

**MINUTES OF THE ALTOONA, WI
REGULAR PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
January 12, 2021**

(I) Call Meeting to Order.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Brendan Pratt at 5:30 p.m. held on zoom Teleconference/video conference due to Coronavirus COVID-19.

(II) Roll call.

Members present: Brendan Pratt, Tim Sexton, Matthew Biren,
Barbara Oas-Holmes, Andraya Albrecht, Bill Hoepner,
and Dean Roth.

Also Present: City Planner Joshua Clements
Management Analyst Roy Atkinson
City Clerk Cindy Bauer

(III) Citizen Participation Period.

Kristy Goettl, 2120 Moonlight Bay Drive, Altoona would like the Plan Commission to reconsider the proposed project on Lake Road because of the findings that have been made in the past 2 months.

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

(IV) Approval of minutes.

Motion by Biren/Sexton to approve the minutes of the Dec 8, 2020 Regular Plan Commission meeting as amended by Clerk Bauer to list Member Albrecht as being absent (not present at the meeting).

Motion carried.

(V) Old Business - none

(VI) New Business

(1) - Discussion and possible action regarding direction to City Staff in preparation of RFQ for Planning Services for the “Volkman Property”.

City Planner Joshua Clements referred to the Draft RFQ for Area Planning Services. Clements recalled that the City has budgeted funds in 2021 for the completion of an area plan for property located east of the City, including approximately 83 acres acquired by the City in 2020. The intent of the planning process, led by a consultant, is to examine potential land use options, variety of uses and scale, and corresponding arrangement of infrastructure. This planning process is intended to serve as a platform to engage property owners in the area and the public in envisioning the future growth of the City.

The specific portion of the draft RFQ for feedback and direction is the **Purpose and Vision** description on page 5 of the materials that was provided to the Plan Commission members. These statements will set the tone and direction for the Project and assist consulting firms understand how to approach their response to the RFQ. After a consultant has been selected, these vision and values will be revisited and refined as they pertain to this project. City Planner Clements indicated that the City will be creating a new Comprehensive Plan throughout 2021 and into 2022. The Area Planning Process is expected to contribute additional depth and focus and be incorporated into the comprehensive plan. RFQ responses for Comprehensive Plan Services are due on February 8. Staff will guide the City Council through a discussion of the RFQ to gain direction regarding the content of the solicitation and also engage the City Council in a similar exercise on January 14, 2021. Staff proposes to incorporate feedback and

changes to the RFQ as directed by the Plan Commission and Council to release the document within the next week. Discussion followed. No action by Plan Commission.

(VII) MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

(1) Windsor Forest Place

City Planner Clements referred to the Windsor Forest Place - Plan Commission Update 2021-0108. Clements explained that earlier in the fall, staff announced during oral staff reports to the Council that the City had successfully engaged UW-Madison Landscape Architecture *Community Design and Planning Services* (senior capstone project) for a project in Altoona. The project is an open space and neighborhood design exercise for “Windsor Forest Place”, the landfill property in the Windsor Forest neighborhood and adjoining lands.

Through the fall semester Mr. Colin Thomasgard, landscape architecture student, has studied the site and potential approaches to this project. This project is firstly a learning opportunity for Mr. Thomasgard, and secondly an opportunity for the City to engage in a planning process and yield some ideas for future projects. Based upon past projects from the program, City Planner Clements anticipated the City will get valuable insights to determine how to proceed in property acquisition and development, and that Mr. Thomasgard’s work may be readily built upon by a consultant, with further direction by Council and staff, to generate a development plan. The public engagement phase of the project has begun, including distribution of a virtual survey instrument, scheduling of virtual open houses and site tours. The expectation is that Mr. Thomasgard will partner with City staff to engage the Plan Commission and City Council in February. Following these, Mr. Thomasgard will proceed in the design phase of his project, and present his product in May. Clements mentioned that the next phase of the project is public engagement, including distribution of a virtual survey instrument and virtual open houses. The desire is to finalize the survey instrument for distribution prior to the holidays, so that the survey can be promoted for several weeks prior to the start of the spring semester in late January. Distribution via postcard is anticipated, and a space on the City’s website will be created to share information on this project.

(VII)(2) - Transit Commission

City Planner Clements explained that the Eau Claire Transit Plan 2021-2026 was approved by the Eau Claire City Council on December 8, 2020. Eau Claire Transit and the Transit Commission will determine how and when to move through implementation of the plan recommendations. Clements recalled that the Plan Commission recommended approval of the changes to service in Altoona to expand the existing route from a 30-minute to 60-minute cycle, reaching areas along Devney Drive and Hillcrest Estates. Staff will provide updates regarding when the opportunity to implement the recommendations for Altoona may occur. These changes will require modification of the existing service agreement as well as budget.

(VII)(3) - Housing Task Force

City Planner Clements explained that the Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force met virtually on December 11, 2020 via Zoom with guest speaker Kurt Paulsen, Professor from UW-Madison. His presentation was recorded, and the slides are available, distributed to the Plan Commissioners via email. The Task Force organizers are exploring options for a February 2021 meeting.

(VII)(4) - Wintermission

City Planner Clements explained that over the past approximately 18 months the City of Altoona has been collaborating with the City of Eau Claire, Visit Eau Claire, and other partners with the City of Eau Claire’s Wintermission program, for which Eau Claire received a highly competitive grant. The overall objective is to improve public health through staying active, physically and socially, during winter conditions.

Management Analyst Atkinson commented on the Winter Activities that will be taking place in the Chippewa Valley area in 2021.

(VII)(5) - Commissioner Training

City Planner Clements explained that Smart Growth America is hosting its 2021 Equity Summit from January 26 - 28, 2021 from 10:00 - Noon each day. Registration is *free*. Clements summarized the purpose of the Summit.

(VII)(6) Additional Reading

A. The December 2020 issue of Parks & Recreation Magazine featured a summary article exploring the evidence connecting the quality and accessibility of parks with longevity. The article specifically utilizes research from UCLA, suggesting, among other things, that “Increasing park acreage in areas that face park deficits and low levels of tree canopy could lead to significant population-level increases in life expectancy.”

www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2020/december/more-parks-longer-lives/

B. The University of Pennsylvania, regarded as one of the top urban planning and landscape architecture programs, recently published in *Penn Today*, “How can cities become healthier, greener, and more equitable in the future?” (Dec 3, 2020). The author speaks to several faculty members regarding the impact of Covid-19 on contemporary trends in community planning and equity.

<https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/how-can-cities-become-healthier-greener-and-more-equitable-future>

C. Enclosed in your meeting packet is an article from the December 2020 *Planning Magazine* entitled “Age-Friendly Rural Planning”. The article explores how planning concepts described by AARP and the American Planning Association to improve quality of life in smaller towns that may lack the resources and amenities of larger or more affluent communities, particularly as people advance in age.

(VIII) Adjournment.

Motion by Roth/Hoepner to adjourn at 6:24 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Minutes transcribed by Cindy Bauer, Altoona City Clerk