

**MINUTES OF THE ALTOONA, WI
REGULAR PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
August 13, 2019**

(I) Call Meeting to Order.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Brendan Pratt at 5:00 p.m. held in the Council Chambers at Altoona City Hall.

(II) Roll call.

Members present: Brendan Pratt, Andrew Schlafer, Dean Roth, Barb Oas-Holmes,
Matthew Biren and Andraya Albrecht. Bill Hoepner arrived at 5:15 p.m.

Also Present: City Planner Joshua Clements
City Clerk Cindy Bauer

(III) Citizen Participation Period.

Motion by Roth/Oas-Holmes to close Citizen Participation Period. **Motion carried.**

(IV) Approval of minutes.

Motion by Biren/Roth to approve the minutes of the July 9, 2019 Regular Plan Commission meeting. **Motion carried.**

(V) Old Business – none.

(Vi) New Business

(1) Public Hearing at 5:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as is practical regarding a Conditional Use Permit for Parcel # 201210008000 located at 820 Harlem Street. The request is to allow a garage to exceed 11.5 feet in height as regulated by Section 19.28.090 B.3 of the Altoona Municipal Code.

Mayor Pratt opened the public hearing at 5:01 p.m.

City Planner Joshua Clements explained that the applicant is seeking a Conditional Use to allow an accessory building (garage) with an end wall greater than 11.5 feet in height. The proposed height of the front wall is 19 feet, which is less than the total height of the existing home (approx. 24 feet). All other standards applicable to accessory buildings shall be met. The petitioner has included windows on the front and sides (not rear) of the garage for a more residential appearance, including above the garage door. Gutters and drain tile are proposed to assist in managing storm water.

James Lant, CUP applicant, was present to answer any questions Plan Commission Members had regarding the Conditional Use Permit. Mr. Lant mentioned that he had talked to the surrounding neighbors regarding his site plan and said the neighbors did not have a problem with the proposed height of the garage.

Motion by Biren/Oas-Holmes to close the public hearing at 5:08 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Plan Commission Member Bill Hoepner arrived at 5:15 p.m.

(VI)(2) Discuss/consider approval of a Conditional Use Permit for Parcel # 201210008000 located at 820 Harlem Street as submitted by James Lant.

Mayor Pratt has some concerns with the height of the garage.
Derek Peterson, builder for the applicant, further explained the proposed design of the garage.

James Lant mentioned that the house will match the same color scheme of the garage

Plan Commission Member Schlafer had concerns with setting precedent of the height of the garage.

Plan Commission Member Biren would give support for reduction in the height and bringing the garage forward, that being a 13 feet front yard setback.

Motion by Biren/Roth to approve a Conditional Use Permit for Parcel #201210008000 with proposed conditions.

- The front height (pitch) be reduced from 19 feet to 15.5 feet.
- Front yard setback be 13 feet.
- The structure and color pallet of the garage be consistent with the existing house.

Motion carried.

(VI)(3) Discuss/consider recommendation to Council regarding a Certified Survey Map (CSM) to subdivide parcels: #201234202000 at 620 Bartlett Avenue and #201102003070 at 704 Bartlett Avenue (Public Hearing at the August 22, 2019 Council Meeting).

City Planner Clements explained that the proposed CSM subdivides two parcels, 602 Bartlett Avenue, 1.5 acres, and 704 Bartlett Avenue, 1.45 acres. The resulting lots are 1.07 acres and 1.04 acres respectively, and creates Outlot 1 of 0.41 acres and Outlot 2 of 0.43 acres. The proposed outlots encompasses existing storm water ponds on the affected properties. The area is to be transferred to the City to be utilized as a storm water facility to accommodate runoff in the Bartlett Avenue corridor.

Motion by Hoepner/Roth to recommend to City Council approval of the CSM to subdivide parcels at 620 Bartlett Avenue and 704 Bartlett Avenue. **Motion carried.**

(VI)(4) Discuss/consider recommendation to Council to rezone parcel #201105302000 from C Commercial District to I Industrial District, located east on Otter Road as requested by Jason Griepentrog on behalf of ChoicePoint Holdings LLC. (Public Hearing at the 2019 August 22 Council Meeting starting at 6:00 p.m.)

City Planner Clements explained that the petitioner seeks to rezone a parcel currently zoned as Commercial to Industrial to allow for construction of self-storage units. Properties to the west and north are zoned industrial and similar in character. Property to the south is commercial (Draganetti's Ristorante). The parcel is constrained by topography and shape, likely limiting use for commercial employment or service beyond a small building.

Mayor Pratt had some concerns with potential run off into the park.

Motion by Biren/Hoepner to recommend to Council approval to rezone parcel #201105302000 from C Commercial to I Industrial. **Motion carried.**

(VI)(5) Discuss/consider mixed-use zoning in certain corridors.

City Planner Clements explained that the structure of the zoning code utilized by the City of Altoona is built upon review processes, concepts and mechanics that have changed very little since 1968, the earliest copy of the zoning ordinance on file. The notable change is the River Prairie Design Guidelines in 2005, which were adapted from the City of Fort Collins, Colorado, form-based code. As you know, most of the development in Altoona in the past ten years has been subject to those Guidelines. Altoona is not unique, the City of Eau Claire's zoning code utilizes largely the same structure, as do most cities in western Wisconsin. Many zoning codes utilize a standard framework or approach that were being circulated during the time of adoption, or bearing the approach of a particular consultant. Most zoning codes adopted between the 1950s and 1980s are "Euclidean", meaning there are strict separation between residential and commercial uses, large setbacks, and that the code and associated zoning maps strongly favor single-family neighborhoods.

The current thinking by staff concerning the City's zoning code is that significant structural updates are necessary to pursue the vision and goals generally communicated by the Council, Plan Commission, and illustrated in the City's 2009 Comprehensive Plan. However, an update of the Comprehensive Plan is overdue, and thus that plan should be completed prior to undertaking major

structural changes to zoning. The subsequent zoning changes should reflect and pursue implementation of the vision, goals and objectives articulated in the Plan.

City Planner Clements noted that Eau Claire County adopted a new Comprehensive Plan in 2018 and is currently engaged in re-writing their zoning code. The City of Eau Claire is planning to conduct major changes or re-write in the next few years.

City Planner Clements gave some instances where most recently, the City Council disapproved an appeal for rezoning from Commercial to R-3 along Fairfax Avenue to allow for a small multi-family building. Although the current commercial zoning of that parcel allows building heights of up to 35 feet or 3 stories, with limited setbacks, the corridor is uniformly zoned commercial and thus the Council confirmed that the intent is future uses that are commercial in nature. As part of that discussion, staff and Council discussed creating a mixed-use zone that may be applied in certain corridors and contexts, such as Fairfax, Spooner, and select areas of 10th Street W and/or 3rd Street E, that may permit both commercial and multi-family uses that are similar in character. This zone might illustrate a range of permitted and conditional uses and rely upon common form-based standards.

City Planner Clements mentioned that the Council and City Administrator directed staff to consider how a modification to zoning that may allow for a “bridge solution” for medium-term (1-2 year) pursuit of the goal of more zoning flexibility regarding uses in certain corridors, given that structural changes to zoning are anticipated. Another consideration is that this modification should be completed with manageable staff time so that large projects such as the Comprehensive Plan are not further delayed.

Findings:

- The Future Land Use Map (2009) creates some limitations. The Spooner Avenue corridor from 11th Street W to Division is identified as “Downtown mixed use”. This is enabling.
- The Map shows Fairfax, 10th Street, and 3rd Street nearly uniformly as “Low Density Residential”, which conflicts with existing commercial zoning in many places.
- There are some other discrepancies in the Map that could be corrected at that time.

Potential timeline:

In order to be properly administered, creating a mixed-use zoning classification to be applied in corridors of interest, the Future Land Use Map component of the Comprehensive Plan needs to be amended. This requires consideration by the Plan Commission and a 30-day class 1 noticed public hearing by the City Council. In addition, there should be notice and, desirably, participation by potentially affected property owners. Thus, the earliest this would be assembled by staff and considered would be mid-fall.

