

MEETING MINUTES

URBANA MOR DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

DATE: September 30, 2015

APPROVED

TIME: 7:30 p.m.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Scott Kunkel, Dannie Otto, Jeffery Poss, Kim Smith, Jonah Weisskopf

STAFF PRESENT: Elizabeth Tyler, Director of Community Development Services; Jeff Engstrom, Planner II; Teri Andel, Planning Administrative Assistant II

OTHERS PRESENT: Brian Adams, Carolyn Baxley, Beth Darling, Andrew Fell, Michael Fitz, Thomas Garza, Kevin Hunsinger, Dixie Smith Jackson, Eric Jakobsson, Daniel Krehbiel, Ed Maclin, Ben Newman, Crystal Newman, Dan Newman, Sam Newman, Sylvia Sullivan, Sara Wiggins

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

Chair Poss called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was declared with all members present.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINTUES

The minutes from the January 15, 2015 meeting were presented for approval. Ms. Smith moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Kunkel seconded the motion. The minutes were then approved by unanimous voice vote.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Regarding Case No. DRB-2015-01

- Revised Site Plan
- Email from Ryan and Maria Bailey
- Email from Peter and Caroline Coulston

- Email from Kate Hunter
- Email from Louise and T.J. Kuhny
- Email from Linda Lorenz
- Email from Dan Newman
- Email from Alice Novak
- Email from Gina Pagliuso
- Email from Gale Walden
- Email from Eunice Weech

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS

Discussion of Amendment to the Official Bylaws

Chair Poss asked for an update on the possibility of combining the Design Review Board and the MOR Development Review Board. Jeff Engstrom, Planner II, explained that City staff was working on the best way to consolidate the boards. They were reviewing the existing Zoning Ordinance and also were considering a new design review district for Downtown Urbana.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Case No. DRB-2015-01 – A request by Kevin Hunsinger for review of a Site Plan and design of a five-unit apartment building at 611 West Elm Street in the MOR, Mixed Office Residential Zoning District.

Chair Poss opened the public hearing for this case. Jeff Engstrom, Planner II, gave the staff report for the proposed Site Plan review and design approval. He began by presenting a brief background on the proposed site. He mentioned the revised Site Plan that was handed out prior to the start of the meeting. He noted the revisions that were made and were now being proposed. He stated the intent of the MOR Zoning District and reviewed the objectives from the Urbana Zoning Ordinance that the MOR Development Review Board has when reviewing the Site Plan proposal.

Using the revised Site Plan as an exhibit, he described the proposed development. He presented a zoning analysis with regards to the development regulations for new development in the MOR Zoning District. He stated the zoning and land uses of the surrounding properties and of the properties in the block. He noted that the revised Site Plan conforms to the development regulations required in the Urbana Zoning Ordinance in terms of height, setbacks, floor area ratio (FAR) and open space ratio (OSR).

Mr. Engstrom reviewed how the proposed development related to the Site Plan Review criteria in Section XI-12.I of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance. These criteria include the following:

1) Compatibility with the Surrounding Neighborhood

Mr. Engstrom reviewed other properties in the surrounding area in detail noting their uses, building location, orientation and scale of each building. Ms. Smith pointed out that 203 South Coler Avenue and 701 West Elm Street were not located within the MOR Zoning District, and she questioned whether they should be included in the zoning analysis of massing and scale, especially since *“New construction shall be designed and constructed in a manner that is consistent with the character of the district.”* Ms. Tyler stated that this criteria also says, *“Proposals shall demonstrate consistency with the intent of the MOR Zoning District. In reviewing proposals the Development Review Board shall consider the effects of the proposed structure and use on adjacent properties and the surrounding neighborhood.”* While the MOR Design Guidelines referred only to the block in the MOR Zoning District, these criteria referred to adjacent properties and the surrounding neighborhood.

2) Parking and Access

Mr. Engstrom talked about the removal of the existing garage and the proposed five-space paved parking area to the south of the house that will be screened by a six foot fence.

Chair Poss inquired about the landscaping used around the proposed fence. Mr. Engstrom referred to the list of landscaping materials that was submitted as part of the revised Site Plan.

3) Screening and Landscaping

Mr. Engstrom talked about the existing trees on the proposed site noting that the two trees in the right-of-way along Coler Avenue have been scheduled to be removed due to the overhead power lines and the health condition of the trees. The tree in the back of the property would be removed to allow room for the parking spaces. The owner of the property planned to plant two new trees on the property.

Ms. Smith inquired about a sidewalk being required south of the proposed driveway that would not connect to another sidewalk. Ms. Tyler stated that requiring sidewalks is the best practice to provide a complete network. There is certainly quite a bit of pedestrian traffic in this area. When new development occurs, the City requires new sidewalks to be constructed where they are lacking. The Board could certainly make a recommendation for a terminus at this location, but the City Engineer and Community Development staff recommends that these networks be expanded when possible.

4) Site Details

Mr. Engstrom discussed where the exterior trash dumpsters would be located and how they would be screened. In terms of lighting and location of mailboxes, the applicant has not yet submitted a design.

5) Design Guidelines

Mr. Engstrom stated that there would be an entrance into the proposed building from each street frontage; however, the entrance off Elm Street would be into a single unit. There would be several windows on the front facades along both Elm Street and Coler Avenue. Parking spaces would be located in the rear of the property on the south side.

Mr. Otto asked how City staff determined where the front of the proposed development would be. Mr. Engstrom explained that City staff looked at the surrounding houses, and noted that most of the corner houses in this area face onto Elm Street. The Zoning Ordinance also determines that on a corner lot the narrower of the two frontages is the primary front yard, which is used to determine the rear yard.

Mr. Engstrom reviewed the MOR Design Guidelines and explained how they relate to the proposed development. They are as follows:

- Façade Zone
- Building Orientation & Patterns
- Massing and Scale
- Openings
- Outdoor Living Space
- Materials
- Parking Areas
- Landscaping
- Commercial Site Design

Mr. Otto asked for clarification regarding setbacks. Do setbacks exclude open porches? Mr. Engstrom replied yes. Open porches may encroach into a required yard, but only up to five feet and no closer than five feet to the property line. Mr. Otto asked if the setback along Elm Street is measured to the first enclosed plane of the building. Mr. Engstrom said that was correct.

Mr. Otto inquired how City staff determined that these were porches and not terraces. Mr. Engstrom explained that terraces are on grade. Porches have hand railings, railings all around and columns. The proposed design exhibits porch-like qualities.

Mr. Otto questioned if there would be an easement on the other property to ensure that a parking space would be available in the future if the two properties should change owners. Mr. Engstrom stated that the MOR Development Review Board could require this as a condition of approval.

Mr. Engstrom stated that the Historic Preservation Commission had an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed development because it is adjacent to the Ricker House, which is a Historic Landmark in the City of Urbana. Many of the members provided comments, which have been provided to the MOR Development Review Board.

Ms. Smith explained that she serves on the Historic Preservation Commission and had submitted comments. The existing garage has very little architectural significance and is in a deteriorating state. The form of the existing house is still intact and there are still a lot of historical architectural details remaining for the Dutch Colonial style. The façade along Elm Street has

been impacted by the addition of the outside wooden stairs to the second floor and also by the enclosure/replacement of the porch.

Ms. Smith stated that her concern was how to encourage owners to reuse the existing buildings on these types of properties.

Mr. Engstrom read the options of the MOR Development Review Board and presented City staff's recommendation for approval with conditions. Chair Poss asked if the Board had any questions for City staff.

Mr. Otto acknowledged the number of communications that were submitted with regards to stopping the demolition of the existing house. He asked what authority the Board had relative to the demolition. Mr. Engstrom stated that the MOR Development Review Board did not have authority regarding the demolition itself. However, there was a Demolition Delay Ordinance in effect for this neighborhood, which requires demolition permits to be delayed for 45 days to allow time to review requests for possible historic value. In this case, the applicant applied for a demolition permit and the time period for the delay ends on October 22, 2015. The purview of the MOR Development Review Board was to review the proposed development plan and determine if it meets the intent of the MOR Zoning District.

Mr. Otto wondered if there were any limitations on the density of an apartment building allowed in the MOR Zoning District. Mr. Engstrom explained that there are a few ways in which density is restricted in the MOR. The main restriction is through the FAR limits and the limit of lot area that applies to FAR. OSR and parking also set limits on density.

With there being no further questions for City staff, Chair Poss opened the hearing up for public input.

Andrew Fell, architect for the proposed development project, addressed some of the issues raised. With regards to the location of mailboxes, there would be a niche located inside the front door of the proposed building where they intend to have the mailboxes; however, the United States Post Office determines whether the mailboxes can be located inside or not. They are waiting to hear back from the Post Office.

Mr. Fell spoke with City staff about the possibility of delaying the installation of a sidewalk along Coler Avenue until there is a continuing sidewalk along the Ricker property. This sidewalk would only be required to be built if the Ricker property would be redeveloped, which will never happen. However, City staff denied his request.

The additional parking space would be located at 708 West Elm Street, which the developer also owns. Chair Poss asked if they would be willing to memorialize the parking space by providing an easement. Mr. Fell did not think it would be a problem and noted that to his knowledge the City of Urbana had never requested that be done before. Libby Tyler, Director of Community Development Services Department, replied that if the owner were seeking parking to meet the requirements off-site owned by another person or business, then the Board might want to pursue an easement condition. However, since the owner owns both properties, a letter agreement would be sufficient. City staff would verify availability of the parking space and document it

accordingly. Placing an easement would take legal and engineering work and would be beyond what was needed in her opinion.

Mr. Fell addressed the porch issue. He stated that architects and developers have the problematic issue of dealing with both what is logical and aesthetic and what the Accessibility Code require them to do. The Accessibility Code required them to have two adaptable units in the proposed building, so the ground two units would need to be adaptable. In order to do this, they have to deal with grades. Their preference would have been to raise the first floor up; however, that would mean they would have to install ramps. The site is constrained enough that they would have to put the ramps on the outside of the building, which would be an aesthetic concern.

Ms. Smith asked Mr. Fell to elaborate on his comment in the application about "*the existing structure not being well suited to renovation for intended purpose.*" Mr. Fell replied that this is more of a matter of the existing use of the structure and the compatibility with the City's building codes. The existing structure is a rental property that is underutilized. To remodel the building into different units to meet building code would be impractical.

Mr. Otto inquired as to whether the row of trees on the south side of the property were located on the proposed property or on the Ricker property. Mr. Fell stated that they would not remove anything on a neighboring property. Mr. Engstrom added that it appeared in the survey that was submitted as part of the application that the row of vegetation in question was located on the subject property.

Chair Poss questioned if there had been any discussion about possibly leading the sidewalk along Coler back to the street. Mr. Fell said no. Ms. Tyler stated that it really was best engineering practice to require sidewalks for new development. In this case it may make sense for the sidewalk to lead a pedestrian back into the street. However, that would require a mid-block crossing, and the engineers would likely not allow it in this location. There may be some flexibility to terminate the sidewalk at the driveway.

Chair Poss stated that in the numerous communications that were received, one major concern was about the impact of the proposed development on the Ricker property. He wondered how the decisions came about for the materials for the fence, the color of the fence, and the choice of the vegetation material. Mr. Fell explained they do not want a fence that is transparent so car lights would not shine onto the Ricker property. Material and landscaping choices were due to economics, durability and maintenance requirements.

Ms. Smith asked if there was anything that could be done to the big expanse of wall that would face the Ricker property to make it less industrial looking. Mr. Fell replied yes,

Mr. Otto stated that vinyl siding is excluded in the MOR Zoning District. Did Mr. Fell and the owner consider using masonry for the fence, which would also be durable long term and aesthetically pleasing. Mr. Fell replied no. The project needed to be economically viable as well as aesthetically pleasing. They could probably construct a wood fence, but then there would be maintenance issues with a wood fence. Chair Poss suggested another alternative would be to go with a better quality material and have a shorter fence.

Brian Adams approached the MOR Development Review Board to speak in opposition to the proposed development. He mentioned that he used to live on West Elm Street and liked the old historic feel and setting of the neighborhood. He talked about the impact that the proposed development would have on the historic integrity and feel of the neighborhood. Elm Street was one of the original corridors in the City of Urbana. This area has already been affected by the removal of some historical buildings. There were many important, historic structures dating from the 1860s through the 1920s still standing on Elm Street, so there was a good cross-section of architectural styles and time periods represented. Replacing the existing house with a modern building would have a negative impact on the historic and architectural fabric of the neighborhood. It would also go against one of the goals of the MOR Zoning District, which was adaptive reuse of existing structures.

Eric Jakobsson approached the MOR Development Review Board to speak in opposition to the proposed development. He talked about the 800 block of West Main Street, which was where he lives. Once the City got involved and decided to preserve this block, home owners began expressing interest in renovating their existing structures to their original historic character. Some of the homes on the block were in far worse condition than the existing house at 611 West Elm Street. While the proposed development would not be ugly, it would alter the character of the neighborhood on that block. He urged the Board to see the photos of the inside of the existing structure that are available on the Hunsinger website.

Ms. Smith asked what they could do as a community to save the historic structures in the City of Urbana. Ms. Tyler responded that there was a long history and a variety of tools. There was an outgrowth of concern regarding out-of-scale apartment rebuilding along Green and Elm Streets. This came at a time when there was a variety of rezonings in the City as a result of the Downtown to Campus Plan in the 1990s. The MOR Zoning District was crafted to promote office reuse of existing structures, to limit new development to the FAR requirements we currently have, and to limit lot consolidation. Now the newer built apartment buildings are smaller, have more architectural detail and look more residential than the older apartment buildings.

Another tool was the City's historic preservation protections. Part of Main Street became a historic district. One benefit of a historic district is that it can contain a property such as the proposed site that may not qualify for a landmark on its own but would be worthy of contributing to a district. The City of Urbana has a Demolition Delay Ordinance that gives people the chance to learn about a proposed demolition, to study the property and maybe even preserve the site. To go beyond this, the City would get into the area of property rights.

City staff continually tries to make improvements to the zoning districts. The MOR Development Review Board was previously a staff review board with some outside expertise. Now, it is a citizen review board with different membership requirements. City staff has added the design guidelines for the MOR. The Board could make improvements to a project based on public input and concerns.

Eric Jakobsson added that it seemed there were different considerations, but the Board was not told how much to weight each one. They were charged with being wise. There was one choice that would be irreversible, and that was whether or not to tear the existing structure down.

Dixie Jackson, one of the volunteer managers of the First Presbyterian Church's Thrift Shop located on Elm Street, approached the Board to speak in opposition. She expressed concern about tenants or guests parking in the church's parking lots.

Carolyn Baxley approached the MOR Development Review Board to speak in opposition. She mentioned that she served on the Plan Commission when the Downtown to Campus Plan was adopted and when the MOR Zoning District was created. The intent of the MOR Zoning District was to maintain the look of Green Street and Elm Street and to prevent encroachment of large apartment buildings in the area. The primary purpose was adaptive reuse of existing historic structures with compatible infill by apartment developers such as the owner of 611 West Green Street, Kevin Hunsinger. She complimented Mr. Hunsinger for being responsible and having an aesthetic sense; however, the proposed development did not conform to the primary intent of the MOR Zoning District. Other people have given testimony to the historic character of the existing house. It is a good house and the exterior is intact except for the enclosure of the front porch, which is easily reversible. It is feasible to renovate these historic houses as they exist.

She also expressed concern on the impact the proposed new apartment building would have on the Ricker House. The Ricker House was one of the City of Urbana's most significant historic buildings. It is on the National Register list of Historic Places.

Dan Newman, owner of the Ricker House located to the immediate south of the proposed property, approached the Board to speak in opposition. He asked if the MOR Development Review Board had any authority to stop the existing house from being demolished. Mr. Otto replied that the MOR Development Review Board cannot keep the house from being demolished. The City of Urbana had guidelines with regards to demolition; however, as long as the property owner conformed to the guidelines, the existing house could be torn down and turned into a grassy lot. The Board did have some approval over the design of the new structure, which determines something about the incentives to demolish indirectly.

Mr. Newman inquired about the row of vegetation separating the proposed site from his property. Mr. Engstrom stated that most of the growth was north of one street tree that appeared to be right around the property line. Mr. Newman expressed his concern about trees and other vegetation growth on his side of the property line being removed or considered part of the proposed property. He also expressed concern about the type of fencing the owner was planning to construct between the two properties to screen the parking spaces. A cedar fence would be more aesthetically pleasing than the proposed vinyl fence.

Mr. Newman gave a presentation on the purpose and intent of the MOR Zoning District. He talked about the properties across the street from the proposed site and how the new development would compare in height and appearance to those properties. He talked about the existing structure on the subject property. He reviewed the comments submitted by members of the Historic Preservation Commission.

Ms. Tyler noted that any removal of vegetation on his property would be unlawful. The developer had a survey performed and would not remove trees from his property.

Crystal Wiggins, of 612 West Green Street, approached the Board to speak in opposition. She wondered how the proposed development would affect the feel of the neighborhood. She

expressed concern in that the Historic Preservation Commission was not utilized in the way they should have been to review a case like this. Her family only found out about this from a letter they received in the mail from City staff. They did not have much time to prepare their testimonies. She encouraged the board members to take some time to consider the comments from the written communications that were received and from testimonies they heard at this meeting. This would allow for more input from the neighbors and give the owner more time to finalize his plans.

Thomas Garza, Director of Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA), stated that PACA holds the preservation covenants on the Ricker House, which was located adjacent to the subject property to the south. PACA was concerned about the framing and the context of the proposed development. He recalled the Mumford House. It was a model farm that was built by the University of Illinois to demonstrate farming techniques. Over the years, the University has built around it, and now the Mumford House was the “odd man out”, so framing and context matters. He believed that a large apartment building on the subject property would materially affect the Ricker House and change the neighborhood in a way that would not be good.

Kevin Hunsinger, owner of the proposed property, approached the MOR Development Review Board to answer any questions that the Board members had.

Chair Poss asked Mr. Hunsinger to give a brief history of the property. Mr. Hunsinger began by stating that he purchased the property between ten and fifteen years ago. It was a six bedroom house. One of the major negative impacts that occurred was when the City passed an ordinance stating that no more than four unrelated people could live in a rental property. It highly impacted how he rents the place, because now he could only rent to four people leaving two bedrooms empty. This was not just a revenue issue, but a management issue because now he had to watch to make sure his tenants did not allow extra people to live in the spare two bedrooms. Also, because there was extra space, it would attract young people who like to host parties, which created significant damage on a yearly basis. Over the course of time, the property had deteriorated to a point that it was economically time for him to replace the building.

To the people who want the existing house saved, Mr. Hunsinger argued that, other than the Ricker House, for two blocks in any direction from the subject property was student housing. Although the residents in the West Urbana Neighborhood area did not like it, the reality was that this neighborhood was mostly where college students live. All he wanted to do was to provide a product that the students want. He gets many requests for one bedroom, high quality apartments every day. Future tenants in the proposed apartment building would be more responsible than tenants that live in the existing party house. Future tenants would include grad students and under-grad students that would be serious and take ownership of the neighborhood.

He stated that he would try to be accommodating to the Ricker House. He would be willing to install a cedar fence if that is what the Newman Family wants.

He talked about the size and height of the building compared to other buildings in the immediate area. He stated that because of the property being on a corner lot and having two front yards, he got locked into making the proposed building appear to be more as an apartment than a residential house.

Mr. Newman re-approached to say that the previous tenants have been good neighbors. If they held a party, they would invite him over and asked him if he or his family had any problems with partygoers to please call them rather than calling the police. He would rather have this kind of neighbor in the existing house rather than having six or more neighbors in a 4,600 square foot. One of the roles of the MOR Development Review Board was to judge the scale and massing of a new development.

Mr. Fell re-approached the Board. He mentioned that he was sympathetic to the neighbors. He had lived in the neighborhood for seventeen years and has many historic preservation awards on the walls in his office. However, the City of Urbana needed to promote some growth, and he worked hard to meet every requirement in the MOR Ordinance. If it is the City or the staff's stance that there should not be any new development, then the City needed to revise the existing ordinance.

Chair Poss closed the public input portion of the hearing, and he opened it for discussion and/or vote from the Board.

There was talk amongst City staff and the Board members as to whether they should discuss and take a vote on the case or to continue the public hearing to another meeting. Most of the members agreed that City staff had given a thorough presentation of the case and that they received a clear presentation of the concerns from people in opposition and were ready to discuss the case and take a vote.

Ms. Smith requested that when the Board looked at the massing and scale of the proposed development, they not consider the massing and scale of properties outside of the MOR Zoning District.

Mr. Kunkel mentioned that he appreciated the concerns that neighbors had brought forward. However, he kept coming back to the encouragement of reuse, which was done through an incentive process; in which, a property owner could evaluate and decide if those incentives were adequate or made the best interest for the use of their property to utilize as the basis to adaptively reuse versus replacement. It seemed apparent to him that the property owner had weighed this calculation and had decided that the incentives and opportunities associated with adaptively reusing the property would not make sense and instead chose the other equally viable option to have a new development. Therefore, he felt the Board's charge was not to make a subjective evaluation of the appropriateness of adaptive reuse versus replacement, but instead to take the project as submitted and evaluate how well it conformed with the intent of the MOR District and with the Design Guidelines that were in place if new construction was elected.

Frankly, he believed the owner and architect had done an admirable job. There were some rough edges to discuss such as the fence. He was happy that the owner was not opposed to installing a cedar wood fence around the parking.

Mr. Weisskopf agreed with Mr. Kunkel's articulation. It was clear that the design and aesthetics of big box apartment buildings was not present in the proposed design. The proposed design was aesthetically pleasing. He sympathized with the neighbors' concerns and felt they were valid. It was a student intense housing area. His concern with students was safety. Ultimately, the proposed new development would be required to have a sprinkler system and meet every new

modern building code that exists when being built versus the safety of a 100-year old building. The proposed design complied with every design standpoint that the City asks for. The design restrictions themselves were the criteria.

Mr. Otto commented that in the preamble to the creation of the MOR District, the economic interest that was referenced referred to the surrounding land owners, not the applicant. Nowhere in the MOR Guidelines did it say that the Board should consider the economic interest of the applicant. So, within the larger framework of the desire to do adaptive reuse first, there was a concession that there might be new construction. However, the economic interest of adjacent landowners was specifically mentioned in the preamble, so the Board needed to weigh that.

He understood the criteria for massing and scale a little differently than what City staff did. To him it had to do with the overall scale of the project and the impact it would have on the neighborhood. Tripling the mass of the building would change the character of the neighborhood, which was specifically mentioned in the preamble. They would be going from the legal occupancy of four to ten people.

If the existing structure no longer existed and adaptive reuse was not an option. The guidelines say that a new building on a vacant lot should be similar to the scale and mass of the previous building or the other houses in the neighborhood. So, to him the proposed development would be an outsized building. It was up to the developer to either adaptively reuse the existing building or to replace it with a new building that would be the same size.

He believed that the new development as proposed would violate the economic impact on the neighborhood, which was the only thing they were instructed to consider in terms of economy and the effect it would have on the adjacent properties.

Mr. Weisskopf estimated in terms of the economic impact on the neighborhood, the new development would triple the tax revenue for the proposed site. He asked Mr. Otto if he would characterize that as an advantage for the neighborhood or an economic incentive for the new development to be built. Mr. Otto replied that it would be an advantage for the City, not the neighborhood. The Board was not supposed to consider this in making a decision to vote in favor or against the proposed request. They are only to consider the affect it would have on the character of the neighborhood, the massing and scale of the proposed new development as well as the economic impact on adjacent properties, the transition of the north side of the street explained by Mr. Jakobsson, and the ability to adaptively reuse an existing structure.

Mr. Otto stated that it was not the job of the Board to layout plans to adaptively reuse the existing structure. The owner purchased the property, had been leasing it out and needed to maintain it to meet the City's codes. Even if it were a vacant lot, he would not approve the scale of the proposed development.

Ms. Smith felt that the design of the proposed development was very sensitive to the Design Guidelines for the MOR District. The architect did a nice job with the detailing to try to bring the scale down. However, her concern was with the massing and scale and how it was justified in the written staff report. She agreed with Mr. Otto on how the proposed development would economically impact the neighborhood.

Chair Poss commented that the Board's role was not to feel comfortable. He had served as Chair for the Board for four years and believed this was the first project that they had heard. He realized why the Board and the MOR District were created. He kept remembering that this is a MOR District and not a historic district. Here was a well-intentioned property owner who had been given a set of criteria and hired an architect to design an apartment building that reflects the intentions and values of the MOR Design Guidelines.

He stated that he had heard a lot of emotional testimony rather than testimony about the economic interest. He related to and empathized with everyone who testified during this public hearing, but ultimately the Board had certain instructions before them. The Board cannot decide whether the existing building gets demolished or not. The Board also cannot decide whether the owner should sell the property to another person who wants to maintain the existing building as a single-family residence. The Board was to decide whether the design for the proposed development met the guidelines for the MOR District.

In doing so, he kept in mind what the MOR was, what was the intention of the MOR and how did the proposed development fulfill those intentions. Because the property was not a historic property, keeping the structure within the same scale was not what the MOR intended. The zoning, the design guidelines and the MOR criteria specifically state what the scale can and cannot be. He felt that the design of the proposed development met the intentions of the MOR Zoning District.

Testimonies during the public hearing prove that there was a greater need to develop more historic districts in the Downtown Urbana area. There seemed to be a tremendous, emotional need to hold on to the historic fabric as much as possible. There was controversy with this because the area was located so close to the University of Illinois' campus, it also made the area viable for student housing. Overall, he felt the developer had done an admirable job in fulfilling the intent of the MOR District.

Mr. Kunkel moved that the MOR Development Review Board approve Case No. DRB-2015-01, which was in general compliance with the guidelines of the MOR Zoning District, including the condition that the fence being proposed to screen the parking along the south boundary of the site be constructed of a natural material in lieu of the proposed PVC material. Mr. Weisskopf seconded the motion.

Ms. Smith discussed possibly adding conditions to either add detailing or window openings to the expansive wall on the south façade and to add operable doors on the trash areas. Mr. Kunkel asked for a "friendly amendment" to add conditions to include the following:

Condition 2: Additional articulation be provided on the façade on the south elevation,

Condition 3: Screening of the trash area be provided, and

Condition 4: Provide more robust landscaping on the property

Mr. Weisskopf agreed to the suggested changes.

Mr. Otto encouraged both the owner of the proposed property and the Newman Family to have surveys of their properties performed so that the row of vegetation was not removed from the neighboring property.

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Mr. Otto	-	No	Mr. Poss	-	Yes
Ms. Smith	-	Yes	Mr. Weisskopf	-	Yes
Mr. Kunkel	-	Yes			

The motion was passed by a vote of 4 to 1.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Kim Smith requested that City staff review the design guidelines and fine tune the MOR process for future projects. Mr. Kunkel agreed especially in terms of massing and scale. Ms. Tyler replied that City staff could research the purpose or intent of the MOR Zoning District. They have recently been asked to review the Boneyard Creek District by City Council.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATIONS

Dan Newman approached the Board to say that his family preferred there not to be windows on the south façade of the new development to the north. The massing on the south side of the proposed development would be good for privacy. Chair Poss encouraged him to speak with the owner and architect.

Crystal Wiggins wondered if there was a rule that the Historic Preservation Commission must meet to review such proposals. Mr. Engstrom explained that the Ordinance required the Zoning Administrator to forward the Application for Site Plan Approval to the Historic Preservation Commission for comments, but it was not required of the Commission to meet about the application.

10. STAFF REPORT

There was none.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Smith moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kunkel seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Engstrom, AICP, Secretary