

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: March 19, 2020

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Urbana City Building
Council Chambers
400 South Vine Street
Urbana, IL 61801

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Billman, Andrew Fell, Tyler Fitch, Chenxi Yu

MEMBERS ATTENDING

REMOTELY: Lew Hopkins, Jonah Weisskopf

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dustin Allred

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin Garcia, Planner II; Katherine Trotter, Associate Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: Jim Heimbürger, Mr. O'Hara

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Fitch called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call was taken, and there was a quorum.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 5, 2020 regular Plan Commission meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Fell moved that the Plan Commission approve the minutes as written. Ms. Yu seconded the motion.

Mr. Fitch noticed a typo on Page 5, 3rd Paragraph, 6th Sentence. It should read as such, "Mr. Hopkins added that the Plan Commission would be doing nothing at this meeting other than ...".

The minutes were approved by unanimous vote as amended.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

- Email from Peoria Charter Bus Company regarding Plan Case No. 2397-SU-20 that was withdrawn after the owner spoke to and was informed by the Planning staff that the application was to allow a cannabis craft grower use, not a cannabis dispensary.

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 2397-SU-20 – A request by Tamala Green, on behalf of Champaign Social Equity Growers, for a Special Use Permit to allow a craft grower cannabis business at 1906 Federal Drive in the IN-1, Light Industrial/Office Zoning District.

Chair Fitch opened the public hearing for this case. Katherine Trotter, Associate Planner, presented the staff report to the Plan Commission. She began by stating the purpose for the special use permit request and noting that Byron Clark and the applicant's project team were tuned in remotely to answer any questions that the Plan Commission may have. She gave a brief description of the proposed site and surrounding properties, noting their current zoning and uses. She showed photos that were taken on March 5, 2020 of the existing building and parking lot at the proposed site. She discussed the proposed use. She showed the Site Plan and perspective views of the subject property while she reviewed the requirements for a Special Use Permit according to Section VII-4.A of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance. She read the options of the Urbana Plan Commission and presented staff's recommendation for approval including the following condition:

- The use generally conforms to the site plan submitted in Exhibit C.

Chair Fitch asked if any members of the Plan Commission had questions for City staff.

Mr. Fell asked how many total square feet the existing building and proposed expansion would be. Ms. Trotter stated that the proposed addition would be 16,000 square feet.

Mr. Fell asked if the Plan Commission had the responsibility to provide comments on the plan or were they only to review the ability to approve the special use permit request. Kevin Garcia, Planner II, stated that the proposed request is for the special use permit, not the building plans.

Mr. Fell asked how many feet the subject property is from the nearest residential lot. Ms. Trotter stated that according to Geographical Information System (GIS), it is 298 feet. Mr. Garcia added that City staff is beholden to the quality of the GIS data, which is pretty accurate.

With no further questions for City staff, Chair Fitch opened the case for public input. He summarized the procedure for a public hearing. He invited the applicant to speak remotely.

Tamala Green, applicant, spoke on behalf of her proposed request for a special use permit. She stated that she is the Managing Member of the company. She thanked the City staff for working with them and for showing support by helping them through the application process. It has helped them to submit a quality application to the State of Illinois. She did not have additional information to add as City staff gave an informative presentation.

Jim Heimbürger approached the Plan Commission to speak. He asked if the applicant would be growing the cannabis inside the building. Chair Fitch said yes.

Mr. Heimbürger asked about the distribution of the cannabis from the proposed facility. Ms. Trotter replied that the cannabis grown at the proposed facility would not be sold to individual clients, but rather picked up and brought to cannabis dispensaries, likely in the area, and sold from the dispensaries.

Mr. Heimbürger asked about security for people who attend church nearby. Ms. Trotter stated that the distributors picking up the cannabis would do so in trucks during hours designated for pickup times. The proposed facility would be fenced and secured with armed guards 24 hours a day. She asked the applicant to speak more on the topic of security.

Byron Clark, on behalf of the applicant, stated that they would be working with FE Moran for security on the site. They would be following FE Moran's direction on security; however, most often the cannabis would be shipped out rather than picked up. As for the procedures at the gate, they are going to try to make it as inconspicuous and uninvasive as possible with regards to public interaction. They would be dealing with bulk dispensaries so it would minimize any traffic.

Mr. Heimbürger asked if they would have employees parking on the street. He has large farm equipment he drives down the street to get to his property, and sometimes it is difficult with parking from Canteen overflowing onto the street. Mr. Clark stated that their employees would be parking in the existing parking lot on the site.

Mr. Heimbürger wondered if they started growing cannabis by seed or by plants. He only asked because it may increase the amount of traffic coming in to the site. Mr. Clark stated that is internal information; however, he reassured Mr. Heimbürger that they do not anticipate much incoming traffic. They will do everything they can in terms of growing and production to minimize incoming traffic.

Mr. Heimbürger asked if they planned to sell the cannabis 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week. Mr. Clark said no. They anticipated having regular business hours.

Mr. Heimbürger asked why they need a facility to grow cannabis in the City of Urbana. Mr. Clark stated that it is about supply and demand economics. There is a demand for cannabis, and it is a legal and legitimate business. Chair Fitch added that dispensaries are required by the State of Illinois to buy cannabis from a licensed grower. The applicant is a licensed grower and will sell the cannabis they grow to licensed dispensaries, who will then sell it to individuals.

Mr. Heimbürger asked if the applicant is required to sell their product to a local dispensary or can they sell it to dispensaries outside of the area. Mr. Garcia explained that there are rules in the Illinois State Act that say how close you can sell your product. The rules vary depending on the population in the surrounding area of a grower. If the applicant wanted to sell to a dispensary in another area located several counties away, his understanding is that they would have to use a dedicated cannabis transporter, which is different type of business licensed separately by the State.

Mr. Heimbürger asked if the City staff received any response from the church. Ms. Trotter said no.

Mr. O'Hara spoke to the Plan Commission remotely. He said he knows the area and the demographics, and because it is a dead end, it is difficult for traffic to maneuver. He said the applicant also said that the facility would be inconspicuous but that they would have armed guards and security, so he asked which is it ... inconspicuous or out in the open? Mr. Clark replied that the security surveillance would be inconspicuous on the outside, and the guards would be inside the facility. Chair Fitch noted that the Plan Commission just reviewed and recommended approval for a case that would construct a road to connect to Federal Drive in the near future. Mr. Garcia added that the future street would be coming off Oak Street through the future Union Gardens development and connect to Federal Drive.

With there being no further input, Chair Fitch closed the public input and opened the hearing for Plan Commission discussion and/or motion(s).

None of the Plan Commission members had input or concerns to share.

Ms. Billman moved that the Plan Commission forward Plan Case No. 2397-SU-20 to the City Council with a recommendation for approval. Ms. Yu seconded the motion.

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes	Mr. Weisskopf	-	Yes
Ms. Yu	-	Yes	Ms. Billman	-	Yes
Mr. Fell	-	Yes	Mr. Fitch	-	Yes

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Garcia noted that the case would be forwarded to the City Council on April 13, 2020.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

There was none.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Garcia, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission