

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: September 6, 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, Andrew Fell, Tyler Fitch, Michael Pollock, Bernadine Stake, Mary Tompkins

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Lew Hopkins, Dannie Otto, Marilyn Upah-Bant

STAFF PRESENT: Robert Myers, Planning Manager; Rebecca Bird, Planner II; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael Augustine, Jim Burch, Robert Dayton, Patrick Moone, Susan Taylor

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

Chairperson Pollock called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The roll was called and a quorum was declared present.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There was none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Fitch moved that the Plan Commission approve the minutes from the August 9, 2012 meeting. Mr. Ash seconded the motion. The Plan Commission members approved the minutes by unanimous voice vote.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 2188-SU-12: A request by Bainbridge Communities Acquisition II, LLC for a Special Use Permit to construct multi-family residential dwellings at 1008, 1010 and 1012 West University Avenue and 508 North Goodwin Avenue, in the B-3, General Business Zoning District.

Rebecca Bird, Planner II, presented this case to the Plan Commission. She began by stating the purpose of the proposed request and that the proposed development would also require approval of two major variances that would be reviewed by both the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Urbana City Council. She reviewed the general plans for the proposed development and talked about previously approved plans for the proposed site, including a Special Use Permit and variances. She noted the existing land uses, the zoning and the future land use designations of the site and of the adjacent properties. She explained how the proposed development would relate to the goals and objectives of the 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan. She talked about the development regulations for the B-3 Zoning District with regards to building height, FAR (Floor Area Ratio) and OSR (Open Space Ratio), setbacks, and access. She discussed parking for the proposed project and reviewed the requirements for approval of a special use permit. She read the options of the Plan Commission and presented City staff's recommendation.

Chair Pollock opened the meeting to Plan Commission questions for City staff.

Are there people now living on the site? Ms. Bird said that the proposed site includes vacant commercial buildings. She showed an aerial of the proposed sites noting the existing commercial buildings and what their previous uses were. There are no residential dwellings existing on the project site.

It seems that the development would be encouraging the use of more vehicles. Ms. Bird replied that although there will be more parking spaces provided than required, the project will also provide bicycle parking and will be located on several bus lines. In addition, it will be walkable to and from the University of Illinois and several nearby restaurants.

Why is the developer requesting variances? What are the variances specifically for? Ms. Bird explained that the variance requests are for the rear-yard setbacks and for the side-yard setbacks. Using the Site Plan, she showed the Plan Commission what City staff considers each to be. She explained that the site is irregularly shaped. The variances are only required because of the residential component of the development. If it were a strictly commercial project, then the proposed setbacks would be allowed by right.

Will the traffic study include the University Avenue access? Robert Myers, Planning Manager, pointed out that the parking lot off University Avenue is quite small with only 14 parking spaces. The traffic impact analysis is required for Goodwin Avenue where most of the vehicles will be entering the street.

Will the traffic impact study look at how to get bicyclists coming from this project across University Avenue safely? Ms. Bird stated that she would mention having the engineers look at safety issues for bicyclists. Concern was expressed about the location of the bicycle racks on the proposed development and concern about drivers not seeing a parking lot in behind the development and possibly backing out onto University Avenue or drivers not seeing that the parking lot is full or that the parking spaces are dedicated to retail use only.

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

Mike Augustine, a representative of the applicant, Bainbridge Communities, stated that they are a national leader in owning, developing, contracting and managing multi-family properties. The company has been in business since 1993. Since the business started, they have acquired, developed, repositioned or redeveloped over 30,000 units in the United States totaling over \$3 billion in total project costs. He pointed out that the proposed project is their first in Illinois, and they are looking forward to it.

He showed photos of their Campus Circle development that currently exists in Tallahassee, Florida to show the Plan Commission to illustrate the thought, creativity and quality that they provide in their developments. He mentioned that all the amenities and rent are included in one price rather than the tenants having to setup different accounts.

Patrick Moone, of the Farnsworth Group, spoke concerning the traffic study. They obtained the traffic counts last week and have carried out preliminary analysis. They are not seeing any traffic lane improvements being required at this time on either University or Goodwin Avenues. There may need to be some signal timing modifications, but they plan to work with the City Engineer on this.

With regards to bicycle safety, they will install a sidewalk extending further north from Durst Cycle along Goodwin Avenue. There are already sidewalks that exist along University Avenue. However, they will inform tenants of where bicycle parking is permitted and post proper signage.

Mr. Fell asked Mr. Augustine to talk about building code, life safety, and accessibility and public health requirements of the project. Mr. Augustine stated that they have met with City staff several times as they evolved through the planning process. In response to Mr. Fell's specific questions, Cabana bathrooms will be provided in the pool area to comply with handicapped requirements. They plan to separate the parking garage and the residential component by establishing a firewall. They plan to provide several different exits out of the building to address life safety issues. And units on all levels will meet Illinois accessibility requirements.

Ms. Stake inquired as to who chose the color scheme. Mr. Augustine replied that it was a collaborative effort of their marketing team, architects and landscape architects along with him. They researched the University of Illinois and the surrounding businesses and areas to find the local style of the neighborhood. Several of his team members were once students at the University of Illinois, so he valued their input when making decisions on the color schemes.

Mr. Fell questioned why they are providing more parking spaces than the City requires. Where will the guest parking be located? Mr. Augustine explained it is for marketability purposes. They target a crowd that typically is willing to pay higher rents; and although there is other

means of transportation in the area, they find that most tenants will have vehicles. When they pay higher rent, the tenants expect to have places to park their vehicles, even if they don't use them very often.

Mr. Augustine went on to explain that the 14 spaces off of University Avenue will be reserved for retail use. Prospective residents will also use these spaces when coming to the leasing office. The entire ground floor of the parking garage will be left open for visitor parking. There will be a total of 417 parking spaces provided inside the parking garage with the majority of them being located behind a controlled access gate for the residents only.

Chair Pollock commented that the renderings and photographs are impressive. He asked for clarification on the market. Will the units be only for students or anyone who would like to live there? Mr. Augustine replied that anyone can rent a unit; however, with the way the units are designed, people past college do not typically want to live in a development like this.

Chair Pollock inquired about the construction timeline. When do they expect the project to be completed? Mr. Augustine said that if everything goes as planned, then they plan to have the project completed in April of 2014 for an August 2014 school delivery.

Susan Taylor, 606 West Michigan Avenue, mentioned that in the 12-15 years of watching the Plan Commission, she has noticed many stages of planning. When she first began, there was a two-phase process for the Plan Commission. It was nice because developers could gather valuable input from the Plan Commissioners during the first review of a project. Now, projects only come before the Plan Commission once. She mentioned that there is a lot of traffic already on University Avenue for the two hospitals located in the nearby areas. There are many ambulances up and down the street all day and night. At 5:00 p.m., drivers trying to pull onto University Avenue get locked in by the rush hour traffic.

With no further input from the audience, Chair Pollock closed the public input portion of the hearing and opened it for Plan Commission discussion and/or motion(s).

Mr. Fitch felt this is a great project for the City of Urbana. He moved that the Plan Commission forward Plan Case No. 2188-SU-12 to the City Council with a recommendation for approval including staff's suggested conditions as listed on Page 10 of the written staff report dated August 31, 2012. Ms. Tompkins seconded the motion.

Chair Pollock commented that he is excited to see the proposed sites be developed/redeveloped, especially because the property is difficult due to its odd shape and location along the railroad tracks. He looks forward to seeing the completed project.

Roll call was as follows:

Mr. Fell	-	Yes	Mr. Fitch	-	Yes
Mr. Pollock	-	Yes	Ms. Stake	-	Yes
Ms. Tompkins	-	Yes	Mr. Ash	-	Yes

The motion was passed by unanimous vote. Chair Pollock announced that this case would be forwarded to the Urbana City Council on October 15, 2012.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Susan Taylor spoke about the residential neighborhood north of the railroad tracks along University Avenue. Development and student parking are intruding on the neighborhood. The proposed development in Plan Case No. 2188-SU-12 will provide even more parking spaces adjacent to an existing parking garage owned by the University of Illinois that is currently underutilized. Ms. Taylor also expressed concern about how Bristol Place is being managed in the City of Champaign and how the Champaign County Housing Authority is handling housing vouchers there.

10. STAFF REPORT

Robert Myers, Planning Manager, reported on the following:

- Gun Stores and Private Indoor Firing Range Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment was approved by the Urbana City Council.
- Aditi Kambuj was hired as a new planner at the City of Urbana.
- APA-IL Conference will be held in the City of Champaign on September 19-21 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Champaign. There will be a one day track for training Plan Commissioners and Zoning Board of Appeals members.
- Draft Climate Action Plan will be coming before the Plan Commission for review and comments in a future meeting.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Myers, AICP, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission