

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: March 4, 2021

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Zoom Webinar

MEMBERS ATTENDING REMOTELY: Dustin Allred, Jane Billman, Andrew Fell

MEMBER ATTENDING AT CITY BUILDING: Tyler Fitch

MEMBER EXCUSED: Lew Hopkins

MEMBER ABSENT: Jonah Weisskopf, Chenxi Yu

STAFF PRESENT: City of Urbana (Host); Brianna Gaspar, UPTV Camera Operator, Marcus Ricci, Planner II; Kat Trotter, Planner I

OTHERS ATTENDING REMOTELY: David Kuehn, Charles Reifsteck and Elsa Reifsteck

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

Chair Fitch called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Roll call was taken, and there was a quorum present.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the December 10, 2020 regular Plan Commission meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Fell moved that the Plan Commission approve the minutes as written. Mr. Allred seconded the motion. Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Mr. Allred	-	Yes	Ms. Billman	-	Yes
Mr. Fell	-	Yes	Mr. Fitch	-	Yes

The minutes were approved by unanimous vote as written.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 2415-SU-21 – A request by Trinity Lutheran Church for a Special Use Permit to allow operation and expansion of a Church at 701 East Florida Avenue in the R-2, Single Family Residential Zoning District.

Chair Fitch opened the public hearing for Plan Case No. 2415-SU-21. Marcus Ricci, Planner II, presented the staff report to the Plan Commission. He began by explaining the purpose of the proposed Special Use Permit request, which is to allow a church in the R-2, Single Family Residential Zoning District. He noted two changes to the conditions suggested in the staff recommendation in the written staff memo, which were as follows:

1. Add the condition that the four parcels must be combined into one parcel;
2. Add the condition that the owner install a sidewalk on the south side of the property along Sunnycrest Drive.

Mr. Ricci gave a brief background on the history of Trinity Lutheran Church located at 701 East Florida Avenue. He noted the zoning of the proposed site as well as for the adjacent properties. He talked about the existing church use and layout and about the proposed expansion and use. He mentioned that Trinity Lutheran Church held a public input meeting on February 18, 2021 where neighbors expressed concerns of screening on the south and east sides of the property and of the parking lot being used as a cut-through for drivers. As a result from the meeting, the applicant revised their site plan to address the concern for screening.

Mr. Ricci reviewed how the proposal relates to the criteria for a special use permit according to Section VII-4.A of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance. He read the options of the Urbana Plan Commission and stated staff's recommendation for approval with the following conditions:

1. Construction must be in general conformance with the site plan (Exhibit D) entitled "Trinity Lutheran Church, 701 East Florida Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801, Preliminary Site Plan" dated 02/22/21;
2. Combine the existing four tax parcels into a single tax parcel;
3. Install a pedestrian sidewalk along East Sunnycrest Drive; and
4. Restrict the Florida Avenue egress to right-in, right-out traffic.

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

Mr. Fell asked if there was a change in the number of parking spaces from the site plan that was originally submitted to the revised site plan. Mr. Ricci explained that there was no change in the number of parking spaces. There are 55 parking spaces, which is the minimum required for a sanctuary of this size. The applicant eliminated the tree median in between the two long rows of parking spaces. Some of the spaces would be converted into compact car spaces.

Mr. Allred stated that the proposed new drive on Florida Avenue would be close to the property at 705 East Florida Avenue. He asked if there was any concern about driveway spacing. Mr. Ricci replied that the driveway to the property at 705 East Florida Avenue is located on the east side of their property, which is further away from the proposed access drive. So, there should not be any concern for spacing between the two drives.

Mr. Allred mentioned that the parking lot appeared to nearly double in surface area. He asked if it would be reviewed for compliance with any stormwater management requirements. Mr. Ricci said yes. Mr. Allred noticed that the parking lot would be up to the property line in some places. He asked if City staff had considered where the stormwater would flow to. Mr. Ricci replied that there is always concern about this. Getting approval for a Special Use Permit to allow the church use in the R-2 Zoning District is the first step. The next step would be for Public Works to do a plan review process, where the City's Engineering Division would review and verify the drainage calculations that the applicant's designers provide to see how much onsite stormwater detention would be required. There is a fairly large amount of open space that could be used for stormwater detention mechanisms.

Ms. Billman asked if there was any effort made to retain the existing trees, specifically on the east side of the site. Mr. Ricci noted that there are five mature trees that would likely be removed because they are located where the church proposes to expand the fellowship hall and parking area. However, the applicant would be adding new trees to meet the parking lot requirement. The existing trees to the north of the sanctuary as well as the tree on the southeast corner of the lot would be retained.

Chair Fitch asked if there was an existing Conditional Use Permit to allow the daycare, and if so, would the Conditional Use Permit be affected by the proposed Special Use Permit. Mr. Ricci said yes there is a Conditional Use Permit and it would not be effected by the Special Use Permit.

With there being no further questions for City staff, Chair Fitch opened the hearing for public input. He invited the applicant(s) to speak.

David Kuehn, representative for the Trinity Lutheran Church, raised his hand to address the Plan Commission. He identified himself as the Chair of the Building Committee. He noted the different events that the church usually holds in their fellowship hall, which the public is invited to attend. He stated that the current fellowship hall is in serious disrepair and has been permanently closed. The Special Use Permit would allow the church to do the needed repairs.

Elsa Reifsteck raised her hand to speak. She stated that she is one of the architects on the project. She summarized the project by stating that demolishing the existing hall and constructing a new building made more sense to create a more inviting and functional building to

meet the church's needs. The square footage of the new building would be roughly the same as the existing fellowship hall; however, since it would be reduced to one story, the footprint would increase. The Special Use Permit would allow for better traffic flow and provide a safer drop-off zone for the preschool.

Ms. Reifsteck talked about the neighborhood meeting the church held. She stated that they revised the site plan to address some of the concerns of the neighbors. She noted that they were still in the early planning stages of the site plan. They are waiting to get the existing survey completed on the exact location of the trees. They want to preserve as many trees possible. There is some concern over the quality of the trees. They do plan to preserve the trees to the northeast of the sanctuary and the tree on the southeast corner of the lot.

There was no further testimonies or input from the public, so Chair Fitch closed the public input portion of the hearing. He, then, opened the hearing for Plan Commission discussion and/or motion(s).

Ms. Billman stated that the Plan Commission usually gets a more detailed site plan. Ms. Reifsteck had mentioned that they are still in the early stage of creating the site plan. Ms. Billman asked "How does the Plan Commission approve something that they do not have enough detail on?" Chair Fitch said there is a condition that City staff recommends for approval in that "construction must be in general conformance with the site plan". If details are added to the site plan that are not in general conformance with the site plan dated 02/22/21, then the applicant would need to come back to the Plan Commission. Mr. Ricci stated that this was correct. The footprint of the new fellowship hall and the parking lot with proposed access drives and egresses would be tied to the 02/22/21 site plan. The Special Use Permit would be to allow a church in the R-2 Zoning District. He did not believe it was in the purview of the Plan Commission to review floor plans or discuss how the church itself would be designed. There would be no changes to service times or daycare activities. Chair Fitch stated that the Plan Commission has some purview to consider landscaping, screening, etc. Mr. Fell explained that it can be a very long process between the point of determining what the footprint of the building is to being done enough with it to get a building permit. He assumed that they would be installing a new kitchen as part of the new fellowship hall, and kitchen planning can take several months.

Mr. Allred believed that the Plan Commission is to consider how the proposed church use impacts the surrounding uses. The specifics of where screening, entry and exit points, etc. are addressed on the site plan.

Mr. Fell moved that the Plan Commission forward Plan Case No. 2415-SU-21 to the Urbana City Council with a recommendation for approval including the following conditions:

1. Construction must be in general conformance with the site plan (Exhibit D) entitled "Trinity Lutheran Church, 701 East Florida Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801, Preliminary Site Plan" dated 02/22/21;
2. Combine the existing four tax parcels into a single tax parcel;
3. Install a pedestrian sidewalk along East Sunnycrest Drive; and
4. Restrict the Florida Avenue egress to right-in, right-out traffic.

Ms. Billman seconded the motion.

Mr. Kuehn stated that the exterior of the new structure had been taken into account. The building would be attractive with brick and several large windows. Chair Fitch noted that the Plan Commission does not have purview over the exterior of the building.

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Ms. Billman	-	Yes	Mr. Fell	-	Yes
Mr. Allred	-	Yes	Mr. Fitch	-	Yes

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Ricci noted that Plan Case No. 2415-SU-21 would be forwarded to Committee of the Whole on March 15, 2021 and to City Council on March 22, 2021.

8. NEW BUSINES

There was none.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

Kat Trotter talked about the following:

- Plan Cases 2411-PUD-20 and 2412-PUD-20 were referred back to Committee of the Whole and were considered on March 1, 2021. Committee of the Whole forwarded the cases to the City Council meeting on March 8, 2021 for a vote.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Garcia, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission