

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: February 9, 2012

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carey Hawkins Ash, Tyler Fitch, Lew Hopkins, Dannie Otto, Bernadine Stake, Mary Tompkins

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Andrew Fell, Michael Pollock, Marilyn Upah-Bant

STAFF PRESENT: Robert Myers, Planning Manager; Jeff Engstrom, Planner II; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Rodolfo Barcenas, Alexandra Cueva, Mike Desai, Tom and Sue Falender, Hyeyeoun Ji, Yuchi Jin, Colleen Malee, Kern Malom, Nicholas Martinez, David Monk, Flora Ramirez, Ethan Tabakin, Susan Taylor

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

Tyler Fitch, Acting Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. The roll was called and a quorum was declared present.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Stake moved that the Plan Commission approve the minutes from the January 19, 2012 meeting as presented. Mr. Ash seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

- *Revised Annexation Agreement with Mervis Industries, Inc. regarding Plan Case No. 2169-M-12.* Robert Myers distributed a modified annexation agreement. The exhibit provided as part of this case packet was an earlier draft, and an updated document was distributed which includes Mervis Industries as the property owner rather than Green Vistas, and no Special Use Permit provision.

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 2165-T-11: A request by the Zoning Administrator to amend Section II-3 (Definitions) and Section V-11 (Residential Occupancy Limits) of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance concerning occupancy of hotels and motels.

Robert Myers, Planning Manager, presented this case to the Plan Commission. He began by stating the purpose of the proposed text amendment, which is to insure the safety and compliance of longer term occupancy of hotel and motel units with housing, building and occupancy codes. With the approval of the proposed text amendment, people would be allowed to stay longer than 30 days, but the hotel/motel would need to provide “extended stay” units to do so. Extended stay units would differ from other hotel/motel rooms in that the extended stay units would have full kitchens and meet residential building code requirements for adequate electrical service. He mentioned that owners of hotels and motels in the City of Urbana he has spoken with have indicated that allowing extended stay is a small yet significant component of their business.

He discussed some of the problems with the current definition of “hotels and motels”. The problems were as follows: 1) Regulations within definitions; 2) Extended stay units; 3) Site manager residences and 4) Ancillary facilities.

He explained the reason for continuing this public hearing at the last Plan Commission meeting. City staff felt that notifying all hotels, motels, and beds-and-breakfast in the City of Urbana would ensure that they were aware of the proposed text amendment. He read a list of the 16 businesses notified by mail. He then took questions from the Plan Commission.

Ms. Stake inquired as to whether the City of Champaign has extended stay units available already. Mr. Myers said yes. Also, some hotels and motels in Urbana already have rooms with kitchens, so City staff would only need to ensure that the electrical service is up to grade for those units.

Mr. Ash wondered if City staff received any feedback from the owners of hotels and motels. Were there any particular impacts that the owners felt the proposed text amendment would have on their businesses? Mr. Myers answered that City staff has not received any feedback, either positive or negative.

Mr. Otto questioned how the proposed text amendment would compare to the regulations that the City of Champaign has in place. Mr. Myers replied that he could retrieve that information and provide to everyone.

Mr. Hopkins noticed that the proposed new definition deletes the reference to the Illinois Department of Revenue. Is there any significance to this? Mr. Myers explained that the Department of Revenue's definition of hotels and motels unit is for tax revenue purposes and is different than a definition for zoning purposes. The Department of Revenue definition states that anyone remaining for more than 30 days is a resident of the hotel and is not subject to the State Hotel or Motel Tax.

With there being no further questions for staff, Acting Chairperson Fitch opened the hearing to public input and/or comments. There was none. Acting Chairperson Fitch then closed the public hearing and opened it up for Plan Commission discussion and/or motion(s).

Discussion ensued regarding whether the City of Urbana should make their regulations be consistent with those established in the City of Champaign. The Plan Commission and City staff also talked about the definition of a full kitchen versus a kitchenette.

Mr. Hopkins asked for clarification that by approving the proposed text amendment, the City of Urbana would be allowing buildings zoned as hotels to also include apartment units. Mr. Myers responded that the City wants to make sure that units occupied longer than 30 days in hotels and motels are not a way to circumvent housing codes. He mentioned the case of the Europe Inn, which was a hotel which became a substandard apartment. This is a perfect example of what City staff would like to guard against.

The Plan Commission then tabled this item at 8:03 p.m. to allow City staff to verify the City of Champaign's zoning regulations concerning hotels/motels. Plan Case 2169-M-12 and Annexation Case No. 2012-A-01 were heard by the Plan Commission in the interim.

At 8:21 p.m., the Plan Commission reopened the agenda item. Mr. Myers read the City of Champaign's definition for hotel/motel. He stated that the City of Champaign's zoning ordinance does not limit how long people can stay at hotels or motels.

Mr. Otto mentioned that Champaign not having occupancy limits for hotels/motels was a problem for the Gateway Studios which had to be condemned.

Mr. Otto moved that the Plan Commission forward Plan Case No. 2165-T-11 to the Urbana City Council with a recommendation for approval. Mr. Ash seconded the motion.

Mr. Hopkins commented that it was worth having City staff research the City of Champaign's definition. The City of Urbana is leading the way with better regulations.

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Mr. Fitch	-	Yes	Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes
Mr. Otto	-	Yes	Ms. Stake	-	Yes
Ms. Tompkins	-	Yes	Mr. Ash	-	Yes

The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Mr. Myers noted that this case will be forwarded to the Urbana City Council on Monday, February 20, 2012.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 2169-M-12 and Annexation Case No. 2012-A-01: A request by Mervis Industries, Inc. to rezone an 8.14-acre tract of property located at 3106 North Cunningham Avenue from Champaign County B-4 (General Business) to City IN (Industrial) upon annexation.

Robert Myers, Planning Manager, presented this case to the Plan Commission. He gave a brief introduction and background on the reason for the proposed rezoning. He described the subject site and adjoining properties to the south noting the zoning, current land uses and future land use designations of all. He mentioned the revised annexation agreement that was handed out prior to the start of the meeting.

He showed photographs of the site. He noted that development of the Mervis Recycling Center will require some upgrades to the infrastructure such as construction of a turn lane on Cunningham Avenue and extension of a water line from Airport Road. Mervis will be receiving a grant from the State of Illinois to substantially reduce the cost of the turn lane. The City of Urbana does not have to contribute financially but is overseeing the road work. He then took questions from the Plan Commission.

Mr. Otto pointed out that Article I, Section 1 of the revised annexation agreement requires the owner to annex the proposed site within 30 days of the approval of the agreement; however, Article III, Section 1 makes the agreement binding for 20 years. Mr. Myers explained that upon approval of the revised annexation agreement, the owner will be required to annex 3106 North Cunningham Avenue within 30 days. Even though the property will be annexed, the owner and City will still be bound for 20 years to abide by the agreed upon provisions of the annexation agreement.

Ms. Stake asked about the planned recycling facility next door. Mr. Myers stated that although Mervis Industries does not have development plans for the property under consideration, their property next door, which is already in the City, has been approved through a Special Use Permit as a recycling center. They will collect and sort recyclable materials there and ship them to other Mervis facilities to be processed.

With no further questions for City staff, Acting Chairperson Fitch opened the hearing to public input and/or comments. There were none, so Acting Chairperson Fitch closed the hearing and opened the meeting to Plan Commission discussion and/or motion(s).

Mr. Ash moved that the Plan Commission forward Plan Case No. 2169-M-12 to the Urbana City Council with a recommendation of approval. Mr. Otto seconded the motion. Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Mr. Ash	-	Yes	Mr. Fitch	-	Yes
Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes	Mr. Otto	-	Yes
Ms. Stake	-	Yes	Ms. Tompkins	-	Yes

The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Mr. Myers noted that this case would be forwarded to the Urbana City Council on Monday, February 20, 2012.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

There was none.

11. STUDY SESSION

Presentation on the draft 2012 Downtown Urbana Plan

Jeff Engstrom, Planner II, gave a presentation on the draft Downtown Urbana Plan. The Plan process began formally in 2010 with extensive public input and direction from a Downtown Plan Steering Committee composed of downtown stakeholders. His presentation consisted of the following format.

- New Logo for Downtown Plan
- Overview
- Process
- Visioning Workshop
- Image Preference Survey
- Stakeholder Forums
- Draft Plan Elements
- Trends & Issues: Housing
- Goals
- Concept Plan
- Redevelopment Sites
- Approval Process
- More Information on the Plan

The Plan Commission inquired about the following three areas:

- The Flat Iron site (Springfield Avenue/Main Street - Mr. Engstrom explained that the City has moved redevelopment of this site to a lower priority. Based on a lengthy

investigation of possible reuse of the site, the City does not feel that they can make it an affordable redevelopment because of purchase costs and site cleanup costs.

- Kurland Steel property – Mr. Engstrom stated that the Downtown Plan Steering Committee recognizes that this area needs to be redeveloped and brought into more of the downtown character, but there currently are no plans for Kurland Steel to move out.
- Lincoln Square – Mr. Engstrom was asked whether Lincoln Square has the most successful mix of businesses given that much of the mall is now used as offices. He remarked that the owner is working hard to bring back business in the mall. A more blended approach to tenants, such as addition of Health Alliance, has made Lincoln Square more successful.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Myers, AICP, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission