



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
September 12, 2005

Committee Members Present:

Lynne Barnes, Brandon Bowersox, Danielle Chynoweth, Robert Lewis, Dennis Roberts, Charlie Smyth, Heather Stevenson and Mayor Prussing - 8.

Committee Members Absent:

None.

Staff Members Present:

Police Chief Eddie Adair, Planner Paul Lindahl, Fire Chief Rex Mundt, Community Development Director Elizabeth Tyler, Deputy City Clerk Deborah Roberts, and Chief Administrative Officer Bruce Walden

Others Present:

Julie Watson, Rick Beyers, James Green, and Members of the Media

Meeting Location:

Urbana City Council Chambers

There being a quorum, Chair Chynoweth called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Additions to the Agenda and Staff Report

There were none.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mr. Smyth moved to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2005 meeting of the Committee of the Whole. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bowersox. Mayor Prussing requested to have her name added to the list of Committee Members present. There were no objections. The minutes were approved as amended by a voice vote.

Public Input

Julie Winston, 805 E. Green, addressed the Committee regarding the pedestrian bridge at 123 West Main and the number of unrelated persons living at a residence.

Ordinance No. 2005-09-136: An Ordinance Annexing Certain Territory to the City of Urbana (A Tract of Land Contiguous to the Northwest Corner of the City Limits, Adjacent to the Canadian National Railway/Emulsicoat, Inc.)

Planner Paul Lindahl presented staff report. The property is located approximately 825 feet west of Saline Court, and runs along the east edge of the Canadian National/Illinois Central Railroad right-of-way, northward for approximately 2,500 feet.

There are a number of related cases regarding this tract including: a rezoning, annexation agreement with special use permit, and this annexation petition.

Rick Beyers, General Manager of Emulsicoat, and James Green, Attorney for Emulsicoat discussed the intent of the move and what portion of the Emulsicoat operation would be moved to this location.

Mr. Beyers and Mr. Green answered question from the Committee regarding this annexation.

Following debate, Ms. Barnes moved to forward **Ordinance No. 2005-09-136: An Ordinance Annexing Certain Territory to the City of Urbana (A Tract of Land Contiguous to the Northwest Corner of the City Limits, Adjacent to the Canadian National Railway/Emulsicoat, Inc.)** to a Special City Council Meeting to be held at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, September 26, 2005 with no recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Roberts and carried by a voice vote.

Discussion: City Council Goals (Draft 7)

Mr. Smyth presented the following goals which were created by the City Council to lay out a framework of priorities for the Mayor, Staff and Council for the current council so that they can take a proactive role in the future of the City.

Common Goals

1.) Promote Public Safety

- a. Provide police and fire service at the level needed for all neighborhoods.
- b. Support the Mayor in putting together a task force to pursue a Police Review/Oversight Board appropriate for our size of city that is effective, professional, and cost-effective.

- c. Establish appropriate ordinances to strengthen the city's ability to maintain safe environments within our neighborhoods.

2.) Strengthen Urbana's Economic Development Program

- a. Philo Road – implement action plan, extend Florida, work with neighborhood and business leaders, stabilize nearby neighborhoods, consider additional safety enhancements, and examine further economic incentives.
- b. Recruitment visits including Mayor/Council Members to targeted businesses.
- c. General business development along Cunningham Ave including beautification.
- d. Monitor developments on 130/150 and develop consensus vision.
- e. Look at Olympian Drive completion over the next several years.
- f. Hire Economic Development Manager ASAP. Consider higher level position that answers directly to the Mayor and CAO.

3.) Create an energetic, vibrant downtown that provides needed services to the City.

- a. Establish Downtown Commission that will propose Annual Action Plans before each budget season to Council.
- b. Create and implement redevelopment plan for Broadway corridor.
- c. Create and implement redevelopment plan for the Boneyard – especially Race to Vine.
- d. Implement downtown, public wireless.
- e. Develop trailway from Carle to downtown.
- f. Increase outdoor activity – create single ROW usage license, market Farmers Market to tours, encourage outdoor dining and beer gardens and music events.
- g. Pursue increased outdoor green space/establishment of a public square.

4.) Preserve Neighborhoods and Promote Rental Safety

- a. Develop Conservation districts for historic and sensitive areas of the city. Conservation Districts should include review of demolitions, approval of new construction, and design guidelines applied by a MOR style Design Review Board or as fixed requirements required by zoning ordinance.
- b. Increase code enforcement, particularly for rentals. Hire additional housing inspector, and pursue consequences for repeat code offenders.
- c. "Rebuild Urbana" - encourages home maintenance including painting in target areas, examine incentives for conversion of rentals and boarding houses to single family and condos, and replace decayed stock to low density or condos.

5.) Implement the 2005 Comprehensive Plan

- a. Rewrite our Zoning Ordinance. We propose hiring an outside consultant in order to accomplish this over the next year and to focus on billboards and sign issues now with current staff.

- b. Include use of design guidelines, form-based code concepts, modern sign and lighting standards, Traditional Neighborhood Development standards, commercial big box store standards, neighborhood business zones, preserving historic neighborhoods, farmland, natural areas and minimizing sprawl as guiding principles (see Comprehensive Plan implementation section for complete action items and goals).
- c. Update the sign ordinance for the city, setting new guidelines for commercial signs along main arteries and traffic corridors designated for redevelopment or beautification. Establish a time table for the replacement or phasing out of billboards and tall pole signs along designated traffic corridors.

6.) Reduce Urbana's Environmental Footprint and Waste Stream/Expand Recycling

- a. Study and implement green building guidelines and incentives.
- b. Implement recycling of bottles, paper, etc in downtown - particularly in light of local beer distributors' termination of bottle recycling.
- c. Target construction debris for waste reduction/recycling, since it is the greatest source of waste.
- d. Support hazardous waste collection.

7.) Promote Diversity and Non-Discrimination

In:

- a. Hiring
- b. Contracts
- c. Public services
- d. Code enforcement

8.) Increase Affordable Housing

- a. Develop nationally recognized, model neighborhood that is affordable and uses 10% of standard energy consumption.
- b. Develop replacement rental housing for Lakeside Terrace – 80 units or more – that are affordable to the poorest of the poor as per prior council agreement.
- c. Continue support for accessible, energy-efficient, affordable housing including an effective mix of rent subsidized housing with home ownership programs.

9.) Get Urbana Bicycling

- a. Create a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory committee and seek Bicycle Friendly Community designation.
- b. Staff and Council will implement Bike committee recommendations on new and improved routes and regional connections, bike maps, designated routes, signage, improved off-street and on-street bike routes and facilities, increased bicycle parking, as well as creation of bike safety and public education programs.

- c. Take a leadership role on developing the regional trail to Danville that would include historic Lincoln sites in Urbana.
- d. Develop a local trail from Carle to Downtown and other in town greenways and trails.

10.) Create a Public Arts Program

- a. Establish a dedicated revenue stream for public art – consider percent for arts approach.
- b. Encourage the preservation and commemoration of local and multicultural traditions and histories.
- c. Integrate art into every feasible public works project – promote functional and streetscape art.
- d. Create a public art program that represents our community in all its diversity – in terms of race, geography, gender, class, sexual orientation, belief-system, etc.
- e. Provide opportunities for local and national, established and emerging artists in Champaign County.
- f. Develop a strong public collection of artworks representing diverse communities, artistic styles, and disciplines.

11.) Recruit and retain top quality staff

- a. Become more competitive and develop methods for better retaining staff.
- b. Identify immediate changes and long-term goals to attract and retain top-notch employees; include examination of pay scale and advancement through positions.
- c. Implement appointment contracts.

12.) Review City Code

- a. Compare policy to practice.
- b. Review code for inequities.
- c. Pursue relevant changes as required.

13.) Handle Council Business Efficiently

- a. Improve council chambers audio.
- b. Provide three chairs at public comment table and replace with better microphone.
- c. Provide public with a “how to” brochure for public input and making comments as new additions to the conversation.
- d. Improve meeting efficiency.
- e. Wherever possible, staff time at meetings should be consolidated and ordered with agenda items planned so that a particular staff member is not at every meeting.
- f. Several vacation periods have been set including no meetings the weeks of July 4, August 1, Dec. 26, and Jan 1. In the event that a council meeting is needed, it

should be scheduled to precede the regularly scheduled committee of the whole meeting of the subsequent week. Attempts will be made to line up vacation periods in upcoming years.

Committee Members discussed these goals and suggested the following changes:

Under item 6.a. add “energy conservation improvements, and environmentally friendly public works.”

Under item 10. add “g. Establish a public arts commission.”

Under item 11. add “d. Gather input from employees on how to improve the City’s employment climate.”

Under item 13. change item c. to read “Provide public with a “how to” brochure for public input and advice on how to make comments additions to the conversation instead of repetition.”

Mr. Smyth moved that the suggested changes be made to these goals and a final draft be forwarded to Council with a recommendation for approval. The motion was seconded by Ms. Barnes and carried by a voice vote.

Discussion: Ideas on Neighborhood Preservation

Mr. Smyth stated that he is interested in developing an all encompassing approach to neighborhood preservation and minimizing the impact of rental properties on various neighborhoods. Mr. Smyth proposed the following steps:

Implementation Items:

- 1.) Rental Registration: closes the loop on the new provision in the 4 unrelated living in a unit
- 2.) Family definition needs to be tightened up to something along the lines of other university cities’ definitions of functional family unit, e.g. Ann Arbor, MI
- 3.) Expand rental inspection to include 1 and 2 unit properties.
- 4.) Need to better define green space requirements on side and backyards to eliminate back and side yard parking on properties not designed for more than a vehicle or two. In fact many properties just barely accommodate one vehicle
- 5.) Remove crushed gravel/limestone as an alternative landscaping material and ban its use as a renewal cover over existing except for driveways (i.e. can’t be used on any surface other than a main driveway)
- 6.) Designate certain areas for conservation districts with design and review guidelines that have real requirements and teeth.
- 7.) Require minimum levels of maintenance inside and out (so called housekeeping ordinance)

- 8.) Scope of the area covered by most provisions could be the whole community. There are those that think we should apply this to historic districts while others think it is needed everywhere to keep non-historic areas from decaying.
- 9.) If it is applied to certain areas, it can be done on the same basis that we have university district/campus district parking where they overlap historic neighborhoods. Or you could use this designation to modify restrictions in some areas.

Some Alternative/Additional Ideas that should be discussed as part of the process:

- a.) Cost of on street parking. Maybe it should go up with additional cars per household/structure. This could vary by number of units in the structure.
- b.) Number of vehicles allowed both off street and on street based on the size of the property. This might be an attractive way to combine with (a).
- c.) Similarly you could regulate the number of unrelated individuals in a rental based on size/number of bedrooms. I think the biggest issue is the impact of so many cars on converted properties.
- d.) Licensing landlords like restaurants so that with certain levels of negative evaluations they get fined and/or closed down. We could also look at charging for visits by inspectors or police/fire if they become excessive.

Issues:

- 1.) Justification and rationale to tear down existing housing and replace with junk is essentially through demolition by neglect. The landlords or a series of landlords doesn't take adequate care of the property one reason being because they cost it out based on "economic lifespan" of the house which is usually different for commercial properties.
- 2.) The replacements are done without design guidelines and have no esthetic sense of the area thus resulting in a loss of character to the neighborhood
- 3.) Replacements don't have the "Institutional" quality of homes built 80 or more years ago
- 4.) Infrastructure can't handle the impact of the many vehicles though, particularly for larger houses, the number of people may be doable.

Related thoughts and ideas:

The quality and quantity of rentals affects the livability and viability of a neighborhood.

Make duplexes/condos out of boarding houses. Square footage issues.

Justification for Rental registration/affidavit program: The tenant needs to sign on the dotted line. Nothing from keeping them from crossing the line and claiming "family" relation – Our current ordinance is only half the answer without rental registration as we need to complete the loop on this one.

The city needs to provide aggressive monetary assistance to those willing to convert back to single family. Assistance to those willing to convert R7 boarding houses/large homes to condominiums and either rent or sell them. Maybe a build Urbana incentive to doing something like this (Robert and Dennis's ideas on Rebuild Urbana/Paint Urbana). There are also tax incentives to look at for anyone wanting Historic designation. We probably need more condominiums available *for sale* in the campus area.

How would we get the community involved in this? I can see students, tenant union, renters, WUNA members, preservationists, and landlords and so on. I'd hate to put together a task force that would take too long but maybe that's the way to go?

Tenant behavior: tools for landlords to deal with this so that it can be stopped before a crime problem develops.

Debate followed Mr. Smyth's presentation. Community Development Director Libby Tyler stated that work on some of these issues has been started and staff would like the opportunity to respond. Staff will bring back their recommendations at a later date.

Discussion: Item from Neighborhood Preservation List on the Definition of Family for the Purposes of Regulating the Number of Unrelated Individuals that Can Live Together in Certain Zoning Classifications

Mr. Smyth stated that this is a specific item from the previous discussion that he thought could be tackled early in the process, as well as being considered a part of the whole Neighborhood Preservation item.

Dr. Tyler reviewed the current regulations on four unrelated adults living together. Article II, Definitions, page 13 in the Zoning Ordinance defines a unit rather than the people living there as "A building containing one dwelling unit and occupied at any given time by a group of persons consisting of one or more persons related by blood, adoption or marriage, living and cooking together as a single housekeeping unit together with not more than three additional persons, not related by blood, adoption or marriage." "Multiple-families is a building containing three or more dwelling units, each of which is occupied at any given time by a group of persons consisting of one or more persons related by blood, adoption or marriage, together with not more than three additional persons not related by blood, adoption or marriage, living and cooking together as a single housekeeping unit." Staff is working on a definition to include foster children.

Following debate, Mr. Smyth stated that many communities set a tighter definition of families. They make it a level two kinship that could be a grandparent and grandchild. Cousins are not allowed. Cousins would be considered in the three unrelated persons. Mr. Smyth suggested a "functional family" that would be a group of unrelated individuals who can demonstrate that they live together as a family could continue to do so.

Following debate, Mr. Smyth requested a straw poll to determine whether there is a desire to see a firmer definition of family. The Committee agreed with the desire for a firmer definition.

Following further debate, the consensus of the Committee was for staff to provide the Committee with a definition of functional family.

Ordinance No. 2005-09-137: An Ordinance Revising the Annual Budget Ordinance (Police Review Board Training)

Mayor Prussing stated this is a request for funds for four people to attend the National Association for NACOLE 11th Annual Conference (National Association for Civilian Oversight) as training for the Police Review Board. The four attending would be Mayor Prussing, Mike Bily, Anthony Cobb and Jennifer Walling.

Mr. Lewis moved to forward **Ordinance No. 2005-09-137: An Ordinance Revising the Annual Budget Ordinance (Police Review Board Training)** to Council with a recommendation for approval. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bowersox and carried by a voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Chynoweth declared the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Taylor
Recording Secretary

*This meeting was taped.

*This meeting was broadcast on cable television.

Minutes approved: September 26, 2005