

ALTOONA PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

September 24th, 2024

Altoona City Hall

Members Present in Person: Pudenz, Sloan, Herbold-Swalwell, Chase

Members Present Virtually: Moyna

Members Absent: Henry

Staff: John Shaw, Claire Habel

Guests: Larry Williams, Mark Stewart, Robert Chiles, Josh Dunwoody, Ryan Day, Micheal Kohne, Jennifer Ellison, Helen Phillips, Herbert Phillips, Kary Turner, Jerry Evans, Mike Ballard, Jon Wall, Sonya Nicholson, Alex Payne, Bev Sells, Brian Ohalko and others not signed in or written illegibly.

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

1. Roll Call. Roll call was taken. Six commissioners were present at roll call. Scott Henry was absent.

2. Perfecting and approval of the agenda.

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

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

3. Public hearing for a comprehensive plan amendment for the Haines House Commercial Building at 202 2nd Street SE.

Sarah Kavalier presented this item. She has been a resident of Altoona since 2006 and involved in the city. She introduced Kyle Clarkson, another realtor. They, and one other realtor, wish to use this lot as office space for a new realty group, Legacy Realty. Sarah noticed that the Haines House had been on the market for 190 consecutive days, they put in an offer which was accepted, they are currently in their due diligence period.

Kyle Clarkson spoke, he has been a business partner with Kavalier since May. He then speaks on what Legacy Realty means to him; he feels that the Haines House would incorporate the values of Legacy. Kavalier stated that there would be zoning conditions placed on the lot (shown on screen). She does not want to change anything about the house other than what the city would require, this would mainly be making the house ADA compliant. Kavalier stated that she would take questions.

Erin Herbold-Swalwell asked if the house is on the historical registry. Sarah stated that if they were to add the house to the registry, they would like to do it after they make all of the necessary changes.

John Shaw explains that there are two items on the agenda pertaining to the Haines House Commercial Building, he then explained more about the conditional zoning. Erin then opens the public hearing

Alex Payne spoke. He fears that once the house is commercial, it will ruin the history of the Haines House. Erin asks about the current use of the house, Payne stated that it is currently vacant. Payne said that previously, Mayor Dean O'Connor would not allow the Historical Society to move forward with their plan for the Haines House.

Jeff Kuney stated that as the next-door neighbor, he is concerned about what would happen should the Haines House be sold. He mentioned that he does not want some uses to go into the house that would be allowed with the list of exclusions that were proposed. He presented concerns about uses that would not be family friendly.

Chantelle Kuhn stated that she is originally from Altoona, now lives in Pleasant Hill. She is also a realtor and spoke highly of Kyle Clarkson. She thinks that bringing their business to Altoona is a good idea, but she wants them to choose a different location. She expressed concerns over traffic and that if the integrity of the home was lost, it could not be returned.

Mike Ballard said he has spoken with neighbors, and none are in favor of the rezoning request. He spoke of concerns of “zone creep”. He has concerns about the permitted uses on the property.

Herbert Phillips presented; he lives across the street from the Haines House. He presented a book that was published in 1875, the book contained historic people and places from Iowa. Haines House is in the book multiple times; he urged the commissioners to check out the book from the Altoona Library.

Jeff Lamb stated his concern about traffic in the area should the Haines House be rezoned to commercial. He is worried about his dogs barking.

(Presenter did not state name) – Presenter used to be a Southeast Polk teacher, she stated that they were required to teach Southeast Polk History. She felt that history needs to be preserved and that the house should not be rezoned.

Robert Chiles (online) lives two doors down from the Haines House. He stated that sometimes, as a commission, it is easy to ignore the bad and see the good. He asked why the applicant waited until now to rezone.

Kavalier stated in response to Chiles that the house is currently now owned by Legacy Realty but that their offer has been accepted. Kavalier stated that the house has been on the market for 190 days and that there are no other offers on the house. Kavalier looked at pictures from 2003, the Haines House has already been changed from its original. She stated concern about keeping the house zoned R-3 and residents purchasing the house and changing it. Kavalier stated that she would be happy to open the house up for Olde Town Christmas, the 4th of July Parade, etc. and that she would like to collaborate with Altoona. She stated that she would be happy to adjust the conditional zoning list.

Pudenz brought up that the risk lies in the future. She asks Shaw about strategies for minimizing the risk. Erin reiterated Pudenz concern, she also stated that the house being vacant is a current risk. Shaw responded that conditional zoning would be a strategy. Architectural restriction could also be a possibly strategy.

Kavalier offered to meet with all neighbors or concerned residents. She stated that due to their due diligence period, time is of the essence.

Trish Johnson presented. Johnson has been an Altoona resident for eight years, she stated that she did not buy her house to live in a neighborhood with a commercial use. She is concerned about her granddaughter playing in the backyard near the commercial use, and about her dog barking more.

Erin closed the public hearing.

Motion to deny by Erin, seconded by Pudenz. Yes – Erin, Pudenz, Sloan, Narber. No – Chase, Moyna. Abstain – None. Motion denied 4-2-0.

4. Public hearing for a request to rezone the Haines House Commercial Building at 202 2nd Street SE from R-3 (Multi-Family Residential) to C-4 (Village Commercial).

Erin opened the public hearing. She stated that most concerns have been raised with the previous action.

Jeff Kuney stated that he has spoken to the current owner of the Haines House. He said that there had been other offers, but people don't want to buy it because it doesn't have a garage. The owner would build a garage if this rezoning fell through.

Robert Chiles (online) asked if the vote needs to be unanimous. Erin said that it does not need to be unanimous and that it will go to City Council afterwards.

Mike Miller stated that he has not seen the comprehensive plan. He does not like the idea of on-street parking. Shaw stated that Altoona has currently identified areas where parking will be added. The area around Haines House has some parking identified.

Bev Sells states that the Haines House is cherished history, she is concerned about what will happen down the road.

Erin closed the public hearing, she stated that she would like the neighbors and the applicants to have more conversation before the City Council meeting. She felt that both sides are just trying to protect the Haines House.

Pudenz made a motion to deny, seconded by Erin. Yes – Pudenz, Erin, Narber, Sloan. No – Chase, Moyna. Abstain – None. Motion denied 4-2-0.

5. Consideration and recommendation of a site plan for Starbucks at 501 8th Street SW.

Larry Williams (online) with Kimley-Horn presented the site plan for the Starbucks at 501 8th Street SW. Williams stated that Kim-Horn has been working with the city and will continue to work with the city.

Pudenz and Sloan expressed concerns about the traffic congestion that this will create and that it's so close to the elementary school. They are also concerned about the "C" shape of the drive-through and that if someone left the drive-through and wanted to go west, they would need to do a U-turn.

Williams stated that they would be open to an "L" shaped drive-through. Micheal Kohne (online), also from Kimley-Horn has concern about the "L" shape as it wouldn't allow for as much car stacking. Staff had previously expressed the need for maximum stacking so that it doesn't extend onto 5th Ave SW or 8th Street SW.

Moyna asked if the building could be moved further to the north to make the west turn easier, Shaw says that there is green space to the north of where the building is right now.

Shaw stated that the main concern among the staff is traffic and the turning lane on 5th Avenue SW. There are already existing congestion issues from the Casey's. Staff and Kimley-Horn have been discussing the possibility of an access easement that would allow the driveway to be moved further north, out of the way of the turning lane, should the properties to the north be redeveloped. The other option would be adding a raised median to the turning lane so that those leaving Starbucks cannot drive through the turning lane. Shaw stated that there was no turning lane when the Family Video was developed, and that the city does not allow drives into turning lanes. Moyna asked why the drive couldn't be moved north to where the dumpster is, Shaw stated that it would still not be far enough north to be out of the turning lane.

Maggie Creb stated her concern about the elementary school students that walk to school. Starbucks and the school have the same peak hours, she stated that there are other businesses that could go on this lot.

(Presenter did not state name) – All of her friends with kids at Altoona Elementary are scared for their kids walking to school. She stated that she did not like the look of the site plan.

Pudenz made a motion to deny, seconded by Sloan. Yes – Pudenz, Sloan, Narber, Erin. No – Chase, Moyna. Abstain – None. Motion denied 4-2-0.

6. Consideration and recommendation of the final plat for Brookhaven Estates Plat 5.

Jennifer Ellison from Jerry's Homes presented. She stated that they have previously gotten preliminary plat approval, they just need their final plat approved.

Motion to approve by Pudenz, seconded by Sloan. Yes – Pudenz, Sloan, Narber, Erin, Chase, Moyna. No – None. Abstain – None. Motion approved 6-0-0.

7. Approval of the August 27th, 2024 meeting minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes by Sloan, seconded by Moyna. Yes – Sloan, Moyna, Pudenz, Narber, Erin, Chase. No – None. Abstain – None. Motion approved 6-0-0.

Next regular meeting on October 29th, 2024.

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Habel
City Planner
City of Altoona