

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE: October 2, 2024

APPROVED

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: City Council Chambers, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois

MEMBERS ATTENDING: David Hays, Kathryn Holliday, Angela Urban, Andrew Weiss

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Laura O'Donnell, Dennis Roberts, Trent Shepard

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner; Marcus Ricci, Planner II; Teri Andel, Planning Administrative Assistant; Andrea Ruedi, Senior Advisor for Integrated Strategy Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Susan Appel, Phyllis Winters-Williams

A. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

Chair Urban called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

B. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

C. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the September 4, 2024 regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were presented for approval.

Mr. Hays stated that he found no errors. The minutes are very thorough and well done. He moved to approved the minutes of September 4, 2024 as presented. Mr. Weiss seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes as written was approved by unanimous voice vote.

D. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

▪ **Email from Brian Adams dated September 24, 2024**

Mr. Adams sent an email volunteering to help update the Royer brochure. Chair Urban summarized Mr. Adams' email. Mr. Ricci noted that the only thing Mr. Adams requested, if he helps, is to be acknowledged on any printouts of the brochure after it has been updated. Mr. Ricci mentioned that City staff has two boxes of the existing brochures. He added that this could be a great project for a Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant. Mr. Hays stated that Mr. Adams has been a great

collaborator over the years, and he encouraged that either the Historic Preservation Commission collectively communicate with Mr. Adams or that Chair Urban communicate with Mr. Adams directly, regarding the Commission's appreciation of his interest in having the brochure be correct and as interesting as possible. Mr. Ricci pointed out that, if more than two Commission members work on this project, then they will need to comply with the notification requirements of the Open Meetings Act. City staff will assist in any way they are able.

E. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

F. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

G. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

H. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

I. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

J. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Mr. Hays stated that in the past this was always done by a member of the Commission. He wondered if there was a systematic assessment. Mr. Ricci replied that if the Commission members are interested, he could divvy up the local landmarks and districts in Urbana amongst the members to monitor. Mr. Hays stated that he would love this. Mr. Ricci asked if he should provide a form for the members to select the properties that interests them or should he assign them based on area. Mr. Hays expressed that he liked assigning them by area. Mr. Weiss agreed that he liked having them parceled out. Mr. Ricci stated that he will look into setting something up in Google Doc to make it easier for the Commission members to provide comments and to have a record on each property moving forward.

K. STAFF REPORT

***Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan – Andrea Ruedi and Kevin Garcia**

Andrea Ruedi, Senior Advisor for Integrated Strategy Development, and Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner, approached the Historic Preservation Commission to present the DRAFT *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan. After introducing themselves, they talked about the following:

- A press release with information on how to find the plan online was sent on August 20, 2024
- What is the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan?
 - Community's Vision for what Urbana should look like in the next 20 years

- Overarching Goals (Big Ideas) and Strategic Actions (Big Moves/Little Moves)
- City's Primary Long-Range Planning Document
- *Imagine Urbana* Process
- *Imagine Urbana* Published Reports
 - September 2021: 2005 Comprehensive Plan Assessment
 - October 2022: Community Outreach Summary
 - April 2023: Examine Urbana
 - August 2023: Balancing Act Findings Summary
 - August 2024: *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan Draft
- *Imagine Urbana* Draft – Table of Contents
 - I. Introduction
 - II. Vision & Values
 - III. Background
 - IV. Big Moves
 - V. Big Moves/Little Moves
 - VI. Master Map
 - VII. Tracking Progress
 - VIII. Evaluation and Reporting
 - IX. Appendix
- Urbana's Vision & Values
 - Urbana's Vision
 - A Welcoming Community for Everyone
 - Urbana's Values
 - The City ensures **Equity** and Inclusion in all City Services
 - This City is a **Welcoming, Livable, and Healthy Community**
 - The City has a **Thriving, Resilient Economy and Environment**
 - The City celebrates and enriches its **Cultural Vitality**
 - The City promotes **Growth Within the City's Borders**
- Hierarchy of Big Ideas, Big Moves/Little Moves & Metrics
- *Imagine Urbana* Big Ideas
 - Big Idea 1: Urbana is a Place for Everyone
 - Big Idea 2: Urbana is both Financially and Environmentally Resilient
 - Big Idea 3: Urbana is a City of Connected Neighborhoods
 - Big Idea 4: Urbana Embraces its Cultural Vibrancy and Character
- *Image Urbana* Big Moves/Little Moves
 - Big Move 1: Develop a Plan to Address Urbana's Diverse Housing Needs
 - Big Move 2: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to Align with *Imagine Urbana*
 - Big Move 3: Create Neighborhood Plans to Address the Needs of Individual Areas
 - Big Move 4: Strengthen Downtown Urbana's Role as the Economic Driver of the City
 - Big Move 5: Expand Urbana's Arts and Culture Program
 - Big Move 6: Make Walkability the Default Setting
 - Big Move 7: Promote Incremental Development
 - Big Move 8: Invest in Infrastructure that Makes Sense Financially and is Environmentally Resilient
 - Big Move 9: Increase Urbana's Economic Vibrancy
 - Big Move 10: Encourage and Support Community Health, Safety, and Well-Being

- Big Move 11: Advance a Healthy, Clean, and Green Community
- Master Map
- Acknowledging Existing Plans
- *Imagine Urbana* Draft Plan Roll Out
 - Postcards
 - Information Release on *Imagine Urbana* Plan Draft
 - Advertising in Smile Politely
 - Advertising in News-Gazette
 - Flyers
- Informal Community Discussions
- *Imagine Urbana* Review Tentative Timeline
- *Imagine Urbana* Draft Plan – Commission Feedback

Chair Urban thanked Ms. Ruedi and Mr. Garcia for their presentation. She requested a .pdf copy of the plan. She stated that, while as a resident she received several notifications about the activities for the Comprehensive Plan, she did not receive any correspondence on the plan as a Commission member. This is the first that she is learning that she really should look at this in more depth to be able to provide comments, as a Commission member. She requested that the Historic Preservation Commission members be added on any future correspondence.

Mr. Hays thanked staff for the work that has been put into the draft plan. He was glad to hear what staff had learned from the 2005 Comprehensive Plan in terms of getting it connected to zoning. He stated that Lily Wilcock is phenomenal.

Mr. Weiss asked for clarification if the Big Moves and Little Moves were more in line with strategic plans. Mr. Garcia stated that he talked about strategy plans. Ms. Ruedi stated that she mentioned that the moves were strategies, so that might be where the confusion comes from. Mr. Weiss stated that he was looking at the diagram showing how the Comprehensive Plan relates to other City plans. He suggested that they mention the other City plans. Mr. Garcia said that staff needs to decide which of our current plans carry over as part of the Comprehensive Plan update.

Ms. Ruedi gave an example of the Little Moves for walkability. She explained that Little Moves are very specific actions that are measurable and trackable to make sure that staff is making the overall Big Move happen. Mr. Ricci added that Big Moves do not necessarily track under any one given Big Idea. A Big Move could help multiple Big Ideas. Mr. Ruedi pointed out that at the end of each one of the sections on the Big Moves and Little Moves, the Plan talks about the associated Big Ideas. It also states which staff member is going to be the project lead on each of the Big Moves and who are the implementation community partners.

Mr. Hays recalled being hesitant to go for walks during the pandemic because so many other people were out on walks. He believes that the walkable aspect of our community is a huge part of our cultural vibrancy and character.

Chair Urban thanked City staff. She acknowledged that the Historic Preservation Commission has homework to review *Imagine Urbana* and provide comments. She requested that the

Commission add “Discussion of the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan” to the agenda for the next meeting so they can have a deeper conversation on it and get a better sense of how they want to move forward updating it.

Urbana Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report – October 2, 2024

Mr. Ricci reported on the following:

A. Items of Interest:

- **APA-IL Distinguished Service Award**

Mr. Ricci stated that the former Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission, Alice Novak, received the APA-IL Distinguished Service Award for her service to the City of Urbana, to planning students, and to new practicing planners.

- **Historic Preservation Commission Bylaws**

Mr. Ricci stated that City staff is currently working with the City Attorney on proposed revisions to the bylaws.

- **CLG Grant Opportunity**

Mr. Ricci stated that the application process is now open. The State of Illinois Historic Preservation Office website provides information on the application process, on providing a budget and a creating a timeline. He mentioned that in 2022, the range of money available was a little over \$140,000.00 for the entire State of Illinois. The range of money one could ask for was up to \$140,000.00, so he believes it is first come, first served. However, if you need a smaller amount, that is fine, too.

He reviewed the ideas that were discussed at the previous meeting. They include the following:

1. Royer District Signage and/or brochure update
2. Historic Preservation Website
3. Landmark/District Owner Education Program
4. Downtown District Signage/Banners
5. Historic Resource Inventory
6. Historic Preservation Plan Update

The Commission members and staff talked about how to proceed. Ms. Holliday suggested hiring a summer intern to work on different projects such as updating the website and creating some educational program materials. Mr. Hays liked this idea and thought they could group some of the projects together. He asked how they would proceed. Mr. Ricci replied that they could hire a consultant or even a class at the University of Illinois work on a project(s).

Mr. Weiss suggested working in pairs since the deadline to submit a grant application is only five weeks away. He believes this would be a more flexible strategy. Mr. Ricci

pointed out that CLG grants are a recurring grant process that happens at least once a year. There have been some years where there were two cycles of grants. Some projects may take more than five weeks to come up with a budget so those projects may have to wait until another grant cycle.

There was discussion about the notification requirements to hold a meeting to only discuss projects and to create a budget(s) for the projects. City staff stated that they would need to check on the requirements to be sure that they comply with the Open Meetings Act.

Phyllis Winters-Williams approached the Historic Preservation Commission to speak. She mentioned that she is a volunteer with the Preservation and Conservation Agency (PACA). She encouraged the Commission members to work on a brochure to educate and encourage property owners of historic homes to nominate their properties as local landmarks and historic districts and to make them aware of the process and benefits of doing so.

- **Preservation Month Activities**

Mr. Ricci mentioned the Mid-Century Modern Home Tour that is scheduled for May 31, 2025. Ms. Holliday talked about the tour stating that the format of the tour will be four open houses: Erlanger House, Jack Baker Loft and Studio (Downtown Champaign), the John Replinger Bier House, and the fourth house is tentative so she did not mention the name. There will be a symposium about historic preservation and mid-century modernism in the morning. The open houses will be held in the afternoon. They are also working on creating a driving tour of Urbana and Champaign that has high concentrations of interesting mid-century modern housing as well as more broadly building of housing from the 1950s through the 1980s.

Ms. Holliday stated that this is part of an exhibition titled “Making Place for the Arts at Home: Performance and Midcentury Modern Architecture” that will be on display at the Krannert Art Museum from January 30, 2025 through July 12, 2025. She noted that she and Mr. Hays have both been working together as part of a curatorial group on the exhibition. Mr. Hays provided more details on the exhibits.

B. Historic Property Activities:

- **Landmarking and Districts**

Mr. Ricci stated that there are no recent inquiries.

- **Certificates of Appropriateness in Progress or Review**

Mr. Ricci stated that there are no significant changes in the status of the Certificates of Appropriateness for Buena Vista Court or Hotel Royer. Chair Urban asked about the deadline for Hotel Royer. Mr. Ricci replied that there is no longer a hard and fast deadline. There is simply a monthly or quarterly reduction in the reimbursement that the owner will get, so the longer it takes to complete, the less their reimbursement is from the City for property tax or sales tax.

October 2, 2024

Mr. Hays stated that it is important to update the Historic Preservation Plan and to create educational brochures. We have great expertise with the members of the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Ricci stated that he would inquire with other cities about the cost to update their Preservation Plans.

L. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

M. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There was none.

N. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Urbana adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marcus Ricci".

Marcus Ricci, AICP
Historic Preservation Commission Secretary