

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

DRAFT

DATE: June 22, 2023

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

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

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Dustin Allred, Lew Hopkins, Debarah McFarland, Chenxi Yu

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Will Andresen, Andrew Fell, Karen Simms

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner; Marcus Ricci, Planner II;
Kimberly Smith, Director of Community Development Services

PUBLIC PRESENT: Victoria Areear, Darlene Bailey, Cheryl Bicknell, Elderess Melinda Carr, Paulette Coleman, Jackie Curry, Lisa Dixon, Brian Kesler, Claudia Lennhoff, Rynati Miles, Chad Osterbur, Jennifer Putman, Adani Sanchez, Marty Smith

1. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

Chair Allred 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 of PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the May 18, 2023 regular meeting was presented for approval. Ms. Yu moved that the Plan Commission approve the minutes as written. Mr. Hopkins seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

4. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was none.

6. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 2476-PUD-23 – An application by Marty Smith, on behalf of Carle Foundation, for a residential Planned Unit Development located south of Federal Drive and north of Dorie Miller Drive and Carver Drive in the R-3 (Single and Two-Family Residential) and R-4 (Medium Density Multiple Family Residential) Zoning Districts.

Chair Allred opened Plan Case No. 2476-PUD-23. Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner and Zoning Administrator, gave a presentation reviewing the details of the request to build a residential Planned Unit Development from the written staff memo. He mentioned that the Supplementary Memorandum dated June 21, 2023 that he had sent out regarding this case. He noted that the supplementary memo gave a summary of the neighborhood meeting that was held on June 20, 2023. He reviewed the options for the Plan Commission and presented staff's recommendation to forward Plan Case No. 2476-PUD-23 to the City Council with a recommendation for approval with the following conditions:

1. That the final development plans be in general conformance with the attached Site Plan; and
2. That the final development plans include sidewalks that connect the development to Carver Drive.

Chair Allred asked if members of the commission had any questions for staff.

Mr. Hopkins asked for clarification on the planned unit development (PUD) process. He stated that his impression is that the Site Plan is not well developed. Should the Plan Commission address this during the Preliminary hearing or will the Commission have the ability to address it during the Final PUD hearing? Mr. Garcia stated that the Plan Commission could recommend changes to the site plan at this time.

Mr. Allred asked if there were no minimum parking requirements, would this development as proposed be able to be constructed meeting the current Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Garcia said no, the proposed development is a series of single-family homes that would all be on the same lot under common ownership. The City of Urbana does not currently have a mechanism in the Zoning Ordinance to allow this.

Mr. Allred asked if there are other development guidelines that apply. Mr. Garcia said that they look at the design features for a PUD in Table XIII-2 of the Zoning Ordinance. While a preliminary PUD application is not required to provide specifics on the design features, the application does generally ask which design features the applicant intends to include in the final PUD.

Mr. Allred asked how the residential PUD meets the "Institutional" designation of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Garcia said that the community center would provide supportive services. "Institutional" includes charitable uses, and that is how this PUD would align with the "Institutional" future land use designation.

Mr. Allred mentioned that during the neighborhood meeting, someone mentioned transit services, and he wondered where the closest transit stop would be located. Mr. Garcia stated that there is a stop at Carver and Bradley, and the developer is in discussion with MTD regarding potential additional stops. The developer may also be considering private shuttle services.

Chair Allred reviewed the procedures for a public hearing. He, then, opened the hearing for public input.

Marty Smith, applicant on behalf of Carle Foundation, approached the Plan Commission to give a quick overview of their request. He stated that the development focuses on the chronically homeless. There is a lack of services provided in the community, and the proposed development seeks to fill that. He noted that there will be case worker offices, an intense wrap-around service, a learning-teaching kitchen, a community room, and laundry services. It is not just housing; it is about healthcare to get to the root needs of the residents. There is a collaboration between Carle Health, the University of Illinois, and the Champaign County Health Care Consumers (CCHCC) to provide a development unlike anything across the country.

Mr. Hopkins asked who owns the land. Mr. Smith said that Carle Health currently owns the land. The six-acre tract for the proposed PUD would be conveyed to the not-for-profit organization, Hope Village, Inc., and the balance of the land would be retained by Carle Health.

Mr. Hopkins asked about the future connectivity of the remainder of the parcel, and wants to know how Phase 2 or the design of the remainder of the parcel would have access to Federal Drive. Mr. Smith replied that the remainder undeveloped portion of the land would have access to Federal Drive.

Mr. Hopkins asked how the 30 residents would be selected from the 137 persons without homes that have been identified. Claudia Lennhoff, Executive Director of the CCHCC approached the Plan Commission. She said that their organization does a Point-in-Time count twice a year. Point-in-Time refers to a process of finding and trying to identify and count every single individual who is homeless in our community. They have many housing resources and have identified a subset of the individuals who are homeless that cannot be serviced by these other resources and who are medically fragile. So, there is an urgency to find homes for them. There are two criteria used to help identify individuals who would qualify for the Hope Village project. One is a history of chronic homelessness, and the second is if they are medically fragile. Many times the individuals may be older individuals. This set of 30 homes should be a good start, as other organizations have also started bringing other resources to the community.

Mr. Allred stated that there were comments and concerns mentioned the neighborhood meeting regarding how accessibility and integration in the neighborhood are balance with security. He wondered what this would look like. Mr. Smith said that they envision having a decorative gated type of community. He mentioned that the proposed development is for individuals with medical conditions so many of the security features would be for the residents.

Mr. Allred mentioned that there were renderings in the newspaper. Mr. Smith said that they provided conceptual renderings available at the neighborhood meeting. Mr. Garcia said the drawings were not part of the application and were not relevant at this point in the preliminary PUD approval process.

Jennifer Putnam approached the Plan Commission to speak in favor of the request. She mentioned that she had attended the University of Illinois' Compact Governing meeting and participated in a breakout session on health and wellbeing. One of the topics that the participants in this session talked about was what they envisioned in the community in the future. She noted that many of the things they discussed seemed to be included in the proposed Hope Village project.

Lisa Dixon approached the Plan Commission to speak in favor of the proposed request. She attended the neighborhood meeting. She stated that she has been involved with Champaign County Health Care Consumers for many years, and she believes that doing something for the least of us is the same as doing something for the most of us. She stated that the Hope Village proposal is a concrete example of what we can do for those in our community who are amongst the least of us. As she listened to the planning around the proposed development at the neighborhood meeting, she knew that the developers could not answer everything, but that it was well thought out in its intention to help those who are unhoused as well as in its intention to integrate these individuals rather than keeping them separate from the community. She hopes Urbana will be a leader in this sort of development that takes care of the least of us, and hopes that she will be able to contribute time and energy to residents of the village.

Darlene Bailey approached the Plan Commission with questions about the proposed development. Will it be only for medically fragile people? Will other phases be added? Mr. Hopkins asked her if she lives in the neighborhood. She said she lives near Beardsley and Carver on the south side of Beardsley.

Jackie Curry approached the Plan Commission to speak in opposition. She stated that she lives in Carver Park. She stated that Carver Park Subdivision is not a big area. There is a lot of traffic including school buses, Amazon trucks, and garbage trucks. There are kids playing and people walking. She pointed out that this neighborhood is the oldest African-American neighborhood in Champaign, and it seems to be always the first one chosen for these sorts of proposals. She wonders why that is. If everything is clear-cut, then she would feel better about it, but it is not. She said that at the neighborhood meeting, it was mentioned that 18 sites had been considered, and she wonders why her neighborhood one was the one chosen. Please consider the residents in the Carver Park Subdivision want, not just the money and what the commissioners want.

Elderess Melinda Carr approached the Plan Commission to speak in opposition. She stated that she lives in the Dr. Ellis Subdivision and has several concerns about the proposed development. She stated that she is concerned with the location for this type of development. She talked about the concerns that Councilmember Hursey had expressed about this development in a previous meeting. She said that although there may be medically-fragile persons living in the proposed development, there may also be people with criminal backgrounds. She stated that the facility does not feel like a residential facility but rather like an institution. She said that she wants all people to have housing; it is the location that she is concerned with. They want the people of neighborhood to be respected.

Ms. Lennhoff re-approached the Plan Commission to address some of the concerns expressed. She explained that they would be working with a number of organizations including the Champaign County Continuum of Service Providers for the homeless. They will also be working with street outreach, who work with people living on the streets, and both hospitals to get referrals for future discharges that do not have housing.

Ms. Lennhoff stated that regarding traffic, she believes that the development would not be adding much traffic to the neighborhood. The chronically homeless do not typically have cars. Staff will park in the parking lot on the property, not park on Carver Drive.

Ms. Lennhoff stated that they looked at 18 different properties in Urbana. Some properties were not for sale, and some properties did not meet all of the requirements in terms of size and other things.

Ms. Lennhoff assured the Commission members and viewers that they will have a continual commitment from the three founders – Carle, UIUC, and the Champaign County Health Care Consumers. They will work with the community to identify and address issues. Their planning has been focused and intentional, and they will do their best not just for the residents of the Village, but also for the neighborhood and the community.

Mr. Allred said there was a question about whether the eligibility standards could change in the future. Would the “medically-fragile homeless” be a condition of the PUD application. Mr. Garcia said that that requirement had not been considered. Ms. Lennhoff added that she does not envision a possibility in the City of Urbana of having no homeless people. She pointed out that the number one cause of homelessness is the cost of housing, not drugs, alcohol or mental illness. Within that population of homeless, there are always going to be people who have been chronically homeless for a number of reasons and who are medically fragile. Nationwide, there is an increasing percentage of homeless individuals who are seniors. She does not think that the mission and goal here will change, and the homes have been designed for this mission and goal.

Mr. Hopkins asked if any other sites were made public during the site selection process. Mr. Smith re-approached the Plan Commission to state no. The City of Urbana staff gave them a list of 18-19 potential locations. The proposed site is an ideal location as it relates to the services to the site, the affordability and it doesn’t require demolition of any existing buildings. They did not have to rezone the parcels. There are utilities surrounding the site, so it is not completely undeveloped. There will be bus service. He stated that it will be compatible with the adjacent neighborhood and believes that they have provided the safeguards and the amenities which will also be a benefit to the adjacent residential neighborhood.

Chad Osterbur, of Fehr Graham, and Bryan Kessler, of Architectural Expressions, approached the Plan Commission to answer questions from the Plan Commission members about the proposed project.

Mr. Hopkins reiterated that this is the preliminary PUD and additional details will be needed for the final PUD. He asked if the design team is responsible for the remainder parcel in their initial design phase. Mr. Osterbur said they are only designing Hope Village, but that they are not designing themselves into a corner. Mr. Hopkins said that general layout may imply that Phase 2 may include a connection to Carver Drive, Tract 2 is in a trapped southeast corner, and Dorie Mills Drive dead ends. He stated that there are two parcels with no plans and no obvious consideration of what comes next or why or for what range of possibilities these parcels have been trapped. Mr. Osterbur stated that everything south of the north fence line will become one parcel owned by Carle.

Mr. Hopkins asked why the north boundary and fence was drawn the way it is. Mr. Osterbur said it is intended to keep them from using more land than is needed for the proposed development. There are no plans for the parcel to the north. Mr. Hopkins replied that he would prefer to see it follow some infrastructure. Mr. Osterbur stated that he believed they had changed the north boundary line to be straight. Mr. Kessler added that Tract 2 may be used as a community garden or some other amenity to the Village.

Mr. Hopkins asked why they did not make the connection to Dorie Mills Drive now to spread the traffic out on two streets rather than just on one. Mr. Kessler stated that they do not want to extend Dorie Mills Drive into the proposed development because they want to limit the traffic.

Mr. Hopkins said there are two issues. One is what the residents of Carver Park Subdivision have expressed at this meeting, which is “why us?” The second issue is “why was the development designed in this particular way?” which focuses all of the traffic on one small residential neighborhood with single family homes. He went on to say that construction access should come from Federal Drive. Servicing and operations could come from Federal Drive, including deliveries, caseworkers, the mobile food bus, etc.. There are other ways to mitigate the “why us?” concerns. Mr. Kesler said they want to be conscious of the demographic that they would be serving, and there is nothing in the preliminary plan that indicates construction traffic using Carver Drive for access to the property. As for extending Federal Drive to the proposed site, there is an issue of economy. This would be a major cost, and they have limited funds.

Mr. Allred said he feels that the Plan Commission is at a disadvantage as they do not have the materials that were made available at the neighborhood meeting. He asked what the impact would be on the residents in Carver Park Subdivision. Mr. Kesler said they have tried to set the development back from the neighborhood to the south by providing a buffer with nice landscaping between the community center and the adjacent neighborhood to the south, and they plan to have a detention in the southwest corner of the proposed site. Design-wise, he said that they plan for the tiny homes to have a residential feel with asphalt shingles and a composite siding product, so they are trying to deliver a quality product with a modern edge. He pointed out that the community center is currently being planned to be made available for the 30 residents of the Village and also an amenity for the community at large.

Mr. Allred mentioned that detention ponds can be good or bad depending on how they are maintained. He asked if the location of the detention pond is due to the natural topography? Mr. Kesler said that it was located there to take advantage of natural winds to be cooled as it passes over the water to help cool the homes.

Mr. Hopkins pointed out that the detention pond is at one of the high points of the parcel, which is unusual for placing a detention basin. With it being located outside of the fence, it might need to be fenced due to the proximity to the adjacent neighborhood. Also, he said that it relates to the question of what the infrastructure is identified as; whether it is agricultural drainage and whether it has to be maintained. So the detention pond’s location should be considered as an open question. Mr. Osterbur replied that the detention pond would be more of an urban storm sewer collection system that would collect everything from the southern portion of the proposed site.

Mr. Garcia reviewed the requirements for a preliminary PUD application. He, then, listed the additional items required for a final PUD application. The submitted application included all of the items and details required for a preliminary PUD approval.

With no further input from the audience, Chair Allred closed the public portion of the hearing. He opened the public hearing up for Plan Commission discussion and/or motion(s).

Chair Allred mentioned that the second condition did not seem necessary as it was a level of detail not required for the preliminary PUD approval. Mr. Garcia agreed.

Mr. Hopkins stated that this project is something that should be done, but again the adjacent neighborhood does not want it done in their back yard. He stated that they could be doing a better job to mitigate the effects that it may have in others’ backyards.

Mr. Hopkins asked when the case would be forwarded to City Council. Mr. Garcia replied that it would go to the Committee of the Whole on Monday, July 17, 2023. Mr. Hopkins said that a building permit application would be two or three months away. Mr. Garcia clarified that the News-Gazette stated that ground would be broken in July and that the project would be completed in December of this year. He stated that the community center and a model home could be built by right because they would meet the zoning requirements as being charitable nature. So, the ground breaking would be for these two structures. However, constructing these would mean that the applicant would be taking a risk of the final PUD application not being approved because getting approval for the final PUD would take longer than the month of July. Chair Allred commented that this does not help the situation of people feeling like this project is a done deal.

Mr. Hopkins talked through potential conditions to place on a recommendation for approval. Mr. Garcia stated that if the Plan Commission suggested specific changes, the developer could make some changes and bring it back to the Plan Commission at their July 6, 2023 regular meeting. Mr. Hopkins said he would not be here, and he thinks that the changes he has in mind could be figured out that quickly. So, he recommended treating the preliminary PUD as being very much preliminary so not to delay the construction timeline, but acknowledge that they will take time to create a project that will mitigate the complications. Mr. Allred added that the mitigations should not come from the Plan Commission; rather it should come from the neighbors living adjacent to the proposed site. He mentioned that a second neighborhood meeting had been mentioned at the first neighborhood meeting, and he felt that this should be a condition added to the recommendation for approval.

Mr. Allred mentioned that the parking waiver does not need to be a condition. Mr. Garcia said that was correct.

Mr. Hopkins moved that the Plan Commission forward Case No. 2476-PUD-23 to the City Council with a recommendation of approval with the following conditions:

- That no construction can occur on the applied-for site until approval of the final PUD application;
- The final PUD application is not constrained by the preliminary site plan;
- The final site plan will take major steps to mitigate the impacts on the neighborhood to the south; and
- An additional meeting with the neighborhood residents will be conducted.

Ms. McFarland seconded. Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Mr. Allred	-	Yes	Ms. McFarland	-	Yes
Ms. Yu	-	Yes	Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes

Chair Allred reiterated that the case will go to the City Council on Monday, July 17, 2023.

7. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

8. PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

9. STAFF REPORT

There was none.

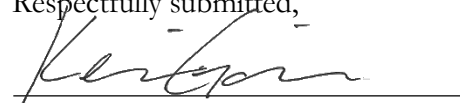
10. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

11. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Garcia", is written over a horizontal line.

Kevin Garcia, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission