

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING**

**URBANA PLAN COMMISSION**

**APPROVED**

**DATE:** November 20, 2008

**TIME:** 7:30 P.M.

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

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jane Burris, Tyler Fitch, Ben Grosser, Lew Hopkins, Michael Pollock, Bernadine Stake, Marilyn Upah-Bant

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Don White

**STAFF PRESENT:** Robert Myers, Planning Manager; Jeff Engstrom, Planner I; Rebecca Bird, Associate Planner; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Dick Brazee, Rich Cahill, Paul Cheng, Paul Debevoc, Brad Gregorica, Hyun Kyang Lee, Shirley Stillinger, Susan Taylor, Crystal Whitters

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

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


**2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

There was none.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Stake moved to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2008 meeting as presented. Ms. Upah-Bant seconded the motion. Robert Myers, Planning Manager, recommended the following change to the last paragraph on Page 3: Change "Carle" Park to "Crystal Lake" Park. The minutes of the October 23, 2008 were approved as corrected by unanimous voice vote.

**4. COMMUNICATIONS**

 Email from Georgia Morgan regarding Plan Case No. 2074-T-08

✚ Revised Article VI. Development Regulations of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance for Plan Case No. 2063-T-08

## 5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

**Plan Case No. 2074-T-08: A request by the Zoning Administrator to adopt design guidelines for the Lincoln-Busey Corridor, amend the Urbana Zoning Ordinance to enable design review in certain areas, and establish the Lincoln-Busey Corridor design overlay district.**

Robert Myers, Planning Manager, presented an updated staff report for the proposed text amendment to the Plan Commission. First, City staff would be willing to add one more resident to the list of members of the Design Review Board. He advised the Plan Commission to think about this. This might increase the chances of the Plan Commission not being able to get a majority vote. An option would be to eliminate one of the professional board members such as the developer or the realtor. Second, staff noted that the language about the prohibition of an appeal of a joint decision of the Zoning Administrator and the Chair of the Board has been eliminated. Third, under administrative review, he recommended striking #3 (*Changing the floor area ratio of an existing principal structure by more than 5%*) from the list of criteria that should be met. Upon reflection, this criteria isn't necessarily related to exterior changes. For instance, attic space converted to a dwelling unit that would change the floor area ratio but would not change the exterior of the property. Most changes to the exterior would trigger a change to the footprint of the existing structure, and this would be covered under Criteria #2 (*Changing the building footprint of an existing principal structure greater than 15%*).

Mr. Grosser questioned what would happen if the Zoning Administrator and the Chair of the Board did not agree. Mr. Myers replied that the Zoning Administrator is designated with making the determinations on the Zoning Ordinance. Consultation with the chair of the Board is necessary, but ultimately the decision would be up to the Zoning Administrator. Like any decision in the Zoning Ordinance, the Zoning Administrator's decision can be appealed. He felt that especially given recent events, the Zoning Administrator will have a heightened sensitivity about whether or not a project is considered a major or minor work and when a project would go before the Board.

Ms. Stake commented that there is not any language in the proposed text amendment that tells them what a minor visible change is. Do other cities have administrative review or do development projects go directly to the Board? Mr. Myers replied that on Page 150 of the Zoning Ordinance, it states that if a project requires a building permit and can be seen from a public right-of-way or alley, if it is construction of a new principal structure, changing of building footprint of an existing principal structure greater than 15% and substantially changing the appearance and/or scale of an existing building, as determined by the Zoning Administrator in consultation with the Design Review Board Chair, then it will be considered a major work and go before the Design Review Board.

Many cities have administrative review. Some do not and every project goes to the Board. This is not something that City staff or the Board would want however, because there are many

projects that are minor works and do not need full review by the Board. It would take longer and is simply unnecessary. If the approval process is a burden to perform simple projects, then people will stop doing exterior maintenance and repairs on their homes.

With no further questions for City staff from the Plan Commission, Chair Pollock opened the hearing for public input.

Shirley Stillinger, of 1003 South Busey Avenue, mentioned that she lives in the middle of the Lincoln-Busey Corridor. She cannot come to grips with the makeup of the proposed Design Review Board. She does not see the rationale in having a developer serve on the Board. What role would they play? They could remove the developer and realtor and add two more residents and still have a seven member board.

Rich Cahill, of 307 South Orchard Street, stated that he sees many parallels between the proposed ordinance and the MOR ordinance. He finds it good with what City staff has clarified what would be considered for administrative review, but he also feels that there should be criteria regarding parking and another for the removal of trees. The problem with the notification process is that it is impossible to notify everyone when a project is being administratively reviewed. He did not see Urbana connected with the other municipalities mentioned in the chart on Page 2 of the written staff report. None of them, except maybe College Station, Texas, relate to Champaign-Urbana. He does not have an issue with the makeup of the proposed Design Review Board. He understands the purpose for having a developer and a realtor serve on the Board. He asked staff and Plan Commission to consider tightening up the Administrative Review section. He mentioned that he would like to see some of the changes in the proposed Ordinance be proposed to help fix some of the problems with the MOR Ordinance at a future time.

Paul Debevoc, of 708 West California Avenue, expressed his concern about the administrative review section. He talked about the four criteria that City staff is proposing to be met to determine whether a project could be administratively reviewed or whether it requires full review of the Design Review Board. He projected photos of different properties along West Green Street, including 601 West Green Street which is the property that has created much controversy in the MOR Zoning District. He questioned whether the proposed Ordinance for the Lincoln-Busey Corridor is more stringent than the existing MOR Ordinance. Chair Pollock asked if the redevelopment of the existing structure at 601 West Green Street would have required Board review under the proposed ordinance. Mr. Myers replied yes, he believes it would have.

Chair Pollock questioned if the parking behind 601 West Green Street would require Board review. Mr. Myers said that a parking increase would probably fall under the criteria of substantial change, but if the Plan Commission felt it would be helpful to clarify, then they could add another criteria regarding parking triggering Board review.

Ms. Stake inquired if a developer/property owner could change every side of a house without having the Board review the project. Mr. Myers said it would be possible, yes. For instance, they could install siding without going before the Board. They could also change out all of the windows without triggering Board review. However, if they bumped out all four sides of a

structure, then it might trigger Board review if it affects the footprint of the structure by more than 15%.

The Plan Commission discussed why the sides of 601 W Green were boarded up. Although it appeared as if there were not going to be any windows on the first floor, window openings were boarded just during construction. They also talked about the removal of trees. Chair Pollock asked if removal of trees would trigger Board review in the proposed text amendment. Mr. Myers said no because the City does not have a tree preservation ordinance.

Dick Brazee, of 905 South Busey Avenue, stated that he lives in the middle of the Lincoln-Busey Corridor. His property shares a corner of a property that started the issues with parking about four years ago. The issue at the time was the green space and the paving over that upset the residents in the area. He encouraged the Plan Commission and City staff to continue discussing loss of green space, installing parking lots, and removal of trees as triggering design review.

With no further comments from the public audience, Chair Pollock closed the public input portion of the hearing. He then opened it up for Plan Commission discussion.

Ms. Burris stated that she applauds the work that has been done and understands why, but she is not convinced that the proposed ordinance is the right thing to do. This is not a direction in which she wants to go in, so she cannot support the proposed text amendment.

Mr. Hopkins felt that there is still more work to do on the proposed ordinance. He would not want this for his neighborhood for reasons that Ms. Burris is talking about. Many of the things that he has done to his house and to his yard would not have been approved by a Design Review Board. Regarding the membership section of the proposed Ordinance, he finds it intriguing that in order to have a voice and serve on the proposed Design Review Board one must own a property in the district and live in it. This country long ago did away with property ownership requirements for participating in government. Also, he understands that the developer and realtor are positions to counter the notion that only single-family owner-occupants in the districts should have a voice. However, there are other ways to represent the rest of the community other than having a developer and a realtor serve on the board. Why isn't there a renter in the district serving on the board? We need to be really careful about the makeup of the membership. He recommended deleting the requirement of it being an owner-occupant who serves on the board.

Chair Pollock suggested changing the language on page 148 of the proposed Ordinance to read, *"Two residents of Urbana. The residents should include one representative from each design review district who owns ~~and~~ or occupies...."*. Mr. Hopkins stated that this raises a very interesting possibility because it suggests that it could be an owner of a rental property or it could be a renter in the rental property. However, making this change will completely change the politics of what people are trying to accomplish with the proposed Ordinance.

Ms. Stake believes that the problem started with the MOR Zoning District. The idea was to keep the history of the structures by leaving them as they were and not by demolishing them and rebuilding structures. That lowers adjacent property values because of the increase in the noise pollution, the increase in the number of vehicles and the decrease of open green space. She is

concerned about the 28% of properties in the district which are single-family, owner-occupied home owners.

Ms. Burris thought the assumption that renters do not care for their homes is absurd. It is the individuals who live in the structures that make the community, not the people who own them. Ms. Stake replied that she is talking about developers coming in and tearing down the existing structures to build something else. Chair Pollock pointed out that the proposed Ordinance does not change the zoning, so it does not ensure that a structure will not be torn down and something else built in its place if the zoning is appropriate.

Chair Pollock stated that from the discussions they have held so far regarding the proposed text amendment, he wonders what the goal of the proposed text amendment is. Why has it come before the Plan Commission? What is the ultimate goal that they are trying to achieve by passing this kind of legislation? It appears that the Plan Commission members, City staff and the public are not in concert on the answer to these questions. Mr. Myers replied that in the fall of 2006, City Council directed City staff to pursue six strategies to improve the quality of life in West Urbana and other neighborhoods. One of the six strategies was design review in the Lincoln-Busey Corridor. Although the vast majority of the West Urbana Neighborhood was down zoned in the early 1990s – meaning that not much more could be built within the neighborhood -- the Lincoln-Busey Corridor was not rezoned. The zoning is still mixed in the Lincoln-Busey Corridor and there are still some higher zoned properties with less intensive uses. Chair Pollock noted that there were in fact a few properties in the Lincoln-Busey Corridor that were down zoned. If the intention is to prevent large scale development in the mixed area, then they need to ask themselves if the proposed text amendment will accomplish this goal. Mr. Myers pointed out the proposed design guidelines are not intended to prevent large scale development, but that if it happens it should respect its neighbors.

Mr. Hopkins stated that the reason the Lincoln-Busey Corridor is of focus is because it is a transition point. It is the border where things change from one thing to something else. It is also a transition in that it is changing. Therefore, he sees the proposed design guidelines and text amendment as a guide to ensure that the changes would be more acceptable to everyone, but it is not designed to stop change.

Mr. Fitch agreed with Mr. Hopkins. He stated that although he could not speak to the Lincoln-Busey area, but he could speak about the next area to possibly use the design guidelines, which is in the Historic East Urbana Neighborhood. Zoning is the key. Design guidelines just guide the development of new structures to fit in more.

He likes the makeup of the proposed Design Review Board. He would accept changing the wording from “property owner” to “resident” in the language of the proposed ordinance that talks about the makeup of the board.

Mr. Grosser agreed with the discussions of the Plan Commission. He addressed Ms. Stillinger’s question about why a developer would serve on the proposed board. A developer can help answer questions about what the possibilities could be other than what is being proposed on a site plan. A developer offers the logistics of what it means to develop a piece of property.

Having said that, he did not see the purpose for having a real estate professional serve on the Board. He agrees with Mr. Hopkins about not restricting the resident board members to only property owners. A characteristic of this area is that many people who live in the area do not own property. So it would make sense to change “and” to “or.” He also would not want this in his neighborhood. However, he feels that it is important that the characteristics of this particular small passage of the City are pretty unique. The people who live in the Lincoln-Busey Corridor want the proposed text amendment as well.

Mr. Fitch suggested the following. Rather than striking #3 in G.4 Applications, they could add to the end “*that substantially change the appearance.*” Second, add language to #4 in G.4, so that it reads as such, “*Substantially changing the appearance and/or scale of an existing building including the building, grounds and parking, as determined by the Zoning Administrator...*”. Third, include language that requires the Zoning Administrator to report any administrative review to the Design Review Board, and provides a mechanism for the Design Review Board to override the Zoning Administrator’s decision forcing the application process and the Board’s consideration.

Mr. Grosser wondered how this would be different from having every project go before the Design Review Board. Mr. Myers responded that Mr. Fitch’s third suggestion would cause the building permit application to delay acting on the permit until the next Board meeting, just to insure that administrative approval wasn’t overridden. This could mean a delay of a month or so for the Board to meet.

In terms of Mr. Fitch’s second recommendation, Mr. Myers said that a building permit application is the trigger for review. A developer and/or property owner would be required to obtain a building permit for everything we’ve discussed except the removal of trees, because the City does not have a tree preservation ordinance. Parking lots have not always required building permits, but this changed about a year ago and are now required.

Ms. Stake inquired about administrative review. Would the developer/property owner still need to show what they are planning to do? Mr. Myers said yes. They would need to submit an application and the application would have to meet the design guidelines. It would also need to include a site plan of what the project would look like when finished.

Ms. Stake commented that maybe the Design Review Board could meet more than once a month. Mr. Myers replied that we do not want to discourage maintenance and repair. If someone is performing a minor repair such as reroofing a house with exactly the same kind of asphalt shingles, do we really want to take up the Board’s time to review it? There is a lot of work that goes on behind the scene. City staff prepares and sends out 60 copies of the packets, notices are published in the *News-Gazette*, hours of preparation of minutes, etc. He suggested that based on comments tonight that parking be added as triggering board review. He feels that along with the other proposed criteria it would catch any major or even medium development project and require it to go before the Board.

Chair Pollock asked if there was any objection to striking #3 criteria (floor area ratio) from the list as recommended by Mr. Myers during his staff presentation. Mr. Hopkins stated that if they

strike #3 from the list, then a case like 601 West Green Street does not necessarily trigger Board review, because the building footprint could be interpreted to include all of the porches. So, if you take all of the porches, it could double the footprint of the building. If you do not have any indicator based on floor area ratio, then there is nothing to trigger with respect to that. So he would be inclined to include such a trigger. But he also feels that 5% may be too small as a change in floor area ratio.

Chair Pollock asked the members of the Plan Commission if they want to send this back to the City staff to make changes, then what do they want to change?

Mr. Hopkins discussed the following issues:

1) G-1 – He feels that this implies that a developer/property owner has to apply for a design review application anywhere in the City. In actuality, it only applies in a design review district. It also begs for a cross reference, where any general rules about applying for a building permit ought to indicate that if a person is applying for a building permit in a design review district, then they are required to apply for design review. They need to either assume or specify that this only applies to projects that require a building permit, and that this is an additional component of a building permit in particular districts. We also need to get the right set of labels associated with triggering this because a building permit does not include plumbing or electrical.

2) G-4a – He suggested changing the language to read as such, “*Design Review Board Review. Applications for the following projects, and ~~where~~ if visible from public rights-of-way other than alleys, shall be subject to review by the Design Review Board.*” On the other hand, he did not believe that this phrase should be included because it begs a whole lot of additional complications that they do not want to deal with. How do they decide if something is visible?

3) Zoning Administrator’s Decisions – There are two types of decisions that the Zoning Administrator can make. The first one is whether a project needs to go before the Board or not. The second is the actual design review decision. He believes that the Zoning Administrator should report a project to the Design Review Board immediately if she decides that it only requires administrative review. Then the Board members could decide to override her decision and require review by the Board. This process would be different than informing the Board of an administrative decision by the Zoning Administrator and the Chair after a building permit has been issued. He pointed out that you cannot make a building permit retractable a month later when the Board finally meets. This would also help clarify what decision of the Zoning Administrator is appealable. The administrative decision of approval of a project does need to be reported, because it is appealable to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Therefore, he feels that the procedural steps need to be clarified.

Mr. Myers stated that the Zoning Administrator makes literally thousands of administrative decisions a year – day in and day out. Permits are issued. Every single day there are dozens of issues that administrative decisions are made on whether or not they meet the Zoning Ordinance or not. He advised against having to notify everyone of all administrative decision made in the district but said that it shouldn’t be a problem just to report to the Board joint determinations of Zoning Administrator and the Chair on design review applications.

Mr. Grosser believed that there should not be any recourse by the Board. So many of the decisions are going to be things that the Board does not want to see or know about. This is the reason why City staff is suggesting that they be administrative review. The answer is to make the administrative review criteria strong, so we are confident that nothing controversial will slip through. We could certainly have the Zoning Administrator report to the Board, the same way City staff reports to the Plan Commission at the end of the meeting. Chair Pollock agreed that by giving the Board the ability to override the joint decision of the Zoning Administrator and the Chair of the Board, they would be compromising the Zoning Administrator's ability to make administrative decisions.

Chair Pollock took a poll to see how many of the Plan Commission members felt the floor area ratio percentage should be higher than 5%. The majority of the Plan Commission agreed.

Chair Pollock took a poll to see how many of the Plan Commission members felt that there should be an additional criteria triggering Board review of parking lots. All of the Plan Commissioners agreed.

Mr. Fitch thought J.2 Application Review Criteria should specify that new guidelines should be reviewed by the Plan Commission as well as amendments to the old guidelines. Mr. Myers stated that he would add that.

Mr. Grosser asked if the design guidelines are part of the ordinance or will it get passed separately. Mr. Myers explained that the design guidelines would be passed at the same time as the Ordinance, except it would be assigned a separate ordinance number.

Ms. Stake inquired about the makeup of the Board again. Mr. Grosser suggested removing the realtor from the list of members. Ms. Upah-Bant believed it might be appropriate to have a real estate agent on the Board, because it would affect their colleagues' income. Mr. Fitch added that a real estate agent could be beneficial in that they could give input as to how a development project would affect the value of the properties around the project site. There was a split in the Plan Commission about whether or not the real estate agent should be removed from the list.

Regarding changing "and" to "or" in C.d.b on Page 148, Mr. Myers pointed out that the current proposed language states that it "should" be single-family owner-occupied residents in the district, but that does not require the two residents to be single-family owner-occupied residents in the district. If they make the requirements too specific, then it makes it more difficult to find people willing to serve on the Board. The majority of the Plan Commission agreed with the language change from "and" to "resident, owner or tenant".

Mr. Fitch asked City staff for a count of the number of building permits that were issued in the Lincoln-Busey Corridor over the last year. Mr. Myers said that they could supply that information for the Board.

Mr. Hopkins raised an issue about the word "should" versus "shall." He did not feel that most of the people would recognize what "should" really means in terms of an ordinance. Chair Pollock



pointed out that it does not say “*must*” and it leaves some leeway for the Mayor to make sure the Board has enough people to function if there are not residents willing to serve.

With no further discussion, Chair Pollock continued this case to the next scheduled meeting.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

There was none.

## **7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **Plan Case No. 2063-T-08: A request by the Zoning Administrator for an omnibus text amendment to the Urbana Zoning Ordinance.**

Jeff Engstrom, Planner I, began presenting the staff report for the proposed text amendment. He reviewed the proposed changes through Article II when Robert Myers, Planning Manager, suggested continuing this case to the next scheduled meeting to allow time for the staff report on the Cunningham Avenue Beautification Plan, which is scheduled to go before City Council on December 1, 2008.

Chair Pollock asked Plan Commission members to read through the staff report and attachments related to the proposed text amendment. Rather than Mr. Engstrom going through each revision one by one at the next scheduled meeting, the Plan Commission should come prepared with specific questions or concerns. The Plan Commission agreed, and the case was continued to the next scheduled meeting.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

There was none.

## **9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Paul Debevoc, of 708 West California Avenue, talked about the proposed omnibus text amendment for the Urbana Zoning Ordinance in Plan Case No. 2063-T-08. He stated that it is a very long document and very hard for a single individual to review all of it.

Listed below are some of his suggestions:

- ◆ City staff should come up with some mechanism to have someone sign off on every page of the proposed ordinance.
- ◆ He also believes that regarding the zoning map, there should be some list or map available to the public indicating all of the non-conforming properties in the city. There is no easy way to get this information.
- ◆ It would be helpful to have a connection to the Assessor’s database to make it easier to get information regarding properties.

- ◆ An authorized copy of the Zoning Ordinance should be available at the Urbana Free Library.
- ◆ Some typos that need to be looked at:
  - ◆ Figure 1 (Floor Area Ratio) and Figure 2 (Open Space Ratio) – The drawings should be accurate.
  - ◆ Table V-1 (Table of Uses) – Is agriculture really a permitted use in the R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6 and R-6B Zoning Districts?
  - ◆ Formula for parking space calculation should be looked at again, because it did not calculate correctly.

Regarding open space ratio (OSR) illustration in the definition section, Mr. Myers stated that a certain percentage of a roof and balconies are included into the OSR. There could be a courtyard on the roof designed for people's use. Also, agricultural uses are permitted use in the R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6 and R-6B Zoning Districts. This is not a mistake.

## 10. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Myers reported on the following:

- ✚ Crystal Lake Neighborhood Plan was adopted by the City Council on November 17, 2008 as an element of the Comprehensive Plan.

## 11. STUDY SESSION

### **Review and Comment on the Cunningham Avenue Beautification Final Report**

Ryan Brault, Redevelopment Specialist in the Economic Development Division, presented the final draft of the Cunningham Avenue Beautification Plan to the Plan Commission. He gave a brief introduction and provided background information on the proposed plan. He reviewed the general recommendations and design elements of the plan. He talked about the planning implications and the financial impact.

Chair Pollock inquired about the roundabout that the consultants propose for the intersection at Country Club Road/Perkins Road and Cunningham Avenue. He felt this should be stricken from the plan because it would be a disaster. Mr. Brault responded that the roundabout was identified in the plan as an alternative and which the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) would most probably not allow it to be constructed anyway.

Ms. Stake felt it was wonderful to put in public art and planting trees. She asked if they would use trees indigenous to Illinois. Mr. Brault replied that the plan calls for native plantings. The plan would be to use trees that are indigenous to our specific area.

Mr. Grosser felt it important to clarify that the public art recommendations in the report are only suggestions or possibilities. Decisions on specific art would be up to the Public Arts Commission. Mr. Brault explained that every concept in the plan is a suggestion and is not mandatory. It is a concept plan which is intended to be visionary. However, the plan does

provide a design theme, and City staff does want to try to make real ideas fit the theme of the plan.

He pointed out that the public art piece shown extending over Interstate 74 would most likely not be allowed by IDOT as illustrated. IDOT does not want to allow anything in the right-of-way that would be distracting to drivers as they travel over the bridge. IDOT is willing to work with the City on doing other improvements. For instance, IDOT would allow art work that is affixed to the retainer walls on the sides of bridges. It is integral to the bridge, and it is basically decorative railings and landscaping around the bridge.

Mr. Hopkins mentioned that the new bridge on Curtis Road and Interstate 57 supposedly has some of these features. He asked who is spending their money this way. His reaction is that if he was considering how to spend the City budget or a TIF (Tax Increment Finance) budget to which he was contributing as a developer or a land owner, the priorities do not make sense to him. He does not see why park benches should be installed on what is not -- and probably should not be -- a pedestrian corridor.

Chair Pollock asked if a TIF District is not designed to eliminate blight and promote economic development using the tax funds within the district to pay for the improvements. Mr. Brault said yes. Chair Pollock commented that he did not see that the recommendations in the proposed plan do either one of these. It is very nice to look though.

Chair Pollock inquired as to how much it cost the City to do the study. Mr. Brault said it was around \$100,000. Mr. Pollock said that municipalities across the country are suffering because of the current economic situation. It is liable to get worse. He would ask that the City Council question where they spend all revenues such as TIF funds, including the \$100,000 it cost to hire a consultant to draw up the proposed plan. Although he likes some of the ideas that the consultants have come up with, he questions whether this is the best place for the City to be dedicating its shrinking resources.

Mr. Brault stated that he will take the Plan Commission's comments and concerns to the City Council. They have already had an opportunity to study the proposed plan in draft form.

Chair Pollock questioned how much money was spent on the plan to prepare drawings and plans for elements that IDOT has never had any intention of approving. He could never imagine IDOT allowing a roundabout on a four lane major access point into Urbana. Mr. Brault replied that the consultants have done roundabouts in other cities. Mr. Hopkins added that the reason IDOT will not allow a roundabout at this intersection is not because it should not be there, but because people in places like Urbana do not know how to use roundabouts. Elsewhere roundabouts work efficiently, even on four lane highways. Mr. Brault pointed out that even the City of Urbana's Public Works Department was skeptical about the roundabout, which is why City staff insisted that the consultant use other intersection treatments in the proposed plan. The consultant and City staff did not receive feedback from IDOT until after the plan was well underway.

Chair Pollock questioned if City staff has any idea of how much funding and matching funding might be available from the state and/or federal government. What would the remaining amount

of cost be for the City of Urbana? Mr. Brault stated that there is not a definite answer at this time. There may be some grants available. Chair Pollock commented that there would be several million dollars at the responsibility of the City, and it would need to be budgeted within the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan). In the face of the other things that the City needs to do -- in terms of infrastructure, repair and maintenance -- he questions whether this would be a wise expenditure. Mr. Brault remarked that there would also need to be much more investment along Cunningham Avenue before the City would be able to have enough TIF funds to implement this plan. The plan is really meant to provide various idea that the City can pick and choose from to have the most impact and be the most beneficial to the City.

Chair Pollock stated that he did not want to be too harsh and rain on anyone's parade because there are some elements in the proposed plan that would help the Cunningham Avenue Corridor that could be done relatively inexpensive. However, on each step of this, he would ask the question in terms of use of TIF funds, what really is the payback in terms of development and increase in tax revenue within the district for what the expected use of the funds is suppose to be.

Mr. Fitch agreed with the commentary. He asked if any of the merchants along Cunningham Avenue had expressed any opposition about driveway closures. Mr. Brault said no. City staff presented the proposed plan in draft form at one of the North Cunningham neighborhood business group meetings. None of the business owners expressed concern about this. It only refers to unused and unnecessary driveways.

With no further comment, the study session ended.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Robert Myers, AICP  
Secretary, Urbana Plan Commission