
DATE: Monday, November 18, 2024
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: 400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

The City Council of the City of Urbana, Illinois, met in regular session Monday, November 18, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PHYSICALLY PRESENT: Diane Wolfe Marlin, Mayor; Darcy Sandefur, City Clerk; CM Maryalice Wu, CM Christopher Evans, CM Shirese Hursey*, CM Jaya Kolisetty, CM Chaundra Bishop^, CM Grace Wilken, CM James Quisenberry*^

***CM PRESENT REMOTELY**

^CM ARRIVED AFTER ROLL CALL

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Bourema Ouedraogo, Nick Olsen, Elizabeth Hannan, Kevin Garcia, Will Kolschowsky, Carol Mitten, Larry Boone, Andrea Ruedi, Matt Roeschley, Seok Hyun Cho

OTHERS PRESENT: Angela Bradley, CEO of HeartStrong Meals

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

With a quorum present, Mayor Marlin called the meeting of the Urbana City Council to order at 7:00p.m.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

a. 10-28-2024 City Council Minutes

Motion to approve by CM Wu, seconded by CM Kolisetty.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Kolisetty, Wilken

NAY: None.

3. Additions to the Agenda

Motion to remove Ordinance No. 2024-11-037 from the agenda CM Evans, seconded by CM Hursey.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Kolisetty, Wilken

NAY: None.

4. Presentations and Public Input

Adani Sanchez encouraged City Council to approve Ordinance No. 2024-11-034 to allow for an easier duplex development process in zones R-2 and R-3. Stated the ordinance provides a gentle method of increasing density and increasing affordable housing availability. *Reverend Dr. Evelyn Underwood* stated the community has been calling on the City to address the food desert in Ward 3 and emphasized the need for a grocery store in Ward 3. Thanked Angela Bradley for her integrity in contacting residents

of Ward 3 to gather support for her work and urged City Council to approve the funding for the grocery store. **Darleen Bailey** spoke in support of the proposed grocery store, stating it will generate tax revenue for the City as it can capture money that would have originally been spent in Champaign and counterbalance the tax-exempt properties in Ward 3. Stated while the establishment of the grocery store is a large undertaking, it can still be achieved. **Anonymous** expressed the grocery store stands to greatly benefit the entirety of the community. Stated the community has an excess of liquor stores, casinos, and smoke shops that feed into the addiction that people face. Voiced the establishment of the grocery store in Ward 3 signals a positive development that shows care and love to the community. **Angela Bradley** thanked the residents of Ward 3 for sharing their voices and concerns to City Council, thanked CM Hursey for her longtime championing of the effort to build a grocery store in Ward 3, and thanked Mayor Marlin and City Council for their diligence in considering this issue. **Eric Sacks** expressed support for Ordinance No. 2024-11-037 regarding the grocery store in Ward 3. Stated Ward 3 has lacked a grocery store for decades and this is a valuable opportunity to address this problem through a modest investment into the community. **Marina Minetti** expressed astonishment at the amount of work that has gone behind moving the grocery store proposal forward for the betterment of the entire community. Stated further liquor stores are unnecessary, but grocery stores are a vital aspect of a community and should be supported whole heartedly. **Carmen Blubaugh** stated the community agrees that residents of Ward 3 deserve access to fresh groceries in spite of the lack of support from larger grocery chains. Expressed admiration for the work Angela Bradley has done to forge partnerships with local farmers and producers of food to create another space for their food to be sold within the community. **Carrie Hacker** expressed need for affordable housing in the City of Urbana and voiced support for Ordinance No. 2024-11-034 regarding the amendments to the Urbana zoning ordinance. Asked the City consider investigating the predatory and exploitative tenant application process for rental properties that are being seen across the City of Champaign and the City of Urbana. Requested for landlords to be transparent and forthcoming in their application approval criteria. **Michelle Kiisyo** voiced support for the grocery store in Ward 3. Spoke in support of Ordinance No. 2024-11-034, stating the benefits of duplexes to a community and their ability to create more affordable housing. **Stuart Levy** expressed support for the proposal for the grocery store in Ward 3 and hoped for the City to commit funding to the project.

Written Public Input in support of the grocery store in Ward 3 was received from the following individuals and read by Mayor Marlin and CM Evans: Esther Patt, Ingrid Melief, Sana Saboowala, Lilah Leopold, Derek Briles, and Adam Nichols, and Bryan Maxwell. Written Public Input in support of the grocery store in Ward 3 was received from the following individuals, but were not read: Caitlin Clarke, Carmen Blubaugh, and Deborah Hollenberg.

5. Council Input and Communications

CM Kolisetty clarified her support for removing Ordinance No. 2024-11-037 from the agenda was only because it will be returning to next week's meeting as an item for final action. Thanked Mayor Marlin for reading the public input from her Ward 4 constituents due to her having a migraine. Spoke in support of continuing and resuming the work of the Alternate Response Task Force to carry out the initial intent behind the funds that went to support it. **CM Wilken** thanked the community for attending and sharing their feedback with City Council. Spoke in support of funding the grocery store in Ward 3 and requested further information to be shared and developed regarding the source of the funding within the City. Echoed CM Kolisetty's intent to resume the work of the Alternate Response Task Force and hoped for more information to come regarding the state of the task force. **CM Wu** expressed thanks for residents sharing their support for the grocery store. Stated the grocery store proposal has strong support from City Council and City staff and she looks forward to hearing more information on the ways in which the funding can be sourced and committed. **CM Evans** thanked CM Hursey for her leadership throughout the past 6 years in advocating and mobilizing for a grocery store in Ward 3. Thanked Angela Bradley for her initiative in bringing forward the grocery store proposal. Thanked Mayor Marlin for her leadership in coordinating the efforts to match the funding for the grocery store's grant application. **Mayor Marlin** stated both the Alternate Response Task Force and the grocery store in Ward 3 are high priorities for

the City. Stated the City intends to find another facilitator for the task force to continue the work, but the current priority has shifted to quickly address the fund matching for the grocery store. **CM Hursey** stated full support for the grocery store proposal in Ward 3 and thanked Angela Bradley for her enthusiasm and dedication to this project. Voiced appreciation for the support shown from within City Council and from residents across the City of Urbana for the grocery store. **CM Quisenberry** expressed thanks for the internal mobilization to support the grocery store proposal and for looping CM Hursey into the conversations around it. Stated the risks in moving forward with the grocery store are acceptable. Reiterated the original purpose of the request, to make a funding commitment to allow for an application to a grant. Stated the grant process will be lengthy and may extend beyond the current fiscal year.

6. Reports of Standing Committees

None.

7. Committee of the Whole (*Council Member Christopher Evans, Ward 2*)

1. Consent Agenda

None.

2. Regular Agenda

- a. **Resolution No. 2024-11-072R:** A Resolution Approving an Increase in the Number of Liquor Licenses in the Class A Designation for Fuentes 10 LLC d/b/a El Patron Ballroom, 1006 North Cunningham Avenue – Exec

The Resolution seeks to approve an increase in the number of Class A liquor licenses in the City of Urbana.

Motion to approve by CM Evans, seconded by CM Wu.

Roll Call Vote:

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

NAY: None.

- b. **Resolution No. 2024-11-073R:** A Resolution Estimating the Tax Levy (Fiscal Year 2024-2025) – HRF

The Resolution establishes an estimated property tax levy of \$12,100,696 for 2024 to begin the property tax levy process.

Motion to approve by CM Evans, seconded by CM Bishop. Questions and discussion followed.

Roll Call Vote:

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

NAY: None.

8. Reports of Special Committees

None.

9. Reports of Officers

Mayor Marlin provided background on the request for \$800,000 in fund matching from Angela Bradley for the Illinois Grocery Initiative Grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) to support the establishment of a grocery store in Ward 3. Stated developing a grocery store in Ward 3 is a high priority for the City of Urbana as per the Mayor/Council Goals and the City stands in support of the project. Stated that due to the short time-frame to respond to the request, the City is navigating logistical challenges and the decision requires a one-week delay to allow for some due diligence to ensure tax-payer funds are being spent responsibly in addition to providing options for where the funding will be sourced within the City's budget.

Carol Mitten, City Administrator stated the funds could be sourced through the General Fund by waiving financial policy which secures a minimum amount of funds; using funds from CDBG by implementing it into the Annual Action Plan; reallocating \$800,000 in remaining ARPA funding to the project; by using the \$772,000 of interest generated through investing the City's ARPA allocation which will likely increase to over \$800,000 soon; or by contributing an in-kind match of City-owned property, but it turned out that the match was unacceptable by the terms of the grant. Stated the City would like to fund the demolition of a soon to be decommissioned fire station and offer the property on a 25-year lease at a rate of \$1.00 per year. Requested further direction from City Council to develop a funding agreement.

Council discussed the potential fund source for the grant and what will be sufficient for the requirements to apply for the grant.

Council voiced preference for providing the funding without breaking the City's own financial policies and favored using the interest generated from the ARPA investments. Council supported favorably leasing the old fire station property to be used for the grocery store.

Mayor Marlin stated a Resolution will be brought forward in the next City Council meeting and a letter of commitment will be drafted alongside that to be sent to Angela Bradley once approved.

10. New Business

- a. ~~Ordinance No. 2024-11-037: An Ordinance Revising the Annual Budget to Invest in a Grocery Store in Ward 3 (Budget Amendment #3) – CM's Evans & Kolisetty~~

Item removed from the agenda during Additions to the Agenda.

11. Adjournment

With no further business before the Urbana City Council, Mayor Marlin adjourned the meeting at 8:37p.m.

Seok Hyun Cho

Deputy City Clerk

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

Minutes approved: 12/9/24

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Esther Patt <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, November 16, 2024 8:47 AM
To: !City Council
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT - Nov. 18 Regular City Council Meeting - budget amendment

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Please read my message during public input for the Nov. 18 city council meeting.

Dear Mayor Marlin and Urbana City Council Members:

Please vote to approve the \$800,000.00 budget amendment to provide the 25% local match for the Illinois Grocery Initiative grant for Heart Strong Meals to establish a grocery store in northwest Urbana.

For more than four decades, people who live in northwest Urbana have been asking city officials to help get a proper grocery or supermarket in the neighborhood. Those of you who are older might remember that in 1990, Wal-Mart announced it would open its first store in our community at Lincoln and Bradley. Mayor Markland and his staff worked diligently on that project. But then Wal-Mart backed out and chose a Champaign location instead because it was close to both I-57 and I-74.

When you drive on Lincoln Avenue, you might notice that the Onyx apartment complex on the west side of the 1300 block north is set very far back from the street. The reason is that in 1997, when the complex was developed as a TIF project, city officials were still trying to get a grocery or supermarket in the neighborhood and set aside that land for that purpose.

Here we are, 27 years later, and finally someone has a viable plan to leverage state funds for our community to open a grocery store in northwest Urbana. I know you face so many compelling needs for money but please consider how very long the people of the neighborhood have had to wait to shop for groceries near their homes.

Thank you for your service and the incredible amount of time you spend sitting through long meetings.

Esther Patt
[REDACTED]

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Ingrid Melief <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, November 17, 2024 10:16 PM
To: !City Council
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT Nov. 18,2024

*** Email From An External Source ***

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

This message can be read out loud at the meeting:

Dear members of the City Council,

I am writing to ask you to provide the 25% local match for the organization that is trying to establish a good grocery store in the Urbana Ward 3 area. Food deserts are a national disgrace and as a city we should do all we can to make sure they do not exist in our neighborhoods.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ingrid Melief

[REDACTED]
Urbana

Sent from my iPhone

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Sana Saboowala <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, November 17, 2024 10:45 PM
To: !City Council
Subject: Public Comment 11/18

*** Email From An External Source ***

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Dear Urbana City Council,

Please read my comment into public record.

My name is Sana Saboowala, I live in Urbana. I strongly support spending city money to pay the \$800,000 portion necessary for the Illinois Grocery Initiative to match with \$2.4 million to open a grocery store. Eliminating a food desert by creating a local space for people to get groceries is, in my opinion, an excellent use of city funds. This will positively impact ward 3 residents. It's a human rights issue. People deserve access to food. Through the Illinois Grocery Initiative, getting people this access is even easier. I urge the council to take the necessary steps to allow for the opening of a grocery store in ward 3.

Thank you

Best,
Sana Saboowala

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Lilah Leopold <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 12:48 PM
To: !City Council; Marlin, Diane
Subject: Public Comment 11/18/2024

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Dear Mayor Marlin and Council Members Wu, Evans, Hursey, Kolisetty, Bishop, Wilken, Quisenberry,

Please read the following at public comment. My name is Lilah Leopold and I live in Ward 4. I write to add my voice to those who stand in support, in the strongest possible terms, for a grocery store in Ward 3.

Every penny of the \$800,000 potentially allotted by Council to match the \$2.4 million Illinois Grocery Initiative state grant would be well spent. The health, social, and financial benefits of access to fresh food, nearby, cannot be understated. Access to a nearby, community-focused supermarket should not be the privilege of any one zip code. Especially in a country in which healthcare is neither universal nor easily accessible (and this is not to diminish the incredible local initiatives and Public Health Department we have here), the ability to regularly, and easily access food nearby will collectively save residents untold health and pharmaceutical costs and be a very real, concrete step toward addressing health disparities across the community. And this is not even to mention the benefits of offering jobs, collaborative and innovative planning opportunities, and a place for community to gather in small and large ways around food on a daily basis.

We all need to eat, and all residents deserve to have a choice in what we feed ourselves and what we feed our families. This issue is at the heart of addressing systemic inequalities and one that when directly supported, has incredible potential to reverberate across Urbana and beyond. This is a chance to support very real community care and I am proud to live somewhere where such an initiative is up for a vote by council.

City money could not be better spent: Yes, yes, yes, to a grocery store in Ward 3!

Sincerely,

Lilah Leopold

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Derek Briles <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, November 17, 2024 9:19 AM
To: !City Council
Subject: Support for Budget Amendment #3

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

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Please read my comment aloud into the record.

Hello! My name is Derek Briles and I am a resident of Urbana ward 4. I am writing in support of the ordinance to amend the budget to free up \$800,000 in order to receive state funding to build a geocery store in ward 3.

Over the years, I have seen this council allocate funds to many things that seem to have little to no positive impact on the working people of Urbana, particularly the Black working class. While the UPD, who historically over polices the Black community, receives millions and still asks for more, precious little funds are allocated to proactively improve the material conditions of those with the greatest need.

According to US Census Bureau data, 27.7% of Urbana lives in poverty and the average household income is less than \$42,000. The poverty rate in Illinois is 11.6% and the *median* household income is roughly \$80,000. I hope you find these numbers embarrassing because I certainly do. I think we can all agree that it is far past time that we address the systemic inequalities extant in our community.

While I do understand that you have spent down the budget considerably throwing money at the gaping, hungry maw that is the police force and wasted a fair amount on a consultant that turned tail and ran when the people demanded transparency, an inadequate amount of funds have been allocated to the working people of this city who are pushed further and further to the margins.

Here, you have a chance to fund something that could be helpful. I'll go on the record saying that I am skeptical of ventures such as these, as I fear it will result in an exploitative company price gouging our underserved Black neighbors. But I still believe this is a project worth funding.

I'm proud to see my alderperson's name attached to this ordinance and, as a member of her constituency, it has my support.

Thank you.

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Adam <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 5:37 PM
To: !City Council
Subject: Public input for city council meeting 2024-11-18

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Please read my comments into the record.

I'm Adam Nichols and I've spoken out publicly about fiscal responsibility numerous times. Tonight I'm writing about the proposal related to funding a grocery store in Ward 3.

Although the proposal doesn't seem to use the word "grant" it appears that's what is on the table. Money provided for a specific purpose without any expectation of direct repayment.

A one time cost of \$800,000 may be small as compared to the annual recurring budgets for some departments, but that doesn't mean it should escape scrutiny.

The big questions are why should the city government step in here to spend taxpayer money on a private business?

The default option is for the city to do nothing. This could mean that the grocery store doesn't get opened, people have to continue to go further to get groceries, and things continue as we do today.

The alternative is to provide funding to a business being started by a local resident, so people can have better access to healthy food.

The pros:

1. People don't have to go as far to get healthy food
2. Another tax paying business in Urbana, and not one that will send the profits off to Wall Street investors or overseas to some tax haven
3. Local jobs would be created
4. The city is more walkable

The cons:

1. The people of Urbana pay roughly \$20 per capita (\$800K/40K residents)

It's not often I advocate for more government spending, but in this case, I think it's a smart move. It aligns with what the economic goals of the city, supports a local business and serves the needs of the residents. It's not a recurring cost and will likely pay for itself over time with the increased tax revenue.

Please vote to approve this ordinance. Lets take a chance on trying to end this food desert.

Thank you,
Adam Nichols

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Caitlin Clarke <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, November 16, 2024 1:33 PM
To: !City Council
Subject: Public Input Fwd: [WUNA-Main] Grocery store for northwest Urbana neighborhood

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Dear Council Members,

I write to note that I fully support the effort to build a new grocery store in north west urbana. This is desperately needed for our community's health and wellbeing. I support city council matching funds to support the development.

I also encourage council members to connect with JR Lill (IPLAN coordinator) and Illinois Extension staff as these folks helped work on the Champaign county food summit. Their data may provide additional insight into helping ensure this project is successful.

In addition to our permanent residents in north west urbana, many university students live in that area without access to a grocery store. As faculty in Health & Kinesiology, I am keenly aware of food security issues among University students. Having both affordable housing and an accessible grocery store are critical for ensuring their wellbeing and academic success. In my mind, this project would significantly benefit numerous groups within our community.

Best,
Caitlin Clarke

Sent from Gmail Mobile

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Esther Patt <[REDACTED]>
Date: Sat, Nov 16, 2024 at 7:48 AM
Subject: [WUNA-Main] Grocery store for northwest Urbana neighborhood
To: wuna list <[REDACTED]>

I write to share information about a vote on Monday night's city council agenda to provide matching funds for a grocery store in northwest Urbana.

If you wish to share your opinion with city council members before Monday night's meeting, please send your message to citycouncil@urbanaininois.us. The subject line of the email must **include the words "PUBLIC INPUT" and the meeting date**. If you want your comments read out loud, state that in your message. To see the whole November 18 city council packet go to [Agendas/Minutes | City of Urbana Illinois Meetings](#)

Description of the Issue: The following is quoted from Chris Evans' memo to the mayor and city council in the packet for the meeting.

"The northwest portion of Urbana used to have an IGA grocery store that serviced the area residents. IGA closed over 40 years ago and since that time has left the area a 'food desert.' Ward 3 has long been in need of economic development with jobs and services. Attracting a capable developer to build a grocery store has proven difficult thus far.

During the course of debating another development in northwest Urbana, residents complained that what was needed most in their neighborhood is access to healthy food. Numerous residents of Ward 3 have given public input at past council meetings that the City Council should do things through a lens of equity and consider all people in its deliberations.

On August 18, 2023, the **State of Illinois adopted Public Act 103-0561, the Illinois Grocery Initiative**, that has a component of the New Stores in Food Deserts program to combat food insecurity by offering competitive grants administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to support the establishment of new grocery stores in food deserts.

Urbana resident and CEO of HeartStrong Meals, Angela Bradley, has applied for an Illinois Grocery Initiative grant to establish a new grocery store in City of Urbana Ward 3 area. Ms. Bradley has been advised by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity that **\$2.4 million dollars would be available for this project if the applicant can provide 25% of the project cost, or \$800,000.**

Throughout Council 's Strategic Priorities & Goals adopted in April of 2022 and March 2024, Council has made a grocery store in northwest Urbana a strategic goal. An \$800,000 contribution toward a "North End Grocery Store" is well overdue and would give Ward 3 a needed economic stimulus. It would be right for the City to invest in the employment and nutritional needs of working people.

Fiscal Impact: The new estimated fund balance in the General Operating Fund would be \$11,053,625."

Although this is not a proposal for our neighborhood, it is an issue about neighborhoods and the needs of people who live in them. Cities providing local match to leverage state and federal funds is just as important as cities providing economic incentives to businesses to leverage higher tax revenue (in my humble opinion).

Esther Patt

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The opinions expressed on this moderated list do not necessarily reflect those of the WUNA Steering Committee. To post to this group, send email to [REDACTED]

To read the WUNA-Main Policies and Procedures, visit <https://westurbana.org/wuna-main-listserv/> or navigate elsewhere on our website to learn about WUNA, how to join, and for resources about the neighborhood and city.

Questions about WUNA's Google Groups can be sent to [REDACTED]

You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "WUNA-Main" group.

To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

To view this discussion visit <https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/wuna-main/SJ0PR84MB15787F8E93613CED524422A5C3252%40SJ0PR84MB1578.NAMPRD84.PROD.OUTLOOK.COM>.

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Bryan Maxwell <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, November 17, 2024 12:49 PM
To: !City Council
Subject: Support for Ward 3 Grocery Store

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Good afternoon, I'm writing in support of the city allocating funding for the proposed grocery store in Ward 3. Ward 3 has been a food desert for a long time, which is extremely harmful for the health and well-being of the community. Poor nutrition and food insecurity especially for children can have huge impacts on their well-being now and later in life. Eliminating these food deserts is important for addressing the legacies of racism in the US and Champaign-Urbana, as these food deserts disproportionately affect black communities.

While the council might have concerns about the cost and reducing the amount in the General Operating Fund, I would ask the council consider that

1) spending the \$800,000 will also be bringing in \$2.4 million into the city, which should be seen as an investment in the health and safety (numerous studies showing the link between proper nutrition and reduced crime) of Ward 3

2) it's rare that a private citizen (like Angela Bradley) is willing to step up and lead a major effort to improve their community like this. Supporting this kind of initiative from the community is important, and would set examples for other people in the community that they can be leaders for change and that the city of Urbana will stand behind them.

It would be a missed opportunity to make Urbana better to turn away such a large funding opportunity and committed member of the community. Please approve the funds for creating this grocery store in Ward 3.

Bryan Maxwell
Resident of Ward 5

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Carmen Blubaugh <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 11:13 AM
To: !City Council
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Greetings,

I would like to voice support for a local match for a state grant to establish a grocery store on Urbana's North end. While corporate grocery developers may not agree that all people deserve walkable access to healthy food, I know that many in our community do. Ms. Bradley has a long list of partners and suppliers that will make Heartstrong Grocery a lynch pin in the local food community, and provide new access to healthy produce that does not currently exist anywhere in Urbana. I would be proud to mobilize Urbana community members, U of I students, and extension resources to support the long-term prosperity of a new local grocery store. Heartland Grocery will improve long-term food access on the North End and will also establish new market shares for current and aspiring farmers in Central Illinois. This is a core part of the land-grant mission and I expect that many of my colleagues in the College of Agriculture will share my commitment to expanding food access in our hometown.

I plan to attend tonight's meeting, and hope to make my voice heard there in-person.

--

Carmen Blubaugh

[REDACTED]
Urbana, IL

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Deborah Hollenberg <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2024 6:45 PM
To: !City Council
Subject: Public Comment about proposed grocery store

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Hi Council,

I have lived in Urbana for 10 years now. One of the things I love most about this city is how well our community cares for each other and the support programs available. I've never lived anywhere with so many food pantries and free meal programs! That said, food pantries are NOT a grocery store or anywhere equivalent to one. The fact that we have food apartheid, formerly called food deserts, in Urbana is frankly embarrassing.

Everyone deserves access to food and food autonomy. Having a grocery store in the north side of town will boost the community and health outcomes of residents. Research has shown that presence of grocery stores in food apartheid areas reduces alcohol dependence and crime rates.

Additionally, Urbana touts itself as a sanctuary city. What good are we as a sanctuary city when our own residents are suffering from systemic inaccessibility to basic human needs? We can do better. Y'all voted to pass the ceasefire resolution to end genocide and apartheid in Palestine, now let's end food apartheid at home.

Black Lives Matter. Prove yourselves by funding a grocery store in a predominantly Black part of town.

Sincerely,

Deborah Hollenberg