The Map would be updated again in 12-18 months in conjunction with updating the full Comprehensive Plan.

The alternative is to do nothing with regard to the Map and zoning, and focus on the entire Comprehensive Plan and subsequent zoning updates. This would mean that nothing would change procedurally or regulatorily in the short term.

Staff is seeking general direction as to how to proceed. Consensus was to continue with discussions in the future. No action.

(VI)(6) Update regarding Housing Task Force

City Planner Clements mentioned that the Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force met on July 15, 2019 and arrived at consensus approval of the [Summary of Recommendations](#) and [Recommendations Report](#). Next steps for the Task Force include meeting of the full group in October, and more focused teams or stakeholder group work prior to that time. These small groups may explore challenges and opportunities such as zoning, finance, construction, or specific projects. Task Force participants continue

to communicate and collaborate on policy development and projects. One area of current investigation is to identify trackable Indicators of Success or other benchmarks.

City Planner Clements has continued to share results of the Task Force findings and effort, most recently at the Home For Everyone Conference at the Lismore Hotel (July 17). Presentations upcoming include the Momentum West Housing Forum on August 15 and Chamber of Commerce “Eggs and Issues” on August 16. The City of Eau Claire has likewise [continued to pursue implementation](#) of the Task Force recommendations. Their Council approved \$200,000 toward land purchase to facilitate more affordable single-family homes on the City’s north side, and \$500,000 toward future multi-family project(s). The Council also approved a development agreement in the Cannery District for a two-phase project with an affordable housing component. A [new TIF district](#) was created to potentially support that and other projects.

City Planner Clements mentioned that Staff is currently working on an inventory of vacant parcels and parcels that could be readily and legally subdivided for additional infill development. Staff is also working on materials to provide information and encouragement regarding Accessory Dwelling Units, based upon recently approved zoning amendment.

No action taken. Informational purposes only.

(VI)(7) Upcoming Plan Commission Dates

The next Plan Commission meeting is scheduled for **Monday, September 9th at 5:30pm**. Anticipated topics include reviewing portions of the *Altoona Place Plan* (Parks Plan) and discussing element prioritization for the Comprehensive Plan.

City Planner Clements noted some additional meeting dates:

Reminder

Momentum West Housing Summit

August 15th, 8:00 – 3:00 p.m., CVTC Rice Lake

<http://business.momentumwest.org/events/details/2019-momentum-west-housing-conference-53>

Planning Department will cover registration for Plan Commissioners (\$50)

Reminder

American Planning Association – Wisconsin Chapter

Annual Conference

October 2-4, Halls of the Lismore, Eau Claire

<https://wisconsin.planning.org/conferences-and-events/2019-conference-information/>

Planning Department will cover registration for Plan Commissioners (\$100, est.)

No Action

(VI)(8) Supplemental Materials (Discussion)

City Planner Clements noted some additional supplemental materials for Plan Commission Members to read at their leisure:

[“Diversifying Housing Options with Smaller Lots and Smaller Homes”](#), National Association of Home Builders, was released in July. The lengthy article illustrates findings including examples of over 100 codes and ordinances and their impact on housing supply and affordability. Among the findings is the conclusion that zoning regulations across the County have created a dichotomy between single-family detached homes on large lots and large multi-family projects, with single-family development favored across the County. This has led to acute supply shortages, lack of choice and variety, and rising affordability challenges. Reading the 4-page Executive Summary is recommended, and then proceed into select portions of the study as desired.

(VII) Miscellaneous Business and Communications.

City Planner Clements mentioned Hillcrest Estates is requesting a new pylon sign. The sign would be shorter in height and displayed as an electronic reader sign. The proposed sign does not meet current regulations. Discussion purposes only.

(VIII) Adjournment.

Motion by Biren/Oas-Holmes to adjourn at 6:19 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Minutes transcribed by Cindy Bauer, Altoona City Clerk