

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: November 5, 2020

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Zoom Webinar

MEMBERS ATTENDING REMOTELY: Dustin Allred, Jane Billman, Andrew Fell, Lew Hopkins, Jonah Weisskopf, Chenxi Yu

MEMBER ATTENDING AT CITY BUILDING: Tyler Fitch

STAFF PRESENT: City of Urbana (Host); Jason Liggett, UPTV Manager, Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner; Marcus Ricci, Planner II; Kat Trotter, Planner I

OTHERS ATTENDING REMOTELY: Tracy Chong, Dan Corkery, Josh Daly, James Dobrovolny, Christopher Hansen, Mary Pat McGuire, Richard Mohr, Erik Sacks, Leslie Sherman, Jacob Unzicker

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 with all members present.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the September 24, 2020 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:

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

The minutes were approved by unanimous vote as written.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

PLAN CASE No. 2410-M-20

Communications received in Opposition:

- Email from Tom Bassett and Carol Spindel
- Email from Richard Colby
- Email and related articles from Dan Corkery
- Email from Steve Drake and Diane Beck
- Letter from C. K. Gunsalus and Michael W. Walker
- Email from Kevin Hamilton
- Email from Paul and Jennifer Hixson
- Email from Sharon Irish
- Email from Becky Mead and Tim Stelzer
- Email from Tacey Miller
- Email from Richard Mohr
- Email from Laura O'Donnell
- Letter from Andrew Orta and Ingrid Melief
- Email from Dannie Otto and Barbara Shenk
- Letter from Michael and Elizabeth Plewa
- Email from Steve Ross
- Letter from Erik Sacks
- Email from Thomas Schmidt
- Email from Trent Shepard
- Email from Lisa Treul
- Email from Dallas Trinkle
- Email from Ann Wymore

PLAN CASE Nos. 2411-PUD-20 and 2412-PUD-20

Communications received in Opposition:

- Email from Karen Acton
- Letter from Elizabeth Cardman
- Email from Cope Cumpston
- Email from Beverly Fagan
- Letter from C. K. Gunsalus and Michael W. Walker
- Email from Paul and Jennifer Hixson
- Email from Sharon Irish
- Email from Patricia Jones
- Email from Jo Kibbee
- Letter from Mary Pat McGuire
- Email from Becky Mead and Tim Stelzer
- Email from Tacey Miller
- Letter from Andrew Orta and Ingrid Melief
- Email from Peggy Patten
- Letter from Michael and Elizabeth Plewa
- Email from Thomas Rauchfuss
- Email from Lois Steinberg

- Email from Lisa Treul
- Christine Yerkes and Antony Crofts

Chair Fitch stated that he would summarize the communications at the start of each public hearing due to the number of communications received.

Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner, talked about the new Public Input Guidelines that were enacted as a result of an Ordinance passed by the City Council. They are available on the Plan Commission webpage.

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 2410-M-20 – A request by James and Spencer Dobrovolny to rezone five (5) properties from R-3 (Single and Two-Family Residential) to R-5 (Medium High Density Multiple Family Residential) located at 702, 704, 706 and 708 West High Street and 309 South Coler Avenue.

Chair Fitch opened the public hearing for this case.

Kat Trotter, Planner I, presented the staff report for Plan Case No. 2410-M-20 to the Plan Commission. She explained the purpose of the proposed rezoning, which is to allow for higher density residential development close to the University of Illinois campus. She gave a brief background of the properties. She described the subject parcels and the surrounding properties by noting the current zoning, existing land use designations and future land use designations. She reviewed the rezoning criteria, and she stated that the proposed request does not meet those criteria. She read the options of the Plan Commission and presented staff's recommendation which is to deny the proposed Zoning Map Amendment.

Chair Fitch asked if the Plan Commission members had questions for City staff. There were none. Chair Fitch opened the hearing for public input and explained the procedure.

Chair Fitch mentioned that City staff had received over 20 written communications in opposition to the proposed rezoning. He summarized the reasons for the opposition, which are as follows:

- Violates the City's Comprehensive Plan
- Increase the noise level in the neighborhood
- Concerns about the existing drainage tunnel
- Parking and traffic issues
- Families in the neighborhood
- Empty units in the area already
- R-3 Zoning District is a buffer from the MOR Zoning District for the R-2 Zoning District

- Precedent for more developments of this type
- History of maintaining neighborhood as outlined in the Downtown to Campus Plan, the Comprehensive Plan and the Lincoln-Busey Corridor

Chair Fitch invited the applicant(s) to speak on behalf of their request.

James Dobrovolny, applicant, stated that he received an email from Carolyn Baxley urging him to withdraw his rezoning request or else there would essentially be public shaming and his interest in preservation would be questioned. He stated that he owns 402 West Elm Street, which is probably the oldest single-family home in Urbana. When he purchased it, the building was cut up into 3 apartments. His son, Spencer, lived in it 20 years ago and converted it back into a single-family home. He stated that he also owns 5 other single-family or duplex homes in the state streets area. All of the homes are 100 year old or more, and he continuously maintains them. He also owns a grade school in the City of Champaign that is over 100 years old that he continuously maintains. So, he is at a loss of why so many people take umbrage at what he is trying to do with the proposed rezoning.

Mr. Dobrovolny stated that the 700 block of West High Street is high in density. One neighbor has 25 units and all of the other neighbors have 3 or more units. The drainage tunnel that was a concern expressed in one of the opposing emails runs directly underneath a 25-unit apartment building, so he is not concerned about the tunnel.

Mr. Dobrovolny talked about preservation and stated that it can have some ugly, unintended consequences. What is being preserved, he asked ... the emotional home of genius white middle upper class community of West Urbana that people of color have been denied access to for generations? There are still some deed restrictions memorialized forever in the public record that prohibit people of color to own homes in West Urbana. Over time, those restrictions were outlawed, but the backdrop of circumstance that these homes were born from does not merely fade away. This lack of access and racism got built into the "character" of this neighborhood over generations. You cannot decouple this inequity from the character. He works in the neighborhood, his office is in the neighborhood, and he owns property in the neighborhood. He does not know of any Black owned or Black owner-occupied single-family homes in the state streets area. Higher density gives more opportunity for diversity of race, income and age in this neighborhood where it is needed most. Let's stop talking about encroachment and start talking about inclusion. What else are we trying to preserve? Certainly not Mother Nature. Old single-family homes are energy hogs. They are leaky and toxic. Transportation and buildings are the two biggest offenders of greenhouse gas emissions. By adding density in close proximity to transportation hubs, town centers, hospitals, and universities, we are able to build energy efficient structures that house more people in closer proximity which equals less resource demand. At the same time, putting more people closer to their workplace, transit and services which saves on vehicle miles travelled. The last thing people need is to stay stuck in the past. Preservation is code of exclusion. It is red-lining at its most subtle form. How many people of color or minorities served on the commission to draw up the MOR (Mixed Office Residential Zoning District), the Zoning Ordinance or the Comprehensive Plan? How many live in the district?

Mr. Dobrovolny stated, "Let's build community. Let's build diversity. Let's build equity. Let's build efficiency. Let's build density where the City needs it the most. Let's build a future."

Mr. Dobrovolny went on to address a concern expressed in one of the opposing emails about higher density increasing the amount of traffic. He did not see this happening with the bus line being located half a block away. The person who expressed this concern tore down a small structure and built a mausoleum for his cars. This seems hypocritical.

Mr. Dobrovolny stated that he has a reputation of being a good landlord. He has always been present when his properties are inspected. He doesn't have tenant complaints with the Landlord Tenant Union. He has been a resident of the Champaign-Urbana area most of his life. He expressed being offended by some of the opinions of a few people against his request to rezone.

Mr. Dobrovolny stated that he just wants to make the best use of the properties. He asked the Plan Commission members to take a look at the equities of the block that the proposed site is located. There are no other single-family homes on the block that aren't either a group home or apartment buildings touching the proposed properties. It is all high density use. High Street is a buffer.

Mr. Dobrovolny thanked the Plan Commission for reviewing and considering his rezoning request.

Chair Fitch asked if there was anyone else who wanted to speak in favor of the proposed rezoning. There were none. He asked if there was anyone who wanted to speak in opposition.

Leslie Sherman addressed the Plan Commission. She stated that she lives at 513 West Oregon Street, which is 2-3 blocks from the proposed development. She opposed the proposal. While the applicant would like to increase his properties' values by combining the parcels and rezoning them to the R-5 Zoning District, she wants to maintain her property values by the applicant's properties remaining zoned R-3 and providing the buffer zone that the Comprehensive Plan was designed to do. This would prevent the encroachment of higher density buildings into the neighborhood. She felt there was more diversity than Mr. Dobrovolny thinks. She hoped that the Plan Commission members would deny the request.

Richard Mohr addressed the Plan Commission. He noted that there was one factual mistake in the petitioner's claims. Immediately across from the proposed site, 401 South Coler Avenue is owner-occupied. He urged the Plan Commission to vote against the proposed rezoning. He owns and lives in a historic home catty-corner from the proposed project. His home is on the City's list of 100-Most Significant Buildings. His home is ringed all around with other vintage homes of single-family design. To build a 24,000 square-foot modular bunker pointed at his home across a three-zoning category leap (R-5 to R-2) would be like having an air-craft carrier square off with a dingy. Allowing an R-5 building to wedge into the core of West Urbana would irreparably damage the neighborhood's texture, character and history; all of which the 2005 Comprehensive Plan explicitly seek to preserve.

Mr. Mohr stated that the sole ground that the developer offers for the project's conformity to the Comprehensive Plan is that it matches high density contiguous properties. Well, the developer's lots touch an apartment building that was built in accordance with the MOR Zoning and were previously zoned R-5. According to the Comprehensive Plan, the current R-3 Zoning along High Street is supposed to serve as a buffer for the R-2 Zoning to the south. So, the application sites as

its sole evidence for conformity with the Comprehensive Plan the very thing from which the plan is supposed to be protecting, which is the single-family dwellings to the south.

Mr. Mohr stated that the project would destroy the buffer for the length of a block. In the same vein, the developer's proposal sets up West Urbana as a series of dominos. If the mere existence of high density apartments in one block justifies rezoning the next, then there is no stopping a march of high density R-5 apartment buildings right across the City.

Mr. Mohr stated that the developer without evidence claims a pressing need for more student apartments; however, the New York Times reported that American universities experienced a 16% drop in freshman enrollments this fall. This drop will hit the rental market next year. The current local rental market is already depressed. Nearly every rental between Coler and Lincoln Avenues have "For Rent" signs posted for now; not next fall. The rental property south of his property has stood empty through the entire fall with a "For Rent" sign posted.

Mr. Mohr felt that any reconsideration of R-3 zoning along High Street should not be taken up piecemeal, but as part of the upcoming new Comprehensive Plan. To save West Urbana, he encouraged the Plan Commission to vote against the proposed rezoning.

Erik Sacks addressed the Plan Commission. He mentioned that he lives at 507 West High Street. The petitioner does not speak for the community although he tried to. Clearly the large number of people who communicated against the proposed rezoning show otherwise. The main argument that the petitioner made was that the City should ignore the City's master plan for growth. If that is the case, then it would be a free-for-all. There would be little that one could do to plan for what kind of growth one would invest in any part of the City. He could see where approving the proposed rezoning would lead to a rash of developments along High Street and other surrounding neighborhoods. Lastly, towards the argument for the need for higher density, the student population at the University of Illinois has been flat for the last ten years, so there is not a great need for additional high density. The creation of new housing units within the City just moves people around from one spot to another. The need for more housing units should be decided by the market with a fair set of rules for where developments of certain sizes are allowed to take place. He encouraged the Plan Commission to uphold the current zoning.

Tracy Chong addressed the Plan Commission. She stated that she was not speaking in favor or against the proposed rezoning. She only wanted to generally address the "voice of the neighborhood". The term "firestorm" in one of the written communications was created by a small number of residents in the West Urbana neighborhood with very loud voices. This is what the loud voices do at meetings and on the neighborhood mailing list. People who disagree with the opinions of the loud voices are shamed on the mailing list. These loud voices are not representative of the entire neighborhood. She encouraged the Plan Commission to take this into consideration as the members make a decision.

Ms. Chong stated that many people want to live in the West Urbana neighborhood for many reasons, including the great location and ease of transport to the University of Illinois. She believed that they should improve the diversity of the neighborhood. It currently is not very diverse. The Plan Commission should think about what the neighborhood is trying to protect.

Dan Corkery addressed the Plan Commission. He stated that he lives at 602 West High Street. He owns the carriage house that was referred to as a mausoleum by the applicant. He referred to the email that he wrote and submitted in opposition. In his email, he provided links to a column he wrote for the News-Gazette four years ago, which he read to the Plan Commission members.

Mr. Corkery stated that everyone understands the value of the University of Illinois. The West Urbana neighborhood is part of the University's campus. It is the last single-family neighborhood adjacent to the campus. So, when you look at the Comprehensive Plan for West Urbana, he believed what defines it is the spirit of neighborhood ... the walkability, the bikeability, the convenient location.

Christopher Hansen addressed the Plan Commission. He stated that he was not speaking in favor or against the proposed rezoning. He understands arguments from both sides. He did not like hearing comments about being anti-student or that the neighborhood doesn't want diversity. Everyone have their own financial means. People who have less means should still have a chance to live in the neighborhood, and some of the higher density housing can offer that. He would like to see the Plan Commission dispense of any opinions against landlords and tenants and focus on the logic and details of the proposal.

Mr. Hansen addressed an earlier comment about the student population being flat. His understanding is that the number of students has been increasing every year, and the University of Illinois is at an all-time high.

Mr. Dobrovolny re-addressed the Plan Commission. He appreciated everyone who commented. He questioned the neighbors' concerns for the rezoning decreasing their property values. When looking at the apartment building in the 400 or 500 block of West High Street, it did not diminish the property values of the lots around it. The neighborhood is not any less walkable or bikeable. When one walks out their front door and sees another person outside, they do not know if that person came from the apartment building or from one of the single-family homes nearby. Allowing a higher density residential zoning is one way to build a community. A higher-density zoning would merely fill in the block and would not cause a domino effect, because the proposed site is surrounded on all sides by high density housing units.

Mr. Dobrovolny stated that he had talked with the resident at 401 South Coler Avenue, and that person did not oppose the rezoning. Another resident catty-corner from the proposed site is in opposition; however, Mr. Dobrovolny did not feel that a high density residential building would be a "battleship" pointed at his front door. It could be a compliment to his home.

Mr. Dobrovolny stated that if Mr. Corkery is correct in his email about the underground drainage tunnel preventing a large building from being constructed, then that would solve the neighborhood's problem.

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

Mr. Hopkins felt this was a plan making issue that had been debated, evolved and had accumulated a set of expectations for 40 years or more. The way to continue to work out a strategy for the neighborhood is through a planning process and not by a rezoning of a few lots

that would not be consistent with the current accumulation of plans. Many of the issues on how a neighborhood could evolve and maintain a particular set of characteristics that are not static or intentional would be to deny the proposed rezoning but acknowledge the continued need for a planning process to address the issues involved.

Mr. Weisskopf stated that he drove through the area and took a quick inventory of the properties that were rental and what were single-family in the 700 block of West High Street. 713, 712, 711, 710, 709, 708, 707, 706, 705, 704, 703 West Illinois are rentals. 702 West Illinois appeared to be a single-family home. 700 West Illinois and 403 South Coler Avenue are rental properties. This is a problem and will continue to fester and to be an issue. It is not being addressed by the current Comprehensive Plan. He would love to see some growth and development on the part of what a plan would look like to address what is actually happening on the 700 and 800 blocks of West Urbana. The Plan Commission is often told that this area was down zoned to single family and that there is all single family residences there. That is incorrect. Most of the 700 and 800 blocks of West Urbana are rental properties.

Mr. Weisskopf suggested that the neighbors in opposition of higher density zoning and use become proactive. Talk about what you want to see happen here. Do you want growth in this area?

Chair Fitch agreed that there is constant tension between the single-family homeowners and landlords/developers. The buildings may appear to be single-family homes, but they are multi-family rentals. He hoped that the planning process would take a look at the current regime and see if there is something that the City could do better.

Ms. Yu echoed the overall housing decline on the 700 and 800 blocks of West Urbana. She stated that without a detailed plan of what the owner wants to do, she did not feel it would be appropriate to rezone the subject properties. She would like to see a high quality development that would fit into the neighborhood be proposed.

Ms. Billman stated that a high quality development could be constructed in the R-3 Zoning District. They don't have to have a big development or the run down houses.

Mr. Fell agreed with Ms. Yu and Ms. Billman in that they would be up-zoning a piece of property that acts like a buffer. The proposed rezoning would not move the buffer but instead jump over the current buffer. He believed that the best way to redevelop the lot and appease the neighborhood would be through a Planned Unit Development. This would allow the applicant to show what would be built and allow the neighborhood to see if they feel it would be appropriate.

Mr. Allred agreed with Mr. Hopkins in that a rezoning like this should happen comprehensively. It needs to be thought about in terms of the overall pattern, and the desires and goals of the community. This is not going to happen through the proposed spot zoning process.

Ms. Billman moved that the Plan Commission forward Plan Case No. 2410-M-20 to the Urbana City Council with a recommendation for denial. Ms. Yu seconded the motion. Roll call on the motion was as follows:

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

The motion passed by unanimous vote. Ms. Trotter noted that this case would be forwarded to City Council on November 23, 2020.

Plan Case No. 2411-PUD-20 and 2412-PUD-20 – A request by CCH Development, LLC for preliminary and final approvals of a residential Planned Unit Development at 805, 807 and 809 West California Avenue, 602 and 604 South Lincoln Avenue; 804, 806, 808, 808-1/2 and 810 West Oregon Avenue under Section XIII-3 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance.

Chair Fitch opened the two cases together.

Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner, presented the staff report to the Plan Commission. He began by noting the location of the proposed development and talking about the plans for the development. He gave a description of the subject properties, showed photos of the existing buildings on each property and stated the zoning and current use of the properties. He showed the Site Plan (*Page A1.0 of Exhibit E*) and talked about the layout, parking, and other details of the proposed development. He discussed how the proposed development relates to the City's 2005 Comprehensive Plan and to Section XIII-3.C (*General Goals for Planned Unit Developments*) of the Zoning Ordinance. He reviewed the Criteria for Approval according to Section XIII-3 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance. He read the options of the Plan Commission and presented staff's recommendation for APPROVAL with the following conditions:

1. That construction be in general conformance with the Site Plan and Elevations attached to the written staff report, subject to minor modifications that may be required by the Design Review Board.
2. That the sidewalk along Lincoln Avenue be reconstructed further to the east, on the applicant's property and at their expense, and that the applicant provides an access easement to allow the sidewalk's use by the public.

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

Mr. Allred asked if the buffered area between the street and the proposed sidewalk would be grass or if there would be trees planted as well. Mr. Garcia replied that this would be a good question for the applicant. The sidewalk shown in the Site Plan is an approximation of where it would be located. The applicant would need to consult with the City engineers to determine an exact location.

Chair Fitch asked for clarification on the purpose of asking for a Planned Unit Development (PUD). Mr. Garcia explained that the applicant had two options for development: one option is to request a PUD to allow apartment buildings in the R-7 (University Residential) Zoning District, and the other option was to request a rezoning of the properties to the R-5 (Medium High Density Multiple Family Residential) Zoning District. From City staff's point of view, rezoning to R-5 would not come with any certainty for the City or the neighborhood. In PUDs,

we actually get to see the plans when reviewing the development for approval. However, once a rezoning request is granted, the development could be built to the maximum development standards, which could be different than what was being proposed in a rezoning case.

With no further questions for City staff, Chair Fitch opened the hearing for public input. He stated the procedure for a public hearing. He stated that there were 19 written communications received in opposition to the proposed PUD cases. Reasons for opposition included:

- Character of the neighborhood
- Traffic and Parking
- Violation of the City's Comprehensive Plan
- Surplus of Multiple Family Unit Housing

Although all of the communications were in opposition, some people mentioned some of the aspects that they liked about the proposed development, such as the different changes in the exterior, the pitched roofs, and saving of the mature trees. However, these aspects and the amenity of the new sidewalk were not enough to justify the granting of the proposed PUD requests.

Chair Fitch invited the applicants to speak.

Jacob Unzicker and Josh Daly, of Mode 3 Architecture, spoke on behalf of their preliminary and final applications for a Planned Unit Development.

Mr. Unzicker thanked Mr. Garcia for his staff presentation. He noted that they have developed other sites, including 809 West Nevada, in the City of Urbana. They tried to use what they learned from developing the other sites and the Lincoln-Busey Design Guidelines when designing the proposed development. They walked the site prior to coming up with any designs and noticed the mature trees, and they decided to keep most of them in their design. When drawing up the designs, they tried to keep within the development regulations and succeeded with the parking and maximum height of the building. The only thing they need a waiver for is the Floor Area Ratio (FAR). He pointed out that the existing buildings are currently not in compliance with the FAR regulations.

Mr. Unzicker mentioned that they were planning to provide more sustainable features in the development, such as permeable paving, covered parking, saving mature trees, and providing an Open Space Ratio of .42 (which is enough to get credit for LEED in Open Space). They plan to construct the buildings in compliance with the 2018 Illinois Building Code, which is the current standards for energy efficiency. He mentioned other energy efficiency features that they will provide and materials they will use.

Mr. Daly stated that the proposed site is unique to the neighborhood as it is located directly across Lincoln Avenue from the Alumni Center. The development was designed to give a presentation to the University of Illinois campus. The mature trees were the first thing that drove the proposed design. There will be five buildings. Three buildings along Lincoln Avenue appear to be one because of the design of the roof. They wanted to have sloped roofs and keep a residential scale to the buildings. He talked about the materials they plan to use to keep in character with nearby structures. Parking will be located in the back of the buildings along Lincoln Avenue. They felt it was important to allow light and air down into the center of the

development. The setbacks are significant to allow better visibility. He felt the proposed development would vastly improve the view of the subject properties from the Alumni Center compared to the existing buildings. A development like this would put a good face to the residential neighborhood and will emphasize the quality of the neighborhood.

Mr. Unzicker talked about the proposed sidewalk being reconstructed on their part of the property. They agreed with City staff on this, and they plan to provide a landscaping plan for the proposed site before the Design Review Board reviews the design of the project.

Mr. Daly added the importance of providing the open space. The proposed design is only 10% more than what currently is there with nine structures, plus garages and covered porches. They are also providing additional bicycle parking.

Chair Fitch asked if their target market was grad students with the development having a mix of single bedroom and studio apartments. Mr. Daly said that was correct.

Chair Fitch inquired about the amount of rent. Mr. Unzicker and Mr. Daly stated that they did not know what the rent would be.

Chair Fitch asked if there was anyone in the public that wanted to speak in favor of the proposed PUD. There were none. Chair Fitch, then, asked if anyone wanted to speak in opposition. He reminded them to raise their hand and he would call their name in the order that he saw on the screen.

Leslie Sherman stated that she lives in the 500 block of Oregon and she is opposed to the proposed development. When she bought her house, she knew the zoning of her property. She believed that others should know and respect the zoning of properties they purchase. The proposed properties are zoned R-7, and the owner(s) should not assume that because there is higher density across the street, that they can build a higher density development. They should maintain the properties as the Comprehensive Plan designates.

Ms. Sherman stated that the proposed development does not provide enough parking for all of the apartments. Most people will want to have a vehicle to be able to go to the store and buy groceries. This will create more of a parking issue on the nearby streets than what already exists. She asked the Plan Commission to deny the requests.

Mary Pat McGuire stated that she owns lives at 804 West Nevada, which is within 250 feet of the proposed site. She mentioned that her neighbor Marie Pierre Lassiva Moulin, who owns and resides at 806 West Nevada, asked her to include Ms. Moulin in her remarks during this meeting because Ms. Moulin was unable to attend. Ms. McGuire read from and talked about points mentioned in her written communication that was sent to City staff prior to this meeting.

