

CITY OF OSKALOOSA
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 3, 2022

A regular meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. by vice chair Pamela Blomgren at 220 South Market Street, Oskaloosa, Iowa.

1. Roll Call

Present: Pamela Blomgren, Brant Champoux, Andrew Gemmell, Scott Moore, Linda Russell

Absent: R.D Keep, Robb Beane

Staff: Shawn Christ and Sean Murphy

Others: Jerry Slobe, Loren & Lois Bolkema, Tom Flaherty, and Brant Bollman (in-person), and Charlie Cowell (electronically via Zoom)

- 2. Approval of the Minutes.** It was moved by Moore, seconded by Russell, to approve the April 5, 2022 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

- 3. Citizens to be Heard.** None

4. Street and Alley Vacations

- A. Consider a request to authorize the vacation and sale of the 133 foot by 16.5 foot section of the north-south alley adjacent to 308 North 5th Street.

Staff received an alley vacate request from Kyle Veenstra, 308 North 5th Street, for the 66.5 foot by 16.5-foot east-west alley adjacent to the property. Mr. Veenstra would like to purchase the land to expand his backyard. While contacting property owners regarding the application, Timmy Crook, 609 B Avenue East, requested that the city also vacate an additional 66.5 feet of the aforementioned alley to the right of way along the south edge of his property. That request is also included in this alley vacate. Three (3) property owners were surveyed for this request, of which one (1) response was received. The responding property owner, Timmy Crook, indicated he is in favor of vacating the alley, and would like to purchase his portion of said alley and to extend the vacate area as described. It was moved by Moore, seconded by Champoux, to recommend approval of the alley vacate. By roll call vote, all ayes, motion carried unanimously.

- B. Consider a request to authorize the vacation and sale of the 120 foot by 16.5 foot section of the east-west alley adjacent to 209 North A Street.

Staff received an alley vacate request from Loren and Lois Bolkema, 209 North A Street, for the 120 foot by 16.5 foot east-west alley adjacent to their property. They indicated they have been maintaining the alley and would like to own it. This alley is located in a Commercial (UC) zoning district, but the owners have requested that the city vacate this alley as a residential alley since they have a residential use. City staff conducted a survey of property owners with direct access to the alley and utility companies. Four (4) property owners were surveyed for this request, of which three (3) responses were received. One of the responding property owners was not opposed to vacating the alley, and two (2) were opposed to the vacation. Jerry Slobe owns the property at 209 A Avenue West and indicated all 3 of the businesses in the property require both the east/west and north/south alley for pick up and deliveries related to

their businesses. The Two Timbers Church of Christ at 206 North B Street was also opposed due to the alleys seeing frequent use by their building. Both opposed owners indicated the subject alley is used by sanitation trucks to empty dumpsters, and for snow removal. It was moved by Russell, seconded by Moore, to recommend approval of the alley vacate as requested as a residential alley and to allow discussion.

Russell commented it could be a problem getting large trucks in and out due to the businesses. Trash pickup locations, alley surfacing, and snow removal responsibility were discussed. Jerry Slobe, 2475 Osburn Avenue, who owns 209 A Avenue West, stated alley snow removal has been a problem in the past so he cleared snow near his part this year. Mr. Slobe further stated eastbound traffic and garbage trucks can't make the turn northward, and the owner of the apartment house also wants to vacate his share, which would create a larger problem and hurt property values. Mr. Slobe submitted a signed petition from his tenants and from a representative of Two Timbers Church of Christ to not close or sell any alleys due to customers, deliveries, garbage trucks, and snow removal. Loren Bolkema, owner of 209 North A Street, stated he and his wife Lois were aware the city was vacating alleys and this looked like a great opportunity. Mr. Bolkema stated there isn't much traffic or activity on the alley. Trash pickup, deliveries, and customers go elsewhere, and they can make arrangements with Mr. Slobe on snow removal.

Vice chair Blomgren asked about precedence being set by vacating an alley in a commercial area but with a residential rate. Sean Murphy stated it's his understanding Council cannot make modifications from the adopted fee schedule, but past interpretations may have differed based on zoning or building use. Blomgren asked about traffic counts or usage data and Sean Murphy stated he doesn't have any data on alleys except for requests to the city for rock or repairs. Russell stated there are utilities present and companies would need access. Sean Murphy added the property owner at 211 later responded that they were in opposition, due primarily to snow removal.

Following further discussion and by roll call vote, all noes, motion lost unanimously.

5. **Reports**

- A. **Presentation and progress update from RDG on the PlanOskey Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code project.** RDG project manager Charlie Cowell provided an update and detailed presentation to commissioners on current progress and next steps for the comprehensive plan and zoning code update. Cowell answered questions from Blomgren regarding owner and arts involvement. Christ stated Tom Flaherty and Brant Bollman in the audience are part of the advisory committee and project supporters. Following discussion, Blomgren thanked Charlie for his work and there was no further action taken.

6. **Miscellaneous Business.** None.

7. **Adjournment.** With no other items for discussion, it was moved by Moore, seconded by Gemmell, to adjourn at 5:22 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.