

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: June 11, 2015

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

PLACE: Urbana City Building
Council Chambers
400 South Vine Street
Urbana, IL 61801

MEMBER PRESENT: Corey Buttry, Maria Byndom, Andrew Fell, Tyler Fitch, Lew Hopkins, Christopher Stohr, David Trail

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dannie Otto

STAFF PRESENT: Lorrie Pearson, Planning Manager; Kevin Garcia, Planner II; Matt Rejc, CD Associate

OTHERS PRESENT: Willow Jenkins, Bryan Johns, Fred Lux, Ramu Ramachandran, Bill Scott, Dennis Stivers

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

Chairperson Fitch called the meeting to order at 7:30 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 April 23, 2015 regular meeting and the May 21, 2015 regular meeting were presented for approval.

Mr. Fell moved that the Plan Commission approve both sets of minutes. Mr. Hopkins seconded the motion. The motion was approved as presented by unanimous vote.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 2256-PUD-15 and Plan Case No. 2257-PUD-15 – A request by Clark-Lindsey Village, Inc. for a Preliminary and Final approval of a residential mixed-use Planned Unit Development at 101 West Windsor Road in the City’s R-3, Single and Two-Family Residential Zoning District.

Chair Fitch reopened the public hearing for these two cases. Kevin Garcia, Planner II, presented a brief staff report. He explained that the request is to allow the construction of three one-story residential buildings as well as additions to existing buildings on the proposed site. He reviewed the options of the Plan Commission and presented an updated staff recommendation for approval.

Mr. Trail asked for clarification on street width. The staff report states 25 feet; however, other documents in the packet state a 20-foot two-lane access drive that widens to a 28-foot drive with two lanes and parallel parking. Mr. Garcia stated the applicant originally asked for a 20-foot drive in their application but after having talked with City staff, they agreed to a 25-foot wide access drive widening to a 29-foot wide drive with parking. This is reflected on the Site Plan dated 05-15-2015, which is mentioned in the condition for approval.

Mr. Trail asked if this new parking along Race Street would be in support of the three new residential buildings or was the parking planned to generally support the facility. He also expressed concern about the safety of having a road on one side of a sidewalk and a parking lot on the other side. He talked about the future possibility of the City widening Race Street in the area where the new parking would be constructed and wondered if there was another area on the subject property where the proposed new parking could be constructed. Mr. Garcia deferred these questions to the architect.

Mr. Stohr asked if future tenants used moving vans to move into the Green House buildings and parked along the narrow access drive, would there be enough space for emergency vehicles to pass, if needed. Mr. Garcia explained that the Fire Department, Police Department and the Public Works Department staff all reviewed the proposed plans and each had given their approval.

With no further questions for City staff, Chair Fitch reviewed the procedures for a public hearing. He, then, opened the hearing for public input.

Ramu Ramachandran, architect for the proposed project introduced Fred Lux, Director of Enrollment Services, and Bryon Johns, Landscape Architect, both from Clark-Lindsey Village, who were with him to answer any questions.

To answer Mr. Trail’s questions, he stated that one of the biggest problems that Clark-Lindsey Village faces is the lack of parking, especially for staff. Clark-Lindsey prides itself on not being short-staffed. So they obtained an agreement with the Urbana Park District to share the parking lot just south of the area where the Green House buildings would be constructed. From his

understanding, the parking lot is being more regularly and intensely used by Urbana residents and by the Urbana Park District patrons. Even though they have this agreement, there is definitely a need to add more parking spaces on the Clark-Lindsey Village property.

Exhibit D/E shows that each Green House building will have a dedicated access lane into a garage on either side of the Green Houses. This ensures that if there is a moving van or delivery then they would not be blocking the main road for emergency vehicles to access.

He mentioned that with regards to the road width, during the course of planning the proposed development, many of the residents have given significant feedback and stated that they love the existing look and feel of Clark-Lindsey Village. This was the fundamental reason why they approached the City for a 20-foot wide lane. They wanted to save as many of the trees as possible. They even narrowed down the row of parking along Race Street from a double row of parking to a single row to keep a buffer of trees. They will make sure to provide a buffer, and Clark-Lindsey does a fantastic job of maintaining their grounds by pruning, growing and caring for their trees, and choosing the right kind of landscape.

Mr. Trail wondered if the new parking area could be located on the east side of the Green House buildings rather than on the west side along Race Street. They could also move the location of the Green House buildings further east to provide more of a buffer along Race Street. Mr. Ramachandran explained that the main concern with this would be headlights shining in the windows. Relocating the additional new parking spaces elsewhere on the subject property would have significant impact to the property. The hope of Clark-Lindsey is to ensure that their land is maintained so they can offer the best services to their residents. His firm was careful to make sure that they did not enter into too much of the land that they took out existing greenery or to take away their capacity for future growth.

Mr. Trail expressed concern for people walking along Race Street. Mr. Ramachandran asked if his concern could be resolved with specific landscaping. Mr. Trail mentioned that the flagged lamp poles are exactly what you normally see in pedestrian walkway areas, so he wondered if they could continue them down the length of the new parking area. Mr. Johns responded saying that they planned to use the same lighting in the Villas development of the property, so continuing it here would tie both sides of Berns Clancy Drive together. He believed that Clark-Lindsey Village's Marketing Department would like this idea.

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

Mr. Hopkins moved that the Plan Commission forward Plan Case No. 2256-PUD-15 and Plan Case No. 2257-PUD-15 to City Council with a recommendation for approval including the following two conditions: 1) Construction will be in general conformance with the detailed Site Plan dated 05-15-2015 and shown in Exhibit F and 2) Construction will be in conformance with the general Site Plan shown in Exhibits D and E. Mr. Buttry seconded the motion. Roll call was as follows:

Mr. Buttry - Yes Ms. Byndom - Yes

Mr. Fell	-	Yes	Mr. Fitch	-	Yes
Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes	Mr. Stohr	-	Yes
Mr. Trail	-	Yes			

The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Ms. Pearson noted that recommendation will be forwarded to City Council on June 15, 2015.

Plan Case No. 2258-M-15 – A request by the Zoning Administrator to rezone a 1.36 acre parcel located at 401-1/2 and 403 East Kerr Avenue from B-3, General Business Zoning District, to R-4, Medium-Density Multiple Family Residential Zoning District.

Chair Fitch opened the public hearing for this item on the agenda. Matt Rejc, CD Associate, presented this case to the Plan Commission. He began by explaining that the reason for the rezoning is to allow the developer to build 33 residential units. He stated the zoning, existing and future land use designations of the proposed site and of the surrounding adjacent properties. He reviewed how the LaSalle National Bank criteria pertained to the proposed rezoning. He read the options of the Plan Commission and presented City staff’s recommendation for approval.

Chair Fitch asked if there were any questions from the Plan Commission for City staff. There were none. Chair Fitch reiterated the procedures for a public hearing, and opened the hearing up for public input.

Aaron Smith, Executive Director of Homestead Corporation, approached the Plan Commission to speak. He stated that they were excited for the proposed project to be moving forward again. Lack of available financing caused them to delay their progress, but due to some changes and some recent developments, they have been able to obtain the financing needed to complete the development project. The proposed rezoning is the first step to the process.

Mr. Fell wondered why some of the units were accessible if they were all going to be single-family and duplexes. Mr. Smith explained that it is a requirement of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program.

Mr. Trail asked what the developer might have learned from redeveloping Crystal View Townhomes that he planned to apply to the proposed development. Mr. Smith stated that the main thing they learned was related to some of the mechanical and energy-efficient features. On the Crystal View Townhomes site, they did geo-thermal throughout the site. It was a fairly large up-front cost for them. They found that maintenance of the units was more intensive than anticipated, so they planned to look for alternative energy-efficiency measures for the proposed new development.

In terms of day-to-day management and tenant selection, they have had a stable operation with Crystal View Townhomes. They plan to use the same management team as Crystal View Townhomes for the proposed new development. Since the two sites are adjacent, they will be connected with a pedestrian path.

Mr. Trail noticed that there was not much parking being proposed in the development. He asked if the developer was planning for future tenants to ride the bus or walk. Mr. Smith replied that in Crystal View Townhomes, there was more than ample number of parking spaces for the amount of cars that the tenants actually have. There was also street parking in the Crystal View development that has not really been utilized, so they are not planning to provide as much in the proposed development.

Mr. Trail stated that the two developments would be similar so one could almost view them as one. Mr. Smith explained that part of their motivation for wanting to develop the proposed site was because it was adjacent to Crystal View Townhomes, and they want it to be an extension of that site.

Mr. Trail wondered if they had contacted CU-MTD about providing bus services. Mr. Smith said that they had not made any formal requests with them, but they would consider it.

Mr. Fell expressed concern about the layout of the streets and access to the dumpsters. He asked if it would be possible to flip the layout of the streets so that the street would run along Kerr Avenue rather than butting up to the neighboring property to the south. Mr. Smith stated that there is a row of trees along the property to the south separating the two properties. The location of the dumpsters may not actually be placed as shown. They still need to speak with the Fire and Police Departments to ensure that the street layout meets their satisfaction. They could make changes to the location of the dumpsters if they need to.

Mr. Hopkins pointed out that they are reviewing the applicant's request to rezone the property from B-3 to R-4, not review plans for a future development. Although it is interesting to look at the Site Plan, it is almost too much information for what they were to be considering.

Mr. Stohr questioned if some of the garden area could be used for open space or to construct a playground for the children who would live there. Mr. Smith believed that there was some intention to provide some open space and possibly a playground.

Bill Scott approached the Plan Commission to speak in opposition. He stated that he owns all of the properties along the east and south sides of the subject property, including all of the houses on Barr Avenue. He has been acquiring properties in the area for the last 30 years so he can develop them for commercial use, not residential. He would even be willing to purchase some of the proposed site because it is a prime area to have commercial businesses.

Rezoning the subject property to residential use will devalue all of his properties. It will also put the burden of screening/buffering on him when he develops his two vacant properties because his is the business/commercial use. He encouraged the Plan Commission to continue this meeting so that he could have time to look over the written staff report more and to talk with City staff about his plans for developing his properties and possibly purchasing property from the City.

Mr. Hopkins asked if Mr. Scott received a notice about the public hearing for the proposed rezoning. Mr. Scott said yes. Mr. Hopkins questioned what information Mr. Scott did not

receive until this meeting that he felt was significant. Mr. Scott replied that he had not seen the written staff report and Site Plan before this meeting.

Mr. Hopkins stated that the proposed case was about rezoning the two properties at 401-1/2 and 403 East Kerr Avenue from B-3 to R-4. He understood that Mr. Scott was opposed to the rezoning. Mr. Scott commented that was correct. He would also like to see the rest of 401 East Kerr Avenue and 302, 304, 306 and 308 East Barr Avenue be rezoned to B-3 because it would be a great way to redevelop this area of Cunningham Avenue. If they approve the proposed rezoning, then it will negatively impact the properties on Barr Avenue.

Willow Jenkins, of 406 East Kerr Avenue, approached the Plan Commission to speak in opposition. She expressed concern about the amount of pedestrian traffic that the proposed new development would produce. She believed her property value would decrease as well due to the traffic and the low-income families that would be allowed to live there.

Dennis Stivers, of 1005 North Geraldine Avenue, approached the Plan Commission to speak in opposition. He stated that he was opposed because the proposed new development would be multi-family low-income housing and across the street would be single-family owner-occupied housing. Renters come and go; while single-family homeowners take care of their properties. The new development would also create more concrete-paved over land adding to the existing problems of poor drainage.

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

Ms. Byndom asked for clarification on what the Comprehensive Plan's future use designation is for the proposed area. Chair Fitch answered saying that the area was designated as future mixed residential.

Chair Fitch stated his concern about the houses on Barr Avenue being landlocked.

Ms. Byndom stated that she felt the proposed rezoning would conform to what the Comprehensive Plan designates the future use of the lots to be as "mixed residential". A similar proposal was presented to the City in the past, and the City wanted to move forward with it at that time. There is a need for this type of housing in the community. She also liked that they have already been awarded vouchers for homeless veterans to live there. She did not see a strong case to keep it zoned for commercial. Therefore, she felt comfortable proceeding with the hearing.

Mr. Stohr agreed with Ms. Byndom about the vouchers for veterans. However, he expressed concern about the density of the proposed use and shared Ms. Jenkins' concerns about development and multi-family. He also had some concerns about there not being much open space in the proposed development. He favored continuing the case.

Mr. Fell asked when the City of Urbana purchased the two lots. Mr. Rejc said that they were purchased in 2004. Mr. Fell wondered if they had been placed on the open market for any

developer to purchase or were there special conditions why the City was able to purchase them. Mr. Rejc stated that he would have to research this to respond.

Mr. Trail believed that there was general community interest in not allowing land to be held undeveloped even if there might potentially be plans for the future use of the land. He did not see a problem with rezoning the proposed site. By holding it for future commercial implies to him that we think there might be a commercial development with a large, paved parking lot along this area of Cunningham Avenue. He did not believe that was part of the City's plans in the Comprehensive Plan when it says "Community Business". To him that means small businesses.

With regards to the houses on Barr Avenue being landlocked, he agreed somewhat that there is concern. However, he did not see a potential commercial use helping improve the problem. The City could possibly purchase one of the houses on the end to extend Barr Avenue into the proposed new development, but if we were going to do that, then he believed that we would have already done so to extend Barr Avenue into Crystal View.

Mr. Hopkins moved that the Plan Commission forward Plan Case No. 2258-M-15 to the City Council with a recommendation for approval. Ms. Byndom seconded the motion.

Mr. Hopkins explained the strategy to his motion. He encouraged the land owning parties to consider the possibility of configuring a more effective arrangement of ownership so that the housing proposal could have two exits, which would decrease the impact on Kerr Avenue. It would resolve many of the issues of the four stranded residential R-3 zoned parcels at the end of Barr Avenue. It would also enable a project from Homestead's point of view to go forward. The depth of the commercial would still be significant greater than the existing commercial development that is there now.

Mr. Trail commented that in terms of a zoning decision, the Plan Commission should either approve it if it makes sense to do. He felt that it would make sense to approve the proposed rezoning because Brinshore Development and Homestead plan to build a useful development rather than waiting for something to potentially happen.

Mr. Stohr stated that he would hate to see the loss of commercial property if it could be potentially used as business. With the four houses on the west end of Barr Avenue being landlocked and with there being very little open space area in the proposed residential development, he would prefer to continue the case. Mr. Hopkins explained that there was a timeline for a grant that Homestead Corporation was applying for, so they should not delay making a recommendation.

He continued by saying that by sending the proposed map amendment to City Council with a recommendation for approval, then the rezoning can occur, the application can be made based on a proposal that is already highly developed, and the Plan Commission has stated for the record that there was a better way to develop the properties without landlocking the four houses on the west end of Barr Avenue.

Mr. Fell mentioned that any proposed development on the lots will have to conform to the Urbana Zoning Ordinance with regards to open space. Mr. Hopkins asked if the applicant would need approval for a Planned Unit Development to develop the proposed site. Ms. Pearson stated that although there may be changes to the proposed development plans, the applicant has stated a desire to meet the by-right requirements for the R-4 Zoning District so no Planned Unit Development would be required. At this point in the process, Exhibits A-01 through A-10 were only conceptual drawings to attach to the map amendment application. Most of the engineering and detailed plans have not been provided to the City as of yet.

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Mr. Buttry	-	Yes	Ms. Byndom	-	Yes
Mr. Fell	-	Yes	Mr. Fitch	-	Yes
Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes	Mr. Stohr	-	No
Mr. Trail	-	Yes			

The motion passed by a 6-1 vote. Chair Fitch stated that this case would be forwarded to City Council on June 15, 2015.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 2259-M-15 – A request by C-U at Home to rezone a 0.19 acre parcel located at 703 North Matthews Avenue from R-2, Single-Family Residential Zoning District, to R-4, Medium-Density Multiple Family Residential Zoning District.

Plan Case No. 2260-SU-15 – A request by C-U at Home for a Special Use Permit to allow for a Home for Adjustment at 703 North Matthews Avenue.

Chair Fitch continued these cases to the Regular meeting of the Urbana Plan Commission on June 18, 2015.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

There was none.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorrie Pearson, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission