

City of Ashton Minutes Planning and Zoning Commission

**Thursday, February 20, 2025
7:00 p.m.**

In Attendance: Audrey Tibbitts, Trena Howell and Dallas Hill.

Also, in Attendance: Administrator Sara Bowersox & City Clerk Cathy Stegelmeier.

Audrey Tibbitts conducted the meeting and welcomed everyone at 7:01 pm.

1. Approve Minutes from January 16, 2025: ACTION ITEM

Chairperson Tibbitts asked the commission if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes. Hearing none the minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Administrator's Report – Sara Bowersox

Administrator Bowersox had not had any conversation about the comprehensive plan with Great Western since the last meeting. The city clerk had received something so the administrator started the next agenda item and turned the time over to City Clerk Stegelmeier.

3. Comprehensive Plan Discussion (w/ Great West Engineering)

City Clerk Stegelmeier had just received a bill from GWE for this last month. The amount was \$10,600.00 for the work that they have done so far. Commissioner Hill asked if the amount came in above or below the amount that would be expected? City Clerk Stegelmeier told the commission that it is what you would expect for that many hours. It is \$40 per hour for a senior planner. The commission discussed the things that were to be sent to GWE, such as photos that represent Ashton. They feel that the more photos that they can give to GWE the more options they will have to personalize Ashton. The commission will email Deputy Clerk Warnke with photos and the feedback that they were to get. Then she will send the photos and information on to GWE.

4. Area of Impact Area Discussion

a. Expected areas to grow

Administrator Bowersox told the commission that two important things that she thinks that the county wants to know are, where do we expect the city limits of Ashton to grow in the next 5, 10, 20 years. The commission has agreed that if highway 20 is going to be where highway 20 is eventually going to be, that it is in the best interest of the city of Ashton for the city limits to grow to the west to meet the highway. She feels that the Ashton comprehensive plan needs to reflect that. The new state law says that the cities and the counties must revisit their areas of impact every five years. What she sees happening based on conversations that she has been part of is that the county wants to know what Ashton would call the area of impact. In her opinion, she thinks that on the west side of town, the area of impact would go out a mile, probably mostly along what is now 1300 N. but would at the point in time when ITD does what it's going to do, that's going to change and become highway 47. Then, back away from the road, however many feet, but not necessarily the full length of what is the city limits now, all the way out a mile. She also feels that it would be good to keep the area of impact on the east side to the intersection with highway 32 for the same reason. Something commercial is going to want to come to that

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intersection. The people that own it right now say that it will never happen in 5, 10, 20 years but when something commercial wants to be there, in her opinion, the City of Ashton would want it to be in that location. She also suggested to scale back and not go as far south down Highway 32. The commission also wanted to shorten the areas going east of highway 32 and going north on county road 3600 E. Commissioner Howell believes that some of the property owners to the west are already anticipating this and does not believe that there would be a lot of resistance to annexation. Earlier in the meeting there was a question asked about if the city would be obligated to grow in the areas that will be identified as the new Area of Impact. The administrator explained that in five years from now, we still have not annexed any part of that area, then the county is going to come to the city and ask if they are sure that the city needs all this area of impact? At that time, the two entities may decide to scale back the city's impact areas.

Commissioner Tibbitts thinks that when the new areas of impact are designated then it will signal to the property owners that the city expects growth. Administrator Bowersox answered, saying, if a property owner outside the city limits, but who touches the city limits, decides they want to do some development, whether it's a residential subdivision or a little commercial shopping center. If their property is touching the city limits today and they want to do some development, she believes the city and the county both would tell that property owner, you need to get annexed into the city before you do your development. Commissioner Hill asked if there had been any annexations in the last 5 to 20 years. The administrator informed him that there have been annexations, but they have all been at the request of the property owners. Mr. Hill then asked if the city is required to have an area of impact at all? And if we are not required to have an area of impact, what consequences would it have negatively if we do not have one and just went with a situation where a development is coming in and we're going to approach it at that moment. The administrator does not think that there is a hard and fast penalty anywhere but, what you run into is, if you don't have an area of impact, you let the county just apply standard county zones right up to your city limit without any kind of conversation between the city and the county about what's appropriate there. Then you are going to end up with the zone right next to the city limit that says you can only have one lot for every five acres, right? That is too big for a lot in Ashton. The minimum lot size inside the city of Ashton is six thousand square feet, so you want to get the county to put zones close to your city that are more appropriate for your city. Without an area of impact, the county property owners are limited to one lot per five acres but, within an area of impact a property owner could have however many six thousand square foot lots they could get on their property. City Clerk Stegelmeier pointed out that if a property does not touch a city boundary, then they cannot be annexed without the property between them and the city being annexed as well. Commissioner Tibbitts voiced her thoughts about working with the county to choose the area of impact the city feels is most beneficial, most likely to grow, and not forcing annexation. She liked Mr. Hill's point of "do we want to encourage farmland to become something else, or do we want to just let it happen organically? She also wondered what the citizens surrounding our city would appreciate the commission taking into consideration. The administrator said that the point of the area of impact is to project that this is the area that we think eventually may get annexed into the city and to make sure that it is not a surprise to people. So Commissioner Howell shared her thoughts with the commission. She has been thinking about this. We want this area of impact to lead out to where the whole highway is proposed by ITD to be. She is thinking that we want that road to be an artery to bring people into town. There are already lots of residents on the north side of that road and a few on the south side of that road. Is there a way to encourage more commercial type businesses along the road that will lead to the highway. The administrator told the commission that you direct the development by the type of zone you place in the different areas.

b. Compare County Zones to Ashton Zones

The administrator handed out a copy of the table that she had made comparing the county zones to the city zones. She then went on to say that the current area of impact around Ashton is a mile all the way around the city. Where the city area of impact is on the west right now is already a mile out there. So, except for the fact that we would like to grow to where the highway will be, we do not want to stop just on the east side of the highway. It would be beneficial to go a block to the west of the highway. The city might need a little more than a mile out there eventually. We are not looking to increase any portion of our area of impact right now. We will keep what we have got out there and pull back in a few other places like what was discussed earlier. The

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commission discussed where they would suggest having the best commercial areas in the impact area. They looked at the table that the administrator prepared for what the city zones are and what the county zones are. In her analysis this list of county zones is the closest to the city zones. She gave the commission the assignment to look over the table to see if they agree with her analysis or if they think something different. She will send the link to the county rules on the county code to the city clerk and she will forward it on to the commission. She then explained how to navigate the website. The county is going to need to pass a new ordinance, or some new ordinances, that say, from this point forward, we are changing the zones in this area of impact, from the city of Ashton zones to county zones. The county wants to put zones there that make sense to this. The county is even willing to create a new and unique zone if there is no county zone that satisfies what the city thinks should be right there.

- **Schedule next Meeting**

The next meeting will be scheduled for March 20, 2025

Minutes respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Jan Warnke