

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING**

**URBANA PLAN COMMISSION**

**APPROVED**

**DATE:** February 23, 2023

**TIME:** 7:00 P.M.

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

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**PLAN COMMISSION**

**MEMBERS ATTENDING:** Dustin Allred, Andrew Fell, Lew Hopkins, Karen Simms

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Will Andresen, Debarah McFarland, Chenxi Yu

**STAFF PRESENT:** UPTV Camera Operator; Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner; Marcus Ricci, Planner II; John Zeman, City Engineer; Joe Pisula, Temporary Engineer

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** There were none.

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

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**

The minutes of the January 5, 2023 regular meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Fell moved that the Plan Commission approve the minutes as written. Ms. Simms 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. 2468-T-23 – An application by the Urbana Zoning Administrator to amend the Urbana Zoning Ordinance to allow more than one residential building on any lot zoned for multifamily use.**

Chair Allred opened the public hearing for Plan Case No. 2468-T-23. Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner, requested that this case be continued to the next regular meeting. The Plan Commission concurred, and the meeting was continued.

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

There was none.

**8. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was none.

**9. STAFF REPORT**

There was none.

**10. STUDY SESSION**

**Proposed Manual of Practice and Subdivision and Land Development Code**

Chair Allred opened this item on the agenda. Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner, gave a brief background on the update process and introduced John Zeman, City Engineer, and Joe Pisula, Temporary Engineer.

Mr. Zeman and Mr. Pisula approached the Plan Commission to present the draft of the Manual of Practice and of the Subdivision and Land Development Code. Mr. Zeman stated that City staff proposes to take the existing Chapter 21: Subdivision and Land Development Code and split it into two documents ... 1) The Manual of Practice and 2) The Subdivision and Land Development Code. The Subdivision and Land Development Code will explain what a developer needs to do and what the policies and procedures are. The Manual of Practice will be an administratively created and managed document that states how subdivisions need to be done and what construction design standards need to be followed.

Mr. Zeman talked about the steps staff has taken to update the Subdivision and Land Development Code and to create the Manual of Practice. He mentioned that many requirements in the Manual of Practice are based on the Illinois Department of Transportation's standards and Illinois sewer and water specifications. He explained the timeline to get the revised documents ready to present to City Council on March 20, 2023 to adopt.

Mr. Zeman highlighted the changes to the Subdivision and Land Development Code. Those changes include defining "redevelopment" and "public improvements." Some improvements made will eventually become property of the City, while others will remain private but are providing a public benefit over which the City has regulatory authority, such as stormwater detention basins. He

explained the shift from “waivers” to “variances” and the shift from requiring all waivers to be granted by City Council to many variances being processed administratively. Another change is that developers would become responsible for street signs, street trees, and traffic control devices. He mentioned that the basic procedures will remain the same as in the current code; however, City staff would like to see all of the steps in the process followed better, such as having a pre-application conference. He said that a development flow chart was created as a way to help guide staff and developers through the process.

Mr. Pisula talked about a Traffic Impact Analysis serving as a means to address traffic calming features in a development. This allows the Plan Commission to consider traffic calming options during site plan review.

Chair Allred asked if any Plan Commission members had questions about the Subdivision and Land Development Code.

Chair Allred asked if the Code only applies to subdivisions. It seems like the proposed Code applies to development generally. However, an infill development does not necessarily involve a subdivision. The proposed Code does not offer any options for development that is not considered a minor or major development. Mr. Zeman explained that a lot of infill development is considered a minor development. Mr. Pisula reviewed the definition of “development” from the proposed Code. The definition includes projects that require a stormwater management plan.

Chair Allred asked if we are trying to include more development under the regulation of the proposed Code and Manual of Practice to not only help make the administration process easier but also to improve the quality of development. Mr. Zeman said it was to help improve the quality of development.

The Plan Commission discussed sidewalks and who was responsible for installing them.

Marcus Ricci, Planner II, pointed out that the proposed Code states that the Administrative Review Committee determines whether a proposal is considered a development or not and whether it would be a minor or major development. Ms. Simms suggested that City staff brainstorm some scenarios that would not fall under minor or major and create a third classification to put them under. Mr. Zeman thought this would be a good idea to do. Staff could run through previous cases and see which classification of development they would fall under.

Ms. Simms suggested that as the City tries to move towards more equity and transparency, and the less a small group of people make decisions, the more people trust the process. The more it feels there could be some subjectivity, people talk and the less it seems equitable. Mr. Ricci asked for clarification about what in the Code seems subjective. Mr. Hopkins replied that some of where descriptions and cross references are can be subjective, such as starting a statement with a reference. Mr. Garcia agreed and said that staff would clean up the language to make it clearer.

Chair Allred asked about Planned Unit Developments (PUDs). He stated that the proposed Code has traces of a Planned Unit Development being similar to a subdivision. He asked if a Planned Unit Development was considered to be a major development. Mr. Garcia stated that there have been some PUDs that were not major developments. Mr. Ricci noted the difference between a PUD and a major development, which is that a major development is a by-right development and meets the development regulations. A PUD requires approval because the developer needs variances or

waivers. Mr. Zeman read a section of the proposed Code that states that “For purposes of this Chapter, a PUD shall constitute a major development, as herein defined”, which he believed is a carryover from the existing code. Staff will review and see if PUDs should be considered as something other than major or minor.

Mr. Hopkins talked about and suggested changes to the Subdivision and Land Development Code:

**1. Page 5. Article I. Section 21-105. Policies**

- A. Mr. Hopkins stated that (C), which is one of the purposes listed under *“The Subdivision Code is adopted for the following purposes:”* states that it should adhere to the Comprehensive Plan *“to prevent overcrowding of the land and undue congestion of population”*. He feels that this is debunked 1950s-era language that should not be included in a modern code.
- B. Chair Allred pointed out that the proposed Code often refers to itself as the Subdivision Code. Both Mr. Allred and Mr. Hopkins felt that the document should be called the Development and Land Subdivision Code and shortened to the Development Code.

**2. Comprehensive Plan in relation to streets**

- A. Mr. Hopkins stated that several places in the proposed Code mentions the Comprehensive Plan in relation to streets; however, the Comprehensive Plan does not designate future streets. It designates policies and has a Mobility Map, but it does not have future street alignments that would identify rights-of-way that could be used as something that would apply to this exception.
- B. Mr. Hopkins pointed out that Appendix H: Functional Street Classification Map in the Manual of Practice is inconsistent with the Mobility Map in the Comprehensive Plan.

**3. Page 12. Article I. Section 21-115. Definitions**

- A. Mr. Hopkins pointed out that the definition of “pavement” still refers to outside curb to outside curb. Pavement width is appropriate for impervious surface calculation.
- B. He suggested adding a definition for “street width”. Street width is specified for traffic analysis.

**4. Page 16. Article I. Section 21-120. Legal Authority and Jurisdiction (F)**

Mr. Hopkins recommended adding the word not in (F) so it reads as such, “... *The City Engineer will not allow public or private infrastructure improvements to be commenced or constructed except in conformity with these regulations.*”

**5. Page 16. Article I. Section 21-125. Scope.(A)**

Mr. Hopkins stated this refers to the Comprehensive Plan as if it were a regulation. The Comprehensive Plan includes aspirations, policies, goals, etc., so we need to be careful about referring to the Comprehensive Plan as a regulating document. We also need to be careful about a property’s designated use in the Comprehensive Plan, because the tendency now is to identify “development types” or “development character”; not designate uses by property. Again this is old fashioned language that should be cleaned up.

**6. Page 24. Article II. Section 21-210. General Area Plan (D.6)**

Mr. Hopkins talked about the reference to the Mobility Map in the Comprehensive Plan; however, he was told that the future update of the Comprehensive Plan will not have a Mobility Map. Mr. Garcia replied that it has not been established yet as to whether there will or will not be a Mobility Map in the new Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Hopkins suggested referring to the Comprehensive Plan in general and not to a specific map.

**7. Page 47. Article IV. Section 21-400. Design of Streets (A.3)**

Mr. Hopkins stated that if the Mobility Map is put in the new Comprehensive Plan, then it would be acceptable to keep "... *aligned to integrate with the existing and proposed system of streets as established in the comprehensive plan ...*".

**8. Article IV. Section 21-405. Design and Arrangement of Sidewalks, Mid-Block Walks, Bikeways, Lots and Blocks**

**A. Page 48 (B.1)**

Mr. Hopkins noted that this refers to the Urbana Bicycle Master Plan, which he believed is a plan and not a regulation. Therefore, we should refer to it carefully. Chair Allred added that the proposed Code would address new subdivisions, which the current Bicycle Master Plan would not have anything to say about bike paths in new subdivisions. Mr. Hopkins suggested that staff research to see if the Complete Streets policy has a requirement about bike paths. City staff replied that (1) does say that "*Bikeways shall be required where indicated by the Urbana Bicycle Master Plan's ...*". So, the question is does the City want to require what one of their adopting plans recommends? Mr. Garcia said yes, and we want the developer to pay for it. The proposed Code also covers areas in town, not just new subdivisions. Mr. Hopkins pointed out that the proposed Code also requires sidewalks but it mentions no reference to the Pedestrian Plan. He acknowledged that he misread (1).

**B. Page 49 (C.5)**

Mr. Hopkins talked about the "lot width to depth ratio of no more than one-to-three (1:3). He suggested changing the language to say that the depth can be no more than 3 times the width.

**9. Page 52. Article IV. Section 21-425. Sanitary Sewers (A)**

Mr. Hopkins stated that the language should reference the City's plans for land development, perhaps the Comprehensive Plan, rather than another agency's master plan. The determinations about installations could depend on the land use designations in the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that we should identify the calculations based on where we want our development build outs to be. One of the great ways to control development is to control access to sewer capacity or to force developers to pay for increasing the access that was not provided because it was not wanted.

**10. Article IV. Section 21-430. Stormwater Management; Storm Sewers and Other Drainage Facilities**

**A. Page 54 (A.2) and Page 56 (E)**

Mr. Hopkins asked what the difference is between a sump pump service line and a sewer. Mr. Zeman replied that a storm sewer pipe would be a minimum size of 10-inches, and a sump pump collection line pipe would have a minimum of 8-inches. The smaller pipe is allowed to collect building foundation drain water in places where there might not be a storm sewer line. Mr. Pisula explained why both are required for each lot in a subdivision, which is later described on Page 56 under (E). Mr. Hopkins suggested that (A.2) on Page 54 be deleted as it is not needed and explained in (E) on Page 56. He recommended that staff also check the Manual of Practice for the same.

**B. Page 58. (K)**

Mr. Hopkins stated that (K) should be stronger for low impact development (LID) than "encouraged". It should be "recommended" and provide some examples.

Ms. Simms stated that it is harder to retrofit a manual than to start over. There are always tensions in the language that are missed, so it is good to be clear about the intent. It is wise to have someone else read the manual; someone who does not have the knowledge you do about what you are trying to say. She acknowledged that what City staff is trying to accomplish with updating the Subdivision and Land Development Code is challenging, and she thanked Mr. Hopkins for taking the time to thoroughly go through the draft and providing this level of input. Mr. Zeman agreed.

Mr. Hopkins continued by discussing and making the following recommendations to the Manual of Practice:

**11. Page 163. Chapter 23: Stormwater Holding Basin Standards. Introduction and Goals**

Mr. Hopkins talked about “*Residential backyard or side yard single-lot detention or retention is prohibited*” changes in the proposed Code. He stated that rain gardens would no longer be allowed on new lots. Mr. Zeman stated that this section was intended to refer to installing detention basins in common areas rather than on individual lots to encourage regionalization detention. Mr. Hopkins replied that there are three types: 1) regionalization, which has specific language about, 2) major development detention that has to be on a separately identified parcel and cannot be on a parcel with any other use, and 3) disbursed water detention on lots. Then, there is the question of what an individual can do on their lot without reference to a Stormwater management plan.

**12. Page 171, Chapter 24: Right-of-Way Tree. Standards**

Mr. Hopkins stated that the new Manual of Practice would require street trees in the right-of-ways on both sides of a street with specific dimensions from fire hydrants, light poles, utility wires, and street intersections. In addition, the new Manual of Practice would require 5-foot wide sidewalks. He felt this would cause a problem because it would create additional concrete, additional impervious surface, etc. There needs to be more flexibility. Four-foot wide sidewalks would take up less space and make development less expensive. Whether sidewalks are needed on both sides of the street depends on other aspects of street design. It is better for trees to be planted on the lot side of a sidewalk and provides better solar accessibility. Mr. Ricci replied that it is a matter of geometry...solar panels on a 30-foot house, so he did not see any reason for not requiring street trees on both sides of the street. He stated that he has been working on updating the Code and creating the Manual of Practice with other City staff (including Mike Brunk, the former City Arborist) for several years. City staff is looking for suggestions from the Plan Commission. Mr. Garcia added that staff values input from the Plan Commission. Chair Allred stated that this section is in the Manual of Practice, and if something does not work, then changes can easily be made without it having to go to City Council for approval. If a developer wants they can ask for a waiver for planting street trees as required. Mr. Garcia pointed out that the proposed Code would be presented to City Council for approval. Since the Code is part of the City Code, no other action is required.

**13.** Mr. Hopkins stated that it is a very good idea to split the Subdivision and Land Development Code into two documents (the Development Code and the Manual of Practice). He stated he was confused about the timing of updating the Manual of Practice. He felt that it should be allowed to be changed at any time rather than “once a year” as mentioned in the Manual and have immediate effect.

**14.** Mr. Hopkins stated that it would be better to define the authority over the Manual of Practice as the Administrative [Review] Committee, which is already defined for other purposes. This makes the process more consistent and prevents any one person from being able to make changes. Mr. Zeman agreed.

15. Mr. Hopkins talked about the Manual of Practice requiring 8-foot wide sidewalks in campus commercial downtown districts. The City does not have a campus commercial downtown district so there is confusion what this refers to. Mr. Garcia replied that he believed the intent was for the B-4 (Central Business), maybe the B-3U (General Business – University) and for the CCD (Campus Commercial District).
16. Mr. Hopkins talked about the sidewalk requirements in other districts and no mention of sidewalks in industrial districts. Mr. Zeman said they would have Planning staff look at this section and add some clarity. Mr. Garcia asked if the 5-foot recommendation is to meet American Disability Act requirements or is to meet the Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG). Mr. Pisula stated that it is the standard in Savoy and Champaign.

Mr. Zeman thanked the Plan Commission for their input. He welcomed any more suggestions they had. Both Mr. Garcia and Mr. Ricci thanked the Plan Commission as well.

## 11. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Garcia, Secretary  
Urbana Plan Commission