

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: January 18, 2007

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Burris, Lew Hopkins, Michael Pollock, Bernadine Stake, Marilyn Upah-Bant, James Ward, Don White

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Ben Grosser

STAFF PRESENT: Elizabeth Tyler, Director of Community Development Services; Robert Myers, Planning Manager; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Rita Black, Susan Chavarria, Scott Kunkel, Peter McAvoy, Susan Taylor

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 p.m., the roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There was none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Ward moved that the Plan Commission approve the minutes as presented from the December 21, 2006 meeting. Mr. Hopkins seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

- Letter from Steve Buck
- Email from Barak Rosenshine
- Email from Brandon Bowersox

- Comment Sheet from George Boyd
- Letter from Joyce and Frank Phares
- Packet of Comment Sheets from the IL 130/ High Cross Road Corridor Study Public Open House held on December 14, 2006
- PowerPoint Presentation Handout regarding IL 130/ High Cross Road Corridor Plan

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 1959-M-05: Request by Gregory Place, LLC to rezone parcels totaling one acre located at 1004, 1006 and 1008 West Nevada Street, 704 and 706 Gregory Place, and 1003, 1005, and 1007 West Oregon Street from the R-5, Medium High Density Multiple-Family Residential Zoning District, to CCD, Campus Commercial Zoning District.

Plan Case No. 1959-SU-05: Request by Gregory Place, LLC for a special use permit to allow a mixed use development known as the East Campus Commercial Center Phase II located at 1004, 1006 and 1008 West Nevada Street, 704 and 706 Gregory Place, and 1003, 1005, and 1007 West Oregon Street in the City's CCD, Campus Commercial Zoning District.

Robert Myers, Planning Manager, presented these two cases to the Plan Commission. He introduced the rezoning and special use permit request cases together by stating the reasons for each request. He gave a brief background noting the zoning and land uses of the proposed site and its surrounding properties. He talked about the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan that relate to the proposed rezoning request. He reviewed the LaSalle National Bank criteria that pertains to the request to rezone the proposed property from the R-5, Medium High Density Multiple Family Residential Zoning District, to the CCD, Campus Commercial Development Zoning District. He presented staff's recommendation for the rezoning case, which was as follows:

In Plan Case 1959-M-05, based on the evidence presented in the written staff report, and without the benefit of considering additional evidence that may be presented during the public hearing, staff recommended that the Plan Commission recommend approval of the proposed rezoning.

Mr. Myers continued his presentation by reviewing the requirements for a special use permit according to Section VII-6 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance that pertain to the proposed special use permit request. He presented staff's recommendation for the special use permit, which was as follows:

In Plan Case 1959-SU-05, based on the evidence presented in the written staff report, and without the benefit of considering additional evidence that may be presented at the public hearing, staff recommended that the Plan Commission recommend approval of the proposed special use with the following conditions:

- 1. The Developer shall consult with City staff indicating the exact commercial uses that will be located within the commercial space. City staff shall confirm that the uses are permitted in the CCD District and that adequate parking is accommodated to satisfy the development regulations.*
- 2. That the development on the property be in substantial conformance with the Site Plan.*

With no questions for City staff, Chair Pollock opened the public hearing to testimony from the petitioner and other members of the audience.

Scott Kunkel, representative for Gregory Place, LLC, approached the Plan Commission. He displayed photos of the existing Phase I building noting that many aspects would be seen in the proposed Phase II building as well. He displayed a site plan of the overall project, a site plan of the 1st floor plan (retail level), a site plan of the 2nd floor plan (office level), a site plan of the 3rd – 5th floor plans (residential levels), and an elevation plan showing the west and south sides of the proposed building. He talked about architectural layout and uses for each floor.

Ms. Stake inquired as to whether or not there would be any common space for the residents. Mr. Kunkel stated that the main common space would be the courtyards on the third floor interior. It would be accessible to all residential users. Otherwise there would be only minor common areas.

Ms. Upah-Bant wondered where parking would be available. Mr. Kunkel explained that there would be parking behind the retail spaces on the first floor. The balance of the parking would be provided on an adjacent parking lot through a development agreement that Gregory Place, LLC has with the University of Illinois (U of I). The U of I has designated parking for Gregory Place, Phase I, using designated parking spaces, and it has worked out well.

Ms. Upah-Bant inquired as to how many parking spaces would be behind the retail space. Mr. Kunkel responded that there would be 41 parking spaces provided onsite. Prior to Phase I being built, Gregory Place had parallel parking on either side of this street. When the Phase I project was completed, Gregory Place was reconfigured to provide diagonal parking in front of Phase I. Gregory Place is currently one-way southbound. With the Phase II project, they will complete the reconfiguration of Gregory Place and convert the street to two-way traffic with diagonal parking in front of Phase II mirroring that for Phase I. The parking meters, which are owned by the U of I, are short duration (30 minute and 1 hour) meters for use by customers for the retail spaces.

With no further testimony from the audience, Chair Pollock closed the public hearing portion of this case and opened the case up to hear discussion from the Plan Commission.

Mr. White moved that the Plan Commission forward Plan Case 1959-M-05 and Plan Case 1959-SU-05 to the City Council with a recommendation for approval with the two conditions recommended by City staff and with the findings presented in the staff report. Ms. Stake seconded the motion. Roll call was as follows:

Ms. Burris	-	Yes	Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes
Mr. Pollock	-	Yes	Ms. Stake	-	Yes
Ms. Upah-Bant	-	Yes	Mr. Ward	-	Yes
Mr. White	-	Yes			

The motion was passed by a unanimous vote of 7-0. Mr. Myers stated that these two cases would go before the Urbana City Council on February 5, 2007.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Myers gave a brief report on the following topics:

- **The Pines at Stone Creek Commons Subdivision Plat** was revised and approved by the City Council on January 16, 2007.
- **Historic East Urbana Neighborhood Association (HEUNA) Plan** was accepted by City Council on January 16, 2007.
- **The Planned Unit Development (PUD) Text Amendment** was continued to the Committee of the Whole meeting on January 22, 2007.
- **IL Route 130/ High Cross Road Corridor Plan** will be reviewed by the City Council on January 22, 2007.
- **A joint meeting between the City Council and the Historic Preservation Commission** will be held on February 7, 2007. They will be discussing ways to encourage more applications for local landmarks and historic districts.
- **Neighborhood Conservation District** will be submitted as a text amendment to the Plan Commission and the City Council in the near future.

Ms. Stake asked staff to work on getting a permit process established for demolitions. Mr. Myers stated that demolition review needs to be in the context of local historic landmarks and districts. Libby Tyler, Director of Community Development Services, added that currently the City does require permits for demolitions, but they do not undergo any form of review.

Demolition permits are issued administratively and the permits are noticed with a listing on the City's website. City staff has researched the demolition review process and what has led to demolitions and the pattern of demolitions. Staff also researched other communities' review processes for demolitions. This information was passed along to both the Plan Commission and to the City Council during study sessions on Neighborhood Conservation Districts. It would be coming back to the Plan Commission and City Council in the future for further review and discussion as City staff moves forward with Neighborhood Conservation. Ms. Stake commented that it would be good to get some review of demolition requests, so people could not just tear down buildings.

11. STUDY SESSION

Route 130 Corridor Draft Plan

Mr. Myers gave a brief introduction of the draft plan explaining that the City of Urbana received an Illinois Tomorrow Grant in 2003 from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to perform a study to promote development that would integrate transportation and land use. The Plan was prepared by Champaign County Regional Planning Commission under contract with the City of Urbana. Other participating agencies included Champaign County, Somer Township, Urbana Township and the University of Illinois. The Plan was timed so that it would be finished after the 2005 Comprehensive Plan was approved to take advantage its guidance. There was a strong public involvement process in creating the Route 130/ High Cross Road Corridor Plan.

Mr. Myers explained the future steps for plan adoption. After gathering input from the Plan Commission and City Council in study sessions, a final plan would be presented to the Plan Commission and City Council for adoption.

Mr. Pollock inquired as to whether the ability to adopt the proposed plan would rest entirely upon the Urbana City Council. Rita Black, of the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, answered by saying that they would get approval from all of the entities that participated in the process. After getting approval from the Champaign County Board, Somer Township and Urbana Township, the plan would be presented to the City of Urbana for approval. The plan would then be sent to IDOT for final approval.

Mr. Pollock asked what would happen if one of the other entities does not approve the plan. Ms. Black responded by saying that because the Champaign County, Somer Township, Urbana Township, the U of I and the City of Urbana has been working on this plan together along with the public, they do not expect that to happen. Mr. Pollock questioned whether the plan would still be sent to the Urbana City Council and to IDOT for approval in the event that one of the other entities does not approve it. Ms. Black stated that in this case, certification would be provided to IDOT that although one entity did not approve the plan the lead agency did so.

Susan Chavarria, of the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the IL Route 130 Corridor Plan. She discussed the following:

- About the Study
- Study Purpose
- Study Area
- Plan Contents
- Existing Conditions
- Future Conditions
- Preferred Alternatives

Mr. Pollock asked if the shared use path along Route 130 was off the roadway and if so, how far. Ms. Chavarria stated that it would be on the west side of the roadway but not on street. She is not sure how far it will be off the road. It is expected to be constructed within the existing right-of-way. The final determination is expected to depend on the specifics of the development going there.

Ms. Stake questioned if all the bike paths and pedestrian paths would be combined. Ms. Chavarria explained that for the shared use paths, pedestrians and bicyclists would be sharing a path off of the roadway. Along Washington Street, there would be on-street bicycle lanes and pedestrians would have sidewalk facilities. Ms. Stake stated she believes it can be rather dangerous to have shared use lanes for pedestrians and bicyclists. Ms. Chavarria stated that there are many people who would agree. There needs to be an education program for all the users to make sure that they understand the rules of the path and the road to minimize conflicts. Mr. Myers commented that there are also other ways to deal with this. A shared use path can be wider than sidewalks and have designated lanes for different users. Mr. Pollock pointed out that a pathway off-the-road for any activity would be better than no path at all.

Ms. Chavarria continued with her presentation by talking about the following:

- Implementation Plan
- Implementation Plan Matrix
- Design Considerations
- Appendices
- Public Involvement Efforts
- Public Comment
- What does this mean for Urbana?
- Next Steps

Ms. Tyler mentioned that City staff will ask for a Plan Commission recommendation to City Council when it becomes a final plan. Therefore, it will come back to the Plan Commission in a month or so.

Ms. Stake thanked Champaign County for the work put into the plan and for giving the public the opportunity to have a community voice in the proposed IL Route 130 Corridor Plan. She mentioned that the Plan contained an incredible amount of information. However, it was not very organized. There is not a table of contents and page numbers were missing for the Public Involvement. But overall the Plan is fantastic. The work that went into the two volumes is really

appreciated. It would be easier to understand if the comments could be incorporated with the Plan.

She talked about the comments received during the Public Involvement meetings. Most comments centered on preserving the valuable, unique High Cross Road area. 134 out of 156 people responded that they are opposed to a High Cross Road trumpet extension. Many people do not want any access to Interstate 74, while some people chose 1800 East for the trumpet extension.

She went on to state some facts that the Champaign County Blue Ribbon Panel had found regarding green space. The statewide average for green space is 49 acres per 1,000 residents. By this standard, Champaign County has 180,000 residents, who could reasonably expect the provision by about 9,000 acres of public open space, which is two and half times the present acreage.

Ms. Stake read some of the comments included in the Route 130 Corridor Plan. The comments included concerns about the environmental protection of N High Cross Road and the impact of increased traffic and street lighting along High Cross and Cottonwood Roads on Urbana's Atmospheric Observatory and other research sites. She expressed her concern about Champaign County and the City of Urbana possibly reducing development standards to get more development in the area.

Mr. Hopkins talked about the four things that the City of Urbana should be doing beyond the adoption of the proposed Route 130 Corridor Plan. The first one is to review and compare the Plan to Urbana's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). This is something that the City of Urbana can do. It is not the County's responsibility. Mr. Pollock commented that this is something that the City Council would do, not the Plan Commission. Mr. Hopkins suggested that they use the Route 130 Corridor Plan as the basis for allowing the Plan Commission to review the CIP in order to compare it to the Plan. He felt it is something that the Plan Commission should at least be aware of. Ms. Tyler stated that she would ask the Mayor for permission to give the Plan Commission a presentation on the City's CIP. She mentioned that the City's Public Works Department is heavily involved in the proposed Plan. Therefore, they are aware of the priorities and already incorporating them into the City's CIP. Of course there are limited resources for funding, but many of the priority projects are already underway. There are never enough resources to do everything that needs to be done, and there are other parts of the City that need improvements as well.

Mr. Hopkins talked about managing the number and types of access points on IL 130. His impression from looking at some of the diagrams from the proposed Route 130 Corridor Plan and from some of the City of Urbana's plans is that from Windsor Road to University Avenue, the City has this under control. The problem appears on High Cross Road, north of Interstate 74, which is outside City limits. Therefore, he wondered if, in the context of the proposed planning document which the City has some say or role in, the City of Urbana could encourage or maybe even add to this a notion of access policies under County or Township control. Ms. Tyler replied that the City of Urbana does have some control because it is in our planning and subdivision area. Therefore, we do have some authority to deny driveway access through our Subdivision

and Land Development Ordinance. Ms. Black added that there are also Access Management Guidelines that were prepared by CUUATS. These guidelines were approved by all the entities that belong to CUUATS including Champaign County. So, the City of Urbana could use these guidelines in their mile and a half jurisdiction.

Mr. Hopkins wondered whether it would be useful to have a stronger statement about this problem in the proposed plan document or whether it simply would be an action item. The list under “What does this mean for Urbana?” is a project list. Managing the number and types of accesses on IL 130 is not a project in the usual transportation planning sense. Ms. Tyler felt this would be a good suggestion. It would be good to have the City’s engineers respond to this. Ms. Black commented that on Page 5-14 under “Implementation” in the Route 130 Corridor Plan, there is a paragraph regarding traffic concerns on rural roads. Mr. Hopkins explained that he is looking at defining an action item in the same sense that they are defining projects. Is this something that the City actually has to do? Or is this just a problem that we are noticing and we have all of the procedures in place that we need or should have to deal with it? He has not figured this out yet.

Mr. Hopkins discussed “complete streets” policies. He feels that the City can deal with this.

He went on to talk about an interstate interchange access report. He understood it to be outside the scope of the Route 130 Corridor Plan. However, he felt it would be ostrich-like to ignore this question in the context of talking about and acting upon it as the City of Urbana. Ms. Tyler pointed out that the City of Urbana’s updated their Comprehensive Plan, and there was a lot of discussion during the process about a future interchange. Then the proposed IL 130 Corridor Plan was drafted. There was a lot of debate about the possibility of a future interchange during the public involvement process. People began to talk about Cottonwood Road being used for the interchange access. Then, they preferred to have an interchange further east at 1800 East. The stakeholder and notification list for the public involvement process did not include that far east as 1800 East is two miles outside of the study area. IDOT has been involved in the process all along, and they have stated that we need an Access Justification Report performed. This is a gigantic undertaking, and it will cost several million dollars for this particular study. IDOT was impressed with the public outreach for the proposed plan, that they would be interested in authorizing such a study should the funds be found. Utilizing the work done as part of the proposed plan would just be a starting point for a much broader study that would involve even more public involvement. In addition, the engineering factors were beyond the scope of the proposed plan. This is something that would definitely need to be studied more.

Mr. Hopkins inquired as to whether the study would be federally or state funded. Ms. Chavarria responded that Champaign County is under the impression that IDOT would not fund this study on their own. Ms. Black clarified that the City of Urbana could request funding to do this study through IDOT, and then IDOT would make a request for funding to the federal level. Ms. Chavarria said that Champaign County understands that there might be some potential funding for this study through the Opportunity Return Grant through the Governor’s office. Ms. Tyler noted that it was a special offer early on in this Governor’s administration. The Access Justification Report is a project that the City of Urbana identified as one of many projects for an

Opportunity Return Grant with the Governor's office. This study is one that the Governor's office picked up and would be interested in providing funding for.

Mr. Hopkins stated that clearly this issue is on the table because of the IL Route 130 Corridor Plan as well as the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. A group that would be happy if there were no interchange would have no reason to think that we should do a study. In other words, there is no reason to do such a study unless our intent is to get funding to build such an interchange. Is this correct? Ms. Chavarria said yes. Ms. Tyler pointed out that a study could also recommend no interchange. But if a group opposed any interchange, then they would not want to study it for fear that it might recommend an interchange.

Mr. Hopkins said it seemed to him that the Plan Commission and the City Council have to be aware of this issue, because we may have to explicitly decide not to do it; otherwise, someone will keep bringing it up. Ms. Tyler mentioned that there is a timing aspect though. It would cost between \$700,000 to over a million dollars to perform the study. Next, it would take some time to perform the study, and then we would have to get in line behind all the other interchanges that are being desired. We are talking about a thirty year process to get an interstate interchange.

Mr. Pollock commented that when this issue was brought up years ago for the first time, it was clear that the funding agencies were going to look case by case. If there was an instance in which there was substantial public outcry over the possibility of it, then they would not put their funds into that interchange project. This may very well be true here for a long time. He pointed out that the IL Route 130 public process clearly has decided that an interchange would not be desirable at Route 130/ High Cross Road.

Ms. Tyler stated that if the City of Urbana adopts the proposed Route 130 Corridor Plan that it would not conflict with the City's Comprehensive Plan. This study would merely add additional information and point out that we would really need the Interchange Access Justification Report to move further along towards an interchange with Interstate 74.

Mr. Pollock asked if all the improvements that are recommended in the proposed plan are completed over a period of time, it does not preclude the possibility of interchange at Route 130 and Interstate 74. Ms. Chavarria said no. She commented that the only recommendation made in the proposed plan is to do the Access Justification Report. Another thing to keep in mind is that they have managed to get rid of most of the anticipated traffic congestion in the next twenty years with the projects listed in the Preferred Alternative. If you have an interchange constructed, it would induce more traffic. It would create more congestion than what the Preferred Alternative could handle. Mr. Hopkins added that when you look at the predicted results of the projects, there is one Level C service for just a small part of either Curtis Road or Windsor Road at Year 20, assuming build out of retail and such similar to the Urbana Comprehensive Plan expectations. This is a way of saying that no projects other than these are need to be built based on the land uses anticipated in twenty years by the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, it does not preclude doing the interchange later, but it makes it unnecessary on the order of twenty years.

Ms. Black reminded the Plan Commission that it took about twenty-five years to get the interchange being constructed at Curtis Road and Interstate 57. If you want to move ahead, then you need to start now. Mr. Hopkins stated that there are two interesting implications, which are 1) if you want to feel safe for the next twenty-five years, then do not do the access justification study and 2) in twenty-five years, it might be a lot more plausible to have the interchange at Cottonwood or 1800 East than it is now. Doing the study too early might get you the wrong results. Mr. Pollock commented that doing the study early enough means you might actually create an access at the point where it would be needed in time and location. Mr. Hopkins said true. It is a tricky thing.

Ms. Stake wondered how it determined that there would be so many more people in twenty-five years. Ms. Black explained that the City staff determined a future population and employment of the area based on the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Stake declared that it is a huge number compared to what is there now. Mr. Pollock stated that the rate of growth is accelerating substantially in the last number of years. City staff anticipated that this acceleration would continue. Mr. Myers said that the Route 130 Plan is not recommending any changes to the Comprehensive Plan in terms of land use. The Transportation Plan really fits within the Comprehensive Plan in terms of future land use and the jobs and housing expected to be generated. City staff used the Comprehensive Plan as the basis for their calculations, and then tweaked the numbers based on the land use and housing densities actually built in this area over the past number of years.

Mr. Myers went on to say that this plan was exciting in that the public actually came up with the transportation projects and alternatives, and then engineering staff plugged these projects into the transportation model to see how they would deal with future traffic in 2020. Many times, planners come up with transportation alternatives, run the transportation computer models, and then share the information with the public and ask for comments. During the public involvement of the proposed Route 130 Corridor Plan, Champaign County staff used the model to evaluate what the residents wanted. Ms. Chavarria mentioned that the Preferred Alternative ended up being made almost entirely by the public. It was the most popular alternative. The only thing Champaign County staff added to it was the new road that would be parallel to Route 130 between Washington Street and Route 150.

Ms. Black noted that the public created twelve different scenarios. Those twelve different scenarios were run in the model. Using the model, County staff was able to estimate the level of air pollution, the level of noise, the congestion, etc. County staff took those results to the public. At that point, the public started rethinking what they wanted to happen. Mr. Pollock commented that it is a breath of fresh air and really exciting to see a study like this done.

Ms. Tyler added that Champaign County staff had been very flexible in working on the plan. They used different approaches and outreach methods as well as in the modeling. They were very patient and held off on the proposed study while the City of Urbana completed the Comprehensive Plan. They added neighborhood meetings and special focus groups when they realized that certain neighborhoods or interest groups might not have participated. They were creative in their workshops. They engaged people in a positive way.

January 18, 2007

The steering committee was initially concerned that the traffic counts and the land use projections would dictate widening High Cross Road north of I-74. We are fortunate that the model results allowed for the roadway north of I-74 to remain without additional lanes as preferred by the public.

She thanked Ms. Chavarria and Ms. Black. She mentioned that she really enjoyed working on this project with them and the other County staff.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Myers, AICP, Planning Division Manager
Urbana Plan Commission