
DATE: Monday, May 18, 2026
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: 400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

The City Council Committee of the Whole of the City of Urbana, Illinois, met in regular session Monday, May 18, 2026, at 7:02 p.m.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PHYSICALLY PRESENT: DeShawn Williams, Mayor; Darcy Sandefur, City Clerk; CM Maryalice Wu, CM Christopher Evans, CM Verdell Jones III, CM Grace Wilken

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT: CM Shirese Hursey, CM James Quisenberry

STAFF PRESENT: Bourema Ouedraogo, Olivia Jovine, Matt Roeschley, Evan Alvarez, Elizabeth Hannan

OTHERS PRESENT: Andrew Fell, Applicant for Plan Case No. 2519-PUD-25

Chair: *Christopher Evans, Ward 2*

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

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

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

None.

3. Additions to the Agenda

None.

4. Presentations and Public Input

a. Public Input

Carolyn Baxley stated Ordinance No. 2026-05-013 contradicts the City of Urbana's Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan. Emphasized that West Main Street's current zoning and character must be protected and should not be changed. Stated Main Street is not a part of downtown Urbana and there are more suitable locations for the development. Warned against allowing high density development on West Main Street. Requested Council vote against approving Ordinance No. 2026-05-013. *Al Kagan* spoke in support of Resolution No. 2026-05-020R for adopting ethical investment policies that divest investments from pools that directly invest in companies engaging in arms-production and military services per the Swedish International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)'s Top 100- Arms-producing and Military Services Companies list. Requested Council add the American Friends Service Committee's (AFSC) list of Corporations Engaged in Genocide to accompany the list from SIPRI. Requested Council consider limiting investments to securities that receive one of the three highest tier ratings. Thanked Council for promoting world peace and justice. *Chris Berdy* stated that the character and historic significance of Urbana is a large attraction for residents. Requested Urbana to develop apartment buildings in other locations instead of historic areas.

a. Public Input (Continued)

Warned against the approval of Ordinance No. 2026-05-013. Stated the proposed building does not suit the characteristic of the historic neighborhood. **Sana Saboowala** thanked Council for considering ethical investment and reflecting the values of Urbana residents in their governance. Requested Council amend the policy to additionally include the list from AFSC to prevent the investment of funds into companies violating human rights. **Gabriel Dunn** stated affordable housing is required to address the issue of homelessness in the community. Stated multifamily housing developments do not harm neighborhoods and asks the question of where the City's priorities lie. Voiced support for Ordinance No. 2026-05-013. **Phyllis Williams** read written public input in opposition to Ordinance No. 2026-05-013 from Geoffrey Bant, which is available to view in the Minutes. **Louis Barnes** spoke in support of Resolution No. 2026-05-020R and Ordinance No. 2026-05-013. Stated City owned lots should be used for affordable housing developments to support people in unstable housing instead of for-profit development. Requested for Council to consider how zoning variances such as the one included in Ordinance No. 2026-05-013 can be used to create other ways to support affordable housing. **Claudia Lennhoff** stated individuals receiving disability assistance are unable to find affordable housing, forcing people to rely on shelters or to remain unhoused. Requested Council to consider affordable housing, diverse housing options, and to require developers to have a certain amount of affordable housing units in their apartments. **Stuart Levy** spoke in support of Resolution No. 2026-05-020R and an economy that is less centered on profiting from war. Shared support for Council considering the addition of the list from AFSC onto the Resolution. **Marcus Ricci** spoke in support of Ordinance No. 2026-05-013, stating this is the best use of the property possible from his perspective as a municipal planner. Stated this parcel in question is difficult to redevelop due to the floodplain, lot configuration, and economic considerations for a developer. Requested Council focus on the most recent Comprehensive Plan for guidance on questions of planning as it builds onto and evolves previous plans. Stated the Ordinance serves to scrutinize and permit the zoning variance while also not permanently changing the zoning in case the development is unable to proceed. **Sarah McEvoy** stated the act of recusal does not prevent the recused member of the body from having historically influenced the culture of the body. Spoke in opposition to Ordinance No. 2026-05-013, unless the fourth floor is dedicated to affordable housing. **Jared Fritz** spoke in support of Ordinance No. 2026-05-013, stating opposition to the development are misinformed. Shared information from local and national studies of housing conditions that demonstrate the need for all forms of housing. **Dennis Roberts** stated the proposed development seems to be of nicer condition than affordable housing and the developer does not seem to be prioritizing affordable housing. Stated the development is more appropriate for campus or next to Lincoln Square Mall instead of the current location in the middle of historic Urbana. Raised concern for the potential for a decrease in property value in the area due to this development. Stated that the proposed change in zoning is too steep and it should be reviewed by the Zoning Board of Appeals. Raised concerns regarding the lack of members on the Boneyard Creek Commission and the single commissioner having another position on the Planning Commission. Expressed concern for a potential conflict of interest. **Eric Sacks** stated low density housing should be preserved and voiced opposition to Ordinance No. 2026-05-013. Stated the development will feature expensive rent and will not be affordable, and that the housing market is manipulated to have high rent costs by the larger companies in Urbana. Stated Planned Unit Developments should feature community incentives, and more starter homes should be developed to address the housing issue in Urbana. Echoed the sentiment of the proposed building not fitting the character of the neighborhood. Noted the actions of the Plan Commission conflict with his understanding of its purpose. **Adani Sanchez** stated the growth in Urbana businesses is likely to encourage population growth, and the City should create housing to retain that growth. Stated the proposed location is ideal for new and old residents of Urbana due to its proximity to downtown, its access to bus lines, and its proximity

a. **Public Input (Continued)**

to amenities. Expressed the need for professional development on navigating the difficulties of financing affordable housing development to actualize affordable housing stock. Stated this development potentially creates affordable housing stock through the incoming tenants moving out of their current housing in search of what this proposed development offers instead of leaving Urbana. Requested Council approve Ordinance No. 2026-05-013. **Tony Crispin** spoke in support of Ordinance No. 2026-05-013 and new housing developments in Urbana. Stated the City should prioritize welcoming those who seek to live in Urbana and ensuring housing is available for new families. Stated the supply of housing's inability to meet the demand of those seeking housing causes the cost of housing to increase. **Mariam Keep** shared her experience of renting in Urbana where a property management company, after purchasing the unit she was renting, had raised her rent 40% over two years. Stated that experience would not be possible if the market was constrained by demand instead of supply. Shared she found there to be a lack of housing for young professionals interested in living in Urbana. Voiced support for Ordinance No. 2026-05-013 as the floodplain restricts opportunities to develop starter homes and the proposal is not in conflict with the local character of nearby buildings. **Annie Adams** spoke in support of Ordinance No. 2026-05-013 as it enhances Urbana's livability and inclusivity. Stated households in Urbana experience pressures from the rising cost of living and the City should help by seeking to raise the population to bring in more funding through the State and federal level, and increase the tax base. Stated the proposed development is in an ideal location close to many amenities and businesses. Stated the development will be granted a change in zoning that suits nearby parcels and suits the neighborhood character because there is no significant neighborhood character. Emphasized schoolchildren should not be forced to live in hallways of hotels when they are priced out of hotel rooms due to surge event pricing and are unable to secure any housing. Requested a traffic circle at West Main Street and South McCullough Street and 32 covered bicycle parking spaces. **Yuri** thanked the City for the Ward 2 Listening Session last week and echoed the concern raised at the meeting regarding drivers speeding and street racing down Green Street at night. Proposed the City implement traffic calming measures similar to that in the City of East St. Louis using concrete barriers and a garden planter. Shared his experience of living in a housing cooperative and raised awareness for that option for housing. **Marten Stromberg** shared current landlords he is in contact with are eager for an opportunity to raise rent on tenants and Urbana requires high-density housing developments. Stated previous administrations have failed to prevent a housing crisis by not developing high-density housing to meet the growth of the City and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Spoke in support of developing housing and Ordinance No. 2026-05-013 to create a more affordable housing market. **Danny Otto** stated the property being considered for development has been vacant for 20 years, but not available as the landowner was uninterested in selling the property until recently. Stated it remained vacant to serve as a green space and so the landowner's wife could walk their dog. Spoke on how in the past, a developer was repeatedly denied variances for property development on a parcel, and they eventually returned with a proposal that more closely adhered to the zoning restrictions. Expressed he previously had an interest in developing a duplex on that property, stating other options are possible. Stated other apartment buildings and housing options are available for people to rent in the area. Opposed Ordinance No. 2026-05-013 and cheap, high-density housing developments. **Jessica Yasin** voiced support for Resolution No. 2026-05-020R and adding the list from AFSC to compliment the SIPRI list. Shared other municipalities have adopted the list as well. **Daniel Folk** emphasized the significance of the hard-fought R-2 zoning of the parcel and the importance of preserving the single-family households in the area. Suggested the City place high-density developments in other spaces in downtown. **Ilna Markovski** spoke in opposition to Ordinance No. 2026-05-013 for disregarding the neighborhood character, historic value, current zoning, and the residents opposing the proposal.

a. **Public Input (Continued)**

Written Public Input regarding Ordinance No. 2026-05-013 and Resolution No. 2026-05-020R were received from the following individuals and read by Council: C.K. Gunsalus & Michael Walker, Derek Briles, Laura O'Donnell, Elizabeth Nicol, Lois Steinberg, Sarah Nixon, Grouchy Birdman, Michael Plewa & Elizabeth Plewa, and Sharon Irish

Written Public Input regarding Ordinance No. 2026-05-013 were received from the following individuals but were not read: Jared Fritz, Geoffrey Bant, Charlie Smyth, Mark Nilges, Kay Kirkpatrick.

Chair Evans called for a five-minute recess at 8:52 p.m.

With a quorum present, Council reconvened from recess at 9:00 p.m.

5. Staff Report

None.

6. New Business

a. **Resolution No. 2026-05-020R:** A Resolution Adopting Revised Financial Policies (2026) – HRF

Presented by Elizabeth Hannan, HR & Finance Director / CFO. The Resolution adopts revised Financial Policies to update pension funding requirements and incorporate an Ethic Investment section to the Investment Policy. Elizabeth Hannan stated the City's Financial Policies inform budget development and financial functions of the City to provide consistency. Shared the proposed changes involve clarifications of how capital equipment and capital improvements are defined; funding strategies for police and fire pensions; and the investment policy.

Stated the change to the Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Fund (VERF) involves requiring a minimum value of \$10,000 (from \$5,000) with a useful life of five or more years with some exceptions such as squad cars that have a four-year life expectancy (increased from three years). Stated the change is to make the VERF more consistent. Shared the change to Capital Improvements policy clarifies definition to cover purchases for individual furniture, modular furniture valued at \$10,000 or more; all equipment attached to a building; and the repair and maintenance of City facilities with a cost of \$10,000 or more.

Stated the Pension Funding changes come from being eight years into the 20 year funding goal set in 2018. Shared the City's actuary recommended a layered funding approach for new, unfunded liabilities through a closed 15-year amortization (payment) period. Stated the current liabilities will be paid down on the current schedule, with 12 years remaining. Displayed a chart of the two funding policies of unlayered and layered responding to a hypothetical 10% asset loss in 2034 from the period between July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2039, for the Firefighters Pension. Stated the period to pay the increased unfunded liability caused by the market loss is shorter with an unlayered approach, leading to an increase of almost \$12,000,000 in pension contributions in 2037. Stated the example was for the Firefighters Pension but the concept applies to all pensions. Emphasized the risk to operations the current pension funding policy poses during economic and political volatility due to having to move away funding from the General Fund for City operations to cover pension funding. Shared a chart demonstrating how the layered amortization concept for unfunded liabilities functions.

a. Resolution No. 2026-05-020R (Continued)

Shared the Investment Policy is for transparency and does not cover externally managed investments such as pension investments and the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund. Stated the policy clarifies the requirement for collateralization for Certificates of Deposit (CDs) with banks and rating requirements for government obligations. Noted the largest change is from the addition of the Ethical Investments section.

Shared the City primarily invests through Busey Wealth Management, the Illinois State Treasurer's Illinois Funds, and the Illinois Metropolitan Investment Fund (IMET). Stated the value fluctuates based on cash flow and is generally between \$60,000,000 and \$80,000,000. Noted the Busey pool does not include any potentially non-compliant investments, as it is almost exclusively treasury securities, federal agencies, and CDs. Stated the Illinois Funds and IMET are Local Government Investment Pools (LGIPs) where the City does not control individual investments or policy.

Stated the proposed section on Ethical Investments, based on input from Council, prevents investments in companies listed on the SIPRI Top 100 Arms-producing Military Services Companies list through direct investment and LGIPs. Noted the SIPRI list was chosen as it seemed to best suit what Council was seeking, and Council can choose to supplement or replace it with another list. Stated the policy also includes regular review of the investments, may need for investments to be redirected, and is anticipated to have a low impact on investment income. Questions and discussion followed.

Motion to approve to the regular agenda, as amended, by CM Wu, seconded by CM Jones.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Jones, Wilken

NAY: None.

Chair Evans passed the Chair to CM Wu.

- i. Motion to amend to include the list of Companies Profiting from the Gaza Genocide by the American Friends Service Committee by CM Wilken, seconded by CM Evans. Questions and discussion followed.

Chair Wu relinquished the Chair to CM Evans.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Evans, Jones, Wilken

NAY: Wu

b. Ordinance No. 2026-05-013: An Ordinance Approving a Preliminary & Final Development Plan for a Planned Unit Development at 413-419 West Main Street (Plan Case No. 2519-PUD-25) – CD

Presented by Olivia Jovine, Director of Community Development Services and Evan Alvarez, Principal Planner with Andrew Fell, the applicant present for questions. The Ordinance approves the preliminary and final approval of a residential Planned Unit Development (PUD) at 413-419 West Main Street. Evan Alvarez stated the original PUD application was submitted by Andrew Fell on behalf of DMCB Properties to support a medium-density multifamily apartment complex in the floodplain. Shared background on what a PUD is intended to be used for and what scenarios would require one. Shared the project is a three-story building with a

b. Ordinance No. 2026-05-013 (Continued)

fourth-story mezzanine on the western end that contains 32 household units. Displayed images of the current design of the property from various angles and shared the proposed site plan. Spoke on the timeline of events for the proposal beginning with the complete application being received on January 15, 2026; then having the Creekway Permit approved on April 16, 2026; then a Public PUD Open House was held on April 30, 2026; and then it was presented to Plan Commission on May 7, 2026 where they voted to recommend its approval before forwarding the item to City Council for consideration.

Olivia Jovine stated Community Development has a standard schedule for PUD items, but City staff chose to take further time to review this application between January 15, 2026, and April 16, 2026.

Evan Alvarez stated the Boneyard Creek Permit is required for developments within the Boneyard Creek District to ensure sustainable development. Shared the permit for this PUD requires a dedication of 20 feet of land along the Boneyard Creek for future development of a shared-use path, and a payment into an Improvement Fund to support that development. Stated the costs of the additional conditions are offset for the developer through a list of Bonus Provisions, where the applicant chose an additional 12-feet of height for the building, used for the mezzanine.

Olivia Jovine stated the conditions of the Boneyard Creek Permit at 413-419 West Main Street contributes to establishing a shared-use path to downtown Urbana along the Boneyard Creek, advancing the goals of the 2008 Boneyard Creek Master Plan.

Evan Alvarez spoke on the four lots being utilized (two vacant, two multifamily housing). Stated the existing zoning is R-2; the parcels directly north of it are zoned as R-4 and R-5; parcels to the west are R-2 and R-4; and commercial parcels to the south and east are zoned as B-2 and B-4. Spoke on the general properties surrounding the proposed development site. Stated the area is classified as Neighborhood I, single-family with some duplexes, under Imagine Urbana, and is directly adjacent to high-density Downtown and Corridor Neighborhood areas. Stated the staff recommendation notes that classifying this area as a district for medium-density housing is a more appropriate transition for an area adjacent to downtown instead of a single-family district.

Explained the 19 one-bedroom and 13 two-bedroom units require a total of 26.3 parking spaces and the plans meet requirements by including 27 parking spaces and 16 bicycle parking spaces.

Stated the lots are within the 100-year floodplain and a flood study was commissioned by the developer which found that any structure developed on the property must be built four feet above base flood elevation. Stated the applicant requested an increase to the permissible Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of the development to offset development challenges of the site. Shared the proposed plans have a site area of 32,273 square feet, with a FAR of 1.0; and the FAR for a R-5 zoning allows for up to 0.9 FAR, leaving a gap of 3,293 sq. ft.

Shared the City of Urbana is currently undergoing a housing study with the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission in response to the housing shortage. Noted a landlord survey indicated over 80% of landlords have no vacancies while 91% report vacancies of one unit or less. Stated the 415 and 417 West Main Street properties have respectively remained vacant since at least 2015 and 2005.

b. Ordinance No. 2026-05-013 (Continued)

Shared the Criteria for Approval for the PUD and that four of the five requirements were completely met with one being partially met. Stated City staff reviewed the case and recommended City Council approve the PUD with the conditions that the final development plans be in general conformance with the attached Site Plan and are built in general conformance with the requirements of an R-5 Zoning District, with an allowance for a FAR of 1.0 instead of 0.90.

Olivia Jovine emphasized the PUD does not rezone the parcels, and the medium-density allowance is specifically tied to the PUD and site plan. Clarified that if the development is not built within two years after approval, the allowance and PUD expire; and if the development were to be built and suffer significant property destruction, it would require another PUD to be rebuilt the same way. Questions and discussion followed.

Motion to extend the meeting to 10:45 p.m. by CM Wu, seconded by CM Wilken.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Jones, Wilken

NAY: None.

Motion to approve to the regular agenda by CM Wilken, seconded by CM Jones.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Jones, Wilken, Williams

NAY: Wu, Evans

7. Discussion

a. Surveillance Ordinance

None.

8. Council Input and Communications

None.

9. Adjournment

With no further business before the committee of the whole Chair Evans adjourned the meeting at 10:43 p.m.

Seok Hyun Cho

Deputy City Clerk

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

Minutes approved: 7/13/26

PUBLIC INPUT: meeting of 18 May 2026

From K. Kirkpatrick [REDACTED]
Date Fri 5/15/2026 5:54 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Dear City Council,

Thank you for all your work that you do for our city.

I noticed the zoning exception pending for the land at 415-417 W Main Street, about one block from where I live in our city's historic district.

I believe that we should maintain the historic character of this West Main Street neighborhood. So I would like to formally register my protest to this zoning exception for DMCB Properties to develop residential planned units.

To be sure, there is a house affordability crisis, but what is being proposed is the same old non-solution that doesn't make actual houses any more affordable. If anything is built on that land, it should be a Victorian-style house with an in-law apartment or three, something that would be actually more affordable for a small family.

Thank you for your consideration,
Kay L. Kirkpatrick

[REDACTED]

Public Input: May 18, 2026 meeting; Planned Unit Development at 413-419 West Main Street

From MARK NILGES [REDACTED]
Date Fri 5/15/2026 9:55 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@UrbanaIL.gov>

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To the Urbana City Council,

I strongly oppose the planned apartment building at 413-419 W. Main St. There are two serious issues with this proposal. First is the rezoning of a R2 area to R5. The main reason we moved to Main St. is because it had been rezoned to R2. The large apartment building across the street, the Landmark (now Element) greatly detracted from the neighborhood, but the residential character of the neighborhood helped to negate this misfitted structure. Parking issues were also problem with this apartment building, as residents would often block or park in our driveway and a few times we had to call the police in order to get into or out of our driveway. The construction of this apartment building would greatly increase this problem.

Second is the design of the proposed building. The idea that this building fits the character of the street is the complete opposite of reality. It seems that the architect tried his best to come up with a design that was as much out of character with the neighborhood as much as possible.

This proposal makes me question wanting to keep living on Main St. or in Urbana itself.

Mark Nilges
[REDACTED]

400 block of West Main St

From Elizabeth Nicol [REDACTED]
Date Sat 5/16/2026 12:30 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Please read this letter at the City Council meeting on Monday.

I am very disturbed to hear of plans for a large apartment building to be constructed in the 400 block of West Main Street. After all we've done with community input to set zoning restrictions and a Comprehensive Plan, it seems as if that means nothing. I thought we had established that we value the historic character of West Main Street, that we regret some of the apartment buildings that were imposed on the neighborhood years ago, and that we reject such a further blight. What was the purpose of all that zoning and planning discussion if it would be so easily thrown away for a development such as this?

Elizabeth Nicol
[REDACTED]

Public Input: May 18, 2026 Urbana City Council Committee of the Whole; Planned Unit Development at 413-419 West Main Street

From Charlie Smyth [REDACTED]
Date Sat 5/16/2026 12:53 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@UrbanaIL.gov>
Cc City Clerk <CityClerk@UrbanaIL.gov>

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Council Members and Mayor Williams,

I write in opposition to the Planned Unit Development AT 413-419 W. Main St (Ordinance No. 2026-05-013).

My opposition is based on three concerns:

- Building to the edge of the Boneyard sets a very poor precedent. The picture on page 65 is disingenuous in that it shows green space and trees to the south of the property where the existing Boneyard runs. What do they propose, covering the Boneyard and planting grass and trees over it? Furthermore, there is no room left for any sort of multi-use trail along the Boneyard which probably needs to be on the north edge of the Boneyard in this section because of the two buildings along Springfield at the intersection with Main St. The precedent set would allow a similar building with parking to the edge of the Boneyard on the south side of the creek leaving no green space or room for natural flood mitigation.
- Building with no setback and to such a height is not in keeping with this historically designated neighborhood. The plans do not show the full significance of building on top of proposed water movement under the building (will there be visible stilts?). Though Main Street becomes urban, this is not an urban section and still has significant setbacks more in keeping with a walkable, livable neighborhood. Just because there is an eyesore to the northwest doesn't mean another one need be added. Anything built along the 400 West block should be more in character and scale with the existing historic housing to the immediate north and west.
- Building such a large structure in a 100 year flood plain given climate change scenarios makes no sense long term. These scenarios predict more frequent and heavier rainfalls for our area (some of which is already happening). Please note also that the Hydrologic Modeling used to support the findings in the application is 13 years old and should be revised to reflect current understanding of weather changes before any building of significance is done along the Boneyard.

Several suggestions come to mind: Build to the south side of the Boneyard where such a structure would be more appropriate and in keeping with the long term plans for Urbana. Turn the north side into green space that can handle long term flood issues and further extend the Boneyard Plan towards the University of Illinois campus. More immediately, I suggest the city trade properties with the developer for the large lot at Griggs and Race where a higher density apartment building would be more welcome and more appropriate as well as closer to more downtown amenities.

--

-c

-Charlie Smyth

Former Urbana City Council Member and City Clerk

Please include this as part of the public record

PUD proposal for 413-419 W. Main Read aloud during the Council Meeting

From Plewa, Michael Jacob [REDACTED]
Date Sun 5/17/2026 8:49 AM
To City Council <CityCouncil@UrbanaIL.gov>
Cc [REDACTED]

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

To be read aloud during the City Council meeting, May 18, 2026

Honorable Members of the Urbana City Council

We write to oppose the PUD proposal for 413-419 W. Main Street, Urbana.

After an exhaustive city-wide discussion on the new Urbana Comprehensive Plan, the City stated that single family zoning for properties should be maintained. Conversion of R2 to R5 for this entire project conflicts with current zoning. The density for the proposed apartment building is much greater than what is allowed for single family housing.

The project will destroy relatively low-cost houses that could be starter homes for first-time home buyers. The goal of developers, such as DMCB Properties, is to remove these houses from the market pool replacing them with high-rent apartments. Excluding student associated housing, Urbana is dominated by renters, with roughly 65% to 70% of all households in the city being renter-occupied rather than owner-occupied. This is damaging to the diversity of housing and the stability of our housing market. The renter rate in the State of Illinois is approximately 33.7% of all households. Urbana does not need more high-rent apartments; there is currently a high vacancy rate in our city.

As a representative for the developer proposing the project, Mr. Andrew Fell, is also a member of the Plan Commission. Mr. Fell recused himself from voting on the Plan Commission as required by law. However, his presence and advice to the Commission have an implicit conflict that generates an adverse impact on the West Urbana neighborhood. Members of the Plan Commission should uphold current zoning and not go against it for personal gain. As indicated by other residents, the very fast movement of this proposal, as well as its timing at the end of the semester when many of us are preoccupied suggests an effort to avoid thoughtful and organized public input.

Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) like this one are required to provide a clear community benefit in exchange for going against the established zoning but this proposal has no benefits to the community. The proposed rents for a regular single apartment are higher than nearby high-rent apartments. The primary beneficiary of this PUD is not the West Urbana neighborhood but the financial interests of Mr. Fell and the developer, DMCB Properties.

During the past decade, the city experienced enhanced storm intensity and flooding due to global warming. The proposed development at 413-419 W. Main Street requires strict compliance with Boneyard Creekway environmental standards to mitigate flood risk. We have serious concerns regarding long-term infrastructure costs and the impact of high-density construction near the floodplain.

This unsightly and high-density project will undoubtedly be used as an excuse to undo the family-oriented zoning on the remainder of Main St. The proposed four-story building is much taller than the other surrounding buildings and will harm the character of the neighborhood. Large apartment projects like this should be built on available lots that are plentiful in downtown Urbana, not in the proposed location within a low-density residential neighborhood. This poor planning is the result of the demand by avaricious developers against the diversity of housing in our neighborhood.

We ask the City Council to reject the PUD proposal for 413-419 W. Main Street, Urbana

Sincerely,

Michael J. Plewa

Elizabeth Wagner Plewa

[REDACTED]

Urbana, IL 61801

To Be Read Aloud at City Council Meeting - Opposition to PUD Apartment Development at 413-419 W. Main Street

From SN [REDACTED]
Date Sun 5/17/2026 10:55 AM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>; City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to express strong opposition to the proposed 4-story, high-density hideous apartment complex at 413-419 W. Main Street.

This Planned Unit Development directly conflicts with our current R2 zoning and violates the city's new Comprehensive Plan, which explicitly states that West Urbana's single-family housing should be maintained.

Furthermore, PUDs are legally required to provide a clear community benefit in exchange for bypassing zoning laws, yet this project offers none. Instead, it destroys attainable starter homes and low-income housing to build high-rent apartments that Urbana simply does not need, given our current high vacancy rates.

Beyond bad city planning, this proposal raises severe environmental and ethical concerns.

The massive footprint encroaches upon Boneyard Creek without an environmental review, and its four-story height will permanently ruin the historic character of Main Street.

Worse, the developer, Andrew Fell, is an active member of the Urbana Plan Commission, presenting a glaring conflict of interest for personal financial gain.

Furthermore, the rushed timing of this proposal at the end of the academic semester appears to be a deliberate attempt by the Plan Commission, potentially in coordination with city staff, to evade public scrutiny and sneak the project past preoccupied neighbors.

Commission members are duty-bound to uphold the city's zoning integrity rather than exploit it for personal financial gain.

Because the aggressive pace of this application at the end of the university semester creates an intense appearance of impropriety, I urge City Council to formally request that the Mayor thoroughly investigate this matter internally, audit whether proper recusal took place, and even if it did, evaluate if this ongoing conflict of interest warrants the developer's removal from the Plan Commission.

Large-scale developments belong on the plentiful empty lots downtown—such as the city-owned lot south of Lincoln Square—not encroaching on a low-density residential neighborhood.

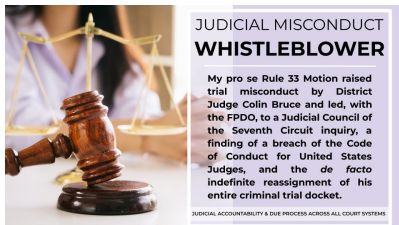
I urge the council to deny this approval, stop the domino effect of destroying West Urbana's zoning protections, and uphold our community guidelines by directing high-density projects to zones better equipped to handle them.

Thank you for your time and your service to our community.

Sarah Nixon

Sarah Nixon

FAMILY COURT REFORM ADVOCATE



C. K. Gunsalus & Michael W. Walker

Urbana, Illinois 61801

Please read aloud and place into the record at Council meeting.

May 17, 2026

Dear Members of the Urbana City Council:

We strongly urge you to reject the requested zoning change and Planned Unit Development for a “professional and graduate student” apartment project in the 400 block of West Main Street. This proposal requires an unprecedented jump from R2 to R5 and is fundamentally inconsistent with the zoning that many of us worked long and hard to achieve over many years. Time after time, residents of our neighborhood have consistently shown up, written, spoken out, and attended multiple public meetings to protect the character of our area when non-resident developers seek to create dense, high-rent apartments in violation of our established zoning.

The proposal is plainly incompatible with our neighborhood. One of us (Gunsalus) served for many years on the Plan Commission while a careful block-by-block review of Urbana’s zoning took place. That extensive process led to unanimous agreement at both the Commission and City Council of R2 zoning for Main Street. The proposed four-story building would be substantially taller and more massive than any surrounding structure, cast a looming shadow across Main Street, and damage the established character and scale of the neighborhood. Note that even the nearby Landmark Apartments (grandfathered in when the Downtown to Campus plan zoning was effected) is only three stories tall. Further, its lowest level starts below grade, and the complex is well back from the street, reducing its overall height, mass, and effect. An immense, taller-than-surroundings apartment building aimed at a higher rent market belongs on vacant and underused downtown parcels, **not** in the middle of a low-density residential neighborhood replacing existing affordable housing.

Zoning exists for a reason: to preserve the character and scale of established residential neighborhoods. This proposal represents a dramatic increase in density and height compared to what is currently permitted. Planned Unit Developments are supposed to provide a clear and meaningful community benefit in exchange for exceptions to existing zoning rules. In this case, no such benefit has been demonstrated. The developer has not meaningfully attempted to offer community benefits that would justify overriding carefully considered zoning protections. Moreover, the newly adopted Comprehensive Plan specifically states that existing single-family housing areas in West Urbana should be maintained as single-family housing. Approving this project would directly contradict the intent and language of the City’s own long-range planning document only shortly after its adoption.

In short, this proposal is bad planning, inconsistent with City policy, and harmful to our community.

We respectfully urge the City Council to deny this zoning change and Planned Unit Development request to uphold the integrity of Urbana’s zoning process. This project would distort the character of the neighborhood and set a dangerous precedent for future re-zonings in West Urbana. We ask that you listen to the voices of the neighborhood and respect the long-established expectations residents rely upon when choosing to live here. Please protect the character of our neighborhood that people move here to enjoy.

Cordially,

Handwritten signatures of C. K. Gunsalus and Michael W. Walker in black ink.

PUBLIC INPUT May 18, 2026: Plan Case No. 2519-PUD-25

From Sharon Irish [REDACTED]
Date Sun 5/17/2026 3:40 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Please read aloud during the Council Meeting.

To: Urbana City Council Members and Staff

Re: Plan Case No. 2519-PUD-25

There have been a number of good arguments put forth either requesting denial of this proposal for a large new structure on Main Street or requesting a delay in approving it. I favor at least delaying the decision in order to obtain further input about the site and the design and to explore a reduction in the scale of the project.

I write knowing how difficult it is to get folks to serve in a voluntary capacity on city commissions. There are three vacancies on the Plan Commission. This means that only six commissioners have provided input to this proposal and, since Andrew Fell is the architect on this project, he has recused himself. I think the remaining number (five) of commissioners responding to this proposal is inadequate. Thus, inviting more comments about the proposal may help serve as a corrective.

One reason that the property under consideration is "underutilized" is because it is in a flood zone. To build in a flood zone invites property damage. To prevent such damage, the designers have raised the structure to a height which is not in keeping with the scale of the neighborhood. The flood management raises the construction costs, so more units are needed to be financially viable. More units require a different zoning designation, "medium high density multiple-family residential." These design and zoning solutions are contortionist in that they try to make an unsuitable property work for something it is not well suited for.

I appreciate that the owners of these properties and the architect live locally. Perhaps this will aid the rethinking of this proposal.

I will stop here because I hope the Council also will have the time and energy to consider again the crucial importance of an oversight policy for surveillance technologies and attendant data management and sharing. (Ordinance No. 2024-12-042)

Thank you,

Sharon Irish
[REDACTED]

Urbana, IL

PUD proposal for 413-419 W. Main

From Laura O'Donnell [REDACTED]
Date Sun 5/17/2026 8:25 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@UrbanaIL.gov>

 1 attachment (15 KB)
PUD proposal for 413-419 W. Main.docx;

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

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Please read aloud for the record at Council meeting on May18, 2026

Dear Members of the Urbana City Council:

I write to request that you reject the zoning change and Planned Unit Development apartment project proposed for the 400 block of West Main Street. The proposed development is brazenly in conflict with current zoning. The density, height, and footprint would be much greater than that of the single family housing currently allowed.

Members of the neighborhood have worked hard over the years to have R2 zoning for Main Street. The Comprehensive Plan specifically states that single family houses currently in West Urbana should be maintained as single family housing. Why should this developer get a pass? This project looks like a conflict of interest in that the developer proposing the project is also a member of Plan Commission. The Plan Commission is there to uphold zoning rules, not to make exceptions to it benefit one of its members.

Zoning exists for a reason. PUDs must provide a clear community benefit in exchange for going against the zoning. What does this development offer the community that it does not already have? This project will eliminate some relatively low-cost single family houses which Urbana needs in exchange for high rent apartments, of which Urbana already has a large inventory.

The developers could build this project and follow the rules if they tried. Empty lots exist downtown and elsewhere, which already have the appropriate zoning and would be a better location for a large apartment complex such as this.

This proposal is inconsistent with City policy, and unfair to residents. If approved, this project would set a bad precedent for future re-zonings in West Urbana. I respectfully urge the City Council to deny this zoning change and Planned Unit Development request and to uphold the integrity of Urbana's zoning process.

Please listen to the voices of the neighborhood and respect the expectations (as written in the city's zoning code) that residents rely upon when choosing to live here.

Sincerely,
Laura O'Donnell
[REDACTED]

PUBLIC INPUT 5/18/2026 2519-PUD-25

From Bant, Geoffrey W [REDACTED]
Date Sun 5/17/2026 8:50 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

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May 17, 2026

RE: Plan Case No. 2519-PUD-25

Please read aloud and place into the record at the Committee of the Whole Meeting Monday, May 18, 2026.

Dear City Council,

I write on behalf of the Preservation and Conservation Association of Champaign County (PACA) to oppose the approval of the Plan Case No. 2519-PUD-25.

I am sure you are familiar with earlier decisions by the council to rezone the Main Street neighborhood from R5 to R2 in order to preserve the character of the neighborhood. Past Plan Commissions and City Councils decided to support the residents and decided to put community, preservation, and tradition ahead of rampant development and the financial motive behind it.

The proposal before you is not an isolated instance, a small adjustment, or a minor variance as you are led to believe by the weight of detail, alignment with vague policy guidelines, supposed conformation with the Imagine Urbana document and other administrative hairsplitting. It is part of an ongoing, perhaps unconscious, effort to erode the Urbana community and foster an environment of commerce over community by pushing the envelope and blurring the lines decided on by previous boards and councils in open communication with their citizens.

The zoning variances you are asked to approve are part of the same efforts that are continuing the dismantling of West Washington Street. This commercial zeal has permitted "self-storage world" to kill the Philo Road corridor and is now threatening Main Street and soon Busey Avenue, with increased high-speed traffic, oversized buildings, and increased, all-day street parking.

