

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: February 9, 2006
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, James Ward, Don White

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Ben Grosser, Marilyn Upah-Bant

STAFF PRESENT: Robert Myers, Planning Manager; Gale Jamison, Assistant City Engineer; Paul Lindahl, Planner I; Matt Wempe, Planner I; Teri Andel, Recording Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: David & Julie Ehler, Don Flessner, Troy Flessner, Mike & Stephanie Martin, Bill Sheridan, Jeff Stallard, Paul Tatman

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.




2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Ward moved to approve the minutes from the January 5, 2006 Plan Commission meeting as presented, and Ms. Stake seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as presented by unanimous voice vote.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

-  Drawing of the originally proposed sign for Plan Case No. 1978-SU-06
-  Drawings of the newly proposed sign for Plan Case No. 1978-SU-06
-  Plan Commission 2005 Annual Report

Matt Wempe, Planner I, briefly talked about the 2005 Annual Report for the Plan Commission. He noted that staff had added a "Trends" section to the report. He explained that the increase in the number of minor subdivision plats were largely due to owners wanting to convert their duplexes into common-lot line dwellings, the City wanting to accommodate commercial developments, and the increase of rural development within the 1½-mile extraterritorial jurisdictional area due to the proposed changes to the Champaign County Zoning Ordinance.

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case 1970-M-05. Request by Howard Wakeland for a zoning map amendment to rezone 1010-1016 W Main Street, and 1011 W Clark Street, from B-3U, General Business - University to CCD, Campus Commercial District.

Plan Case 1971-SU-05. Request by Howard Wakeland for a Special Use Permit to establish multi-family residential, and professional & business office uses as part of a mixed use development at 1010-1016 W Main Street, and 1011 W Clark Street.

Robert Myers, Planning Manager, announced that these two cases have been withdrawn.

Plan Case No. 1978-SU-06. A request by James Burch to allow an increase in the size of two freestanding signs for a convenience shopping center from 75 to 150 square feet each for Five Points Plaza, located at 520 North Cunningham Avenue and 306 East University Avenue.

Mr. Myers presented this case to the Plan Commission. He began by clarifying that the Five Points Plaza was located on the northeast corner of Cunningham and University Avenues behind the new Walgreen store. This project is important for the City, not only in terms of economic development, but also in the fact that this property was previously blighted, and the City has an interest in seeing the success of its redevelopment.

The applicants believe that in order for this project to be successful, they will need better visibility. He went on to talk about the maximum size of signage allowed by the Zoning Ordinance. He explained that with the approval of the proposed special use permit, the applicants would be allowed to have larger signs. He noted that the applicants feel like that in order to be successful they need to have all of their tenants individually listed on each sign.

Mr. Myers pointed out that the applicants have submitted a new sign design since the packet had been mailed out to the Plan Commission members. Therefore, he handed out colored copies of the old sign design and of the new sign design.

The difference between the two designs is that the original design was 150 square feet in area and measuring 16 feet, 7 inches in height. The newly submitted design as scaled from the drawing measures 19 feet in height, and would still be 150 square feet in area. Mr. Ward commented that the base appeared to be higher than originally proposed. He did not see where the actual size of the sign had changed much. Mr. Wempe explained that with monument signs, the City's building inspectors typically would not calculate the size of the monument when figuring the area of the sign, which was kind of an incentive for using monument signs. The height of the monument would, however, be calculated in figuring the overall height of the sign.

Chair Pollock inquired about the location of the two freestanding signs. Mr. Myers explained that the applicants were in the process of working with the adjoining property owner to get a permanent sign easement on the car wash property to the south. Chair Pollock stated that the proposed sign locations were designated on Exhibit A and asked if those have changed. Mr. Myers responded by saying that those have not changed.

Chair Pollock questioned whether the two proposed freestanding signs would be identical. Mr. Myers replied yes.

Mr. Myers went on to say that the project was called out for in the Downtown Tax Increment Finance Plan and in the Downtown Strategic Plan. This corner was really a key redevelopment site. The proposed signage would be in conformity with these two plans, as well as with the Comprehensive Plan. City staff recommended that the Plan Commission recommend approval of the proposed special use permit to the City Council with conditions.

Ms. Stake inquired about the second condition listed under Staff Recommendation in the staff report. Mr. Myers remarked that both applicants, James Burch and Paul Tatman, were concerned about having a quality development. They had mentioned their concern about signage overall for the site. They planned to have a signage program for all of their tenants, so that there would be some continuity throughout. The City would like to assist them if possible by administratively reviewing the overall sign program.

Ms. Goscha inquired if the Plan Commission was only considering the size of the sign and not the location, correct? Mr. Myers said yes.

Chair Pollock opened the public hearing. With no comments from the members of the audience, he closed the public hearing.

Ms. Stake moved that the Plan Commission recommend approval of the special use permit to the City Council with condition number two. Ms. Burris seconded the motion.

Mr. Hopkins asked for clarification. Did Ms. Stake intend for her motion to include all three conditions that were recommended by City staff? Ms. Stake replied yes.

The roll call on the motion was as follows:

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

The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Myers noted that the case would go before the City Council on February 20, 2006.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Plan Case No. 1975-S-06 – Preliminary Plat and a General Area Plan for Somerset Subdivision Phase 5 located south of Airport Road between U.S. Route 45 and Fieldcrest Drive.

Mr. Wempe presented this case to the Plan Commission. He began by noting that this was the fifth phase for the subdivision development and made note of its location. He gave a brief background regarding the Somerset Subdivision. He talked about the annexation of the property and about the General Area Plan for the entire Somerset Subdivision. He discussed the land use and zoning designations, access to the proposed development, utilities and drainage of the proposed site. He also talked about the proposed subdivision waiver. He mentioned that the Plan Commission would need to make two motions: one for the General Area Plan and one for the Preliminary Plat. Staff recommendation 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 approve the Somerset Subdivision General Area Plan and forward the Preliminary Plat of Somerset Subdivision Phase 5 to the Urbana City Council with a recommendation for approval.

Chair Pollock questioned the legal notification process for the General Area Plan. It did not have a separate case number. Would it violate the legal notification process for public hearings? Mr. Wempe stated that no public hearing was required for general area plans. He mentioned that City staff did not have to advertise plat proposals, and the only time general area plans come up are in relation to plats. Therefore, it was not necessary to advertise general area plans. Mr. Myers added that the General Area Plan was shown on the agenda, and this served as notice since no public hearing was required.

Mr. Hopkins commented that he was surprised that on the General Area Plan, there was no connection to the existing Somerset Subdivision Phase 1. Mr. Wempe stated that this was an oversight on his part. Fieldcrest Drive will extend straight down through the undeveloped portion of Somerset to connect to future phases.

Chair Pollock opened the public hearing.

Jeff Stallard, Engineer with HDC Engineering, Inc., pointed out that there would be a road running east-west and would connect to Fieldcrest Drive, which was part of Somerset Phase 4, at the end of the cul-de-sac. He stated that would connect the existing phases of Somerset Subdivision to the proposed General Area Plan.

Ms. Stake inquired about existing natural vegetation. Mr. Stallard noted that the proposed site was currently being used as farmland. He mentioned that there was a run of trees, which they hoped to keep intact, along the west side of the lake, which would be between Landis Farms and Somerset Subdivision Phase 5.

Mr. Hopkins asked about the area shown in gray on the General Area Plan adjacent to the Single-Family and Detention/ Open Space Areas. Mr. Wempe stated that Don Flessner does own this land. However, there are no concrete plans for developing it at this time, so no future land uses were identified.

Mr. Hopkins was unclear about where the road would be connected to Brownfield Road in the grayed out area. Mr. Wempe stated that it would make sense for the road marked with an arrow on the General Area Plan to connect to Columbia Boulevard. Mr. Hopkins wondered if the right-of-way existed to connect these two streets. Mr. Wempe did not know if the full right-of-way exists, but he did know that there was excess land there.

Don Flessner, petitioner, showed Mr. Hopkins that there was area of 60 feet of right-of-way that had been dedicated to the Township. Therefore, he assumed that if this portion of land was developed, then the petitioner would have to show how the proposed street shown with an arrow and Columbia Boulevard would connect.

Mr. Hopkins suggested that City staff and/or the petitioner show the arrowhead as being fixed. Mr. Wempe and Mr. Flessner were in agreement with this suggestion. Mr. Hopkins recommended that his suggestion be interpreted as essentially a graphic technical suggestion of how to express what the intent of the plan was.

Ms. Goscha stated the proposed preliminary plat would be the first phase in the larger concept, and it would leave Riverrock Drive as a dead end at this point. Mr. Wempe pointed out that in the past, the developer created temporary turnarounds.

With no further comments from anyone else in the audience, Chair Pollock closed the public hearing.

Mr. Hopkins moved that the Plan Commission approve the General Area Plan with the understanding that it includes the specification of the outlet as being the Township road just to the northeast of the Carroll Fire Protection District Building. Ms. Goscha seconded the motion.

Ms. Goscha moved an amendment to the motion that it includes the technical correction of where the existing roads are and the proposed roads would meet Somerset Subdivision Phase 4. This met the approval of Mr. Hopkins, the motion maker.

The roll call was as follows:

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

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. White moved that the Plan Commission forward the Preliminary Plat for the Somerset Subdivision Phase 5 to the City Council with a recommendation for approval. Ms. Stake seconded the motion.

Ms. Goscha inquired why City staff did not recommend to the developer that they build contiguous to the existing phases of Somerset Subdivision. Mr. Wempe explained that Landis Farms was a very successful subdivision. It made sense for Mr. Flessner to build his next phase adjacent to a successful subdivision. This was also the reason for creating a new annexation agreement with Mr. Flessner.

The roll call was as follows:

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

The motion was approved by unanimous vote. This recommendation will be forwarded to City Council on February 20, 2006.

Plan Case No. 1976-S-06 – Final Plat of Adair Subdivision located at 4011 East Airport Road.

Paul Lindahl, Planner I, gave the staff presentation for this case. He began with a brief introduction and background of the case. He mentioned that an issue had been brought up today by the Planning Director of Champaign County Planning and Zoning. The issue concerns the ability under County zoning regulations to subdivide a lot of 5 acres or less. Under County zoning regulations, it will not be possible for the petitioners to subdivide the proposed property unless they obtain Rural Residential Overlay District approval through the Champaign County Planning and Zoning Department.

Mr. White moved that the Plan Commission table this case. Mr. Ward seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous hand vote.

Plan Case No. 1977-S-06 -- Preliminary Plat for Cobble Creek Subdivision located south of Amber Lane and southwest of St. Andrews Road in the Stone Creek Subdivision.

Mr. Lindahl presented the staff report for this case to the Plan Commission. He gave a brief background for the proposed site. He discussed the land use and zoning of the proposed site, access to the site, drainage, utilities and the proposed subdivision waivers. He reviewed the criteria that subdivision waivers must meet in order to be granted. He summarized staff findings and read the options of the Plan Commission. Staff recommendation was as follows:

Staff recommended approval of the Preliminary Plat of Cobble Creek Subdivision with waivers as requested.

Mr. Ward pointed out that the numbers do not add up regarding the number of buildings mentioned in paragraph 1 of the staff report in comparison to the Preliminary Plat. Mr. Pollock asked if the Preliminary Plat was correct and should be what the Plan Commission goes by. Mr. Lindahl replied that was correct. He apologized for the miscalculation in the staff report.

Ms. Stake inquired as to why access points for connection of the street to Windsor Road would be determined at a later date by the City Engineer rather than now by the Plan Commission. Mr. Lindahl responded by saying that there had been no proposed connection for that development. The vacant lot to the south, which is zoned B-3, was for sale. The current owner did not yet have a buyer for the property and was unsure of how the layout of this tract would be. So, there was no need to extend the road at this time. The City Engineer has the final say as to where roads connect. Windsor Road will be a fairly high-speed road in the area.

He pointed out that there was a diagram in the packet of one potential location for the roads. One idea was for the petitioner to negotiate with the Calvary Baptist Church, so that the Church could have their access to their parking lot off Cobble Creek Drive and eliminate at least one of their access drives along Windsor Road. Mr. Myers clarified that the developers would extend the cul-de-sac at the southeast corner of Cobble Creek Subdivision all the way to the property line for the purpose of being able to extend this street in the future.

Chair Pollock opened the public hearing. With no members of the audience wishing to speak, he closed the public hearing.

Mr. White moved that the Plan Commission forward the case to the City Council with a recommendation of approval along with the waivers. Mr. Ward seconded the motion. Roll call on the motion was as follows:

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

The motion was passed by unanimous vote. Chair Pollock noted that this case would be forwarded to the City Council on February 20, 2006.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Myers reported that the following cases will be brought to the Plan Commission in the near future:

- Zoning Ordinance omnibus;
- Billboard Presentation to the Committee of the Whole will be held on Monday, February 13, 2006. The next step would be to bring a text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance regarding billboards/outdoor advertising sign structures to the Plan Commission for a recommendation to the City Council; and
- Text Amendment to the Urbana Subdivision and Land Development Code

Ms. Stake commented that when she served on the City Council, she would receive copies of the comments from the utility companies regarding their review of the plats. Mr. Lindahl stated that staff could add these comments to the packet. However, many times staff receives e-mails from the utility companies stating that they have no comments. Many of the requests made by the utility companies are considered to be administrative activities. Therefore, he did not believe it would necessarily be helpful to forward every comments on to the Plan Commission. Chair Pollock remarked that he would rather have staff tell the Commission about any comments than to receive copies of every communication.

- The 2006 Planning Institute will be held on March 2nd and 3rd.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Chair Pollock adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Myers, Planning Division Manager
Urbana Plan Commission