
DATE: Monday, May 2, 2022
TIME: 6:30 pm
PLACE: 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

The City Council Committee of The Whole of the City of Urbana, Illinois, met in regular session Monday, May 2, 2022, at 6:30pm.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT: Diane Wolfe Marlin, Mayor; CM Maryalice Wu, CM Christopher Evans, CM Shirese Hursey, CM Jaya Kolisetty, CM Chaundra Bishop, CM Grace Wilken

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT: Phyllis D. Clark, City Clerk; CM James Quisenberry

STAFF PRESENT: Darcy Sandefur, Carol Mitten, Bourema Ouedraogo, Dave Wesner, Sheila Dodd, Alyana Robinson, Nick Hanson, Kevin Garcia, Kat Trotter, Demond Dade

OTHERS PRESENT: None;

Chair: *Shirese Hursey, Ward 3*

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

With a quorum present, Chair Hursey called the meeting of the Committee of the Whole to order at 6:53 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

April 4th and April 5th ARPA Listening Session

Motion to approve minutes by CM Wu and seconded by CM Kolisetty.

Vote by roll call:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Kolisetty, Bishop, Wilken

NAY: None

3. Additions to the Agenda

Announcement that Dr. Ellis Subdivision Discussion would be moved to the following week due to a staff illness.

Motion to move item 8 (budget amendment) to item 6 (following staff report) on agenda by Mayor Marlin.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans Hursey, Kolisetty, Bishop, Wilken

NAY: None

4. Public Input and Presentations

a. Public Input

Erik Saks spoke in opposition to proposed R-7 zoning ordinance. Expressed that it is important to save and repurpose the historic Greek houses but does not support the amendment as it is written, shared that there should be a difference between Greek houses and boarding houses and that the East and West sides of Lincoln be treated differently. Shared that the effort to amend the zoning should be done correctly the first time. **Esther Patt** spoke in opposition to R-7 zoning amendment because of the unnecessary addition of commercial entities and businesses being added to a residential neighborhood. Expressed concerns about the safety of the neighborhood with the limited parking. Stressed that parking access is a public safety issue not a luxury. **Allan Max Axelrod** thanked previous speakers for providing public input. Thanked Council for passing IL American Water price increase protest resolution. Shared information about creation of municipal utilities. Shared information about profits of IL American Water during pandemic. **Tracy Chong** spoke in support of the proposed R-7 zoning amendment because of its potential for positive neighborhood transformations. Spoke in support of businesses being in walking distance of residences. Expressed concerns about classism entering the discussion. **Shelly Oggle** shared support for Erik Saks proposal to hold off on approving the R-7 zoning amendment until it meets the proposed changes. **Michael Pleva** spoke in opposition to the R-7 zoning amendment. Expressed that desires for residents who have invested into their homes for years are not being discriminatory by wanting to maintain their neighborhood. Expressed concerns about the City amending so much so quickly while residents would have to jump through numerous hoops to make minor changes to their residences. **Paul Hixson (written remarks attached)** shared that he bought his home because of its proximity to the University and the walkability of Urbana. Expressed that he feels his neighborhood is under attack by developers and realtors that is now aided by the City. Spoke in support of four key changes to amendment. **Angel Johnson** expressed frustration with City for not granting her businesses COVID grants or support that they applied for. Shared the success stories of her center and its investments in the local youth. Inquired about status of denial letter for grant application. **Renee Bullock** expressed concerns about trusting the City and its budget. Expressed concerns about road conditions and City expenditures. Inquired about why City officials were not able to provide back and forth. **Bob Stillenger** spoke in opposition to R-7 zoning amendment and expressed concerns about proximity to R-7 zoned property to his residence. Expressed that occupancy of these properties is not an issue and that this zoning amendment is not needed. **CM Kolisetty read statements on behalf of Lewis Steinberg in opposition to the R-7 zoning amendment. CM Wu read statements on behalf of Marie Pierre in opposition R-7 zoning amendment unless amended. CM Hursey read statements on behalf of Becky Mead and Tim Steltzer (see attached). CM Hursey read statements on behalf of Leslie Sherman (see attached). CM Kolisetty read statements on behalf of Trent Shepard in opposition to the R-7 zoning amendment unless amended. CM Kolisetty read statements on behalf of Liz Cardmen in opposition to R-7 zoning ordinance.**

5. Staff Report

Mayor Marlin provided an update on the open seats on the Plan Commission. Extended thank you to the City staff, volunteers, and neighboring agencies who worked to make the Christie Clinic race weekend happen successfully.

6. Ordinance No. 2022-05-015: An Ordinance Amending the Urbana Zoning Ordinance (R-7, University Residential Text Amendment / Plan Case 2438-T-22) – CD

Presented by Kat Trotter of the Community Development Department with support from Kevin Garcia. This item is a proposed zoning amendment to the R-7 properties that allows for additional uses including commercial. Trotter provided a history of this item prior to coming before Council and shared a map of properties currently zoned R-7. R-7 properties are currently Greek houses or boarding houses. This item was proposed because of decreasing popularity of Greek housing and a desire to preserve the historic buildings and to allow easier reuse of these buildings. This would allow for existing buildings to be repurposed as apartments or allowable commercial uses upon application and award of special use permit. The special use permit process will allow for another opportunity for public input and council vote. Provided examples of other R-7 buildings that have been rezoned to multi-family residences. Shared that this amendment is intended to be followed up with supplemental amendments. Shared survey values of Urbana residents regarding the proposed commercial use of Greek houses. Trotter shared definitions and a list of residential uses outlined in the zoning ordinance. Questions and discussion ensued. Kevin Garcia and Nick Hanson helped respond to additional questions.

Motion to keep in committee by CM Wu and seconded by CM Evans.

Vote by roll call:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Kolisetty, Bishop, Wilken

NAY: None

7. Ordinance No. 2022-05-016: An Ordinance Amending Urbana City Code Chapter 5, Building, Fire, and Flood Safety Codes (Merging Building Safety Code Board of Appeals and Property Maintenance Structures Code Board of Appeals) – CD

Presented by Nick Hanson of Community Development Department. This item merges two boards that currently serve to hear appeals for codes adopted by the city and the property maintenance code. Currently half the board members serve on both boards. Both boards are underutilized at this time and combining them would not reduce services or create undue burden on board members. The boards serve the same function. Questions and discussion ensued. Corrections were offered regarding adding of the word “board” where omitted within the Ordinance.

Motion to approve to the regular agenda as corrected by CM Bishop and seconded by CM Kolisetty.

Vote by roll call:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Kolisetty, Bishop, Wilken

NAY: None

8. Ordinance No. 2022-05-017: An Ordinance Revising the Annual Budget (Budget Amendment #7 – Omnibus) – HRF

Presented by Alyana Robinson of the Finance Department with support from Demond Dade the Fire Chief. This item includes approval of coverage for overtime and leave for the fire department; expenditure of legal expenses related to the Windsor Road project; acceptance of grant awarded for Race Street resurfacing project; expense of additional funds to cover necessary Information Technology and Urbana Public Television equipment; and reallocation of grant funds to Champaign County Regional Plan Commission as previously approved. Questions and discussion ensued.

Motion to approve to the regular agenda by CM Wu and seconded by CM Kolisetty.

Vote by roll call:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Kolisetty, Bishop, Wilken

NAY: None

9. Council Input and Communications

CM Evans provided clarity on public input guidelines regarding public body member's ability to ask clarifying questions during public input. *CM Bishop* inquired about the Failure to Comply Ticket (FTC) report included in the meeting materials. *Sheila Dodd the Community Development Director responded.* *CM Wilken* asked additional clarifying questions about FTC report. *CM Wu* acknowledged the time spent by City staff and also the residents regarding the issues presented this evening. Acknowledged the number of hours taken on these items.

10. Discussion: Dr. Ellis Subdivision Sewer Issues Presentation

***Item moved to next meeting, May 9, 2022.**

11. Adjournment

With no further business before the committee of the whole Chair Wu adjourned the meeting at 9:45 PM

Darcy Sandefur

Recording Secretary

This meeting was video recorded and is viewable on-demand [HERE](#).

Minutes approved: 05-16-2022

May 2, 2022

Dear Urbana City Council members,

We are back one more time to urge you to act to protect the unique, but increasingly fragile, nature of the West Urbana Neighborhood we live in.

As we have told you before, we love our home, we love our neighborhood, and we love Urbana. And that has been true since we bought our home in the 200 block of Indiana Ave in 1977. Over the past 45 years, we have dutifully (and happily) paid our property taxes to support both community services and the quality of life in this unique, beautiful neighborhood. Since moving into our home, Paul has been able to either walk or bike to his office on campus; our now-grown adult children were able to attend Leal, Urbana Middle School, and Urbana High School; and Jennifer worked as an educator in the Urbana 116 School District. Perhaps you will recall that in his last letter to you on this topic, Paul shared with you some current photos from his walks around the neighborhood showing you the beautiful parts of WUNA that need and deserve protection.

But, clearly some threats to this neighborhood have emerged over the past few decades. And, although we still love our neighborhood and our city, we have felt a gradual deterioration in support from the city government of Urbana. When we first purchased our home, we felt secure that the city appreciated and supported maintaining the special tree-lined, established mixed residential character of this part of town. It has always been true that the West Urbana neighborhood serves as the residential transitional buffer between the county's largest employer, the University of Illinois, to our west and the county seat and downtown Urbana business district to our east. Because of this location and the desire of many UI faculty, staff, and students to live in an attractive, safe, predominantly single-family residential area and to walk or bike to campus, this has been a highly sought-after location to live in.

At first the challenges to our neighborhood seemed to come predominantly from relatively unethical realtors who bought larger homes in the western part of the neighborhood, converted them to "rooming houses", and failed to do little more than collect the rent, allowing the exterior of the properties to fall into decline. Then the process started to creep eastward. Our neighborhood has had to repeatedly rally to get the city to pay attention to these problems, rather than the city natively responding to them on behalf of its residents. But, over the past 20 years or so, the problems seem to have gotten worse. Now, the City's Department of Development Services seems uniquely focused on taking steps that would permanently, negatively affect this neighborhood that we so love. And, that is why we are writing to you.

The City Council is our last line of defense. In the past the City Council has recognized the unique value that this West Urbana Neighborhood brings to our community and we need for you to once again state that firmly through your votes and your directions to city staff.

If we sound weary or exhausted, it is because, like most members of the West Urbana Neighborhood Association (WUNA), we are tired of having to bring these same issues to repeated meetings with city staff members, Plan Commission members, and City Council members. It seems to be constant struggle to beat back the endless pressure from real estate "flippers" and now City staff planners who advance plans that, if implemented, would permanently degrade the attractiveness of living here.

Now to specifics: **We strongly urge you to reject the currently proposed plans being advocated by the Department of Community Development Services, and to send it back to the planning staff for revision.**

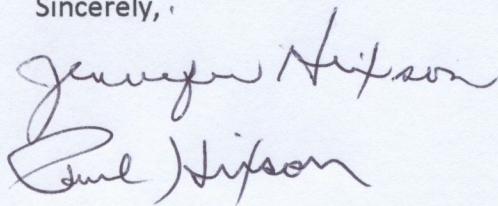
We also strongly support the suggestions by Tina Gunsalus and Michael Walker that any plan that is finally approved should address the following 4 main points:

- Differentiate between east and west of Lincoln Avenue, and create separate rules for each area
- Require any uses not presently permitted by right to require special use permits
- Preserve all current parking requirements
- Revert zoning to match the *[lowest density zoning standard of]* surrounding parcels if re-development of existing buildings is not possible

We still love Urbana... and we still love our neighborhood... but this process of continually having to fight with our own city government to preserve the quality of life in this gem of a neighborhood sure is getting old. Please do your part, regardless of which ward you come from and represent, to stand up for this West Urbana Neighborhood, just as I would hope all council members would do for each neighborhood in the City of Urbana.

Thank you for your service, and for considering our thoughts, concerns, and suggestions.

Sincerely,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in cursive. The top signature is for Jennifer Hixson and the bottom signature is for Paul Hixson. Both signatures are written in dark ink.

Paul and Jennifer Hixson

Sandefur, Darcy

From:
Sent: Monday, May 02, 2022 4:37 PM
To: !City Council
Subject: Input to City Council - R7 Proposal

***** Email From An External Source *****
Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

May 2, 2022

Dear Urbana City Council:

We are 20-year residents of West Urbana and have had to stand up for our neighborhood countless times. We do not understand why our neighborhood is under constant barrage by city planners who should be upholding the comprehensive plan and promoting the unique value of our neighborhood and instead are constantly trying sell it out to encourage inappropriate and thoughtless high density development.

We strongly urge you to reject the currently proposed plans being advocated by the Department of Community Development Services, and to send it back to the planning staff for revision.

We also strongly support the suggestions by Tina Gunsalus and Michael Walker that any plan that is finally approved should address the following 4 main points:

- **Differentiate between east and west of Lincoln Avenue, and create separate rules for each area**
- **Require any uses not presently permitted by right to require special use permits**
- **Preserve all current parking requirements**
- **Revert zoning to match the *[lowest density zoning standard of]* surrounding parcels if re-development of existing buildings is not possible**

Thank you for your consideration and service.

Sincerely,

Becky Mead & Tim Stelzer

Sandefur, Darcy

From:
Sent: Monday, May 02, 2022 2:44 PM
To: !City Council
Cc: WUNA-Main
Subject: Input to City Council R7 proposal

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Dear Urbana City Council Members,

I strongly urge you to reject the currently proposed plans being advocated by the Department of Community Development Services, and to send it back to the planning staff for revision.

I also strongly support the suggestions by Tina Gunsalus and Michael Walker that any plan that is finally approved should address the following 4 main points:

- **Differentiate between east and west of Lincoln Avenue, and create separate rules for each area**
- **Require any uses not presently permitted by right to require special use permits**
- **Preserve all current parking requirements**
- **Revert zoning to match the *[lowest density zoning standard of]* surrounding parcels if re-development of existing buildings is not possible**

I have been an active citizen and attended almost all of the West Urbana neighborhood outreach events held by City Staff to receive feedback on R7 proposals. I have been disappointed in each of these community "forums" at how little the staff listens and uses neighborhood feedback to change their proposals. In the last meeting with them, it came out that one of their motivations has been to reduce the work they have on dealing with special permits and PUDS related to these R7 properties. I find it sad that city staff do not feel listening to those living in Urbana matters and the uniqueness of West Urbana worth their time in preserving. In addition to rejecting the proposed plans, I ask that the city council clarify what the goals and focus of the city development staff should have with regard to working with neighborhoods. I look forward to a day when it is a partnership of shared goals for my neighborhood and the city Department of Community Development Services.

Thank you,

Leslie Sherman