

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: July 11, 2024

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

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

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Dustin Allred, Will Andresen, Andrew Fell, Lew Hopkins, Karen Simms, Chenxi Yu

MEMBERS ABSENT: Debarah McFarland

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Bill Rose

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner; Marcus Ricci, Planner II; Carol Mitten, City Administrator; Andrea Ruedi, Senior Advisor for Integrated Strategy Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Tim Chao, Philip Marteus

A. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

Chair Allred called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Roll call was taken, and there was a quorum of the members present.

B. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the June 6, 2024 regular meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Hopkins moved that the Plan Commission approve the minutes as written. Mr. Andresen seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as written by unanimous voice vote.

D. COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

E. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

F. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

G. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 2485-T-24 – A request by the Urbana Zoning Administrator to amend Articles IV, V, VI and VIII of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance to rename the B-3U (General Business-University) Zoning District as the Campus Mixed-Use Zoning District, and update development and parking regulations in the district.

Chair Allred opened the public hearing for Plan Case No. 2485-T-24. Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner, presented the written staff report to the Plan Commission. He gave a brief background on the history of the B-3U (General Business-University) Zoning District and reviewed the proposed changes which include 1) high densities; 2) mix of commercial, office and residential uses; 3) pedestrian-scale development; 4) buildings close to the street; 5) wide sidewalks; 6) landscaped areas; 7) few driveways; and 8) parking behind structures. He mentioned that two public meetings were held to gather input. He reviewed some of the exhibits of the written staff report to give a visual image of the current B-3U Zoning District. Mr. Garcia presented the options of the Plan Commission and the City staff's recommendation that the Plan Commission forward the case to City Council with a recommendation for approval.

Chair Allred asked if any members of the Plan Commission had questions for Mr. Garcia.

Mr. Hopkins credited City staff for doing lots of background work and for developing the proposed text amendment all the way through. He deferred asking questions until Plan Commission discussion.

Chair Allred asked about the University of Illinois (U of I) properties. Would these properties be rezoned to the new district? Mr. Garcia responded that these properties would be subject to the new regulations. He noted that the University of Illinois should rezone all of their properties in the near future to the CRE (Conservation-Recreation-Education) Zoning District; however, the U of I is not planning to redevelop any of their properties any time soon according to their Master Plan.

Mr. Hopkins questioned what the property tax implication would be if the U of I redeveloped their properties west of Harvey Street in a manner similar to Gregory Place. Mr. Garcia recalled that there is an agreement with the U of I that would allow the City of Urbana to get taxes from any businesses that would be developed.

Chair Allred noted that one of the changes is proposing to go from a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to a height limit, so much taller buildings would be allowed. He asked how the buildable envelope would change from the current to the future development regulations. Mr. Garcia responded that he has not calculated this because it is difficult to get to a typical parcel. With regards to building height, he stated that although the FAR is currently 4%, since there is no building height restriction in the existing B-3U district, a 12-story building could still be constructed. It would just not get as much built on the rest of the site.

Mr. Allred asked how City staff came up with the proposed height limit of 120 feet. Mr. Garcia said that he compared the City of Urbana's current B-3U development regulations to what the City of Champaign has done. He pointed out that the City of Champaign has about eight or nine times the amount of development area than the City of Urbana has with the B-3U District. The City of Champaign has a lot more land to develop, so they have the benefit of designating one area to be

the business focused area and another area to be multi-family only. He said that the City of Urbana does not have that benefit. He further explained that part of the reasoning for the 120-foot proposed height limit is a split between what the City of Champaign is allowing in their multi-family University district and what they allow in their business district. Setting the maximum height to something in between would allow for taller buildings, more density, and maybe more mixed-use buildings.

Mr. Garcia mentioned that the B-3U district is the best area for the City of Urbana to build our tax base. Although it is a small area, there are no other districts that have the characteristics of the land that would allow the City to maximize our property tax base. The district is west of Lincoln Avenue and right next to the U of I campus.

Mr. Fell mentioned that the proposed development regulations are perfectly appropriate for the district. For example, the current parking regulations would prevent a developer from building more than a three-story building, because you could not fit parking on the site. Even though the proposed changes eliminate setback and FAR requirements, it would still be difficult to construct a building to the property line because the closer a building is to the property line, the higher the fire rating and fewer windows you can have.

Chair Allred asked why City staff is not proposing to eliminate parking requirements entirely. Mr. Garcia stated that even though the City of Champaign does not require parking in similar districts on campus, some developers are still providing parking on site. He stated that the proposed text amendment would eliminate parking requirements for smaller residential buildings with 20 bedrooms or fewer in the district. He went on to explain that when staff talked about reducing parking requirements in the past, they were met with some resistance; so, staff did not want to ask for too much and have the proposed text amendment get bogged down in a discussion about eliminating parking requirements altogether. He mentioned that when City staff presented a draft of the proposed text amendment at the two public meetings, there was one person who expressed concern about the parking regulations.

Chair Allred mentioned that there have been requirements for ground-floor commercial in Champaign, and sometimes the commercial space has gone unfilled. As a result, the City of Champaign has eliminated some of the requirements for commercial and allows all residential developments in certain corridors. So, knowing that redevelopment of parcels in the proposed district is likely to be buildings that are entirely residential with the first floor even being residential, he asked if the 10-foot minimum/20-foot maximum setback sufficient to manage the transition from the public realm of the street and sidewalk to the private realm of the first-floor apartments? Mr. Garcia replied that he is aware of the best practices for design and had to fight the urge to be overly prescriptive in the proposed text amendment. Many times, we create a regulation with a good intent and then later realize that it is creating unintended consequences. One of the reasons for the proposed text amendment is to try and build in some good design but not be super prescriptive. He noted that they could add nuance if the Plan Commission wanted to, and the City can make changes in the future if a regulation is not working.

Mr. Fell asked who would be responsible for fixing an alley in need of repair when a development is constructed mid-block. Mr. Garcia said that he would get an answer to this question before this case goes to City Council.

Mr. Hopkins noticed that there were several statements in the proposed text amendment that refer to “a lot line abutting a street or the setback”. He asked if the “property line” is also the “right-of-way line”. Mr. Garcia said yes. It can also be called the “lot line”. He explained that the lot line starts on the private side of the sidewalk for about 90% of the lots in the city. Sometimes, in certain areas, the property line is not next to the sidewalk though.

With there being no further questions for City staff, Chair Allred opened the hearing for public input. He read the rules for a public hearing and invited proponents of the case to address the Plan Commission.

Tim Chao approached the Plan Commission to speak. He stated that he owns a property within the B-3U Zoning District. He believes that this is an important time for the B-3U Zoning District. Most of the mixed-use developments in Urbana don’t get to be used to the mixed-use intent in which they were built. They become mostly single or multi-family residential uses. The proposed text amendment addresses the parking issues, setbacks and the height of future developments in this area.

He mentioned that he and his partner also own the BakeLab across the street from the existing B-3U Zoning District. They have seen an increase in pedestrian traffic. He believed that if the City made the development regulations more accommodating, then it would create an opportunity to connect people to downtown Urbana. Many people from small towns areas are moving to the City of Urbana wanting to live in a more modern urban area. Also, with the University of Illinois’ Engineering Campus, there are professors and outside investors that want to set up offices adjacent to campus. With the Research Park being too far out and with Champaign being too saturated, they love this area in Urbana next to campus. He believes that the City of Urbana can get the best of both worlds by allowing an office mixed-use with residential on top.

Mr. Chao stated that if the City does not overly regulate development in this area and let the developers take the risk so they build something simple and friendly for investors and residents to enjoy the space. This will change the entire area.

With there being no additional input from the audience, Chair Allred closed the public input portion of the hearing and opened it for Plan Commission discussion and/or motion(s). He reviewed the procedure for a public hearing.

Ms. Yu stated that she finds it interesting that the City intended to have more office use in the B-3U Zoning District, but when the University of Illinois built the Research Park, more office use was not needed. Now, the trend is for the offices to be closer to campus. She stated that there is also a shift in the need for higher density rather for parking.

Mr. Fell wondered about parking for business use. So, if a developer constructs a mixed-use building with less than 20 residential units, does the City not require any parking for the business component of the building. Mr. Garcia said that was correct.

Mr. Hopkins stated that the greatest failures of planning are success. We get so convinced that we know exactly what should be done that we do it everywhere to the limit. There are some characteristics of this that worry him. The image of mixed use that much of this conventional is based on is the notion of retail on first floors with glass windows that you walk by and it is exciting and interesting with usually residential on the floors above. The Gregory Plaza is an example of this

idea. He believes that much of the first floor is offices of the University. Ms. Yu added that the biggest portion of the second floor on the Urbana side is the School of Social Work.

Mr. Hopkins stated that he is not sure that there is demand for retail/commercial sufficient to support the notion that this is a mixed-use neighborhood. He said that offices do not necessarily have to be on first floors. He said that residential on first floors is tricky in high density; so, it has to be done reasonably well. Some of the regulations in this seem to be unnecessary and maybe making it more difficult to get the kind of uses/development that the City wants.

He expressed concerns about the proposed text amendment promoting on street parking; requiring a 10-foot setback when there is already a 15-foot right-of-way in some areas and not requiring enough of a setback on other properties to allow for the growth of trees; and the proposed maximum height regulation. He believes that they should have the maximum height limit be 7-8 stories. Mr. Fell agreed that it would be appropriate to put a 75-foot height limit for the proposed district in part because a 75-foot height under the Building Code limits you to not be considered a high-rise. Any height over 8 feet is considered a high-rise. Economy does not allow for 9-foot, 10-foot, or 11-foot high-rise. Financially, you have to build higher. Not too many developers would want to construct high-rise in the proposed area. Mr. Hopkins noted that the City would not want them to build higher.

Mr. Fell talked about the setback and stated that the fire separation distance matters more when it comes to the Building Code. A property line that abuts another property line designates the fire separation distance, and the closer to the property line you build, the fewer windows you can install. However, a property line along a street, the center line of the street designates the fire separation distance, which means you can construct a building on the property line and install as many windows as you want.

He went on to say that bankers deal with a cap rate. The cap rate is now about 7, which means that things have to be 30% more efficient to achieve the same goal for the developer. Artistic designs vanish and developers are being forced to construct the building to the setback line all the way around. As a result, developers will construct their buildings up to the property line on the front/street side(s) and hold back on the interior lot lines. He believed the proposed development regulations would allow more appropriate buildings in this district but just in a different way. By getting rid of the FAR, OSR, and parking requirements achieves the goals that everyone wants to achieve. They are achieved in part by the Zoning Ordinance and in part by the Building Code; and unfortunately, we cannot rely on the Building Code to achieve what the Plan Commission is supposed to achieve.

Ms. Yu asked Mr. Fell as an architect if he saw any part of the proposed text amendment that might become problematic and create unintentional consequences. Mr. Fell replied that he is in favor of most of the proposed text amendment. He added that there are always unintended consequences but they are unintended and he does not know what they are right now. He pointed out that there are districts in the City of Champaign similar to the proposed district. Unintended consequences are usually that a developer wants to build a building and he does not have enough parking to build it; and then, they just have to solve that. This is a greed problem and not a zoning problem. So, as an architectural or development perspective, he does not see a real detriment to the proposed changes.

Ms. Yu stated that there seems to be a lot of expectation on how the first floor would be developed and used. She asked if that will create a handicap for a development proposal. Is the proposed text

amendment written in a way that would prevent first-floor residential use? Most of the developers for the proposed area is in the business of constructing apartments, not business buildings. The developers do not want to deal with commercial business in their buildings. He knows of one building that was required to provide commercial business on the first floor, and the space has been vacant for more than 20 years. Chair Allred stated that there is nothing written in the proposed text amendment requiring commercial business on the ground floor. Mr. Garcia confirmed this. He pointed out that the 12-foot ceiling height requirement for the first floor is by design and not to force commercial when being built. Things change over time...a building may be constructed with residential on the first floor and years later may want to change the first floor to commercial business.

Ms. Simms stated that she loved that the proposed language is broad enough to allow for commercial business on the first floor. She loves walkable communities and believes that mixed use buildings provide walkability.

Mr. Andresen asked why they did not want to leave the height at 120-foot maximum. Ms. Simms stated that she did not want buildings that tall. Chair Allred noted that looking at the surrounding development, a 75-foot-tall building seems contextually more appropriate and is also more economically sound. He said it seems like a consensus of the Plan Commission members were in agreement to capping the height at 75 feet.

Mr. Allred asked about Mr. Hopkins' comments regarding the setback from the right-of-way. Mr. Hopkins replied that he doesn't know what the purpose of asking for a 10-foot setback. If it is to allow for a wider sidewalk, then we need to modify the Land Development Code. We need to add language; otherwise, we end up with a 10-foot strip of grass that is a pain to maintain and don't accomplish anything. You cannot plan any trees because the setback is too small.

Mr. Garcia inquired how much space would be needed to plant trees. Mr. Hopkins guessed 20-feet. However, he did not want to require 20 feet because he did not want to require a developer to plant trees, especially on streets where there are already street trees.

Mr. Garcia said he has the same reaction to the 12-foot height for the first floor and also for no first-floor parking. He believes that hidden first floor parking can be a really efficient way to use first floors when you do not have anywhere near the demand for retail walkable commercial space. Mr. Garcia stated that there is nothing in the proposed text amendment that prevents first floor hidden structured parking within a building. Mr. Hopkins said it has to be 12 feet tall.

Mr. Fell stated that as a design professional he wants to get rid of every additional regulation in the proposed CMU District. He said that legislating good design is impossible. He pointed out that the City of Urbana's most famous architectural building, the Erlanger House, could not be built under any of the proposed regulations. He has a client that wants to build a lab, and because of the City's requirements in this area, the client has decided to build in the City of Champaign. Design regulations limit what can happen. Good and bad designs still happen and none of the proposed regulations get rid of bad design. He wants to be able to design a building that his client wants him to design without being restricted by the proposed text amendment.

Mr. Hopkins went through Section V-7. Additional Regulations in the CMU District:

- A. *Buildings must have a main entrance facing the street, with a walkway connecting the entrance to the public sidewalk.*

Mr. Hopkins asked if this is required for a development that is constructed on four streets. Would a main entrance be required for each street frontage?

- B. *Building walls that face a street must have at least 20 percent transparent glass.*

Mr. Hopkins does not believe this is needed. He said that the language does not require any glass on the first or second floor, so it would have nothing to do with what the pedestrian experience would be.

- E. *Parking is not allowed in front yards, and must be located behind the principal face of a building. Parking areas shall not be visible from the street.*

Mr. Hopkins believed the way to avoid this from becoming a problem is that angle parking would actually be allowed within the right-of-way. Mr. Fell stated that the proposed text amendment does not require any setbacks so there would not be a front yard. Mr. Garcia said that if they removed the proposed regulation in this Section, parking would still not be allowed in the front yard because it is in the Zoning Ordinance in a different section. He was trying to put all of the pieces together so that when a developer looks at the Zoning Ordinance for this district's regulations, all of the regulations would be in the proposed Section.

Discussion ensued about fire-rating walls being allowed to be constructed on the side and rear property lines and whether the City should require a front yard setback and if so, what should the setback be. Ms. Yu suggested only having a maximum setback requirement for the front yard of 20 feet and to get rid of the minimum. Mr. Fell stated that is what the City of Champaign has for their Multi-Family University (MFU). Mr. Hopkins felt this is something that could benefit the City and developers. Mr. Allred expressed concern about a development having a 0 setback with regards to the transition between the right-of-way, the public realm and private space. Mr. Garcia stated that the intent is to have something, not super onerous, because we do not want buildings constructed right on the sidewalk. He mentioned that the only place the City currently has zero setbacks is in the downtown business district where it makes sense.

Mr. Fell asked if it was subject to the Visibility Triangle requirement. Mr. Garcia said yes. He added that the City's Engineering staff have reviewed the proposed requirements. If a developer wants to construct a building 15 feet from the property line but it falls within the Visibility Triangle, then the developer will not be allowed to construct the building.

Discussion ensued about Gregory Place and whether a similar development would be allowed in the proposed CMU District. Marcus Ricci, Planner II, stated that since Gregory Street is not a through street and only runs from Nevada Street to Oregon Street, the parking is not in the front yard setback. Mr. Garcia said that a similar development could occur if an alley ran between the middle of the development. There could be parking on both sides of the alley.

Mr. Hopkins referred to Footnote 5 on Page 15, which states as follows: *"In the CMU District, since automobile parking is only required for some residential uses, for all other uses bicycle parking spaces shall be required based on the amount of automobile parking spaces that would normally be required."* Mr. Garcia stated that the current bicycle parking requirements are based on the amount of required car parking for a

development. It is not an ideal situation, so the only way to require bicycle parking spaces in the proposed CMU District where the City is proposing to get rid of parking requirements for some types of buildings is to calculate the number of automobile parking spaces that would normally be required and then base the required number of bicycle parking spaces off of that. Mr. Hopkins understood that for residential uses in the CMU District, one bicycle space is required for every dwelling unit regardless of the project size. For all other uses, one can look in the table for what would be required in any other district, because it is not the same in all districts. Mr. Garcia stated that the parking requirements are generally a blanket for all districts. The only places where there are different parking requirements are specifically called out in other paragraphs in the Zoning Ordinance. For example, in the CCD (Campus Commercial District) and in the R-7 (University Residential) districts, there are some additional things. Mr. Hopkins suggested the following language: *“Look at the parking table for auto parking requirements by use to compute the bicycle parking required.”*

Mr. Fell clarified that when he commented about Section V-7, he did not mean that the whole thing should be scrapped. Part of his comments come from his profession as an architect, and he wants the most freedom he can have. He understands that staff needs to protect the City and if staff feels the additional regulations for the CMU district is important, then they should keep them in the proposed text amendment. Mr. Allred thanked Mr. Fell for clarifying this. The Plan Commission has to weigh taking Mr. Fell's input as a design professional and being able to understand how these will impact the work that designers do versus what the City is trying to achieve in terms of the benefit for the larger community.

Mr. Hopkins commented that there are not any design guidelines for the proposed CMU District or guidelines that are universal for the City. He said that some of the additional regulations seemed more aspirational than requirements. He does not believe that requiring access to parking off an alley, when available, is not always the best way to do it. The City is responsible for maintaining all of the alleys as well as the streets. If all of the mechanical and waste distribution stuff is off the alleys, then the alleys have to be wide enough for the garbage trucks to be able to turn to pick up the containers. Therefore, he did not feel that this should be a “must”. Mr. Garcia replied that the additional regulations are not about design but rather about making the district pedestrian friendly. Having a lot of driveways off the street where people are walking on the sidewalk is not pedestrian friendly. Having blank walls is not pedestrian friendly, which is why the 20% transparency requirement is being proposed. He added that the alleys are mostly in tack and mostly function.

Chair Allred suggested changing the language to “Encourage parking access to be off an alley”. Mr. Garcia stated that he did not like this suggestion. The Comprehensive Plan says that design guidelines shall be used to make these areas more pedestrian friendly. He stated that the design guidelines that the City currently has are often a struggle because they use words like “may”, “shall”, “should” and “encourage”. These terms are difficult to parse out because they mean something different to everybody.

Mr. Fell wondered if providing the access to parking off an alley means that developers would need to provide enough backout space into an alley. Will they need 23 feet to back out or will they be able to provide 12 feet for drivers to back out into the alley? Mr. Garcia stated that a person should be able to back out in a 12-foot space. Mr. Ricci added that they can take advantage of the already built right-of-way to be the turnaround space.

Mr. Chao re-approached the Plan Commission. He commented that one way to make the area pedestrian friendly would be to allow pergola or outdoor seating to serve as an open transitional

space so the building does not intimidate pedestrians walking by. The current B-3 (General Business) Zoning District does not allow outdoor seating or a pergola because of the setback regulation. Mr. Hopkins felt that this would be a reason to not require that the yard be landscaped or that 30% of it be something other than grass. Some areas, such as for Bake Lab, would rather have concrete or some other hard surface to be able to provide seating and provide shade. Mr. Hopkins suggested adding the following language to Section V-7.D, *“Front yards must be designed to enhance pedestrian experience and access”*. Discussion ensued about this topic.

Ms. Yu asked how the proposed text amendment is different from Champaign’s districts. Chair Allred said he did not think we wanted to make it similar to Champaign. From his understanding, City staff took the best practices and translated them into development standards. Mr. Garcia said that was correct and staff also tried to learn from the City of Champaign’s regulations.

Chair Allred suggested that the Plan Commission go through each item in Section V-7 and come to a consensus.

A. Buildings must have a main entrance facing the street, with a walkway connecting the entrance to the public sidewalks.

Chair Allred asked about multiple frontage streets. Mr. Garcia said that the way it is written, it does not require all street faces to have an entrance, only that the entrance be on a street, so they could change “the street” to “a street” to clarify it more.

Mr. Hopkins used the Gather as an example. He asked where is the main entrance. Is it to the Bake Lab? Is the main entrance to the hotel? Mr. Ricci stated that the main auto-oriented entrance is off the parking lot when you come off Clark Street. He added that the main pedestrian-oriented entrance is off of Lincoln Avenue. When you walk in, there is a shared lobby with a counter to the right for Bake Lab and there is a registration table for the hotel and for the apartment complex.

The Plan Commission discussed how the language should be worded for the proposed regulation and the impact of removing the entire regulation. Mr. Garcia suggested the following language, *“Buildings must have one main pedestrian entrance facing a street.”* The Plan Commission members agreed.

B. Building walls that face a street must have at least 20 percent transparent glass.

Mr. Garcia stated that the intent is that any street facing wall for a building is going to have 20% transparent glass. Ms. Yu stated that she did not see anything wrong with it.

Mr. Fell stated that he didn’t see anything wrong with this regulation except that it limits what a designer can do on a building. Most of the time, buildings are designed with at least 20% transparent glass; however, there are multiple buildings, some famous, around the world with no windows facing the street. Mr. Hopkins added that this prevents some uses, such as a lab, from being built. Also, sometimes it does not make sense to require windows, such as with the apartment building to the north of the City Building. He said that there is an energy point of view here as well to not have windows on the north or west facing walls. Mr. Ricci stated that there is still the variance process where if a developer has justifications, then they can plead their case.

Mr. Garcia stated that he wrote this as a regulation because blank walls are not pleasant to walk by. He said that there needs to be some regulation to prevent blank brick walls. With regards to energy

efficiency, he stated that he initially wrote this regulation as 30% and changed it to 20% after a public meeting was held at which an architect told him that it would be really hard with current energy code to meet this requirement.

Chair Allred stated that he looks at this regulation as a starting point. It is a minimum of something that tries to achieve a collective built environment that has a certain experience.

There was no consensus of the Plan Commission for this proposed regulation.

C. The first story of every building must have a clear ceiling height of at least 12 feet.

Mr. Fell stated that it was an arbitrary standard. No developer who wants to construct a residential building wants to have a 12-foot tall first floor. A normal building is going to be built with pre-cut wood studs that are 9 feet tall. In 95% of the cases, this regulation may be appropriate; however, in 5%, it is not. He believes that most of the lots will be developed as residential rather than mixed use, and 12-foot-tall ceilings are not needed and is a cost that the developers do not want. Mr. Allred agreed.

Mr. Andresen asked where the 12-foot came from. Mr. Garcia replied that it came from the book, Walkable City Rules. He said that he would be willing to strike this regulation.

Ms. Yu stated that if a developer acquires several lots on a block and is planning to construct a large building, more than likely they are already thinking of having a mixed use with commercial on the first floor and are planning to have a 12-foot-tall ceiling. However, a 20-bedroom apartment is not going to be suitable for a commercial development.

The Plan Commission agreed to strike this regulation.

D. Front yards must be landscaped, with a minimum of 30 percent vegetation that is not turf grass.

Mr. Garcia restated what the Plan Commission has discussed and came to an agreement on, which is as follows, “Buildings with first floor residential uses, front yards must be landscaped.” The Plan Commission agreed.

E. Parking is not allowed in front yards, and must be located behind the principal face of a building. Parking areas shall not be visible from the street.

Mr. Fell suggested giving a developer the first 20 bedrooms free of parking requirements if the developer has room to build more bedrooms. Chair Allred asked why require any parking and allow the developers the flexibility to provide the parking that they need. Mr. Fell stated that anecdotally in the City of Champaign, this works pretty well. He added that any building of any size, you want a few parking spaces to allow for deliveries and moving in/out. Mr. Hopkins stated that there needs to be some parking requirements because some developers won’t provide parking and then parking issues are created with neighboring parking spaces.

Mr. Garcia stated that the intent is to keep parking from being super visible.

Mr. Fell asked staff to think about eliminating the ability to dedicate parking on a separate lot in this district. A developer can secure parking up to 600 feet away from their building if there is not enough room on the lot to provide the required number of parking spaces. He stated that this is a loophole that gets taken advantage of inappropriately at times. Mr. Garcia replied that by reducing the parking a lot that would probably in effect eliminate that practice.

Mr. Garcia suggested changing the wording to be as follows, *“Parking is not allowed in front yards. It must be located behind the principal face of a building. Screening shall be provided around the entire perimeter of the parking area, except along the portion at the parking area abutting a public alley.”* He mentioned that screening can include fences and other landscaping.

Ms. Yu stated that parking is not ugly and should not always be hidden. Mr. Hopkins agreed with Ms. Yu. Chair Allred stated that we are not trying to apply our own aesthetic taste. We are trying to apply best practices for how to create pleasant pedestrian environments.

Chair Allred suggested substituting the screening language with the following wording, *“Parking areas shall be screened to minimize visibility from the street”*.

The Plan Commission members agreed to the wording.

F. When parking is provided, access to parking must be off an alley, when available.

Ms. Yu said she was okay with this regulation. Mr. Fell asked for it to be removed because in general terms of best practices, an efficient building is going to park off the alley anyway. However, forcing it to happen may not be appropriate all of the time. In a residential use with this amount of parking required, it is going to happen almost every time. Discussion amongst the Plan Commission members ensued, and it was a consensus of most members to keep the regulation because of the wording *“when available”*.

G. Mechanical equipment and trash enclosures must be screened from view at ground level from public rights-of-way, including alleys. No mechanical equipment or trash enclosures are allowed in front yards.

Ms. Yu stated that she is okay with how it is written.

Mr. Hopkins suggested changing the wording to *“excluding alleys”*. The Plan Commission members agreed.

Discussion ensued about on-street parking for delivery drivers and tenants moving in/out. Mr. Garcia noted that providing on-street parking is beyond the scope of the proposed text amendment and can be addressed in other ways, such as having “loading zones” or “delivery vehicles only zones”.

Ms. Yu stated that she wanted some language to allow free parking up to 20 bedrooms. Mr. Garcia stated that he would add language to allow this.

Mr. Fell moved that the Plan Commission continue Case No. 2485-T-24 to their regular meeting on July 18, 2024, to allow staff time to update the proposed amendment based on their discussion. Ms. Yu seconded the motion.

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Mr. Allred	-	Yes	Mr. Andresen	-	Yes
Mr. Fell	-	Yes	Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes
Ms. Simms	-	Yes	Ms. Yu	-	Yes

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

H. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

I. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

J. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Garcia reported on the following:

- Plan Case No. 2490-M-23 – This case was to rezone 710 North Cunningham Avenue from AG (Agriculture) to B-3 (General Business). The City Council voted to approve the rezoning.
- Comprehensive Plan – Staff is ready to present a draft of the plan to City Council and to the Plan Commission. He noted the process and timeline for reviewing the document and holding a study session. Mr. Hopkins stated that he feels that the City Council should not see the draft before the Plan Commission.

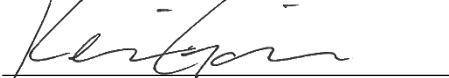
K. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

L. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Garcia, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission