

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING**

**URBANA PLAN COMMISSION**

**APPROVED**

**DATE:** December 4, 2014

**TIME:** 7:30 P.M.

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

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**MEMBER PRESENT:** Corey Buttry, Maria Byndom, Andrew Fell, Lew Hopkins, Dannie Otto, Bernadine Stake, David Trail

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Tyler Fitch

**STAFF PRESENT:** Jeff Engstrom, Interim Planning Manager; Christopher Marx, Planner I; Teri Andel, Planning Administrative Assistant

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Nick Bartholomew, Chen Chenhui, Isaac Cuenca, Yuchen Ding, Nicholas Evans, Yining Fan, Silvia Fang, Tony Herhold, Cynthia Hoyle, Youngjae Kim, Grace Kyung, Jason Lee, Daniel Malsom, Weixuan Mao, Carol McKusick, Alice Novak, Rob Olshansky, Franscesca Sallinger, Jinwoo Seo, Xinyi Wang

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

Danny Otto served as Acting Chairperson in the absence of Tyler Fitch. He called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. The roll was called, and he declared that there was a quorum present.

**2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

There were none.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the October 30, 2014 meeting was presented to the Plan Commission for approval. Ms. Stake moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Buttry seconded the motion. The minutes were then approved by unanimous voice vote as presented.

The minutes of the November 20, 2014 meeting was presented to the Plan Commission for approval. Mr. Hopkins moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Fell seconded the motion. The minutes were then approved by unanimous voice vote as presented.

**4. COMMUNICATIONS**

- Project Proposal & Presentation for a Downtown Urbana Mixed-Use Transit Center Handout

**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**

**Presentation on the Active Trans Workshop**

Cynthia Hoyle, Instructor for the Planning class “Active Transportation Workshop” at the University of Illinois, explained the program. The class was designed to provide the students with a comprehensive overview of how to create a transportation system that gives people choices focusing on walking, bicycling and transit. The project she chose for this workshop was a “Multimodal Mixed-Use Transit Center in Downtown Urbana. She referred to the handout, “Project Proposal & Presentation for a Downtown Urbana Mixed-Use Transit Center”.

The students began the semester by learning basic background and concept information. They have done walkability audits of most of the streets within the study area. They have done a bicycle level of service analysis for most of the streets. They looked at streetscaping and

connectivity issues. They looked at the ability of a site to provide for good access and egress for transit and to reduce conflicts between pedestrians, bicyclists and transit. There was also a focus on how this project could benefit the Downtown Urbana area and the community overall by serving as a way to be a catalyst for more economic development.

The class was divided into three groups and each group will give a short presentation of the site they chose and their basic concepts for the site. Since they were asked to focus on the transportation and land use issues, the buildings portrayed in their proposals are just schematics. The students do not intend to recommend any particular design of the buildings themselves other than uses recommended for the buildings to provide amenities for riders.

**GROUP 1:** Grace Kyung, Nicholas Evans, Daniel Malsom, Weixuan Mao, Xinyi Wang, Jason Lee

- Name of Transit Center: BONEYARD STATION
- Location: Water Street and Broadway Avenue
- Photos showing existing buildings
- Economic connection between Champaign, Urbana and Campus
- Crosswalk proposed from Water Street across Vine Street
- Envisioning Boneyard Station
- Transportation
  - CUMTD Connector
  - Bicycle Haven
  - Zipcar Gateway
- Amenities
  - Office Center
  - Streetside Café
  - Urban Green Space
- Commercial Area
- Future Development – Extend Development further north to connect to railroad

Ms. Stake inquired about railway connection. Mr. Malsom explained that the scope of development is for only the northeast corner of Water Street and Broadway Avenue. If the development is successful and there would be interest in expanding the streetscape further north, then it could potential be an option to connect to the railroad.

Mr. Fell noted that they show the proposed transit center facing the back of other buildings along Water Street. He suggested that they reorient the front of the building. Mr. Evans stated that they would be open to this.

Mr. Otto wondered if they had to prepare a budget as part of the project. Mr. Evans said no. The whole idea is not just to provide a bus station. They wanted to spur economic development in the downtown area. There is potential for development in this area and there are already ways to get there, but there is not a major draw to attract people.

Mr. Otto asked if they planned to continue to support the existing Black Dog restaurant when the new one opens. Mr. Evans said absolutely.

Mr. Trail questioned whether a crosswalk across Vine Street would be enough to get people to shop there. Mr. Evans stated that it would be a start. Mr. Malsom added that when they researched the intersection of Vine Street and Water Street, the Crash Data showed multiple bicycle accidents and a Class A automobile accident from 2007 to 2011. So, this type of project could be used to make improvements.

Mr. Trail wondered if it might cry out for a pedestrian bridge. Mr. Malsom stated that it would not be fiscally reasonable to construct a pedestrian bridge.

Mr. Trail asked how the bus traffic would get through town without them being a major disruption. Also, without some substantial residential development around the multimodal transit center might become a place that people associate with crime or other things. Mr. Malsom replied that with regards to bus traffic, they were concerned about this as well. However, buses coming from University Avenue would turn right down Broadway Avenue and buses coming from the south and the campus area would come up Springfield Avenue and be routed down Race Street around to a drop-off site at Lincoln Square Mall and then be routed straight north on Broadway Avenue and turn into the proposed facility.

They realize that without residential development there, it could be an issue. Their bigger plan allows for residential growth to the north, but it would not occur in the first phase of the plan.

**GROUP 2:** Nick Bartholomew, Yuchen Ding, Yining Fan, Tony Herhold, Jinwoo Seo

- Name of Transit Center: ELM STREET MULTI-MODAL TRANSIT HUB
- Location: Downtown Parking Garage and part of the Historic Lincoln Hotel
- Overview:
  - Accessibility
  - Connectivity
  - Revitalizing
  - Iconic
  - Forward Thinking
- Location
  - Why?
    - Under Utilization of the Existing Structures
    - Close Proximity to Main Street and Other Amenities
    - Along Many Existing MTD Routes
    - Highway Connection via Vine Street
- Existing Uses
  - Landmark Hotel
    - Post 1970's Section
    - Not Subject to Historic Preservation
  - Parking Deck
    - Currently Underutilized
    - Hinders Downtown Growth
  - Elm Street
    - Not a Heavily Utilized Street
    - Businesses Have Alternative Means of Access

- Map from the Downtown Parking Study
- Public Opinion Satisfaction Summary from the Downtown Market Study
- Modes of Access
- The Transit Hub
  - Six 12-foot Bus and Bike-Only Lanes
    - Accommodate Future Uses
    - Two Bi-Directional Bike Sharrows
    - One Bus Parking Spot
  - Multi-Use Transit Hub
    - Bus Waiting Space
    - Coach Tickets Sale
    - Businesses and Offices
  - Mixed-Use Buildings
    - Retail
    - Residential
    - Office Space
- Land Use – Current and Proposed
- Site Plan – Floor Plan and The Site Plan
- Cross-Section View of the proposed project
- Amenities
  - Bike-Friendliness
    - Bike Parking and Rental Facility
    - Bike Sharrows
  - Accessibility
    - Elevators
    - Ramps
    - Reserved Parking Spots
  - Connectivity
    - Enclosed Pedestrian Bridge
    - Connection to Lincoln Square Mall
    - Linkage via Crane Alley to Main Street
  - Sociality
    - The Courtyard
    - Outdoor Tables and Chairs
- Proposed Bus Routes
- Pedestrian Path
- Cyclist Path
- Potential Outcomes
  - Revitalization of the Downtown
    - Economic Benefits
      - Jobs/Tax Revenue/Property Values
    - Mixed-Use Activities
    - Build Cohesion
    - Revitalize Lincoln Square Mall
    - Visually Appealing
    - Landmark for the Public

- Sustainable Active Transportation
  - Universal Access
  - Increase Bus Access to Currently Underserved Area
  - Reduce Carbon Emissions
  - Walkable Community
  - Enhance Inter-City Connections

**GROUP 3:** Chenhui Chen, Isaac Cuenca, Francesca Sallinger, Youngjae Kim, Silvia Fang

- Name of Transit Center: County Plaza Transit Center
- Location: Existing County Plaza at Main Street and Broadway Avenue
- Site Selection
- Site Map
- Key Elements
  - CUMTD Transit Hub
  - Bike Center
  - Parking
  - Regional Shuttle
  - Public Space
  - Retail
- Bus Platform with Retail
  - Bus Arrival Kiosk
  - Seating
  - Vegetation
  - Restaurant, Retail
- Bike Center
  - Secure Bicycle Parking
  - Showers & Lockers
  - Bicycle Rentals
  - Bicycle Repair
- Increase Bike Usage
- Bike Facility Improvement
- Public Plaza
- Underground Parking
  - Take out 200 surface parking
  - Preserve 200 underground parking
- Mode Shift from Auto Dependence to Walkability, Bike-ability and/or Public Transit
- Anticipated Outcomes
  - Vibrant Downtown
  - Public Amenity
  - New Tenants
  - New Tax Revenue
  - Higher Property Value
- Potential Concerns
  - Loss of surface parking spaces
  - Security
  - Bikes vs. Buses

- Traffic
- Proximity to Correctional Center and Civic Center

Mr. Fell asked if the buses could only go single file through the site. Ms. Sallinger explained that one of the group members is a Civil Engineer student and had expressed concern during their group discussion about this, so they designed the route of the buses through the center so that a bus could go around another bus if need be.

Ms. Byndom asked if the existing County Plaza would continue to be used as it is currently being used. Ms. Fang replied that most of the existing building would continue to be used as it is currently being used; however, they would preserve some office space upstairs and use part of the ground floor space as a waiting room or office or retail spaces. Ms. Sallinger added that the building is currently at 84% occupancy, so it leaves enough space for other office uses or for retail.

Mr. Trail asked if they had researched to find out whether the current parking deck was constructed to handle this type of load. Ms. Sallinger said that they talked to the owner of the property and decided that there may need to be structural reinforcements made for the parking deck to accommodate the buses. They believe that since they are not proposing many changes to the property with the exception of the construction of the bike center, that the cost of reinforcing the parking deck might be manageable.

Ms. Hoyle thanked the Plan Commission. She mentioned that the students also prepared Existing Conditions reports as well that will be provided to the City and to MTD. The students will also be presenting to the MTD Board on December 10, 2014.

Ms. Stake stated that it was exciting to see students working to improve Urbana. Ms. Hoyle pointed out that the students have all worked very hard and been engaged in this project.

### **Review of the Plan Commission's Official Bylaws**

Jeff Engstrom, Interim Planning Manager, stated that Christopher Marx, Planner I, was present to type in the changes that the Plan Commission suggests. There were no concrete changes suggested at the last Plan Commission meeting, so the Plan Commission can now go through the bylaws line-for-line and make changes as they see fit.

Mr. Otto suggested that they change "*elect*" in Article III.2 to "*select*" so that the Plan Commission would be in compliance with the bylaws.

Mr. Hopkins recommended the following changes:

- Page 4, Article V.5 – "*...In the interest of ensuring public input in the case of limited time, the ...*"
- Page 5, Article VI. Procedure for Hearings
  - First sentence should read as such, "*Order of Procedures for Public Input*"
  - 1-11 should be changed to A-K

- Add “*L. Chair closes the public input portion of the hearing before the Plan Commission deliberates*”
- Add “*2. Principles for Public Hearing Procedures*”
- 12-18 should be changed to A-G
- The new 2.A should read as such, “*At any time during the public input portion of the meeting, questions from the Commissioners may be directed to the staff, petitioner or public to clarify evidence presented.*”
- The new 2.B – Delete the second sentence.
- The new 2.D should read as such, “*The Chairperson may require advance registration of persons wishing to address a particular case and may set time limits. Advance registration may be by means of speaker cards to be submitted prior to or at the public hearing.*”

Mr. Otto agreed that there needs to be some language in the bylaws that allows the Chairperson to require the public to sign up to speak and to set a time limit if there are many people of the public wishing to speak. It doesn't happen but there have been meetings in the past that were out of control with numerous members of the audience wishing to speak. This would allow the Chairperson to make the decision to impose these actions on the fly at the beginning of a case if he sees the audience is full in order to allow everyone who wishes to speak an opportunity to be heard.

He explained that speaker cards are cards that audience members fill out and submit to the Chairperson if they are interested in speaking on a particular case. He doesn't feel that they have to use cards. They could have a sign-up sheet available for people who wish to speak instead. Mr. Engstrom added that speaker cards would also be useful for people to register their protest or their support without having to speak before the Commission.

Mr. Hopkins continued with his recommendation for changes:

- The new 2.G should read as such, “*...The public input portion of the hearing may be reopened at the same meeting prior to the Commission's action at the discretion of the ...*”

Mr. Otto recommended the new 2.F to read as such:

- “*The petitioners and opponents should present all evidence they wish to submit during the public input phase of the hearing. Written material from the petitioner or opponents will be accepted by the Secretary for distribution to the Commission until the close of the public input part of the hearing.*”

Ms. Byndom asked if someone were to come in at the last minute with evidence to present, would the Chairperson or the Plan Commission be able to re-open the public input portion to accept the evidence. Mr. Otto said yes, this would be covered elsewhere in the bylaws.

Mr. Hopkins stated that the Plan Commission does not explicitly state findings of fact when making a motion. They are a quasi-judicial body and should act like a court hearing, but the State of Illinois, from his understanding, does not constrain them when making motions. Written



staff reports always explicitly include the LaSalle National Bank criteria. So, he suggested a change to the first sentence of Article VII.3 so that it reads as such, "*Unless the motion explicitly includes additional findings, the staff report constitutes the findings of the Commission.*" He believes this would be consistent with the Plan Commission's practice and also provide a record of findings that could be used in a court case if necessary. It may also remind the Plan Commission members that if they are making a decision on new evidence presented during the public hearing or by disagreement with the written staff report, that they should be saying so in the motion.

Mr. Trail wondered what the legal status is for the Plan Commission's decisions. Acting Chairperson Otto answered that they are recommendations to the City Council. Mr. Trail argued that they do not have typical hearings, because they are not making a final decision. Mr. Hopkins replied that the Plan Commission does make final decisions on Boneyard Creekway Permits and Preliminary Plats. Also, the City Council acts on a recommendation from the Plan Commission. The Plan Commission's findings may be used to argue from a legal point of view that a rezoning was arbitrary. In practice, the record on which the Plan Commission's decision is made is the written staff report and the record of the meeting. They don't make a motion and agree on facts.

Mr. Hopkins stated the use of the word "*cross-examination*" makes him a little uneasy, but they have now defined the mechanism of cross-examination of being through the Chair.

Mr. Fell recommended that they address the absence of a Chairperson. He suggested that they include language that states as follows, "*When the Chairperson is absent, an Acting Chairperson will be selected.*" Mr. Hopkins agreed. Mr. Trail felt that it should be the responsibility of the Plan Commission to select the Acting Chairperson.

Acting Chairperson Otto closed this item.

Ms. Stake announced that she was resigning from the Plan Commission. She has recommended Christopher Stohr to be her replacement, and Mayor Prussing plans to appoint him.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jeff Engstrom, Secretary  
Urbana Plan Commission