the City.

Les Lourens, 702 5<sup>th</sup> Ave SW, said he only picked up about half of what was said due to his hearing. He stated he has lived there for 50 years and asked about buffer yards. Herbold-Swalwell stated that buffer areas are required and asked Shaw to further explain. Shaw explained the buffer yard process again, like it had occurred when Family Video went in. Pudenz asked if there was an east elevation drawing. Lourens asked when they would discuss things with the neighbors. Shaw again explained the platting and site plan process. Lourens said that back then, they specified that they didn't want a restaurant where Family Video ended up. Shaw recapped that conditional zoning for the Commission and further explained that this rezoning would be to C-4, which allows restaurants. Lourens again asked about the buffer yard. Sunderman said that they are proposing a heavier buffer with a 6' masonry wall between their property and the neighbor's back yards. Sunderman gave Lourens his card.

Herbold-Swalwell asked if anyone else had additional comments. Hearing none, she closed the public hearing and asked if the Commission had any questions. Pudenz asked Shaw if he thought the issues could be resolved and stated that it looked like Staff was recommending deferral. Shaw said it would make sense to defer action to allow time to drill down and troubleshoot the list of items, such as the parking. They could possibly be more flexible on the size of stalls inside the building. Changes may need to be made, depending on the number of one- and two-bedroom apartments, as they require different amounts of parking. Henry asked if they defer,

could they approve the zoning and the site plan at the same meeting. Shaw affirmed, stating they would still have to submit the plat and the site plan. He said it was important to ensure that both the applicant and the City have a comfort level with what they can accomplish, because it is a complex project. Pudenz asked what was directly to the west. Shaw stated Dollar General. He then explained the ingress/egress with the Dollar General and Family Video lots. Herbold-Swalwell said that one of the concerns was the increase in traffic on an already busy road. She said she hoped discussion would be held regarding safe crossing for school children attending Clay Elementary, like her children do. Shaw said there is a crossing guard there, and all of the sidewalks are in. Pudenz asked about the population that would attend school in the apartments. Shaw stated they could work with the applicants to determine who the end users would end up being, who their target market is. He also reminded the Commission that the center would be a courtyard.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Sloan, to defer a request from BTW Companies LLC to amend the Altoona Zoning Map to change 4 parcels totaling 4.194 acres from their respective zoning districts of C-2 (General Commercial), R-2 (One and Two Family Residential), R-2 (One and Two Family Residential), and R-3 (Multi-Family Residential) to C-4 (Village Commercial).

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

##### **5. Public hearing to consider a request from Cramer and Associates to amend the Stonebridge Development Plan to change the bulks regulations for 108 lots and create smaller lots.**

Doug Mandernach (Civil Design Advantage) presented the request. He said they are requesting smaller lots, but also doing larger lots. He went through the history of the property. It was purchased in 2017. They got the PUD in 2020. They have gone through two changes since then. He reported that development has stalled out there, stating that developers have recently come forward saying they want smaller lots, as there is no interest in the larger lots. He said buyers and residents want smaller lots. He said the southern portion has smaller lots, and it's about half built-out now. These are more affordable houses. On the 50' lots, they can build a similar house for \$60,000 less. He said the main difference between a 50' and a 70' lot is that a three-car garage can fit on a 70' lot. A two-car garage fits on a 50' lot, and they can also park in the driveway and the street. Mandernach spoke about the taxable valuation. He said previously seventy-one 70' lots ended up being \$28,045,000 of taxable valuation, based on similar sized houses in the area. Going to 50' lots, the taxable valuation is \$32,980,000, for a difference of \$4,935,000. He showed renderings of what the homes would look like. He said when requesting to have smaller lots near the center of the development, previously the neighbors to the north and east were concerned about smaller lots next to theirs. They have made the outside lots touching their properties larger in Area H. Those went to a 90', 12,000 square foot lot, and the number of lots reduced from 20 to 18. Area E is their request for 50' lots. Area F is 65' lots, transitioning from smaller lots to larger lots. Area G has standard 70' lots with standard city zoning, and Area H has the larger 90' lots. Mandernach stated they've found not everyone wants a full third-acre lot, but they do want a new house. Henry asked Shaw about the previous plans, as it was not in their packet. Commissioners discussed with Mandernach how the lots adjacent to the east lots have changed, referencing the drawing. Shaw showed them a copy of the previous plan to compare how the lots changed. Pudenz asked how they could have on-street parking when it is not wide enough between driveways to park on the street. Mandernach said Staff previously said with a 24' driveway, there would not be enough parking, but the new driveways are 16'. He said their exhibit shows where the driveways would be and that there is enough room for on-street parking on one side of the street. Shaw stated in order to make it work, they would be restricted on how big their driveways and approaches could be. Standard approach width allows 34' wide at the curb. There would need to be a minimum of 20' for our parking regulations, and they do not have that. Pudenz asked if they could put restrictions on driveway width. Shaw stated theoretically, yes. They would need to figure out how to do that, and how to track and enforce it. Staff would have to talk to the City Attorney on that. Pudenz asked about the spacing with a 16' wide driveway. Shaw said the flares would be 24' at the curblin/street. If you have a 50' lot and subtract 24', the remainder is what you would have for on-street parking. It translates to two parking stalls per four houses. The diagram shows 19 parking spaces for 40 lots. Herbold-Swalwell added that if the driveways are made smaller, people are more apt to park on the street. Mandernach said he would be agreeable to a maximum driveway width. With no further comments from the applicant, Herbold-Swalwell opened the public hearing.

Sarah Rediger (2558 NE 72<sup>nd</sup> St) lives adjacent to this project, at Lot 13 on the Amended Zoning Boundary. She just moved into her house in May. She wasn't aware that the property behind them was even sold. She said she loves looking at the cornfield, so it was kind of a bummer that that transpired. She is thankful that the property lines seem large, so they aren't staring at ten houses behind them. She asked about a timeframe. Mandernach reiterated that they've owned it since 2017 and had it zoned in 2020, so they are almost four years into it. Pudenz asked Shaw if there were smaller lots like these 50' lots in other places. Shaw said at the southern end of this project, the lots were like 48' wide. He said they tried another project over on 17<sup>th</sup> with 48' wide lots. That project has been problematic due to the density. The parking is a big problem. The driveways are big enough that there isn't a lot of on-street parking. With smaller houses, the garages become the storage and the driveway becomes the parking. Everyone else tries to park on the street, and there's not enough parking to go around. Pudenz asked if these homes would have basements. Mandernach affirmed. Henry asked if the homes in Phase 1/Area C that have already been built have basements. Mandernach said some do, but not all of them. Herbold-Swalwell asked if all of the homes in Area E will have basements. Mandernach said potentially, yes. They are selling the lots to the builders, so they don't control what is built. The builders have told them they plan to have basements. Henry asked if we could make having basements a requirement, as he cannot believe it is allowed to build slab-on-grade homes. Shaw said basements are often used for storage. He said when you have the smaller lots with tighter spaces, we are threading the needle on a lot of these things. Parking gets tight. Drainage gets tight. Basements require egress windows. The side yards are reduced to 5', but egress windows cannot go in a 5' side yard setback and still have drainage go between the houses. Location of the condensing units has to be considered. Things become problematic. If you finish the basement, the placement of the egress has to be considered. Herbold-Swalwell asked if there had already been one approved increase in the number of smaller lot sizes. Shaw said on the main street coming in, they were reduced from 70' to 65' in Area D. Mandernach said there were a few that were reduced to 65'. Shaw said there was a certain layout approved but had pushback from the neighbors. It was ultimately denied. They reconfigured it and the City approved it. They have done one amendment, reducing lots from 70' to 65'.

Sarah Rediger asked another question regarding the sewer. Shaw showed her the sewer line on the map and said it would be made available to the surrounding neighbors. Rediger said that was a positive.

Herbold-Swalwell closed the public hearing. Pudenz asked about the lots in Area E. Mandernach said those are currently 50' lots. She asked if they had tried 60' lots, because it was 70' previously. Mandernach said it is working out to be 52' wide lots, because they are not going to reconfigure where the original streets were proposed. He said the very southern part of Area E was 60' lots. Henry asked if Area C was all 50' lots. Mandernach affirmed. Henry asked about Area D and if Mandernach could make the last lot by Lot 17 a 70-footer. Mandernach said that would affect everything across there and pointed out the greenspace adjacent to that. Herbold-Swalwell stated that there was concern on the City side regarding having nearly half of the lots at substandard size. Shaw added that standard minimum size house lots are 70' wide by 125' and 8,750 square feet. The Council wants to see a variety of lots. There's a comfort level when there is variety and not so much dominated by a certain style or size. He said a lot survey was compiled for the comprehensive plan looking at what was being built and how it dictates the future of the community. It has been dramatically skewed to the smaller sizes. The projects where they have larger lot sizes have been developed pretty quickly. The market also tries to dictate what we are trying to be. We try to remember our identity and keep a healthy balance.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Herbold-Swalwell, to deny a request from Cramer and Associates to amend the Stonebridge Development Plan to change the bulk regulations for 108 lots and create smaller lots.

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

## **6. Consideration and recommendation of the Equipment Share Site Plan.**

Ajay Sharma (Bowman) presented the request. The project will serve as an equipment storage and retail location. It is a single building, surrounded by a gravel yard where the equipment will be stored. Customers will place orders online and will either come to pick up or it will be delivered to them directly. There are two drives, one at the front and one at the rear east corner cul-de-sac to help with the maneuverability of the equipment. They are conveying all runoff from this site to the existing intakes to the south of the gravel yard. There are inlets north of the gravel yard and fence rated for a 100-year event. There will be no overflow onto

the public right-of-way. Herbold-Swalwell asked for any additional comments from the public or the Commission. Shaw stated a number of the items have been addressed since the Staff report went out. They still need information on the storm sewer and some additional fees paid.

Motion by Pudenz, seconded by Herbold-Swalwell, for recommendation of the Equipment Share Site Plan, subject to deficiencies.

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

## **7. Consideration and recommendation of the Townhomes at Scenic Ridge Preliminary Plat.**

Ed Pelds (Pelds Design Services) presented the request. They are seeking reapproval of the preliminary plat with 31 townhome lots. It generally consists of extending 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE up to NE 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue/8<sup>th</sup> Street SE. There were issues getting the development started. All of the comments have been addressed, and they are now seeking reapproval. Shaw stated that they did get their CLOMR approved by the Army Corp of Engineers for the work they will be doing in the floodway and flood plain where their detention is going to be located as well as one of the housing units.

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

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

## **8. Consideration and recommendation of the Spring Creek Ridge West Preliminary Plat.**

Branden Stubbs (Stubbs Engineering & Stubbs Development) presented the request. They are looking to get reapproval for the preliminary plat. It has the same layout and same lot sizes as in 2022. They are moving forward with construction, so they submitted construction drawings and were made aware that the preliminary plat had expired. He said they had 33 different concepts on this piece of ground and accidentally submitted the wrong concept. They have since fixed it. Pudenz asked if they had an overall drawing. Jacobson said no. Shaw had a paper copy to show the Commission. Pudenz asked about 28<sup>th</sup> Street SE. Stubbs said it is not tied in. Shaw said the north lots are south of that street, which will dead end. With this, they will provide an outlot which will go to the City, and the street will access to the south end of the park. Herbold-Swalwell asked about the deficiencies. Shaw explained that a lot of the comments were because they had the wrong drawing. There are only a few details left, including grading, a trail, and a detention pond. They took out the townhouses and are only doing the single family lots right now.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Herbold-Swalwell, for recommendation of the Spring Creek Ridge West Preliminary Plat, subject to deficiencies.

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

## **9. Minutes of the January 30, 2024, meeting.**

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

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

No vote to adjourn. Meeting adjourned 7:47 p.m. Next regular meeting is March 26, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Naylor  
Office Assistant