

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: April 19, 2018

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Barry Ackerson, Jane Billman, Andrew Fell, Tyler Fitch, Lew Hopkins, David Trail, Daniel Turner, Chenxi Yu

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Nancy Esarey Ouedraogo

STAFF PRESENT: Lorrie Pearson, Planning Manager; Teri Andel, Administrative Assistant II

OTHERS PRESENT: Brad Joseph, Christopher Oswald

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 a quorum of the members was declared present.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the April 5, 2018 regular and special Plan Commission meetings were presented for approval. Mr. Turner moved that both sets of minutes be approved as written. Mr. Trail seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as written by unanimous voice vote.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 2331-T-18 – A request by the Urbana Zoning Administrator to amend the Urbana Zoning Ordinance to modify who may submit an application for various permits and approvals.

Chair Fitch stated that this case was continued to the May 10, 2018 meeting.

Plan Case No. 2339-T-18 – A request by the Urbana Zoning Administrator to amend the Urbana Zoning Ordinance to combine the Mixed-Office-Residential (MOR) Development Review Board and the Design Review Board.

Chair Fitch opened the public hearing for this case.

Lorrie Pearson, Planning Manager, presented the staff report for the case. She began by giving brief histories of the MOR Development Review Board and of the Design Review Board. She discussed the following changes:

- Membership of the Proposed Consolidated Board
 - Current Design Review Board
 - Current MOR Development Review Board
 - Proposed Membership of a Combined Board

Mr. Ackerson questioned why City staff proposed a board of seven members and two alternatives rather than a nine-person board. Ms. Pearson answered that most boards have seven members. In addition, a seven member board would require four members to attend to have a quorum instead of five for a nine member board. The existing two boards do not meet very often and getting a quorum has often been an issue. Having two alternates who do not count towards getting a quorum unless they participate.

Chair Fitch asked if the intention was to have three of the members represent one of the four interests. Ms. Pearson replied that was the intention.

Mr. Fell wondered if two developers wanted to serve on the board. Ms. Pearson explained that a second developer could serve on the board if they also could represent a district by living inside or within 250 feet or be an owner of a local business with fewer than 40 employees. The original idea when the existing boards were created was to have a balance of residents and those that represent the other interests (such as developer).

Mr. Fell questioned if an architect from the extra territorial jurisdiction area (ETJ) could serve on the proposed board. Ms. Pearson noted that the architect and the developer members are not limited to Urbana residencies.

Mr. Turner asked when the two existing boards meet. Ms. Pearson stated that each board meets at least one annual meeting per year and on an as needed basis when there are applications to review.

Mr. Trail felt it was strange to have a mandatory makeup of the boards. Has it been historically successful getting a balance from the current makeup? Ms. Pearson pointed out that the challenge with keeping members has not been with the four members (architect, developer, Plan Commission member and the Historic Preservation Commission member) who serve both boards. The difficulty has been with getting members who meet the requirements of the residents or business owner. The idea is to get representation of people who actually live or work in the neighborhood and know the character and feel of the existing architecture.

Mr. Trail wondered what the purpose was for each district. Do they have the same purpose? Ms. Pearson stated that the purpose and the guidelines are different for each district. Generally, the idea is to provide a review process for new developments, new additions or renovations to the outside of existing buildings to ensure that the designs are compatible with the neighborhood in which they are being proposed.

Mr. Trail questioned why the districts and boards were created. Ms. Pearson answered that one reason was because a project was constructed without any review that did not fit with the character of the neighborhood and created a negative reaction from the residents. Another reason might be the possibility that a structure could be torn down and replaced with a development that might not fit.

Mr. Trail stated that the districts and boards were created to be a tool to achieve something. Are they compatible enough to combine them? Ms. Pearson stated that the proposed text amendment only changes how things would be administered. Instead of having two different boards reviewing projects in three districts, there would only be one board with four members being the same as currently required on the existing two boards. There would be no shift in power and all three districts would continue to be represented. The proposed text amendment is a result of Mayoral direction.

Mr. Trail asked if the two boards were being combined to solve having difficulty in getting a quorum. Ms. Pearson said that the members of both boards requested that the two boards be combined. It would be easier from a procedural standpoint and increase efficiency.

Ms. Pearson continued with her presentation by discussing the following changes to the Zoning Ordinance:

- Current Section V-8 Additional Use Regulations in the MOR District re-organized into Section XI
- Proposed Section XI-12.D Officers to allow for a Chair and a Vice-Chair
- Proposed Sections XI-12.G.1-2 regarding exempt projects
 - Re-organize when a project is considered for exemption
 - Add single-family homes to the list of exemptions
 - Add projects in the East Urbana Overlay District involving existing and proposed local historic landmarks and properties within proposed or existing local historic districts to the list of exemptions
- Proposed Section XI-12.H.1-2

She concluded her presentation by asking for the Plan Commission's recommendation for approval of the proposed text amendment.

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

Mr. Hopkins asked if there were any spatial overlaps among the three districts. Ms. Pearson replied no. The districts do not overlap in any way.

Mr. Hopkins suggested that they do not include proposed historic landmarks or proposed historic districts. Ms. Pearson agreed.

Ms. Billman questioned what the difference is between a board and a commission. Ms. Pearson did not know.

With no further questions for City staff, Chair Fitch opened the hearing for public input. There was none. Chair Fitch closed the public input portion of the hearing and opened the hearing for Plan Commission discussion and/or motions.

Mr. Hopkins moved that the Plan Commission forward Case No. 2339-T-18 to the City Council with a recommendation for approval with the addition that the East Urbana Overlay District exemptions include any existing local historic landmarks and properties within an existing local historic district. Mr. Turner seconded the motion.

Mr. Fitch stated that when the East Urbana and the Lincoln-Busey Corridor Overlay Districts were created it was intended to preserve the character of the neighborhood by making sure that new developments are compatible from a design standpoint. He pointed out that the proposed text amendment is an administrative change.

Ms. Billman wondered if there was a down side to the proposed text amendment. Mr. Fitch did not believe so. One would have to understand the rules of all three districts.

Ms. Billman asked if the members of the two boards want the proposed change. Ms. Pearson replied that they have discussed the changes at two of their previous meetings and they want the changes. The only discussion that was held by the members was on how to get the language right so there would be representation from all three districts.

Mr. Turner wondered who would review to see if the three overlay districts and review board was effective. Ms. Pearson explained that it come through as a Mayoral and City Council priority. She felt it would be a significant project to do.

Mr. Ackerson commented that any time you can increase efficiency, it is a good thing as long as nothing important is lost. It makes more sense to have one board who would consistently review each district. He felt that one of the issues with not being able to get a quorum is there are too many commissions trying to do too little.

Chair Fitch pointed out a fourth district that would not fall under the review of the proposed board. It is the Southeast Design Review District. Review in that district is through a Special Use Permit.

Mr. Fell thanked City staff for recommending alternate members for the proposed board. As a professional architect, there were times when his clients needed to get review of their projects

done and the City could not get a quorum for two months. This delayed the projects for a year. So, alternates are a great idea.

Chair Fitch clarified the addition in the motion to read as such: *a project shall be exempt from review if it is a local historic landmark or a property within a local historic district.*

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Ms. Billman	-	Yes	Mr. Fell	-	Yes
Mr. Fitch	-	Yes	Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes
Mr. Trail	-	Yes	Mr. Turner	-	Yes
Ms. Yu	-	Yes	Mr. Ackerson	-	Yes

The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Ms. Pearson noted that this case would be forwarded to City Council in the near future. City staff would like to have members to fill the board prior to taking the Plan Commission’s recommendation to City Council.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

Highlights from the Citizen Planner Workshop

Ms. Pearson stated that there was a basic Planner 101 review regarding comprehensive planning, zoning ordinances and zoning maps that was held at the beginning of the workshop. Presenters pointed out how important it is to have an up-to-date comprehensive plan

Another presentation was on how there are different types of cases and how they each rely on a different standards or set of criteria. The presenters talked about how important it is for the board/commission to discuss those criteria during their deliberations, particularly how specific standards, criteria or findings of fact are met when making a motion. Doing this helps build a case should it ever need to go to court.

They talked about avoiding conflicts of interest by making sure that members are not having conversations with applicants. She appreciated the Plan Commission members forwarding

emails that they receive from the public to City staff so that it can be distributed to other members of the Commission.

Ms. Yu pointed out that during her orientation to the Plan Commission, Ms. Pearson had covered most of the information about conflicts of interest that was discussed at the workshop.

Ms. Billman asked how the training was paid. Ms. Pearson explained that each jurisdiction in Champaign County pays dues to the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission for services such as staff trainings and a board/commission training. The Citizen Planners Workshop was paid through the dues that the City of Urbana pays.

Mr. Turner reiterated the importance of each board and commission discussing the findings of facts when deliberating a case. He felt that the presenters got side tracked and did not get through all the information they planned to cover. Overall, he appreciated the training and thanked the City for an opportunity to attend.

Mr. Hopkins recalled that the Plan Commission is not formerly quasi-judicial, so they do not specifically state findings of fact in their motions due to Illinois state law. The Plan Commission even added language to their bylaws stating that the staff report constitutes the findings of the Commission.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorrie Pearson, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission