

Altoona Board of Adjustment Hearing – June 2, 2015 – 6:30 PM

Altoona City Hall

Members Present – John Rullman, Robert Hall, Mary Simon, Lea Morris

Members absent – Dale Sikes

Staff Present – John Shaw, Chad Quick, Susi Hoots

Others Present – Daniel Ryan, Jane Ryan, Karen Schiernbeck, Vernon Schiernbeck, Mary Eastman, Marcus Thompson, Pat Thompson, Mandie Heggen, Randy Buck, Marsha Olinghouse, Mark Olinghouse, Eric Borseth, Rick Carlson

Chairman Rullman called hearing to order at 6:30 p.m.

Member Sikes arrived at 6:32 p.m.

#1 Consider a request for variance from Daniel and Jane Ryan for their property at 310 9th Avenue Circle SW, Altoona, Iowa. They are seeking a 19-foot rear yard variance, decreasing the rear yard setback from 35 feet to 16 feet, to allow them to construct an enclosed sunroom porch on the rear (west) side of the home. The property is zoned R-2 (One and Two-family Residential) and the minimum allowed rear yard setback in this district is 35 feet.

Daniel and Jane Ryan, 310 9th Avenue Circle SW, Altoona, presented the request by saying they live on a circle and the lot has extreme angles. By today's standards the lot would not qualify as a lot. They are limited by the shape of the lot and need a variance to add to the house.

Rullman said he is familiar with the area.

Sikes said this request was discussed at the last meeting of this board. The house could not fit onto this lot as zoning is not met. Sikes asked if a variance was granted to the house to the south of this one. Shaw and Quick responded that yes, a variance was granted to 306 9th Avenue Circle SW in 1994. Shaw stated that all lots on this cul-de-sac are extremely shallow. Sikes and Rullman mentioned that a variance request for an addition to a garage two doors away was denied. Mr. Ryan said their addition would not come close to being as near the rear lot line as the one next door.

Hall asked if the proposed sunroom is the same size as the existing deck. Mr. Ryan stated the room will be smaller than the deck.

Randy Buck, 311 9th Avenue Circle SW, Altoona, Iowa, addressed the Board to state he has no objections to the variance and thinks it is a "good thing".

Rullman stated the hardship was established in the last meeting.

Morris pointed out that there is a bike path and city green space and creek behind the lot and no neighbors would be impacted. Mr. Ryan stated the creek area brush etc needs attention.

Hall moved to approve the variance request as presented. Seconded by Morris. Vote: Yes – Hall, Morris, Sikes, Rullman, Simon. No – None.

#2 Consider a request for variance from Karen Schiernbeck for property owned by Mandie Heggen at 107 7th Street SW, Altoona, Iowa. Ms. Schiernbeck is seeking a six-foot front yard variance along the 2nd Avenue SW frontage, decreasing the front yard setback from 30 feet to 24 feet. She is proposing to buy the lot and move an existing home onto the lot. The home is wider than the allowable building envelope. The property is zoned R-2 (One and Two-family Residential)

Karen Schiernbeck, 400 3rd Avenue SE, Altoona, Iowa, presented the request by explaining she is seeking to purchase the house at 500 1st Avenue S that was built in 1895. Her goal is to move the house to this lot, add a basement, and restore the home. The lot is close in proximity to the house to be moved and to other historic homes. The house would fit in with other homes in the area.

Sikes asked about other homes this age. Shaw mentioned several other homes of this age.

Rullman asked about other homes in the area of this lot that do not meet the zoning setbacks. Schiernbeck pointed out several other houses in the area on an aerial photo that do not comply with current setback requirements. Schiernbeck said she assumes the houses were constructed before the zoning requirement. Schiernbeck continued by saying Mandie Heggen owns the vacant lot and the rental house next door and they have discussed Schiernbeck's intentions. The Schiernbecks live near Haines Park now and would like to stay in a similar area.

Hall asked if the house would be used as a family home. Schiernbeck answered that their goal is to restore the house and live in it.

Rullman said he looked at the house and lot and questioned the south-side porch. Schiernbeck said the porch would be removed and would not be relocated to this lot.

Sikes said the house's appearance would improve with restoration.

Rullman asked if there is a plan for the vacant lot that would result upon the relocation of the house from 500 1st Avenue S.

Sikes said 107 7th Street SW is one of only a few vacant lots in Old Town.

Simon asked about the existing trees on the lot. Schiernbeck said one of the trees will have to go.

Morris asked what had been done in the past with other lots. Sikes said the only ones that have been addressed by the Board are in Old Town as the lots are smaller than the new lots. Quick mentioned that new lots are a minimum of 85 feet wide.

Hall said the character and design of this house would fit on this Old Town lot. Sikes mentioned that this house would not "fit" in a new area and a new house would not "fit" on this lot.

Mary Eastman, 903 4th Avenue SE, Altoona, Iowa, addressed the Board to say the house is unique and it would be a shame to not preserve the house and acknowledged it will require a lot of work.

Sikes moved to approve the variance request as presented. Seconded by Hall. Vote: Yes: Sikes, Hall, Simon, Morris, Rullman. No: None.

Marsha Olinghouse, 1013 NE Fountainview Drive, Ankeny, Iowa, addressed the Board to say her business is at 504 1st Avenue S. They acquired the house when they purchased the business building. Olinghouse said she does not think a contractor would give the house the care and interest that the Schiernbecks will. Olinghouse said she would like to construct a structure to store office furniture and a small office on the resulting vacant lot, but the property is not zoned for that purpose.

#3. Consider a request for a conditional use permit from Integrated Construction, LLC for three properties owned by Jon Ackelson and known as 203 1st Street East, Altoona, Iowa. The properties are zoned C-4 (Village Commercial). Integrated Construction is proposing to purchase the Ackelson properties and use them as an office and indoor storage for their own business use of commercial framing and drywall. Their business hours are proposed to be 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. They are proposing to only use the western two buildings in the business. Chapter 168.10(3) lists permitted conditional uses of the C-4 zoning district.

Marcus Thompson and Pat Thompson of Integrated Construction, 2915 East 38th Street, Des Moines, Iowa, presented the request by saying they are a commercial construction drywall-frame company and wish to purchase the buildings for office space and tool storage. Most supplies are delivered direct to the job site. The only supplies/building materials stored at this location would be excess job leftovers. They currently have eight employees that usually go directly to the jobsite and not to the office. If employees come to this address, they will park in the spaces available.

Hall asked about the third building. The Thompsons said they plan to use two buildings and rent out the third building. Shaw said that the third building tenant could have any type of use permitted in a C-4 zoned area. Any other proposed use would require an application for a conditional use permit.

Rullman asked if Integrated Construction would consider using the third building and if the property has been purchased. The Thompsons said the purchase of the property is in negotiation and they would like to eventually grow into the third building.

Sikes said this conditional use permit, if granted, will apply only to the first two buildings. If the company grows into the third building, they would have to come back for another conditional use permit. Shaw pointed out that if a conditional use permit was approved for all three buildings at this time, the third building could not be rented to anyone else.

Eric Borseth, Borseth Properties Ltd., 111 2nd Street SE, Altoona, Iowa, addressed the Board. Mr. Borseth said he would like information on traffic associated with this business: the type of vehicles, delivery vehicles, frequency, routes used, etc.

The Thompsons said their experience indicates there is more traffic with the current business at this location than there will be with their business. There are currently eight employees using the buildings every day. The Thompsons will have only two employees on site. There will be no shipping and receiving. The vehicles used in their business are standard road pickups, no semis.

Borseth asked how the two buildings will be used. The Thompsons said the first building will be utilized as an office and the second building for storage of tools. They currently have a 30 foot by 65 foot building for tool storage and it is full.

Rullman asked where their work vehicles will be stored. Marcus Thompson said they will be inside the building. Shaw pointed out that all tools and vehicles considered tools i.e. loaders, mixers, trailers, etc are required to be stored in side.

Morris moved to approve the Conditional Use Permit request. Seconded by Simon. Vote: Yes – Morris, Simon, Rullman, Hall, Sikes. No – None.

#4. Morris moved to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2015 hearing as presented. Seconded by Sikes. Vote: Yes – Morris, Sikes, Simon, Hall. Pass – Rullman. No – None.

#5. Next meeting/hearing will be Tuesday, July 7, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. if needed.

Hearing Adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susi Hoots
Community Development Administrative Coordinator