

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: January 10, 2008

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

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

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

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Benjamin Grosser

STAFF PRESENT: Elizabeth Tyler, Director of Community Development Services; Robert Myers, Planning Manager; Lisa Karcher, Planner II; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary; Tom Carrino, Economic Development Manager; Gale Jamison, Assistant City Engineer

OTHERS PRESENT: Cynthia Hoyle, Thomas O'Neil, Mike Pennell, Susan Taylor

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

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

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Ward moved to approve the minutes from the December 6, 2007 meeting as written. Ms. Stake seconded the motion. Chair Pollock called for a voice vote on the motion to approve the minutes as presented. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

- ◆ Letter from Bill Volk, of Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District, regarding the Menards development

- ◆ Menard's Store Site Plan (2 pages)
- ◆ Information regarding the statistics of Income, Homeownership, and the Effects on the School Districts in the City of Urbana versus the City of Champaign

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

There was none.

11. STUDY SESSION

Menards Development Study Session

Robert Myers, Planning Manager, initiated the Plan Commission study session. As this is a study session, it is not a formal submittal or an official public hearing. The purpose is to obtain feedback on an anticipated development in the Route 130 corridor by Menards, Inc. One item that makes this project so interesting is that the anticipated development, in addition to a Menard's store, includes over 300-acres of development with both commercial and a range of residential types. Mr. Myers began his presentation by discussing the following:

Mr. Myers talked about the review process of the anticipated development and the Plan Commission's role. City staff and the developers are presenting study sessions to both the Plan Commission and the City Council to obtain feedback. There will be formal submittals at a later date, first in the form of an annexation agreement and then following with subdivision applications. Because the annexation agreement will involve rezoning of property, it will come before the Plan Commission for review and recommendations to the City Council. City staff anticipates five or more subdivision plats that will include several hundred lots.

Chair Pollock questioned whether the plats would be submitted simultaneously or would they be submitted over a period of time. Mr. Myers replied that he understands the preliminary plats for the entire development would be wrapped in with the annexation agreement. Any necessary waivers from the Urbana Subdivision and Land Development Code and variances would be included in the annexation agreement as well.

Chair Pollock inquired if all of the acreage was outside of the City's limits. Mr. Myers said no. It is split about evenly between City and County jurisdiction.

This project will be reviewed in terms of the development policy context already established. City staff will be referring to the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and the High Cross Road/IL 130 Corridor Plan, which are development guides. City staff would also refer to the Urbana Zoning Ordinance and the Urbana Subdivision and Land Development Code, which are development controls.

Mr. Myers presented a general overview. The development will include 357 acres in 5 tracts. He referred to an aerial photo showing the Menard properties split into 5 tracts. He described the location of each tract as follows:

- ◆ Tract A is just south of the Wal-Mart store. This is prospectively a new Menard store will be constructed. Behind the Menard store, there would be a residential subdivision.
- ◆ Tract B is located to the west side of Tract A across Route 130.
- ◆ Tracts C-1 and C-2 are located to the south of Tract B across Washington Street. These tracts are currently in the City limits. Tract C-1, with the frontage on Route 130, would be anticipated for commercial development with a residential subdivision behind it on Tract C-2. On Tract C-2, there would be a transition of residential densities between the commercial and the existing Savannah Green Subdivision.
- ◆ Tract D, which is located south of Florida Avenue and Tract C-2, would be developed as single-family residential.

Menard, Inc. will annex the half of acreage that currently lies in the County. There will be commercial and residential development. The Menard's store is slated to open in the spring of 2010. There will be a range of residential development. Full build-out of the entire development is anticipated to take 10 plus years meaning that this project would be developed in phases. He noted that Menard's does plan to do the grading for all the tracts at one time in the beginning phase.

He introduced Tom O'Neil, of Menard's, Inc. to the Plan Commission. Mr. O'Neil stated that he does real estate acquisition development for Menard's. Mr. Myers pointed out that City staff has been working with Mr. O'Neil for a couple of years on this project.

Mr. O'Neil stated that one thing Menards is requesting is the preliminary plat approval as part of the annexation agreement for a period of 10 years with the understanding that as different lots and different components of the project develop, additional phases would be brought in for final platting as needed and as the lots are built out.

When it comes to a mass grading perspective, there is a lot of earth that needs to be moved on these properties. Menards wants to make sure that they do it economically, so it would be their intent to perform all of the grading activity in a lump sum manner to ensure that they are balancing the site. They do not want to have to haul dirt in or haul dirt out. They want to ensure that the proposed grades for all the tracts are met at one time.

Mr. Myers commented that adding the preliminary plats as part of the annexation agreement is significant because if Menards plans to do all of the grading at one time, then they really need to get the plats planned correctly. If they change the plats later, then the grading could change.

Ms. Stake inquired if Menard's property extended east to Cottonwood Road. Mr. Myers answered no. He referred to Exhibit 4, which is an aerial photo looking south of Route 150. He pointed out how far east the Menard's tract would extend, which would be about halfway to Cottonwood Road.

Mr. Myers went on to explain that Menard, Inc. purchased most of their property at a land auction in the fall of 2005. He noted that City staff was involved in assisting with the land auction in terms of providing information to interested buyers, because they wanted to make sure that whoever purchased the property would be aware of what the City's expectations are, what requirements the City has and what incentives could be possible for developing the property. He pointed out that Tract B-2 is a later acquisition from the School District.