Christopher Hansen stated that he lives three blocks from the proposed development. He opposed the proposed development because they are proposing to use the same type of lights along the sidewalk that they used for 809 West Nevada Street. The lights look horrible. If they change the type of lights they used, then he might be in favor of the proposed development.

Although the existing structures may have historical value, no one is going to invest money in all ten of the structures to renovate them and make them aesthetically valuable. The proposed development seems like an improvement to the neighborhood. He wondered what the people who wrote in opposition considered the alternative to this proposal to be. Chair Fitch replied that they did not provide alternatives.

Mr. Unzicker noted that the Bollard lighting was provided at 809 West Nevada to try to meet certain requirements of lighting level on the ground. They will look into what other lighting is available prior to going before the Design Review Board.

Mr. Unzicker stated that the proposed development meets the parking requirements for the district. For single bedroom units, the requirement is .7 parking spaces per unit, which results in 49 parking spaces for this development. As for the stormwater runoff, they plan to provide some permeable pavement to help mitigate any runoff.

Chair Fitch closed the public input portion of the hearing. He opened the hearing for Plan Commission discussion and/or motion(s).

Ms. Yu stated that she had mixed feelings. There are ten properties. She would like to see a reuse of the three big houses, and it would be sad to see the four duplexes along the California side be demolished. On the other hand, she felt the proposed development was solid.

Mr. Fell agreed with Ms. Yu in that the proposed development would take away the big group house that attracts residents and generates a lot of noise and replace them with one-bedroom apartments. The neighborhood has told the Plan Commission before in other cases that they want a different demographic of tenants than the loud, partying type. The proposed development would provide the type of neighbors that the citizens want. While he felt that the scale and use of the proposed development would be appropriate, he had sympathy for the neighbors. There have been about six developments proposed in this general area of Lincoln Avenue. This tells him that maybe the Comprehensive Plan is wrong. He suggested that City staff who is working on updating the Comprehensive Plan should take into consideration.

Mr. Allred also had mixed feelings about the proposed development. Development already exists on the proposed sites so the proposal would not be considered infill development. The proposed development would provide a different type of housing choice than what currently exists on the proposed site. He agreed that several requests for rezoning and PUDs along Lincoln Avenue suggests that the zoning is out of whack with what the market is willing to provide. Some developers have done engagement with the public to get their input early on in the designing process and to respond to some of the public's concerns. There were not many constructive comments in the written communications that were useful in terms of negotiating a PUD and asking for some concessions or granting flexibility. This might have happened if there would have been prior public engagement. He wondered if there still might be time for the public engagement to take place.

Ms. Billman felt confused. She does not know which way to vote. She agreed with Ms. Yu in that the proposed development would be a good idea. She hated to see some of the existing buildings to be demolished; however, she realized that a developer would not be willing to develop something small on the other sites.

Mr. Hopkins suggested that the Plan Commission continue the cases to a future meeting. He felt this would be an appropriate strategy for the following reasons: 1) Give people more time to review the case, 2) To make a decisive edge from the residential neighborhood – the face along Lincoln Avenue is a decisive edge. The proposed development is located on a block in which the backside along Busey Avenue is already large group buildings. The only real surprise is the increase in the FAR. Something close to what is being presented would be significantly better than construction by right would allow. Preserving a rooming house because it was given an R-7 zoning because it was already a rooming house is not necessarily consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan or the Lincoln-Busey Corridor Plan. It is difficult to work all of the details out in one meeting.

Chair Fitch agreed with Mr. Hopkins. He felt there were many features about the proposed development to like. Something like this is what the Lincoln-Busey Corridor concept wants to have happen. We want there to be development that is compatible with the neighborhood but which is across the street from the University of Illinois and is attractive to that population. He is concerned about the FAR; however, if they rezone the properties, then the City loses their ability to review the design. He did not feel that the R-5 Zoning District would be appropriate for this site.

Mr. Garcia stated that it would be appropriate to continue the meeting. He asked the Plan Commission to provide what they needed from City staff. Is there any additional information that the Plan Commission members need? Is there an analysis that City staff can perform and provide results to the members? Is there anything that the members need from the architects?

Mr. Fell wondered if they should ask the applicants if they are willing to continue the case. Chair Fitch agreed.

Ms. Billman stated that she could not read the small type on the Site Plan. She requested a paper copy. Are there any floor plans available? Chair Fitch agreed that it was difficult to read unless you zoom way in. Mr. Hopkins stated that especially if you have a large computer screen, you can pan around and zoom in to read the smaller print. He could not find plans for the second or third floors.

Ms. Yu recalled a public meeting being held for a development of this block. Mr. Garcia said that was correct. There was a developer that had proposed a plan that was significantly larger than what was currently being proposed. It was 5-1/2 stories tall and no setbacks. They held an open house at the Urbana Free Library and then shortly thereafter withdrew their application for development before coming to the Plan Commission.

Mr. Allred felt that the applicants gave a better description articulating what the project is doing above and beyond a conventional development. This did not show up in the materials that was given to the Plan Commission. Maybe the applicants can better articulate some of the LEED criteria in their written designs. This would help the Plan Commission members weigh something more than a new sidewalk setback further from Lincoln Avenue against a significant increase in the FAR.

Mr. Hopkins stated that they could use more sharing time, which also includes being able to find the information and being able to read it. Another thing would be more details on the FAR issue. This would include what the implications are for the project (what is dependent on the extra FAR). It would also help to know what development would be possible by right with no change in zoning.

Mr. Weisskopf felt that development of the properties would not be any better than what is being proposed. The applicants would be removing four dangerous buildings. 804 West Oregon is a reflection of the reality of 100-year-old structures directly adjacent/across the street to an ever growing and dynamic university campus. By the way, they are proposing all one bedroom apartments, which is the lowest impact form of housing. They are not traditionally the party types of housing. Did anyone acknowledge this? No, there is no recognition that this is the best possible scenario as far as density and load of people. He is against delaying the decision. He felt that they were not being honest about the situation. To do a PUD in the R-7 Zoning District is cleaning up the zoning because R-7 is so confusing.

Ms. Billman stated that she was happy to hear what he had to say; however, she was still not ready to vote.

Mr. Hopkins said that the proposed development is close to what he felt should happen on Lincoln Avenue. His suggestion to continue the case was not intended to give the opponents more time to drum up more letters of opposition. The Plan Commission has had relatively little time to review the application. It is both a preliminary and final PUD.

Chair Fitch stated that there are some Plan Commission members not ready to vote which is why he would be willing to continue the two cases. He asked the applicants if they would be willing to continue the cases.

Mr. Daly explained that he did not know how productive holding a public meeting prior to the Plan Commission meeting would be other than hearing opposition. What constructive criticism would have come out of it? As an architect company who has a client, they did their job as sincere as they could and the proposed development is what they are presenting. They limited what they could ask for as much as possible while trying to deliver a quality development. Approval of this is important or else it kills the project. This may not be important to some people, but this is how economics work with developing properties.

Chair Fitch asked if the applicants would be willing to continue the two cases to Thursday, November 19th. Mr. Daly said yes.

Mr. Hopkins stated that the Plan Commission was not directing the applicants to arrange a meeting with the public at this point. He was stating that the lead time for the information to be available for the public and even the Plan Commission to review it was difficult to pull off in a quick time.

Mr. Weisskopf pointed out that they have the Design Review Board meeting to go through to review the design of the project and the City Council to make a decision on the PUD cases. However, if two weeks won't scare the applicants away, then they can continue the cases.

Mr. Fell asked what would happen if the Design Review Board makes the applicants redesign the project. Mr. Garcia replied that is one reason he suggested the condition *that construction be in general conformance with the Site Plan and Elevations attached to the written staff report, subject to minor modifications that may be required by the Design Review Board.* If the Design Review Board requested major changes, then the applicants would have to come back before the Plan Commission. The Design Review Board would look at specific Design Guidelines for the Lincoln-Busey Corridor when reviewing the proposed Site Plan and designs.

Mr. Hopkins asked if the applicants know what the Design Guidelines are. Mr. Garcia said yes. Mr. Hopkins stated that he was going to assume the Plan Commission can push this forward based on the things that matter to the Plan Commission, and that the Design Review Board will keep its focus on what they are supposed to focus on and nothing more.

Chair Fitch moved to continue Plan Case Nos. 2411-PUD-20 and 2412-PUD-20 to the Plan Commission meeting on Thursday, November 19, 2020. Ms. Billman seconded the motion. Roll call was as follows:

Mr. Fitch	-	Yes	Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes
Mr. Weisskopf	-	Yes	Ms. Yu	-	No Answer
Mr. Allred	-	Yes	Ms. Billman	-	Yes
Mr. Fell	-	Yes			

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

8. NEW BUSINES

There was none.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Mary Pat McGuire addressed the Plan Commission to talk about the procedure for a public hearing. Her understanding was that the public would be allowed a second chance to speak on a case. Regarding Plan Case Nos. 2411-PUD-20 and 2412-PUD-20, she expressed that it was upsetting to hear the conversation that took place by the Plan Commission. She felt that there was basically a dismissal of 20 emails and letters and comments that were given in opposition.

Chair Fitch stated that the two cases were continued. The Plan Commission followed the process outlined in the Plan Commission bylaws, which are reviewed annually. During the annual review is when it would be appropriate to make changes.

Ms. McGuire replied that her point is if the Plan Commission wants feedback from the public on any case before the Plan Commission, then the Plan Commission should make that clear. Any communication received should be considered. Some of the comments made about the case, about the proposed site and about the role of a Planned Unit Development were inappropriate. The purpose of a Planned Unit Development is not to clean up the zoning. There is clear criteria. The neighborhood felt that there should be more of a process rather than steam rolling the proposed project through.

Ms. McGuire went on to say that there is an openness to understanding the changing nature of our community on all of its frontages. However, this process is not yielding a very good result in terms of a shared understanding about creative ways to incorporate feedback in this process. The fact that the Plan Commission, themselves, did not feel that they had time to review the material before making a decision. Isn't that indication enough that we do not have a good process? This concerned her very much.

Leslie Sherman addressed the Plan Commission. She agreed with Ms. McGuire's comments. Ms. Sherman felt that her comments during the public hearing were ignored. The voice of 20 plus residents were ignored. It concerns her that a couple of the Plan Commission members stated that the Comprehensive Plan may be wrong because developers want to develop along Lincoln Avenue. The Comprehensive Plan was put in place to protect areas such as West Urbana, and she hoped that the Plan Commission would learn to respect that more.

Christopher Hansen addressed the Plan Commission. He began by stating that it is not appropriate for Chair Fitch to interrupt people while they are giving their input. The Illinois Attorney General has made it clear that during general public input at meetings, the City cannot make it content specific. So, someone is allowed to comment on a topic unrelated to the agenda.

Mr. Hansen stated that there have been a few attempts during both public hearings for both sides to make claims that they are representing the community. He hoped that the Plan Commission would ignore these claims by both sides. People can speak for themselves. He did not like the idea that someone was representing him. He lives in West Urbana as well. He is not part of Ms. Sherman's consensus. He would hope that the people listening would represent their own ideas and not claim that they represent the whole neighborhood.

Mr. Hansen hoped that the written communications for Plan Case No. 2410-M-20 would be posted so the public can see them. While he was able to see a couple of them, he did not see all 19 of them.

Mr. Hansen talked about the comment made about parking and how more people own vehicles nowadays. He did not see this as a fact. His observation is that people have fewer cars these days than 10 or 20 years ago. He suggested that maybe the Plan Commission could direct City staff to provide data on this concern. He felt that the proposed Planned Unit Development would provide plenty of parking.

Mr. Hansen addressed the issue of noise. He would like to see data on whether a single bedroom apartment would be attractive to "more responsible" people, which would create less noise. It is not fair to characterize people who live in certain types of dwellings.

Mr. Hansen talked about the Comprehensive Plan. The new update should not just reflect what the developers market says, but also what the single-family buyers' market states.

Mr. Hansen asked if the Plan Commission had been consulted about the new Public Input Guidelines. Chair Fitch stated that the Plan Commission just received them. He apologized for interrupting Ms. McGuire and Ms. Sherman.

Mr. Corkery addressed the Plan Commission to ask about the new Comprehensive Plan. Chair Fitch said that there is a new plan in the works. Mr. Garcia added that the City would be starting their outreach soon. COVID has slowed down the process as with many things.

Erik Sacks addressed the Plan Commission to ask if there was a way for citizens of Urbana to be notified directly of the new Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Sacks stated that he would like to see the Plan Commission members take the opinions of the residents in the neighborhood serious as well as the owners of various properties that want to develop them. Ignoring the opinions of those in opposition of a development is not a good way to build a community. He encouraged the developer to reach out to the community even if the conversation would be difficult.

Mr. Garcia stated there would be ways for the citizens of Urbana to provide input into the new Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Garcia talked about the notification process for cases. City staff has certain rules that they must follow by law to post signs on properties where a case is being considered and to post legal ads in the News Gazette. It is on the City staff's radar to find ways to get information out to the public ahead of time. The two public hearings that were held during this meeting were posted on the Proposed Development Projects webpage of the City's website. Staff recognizes that there are some shortcomings and hope to address them in the future. Mr. Saks suggested posting information on neighborhood mailing lists and maybe on Nextdoor.com or similar sites.

Ms. Billman asked if the City staff gets the information in plenty of time. Mr. Garcia explained that City staff receives applications about a month prior to a meeting. However, the staff is not only working on one case at a time, and cases take time to prepare. Many times they are getting information put together in the few days before the written staff report is sent out. It might be possible to build in some time to allow the staff to get those reports completed further in advance and share them sooner than required.

10. STAFF REPORT

Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner, talked about the following:

- VitalSkin Special Use Permit would be going to City Council along with a related Variance request on Monday, November 9, 2020.
- Comprehensive Plan Update – City staff is preparing to conduct a public outreach. We have been working with a graphic designer to put together a website that will have a lot of public engagement components to it. The City's two-person team will be presenting an update on where they are with the process of creating a new Comprehensive Plan to the Plan Commission at their December 10, 2020 regular meeting.

Kat Trotter, Planner I, noted the following:

- Plan Case No. 2410-M-20 would go before Committee of the Whole on Monday, November 16, 2020.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Garcia, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission