

**CITY OF ALTOONA, WI**  
**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**January 12, 2023**

**(I) Call Meeting to Order**

Mayor Brendan Pratt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Regular Council Meeting was held in person in the Council Chambers at Altoona City Hall, 1303 Lynn Avenue, WI.

**(II) Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Pratt led the Common Council and others in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**(III) Roll Call**

City Clerk Cindy Bauer called the roll. Mayor Brendan Pratt, Council Persons Dale Stuber, Jon Olson, Kaitlyn Leopold, Matthew Biren, Susan Rowe and Timothy Lima were present. Also Present: Attorney Sam Bach Hanson, City Administrator Michael Golat, Assistant City Administrator Richard Downey, Director of Public Works/City Engineer (DPW/CE) David Walter, Police Chief Kelly Bakken, Planning Director Taylor Greenwell, Library Director Arin Wilken, and City Clerk Cindy Bauer.

**(IV) Citizen Participation Period**

There being no Citizen Participation, motion by Stuber/Lima to close the Citizen Participation Period. **Motion carried.**

**(V) Approval of minutes.**

Motion by Biren/Leopold to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2022, Regular Council Meeting. **Motion carried.**

**(VI) City Officers/Department Heads Report**

City Administrator Golat reported on the following:

- Commented on the Solis Circle Solar Contract which will be on the next Council Agenda.
- Commented on discussions with Eau Claire regarding EMS Ambulance Services.
- Met today with Visit Eau Claire regarding developing a Work Plan.

**City Committee Reports – none.**

**(VII) Consent Agenda**

**(VIII) Unfinished Business - None**

**(IX) New Business**

**(1) An Appeal Hearing for denial of an operator's license to serve alcohol within the City of Altoona to Scott Tafel with action to follow.**

City Administrator Golat explained that Per city ordinance 5.24.136 Denial of Operator's License Appeal Process, the police chief's denial of an operator's license to serve alcohol may be appealed to the common council if the person aggrieved files a written appeal. Chief Bakken has denied Scott Tafel's application for an operator's license. Scott Tafel filed for an appeal of the denial. Therefore, for Council consideration is the appeal of Scott Tafel for operator's license to serve alcohol within the city of Altoona. Both Chief Bakken and Scott Tafel had the opportunity to present evidence to the common council, including, but not limited to, documents and testimony of witnesses. The common council may issue an oral decision immediately and if requested within ten (10) days, the decision will be reduced to writing. It was noted that four (4) votes of the common council are required to reverse the original denial.

Police Chief Bakken presented documentation and testimony to the Common Council stating reasons why she denied an operator's license to Scott Tafel. Bakken reported history of past violations. Based on the information provided by Police Chief Bakken, Bakken denied his application for an operator's license for the

2022-2024 licensing period.

Applicant Scott Tafel was present to speak to the Council asking for a reversal of the decision made by the Chief of Police to deny an Operator's license to Scott Taffel.

Motion by Lima/Leopold that, based upon the information presented at the Council Meeting by Chief Bakken and Scott Tafel, at today's hearing, affirmed the decision made by the Chief of Police to deny an Operator's License to Scott Tafel. **Motion carried.**

**(IX)(2) Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as is possible regarding a Certified Survey Map at 985 Pheasant Rd, Fall Creek, WI located in the Altoona extraterritorial jurisdiction.**

Mayor Pratt opened the public hearing at 6:15 p.m.

Planning Director Taylor Greenwell explained that Dakota Thompson is appealing the City Council for approval of a two lot CSM. The CSM consolidates two lots into one, and re-divides the parcel into two lots to enable construction of a home on what would become Lot 2. Lot 1 would be 12.43 acres; Lot 2 would be 2.69 acres. This proposal is in Altoona's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), which requires any lot under 10 acres to be approved through an accompanying ETJ agreement. Approval of the ETJ agreement is discretionary.

Motion by Biren/Leopold to close the public hearing at 6:20 p.m. **Motion carried.**

**(IX)(3) Discuss/consider approval of ETJ Agreement and Certified Survey Map (CSM) for 985 Pheasant Road, Fall Creek, WI. (Will be discussed at the January 10, 2023 Plan Commission Meeting).**

Planning Director Greenwell noted that the Plan Commission, at its January 10, 2023 Meeting, recommended approval of the ETJ Agreement and Certified Survey Map.

Motion by Lima/Rowe to approve the ETJ Agreement and Certified Survey Map for 985 Pheasant Rd. **Motion carried.**

**(IX)(4) Discuss/consider approval of Final Plat for Bartlett Crossing (Will be discussed at January 10, 2023 Plan Commission Meeting).**

Mayor Pratt recused himself from Item 4 of the agenda.

Council President Matt Biren took over as chair of the Council Meeting.

Planning Director Greenwell explained that the applicant, Craig Wurzer, is coming back to the Council to request approval of the Phase I final plat for the Bartlett Crossing Development. The Bartlett Crossing development creates two development areas, 5.49 acres for Twin Homes (TH zone) and 12.76 acres for multi-dwelling structures (R3 zone). The proposed development intensity is well below the maximum density permitted in each zone district. The proposed project consists of two phases, with the western multifamily segment being phase I and the eastern segment being phase II. The current final plat is only for Phase I with a follow up final plat to be recorded that includes phase II. The final plat is consistent with the preliminary plat on each phase.

Planning Director Greenwell noted that the preliminary plat for this proposal was approved by the City Council on July 14, 2022. The remaining steps for the proposal following preliminary plat approval was review and recommendation of the parkland dedication by the Parks Board, a rezone to Twin Home and R3, and final plat and accompanying Development Agreement approval. The Parks Board reviewed and recommended approval of the parkland dedication on September 22, 2022 and the rezone completed on July 14, 2022. Greenwell mentioned that the Plan Commission, at its January 10, 2023 Meeting recommended approval of the Final Plat.

CE/DPW Walter commented on the outlot to be used for a municipal well.

Mark Erickson, Everyday Surveyor, commented on the speed limit on Bartlett Avenue and a Traffic Analysis Study that was conducted on County Highway KB/Bartlett Avenue.

Motion by Rowe/Lima to approve the Final Plat for Bartlett Crossing. **Motion carried.**

Mayor Pratt returned to the meeting.

**(IX)(5) Discuss/consider approval of Preliminary Plat for Bartlett Townhomes. (Public Hearing at the January 10, 2023 Plan Commission Meeting).**

Planning Director Greenwell explained that Richard Golde is petitioning for approval from the City Council of a 5.56-acre Preliminary Plat. The property is zoned R-3, which permits multi-family buildings of all

forms. The proposal creates 10 individual lots and 2 outlots. The applicant has no intention of developing the resulting lots, rather they would sell the lot down the road to be developed by others into 4-unit buildings. There is no proposed developer or buildings at this time. Individual site plan applications by each future owner would be required for development of the resulting lots. The applicant will be responsible for installation of the right of way and subdivision infrastructure, however.

Planning Director Greenwell said the proposed road alignment connects to Bartlett Avenue with a proposed roadway down the center of the proposed subdivision; the road will be named Richards Drive. The road will dead end to the south as the property to the south is in the Town of Washington. Upon annexation of this area and / or development, this would become a thru-street. Planning Director Greenwell noted that the Public Hearing of the Preliminary Plat was held at the Jan 10, 2023 Plan Commission Meeting, and was recommended approval of the plat.

Planning Director Greenwell noted that there might be some small changes to the Plat; taking out a lot and replacing it with storm water, therefore making it nine lots instead of the ten originally planned. In addition, adding a total of three outlots instead of two outlots as originally planned. Greenwell noted that a Development Agreement will be brought forth at the time of the Final Plat.

Matt Appel, Advanced Engineering Concepts was present to explain the design of the units. Discussion followed regarding the possibility of covenants in this development.

Motion by Rowe/Lima to approve the Preliminary Plat for Bartlett Townhomes with the conditions of the staff. **Motion carried.**

#### **(IX)(6) Strategic Thinking: East Neighborhood Development. Possible action to follow.**

City Administrator Golat explained that the City, working with its consultant Vandewalle & Associates, completed a neighborhood plan for what is currently being called the “East Neighborhood” on 80 acres of property the City owns at the intersection of Highway 12 and County SS. The plan, which is attached, also includes other privately owned property adjacent to the property the city owns.

City Administrator Golat mentioned that the plan completed reflects a mixed-use development including residential, commercial and institutional properties. The residential development contemplates a variety of densities and sizes of units. The City is in the midst of a project to extend water and sewer to the City’s property and to construct a well. Availability of the utilities will allow for future development of the property, beginning as early as fall 2023.

City Administrator Golat noted that the intent of this agenda item is to generate focused discussion on whether the East Neighborhood Plan meets Council member’s expectations, how Council wants to approach development of the property given there are many options available and further to review the values the City wants to maintain in development of the property.

#### East Neighborhood Development Plan

As noted above, Council and the Plan Commission reviewed the Plan in the context of reviewing the overall Comprehensive Plan update. However, in anticipation of moving forward with implementing the Plan, staff wanted to revisit the nuts and bolts of the Plan to make sure Council was comfortable moving forward.

#### Approach

For the sake of discussion, provided below are a range of development approaches the City could take in developing the property. The options presented are not all-inclusive, but they reflect a range of options differentiated by the amount of involvement and control the City maintains. Each option has its pros and cons, which are discussed for your consideration.

Option 1: City sells the entire property to a master developer willing to develop the property generally based on the East Neighborhood Plan.

Option 2: The City sells portions of the property to different developers willing to take down specific parts of the development based on their interest, talents and experience.

Option 3: City plats the property and sells the property by the lot.

The City employed all of these approaches in developing River Prairie. Forty acres of the southwest quadrant was sold in one, unsubdivided chunk to a developer, who subsequently sold it to the Woodman's group. That group subdivided the property, put in the infrastructure (using a TID incentive from the City), and sold off any lots they were not directly developing. The northeast quadrant was sold to a developer who subsequently subdivided the property and developed it for single family residential and commercial uses. The southeast quadrant was sold to the same developer that purchased the northeast quadrant. That property was also subdivided and sold to different commercial end-users after the developer put in the backbone infrastructure using an incentive payment from the City. Finally, the City installed all the infrastructure in the northwest quadrant, including the park infrastructure, subdivided the property and sold the lots one by one.

One distinct advantage the City had in developing River Prairie is that all the land was in a tax increment district. This allowed the City to invest in the development's infrastructure and to offer incentives to developers that would not otherwise build in River Prairie without said incentive. Because the percentage of the City's value located in existing tax increment districts exceeds the statutory maximum for creating new districts, the City cannot create an additional tax increment district until TID #3 closes. This reality points the City more in the direction of selling the property to a master developer, or in large chunks so that a developer would be able to attain some economies of scale with respect to infrastructure construction, thereby increasing their potential returns.

A challenge the City may encounter in taking the single master developer approach is that it may be difficult to find a developer with sufficient capital to take down the entire property and pay taxes on the property for an indefinite period of time. Further, the City may have difficulty finding a developer that is willing to develop the property consistent with the City's vision, which would necessitate compromise on the City's part.

On the other end of the spectrum, while it would afford the City more control, it would be very difficult for the City to take on the role of master developer for the East Neighborhood given the cost of the required infrastructure and competing priorities for use of general tax fund revenue and bonding capacity.

### Values

As noted, the updated City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan directs that planning and projects be contemplated giving consideration to three overarching planning lenses, namely:

1. Climate Action
2. Social Equity
3. Economic Vitality/Sustainability

The 80 acres the City owns provides a rare opportunity to implement those values and provide a model for other development within the City to emulate. Council will need to determine what application of those state values means for the East Neighborhood Development. Some obvious areas where the noted lenses will need to be given careful consideration include:

- Transportation planning
- Housing mix and affordability
- Stormwater management
- Park, trails and open space development
- Energy planning
- Overall density
- Health implications

- Commercial uses
- Natural resource management/preservation

At the conclusion of discussion of this agenda item, staff hoped to determine whether Council is comfortable with the East Neighborhood Plan as presented, to receive direction on project approach and to hear input on what values are most important to Council as we contemplate moving forward with the development.

Consensus of the Council was to direct Staff to prepare a Request for Proposals to see what interest is out there for potential developers willing to develop the entire property. Staff will draft a proposal/RFP and bring back at a future Council Meeting for approval.

**(IX)(7) Discuss/consider Energy Innovation Grant Application.**

City Administrator Golat explained that the City received an Energy Innovation Grant to install solar panels on Solis Circle. The project is expected to save the City about \$240,000 over twenty-five years, with a small out-of-pocket investment by the City of approximately \$10,000. The next round of applications is due at the end of the month, and staff would like to submit two applications for the following projects:

Solar and Battery Storage at Altoona Container Park

This project would entail installing solar panel and battery storage for the Altoona Container Park to aid in energizing businesses and public facilities located at the park. This would be a great opportunity to showcase the City's commitment to sustainability and climate action.

East Neighborhood Development Microgrid Feasibility Study

Staff has been working with Eau Claire Energy Cooperative and Dairyland Power on the idea of constructing a microgrid for the East Neighborhood Development. A microgrid is a small network of electricity users with a local source of supply. Microgrids are usually attached to a centralized distribution system to provide resiliency. Both ECEC and Dairyland are interested in a microgrid pilot project in anticipation of distributed energy resources (DERs) becoming more and more popular at a larger scale.

DERs are electrical generation and storage performed by a variety of small, grid-connected or distribution system-connected devices. This contrasts with conventional power stations, such as coal-fired, gas-, and nuclear-powered plants, as well as hydroelectric dams and large-scale solar power stations, which are centralized and often require electric energy to be transmitted over long distances. DER systems are decentralized, modular, and more flexible technologies that are located close to the load they serve. These systems can comprise multiple generation and storage components; in this instance, they are referred to as hybrid systems.

The hybrid DER system contemplated by ECEC would likely include solar, battery storage and possibly a small gas combustion turbine. The project would provide energy resiliency for the residents and businesses located in the development and would provide a good example of what is possible with respect to developments adopting a microgrid strategy.

If the partnership is successful in getting the planning grant, they would complete the plan and then apply for additional funding to design and build the system. Each of the entities involved in the project would need to agree to paying a portion of any costs related to preparing the grant or matching the grant to make the application more attractive. The grant application is attached for your information.

Motion by Rowe/Lima to approve applications to the Energy Innovation Grant Program for two projects:

1. Solar and Battery Storage at Altoona Container Park, and
2. Microgrid planning for the East Neighborhood Development, and to commit funds necessary for preparation of the grant along with any matching funds necessary to make the project application more attractive, such amounts to be reported back to Council and a budget amendment to be prepared if necessary. **Motion carried.**

**(IX)(8) Discuss/consider Contract For Services Agreement between the City of Altoona and Cedar Corporation for the Public Safety Building Addition and Improvements architectural design and inspection.**

City Administrator Golat explained the contract for services between the City and Cedar Corporation to complete the architectural design and inspection for the Public Safety Building Addition and Improvements Project. City Administrator Golat explained that the City received six proposals ranging from \$96,500 to \$236,500, and recommends Cedar Corporation based on their experience, project approach and proposed cost.

Motion by Biren/Leopold to approve a contract for services between the City and Cedar Corporation to complete the architectural design and inspection for the Public Safety Building Addition and Improvements Project in the amount of \$106,425 plus \$6,500 for project related expenses.

**(IX)(9) Discuss/consider approval of the MOU (side letter) between the City of Altoona and the Altoona Professional Police Association (APPA) regarding cadet wages and probationary period.**

Police Chief Bakken explained that hiring law enforcement officers has been challenging. We anticipate hiring officers will continue to be difficult well into the future; the number of officers leaving the profession outnumbers those entering the profession. It has become more and more difficult to hire officers that have already completed the recruit academy. To ensure we continue to hire the best possible officers, Chief Bakken has worked with APPA to create a side letter that will offer a competitive wage for full-time officers hired before completing the academy. The side letter allows the city to pay a cadet wage to the full-time officer while they are attending the 720-hour police academy as well as extends the probationary period to one-year past graduation from the academy.

Motion by Rowe/Lima to approve the MOU (side letter) between the City of Altoona and the Altoona Professional Police Association regarding cadet wages and probationary period. **Motion carried.**

**(IX)(10) Discuss/consider agreement with TDS Telecom for installation of fiber optic cable throughout Altoona.**

CE/DPW David Walter explained that TDS Telecom intends to install their fiber optic network throughout Altoona. The City previously granted two easements for installation of control cabinets, and work has begun on those items. The next step is to approve a Memorandum of Understanding between both parties. TDS submitted a proposed MOU, which was reviewed by staff and the City Attorney. Comments were returned to, and incorporated by, TDS into the attached version. Some notable items include the following.

1. Method of construction is, to the greatest extent possible, entirely underground. Junction points will consist of underground vaults.
2. The network will be constructed in regions, and permit applications for each will be submitted consistent with ordinance to the Director of Public Works\City Engineer for review.
3. TDS will reimburse the City for any third-party review or utility locating needs should they become necessary.
4. The MOU contains a permit fee structure to reflect the increased effort by staff. Their project is far beyond our current Right-of-Way Permit fee table.
5. They intend to begin construction in 2023, but service may not be available to the public until 2024.

Motion by Rowe/Lima to approve the agreement with TDS Telecom for installation of fiber optic cable throughout Altoona. **Motion carried.**

**(IX)(11) Discussion with City Council regarding Road Configuration on Division Street (Lynn Avenue to Spooner Avenue).**

CE/DPW Walter explained that reconstruction of the one block of Division Street adjacent to the planned downtown Container Park is included in the 2023 budget. The scope includes full reconstruction of the roadway

including underground utilities. This presents an opportunity to design the roadway in a manner that will complement the use and function of the container park. Staff offers up the following options for consideration.

Replace In-Kind

The existing roadway is 45 feet wide from back-to-back of curb, with 10-foot sidewalk on both sides. This width allows for full parking on both sides of the road. Replacing in-kind will preserve the ability for people to park adjacent to the nearby businesses, and retains full functionality for use as a through street.

Curb Extensions/Narrowing

In this option, the roadway could be narrowed along the entire frontage of the container park to address the expected increase in pedestrian traffic. The road in that section would be narrowed to 24 feet of asphalt with curb and gutter. Parking would be prohibited in the same area. An enhanced pedestrian crossing could be painted and signed as an additional safety measure. Although parking would be eliminated in the narrowed section, 10 or eleven stalls could be created by paving the vacant property on the west side of the road.

Pedestrian Mall/Partial Road Closure

This option would take the previous one a step further, and close a portion of Division Street to traffic. Access would be maintained for post office delivery vehicles as well as for access to adjacent business parking lots. The entire area adjacent to the container park could be constructed as a pedestrian mall with options for surfacing. This would likely require, however, a cul-de-sac at the east end of Spooner Avenue. In order to accommodate the footprint of a reasonably sized cul-de-sac the City would need to acquire a triangular piece of property from the adjacent business. The benefit of the pedestrian mall is that if additional containers were desired in the future there would be space available.

CE/DPW Walter presented Exhibits for these options at the Council Meeting. Staff is seeking guidance from Council on which concept to pursue. Council agreed to maintain vehicle access through the corridor, with consideration for narrowing the roadway slightly and constructing an enhanced pedestrian crosswalk near the planned entrance to the container park.

City Attorney John Behling was present for the closed session item.

**(IX)(12) Discuss/consider convening in closed session pursuant to Wis. Stats 19.85 (1)(e)**

A. City Administrator's Evaluation, B. City Administrator Contract

Motion by Lima/Leopold to convene in closed session at 8:45 p.m. Roll call vote, 6-ayes, Stuber, Lima, Olson, Biren, Leopold, Rowe, 0-nays. **Motion carried.**

**(IX)(13) Motion to reconvene to Open Session**

Motion by Lima/Rowe to reconvene in open session at 9:26 p.m. Roll call vote, 6-ayes, Rowe, Leopold, Lima, Stuber, Biren, Olson, 0-nays. **Motion carried.**

Motion by Stuber/Lima to approve the City Administrator Contract with a salary of \$146,814.00 retroactive to December 16, 2022. Roll call vote, 6-ayes, Leopold, Olson, Rowe, Stuber, Biren, Lima. **Motion carried.**

**(X) Miscellaneous Business and Communication.**

**(XI) Adjournment.**

Motion by Lima/Leopold to adjourn at 9:30 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Minutes submitted by Cindy Bauer, City Clerk