

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: November 10, 2005
TIME: 7:30 P.M.
PLACE: Urbana City Building
400 South Vine Street
Urbana, IL 61801

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Burris, Laurie Goscha, Lew Hopkins, Michael Pollock, Bernadine Stake, Jim Ward
MEMBERS EXCUSED: Ben Grosser, Marilyn Upah-Bant, Don White
STAFF PRESENT: Robert Myers, Planning Manager; Matt Wempe, Planner I; Teri Andel, Secretary
OTHERS PRESENT: Ruth Jackson, Susan Taylor

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m., the roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared.

NOTE: Chair Pollock introduced and welcomed the newest member of the Plan Commission, Jane Burris. He also mentioned that there were new microphones and explained how to use them.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Stake moved to approve the minutes from the October 20, 2005 Plan Commission meeting as presented. Mr. Ward seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 1964-M-05: A request to rezone 2007 North Lincoln Avenue from IN, Industrial, to B-3, General Business Zoning District.

Matt Wempe, Planner I, presented the case to the Plan Commission. He gave a brief history and description of the proposed site. He noted the existing land uses and zoning designations of the surrounding properties. He reviewed the LaSalle National Bank Criteria that pertained to the rezoning request and summarized staff findings. He read the options of the Plan Commission and presented staff's recommendation, which was as follows:

Based on the evidence presented in the written staff report, and without the benefit of considering additional evidence that may be presented during the public hearing, staff recommended that the Plan Commission forward the proposed rezoning case to the Urbana City Council with a recommendation for approval.

Mr. Pollock asked if the petitioner was thinking about marketing the entire tract and moving the Speedway gas station. Mr. Wempe answered by saying that the petitioner planned to move the Speedway gas station within the site to the southwest corner of Killarney Street and Lincoln Avenue.

Ms. Stake inquired if there would be any problems relocating next to the Capstone Apartments. Mr. Wempe replied that staff had not seen specific site plans. However, a gas station would be permitted by right in the B-3 Zoning District. Staff would discourage lighting that would shine directly on the residential area to the south.

Ms. Stake questioned if staff had sent out a notice to the nearby neighbors and/or talked to any of them. Mr. Wempe stated that staff had sent out a notice to every property within 250 feet of the proposed site. He had not heard from anyone regarding the rezoning request.

Ruth Jackson, representative of the Ramada Inn, inquired if Killarney Street would be effected by closure and for how long during the construction period. Ramada Inn's only entrance is off of Killarney Street, so they were concerned about the street being closed. Mr. Wempe stated that the City typically tries not to close streets. Presumably since the petitioner plans to build their new gas station before they develop the rest of the site, they would be able to keep construction material and equipment on their site. He could not envision a situation where they would require blocking access to the Ramada Inn.

Ms. Jackson noted that the petitioner has a huge highway sign in the middle of the Ramada Inn's property behind the existing building. Ramada Inn wanted to request that the petitioner relocate the sign to a corner of Ramada Inn's property away from the middle. Ramada Inn did not object to the signage, only to its location. Mr. Wempe made note of this concern.

Ms. Jackson pointed out that the current Speedway gas station has had several robberies in the past. Speedway also attracts an undesirable clientele because of the liquor and cigarette sales and being open late hours. Would there be more police available to patrol the area? Mr. Wempe mentioned that the proposed gas station would be built comparable to the new Marathon gas station on the corner of Bradley and Lincoln Avenues. He could not speak to the issue of whether there would be more police available to patrol the area, but he would pass this concern along to the Police Department and to the City Council.

Ms. Jackson inquired if there were any proposed lane increases of Lincoln Avenue. At 5:00 p.m. every night, Lincoln Avenue is tied up with lots of traffic. Mr. Pollock commented that he knew the City was planning to install turn lanes from the opposite directions. However, he did not know of any plans to widen Lincoln Avenue to increase the number of lanes. Mr. Wempe stated that for recent developments, such as the Capstone Apartments, the City had acquired an expanded right-of-way in excess of what the City currently has on Lincoln Avenue. As far as the access drives, typically the City's Public Works Department requires right-in, right-out access drives that are near major intersections. The Champaign County Access Management Guidelines helps the City decide where to place access drives to minimize the negative impact on adjacent areas and on traffic flows at major intersections and roads. Ms. Jackson commented that the only reason she asked about this was because she noticed that on the Future Land Use Map it designates Lincoln Avenue as the Gateway to the University of Illinois.

Ms. Jackson questioned if the petitioner would be required to build sidewalks on the north side or south side of Killarney Street. Mr. Wempe responded by saying that Speedway would only be responsible for building sidewalks on their property. The sidewalks would be on the south side of Killarney Street along the northern line of Speedway's property.

Ms. Jackson asked if the petitioner would be removing the row of trees in order to build the sidewalk. Mr. Wempe stated that there had been some discussion about relocating those trees; however, it really had not come down to a final decision yet. Anything of this nature would have to go through the City's Arborist. Some of the trees will have to be either relocated or replaced in another location on the site in order to make room for the access drive on Killarney Street.

Ms. Jackson asked the Plan Commission and staff to please note Ramada Inn's concern regarding the signage. It is their main concern, because the petitioner tears up their ground and grass every time maintenance is done on the sign. Mr. Wempe inquired as to how that sign was established. Did Ramada Inn grant an easement to Speedway? Ms. Jackson said that she did not have any details. Mr. Pollock pointed out that Ramada Inn may need to renegotiate an easement if there was one in order for Speedway to relocate the sign.

Ms. Jackson inquired if the existing sign would be grand-fathered into any new construction. Mr. Wempe replied yes, unless Speedway chose to build a new sign. In which case, the petitioner would lose any non-conforming status.

Ms. Jackson asked if there would be a height requirement if the petitioner planned to rebuild the sign. Mr. Wempe said that he believed that there was a maximum height of 75 feet with visibility for a quarter of a mile along the highway.

Mr. Myers noticed that the focus of this case had been on what use was being planned for the proposed site. He reminded the Plan Commission that the request is for a rezoning and not for the proposed use. If the rezoning is approved, Speedway's plans could fall through and any business use permitted in the B-3 Zoning District could come in and develop the site. Another issue to consider is whether it is realistic to believe that a tract of less than one acre would become a viable industrial property. It did not have rail access. Although it was located close to a highway, it was almost too close to a highway for big trucks to pull in and out. Ms. Jackson remarked that the existing property had been for sale for the last ten years. The owners have not had any strong offers or valid offers to purchase the land.

Ms. Stake asked what the Ordinance said about cutting down trees. Mr. Wempe replied that it was not that people could not cut down trees. If a tree had to be cut down as approved by the City's Arborist, then it would be in lieu of a fee or a new tree planting. He was not sure if this was in the Zoning Ordinance or in the City Code.

Mr. Ward clarified that the only issue before the Plan Commission was the rezoning of the one small plot from IN to B-3. Mr. Pollock said that was correct. Mr. Ward went on to say that while these other issues were interesting and needed to be considered, they had nothing to do with the rezoning request. Mr. Pollock also pointed out that Speedway planned to rebuild the gas station on property that was already zoned B-3. So, they could build the gas station by right without review of anything that is not already in the City Code.

Mr. Ward moved that the Plan Commission forward the proposed rezoning case to the City Council with a recommendation for approval. Mr. Hopkins seconded the motion.

Ms. Goscha felt it was fairly straight forward. The City would just be filling in a little section that was still zone IN. It was small enough that no industrial use could really build on. Therefore, it made good sense to rezone the property to B-3.

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Ms. Burris	-	Yes	Ms. Goscha	-	Yes
Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes	Mr. Pollock	-	Yes
Ms. Stake	-	Yes	Mr. Ward	-	Yes

The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Mr. Wempe noted that the case would go before City Council on Monday, November 21, 2005.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

Ms. Wempe reported on the following:

- big.small.all.champaign county Visioning dialogue meetings have begun. They are very fun and informative. He encouraged everyone listening to the Plan Commission meeting to attend one of these meetings.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Chair Pollock adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Tyler, City Planner
Urbana Plan Commission