

**Minutes of Meeting
Newton Planning and Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting
February 21, 2023**

ROLL CALL: Board members present: Holschuh, Johnson, Poynter, Van Gilder (5:02 PM), Woody
Board members absent: Cantu
STAFF PRESENT: Erin Chambers, Community Development Director

A quorum being present, Chair Woody called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Minutes. Minutes of the previous meeting of November 22, 2022 were reviewed. **Motion** by Poynter, **seconded** by Johnson to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as written. **Voice vote**, approved 4-0.

Van Gilder joins meeting (5:02 PM)

Public Hearing.

1. AV23-1: N-S alley vacation (south half) located in the 600 block of North 8th Avenue East. Believers in Grace Church, applicant.

Chambers reviewed the prepared staff report. The proposal is to vacate the southern portion of the N-S alley along the west side of Believers in Grace Church at 813 East 7th Street North. The motivation behind the request is to support a parking lot improvement project at the church.

Kenny Lamb, 815 East 7th Street North, stated that he initially signed the church's application in support of the proposal, but has since decided he is not okay with the alley vacation. He doesn't think the north access to the alley is as good and has concerns regarding emergency vehicle access.

Chair Woody asked staff that if vacated, could a fence or other block be installed? Staff responded, "yes." Once vacated, it becomes incorporated into the private property.

Joe Carmichael, 825 East 7th Street North, stated that he agreed with Mr. Lamb. The north end of the alley is narrow due to the location of utility pole. He utilizes the alley for pulling his camper. He worries about people using backyards for turning around.

Casey Lamb, 815 East 7th Street North, stated her main concern was for emergency vehicles.

Sam Huff, 830 East 6th Street North noted the location of the utility pole and narrow nature of the north end of the alley. He was concerned about people using back yards for turning around.

Bob Raymock, 606 North 8th Avenue East, wondered why it was necessary to vacate the alley. Community Development Director Chambers stated that this is the first step in determining what the parking lot project layout will be.

Pastor Steve Doane, Believers in Grace Church, 813 East 7th Street North, thanked the neighbors for coming out to the meeting. He stated that the current parking lot is mostly gravel and they are wanting to reduce that. It was suggested by staff to try for the alley vacation as part of the planning process. He then reviewed some traffic issues the property experiences, such as traffic cut-throughs. The church is seeking solutions, but if the alley vacation isn't approved, they now know how to proceed.

Commissioner Johnson asked about on-street parking. Pastor Doane stated that there is very limited on-street parking. Some on the east side of the church.

Commission Johnson asked about membership and whether it was possible that they would outgrow the location. Pastor Doane stated that they church has been in this location for 80 years, but it might be possible they would outgrow the building.

Motion by Poynter, **seconded** by Holschuh to close the public hearing. Roll Call Vote: 5-0, approved.

Discussion by the commissioners regarding the alley vacation. Commissioners Johnson and Van Gilder felt that a partial alley vacation is not a wise idea at this time.

Motion by Van Gilder to deny the alley vacation in the 600 block of North 8th Avenue East, **seconded** by Poynter. Roll Call Vote: 5-0, approved.

Old Business. None.

New Business.

1. Election of Officers

Noting the absence of Commissioner Cantu, the commission decided to postpone election of officers to next meeting.

Motion by Holschuh, **seconded** by Johnson to postpone election of officers to next meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission. Voice vote: 5-0, approved.

Motion by Poynter to adjourn the meeting, **seconded** by Johnson. **Voice vote**, approved 5-0. Meeting was adjourned at 5:36 PM.