

MINUTES  
ALTOONA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
TUESDAY February 7, 2017

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Bob Gutshall, Chairperson  
Dave Albright  
James Dixon  
Randy Isenberg  
Charles Meyers  
Jennifer Mikolajczyk

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Sam Frye

**PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STAFF PRESENT**

Lee Slusser, Director Community Development  
Nick Ardizzone, Property and Program Coordinator

**GUESTS PRESENT**

Edward C. Kreuz, Jr. – Kreuz Self Storage  
Todd Beiswenger – Young Engineers & Surveyors, Inc.

The Altoona City Planning Commission held its monthly meeting on February 7, 2017 at 3:00 P.M. in the Public Meeting Room, City Hall 1301 12th Street, Altoona. Bob Gutshall, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

**1. Welcome**

Mr. Slusser began by introducing Mr. Charles Meyers, PE, a civil engineer and project manager at P. Joseph Lehman, Inc. Mr. Meyers replaces Barbara Wiens-Tuers. Mr. Slusser briefly reviewed the Commission's duties and powers, which are unique to Blair County. Each of the Commission Members introduced themselves to Mr. Meyers.

**2. Approval of meeting minutes of January 3, 2017.**

The meeting minutes January 3, 2017 were approved as read by a motion made by Randy Isenberg and seconded by Jennifer Mikolajczyk. Motion carried unanimously.

**3. Public Comment Period**

None at this time

## SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ITEMS

4. **Kreuz Self Storage** – Mr. Slusser introduced Edward Kreuz and Todd Beiswenger, Young Engineers & Surveyors, Inc., who are here to present a land development proposal to build a 2,800 sqft building containing storage units at 1812-1818 North 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue in East Juniata on the railroad side of the area. Mr. Slusser then turned the presentation over to Mr. Beiswenger who presented the proposal. Mr. Kreuz is proposing to build a storage building on a vacant lot. The vacant lot serves an overflow parking facility now. The current lot has approximately 9956 sqft of stabilized parking area. The proposed building will be 2813.63 sqft and the proposed parking area will be 5914.00 sqft. No water nor sewer connection will be required at this time. A Highway Occupancy Permit has been applied for and conditionally granted. A traffic impact study is not necessary because the proposed use will not increase 100 or more trips on the adjacent roadways during peak hours.

Mr. Slusser presented the Waivers Requested:

1. 535-105.C(4d10) Fencing shall be provided for all aboveground retention/detention stormwater facilities. A variance has been requested. The ponding depth is approximately 3’.
2. 535-203.D(3h) states Storage Units shall provide a minimum of one parking space for every 10 units available for rent, not to exceed a maximum of one space for every five units available for rent. A variance has been requested stating that any parking would be relatively temporary.
3. 535-203.C(7) Curbing shall be placed at the edges of all surfaced areas, including islands. Curbing shall be vertical around the perimeters of the parking facility but may be sloped around landscaped islands. A variance has been requested as curbing is not provided to the North and South as runoff is proposed to sheet flow into the storm water management system.
4. 535-203.G(1) 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. A variance has been requested.
5. 535-204.A(1-5)& 204.B(5) Sidewalks shall be provided along the entire length of the property in accordance with this section and crosswalks shall be provided where sidewalk intersects access drive. Sidewalks shall be constructed to provide adequate access to the physically disabled. A variance has been requested to providing sidewalk as they do not believe it can be constructed to address the below concerns. Additionally, they have indicated that there is no other sidewalk in the area. The average grade across the front of the property is 12%; however, it appears the sidewalk area is graded so that the grade from the driveway to the southern property line is approximately 20%. There is a 40% cross-slope where the macadam sidewalk area would be off the southern building corner. The cross-slope should not exceed 2%. In order to provide sidewalk, the building size would need to be reduced and the site regraded. As it is currently situated, it would not conform.

6. 535-205.C(4) Along the parking lot, trees and shrubs shall be planted so as to screen the parking facility from all surrounding streets and properties. The intent is to mitigate the impact of vehicle noise, lights, and fumes on adjacent land. Such vegetation shall be planted so as to provide a full screen within five years. Landscaping is only proposed along the southern property line. A modification has been requested to implement the landscaping as shown.

A motion was made by Dave Albright to approve the application which includes the (6) six requested waivers. James Dixon seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**5. Staff Level Reviews** – Mr. Slusser reviewed that staff has worked on the following staff level subdivision/land development reviews since the January 3, 2017 regular meeting.

1. Simington Plaza III – Land Development – 210 E. Plank Road – Under Review
2. Blair Orthopedics – Land Development – 3000 Fairway Drive – Final Approval
3. Wendy’s - Land Development – 309 E. Plank Road – Final Approval
4. Jack & George’s – Land Development – 2400 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Conditional Approval
5. Kreuz – Land Development – 1812-18 N 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Under Review
6. Dollar General – Land Development – 1320 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Final Approval
7. Altoona Land Development, LLC – Subdivision – 400 E. Chestnut Avenue – Final Approval
8. Pallo – Subdivision – 1407 Ivyside Drive – Certificate of Denial
9. McCloskey – Subdivision – 2501-03 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Final Approval
10. Grande Palazzo – Subdivision – 2500 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Final Approval
11. Wm. Kech/Shields Trophy – Subdivision – 2541-43-45 Union Avenue – Final Approval
12. Anytime Truck and Tire – Land Development – 815 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Under Review
13. Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament Parking Lot Expansion – Land Development – One Cathedral Square – Under Review

**URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

**6. Spot Blight Declaration  
2500-07 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue**

Owner: Mark Pakula  
5905 W. Wharton Avenue  
Yakima, WA 98903

Property is vacant and in substandard condition not suitable for rehabilitation. Property was submitted to the Blighted Property Demo Program on January 18, 2017. Owner has not responded to the raze/repair notice issued June 25, 2015. The exterior of the structure is insul brick siding in poor condition. Windows are old, missing or broken, chimney is falling apart. Foundation is in fair/poor condition. Neighbors are concerned that kids are breaking into the building. Property is in severe disrepair. Interior is in bad shape. All utilities are off. Taxes outstanding for 2014 and 2015 totaling \$1,455.23. The City will demolish the structure under the 2009 International Property Maintenance Code, and place a lien on the property for the cost of demolition. A motion to declare the

property blighted was made by Jennifer Mikolajczyk. Motion was seconded by Randy Isenberg. Motion passed unanimously.

**1828 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

Owner: Flora J. Campbell (West)  
 112 Hopewell Drive  
 Altoona, PA 16602

Property is vacant and in substandard condition not suitable for rehabilitation. Property was submitted to the Blighted Property Demo Program on January 18, 2017. Owner has not responded to the raze/repair notice issued June 3, 2016. Owner had not been located until recently and all mail was being sent and posted to the 1828 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue address. All utilities were turned off in 2016, but the property has been vacant for years. Exterior is in bad condition with holes in the siding/walls, foundation is deteriorating and the roof has multiple holes. Windows are broken and/or missing. Taxes outstanding for 2015 totaling \$425.21. The City will demolish the structure under the 2009 International Property Maintenance Code and place a lien on the property for the cost of demolition. A motion was made to declare the property blighted by Randy Isenberg and seconded by Dave Albright. Motion passed unanimously.

**BLAIR COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**7. DISCUSSION AND EXERCISE**

At this time the regular meeting adjourned and the Altoona City Planning Commission reconvened at the Logan Township Building where a joint meeting was held to develop a response for the county comprehensive plan. Each planning commissioner was asked to respond in writing to a series of questions. The written answers were compared for patterns and priorities. The responses from the two groups are as follows:

Question 1

What makes Blair County different than other places? What makes it special?

City	Township
Access to a wide variety of activities	Varied land uses
Access to a transportation network	Low cost of living
Great water	Attractions – parks, state and private
Railroad history	Activities – Altoona Curve, Canoe Creek, State
People	Game Lands
Population and Agriculture	Education – Penn State Altoona
Population is a melting pot of cultural diversity	A lot of water
Low crime	Small business development
Ability to work together	Good schools
Land features – ridges and valleys	Good healthcare
Water quality	

Question 2

What are the core values of Blair County?

City	Township
Pride	Family first
Family	Family
Family / friends	Family
Family values	Community Involvement
Loyalty to the region	Religious
Independence	Education
	Status Quo
	Workers

Question 3

What must Blair County preserve and/or improve upon to make it stronger?

City	Township
Preserve law and order – safety	Sustainable employment
Good water	Teen rec centers / skate park
Marketing	Professional jobs
Money – make Blair stronger	Attract employment opportunity (better pay) –
Must sell itself to outside world (ie. Outdoors, water)	without disruption of natural beauty
Opportunities for all segments of population	Quality employment
Preserve recreational access	Continue positive education
Improve urban life	Bring in good jobs
	Fight blight
	Retaining talent
	Promoting Penn State Altoona

Question 4

Talking about the status quo in Blair County, do you think that the County needs to maintain its course, make a minor course correction, or a major course correction?

City	Township
Minor	Minor
Minor	Minor
Major	Minor
Major – we need to improve the ___ of our area.	Major
Major – we are losing population and the mean income is \$51,000	Major
	Major
	Major – in small bits

Scenario 1

Comments:

This just meets the status quo.

Not good jobs.

It would re-use a vacant building.

If we didn't give the tax credit, someone else would.

Vote:

Do it – 4

Don't do it - 7

## **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

### **8. Planning Report**

- a. Grantmanship activities (CDBG, HOME) – Public Hearing scheduled for February 8, 2017 for CDBG to talk about how to spend the money next year.
- b. Shade Tree Commission report – No meeting last month.
- c. Zoning Hearing Board report – One case this month, a request to put in a triplex where there is currently a duplex.
- d. GAEDC Report – Mr. Slusser stated that Barbara Wiens-Tuers was our representative so we are in need of a new representative, Randy Isenberg volunteered.
- e. Blair County Commission Report – Key function at present is developing the *Areawide Comprehensive Plan for Blair County*.

### **9. Commissioner's Forum – Nothing to report**

### **10. Questions from the Media and Public - None**

### **11. ADJOURN MEETING ADJOURNED AT 3:45 P.M.**

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Signed: Bob Gutshall, Acting Secretary