He stated that City staff prepared and recommended design principles to aid in developing the properties. The design principles include pedestrian access. City staff, along with many residents of Urbana, feels that it is important and desirable for pedestrians and bicyclists to have dedicated access to major developments.

City staff has reviewed and found that the proposed project is in compliance with the Future Land Use designations shown in the 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan.

In terms of the proposed zoning, Tract A-2 (where the residential component of Tract A would be located) is planned to be developed around water features. The anticipated zoning would be R-4, Medium Density Multiple Family Residential Zoning District, or R-5, Medium-High Density Multiple Family Residential Zoning District, depending upon the market conditions.

Chair Pollock asked if there would be residential lots along Route 150 as shown on the Proposed Zoning Map. Mr. O'Neil responded that the eastern part of Tract A-2, located to the east of Wal-Mart, represents property owned by Wal-Mart. Menards, Inc. has been cooperating with Russ Waldschmidt, who is the underlying developer of the Wal-Mart property, to develop that parcel. As a result, this particular parcel will be preliminarily platted along with the Menard's property. They will finalize the ultimate conveyance of the parcel along Route 150 to the City of Urbana. The area immediately adjacent to Route 150, at least for now, is not being proposed to be residentially developed.

Chair Pollock inquired as to what the existing zoning is for this particular area now. Mr. Myers answered that the property is currently zoned B-3, General Business. Menard's proposes to rezone it as part of their larger development to R-4 or R-5.

Ms. Stake asked why they would not rezone it to AG, Agriculture Zoning District, if it is going to be a pond. Elizabeth Tyler, Director of Community Development Services Department, stated that this is one of the new additions to the annexation agreement that needs to be worked out. It is really not anticipated to be commercial, but it is zoned B-3. There are some restrictions on the conveyance of this parcel to the City of Urbana as a detention basin, but it does seem like there is potential for residential to ring the basin. If this is ever to occur, then they would need to rezone, because it would not fit with the B-3 zoning.

Chair Pollock pointed out that the 2005 Comprehensive Plan designates this tract of land as Regional Business. Ms. Stake commented that she would think the City would want to change the zoning then. Ms. Tyler replied that it is possible. This is one of the areas that the City and the developer have not yet pinned down.

Mr. Myers next pointed out that there is a narrow strip of land between Wal-Mart and the proposed Menards store (Tract A-1) known as the Waldschmidt Property. Menard's will propose to rezone both the Waldschmidt Property and Tract A-1 to B-3 Zoning District, and it would be developed for commercial.

Across Route 130, Tracts B-1, B-2 and C-1 would be proposed to rezone to B-3 as well. Menard's will propose to rezone Tract C-2 to three different zoning districts, including R-3 along the western edge of the property that borders the Savannah Green Subdivision, R-2 to the east of the R-3 and would have organized surround ponds, and R-4/R-5 bordering the southwest edge of Tract C-1.

Ms. Tyler noted that C-1 is shown for rezoning to business, because this will be an important future retail area for the City of Urbana. Future Land Use Maps #6 and #7 of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan shows circles or nodes at the Route 130 and Washington Street intersection and at the Route 130 and future Florida Avenue extended intersection. These are intended to show the locations of commercial development but not the exact boundaries. In every other respect, the development plans are precisely consistent with the residential/commercial zoning designation in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Myers stated that Tract D is located south of Florida Avenue extended, and it adjoins Stone Creek Golf Course. Menard's, Inc. plans to propose a rezoning of the tract to R-2, Single Family Residential Zoning District. He mentioned that there is a creek that twists through Tract D, which means that Menard's will have to take this into consideration when developing the tract.

Another part of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan that will be used in reviewing the plats is the Mobility Map. This map provides the skeletal framework for the growth and development of the City of Urbana.

In terms of necessary infrastructure improvements, Mr. Myers stated that the biggest thing will be the widening and improving of Route 130 between University Avenue (Route 150) and Florida Avenue extended. Florida Avenue will be extended to Route 130. Washington Street will need to be widened. The development does not anticipate an interstate interchange. The

development can be served by existing sewer system and would not be contingent upon the East Side Sewer Interceptor Plan.

In terms of paying for Route 130 improvements, Mr. Myers stated that these are preliminary concepts, and they have not been reviewed or approved by the City Council. The cost to improve and widen Route 130 from University Avenue to Florida Avenue will be about \$8 million dollars. Menard's proposed share of the expense will be about \$4.5 million, and other parties' share will be about \$3.5 million. Menard, Inc. would design, build and pay for all the improvements up front. The City of Urbana would then reimburse Menard, Inc. up to \$3.5 million in sales taxes from new commercial development and recoup a proportional share from other properties when those are developed.

Chair Pollock inquired as to what the anticipated contribution would be from Champaign County and the State of Illinois for this project. Mr. Myers stated that he understood that the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) does not have any funds budgeted for this project. It is no secret that the capital program for our district for roadway improvements is not very good. Basically, they State has said that road widening is necessitated by the development so the cost will have to be paid by the developer and other parties.

Tom Carrino, Economic Development Manager, stated that the City of Urbana, particularly the Mayor, have been very aggressive in working with the State of Illinois to have the State allocate funding for this project. City staff is calculating the \$3.5 million that falls under other parties' responsibilities as the State of Illinois' share and other neighboring property owners' share.

Ms. Stake wondered what the amount that the City of Urbana is anticipating to reimburse Menard, Inc. Mr. Carrino said it would be up to \$3.5 million over 10 years in sales tax rebates while the City actively and aggressively tries to secure the \$3.5 million from the other parties that owe that money.

Chair Pollock inquired about the extension of Florida Avenue to Route 130. Mr. Myers explained that this is a proportional share project between property owners and the City of Urbana. Gale Jamison, Assistant City Engineer, added that the Florida Avenue improvements are not part of the costs anticipated for improving and widening Route 130. City staff has designed the extension of Florida Avenue, and we will hand over the design plans to Menard, Inc. to incorporate into their construction timeline. City staff does not want the extension to be built and then have Menard's construction crews crossing the newly built road with scrappers, etc. Two-thirds of the funding will come from adjacent property owners and the rest will be paid by the City of Urbana.

Ms. Stake asked about the detention pond currently located to the east of the Wal-Mart store. Did she hear right in that it would be turned over to the City? Mr. Myers replied that the City of Urbana currently has an agreement with Wal-Mart to take control of the property where the detention pond. Mr. Jamison explained that this is part of the settlement of litigation by adjacent property owners and the Drainage District who had objections over the relocation of a drainage district tile through the Wal-Mart property, which had to be relocated in order to develop the property. Some adjacent property owners objected when the easements went through the court system. According to the agreement, Waldschmidt was to deed the property where the detention

pond is located over to the City of Urbana, because the adjacent property owners wanted someone to maintain it. He does not recall any specific requirements as to how or if development could occur around the pond.

Ms. Stake commented that this is another cost to the City of Urbana to maintain the detention pond. Mr. Jamison responded that this is an obligation that the City of Urbana already has. Ms. Tyler added that when you look at a photo of the site, you can see there are actually two detention basins. One runs north and south along the parcel that the Wal-Mart store is located on, and it was constructed per the City's regulations. The second detention basin was part of the outcome of the litigation, and it really helps pre-existing flooding conditions that were in that location plaguing those property owners. It helps to keep the water off their farms. It does seem to lend itself in the future to possibly to residential development around it.

She went on to explain that Menard's will take care of their own drainage situation. The proposed development would avoid the existing drainage tiles and working along with the Drainage District to avoid the same kind of concerns as was with the development of Wal-Mart.

City staff has talked with the Drainage District and the property owners, and things have definitely improved in the area. They still have concerns along Route 150. City staff has met with IDOT and are trying to address these concerns. They are pre-existing problems, and City staff wants to make sure that the new development does not make the flooding problems worse.

From the perspective of Menard's drainage infrastructure, Mr. Jamison stated that he has reviewed their drainage plan and their detention water plan. Menard, Inc. is far more conservative and would retain a lot more water for their water features than what is required by the City's ordinances. Therefore, the proposed development will improve the situation in terms of potential flooding.

Mr. Myers concluded his presentation by thanking the Plan Commission for helping with the anticipated Menard development by giving feedback during this study session.

Mr. O'Neil gave a presentation on behalf of the developer, Menard, Inc. Menard, Inc. is based in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. They are a family-held home improvement and building material supply retailer. They consider themselves third in their industry behind Lowe's and Home Depot. Menards has about 240 stores in 11 states.

They have had a successful history in the Champaign area, and they are currently looking to add a second store. As a result, early in 2005, he began working with City staff in terms of coming up with some potential alternatives for a complimentary location for their second store. Then, the land auction came up. Menards received a lot of information from City staff and because their comfort increased about what they would be allowed to build and because of their own desire to not only develop a second Menard's store, but to develop other mixed use areas, they purchased the land during the auction. An auction format is an unusual way for Menard's to purchase property, because they prefer to have all of their ducks in a row before purchasing land. They prefer to have approval of all their permits, etc. prior to the sale.

From a Menard's perspective and the development, they do not have to meet the demands of Wall Street because they are a private corporation. As a result, their ownership has taken a different direction than that of Lowe's or Wal-Mart in that in addition to their retail core business, Menards has an interest in real estate development. They feel that real estate can be part of their success. They can build a Menard's store in an area and also develop residential property around it so they can garner the development around their property as well as ensure some building materials sales by having different builders that they work with locally get material packages from them as part of their lot sales. It fosters development for the store, and it fosters development for the area. It also ensures some captive sales that Menard's knows they are going to get in and around their store. So, there is a lot of benefit to Menards to work on mixed use projects.

This project is unusual from their standpoint both with purchasing the land through an auction and also in the scope of the number of the parties involved and the scope of the number of the permits and approvals that are necessary. This is why it has taken Menards two years since purchasing the property to finally be able to come before the Plan Commission and the City Council to start talking about their plans. They have or are working with Wal-Mart, the owner of the Waldschmidt property, and the School District to acquire Tract B-2, and are talking with the Pennell Family to acquire some right-of-way. In addition they have worked with the Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois-American Water Company, the Champaign-Urbana Sanitary District, etc. to get approval of various permits that are required to develop this large amount of land.

From a timing perspective, the real estate market goes up and down, so it is a difficult time to be planning and building a residential development. Therefore, Menards has not pinned down a time yet when the development would be started.

He reviewed the properties as follows:

1. Menard's has been working with the owner of the Waldschmidt property to develop the land and to ensure that there will be a public road connection to Tatman Drive. Tatman Drive is currently a dedicated public street. Menards wants to have the dedicated roadway and signalization access and to construct a frontage road that extends from Tatman Drive over to Washington Street. Menards has worked out some agreements with the owner of the Waldschmidt property in order to ensure this.
2. Menard's store would be located on the western half of Tract A with a residential component to be developed on the eastern half.
3. Tracts B-1 and B-2 are located across Route 130 to the west. Menard's acquired Tract B-2 from the Urbana School District separate from the land auction because they feel it makes sense for them to incorporate this land into their development. Both tracts would be developed as commercial. They do not currently have any plans to construct infrastructure in Tracts B-1 and B-2 because they do not know how it will best develop. They will either wait for someone to come along who has specific plans for it or as the remainder of the property develops, then they will come up with their own plans.

4. Tracts C-1 and C-2 are located across Washington Street to the south of Tracts B-1 and B-2. There will be both commercial and residential components to the development of these tracts.
5. Tract D, which is located further south, will be developed as residential.

Mr. O'Neil pointed out that when they do begin to develop, there are a few things that are likely to happen all at one time, such as:

1. All the site work from a grading standpoint would occur at one time because trucking dirt is expensive, and it would be difficult to convince IDOT that it would be a good idea to truck dirt across Route 130. So, the dirt from digging the detention basins on Tract A would be scraped and moved to the western half of Tract A to raise the Menards store pad up and the commercial component up. The detention basins on the eastern half would then become a water feature for the proposed residential development. All of this would essentially balance from a dirt perspective. There would be no net yardage of dirt that would either have to be hauled off or hauled on to the property.
2. The designs for Tracts C and D, as they have been currently put together, require some of the earth from Tract C to be hauled over to Tract D to raise the residential component on Tract D up. Because dirt is needed in Tract D, it does not make common sense to construct the extension of Florida Avenue until the dirt is moved across the right-of-way.
3. Once the dirt is transferred from Tract C to Tract D, then Florida Avenue can be extended.

Mr. Ward commented that there is a natural ridge located in the northeast corner of Tract C-2. How much of the ridge would be disturbed by the proposed development? Mr. O'Neil stated that Menard's plans to cut down most of the ridge in order to assure that there is a more gradual transition from a roadway perspective internal to the development. Mr. Ward remarked that we do not have very many hills in central Illinois, and people will miss it. Mr. O'Neil stated that Menards feels they would be making up for it with the amount of detention basins and water features that would be incorporated into the residential components of the development.

Mr. O'Neil continued:

4. Part of the first phase would include the improvements to Route 130 and the construction of a Menard's store on the west half of Tract A. Menard's has consulted with IDOT and the City of Urbana regarding the scope of the improvements to Route 130. They have an approved traffic study through IDOT. He mentioned it is a three-part process: A) traffic study, B) intersection design study and C) final engineering.
5. Both the frontage road on Tract A as well as the frontage road on Tract C, including the legs connecting to Route 130, would be constructed.

Chair Pollock inquired if the final layout of Route 130 would be four through lanes plus turn lanes on both sides. Mr. O'Neil replied that there would be four through lanes plus a median turn lane based on where the entrances to the various lots would be located. There would essentially be a five-lane cross section. After talking with the City of Urbana and using the Highway 130 Corridor Plan as a guide, they are planning to put in some boulevards, medians and landscaping to the extent possible.

Chair Pollock wondered if the business component of the proposed development is really successful, does Mr. O'Neil feel that a single-median turn lane would be sufficient to handle the traffic load. Mr. O'Neil responded by saying that the traffic study shows it would be able to handle the traffic load. He mentioned that there are some improvements that would be necessary to Route 150 as well. The improvements that have garnered IDOT's preliminary approval are not solely for the Menards development. It is for the full build out of all the tracts. Mr. Jamison added that IDOT is requiring Menard's and the City of Urbana to do all of the improvements to Route 130 to the south of Florida Avenue as if all of the properties were developed already. He pointed out that IDOT has thoroughly studied the traffic for the proposed area.

Ms. Stake wondered about bicycle paths and railroad access. Mr. O'Neil replied that he could explain what Menards has come up with for a multi-purpose use path.

Mr. O'Neil stated that the variable that determines what goes into the development as part of the initial phasing of the project is residential. How much of the residential roadway system should they construct on Day One? What type of product line will sell? These are questions that Menard's has not answered yet. So, they do not know if they will final plat just the western half of Tract A-2 or if they will include some of the infrastructure that relates to Tract D or C-2. Therefore, when it comes to what phase of the residential that they would begin developing on Day 1, they still need to determine this.

As part of the overall project, including both the commercial and the residential uses, Menards has worked with City staff in coming up with both a sidewalk plan and a bi-modal plan. City staff has secured some funding from the State of Illinois for a bi-modal (pedestrian and bicycle) path along Route 130. Menards has proposed a plan for a combination of sidewalks and a multi-use path in all of the tracts that would allow every residential lot to have front or back access to one. Menards is also trying to incorporate the multi-use path in and around the water features, so it has some aesthetic quality to it as well. Internal to the commercial components, there are sidewalks along the public streets. As part of the initial construction of the Menard's store, they plan to develop a boulevard median through their parking lot going from the right-of-way of the frontage road with a sidewalk back to the front of the store.

Ms. Stake believes that it would be better to separate pedestrian and bicycle paths for safety reasons. She wondered if there would be a way for Menard's to separate the two. Mr. O'Neil pointed out that Menard's way of separating the two is to split the path into two equal parts between the lineal feet of sidewalk and the lineal feet of the multi-use path. There is an alternative for pedestrians to stay to the sidewalk as opposed to utilizing the multi-use path. Mr. Jamison added that City staff is currently designing a bicycle path along the west side of Route 130, and they are looking at a variety of ways of doing it. The City has come up with a multi-use path on the south side along Florida Avenue extended to Route 130, and there will be a

pedestrian sidewalk on the north side. He noted that the Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Commission has already reviewed some of the designs and provided input.

Mr. White commented that the part of Tract A-2 that fronts on Route 150 should remain zoned B-3. Mr. O'Neil replied that this area was initially zoned as part of the Wal-Mart property. As part of the settlement on the drainage issues, Wal-Mart built the detention basin or pond. Regarding the northern 20 acres fronting on Route 150, Menard's does not care whether it remains zoned B-3 or not. The area in question will be deeded to the City of Urbana. As far as the viability of the area being developed for commercial uses, the railroad right-of-way, grading of the land, and access to the property would make it difficult to use this area for commercial purposes. As a result, Menard's is proposing to incorporate the land into the other A-2 area and develop it as residential. Ms. Tyler added that from the City's perspective, it would not benefit to be used as commercial unless someone develops the land further to the east as commercial, because it will be somewhat landlocked until then.

Mr. Fitch mentioned that he likes the multi-use paths, but it might not be a good substitute for a sidewalk when talking about elderly or disabled people. He referred to the letter from Bill Volk of MTD that was handed out prior to the meeting. He agreed that there are some areas being proposed where sidewalks do not fit. Mr. O'Neil stated that he would be happy to get more input about the sidewalks and multi-use paths. He explained that from an overall standpoint, Menard's has tried to substitute to a certain extent, sidewalks for the bi-modal path. When done in this light, it is economically viable. Mr. Fitch stated that he agrees, except when it comes to people who cannot jump out of the way of a bicyclist.

Mr. O'Neil said that he would be happy to answer any further questions.

Chair Pollock inquired about the use of the outlots on Tract A-1 facing Route 130. These outlots would be used for commercial and would face Route 130? Mr. O'Neil responded that they would be commercial lots with the final layout of the site plan dependent upon particular users. He did not know for sure if they would face the frontage road. Mr. O'Neil did not feel that businesses located on outlots usually face the frontage road. They usually face the main road. Because there is dual frontage, there is an opportunity for dual sided architecture.

Mr. Ward inquired about access to these lots. Chair Pollock stated that the access has to be from the frontage road. Mr. Jamison commented that most of the restaurants along North Prospect Avenue face the street but their access is from behind. He expected something similar to happen with this development. Mr. O'Neil added that the traffic situation will be better than North Prospect in Champaign because they are master planning it as one comprehensive project with City staff's and IDOT's input, and because they have a system of master plan roadways and an approved intersection design study.

Mr. Myers asked Mr. Jamison to speak about access controls and about standards for street lights along Route 130. Mr. Jamison stated that the City has full access control with lights, which means that left turns will only be allowed at the quarter mile points. At the eighth mile points, which are the intermediate access points, there will be right in and right out only. This has been dictated by IDOT and is consistent with the City of Urbana's access standards. Mr. Myers pointed out that this is really important to keep the traffic moving.

Mr. O'Neil talked about the Menard's store site plan, which was handed out. Menard's will have approximately 160,000 square feet of heated retail area. With the outdoor garden center and the drive-thru warehouse in the lumber yard area, all together they will have about 230,000 square feet of retail area. The store will be 330 feet in depth, and the front façade will be about 480 feet across. They use lower shelving in every store which they believe helps provide better customer service. Menard's tries to set themselves apart from their competitors in that their stores are bigger. They like to go outward with their product rather than stack it on risers up to the ceiling like Lowe's or Home Depot. As a result, they get a brighter store, better lit, wider aisles, more room for displays, model kitchens and model baths, etc., but it takes more square footage.

They also emphasize the outdoor lumberyard area. Customers can drive around to the lumber yard area to pick up their lumber rather than trying to navigate through the store with lumber on their cart.

The site plan lays out such that the entrance to their lumberyard would be on the north side of the store. The garden center would be located on the south side of the store. The parking lot would be west of the store facing the frontage road. The number of parking spaces will be tailored to meet the history of Menard's stores and their use rather than meeting the City's requirement. They have found that they will need about 450 to 475 parking spaces. They do not feel it is necessary to create a sea of unnecessary asphalt. This will be one of the Zoning Ordinance variance requests included in the annexation agreement.

Mr. Hopkins inquired if the City's parking requirement is based on the total square feet of a business. Ms. Tyler said yes. Mr. Hopkins pointed out that Menard's argument then should be that they planned to use more square footage per customer than Lowe's or Home Depot and do not need as many parking spaces. O'Neil commented that Menard's has a number of ways to justify the parking waiver request.

Mr. O'Neil pointed out the extent of the landscaping islands as well as that of the perpendicular island that contains a sidewalk to the front of the store. Some of the islands will have lights.

Ms. Stake inquired about trees. Mr. O'Neil replied that they have not yet prepared a landscape plan but there will certainly be landscape. They will have a landscape plan prepared before they submit their applications to the Plan Commission and the City Council.

Mr. Ward asked how much experience Mr. O'Neil and Menards has had with developing this many commercial lots all in one project. The proposed development would bring a lot of commercial development to the City of Urbana. Mr. O'Neil responded by saying that it would take some time. When it comes to the phasing of the project, the final platting as is being proposed at this time is different from the residential to the commercial. Right now Menard's plans to "final plat" the entire commercial areas of Tracts A and C right away. They plan to build the public frontage roads as part of the initial build-out of the project, because once the infrastructure and once the Menard's store is built adjacent to the Wal-Mart store, it will help to sell the property.

Realistically with this amount of potential square footage of retail, it could take 10 to 20 years to full develop. They have experience with this in Yorkville and a larger development in Columbus, Indiana.

Mr. Hopkins expressed several concerns. First, the plans show a lack of continuity of sub-collectors. For example, Tatman Court does not go through or provide any opportunity to through to Cottonwood Road. Pfeiffer Road is shown in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan to continue, but is not acknowledged in the proposed development. There is no continuity out of any of the residential portions. This lack of continuity is part of the thing that landlocks areas like that of the one behind Wal-Mart where the detention basin is located. Although we are looking at the entire development at one time, we are still looking at the parcels as if the world stops at the ends of these parcels.

Another issue is that the subdivision layouts appear problematic. He does not know if this is driven mostly by the City's drainage ordinance, but the shapes of the lots and the multi-use paths that go in odd patterns and do not take you anywhere except running around people's back yards. This worries him.

The third concern is that if we do not think about how the City can have something other commercial along Route 130, then we are putting ourselves in the position of imaging two miles of double-loaded commercial corridor from Route 150 to Windsor Road. By his calculation, North Prospect Avenue is a little less than a mile and a half. It does not make sense to him that the City wants this quantity of commercial properties, especially in this area.

Lastly, he did not see any explanation of the proposed zoning for Tracts B-1 and B-2. Mr. O'Neil stated that Menards is proposing a general business zoning for it, but because they do not have any immediate plans for any roadways through it, they planned to leave it at the existing grades and not plat any lots at present. Mr. Hopkins suggested that we might want to commit to the zoning along the frontage road sooner rather than later, because it will already be a little hard due to Tatman Court and the water tower to put that in there. Mr. O'Neil stated that the access points on the existing High Cross Road/ Route 130 as well as on Washington Street have been approved on Tract B as part of the intersection design study. It is the internal routing of Tract B that is undecided. It will depend on how it is developed.

Mr. Hopkins asked if there is a commitment to provide a connection from Washington Street north to Tatman Court as a frontage road. Mr. Jamison said that the City is committed to one connection off of Washington Street that matches up with the frontage road. Because it is not known how Tracts B-1 and B-2 are going to be developed, the internal routing of the road has not been designed. Mr. Hopkins questioned whether the connection from Washington Street would go north to Tatman Court or to the Menard's access. Mr. Jamison responded by saying that it may go to Tatman Court depending on how the tract is developed. Mr. Hopkins believes that the City could protect the right-of-way and the option to get a connection to Tatman Court now. Mr. Jamison pointed out that there is no routing to the south of Tatman Court in the existing Industrial Park. There is a way that it could still be connected, but they would need to work with the owner of the Industrial Park or the parcels in the park to get the connection. They have no discussed this with those owners, so right now City staff wants to know exactly where the access points will be, because they want to limit the access roads off of Washington Street

and Route 130. We will just have to deal with the connection to Tatman Drive as the remaining undeveloped parcels in the Industrial Park are developed.

Ms. Tyler stated that City staff is concerned about extension connectivity. Often there is some resistance, topographic or other, why they cannot connect roads, but it is a concern in the Comprehensive Plan. City staff knows that the extension to the east is an issue, and it is something that they need to work on more with Menard's.

As far as the extension with Pfeiffer Road, people who live on the north end of the street are concerned about through traffic. It is a neighborhood obstacle, and as plans for Tract C-1 develop, perhaps the City can address this issue.

City staff and Menard's tried to get a connection to Stone Creek Boulevard, but it is not something that they accomplished with the platting for Stone Creek Subdivision having already been approved without having anticipated a connection to this portion of the Menard's development project. In addition, there is a drainage basin that makes the connectivity difficult as well. City staff is doing their best to make street connections.

In terms of the amount of land use of commercial versus residential along Route 130, City staff, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, the Plan Commission and City Council spent a lot of time discussing what would be the right mix even before Menard's purchased the properties. It is being emphasized more on the west side south of the proposed building site for Menard's, but there will have to be residential along Route 130. As you look at the Comprehensive Plan you can see that there will be a mix of commercial and residential along Route 130. There is a lot of commercial proposed as part of the Menard's plan, but she believes we will see that the development that occurs around it will be more and more residential. She feels that the City has a good start in being successful in having residential along Route 130 with the Water's Edge Subdivision.

Mr. O'Neil explained one of the limiting factors in the Pfeiffer Road connection. Normally, Menard's plans frontage roads at 250 to 300 feet off a public road for stacking purposes, but because of the nature of the development, the scope of it and the amount of commercial, Menard's needed to bring the entrance back further away from Route 130 in order to meet IDOT's concerns from a stacking perspective. Because it is anticipated that there will be a fairly significant intersection at Washington Street and the frontage road going through Tract C-1, the proximity to Pfeiffer Road and this intersection also is problematic from having another connection to Pfeiffer Road.

Concerning the paths, Menard's is trying to take advantage of the aesthetic features that they are proposing for the detention ponds. They want to have the paths have the aesthetic quality of being located along the top slope of the ponds. This is the basis of design and incorporation into the residential component of the multi-use paths.

Mr. Hopkins referred to the Proposed Sidewalk & Multi-Use Trail Improvement Plan (Exhibit 15) in the Plan Commission packet. The Plan shows a connection going east out of the parcel, but it goes into the back of the commercial. He does not understand the idea of this particular path is. Mr. Jamison explained that as Washington Street is constructed, they will include bike

lanes on the payment. This particular path will connect to the bike lanes. Mr. O'Neil added that the Plan shows the multi-use and sidewalk paths in Tract C-2, and Menards anticipates that these paths will connect to Washington Street and to Florida Avenue extended.

Mr. Hopkins did not feel that this will work unless bicyclists can figure how to weave through the neighborhoods and through the backs of lots. The paths need to have a kind of legibility in order to be useful. Chair Pollock stated that the multi-use paths appear to be specifically designed for the interior use of the subdivision. Mr. Hopkins added that he cannot even make sense out of how a bicyclist would get from one end of the subdivision to the other in Tract C-2. A kid on a bike would ride in the streets to get where he wants to go, because he/she won't be able to figure out which path leads where.

Mr. Jamison stated that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee has reviewed some of the Plan in conjunction with how it ties in with the plan that they are putting together. The City is going to develop bike lanes on Washington Street from Vine Street to Route 130. People with long commutes will use the paths on Washington Street and Florida Avenue. The intent of the multi-use paths in Tract C-2 is to provide movement within the development and not through the development even though there will be connectivity to the major streets.

Mr. Hopkins stated that there is no reason why people will walk on the path in the back of the lots. He feels that they will walk on the streets in front of the houses. The paths behind the lots accomplish nothing. They lead nowhere and serve no purpose, and they will be located in people's back yards. Mr. O'Neil responded that the proximity to the water feature is what will make the paths more desirable to use.

Ms. Tyler commented that Menard's came in with a recreational system with walkways around the lakes. It will be very recreational. People will not use these paths to get from Point A to Point B in a hurry. It will be people walking their dogs around the lake. Menards wanted to provide this for their residents, and City staff felt it to be a good idea. We also want to make sure that we have some of the attributes of a traditional sidewalk system as well in terms of connectivity. This is a hybrid plan and includes the recreational residential goals that Menard's came in with and some of the City staff goals of connectivity. We are requiring that there be a sidewalk either in the front or the rear of the lots. There may be some fine tuning that needs to happen, but they are trying to accomplish more than one thing. We are trying to provide a nice recreational amenity and to provide connectivity. Menard's and City staff are certainly open to any recommendations on how to improve this.

Chair Pollock noted that he is not as concerned because he sees that the multi-use paths within the development are designed for the people who live there. Bicyclists going across town will not be using these paths anyway.

Mr. Hopkins wondered who would own the multi-use paths in the back of the lots that loop around the drainage ditch. Mr. O'Neil explained that Menard, Inc. will own the paths to begin with. There will be an easement on each of the lots, so essentially a portion of each of the multi-use paths will be deeded to the individual property owners. It will be maintained by a homeowner's association within the residential subdivision.

Mr. Hopkins asked if the sidewalks in the front of the houses would still be deeded to the City. Mr. Jamison replied yes. They would be public right-of-way.

Mr. Hopkins believes that this is a major problem. There will be people with no sidewalks and multi-use paths in their back yards. The homeowner's association has to pay dues to maintain it. He feels that we are getting too messy with requiring or expecting multi-use paths to serve these kinds of purposes and having them maintained by the homeowner's association. Chair Pollock commented that it is a way to walk around a big lake that is in the middle of a neighborhood, and if the paths are not available, then how are the residents to enjoy it. It is clearly not on public property, so someone has to pay for it. Mr. Hopkins replied that if you put one loop around a big pond, then that is fine, but there are a number of multi-use paths going in straight lines behind the lots.

Mr. Jamison mentioned that the City has been requiring a maintenance agreement for detention ponds. It requires the homeowner's association to perform certain maintenance responsibilities and gives the City the mechanism for taking care of them if the homeowner's association decides that they will not for whatever reason. It is stated in the maintenance agreements that the City will be able to setup special assessment districts to make sure the maintenance occurs. City staff thought they would include the maintenance of the multi-use paths in the agreement.

Ms. Upah-Bant inquired as to when the Menard's development is fully built out, how many new residential units will there be? How many new commercial business units will there be as well? Mr. O'Neil replied that there will be about 425 potential residential units in Tracts A-2, C-2 and D. There will be a mix of residential types.

It is tricky to come up with a number for the amount of business units that there will be because it depends on the size of the businesses that go in. In Tract C-1, Menards is looking at potentially having four larger-scale retail types of uses that are looking to open a second store and nine smaller-scale types of businesses such as restaurants, financial institutions, etc.

Menards has tried to incorporate some water features into the commercial developmental areas as well both from an aesthetic standpoint as well as to provide more than just a straight line nature to the road.

Ms. Stake wondered what the other variances and subdivision waivers would be. Mr. O'Neil stated that he could not recall all of them. One of them has to do with parking at the Menard's store. All of the variances/subdivision waivers would come before the Plan Commission and the City Council as part of the annexation agreement.

Mr. White referred to the information he handed out prior to the meeting. He expressed a major concern he has with the residential development associated with the Menard's development, which is about the amount of R-2, R-3 and R-4 zoning being proposed. As you can see on the handouts, Urbana has the lower homeowner rates than the City of Champaign, Champaign County and the State of Illinois. He talked about how this affects the public school system in the City of Urbana. We are spending more tax money per student. Our instructional cost per pupil is much higher than that in the City of Champaign. Much of this is due to the higher level of low-income families that need extra help.

He is concerned about the amount of R-3 and R-4 residential being proposed for the Menard development. He suggested having more R-1 zoned areas in the development to help provide a better tax base for the school district.

Mr. O'Neil stated that Menards does not look at it as being zoned for apartments. They look at the density level of the housing. This is why the zoning districts were selected as they have been. For Tract C-2, there are 240 proposed lots, and maybe 10 or 12 of them on the back side of the commercial that are in a true multi-family zoned district. The lots in Tract D are proposed to be zoned R-2 because of the size of the lots, and Menard's is proposing 83 single-family lots on this tract. For Tract A-2, Menard's is trying to take advantage of the water features to come up with something akin to Beringer Commons. From a residential standpoint, Menard's is trying to accomplish a number of different product offerings. There is a market for multiple different types of lots and residential structures, and they are trying to satisfy numerous market conditions and needs.

Mr. White stated that he is concerned that many of the properties will end up becoming rental properties. Chair Pollock remarked that he did not see this happening with this development.

Ms. Tyler believes that the Menard's development project would be beneficial to the Urbana School District. City staff can provide projections. The Urbana School District still has capacity for new residential. Based on our residential growth rate for single family new lots, this is four to five years of build out.

In earlier planning stages, City staff showed representatives of Menard, Inc. models of subdivisions that were successful and that they could follow. Beringer Commons was a model for the townhomes. Stone Creek Subdivision was a model for Tract D. Savannah Green was a model for Tract C-2 only with larger lots and a higher product. City staff does not anticipate multi-family as a component. There are many other multi-family neighborhoods in other areas of the City, but this is not an element of Menard's developmental project.

She mentioned that they would do financial projections to make sure that the Urbana School District could handle the anticipated number of children that would live in the proposed residential units. Mr. White commented that he would like to believe this is true, but he still remembers being burned by Sunnycrest II, and he is still not sure about the impact of the Savannah Green Subdivision.

Mr. Ward stated that traditionally if you are trying to increase the ratio of Equalized Assess Value (EAV) per pupil and if you play with the mix within the residential sector, then the payoff will be very small. The real payoff comes from increasing EAV per pupil is the ratio between commercial and industrial on one hand and residential on the other. If the commercial portion of the proposed Menard's development grows at a similar rate to the residential portion and it is on the tax rolls, then it will alleviate the problem much more than shifting the zoning of the residential units. Mr. White explained that he is more concerned about the number of children who need special services, which drives up the rate of how many instructional dollars spent per pupil. The City of Urbana already has a very high number of these children compared to the City of Champaign and other surrounding communities. He believes this is costing the City.

People are moving out of town. Mr. Ward replied that in some cases, it is leading people to move to the City of Urbana because of the higher level of services provided. He agreed with Mr. White in that the Title 1 Chapter 1 services are very highly correlated with income level. Many of the other special services are not necessarily so, and they are no respect of social class or educational level of parent or anything else. He would be more concerned if he was trying to change that aspect of the school district. All of the apartment complexes in the City are far more of a factor than this kind of residential housing. Mr. Ward feels that Mr. White has a very valid concern, and he is concerned about it himself. However, he is less concerned about the impact that the proposed project will have on the school district, and he is with some of the other things that are going on in the community.

Chair Pollock stated that there has been a lot of discussion and questions about the details about each tract, but he does not want to lose sight of the fact that he has had a number of people tell him that they want to buy in Urbana some of the things that the proposed commercial development would provide. The City would receive not only the property tax, but the sales tax as well, which is something that we have been lacking sorely for many years. He is really pleased to see the proposed development sitting before him. Mr. White agreed and stated that he is glad to see Menard's develop here as well.

Chair Pollock noted that another thing that is interesting and one does not know how this will end up in 10-20 years, but the fact that all of these tracts are being designed road wise and traffic wise as a much bigger area from the very beginning, he is hoping will make this a project that flows and functions much better than some of the others.

Chair Pollock inquired as to what is the process from here. Mr. O'Neil said that they would be giving a similar presentation to the City Council. Then, Menard's representatives will sit down with City staff and review the comments made by both the Plan Commission and the City Council. Menard's will then submit applications for an annexation agreement including rezoning requests, necessary variance and subdivision waiver requests, along with all of the preliminary plat applications.

Mr. Myers noted that Cynthia Hoyle, Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District, during the meeting brought in a letter from Bill Volk, a draft copy of which they were provided before the meeting. Ms. Hoyle mentioned before leaving that it would be tremendously helpful for the frontage roads to be public roadways. On North Prospect, the frontage roads are private, and it is more difficult for MTD to provide bus service there. Chair Pollock asked what difference would it make who owns the road. Mr. Hopkins answered by saying that a private owner could refuse to allow MTD to go there. Mr. O'Neil pointed out that the two frontage roads proposed in the development plans would be publicly dedicated.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

January 10, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Myers, AICP
Secretary, Urbana Plan Commission