

MINUTES
ALTOONA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
Tuesday, October 6, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT

Randy Isenberg, Chair
Dave Albright, Vice Chair
James Dixon
Richard Haines
Michael Haire, Vice Secretary
Jennifer Mikolajczk, Secretary

MEMBERS ABSENT

Charles Myers

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STAFF PRESENT

Nic Ardizzone, Property Manager
Mary Johnson – CDBG Manager

GUESTS PRESENT

John Sepp – Penn Terra Engineers – Nehemiah Project
Peter A. Joudry – Nehemiah Project
Brian Smith – Smith Welding and Fabrication
Bill Kibler – Altoona Mirror

The Altoona City Planning Commission held its monthly meeting on October 6, 2020 in the Public Meeting Room, City Hall 1301 12th Street, Altoona. Randy Isenberg, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

1. **Approval of meeting minutes of September 1, 2020.**
The minutes of the September 1, 2020, were read. A motion was made by Richard Haines for approval of the minutes. Motion was seconded by Jennifer Mikolajczk. Motion carried unanimously.
2. **Public Comment Period**
No Public Comment at this time.

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ITEMS

3. **Smith's Welding and Fabrication** – Nic Ardizzone introduced the proposed plan which is an amendment of the Altoona City Planning Commission approval

of May 6, 2010 and recorded in the office of the County of Blair, Register of Wills and Recorder of Deeds May 28, 2010, by instrument number – 201008108. All required landscaping from the 2010 approval has been completed and established. The new construction would include a concrete pad of approximately 903 square feet and a proposed roof area of approximately 30' X 72". The existing gravel area of 7,129.40 square feet shall be paved. The applicant seeks approval from the Planning Commission today, no waivers have been requested. Mr. Ardizzone then introduced Mr. Brian Smith, a brief discussion ensued at which time Mr. Ardizzone noted to the Planning Commission that the proposed area is to be paved and must be completed within 12 months from date of approval, because Land Development items cannot be staged. A motion was made by Dave Albright to approve Resolution No. 10-06-20-PAC 19-0004 as presented. Motion was seconded by Richard Haines. Motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 10-06-20-PAC19-0004
A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SMITH'S WELDING AND FABRICATION
AUXILIARY BUILDING LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

WHEREAS an application for a land development project has been filed with the Altoona City Planning Commission (hereinafter "ACPC") by Smith's Welding and Fabrication (hereinafter referred to as the "DEVELOPER"); and

WHEREAS, the DEVELOPER desires to construct an Expansion to the existing building at 1631 North 4th Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, staff has reviewed the LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN, incorporated herein by this reference and filed with the ACPC by the Developer, and has found it to be in compliance excepting waiver requests, as a FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT with all applicable provisions of the City of Altoona's zoning, subdivision/land development, and storm water ordinances subject to the conditions of this resolution; and

WHEREAS, the ACPC has determined that this LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN constitutes a FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN in full compliance with the City of Altoona's zoning, subdivision/land development, and storm water ordinances subject to the conditions of this resolution; and

WHEREAS, the ACPC has the power to APPROVE modifications to the City of Altoona's subdivision and land development requirements, and the Developer has requested the following waivers that are hereby approved by the ACPC:

None have been requested.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Commission of the City of Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania, that the application and plans, as filed by the DEVELOPER, are hereby approved subject to the following conditions:

1. A letter from the Blair County Conservation District approving the plan shall be provided to the City. (Chapter 620)
2. Any necessary permits from DEP must be provided.
3. The ACPC Consulting Engineer's comments contained in the Engineer's letter to the City dated September 17, 2020 and attached hereto must be satisfied.
4. Financial security to cover the cost of all public improvements must be provided to the City prior to plan signature. (Chapter 640)
5. A developer's agreement prepared by the ACPC must be executed by the Developer.
6. All required signatures must be obtained on the plan.
7. The conditions of the plan must be accepted in writing by developer within 30 days of plan approval.
8. A copy of the RECORDED plan must be provided to the ACPC as soon as it is recorded.
9. All conditions must be met, fees paid, and the plan signed and recorded within the plan deadline.

RESOLVED by the Altoona City Planning Commission this sixth day of October, 2020

ATTEST:

Secretary

Chair

The Nehemiah Project, Inc. – Nic Ardizzone made introduction and stated that John Sepp, P.E. was present to speak on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Sepp spoke to the Planning Commission and did a brief outline of the project. The Nehemiah Project, working with Jeffrey S. Long, proposes to merge together 13 parcels and to vacate right-of-way of Highland Place to make a new 1.01 acre. "Parcel 1", addressed as 1500 Eleventh Street. Fourteen townhomes and then to

be constructed on "Parcel 1". An additional five units are to be built on "Parcel 1" at 1414 Eleventh Street. Stormwater may be an issue. The front yard parking encroaches on the city's right-of-way for Eleventh Street, let alone the five-foot setback. The plans would have cars backing out onto Eleventh Street. This project is a much-needed development for this area and would up grade the housing stock for which the City of Altoona needs. The applicant seeks six waivers from the Planning Commission with approval today. Randy Isenberg asked Nic to read each waiver individually.

1. §640-59.C.3: Large trees (greater than 12 inches in diameter) removed pursuant to Subsection C(2) above shall be replaced with a minimum of three trees with a minimum caliper of three inches. Tree placement shall be in such a manner so as to complement the site and ensure the long-term health of the trees planted.
The Applicant is requesting a waiver to this section: There are numerous trees on site which have grown wild over the years and are of no real aesthetic value. The City ordinances require 7 street trees and 10 are being provided. In addition, the trees in the undeveloped section of the property will remain undisturbed. A brief discussion and The Planning Commission indicated that would be acceptable.
2. §640-63.A.(6): The minimum curb radius on an access driveway at the street or alley shall be 10 feet.
The Applicant is requesting a waiver to this section: The alley is being widened by 5 feet in the location of the access. Widening the alley at this location limits the radius that will work at the entrance, but will provide a better means of access to the project. A brief discussion and The Planning Commission indicated that would be acceptable.
3. §640-63.B.(3): Parking facilities shall be set back from street right-of-way lines, property lines, and building foundations a minimum of five feet. "Front parking extends over property line into the right-of-way."
Applicant is requesting a waiver of this section. The design of the townhomes has the main entrance being located on the front of the units which will blend in well with the streetscape. The garages are located on the basement floor of the units. Having the entrances being on the same grade as 11th Street requires parking at the same level as the street to be functional for visitors and others that will not access the units through the basement. A lengthy discussion by The Planning Commission ensued where the planning commission stated that backing out into the travel way would be hazardous and could not support or approve such a waiver. Therefore, there must be a resubmission of the plans with a new design.

4. §640-63.C.(1)]: Facilities shall be designed so that each vehicle may enter and exit a parking space without maneuvering into a public right-of-way or pedestrian facility or without moving any other legally parked vehicle. "It appears that additional parking could be accommodated behind the building, sharing the proposed drive aisle eliminating the need to back into the public right-of-way. Existing parallel on-street parking could remain. A waiver with justification for the proposed parking backing onto 11th Street would be necessary. The waiver should include an illustration on how the cars will safely maneuver into 11th Street taking into account sight distance over the hill and typical speeds (not the posted speed limit) of traffic in the area. The applicant should also justify the necessity of placing parking against 11th Street as shown. If this can be demonstrated." **The Applicant is requesting a waiver to this section: The design of the townhomes has the main entrance being located on the front of the units which will blend in well with the streetscape. The garages are located on the basement floor of the units. Having the entrances being on the same grade as 11th Street requires parking at the same level as the street to be functional for visitors and others that will not access the units through the basement. Attached to the waiver request is an illustration of the cars backing out on to 11th Street. The vehicles will not encroach into the opposite travel lane. Also attached are photos of the street from the Howard Ave and Howard Alley intersections illustrating that the sight distance will be adequate.** A lengthy discussion by The Planning Commission ensued where the planning commission stated that backing out into the travel way would be hazardous and they could not support or approve such a waiver. Therefore, there must be a resubmission of the plans with a new design.
5. §640-63.C.(7): Curbing shall be placed at the edges of all surface areas, including islands. Curbing shall be vertical around the perimeters of the parking facility but may be sloped around landscaped islands. **Applicant is requesting a waiver to this section. Low profile extruded curb is proposed interior to the project, while full depth curb is proposed in the street right of way. Given the minimum speed of the vehicles and the fact that sidewalk is located adjacent to the curb and the stalls are angled, the low-profile curb will be sufficient for this use.** The Planning Commission indicated that would be acceptable.
6. §640-63.G.: For every 10 spaces provided by the applicant for motor vehicles, one bicycle parking space shall be provided, with a minimum of two bicycle spaces for all proposals in accordance with this section. **Applicant is requesting a waiver to this section. The residents will likely house any bicycles inside the units.** The Planning Commission indicated that would be acceptable,

however, but would prefer to see bicycle parking installed to try and minimize bicycles laying on the sidewalks.

The Nehemiah Project is being continued until the next meeting so that they can resubmit a new plan for the requested 3rd and 4th waivers.

4. **Staff Level Reviews** – Staff has approved the following staff level subdivision/land development applications since the September 1, 2020 meeting.

1. **1107 4th Avenue** – Subdivision – Bryan – Final Approval

URBAN REDEVELOPMENT

5. **Spot Blight Declaration**

1914 5th Avenue

Owner: Jennifer & John Graham

3827 Broad Avenue

Altoona, PA 16601

Property is vacant, residential and is in substandard condition not suitable for rehabilitation. No contact with the owners. The property is a wood sided residential building which needs scraped and painting; holes in the siding; back porch is collapsing, accumulations present; gutters and downspouts are falling apart. Roof shingles are worn and/or missing. Windows are broken and some frames are worn and falling out. Garage is satisfactory, but doors need replaced. Electric is on, gas and water are off. Foundation mortar needs repointed. Taxes are owed for 2019. Under the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code, the City will demolish the structure and place a lien on the property for the cost of demolition. Motion to declare the property blighted was made by Jennifer Mikolajczk. Motion seconded by James Dixon. Motion passed unanimously.

2024 5th Avenue (Garage Only)

Owner: Todd Gibboney
38265 Sand Cove Road
Ocean View, DE 19970

Garage is in deplorable condition and was submitted as an emergency demolition. It is vacant and in substandard condition not suitable for rehabilitation. Building is in a major state of disrepair with garage roof collapsing making a dangerous situation for persons accessing the alley. Under the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code, the City will demolish the structure and place a lien for the cost of demolition. Motion to declare the property blighted was made by Richard Haines. Motion seconded by James Dixon. Motion passed unanimously.

1800 6th Avenue

Owner: Daniel & Kelly Feather
1665 Westgate Dr. Apt. 103
York, PA 17408

Property is vacant, residential and is in substandard condition not suitable for rehabilitation. Property's foundation is cracked and deteriorating, exterior siding is loose and missing, roof shingles missing and holes present. Windows are missing or broken. No contact with owner has been made. Water and electric are on and gas is off. 2019 Taxes are owed. Under the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code, the City will demolish the structure and place a lien on the property for the cost of demolition. Motion to declare the property blighted was made by Jennifer Mikolajczk. Motion seconded by Dave Albright. Motion passed unanimously.

2019 11th Avenue

Owner: Jonathan Harr
268 Feathers Road
Imler, PA 16655

Property is vacant, residential and is in substandard condition not suitable for rehabilitation. Property is in disrepair. Side door is not properly sealed and other side door has steps pulling away from the property. Steps to second floor are not safe. Rear porch roof is rotted and missing sheathing and covering. Roof covering is worn and damaged; missing shingles, wood beams for roof are exposed and rotted on rear roof on both sides of property. Windows are broken/missing glass and boarded up. All utilities are off and taxes are owed for 2018 and 2019. This property has changed ownership and a demo order has been issued again with

new owner, but no contact from the owner. Under the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code, the City will demolish the structure and place a lien on the property for the cost of demolition. Motion to declare the property blighted was made by Jennifer Mikolajczk. Motion seconded by Richard Haines. Motion passed unanimously.

1609 17th Avenue

Owner: Willie Williams
203 E. Walnut Avenue
Altoona, PA 16601

Property is vacant, residential and is in substandard condition not suitable for rehabilitation. Property is in disrepair and uninhabitable. Gutters and downspouts are missing and some are falling off. Foundation is cracked and falling apart. Holes in roof and missing roof covering. Windows are missing and broken. Interior-Sewer issues, flooring in disrepair and electrical issues. All utilities are off and taxes are owed for 2017, 2018 and 2019. Code Enforcement has not had any contact with the owner. Under the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code, the City will demolish the structure and place a lien on the property for the cost of demolition. Motion was made to declare the property blighted by James Dixon. Motion was seconded by Jennifer Mikolajczk. Motion passed unanimously.

2409 Oak Avenue

Owner: Carl & Betty Smith
2409 Oak Avenue
Altoona, PA 16601

AWA lists mailing address as 181 Muleshoe Estates, Duncansville, PA 16635

Property is vacant, residential and is in substandard condition not suitable for rehabilitation. Property is in poor condition with gutters and downspouts falling off and worn out cornice is deteriorating. Shingles are worn out and some are missing. Window frames rotted and falling apart. No contact with owners. Code officer commented that the neighbors said they were deceased. 2018 and 2019 taxes are owed. Water and Gas are off, electric is still active. Under the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code, the City will demolish the structure and place a lien on the property for the cost of demolition. Motion to declare the property blighted was made by Jennifer Mikolajczk. Motion seconded by Richard Haines. Motion passed unanimously.

2409 Oak Avenue, Rear

Owner: Carl & Betty Smith

2409 Oak Avenue

Altoona, PA 16601

AWA lists mailing address as 181 Muleshoe Estates, Duncansville, PA 16635

Property is vacant, residential and is in substandard condition not suitable for rehabilitation. Property is in poor condition. Dilapidated wood siding falling off, roof has worn out shingles, window frames are rotted. Gas and water are off, electric still active. No contact with owners. Code officer commented that the neighbors said they were deceased. 2018 and 2019 taxes are owed. Under the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code, the City will demolish the structure and place a lien on the property for the city's share of the demolition. Motion was made by Jennifer Mikolajczk. Motion was seconded by James Dixon. Motion passed unanimously.

202 Willow Avenue

Owner: Doris Wright & Adam Caldwell

202 Willow Avenue

Altoona, PA 16601

Property is vacant, residential and is in substandard condition not suitable for rehabilitation. Property is in poor condition, porch, gutters, downspouts, awnings are falling off. Roof is damaged, holes in boxing and sheathing deteriorating. Foundation stone is falling apart. Windows are broken and missing. All utilities are off. Taxes owed for 2018 and 2019. No contact with the owner. Under the 2015 International Maintenance Code, the City will demolish the structure and place a lien on the property for the cost of demolition. Motion to declare the property blighted was made by Richard Haines. Motion seconded by Jennifer Mikolajczk. Motion passed unanimously.

1518 4th Street

Dommartin LLC

2410 Maple Avenue

Altoona, PA 16601

Property is vacant and in substandard condition not suitable for rehabilitation. Property is a multi-unit structure and is in disrepair. Rear porch stairs and flooring are rotted and missing, brick face missing and loose, graffiti all over. Rear porch roof is damaged. Foundation is satisfactory. Windows are broken and missing. Interior ceilings are falling down. All utilities are off and taxes owed since 2019. There has been no contact with owner. Under the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code, the City will demolish the structure and place a lien

on the property for the cost of demolition. Motion to declare property blighted was made by Dave Albright. Motion seconded by Michael Haire. Motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

6. Planning Reports

- a. Grantsmanship activities – Still working on CDBG and COVID-19.
- b. Zoning Hearing Board – Met on 9/16/20 one Special Exception was approved.
- c. Shade Tree Commission – No meeting
- d. GAEDC – No Meeting
- e. Blair County Planning Commission – Met and had a full agenda still trying to catch up.

8. Commissioners Forum – No report

9. Questions from the Media and Public

10. Adjournment

A motion was made by James Dixon to adjourn the meeting at 4:45 P.M. Richard Haines seconded the motion.

Jennifer Mikolajczk, Secretary