

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: April 22, 2021

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: City Council Chambers | Zoom Webinar

MEMBERS ATTENDING REMOTELY: Dustin Allred, Jane Billman, Andrew Fell, Lew Hopkins, Debarah McFarland, Chenxi Yu

MEMBER ATTENDING AT CITY BUILDING: Tyler Fitch

MEMBER EXCUSED: Jonah Weisskopf

STAFF PRESENT: City of Urbana (Host); Brianna Gaspar, UPTV Camera Operator, Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner; Lily Wilcock, Planner II; Kat Trotter, Planner I; Andrea Ruedi, Senior Advisor for Integrated Strategy Development; Scott Tess, Environmental Sustainability Manager

OTHERS ATTENDING REMOTELY: Cole Avis, Anne Anderson, Hossein Bagheri, Daniel Gaither, Kimberly Harden, Tom Herbert, Carl Hill, Donald Kaap, Lynnell Lacy, Kevin Modglin, Susan Monte, Julia Robinson, Mark Warner

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

Chair Fitch called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Roll call was taken, and there was a quorum of the members present.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 18, 2021 regular Plan Commission meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Fell moved that the Plan Commission approve the minutes as written. Ms. Billman seconded the motion.

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Mr. Allred	-	Yes	Ms. Billman	-	Yes
Mr. Fell	-	Yes	Mr. Fitch	-	Yes
Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes	Ms. McFarland	-	Yes
Ms. Yu	-	Yes			

The minutes were approved by a vote of 7 ayes and 0 nays.

NOTE: Chair Fitch introduced Debra McFarland as the newest member of the Plan Commission.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Correspondence received for Plan Case No. 2418-S-21:

- Email from Kimberly Harden
- Email from Donald Kaap, Lester Anderson, Moises Orozco and Dale Habeck

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 2419-CP-21 – A request by the Urbana Zoning Administrator to adopt the Champaign County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020 Update as an amendment to the 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan (as amended).

Chair Fitch opened the public hearing for Plan Case No. 2419-CP-21. Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner, presented the staff report to the Plan Commission. He began by explaining the purpose of the amendment, which is to allow the adoption of the new five-year update to the Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). He introduced Susan Monte, Planner at Champaign County Planning and Zoning.

Ms. Monte spoke to the Plan Commission and talked about the process for updating the HMP. She noted that updating the plan is important to keep the City of Urbana current and eligible for certain benefits. Local governments are required to address natural hazards such as tornados, flooding and severe thunderstorms. Most hazard mitigation plans also address man-made hazards. She shared a HAZUS model map showing the City of Urbana for the 100-year floodplain. The map shows buildings that could sustain damage. She stated that all of the hazard mitigation actions that were identified in the 2015 update were carefully examined and updated in the proposed amendment. She asked if any of the commission members had questions.

Mr. Fell noted that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) map is notoriously incorrect in its location of the 100-year floodplain. Do we use local survey information to establish the 100-year floodplain or do we rely on the FEMA map? Ms. Monte answered saying that the HMP relies on information collected by FEMA, the Illinois State Water Survey, the Illinois Floodplain maps and from local information as well. If there is a question about the 100-year floodplain boundary, there is a process in place that a person could challenge it. The 100-year Floodplain Map was updated in 2013.

Mr. Hopkins asked if the actions marked as “New” in the Status column indicated new actions that were not in the 2015 HMP amendment. Ms. Monte confirmed this. She noted that Appendix M shows the difference between the actions approved in 2015 and the new ones added for the proposed amendment. Mr. Hopkins stated that the “new” actions are the ones that the Plan Commission and City Council should focus on to make sure that the City should do them.

Mr. Hopkins asked what “Pending” in the Status column meant and what “Recommended for inclusion in a future list of capital projects” means. He felt Table 5-51: Prioritized Hazard Mitigation Actions for City of Urbana was important for the City Council to recognize that some people may consider this list to be actions that the City is committing to do. Ms. Monte recalled that “Pending” was assigned to new actions added in the 2015 amendment. Though those actions are not “new” in the proposed amendment, they are still pending.

Mr. Hopkins questioned the Transfer of Development Rights in the Boneyard Creekway. He was not aware of the City having this. Mr. Garcia confirmed that there is a small Transfer of Development rights for properties that are partially in the floodplain; however, he did not believe it had ever been used.

With there being no further questions for City or Champaign County staff, Chair Fitch opened the hearing for public input. There was none, so Chair Fitch closed the public input portion of the hearing. He then opened the hearing for Plan Commission discussion and/or motion(s).

Mr. Allred commented that the timing for updating the Hazard Mitigation Plan is perfect because the City of Urbana is in the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan. It will not only be adopted as an amendment to the existing Comprehensive Plan but will also have an impact on the content updated in the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Billman moved that the Plan Commission forward Case No. 2419-CP-21 to the Urbana City Council with a recommendation for approval. Mr. Allred seconded the motion.

Mr. Hopkins expressed confusion about whether they would be adopting an “element”, making an amendment, replacing an amendment, or replacing an element. With updating the Comprehensive Plan, it would be nice to have the wording be consistent. Chair Fitch stated that staff’s recommendation suggested the City adopt the plan as an element of the 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan, as amended. Mr. Hopkins suggested adding language to say that the proposed amendment replaces the 2015 Hazard Mitigation Plan. Mr. Garcia recommended using the term “amendment” rather than “element”.

The motion was that the Plan Commission forward Plan Case No. 2419-CP-21 to the City Council with a recommendation for approval of replacing the 2015 Champaign County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan with the proposed plan as an amendment to the 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan. Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes	Ms. McFarland	-	Yes
Ms. Yu	-	Yes	Mr. Allred	-	Yes
Ms. Billman	-	Yes	Mr. Fell	-	Yes
Mr. Fitch	-	Yes			

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Garcia noted that Plan Case No. 2419-CP-21 would be forwarded to the Committee of the Whole on May 3, 2021.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Plan Case No. 2418-S-21 – A request by Carl Hill and H. Alley Dooley for preliminary and final plat approval for the South Ridge VIII Subdivision.

Chair Fitch opened this item on the agenda. Kat Trotter, Planner I, presented the staff report for this case. She gave background information about the subject property. She shared maps showing the location, zoning and future land use designation of the subject property. She discussed the proposed request for a waiver from the Urbana Subdivision and Land Development Code to allow a street pavement width of 28 feet rather than the required 31 feet for all of the local streets in this phase of the subdivision. She summarized the staff findings, read the options of the Plan Commission and presented City staff's recommendation for approval.

Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner, clarified that the Plan Commission would vote on the preliminary plat and make recommendations to City Council on the waiver request and final plat.

Chair Fitch asked if any Plan Commission members had questions for City staff. There were none. Chair Fitch reviewed the procedure for taking input; and then he asked the petitioner to address the Plan Commission.

Carl Hill, petitioner, stated that there were concerns when the property was annexed 20 years ago that the developers were destroying the neighborhood, but since then the phases have been well received. He did not believe that the new phase would hurt property values of the existing homes in other developed phases. The existing development consists of homes that are designed the same; however, the builder has been changing the architectural features of each home so they look different. There is a high demand for the homes so South Ridge Subdivision VIII will be a continuation of the existing subdivision, with a few new designs. The price point of the homes attracts millennials, singles, and several retirees. They plan to build half of the phase to get it done more quickly. They hope to finish out the remainder of the 60 acres ending on Melissa Lane. He assured the concerned neighbors that drainage would not interfere with the existing homes, and topsoil would be used for future development. He mentioned that the value of the existing homes has increased. They promote homes that people love and want to maintain.

Ms. Billman asked if the section along Philo Road would also be platted and developed. Mr. Hill said yes. Ms. Billman asked if Hillshire Drive would be extended to Philo Road. Mr. Hill said yes, but not at this time. Once the project is completed, then the contractor wants to extend the street.

Ms. Billman asked if Mr. Hill planned to keep the R-2 zoning for Subdivision VIII. Mr. Hill replied yes. He stated that he rezoned the R-3 area to R-2 because they found there was no demand for duplex housing. He has no plans to rezone from the R-2 zoning.

Chair Fitch asked if there were other members of the public who wanted to speak with regards to the proposal.

Daniel Gaither identified himself and voiced his concern about the houses in the subdivision looking the same. He stated that there are no stop signs and no City trees planted on the existing developed areas. Mr. Garcia stated that the design of the houses is not something that can be considered with a subdivision proposal. He noted that street trees are not currently required by the Subdivision and Land Development Code. However, he would bring these concerns to the City's Public Works Department.

Mr. Gaither expressed concern about street parking being allowed on the existing 28-foot-wide streets. It is quite dangerous with vehicular traffic on Marc Trail Drive. Chair Fitch stated that the Plan Commission would only be considering the streets in the proposed phase. He felt it would be up to the City's Public Works Department to enforce proper traffic for the existing phases. He asked Mr. Garcia to follow up with Public Works on this.

Kevin Modglin identified himself and spoke in support of the proposed South Ridge VIII preliminary and final plats. He felt this would be a great addition to a successful development.

Kimberly Harden identified herself and expressed her concern about traffic in the subdivision. She is aware that the land will be developed; however, she is concerned about the way that the land is being developed. The houses are being built the same, and the new houses are considered "starter houses". Although there should be a mix of houses, she expressed concern about how the new houses would hold up over three to five years. She wondered if there would be a homeowner's association for South Ridge Subdivision. Chair Fitch stated that having a homeowner's association is outside the realm of the Plan Commission's purview. He suggested that she talk with her neighbors about starting a homeowner's association. Mr. Garcia suggested that she ask Google how to go about starting one.

Ms. Billman asked Ms. Harden to speak more about the price point for the existing housing vs. the newly constructed houses. Ms. Harden stated that she was initially told that the houses would be varied. There were several price points to choose from. The houses along Memory Lane that face the field are a higher price point. The current houses being built are a lower price point than the existing houses. She wondered what the value of the homes would be for the proposed phase.

Hossein Bagheri identified himself and said that due to him having trouble with the sound, he would email his comments.

Lynnell Lacy identified herself and asked if the lots would be open for existing residents to purchase so that lots could be combined. She mentioned that when her family moved to the neighborhood that the character would change ... they would not always have the “horizon view”. She expressed concern about the design of the newly built homes. The homes do all look the same. The sod has not been laid properly causing sinkholes in some of the yards. The residents could use some guidance on the noise pollution and trash being left behind by the builders. The builders have also blocked driveways and mailboxes, which is not ideal for the existing residents.

Mr. Hill addressed the question about a homeowner’s association. He stated that in 2001, they had an agreement with the Urbana Park District to maintain the retention cells and bike trails around it when it was constructed. However, in 2006 when they started to develop the phase with the retention cell in it, there was a new director at the Urbana Park District who said that the Park District Board had decided not to maintain any areas less than seven acres. The future retention cell would only be five plus acres. The land around the future retention cell was already developed so they were unable to make it any bigger. As a result, the City of Urbana asked them to form a homeowner’s association to take care of the maintenance on the retention cells. The South Ridge Subdivision Homeowner’s Association was established in 2006, but he and his partner, H. Allen Dooley, have been the association and have carried the insurance and done the maintenance. They plan to turn the association over to a new board on July 1, 2021. The residents/homeowners will be receiving a letter soon explaining this.

Chair Fitch noted that the concerns about the style and design of the homes did not apply to the proposed case; however, he encouraged the developer to work with the builders to be more courteous of the neighborhood and the residents. Mr. Hill conceded that there have been issues with trash in the neighborhood.

Mr. Hill stated that they are sympathetic about the design and have asked the builder to create two or three more designs for future homes. The builder told him that he is having issues with selling the other designs because many of the homebuyers like the same design, so he has asked the builder to change some of the elevations.

Mr. Hill addressed the concern about the new houses being considered “starter homes”. He pointed out that the value of one of the homes is \$370,000.00, which is \$100,000.00 more than some of the existing homes. So, they do have a variety of homes in terms of architecture and price on Horizon Lane. The homes are built stronger than they were four or five years ago, and they exceed code.

With there being no further input from the audience, Chair Fitch closed that portion of the hearing and opened it for Plan Commission discussion and/or motion(s).

Mr. Fell commented that Hillshire Drive will eventually become a substantial east-west street, so he was concerned about granting the waiver to reduce the width of the street. While 28 feet may work now, eventually at some point in the future, the City will want to widen the street, and by

then homeowners will have mature trees and sidewalks that would need to be removed. Ms. Billman agreed.

Mr. Hopkins stated that the Comprehensive Plan has a Mobility Map, and Trail Ridge is identified as one of the two east-west continuous roads to connect Philo Road and High Cross Road. He believed that this would be sustained and not affected by the proposed subdivision plat. He also stated that Myra Ridge is identified as one of the north-south minor arterials for connectivity and will be continued in the proposed plats in a reasonable fashion. Hillshire Drive was not identified as a minor arterial in the 2005 map; however, it is plausible that it could be one. The second east-west minor arterial had not been determined when the Mobility Map was created in 2005.

Mr. Hopkins stated that he lives on Mumford Drive, which is a minor arterial connecting Race Street and Philo Road. Mumford Drive was paved at 28 feet with the proviso of parking being allowed on one side. The idea of minor collector streets going through residential neighborhoods should be wide enough for parking on both sides is a bad idea. Therefore, he believed allowing the waiver to reduce Hillshire Drive to 28 feet would be acceptable.

Mr. Garcia stated that the Mobility Map does not show Hillshire Drive as a second east-west minor arterial street. He noted that the Public Works Director, Tim Cowan, approved the 28-foot street width for Hillshire Drive with parking allowed on only one side. He stated that narrower streets tend to have slower traffic, and the City encourages slower traffic in residential areas. The City had previously approved a subdivision waiver to allow 28-foot wide streets in South Ridge Subdivision V, VI and VII. As Mr. Gaither had commented, allowing parking on both sides of a 28-foot wide street can be problematic.

Mr. Fell stated that using the scale on GIS maps, Mumford Drive is approximately 30 feet wide from outer curb to outer curb on the western end. Mr. Hopkins agreed that reducing the width of the street would be an issue if Hillshire Drive becomes a minor collector.

Mr. Allred agreed that it would make sense to allow a waiver for narrower streets in residential areas. The line on the Mobility Map indicates a second minor arterial street that did not line with any existing streets at the time. So, it would be speculative for the Plan Commission to make a decision about a neighborhood street in the proposed subdivision based on that.

Mr. Allred moved that the Plan Commission approve the preliminary plat for South Ridge Subdivision VIII and move the final plat and waiver request to the City Council with a recommendation for approval. Mr. Hopkins seconded the motion. Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Ms. Billman	-	Yes	Mr. Fell	-	Yes
Mr. Fitch	-	Yes	Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes
Ms. McFarland	-	Yes	Ms. Yu	-	Yes
Mr. Allred	-	Yes			

The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Ms. Trotter stated Plan Case No. 2418-S-21 with regards to the waiver request and the final plat would be forwarded to City Council on May 10, 2021.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

Comprehensive Plan Update

Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner, introduced Lily Wilcock, Planner II, and Andrea Ruedi, Senior Advisor for Integrated Strategy Development. He felt that staff was doing a fantastic job reaching out to groups in the City of Urbana that we normally have trouble reaching.

Ms. Wilcock and Ms. Ruedi presented the following:

- *Imagine Urbana* By the Numbers – indicates the outreach activities that have taken place including 39 hours of in-person events at Salt & Light, the Urbana Free Library, the Farmer’s Market inside Lincoln Square Mall and one-on-one Zoom interviews; involvement of 21 students from the U of I Planning class, an intern from the Urbana High School and two interns from Civitas helping with reaching out to the black community, Latino community, people who work 2nd and 3rd shifts and youth; and launching the Imagine Urbana website (already has had 1,730 views)
- Scheduled Events – including providing outreach at the Downtown Historic District Walking Tour, Bike to School Day, Mother’s Day Bike Ride, Urbana Green Loop Bike Ride and Head Start Awareness Walk
- Upcoming Outreach – postcard mailing in four languages will be mailed out in late May to 21,000 Urbana households
- Groups We Have Partnered With – Silver Hearts, Dream Girls Academy, Champaign County Congolese Community and Dr. Ellis Subdivision among many others
- 2005 Comprehensive Plan Assessment Document to find out what worked and what did not work and how that will help us plan for the future (June 2021)
- Initial Community Engagement Report (October 2021)
- Phase 1 Community Engagement (Common Themes – based from the community’s concerns and values) ➔ Phase 2 Community Engagement (Discussion groups and interactive education)

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Garcia, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission