

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: September 7, 2006

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Burris, Ben Grosser, Lew Hopkins, Michael Pollock, Bernadine Stake, Marilyn Upah-Bant, James Ward, Don White

MEMBERS EXCUSED: None

STAFF PRESENT: Robert Myers, Planning Manager; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Jeff Blue, Denny Inman, Joy Ready, Susan Taylor

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:28 p.m., the roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared with all members present.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. White moved to approve the minutes from the August 24, 2006 Plan Commission meeting as presented. Ms. Stake seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as presented by unanimous 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. 2012-SU-06 – Request by Denny Inman, Champaign County Zoning Administrator, for a Special Use Permit to construct and operate a public facility for fleet vehicle maintenance and storage as well as the reuse of the County nursing home buildings at 1601, 1701, 1703, 1705, 1905, 1911 and 2001 East Main Street in Urbana, Illinois.

Robert Myers, Planning Manager, presented the case to the Plan Commission. He gave a brief background of the proposed site and on Champaign County's future plans for the site, which is to construct a fleet maintenance building and offices for the Champaign County Highway Department. He mentioned the current land uses and zoning designations of the proposed site and of the surrounding properties. He discussed the goals and objectives of the 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan as they pertained to the proposed special use permit request. He talked about stormwater management, screening, parking, and signage for the proposed development. He reviewed the requirements for a special use permit. He summarized staff findings and read the options of the Plan Commission with regards to the proposed case. He 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 the Urbana Plan Commission recommend approval of the Special Use Permit to the Urbana City Council with the following conditions for approval:

- 1. The development shall be constructed in general conformance to the site plan layout submitted as part of the application and attached hereto. Any substantial change to the layout shall require additional review and approval from the Urbana Plan Commission and Urbana City Council. The Zoning Administrator shall have the power to approve minor plan changes in order for the project to comply with City regulations including Building, Fire, and site development codes, including parking standards.*
- 2. The design and appearance of the Fleet Maintenance Facility and Highway Department offices shall be in substantial conformance to the illustration submitted as part of the Special Use Permit application and attached hereto.*
- 3. The outdoor storage area for vehicles and equipment, not including employee/visitor parking, shall be screened from view from adjacent street rights-of-way, and which may be accomplished using fencing, vegetation, and/or berms.*

Ms. Stake inquired if this would come back to the Plan Commission in the future. Mr. Myers replied that this special use permit request would only come back to the Plan Commission and City Council if there are any major changes to the proposed site plan.

Ms. Stake felt that there were places in the design where the petitioner would need to construct fences or plant trees to provide landscaping and screening. She would like to know what type of materials the petitioner planned to use. Mr. Myers pointed out that Exhibit E shows a row of plants along the west side of the proposed outdoor storage. Since the site plan doesn't indicate how far apart the plantings would be, staff has suggested in Condition #3 that the outdoor storage area be screened from view from adjacent street rights-of-way.

Ms. Stake commented that if vegetation is used to provide screening, then it will have to be appropriate size to cover huge dump trucks and other construction equipment. Mr. Myers stated that it would be appropriate for the Plan Commission to specify what type of screening they preferred the petitioner to use.

Ms. Stake inquired what other uses were nearby the proposed fleet maintenance building. Mr. Myers explained that there is a baseball field to the south. Ms. Stake expressed her concern about the outdoor storage area being screened from adjacent uses as well as from the street. Mr. Myers stated that the Plan Commission could request screening be constructed between the ball field and the proposed site as well.

Ms. Stake questioned what would happen to the existing fleet maintenance building. Mr. Pollock responded by saying that this would be a good question for the petitioner.

Mr. Pollock asked who owned the ball field. Is it owned by the Urbana Park District? Mr. Myers did not know. The petitioner might be able to answer this question.

Denny Inman and Jeff Blue, of Champaign County, approached the Plan Commission. Mr. Inman is the Champaign County Administrator, and Mr. Blue is the Champaign County Highway Engineer.

Mr. Inman stated that Champaign County's objective is to request approval of a special use permit for the construction of a new fleet maintenance highway facility and for the reuse of the existing nursing home once it is vacated. He talked about the purpose of the proposed fleet maintenance highway facility. He pointed out that their maintenance trucks and heavy equipment would be stored inside the garage of the fleet maintenance building. What is marked on their site plan as storage would actually be short term storage of law enforcement vehicles or light duty trucks that will have been worked upon and are ready to be picked up by the appropriate department.

The proposed development would be the gateway to the east campus for Champaign County. They have developed the east campus with the help of the City of Urbana by building a new jail, the Juvenile Detention Center, the Brookens Administrative Center, and the nursing home.

He went on to describe the proposed site and to discuss their plans for landscaping, retention ponds, lighting, existing infrastructure and parking. He stated that the security lighting would

not affect users of Canaday Park. He also explained that Champaign County owns Canaday Park and leases it out to the Urbana Park District for \$1.00 a year.

He continued on by saying that the County's reasoning for reusing the existing nursing home facility building rather than leaving it sit empty is because it would still cost Champaign County about \$350,000 a year in utilities. Champaign County believes that the existing nursing home building is historically relevant, and they plan to maintain the appearance of the building.

Mr. Inman talked more about the proposed fleet maintenance building project. It is a \$6.4 million dollar project. He mentioned that they are interested in incorporating thermal wells and reuse of the spent engine oil to heat the proposed facility to help with environmental and energy issues. He talked about the timeline for the project, noting that they hoped to open the proposed fleet maintenance building in the fall of 2007.

Construction of the existing nursing home building began in 1910, and additions were built up through 1980. This has been part of the problem with having a nursing facility use in it. The building is outdated for a nursing care facility. Thus, the nursing facility had to be replaced with the new building. The existing building will be used for office space for the Coroner's Office, a viewing area for families and a morgue; additional storage space for the County Clerk's office and the Children's Advocacy Center would be relocated to the west wing.

Mr. Inman stated that Champaign County could not have accomplished the east campus area with the assistance of the City of Urbana. He pointed out that if the special use permit request is approved, then the conditions for approval as outlined in the staff recommendations will be complied with with no exceptions.

Mr. Blue commented that they have been working towards the proposed fleet maintenance building since before he became the County Engineer some ten years ago. He believes it would be a nice looking building for a fleet maintenance building. It would be the gateway to Champaign County's east campus, and it will be very attractive.

In answering an earlier question, he stated that the County's Fleet Maintenance Department has been working in a facility that is basically a metal shell building that is rotting out from around them. Seventy-five percent of the existing fleet maintenance building will be torn down. There is a small portion that was built in the 1980s that is still in relatively good shape. It would be used for cold storage for seasonal equipment.

Ms. Stake commented that they have already begun construction on the site. Mr. Inman replied that they are allowed to do site work with the understanding that they need to get approval of the special use permit application, and if it is not approved, then the County is taking a chance and could not continue. Ms. Stake commented that she is pleased with all that the County is planning for on this project.

Mr. Grosser asked where the current fleet maintenance building is located. Mr. Inman showed the Plan Commission on an exhibit where the building is located.

Mr. Grosser inquired as to why the County has asked for more parking spaces for the Highway Maintenance Building. He would not expect 28 visitors to the County Engineer at one time. Mr. Blue explained that the new conference room would hold 30 people. If they had a full meeting, then they would need ample parking spaces. They sometimes hold public hearings on County road projects that could present some controversy, and if so it could draw a pretty good crowd in attendance. The facility is designed so that the conference room could be accessed in the evening without having to enter the office area of the building. It is designed as a community room, and they would be able to allow other governmental agencies to use the meeting room. Mr. Inman added that their committee structure has approximately nine or ten members on the County Board. If you allow another five spaces for staff to park, then they would already be using about fifteen parking spaces of the 28 requested.

Regarding the screening along Lierman Avenue, Mr. Grosser felt that the proposed conditions are clear in that the proposed fleet maintenance building would be screened from view. He inquired whether the screening would be a fence with trees that cover the fence or a fence with a few small bushes in front of the fence. Mr. Inman stated that they were partly waiting to hear what the Plan Commission and the City Council wants. In the County's internal discussions, they have talked about having a berm with appropriate sized trees that would eventually grow to the full width and height to provide necessary screening.

Mr. Grosser questioned whether the elevation of the proposed development would be equal to the street or right-of-way or would it be below the street grade. Mr. Blue replied that the proposed building would be built up two to three feet above Lierman Avenue to allow proper drainage away from the building and to the ponds. Mr. Inman stated that the County's east campus drains for the east side towards the Scottswood Subdivision and the west side drains towards the northwest. This is why they would have to elevate the proposed building and put in the retention ponds.

Ms. Stake believed it is a great idea to reuse the existing nursing home as offices. She wondered why the County needed a special use permit to do so. Mr. Myers answered by saying that the area is currently zoned for multi-family residential. Champaign County could rezone the property for office use, but then next door would be the County Fleet Maintenance Building and under standard zoning, public fleet maintenance buildings are only allowed in the B-3, General Business Zoning District, or in IN, Industrial Zoning District. Because the uses are dissimilar, but they are all government uses, it seems more appropriate to have them request a special use permit. The Zoning Ordinance allows any type of government building or use in any zoning district if the special use permit procedures are followed.

Mr. Pollock wondered if the County would have any problems with the Plan Commission or City Council adding a requirement that the County screen the ball park from view of the proposed facility. Mr. Inman said no. He believed that the plans that the County currently have will take this into account.

Mr. Pollock commented that this project will cost approximately \$6.5 million dollars. Did they have their funding in place? Mr. Inman said yes. Mr. Pollock inquired about the time table for reusing the existing nursing home, how much it would cost, and if the funding is in place to do so. Mr. Inman replied that they first need to get the correct parties aligned together. They

anticipate that in the November to January time frame the County Board will try to address this. It will be a partnership. Champaign County will not be able to fund the project solely by itself for redoing building systems, etc. They have different estimates for different approaches to occupying the facility. He estimated \$1 million would be a good number to rehab the building systems and do some remodeling on the inside. The nice thing about the existing nursing home is that the rooms are quite large, and all the rooms have a window.

Mr. Pollock inquired as to whether the main County Clerk's office would remain at the Brookens Administrative Center or would they move to be closer to their storage. Mr. Inman stated that the County Clerk's office would remain at the Brooken's Building. He mentioned that one of their buildings that are located on their campus was destroyed in a wind storm to such a point that they cannot occupy it anymore. So right now the Clerk's storage is somewhere else off campus. They believe that the existing nursing home building would be a suitable place to permanently store their records.

Mr. Myers questioned whether part of the storage would be used as an impound lot for vehicles that have been stolen or abandoned. Mr. Inman said no. He showed on an exhibit where the current impound lot is located. At this time, there are no plans to expand this facility at all.

Mr. White moved that the Plan Commission forward the proposed special use permit request to the City Council with a recommendation for approval with the three conditions outlined by City staff. Mr. Ward seconded the motion.

Ms. Burris moved to amend the motion by adding the condition that Champaign County additionally screen the storage lot from the ballpark just to the south on Lierman Avenue. Ms. Stake seconded the motion for the amendment. The motion to amend the main motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Grosser stated that he preferred that the screening be vegetative and not be a fence. Mr. Inman believed it would be safe to say that the only area that would have a fence around it would be the parking area for vehicles that have been repaired and are waiting to be picked up.

Roll call on the amended main motion was as follows:

Mr. Grosser	-	Yes	Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes
Mr. Pollock	-	Yes	Ms. Stake	-	Yes
Ms. Upah-Bant	-	Yes	Mr. Ward	-	Yes
Mr. White	-	Yes	Ms. Burris	-	Yes

The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Mr. Myers pointed out that this case would go before City Council on September 18, 2006.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Myers reported on the following:

- Neighborhood Conservation District Study has been presented to the Plan Commission, Committee of the Whole and to the Historic Preservation Commission. City staff is receiving a lot of useful feedback. City Council has asked staff research demolition review – what has the City’s history been of demolition and new construction in its place, and what communities have demolition review? One member of the Historic Preservation Commission made it clear that the Historic East Urbana Neighborhood Area (HEUNA) did not necessarily have the same issues as the West Urbana Neighborhood Area (WUNA) in that they were not necessarily concerned about conversion of homes into rental units. However, they are concerned about new construction. He also learned that there is a property tax freeze available for people who make major investments in historic properties that are either listed in the National Register of Historic Places or are local landmarks.
- Comprehensive Plan Amendments were presented to the City Council. City Council has asked City staff to do more research and return to the Committee of the Whole on September 25, 2006.
- APA CD Rom Training Packages are available to purchase. Let staff know if there is interest from the Plan Commission to purchase specific training CDs.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Myers, AICP, Planning Division Manager
Urbana Plan Commission