

MEETING MINUTES

URBANA DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

DATE: April 26, 2007

APPROVED

TIME: 7:30 p.m.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Adams, Betsey Cronan, Ben Grosser, Michael McCulley, Art Zangerl

MEMBERS ABSENT Jennifer Gentry, Chris Hartman

STAFF PRESENT: Tom Carrino, Economic Development Division Manager;
Jeff Engstrom, Planner I; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Andrew Fell, Darrel Foste, Laura Haber, Michael Jay, Marya Ryan, Nancy Wehling

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

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

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINTUES

The minutes from the January 15, 2005 meeting were presented for approval. Ms. Cronan noticed one change that needed to be made, which is that Ms. Goscha was noted as being both present and absent. She suggested that they delete Ms. Goscha's name from being present at the last meeting. The Development Review Board then approved the minutes as amended by unanimous voice vote.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Jeff Engstrom, Planner I, noted that the petitioner had communicated to City staff that he would like to have the case continued to the next meeting of the Development Review Board.

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

DRB-2007-01: A request by Marcos Hori to review the site plan and design for three proposed six-unit multi-family buildings at 502 and 504 West Elm Street in the MOR, Mixed-Office Residential Zoning District.

Chair Zangerl announced that he will need to abstain from the discussion and vote due to a conflict of interest with the proposed two properties. Mr. Adams announced that he will need to abstain as well due to a conflict of interest with the proposed two properties.

Mr. Grosser nominated Mr. McCulley to serve as Acting Chair during this public hearing. Ms. Cronan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. Then, Mr. Zangerl and Mr. Adams left the meeting.

Acting Chair McCulley stated that it appears that the Development Review Board would be having an administrative meeting since their quorum no longer existed. The issue is then how far should the Development Review Board go through the various steps of the public hearing process before continuing the case.

Mr. Grosser commented that he believes it would make sense to hold off on the staff presentation until more members are present. Mr. Engstrom concurred with Mr. Grosser on behalf of City staff.

Acting Chair McCulley opened the public input portion of the hearing for members of the audience to speak.

Laura Haber, of 206 South McCullough, mentioned that she lives within eyesight of 502 and 504 West Elm Street. She loves to walk through her neighborhood and see how many of the older homes that still exist. She lives in a home that was built in 1927.

The only downside to living in her home is the eyesore across the street. Campus Oaks serves as an object lesson of what we stand to lose when we forget about the treasures in our community and allow for thoughtless and short-sighted development. It is a visible symbol of a burning

question that our community faces: What do we value for our community? What type of development do we want?

She feels that the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and the MOR Design Guidelines were partly meant to address these questions. The answers are that we want to preserve the beautiful buildings and relatively small scale that give our neighborhoods their charm.

She stated that her neighborhood is in crisis. She wondered if it is going to continue to be part of "Historic Urbana" as the street sign proclaims or are we going to sacrifice it to the developers? There is evidence of both possibilities with beautiful old houses and tasteful apartment buildings alongside new ugly apartment buildings. It is a neighborhood that is extremely vulnerable.

The proximity of the proposed development to other large and ugly apartment buildings in the area such as Campus Oaks and other Campus Property Management apartment buildings, makes the proposed development potentially even more damaging. The MOR Ordinance calls for the City to "limit scale and intensity of the uses and buildings that may locate in this district". When the proximity to other large housing complexes is taken into account, this could be transformed into a very ugly block. It could be the tipping point that spells the end of her neighborhood as we know it.

People in the neighborhood and other throughout the City want to preserve the historic buildings and to preserve the character of the neighborhood. Many of these people attended workshops and focus group meetings for the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and stated this desire. No one will say "I wish Campus Property Management would build more apartment buildings in their neighborhoods". If this is allowed to happen, it will clearly be in opposition to the desires of the people who lived in the neighborhood and against the mandates of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and the MOR Zoning District.

Marya Ryan, of 1 Buena Vista Court, lives down the block from the subject properties. She agreed with Ms. Haber. She did not feel that it would be appropriate for the existing houses at 502 and 504 West Elm Street to be torn down. The neighborhood would really lose something irrevocable.

She recommended that the Development Review Board continue this case to the next meeting and hold off on making a decision about the proposed development plans at least until the Historic Preservation Commission has made their determination about the pending historic landmark nominations for the two subject properties.

Ms. Cronan moved that the Development Review Board continue Case No. DRB-2007-01 to a future date to be determined. Mr. Grosser seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

After some discussion, the Development Review Board members present made note of dates that they would be available to hold their next meeting. Those possible dates include Tuesday, May 8th; Wednesday, May 9th; Thursday, May 10th; Tuesday, May 15th; Wednesday, May 16th and

Thursday, May 17th (which is their next regularly scheduled meeting date). City staff will follow up with contacting members who are not present to see what date best fits their schedules.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

There was none.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Grosser moved to adjourn. Ms. Cronan seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Myers, Secretary