

**CITY OF ALTOONA, WI
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
February 23, 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 via Zoom due to inclement weather.

(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, Police Chief Kelly Bakken and City Clerk Cindy Bauer.

(IV) Citizen Participation Period

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

(V) Approval of minutes.

Motion by Rowe/Lima to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2023, Regular Council Meeting. **Motion carried.**

(VI) City Officers/Department Heads Report

City Administrator Golat reported on the following:

- Friday, February 17, 2023 attended the Chamber's Eggs and Issues State of the City of Eau Claire.
- Started working with the Hillcrest Estates Storm Shelter Agreement.
- Governor Evers visited Fire Station 10 in the City of Eau Claire this past week.
- The Chamber's Eggs & Issue - State of the City of Altoona will be held on April 21 in the River Prairie Center at 7:00 a.m.

Police Chief Kelly Bakken gave a Police Department Report and commented on the snowfall the last couple of days.

City Committee Reports – none.

(VII) Consent Agenda

None.

(VIII) Unfinished Business - None

(IX) New Business

(1) Public hearing at 6:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as is practical regarding a Certified Survey Map (CSM) at 1488 Front Porch Place, Altoona, WI, parcel #1820122709153109019.

Mayor Pratt opened the Public Hearing at 6:17 p.m.

Planner Director Taylor Greenwell explained that the petitioner B&S Properties of Altoona LLC, is requesting approval of a CSM to expand their property west by approximately ten (10) feet. The property this amount is being pulled from is owned by the City of Altoona. The City agreed to the sale of this property on November 17, 2023. The intent of the applicant is to program this space for fire pits and a general seating area. No division of land is proposed as part of the CSM, the proposal is for western expansion only. The Plan

Commission recommended approval of the proposed CSM on 2/14/2023.

Motion by Rowe/Lima to close the public hearing at 6:23 p.m. **Motion carried.**

(IX)(2) Discuss/consider approval of CSM at 1488 Front Porch Place, Altoona, WI, parcel #1820122709153109019. (Discussed at the February 14, 2023 Plan Commission Meeting).

City Administrator Golat noted that there appears to be a difference of parcel lines shown on the CSM other than just the additional 10 feet of property lines to the west. Planning Director Taylor will confirm with the Developer if the property lines shown on the CSM were a technical error.

After communicating with the surveyor, it was confirmed that there is no movement to the property lines to the north and south, only to the west as originally discussed and approved by the city. The discrepancy is merely a result of the realignment of the property lines as part of expanding the lot to the west. No additional property is being taken to the north and south.

Motion by Lima/Leopold to approve the CSM at 1488 Front Porch Place with the correction verification that the dotted property lines on the CSM be verified by the developer. **Motion carried.**

(IX)(3) Public hearing at 6:05 p.m. or as soon thereafter as is practical regarding a Certified Survey Map / Condominium Plat (CSM - Condo Plat) at 1260 Otter Road, Altoona, WI, parcel 1820122709272109004.

Mayor Pratt opened the public hearing at 6:25 p.m.

Planning Director Greenwell explained that the petitioner RDK Otter Rd LLC, would like to perform a one lot, two-unit condominium plat via the CSM entitlement process on an existing lot at 1260 Otter Rd. The property has two existing buildings, one comprising storage units and another being for auto body. The new condo lot would have two units and each unit would have one of the preexisting buildings / businesses. No change of use or new construction would result from the proposed condominium, instead making the existing lot into a condominium lot would more easily facilitate the sale of individual buildings.

Planning Director Greenwell mentioned that all new plats and certified survey maps require full compliance with current code. Unit 2 has a nonconforming rear yard setback. The proposed property is in the Industrial zone and the Industrial zone has a rear yard setback of 25 feet. The northwest building (Unit 2) is 4 feet from the property line and would remain so on the proposed plat. As a result, the applicant applied for and received 21-foot variance to this setback requirement making the proposal compliant with current municipal code as of 1/25/2023. The Plan Commission recommended approval of the proposed condominium on 2/14/2023.

Motion by Lima/Rowe to close the public hearing at 6:28 p.m. **Motion carried.**

(IX)(4) Discuss/consider approval of CSM - Condo Plat at 1260 Otter Road, Altoona, WI, parcel #1820122709272109004. (Discussed at the February 14, 2023 Plan Commission Meeting).

Motion by Lima/Biren to approve the CSM-Condo Plat at 1260 Otter Road. **Motion carried.**

(IX)(5) Discuss/consider approval of Reclassification of Confidential Administrative Assistant Position in the Altoona Police Department retroactively effective January 1, 2023. (Discussed at the February 15, 2023 Personnel Committee Meeting).

Police Chief Kelly Bakken explained that in December 2022 the police department requested a review for possible reclassification of the confidential administrative assistant position. There has been a significant increase in overall job duties to the position, creating a larger workload as well as requiring a higher degree of skill and knowledge. There has been a substantial increase in open records requests due to the addition of body cameras and other video recording software causing an increase in responsibility in a high liability area. Because of the high liability and changes to case law, there have been additional educational requirements in understanding Wisconsin open records laws. The job description was revised and a request was sent to Carlson Dettmann to review the position for possible reclassification. Carlson Dettmann has reviewed the documents and information and is suggesting a reclassification of this position from grade level G to grade level H. Staff would suggest this change in grade level be retroactively effective on January 1, 2023. The Personnel Committee met and recommended approval at its February 15, 2023 Personnel Committee Meeting.

Motion by Lima/Olson to approve the Reclassification of Confidential Administrative Assistant Position in the Police Department retroactively effective January 1, 2023. **Motion carried.**

(IX)(6) Discuss/consider approval of site plan for Perseverance Park.

City Administrator Golat explained the proposed site plan for Perseverance Park in the Prairie View Ridge subdivision. The site plan has been presented to the Parks and Recreation Committee and the Committee voiced its approval of the proposed site plan.

Key elements of the site plan include: a pavilion, open space, a fenced community garden, a pad for a portable toilet, a parking area, a drinking water fountain, a swing set in a designated playground area, a trail link to the trail that circles the pond feature and a water service. The pavilion has been constructed by partnering with the Chippewa Valley Home Builders Association. The City bought the materials and the CVHBA provided the labor to construct the pavilion. Water is stubbed to the site.

City Administrator Golat commented that to inform the park design, and at the direction of the Parks and Recreation Committee, the planning department developed a survey that was sent to Prairie View Ridge residents (raw survey results attached). The survey results will be presented at the meeting. The primary takeaway from the survey is that a little over half of the respondents wanted a community garden, while the others wanted open space. Thus, the site plan represents a balance of open space and garden space. Staff is seeking approval of the site plan in order to move forward with final construction this summer. Some of the work related to the garden and fencing is proposed to be completed by Eagle Scout candidates. The goal is to have the garden space available for rent in the spring.

Motion by Lima/Leopold to approve the proposed site plan for Perseverance Park. **Motion carried.**

(IX)(7) Present / discuss the Altoona 2022 Development Report by Planning Director Taylor Greenwell.

Planning Director Taylor Greenwell reported that the City of Altoona continues to experience significant residential and commercial growth and investment. Many communities in the Chippewa Valley are also experiencing growth. However, Altoona has experienced a disproportionate level of residential development within the region as measured by percent change. Altoona's population and equalized value has also significantly outstripped surrounding communities in recent years due to a variety of factors. While the gross number of new residential permits fell significantly from last year, this is not believed to be due to a lack of interest from the development community or general public, but due to a number of external and internal factors that will be explored.

Planning Director Greenwell noted that the purpose of this Report was to briefly summarize 2022 residential permitting activity and recent development trends. Planning Director Greenwell briefly illustrated the corresponding impacts on assessed property values. This summary is intended to stimulate discussion and introspection as we undergo a number of planning / development initiatives in 2023, including a new housing plan, implementation of the East Neighborhood Plan, energy study, and a comprehensive code update. No action taken.

(IX)(8) Discuss/consider approval of a Request for Proposal for the city owned 80 acres, also named the East Neighborhood Development.

Planning Director Greenwell explained that Council have been made aware and discussed in prior meetings, staff is ready to begin moving forward on implementation of the East Neighborhood Plan, the 80 acres that was recently purchased by the City of Altoona, located on the eastern edge of City off of US Highway 12. Staff has prepared a request for proposal (RFP) which was provided to council for review and approval. The RFP calls for a master developer to develop the 80 acres based on feedback from the Council in previous discussions.

Motion by Biren/Olson to approve the Request for Proposal for the East Neighborhood Development contingent upon Plan Commission Review. **Motion carried.**

(IX)(9) Discuss/consider use of the City Hall community gardens.

City Administrator Golat explained that two years ago the City converted the lot behind City Hall to a garden. The garden has eight spaces for use. The first year, five spaces were rented to the public and the three spaces that were not rented were used by City staff to grow giant pumpkins in order to promote the River Prairie Ginormous Pumpkin Festival. The second year, four spaces were rented to the public and the four remaining unrented spaces were used to promote the RPGPF. City Administrator Golat noted that both Group Health Cooperative and Westconsin Credit Union each generously provided \$5,000 sponsorships for the event, in part,

because they were able to participate in growing the pumpkins behind City Hall, and Group Health also produced a video in the garden promoting the event and their involvement in the event. The ability to participate in growing the pumpkins and produce a promotional video were and continue to both be important considerations in providing the sponsorships.

City Administrator Golat commented that last year a renter of one of the garden spaces expressed that they felt the City should not be using the garden space for growing pumpkins and that the space should be made available to other community members. This may be due, in part, to two additional community members expressing interest in renting a space in the garden last summer. Staff is seeking Council direction on whether or not the subject garden space may continue to be used by City staff to grow pumpkins, thereby promoting the RPGPF.

City Administrator Golat noted that plans for Perseverance Park include adding a community garden for rent to residents beginning in the spring. There should be an additional ten 20' X 20' spaces available in the garden.

Motion by Rowe/Leopold to continue utilizing the Community Garden behind City Hall as currently planned keeping 4 spots available for City use and 4 spots available for residents to rent. **Motion carried.**

(IX)(10) Discuss/consider sale of Fencing to Blue Ox.

City Administrator Golat explained that the City, in partnership with the Altoona Lions Club and 44 North, purchased fencing to be used at the Prevea Amphitheater for security purposes during large events. Previously 44 North produced one event in the Spring for the Lions during Cinder City Days, and another event in September. Because the Lions and 44 North are no longer interested in hosting large concerts at River Prairie, 44 North sold their share of the fencing to the Blue Ox Festival. The owner of Blue Ox then reached out to the City to determine whether the City and Lions Club had an interest in selling their shares of the fencing.

City Administrator Golat noted that the fencing has not been used at River Prairie for several years. However, it is uncertain whether the City may have a need for use of the fencing in the future. Staff has spoken with Jim Bischel, owner of Blue Ox, and he communicated that if Blue Ox purchases the fencing and the City needs to use the fencing in the future at a time that does not conflict with Blue Ox's use of the fencing, the City may use the fencing free of charge. Blue Ox has agreed to purchase the fencing from the City and Lions Club for the amount that we purchased it for, \$4,656.09 per share.

Motion by Rowe/Biren to approve directing the City Attorney to draft a sales agreement for sale of the fencing to Blue Ox for \$4,656.09 per share (one share for City, one share for Lions Club) with a stipulation that the City or the Lions Club may use the fencing if needed for events if available, and further authorizing the Mayor to sign the agreement on behalf of the City. **Motion carried.**

(IX)(11) Discuss/consider updating the Employee Handbook. (Discussed at the February 15, 2023 Personnel Committee Meeting).

Assistant City Administrator Downey explained that the Director of Administrative Services, the City Administrator, and Assistant City Administrator have spent considerable time reviewing the Employee Handbook. There are some suggested changes to the employee handbook to present to the Council for your consideration. Council Members were provided a copy of the entire Employee Handbook with the changes listed below included and text that is being removed struck-through. The text is highlighted in yellow in places where language has been added. The text is highlighted in blue in places where the language has been updated.

Pages 1 & 2 Updated Page identifiers

Section 10.5: (page 13) Added statement to identify exceptions to the Interview subsection

Section 11.1: (page 14) Removed “ or a member of the Personnel Committee” Added City Administrator

Section 20: (page 28) Added City of Altoona to identify the employment

Section 20: (page 24) Language update – replaced “disability” with “sick”

Section 21: (page 25) Added “twenty” (previously omitted) to clearly identify maximum number of days.

Section 22: (page 26) Added language for when adding Floating Holiday hours for employees and also for those who begin employment mid-year.

Section 23: (page 28) Updated language - correctly identifying the position as the informational contact

Section 25.2: (page 29) Added language giving direction for supervisors to verify a jury duty or subpoena notice. Also, to provide the information to the payroll processing agent.

Section 27: (page 31) Added language to identify reimbursement for employee only. Added language to promote timeliness submission for reimbursement. Updated maximum amounts per meal. Added language to clarify tip calculation. Added language for determining meal allowances when more than one meal may apply.

Section 28.3: (page 34) Updated language - correctly identifying the position

Attachment I: (page 37) Updated language for acknowledging the receipt and identifying the employee's responsibility

Attachments II & III: (pages 38-39) Added forms referenced in the handbook

The Personnel Committee met at its February 15, 2023 Personnel Committee Meeting and recommended that Council approve the suggested amendments with a minor change under Section 27 increasing the allotted meal reimbursement as follows: Breakfast \$18, Lunch \$24, and Dinner \$36 per meal.

Motion by Olson/Leopold to approve updates to the Employee Handbook as presented. **Motion carried.**

(IX)(12) Discuss/consider moving applicants on to the next round of the Think Inside the Box Challenge.

City Administrator Golat explained that the Think Inside the Box Challenge application period ended on Friday, January 27th. The City received twelve applications for the challenge, one for the tap room, five for the two retail spaces, and six for the restaurant space. Council Members were provided copies of all the application materials.

City Administrator Golat noted that the Council formed an ad hoc committee to review the applications to determine which ones to move on to the next round and to determine the next steps in the selection process. The Committee met before the Council meeting and provide a recommendation to Council rather than making a final decision, as there are four council members on the ad hoc committee and they cannot make a final decision without input by the full Council. City Administrator Golat commented that businesses that are most likely to draw the most visitors to the park and energize the park space should be given the most consideration. Council, at its discretion, may move as many businesses forward to the next round as they determine to be in the City's best interest. City Administrator Golat noted that the Ad Hoc Committee recommended approval of all but two of the applicants to move on to the next round. The Green Fleet LLC (Shuttle Service) and the Flamingo Mocktails did not move on to the next round. However, the Ad Hoc Committee noted that the Flamingo Mocktails could possibly work with the bar for some sort of partnership.

Motion by Rowe/Stuber to approve moving the following applications on to the next round of the Think Inside the Box Challenge:

- Taproom Application #1 – Mark Anderson.
- Retail Application #1 – Grizzly's Tackle Dist.
- Retail Application #2 – Coulee Boutique
- Retail Application #4 – Novel Teas
- Retail Application # 5 – Geek Chic
- Restaurant Application #1 – Beast & Bonito
- Restaurant Application #2 – Big Fella's
- Restaurant Application #3 – Ne-Ne's Taco LLP
- Restaurant Application #4 – Café Indigo
- Restaurant Application #5 – Xoua Yang

Motion carried.

(IX)(13) Discuss/consider approval of determining the procedure for the next round of screening applicants for the Think Outside the Box Challenge proposals. (Discussed at the February 23, 2023 Ad Hoc Selection Committee).

City Administrator Golat explained that the next step in the Think Inside the Box Challenge after screening the applicants is to invite applicants to prepare a business plan and make a Shark Tank style presentation. Staff is suggesting that a panel of “experts” be assembled to sit on the panel to hear the presentations and ask questions and that the Council hear the presentations, ask questions, deliberate and make the final decision on which businesses will be invited to locate in the park. Staff is recommending that the panel be limited to about 7 members and that the panel be composed of local entrepreneurs, economic development professionals, finance professionals and a representative from the business/academic community. The panel would facilitate the presentations and ask follow-up questions. Council would hear the presentations and also have an opportunity to ask questions. Finally, the Council would deliberate and make a final selection for each location. Also, as part of the requirements to move forward in the process, applicants will be required to submit a business plan. The format and content of the business plan need to be determined by Council with input from the Committee. Council members were provided a list of items commonly found in business plans.

Provided below was a suggested timeline for the process:

April 6, 2023–Deadline for applicants to submit business plan materials to the Selection Committee.

April 18, 2023– Applicant presentations at Organizational Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m. Council Deliberations the same night and selection of successful applicants.

April 27, 2023–Staff initiates lease negotiations with Council oversight. Leases brought to Council for approval.

Summer 2023–Infrastructure and street construction, opening planned for mid-summer, 2023

Motion by Rowe/Olson to approve the selection process for the Think Inside the Box Challenge as presented with the amendment that the Council deliberations will be held on the same night as the presentations at the April 18, 2023 Organizational Meeting. **Motion carried.**

(X) Miscellaneous Business and Communication.

(XI) Adjournment.

Motion by Lima/Leopold to adjourn at 8:03 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Minutes submitted by Cindy Bauer, City Clerk