Soon West Urbana will begin to look like Campustown. Churches, perhaps Canaan Baptist, will come down to make way for tall, expensive apartments in buildings with less than adequate parking. More traffic in residential neighborhoods and still NO more affordable housing. The way to get affordable housing to help residents revitalize older homes, not, as in this proposal, to tear them down, and build expensive luxury apartments.

All this is done in the name of "incremental development," a euphemism for high density, high return on investment.

There is a pervasive myth that increased density, i.e. more people living in a smaller area, will increase the total supply of housing and the holy laws of competition, and supply and demand will thereby lower the cost of housing units, creating more affordable housing. It just isn't true. It doesn't work for apartment prices or home prices, and Champaign-Urbana could be the poster child for how the law of supply and demand does not apply to housing.

They say the devil is in the details, but the details are meant to obscure the big picture. The devil is really in the decisions you make. Decisions like this one accumulate and begin, like legal precedents, to move public policy in a certain direction.

A variance asked for in this case, because this particular building would be close to other commercial properties, only moves the line of commercial properties further into residential neighborhoods. Please don't approve this project as another step in public policy that will further the decline of Urbana.

Don't make a decision against residents, neighborhood, affordable housing, and the Urbana community, to satisfy an invisible owner's financial agenda. Make your decision on the big picture, and in support of the visible citizens, and reject this application.

Thank you,

Geoffrey Bant, President, PACA



No to PUD proposal for 413-419 W Main, Urbana

From Lois Steinberg [REDACTED]
Date Mon 5/18/2026 2:36 AM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

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

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Dear City Council Members,

I agree with the neighborhood voices who oppose this abomination of the proposed apartment building. Not only is it inappropriate but it is an eyesore. f

The existing houses should continue to exist.

Please register me with the others and read out loud for the city council meeting.

High Regards,

Lois Steinberg
[REDACTED]
Urbana, IL 61801

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Lois Steinberg, Ph.D., CIYT Level 4, C-IAYT
Director, Iyengar Yoga Champaign Urbana
www.loissteinberg.com, www.yoga-cu.com

From: [Jared Fritz](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Yes on the Main Street Development - PUBLIC INPUT - May 18, 2026
Date: Monday, May 18, 2026 4:23:22 PM

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

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My name is Jared Fritz.

I'm a member of the Champaign Zoning Board of Appeals and a lead member of CURbanism Club, an urbanist community organization focused on housing policy in Champaign-Urbana. I'm writing in support of the Main Street Planned Unit Development.

I want to address arguments being made by opponents of this project, because the most prominent ones don't hold up to scrutiny.

Claim: Urbana has a 12 percent rental vacancy rate.

Reality: The active rental vacancy rate is closer to 1.4 percent.

This figure comes from a Census estimate that counts structurally vacant units, units between tenants, and seasonal vacancies like student apartments sitting empty over the summer. It does not reflect the active rental market that a person actually looking for an apartment encounters.

Champaign's recent housing study found an active rental vacancy of just 1.4 percent. The study projects a need for 7,000 new units over the next decade and describes the current situation as a housing system under strain. There is no credible data source supporting a 12 percent figure for our active market.

Claim: Decades of apartment construction in Urbana have produced no rent relief.

Reality: Construction was following rising demand, not causing it — and more supply consistently moderates rents.

This confuses correlation with causation. A better question is what rents would have been *without* that supply. And the evidence on that question is consistent and clear. **Increasing housing supply reduces rents**, even when those units are market-rate, and the biggest relief lands on low- and middle-income households. When new units come online, people who can afford to move up do so, freeing up units for people lower on the income scale.

This isn't just an Austin and Minneapolis story. Montana faced vacancy rates under one percent in communities like Missoula and Bozeman — cities that look a lot more like Urbana. Their governor called it "gutting the core of our communities." The bipartisan response was to build more housing. That's the conclusion communities across the political spectrum keep reaching when they look honestly at the data.

On affordable housing specifically:

Market-rate construction alone doesn't solve everything. People who can't afford even the

lowest market rents need vouchers and subsidized units, and I support expanding those programs. But a vote on this development is not a referendum on affordable housing.

Two of these four parcels have sat vacant since 2015. If this project is denied, those lots don't become affordable housing. They stay empty. This is exactly the kind of constrained, downtown-adjacent infill that the Imagine Urbana plan was written to encourage.

I hope you'll vote yes.

Jared Fritz
Longtime Champaign-Urbana Resident

Supporting Research:

[How Even Luxury Housing Can Help Solve The Housing Shortage](#)

[Austin's Surge of New Housing Construction Drove Down Rents](#)

[High-End Construction Really Does Help Everyone](#)

Public Comment for 5/18

From Derek Briles [REDACTED]
Date Mon 5/18/2026 6:01 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@UrbanaIL.gov>

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

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Please read my remarks aloud into the record during the meeting.

Hello City Council and Mayor Williams. My name is Derek Briles and I am a resident of Urbana Ward 4.

I would first like to commend the City on its openness to ethical investment practices. With the ongoing genocide in Palestine, it is critical that all municipalities what a concerted effort to divest from companies that profit from the mass murder and displacement of innocent Palestinians. To that end, I urge the City to divest entirely from Illinois Funds. Companies such as Caterpillar and IBM, which the Illinois Funds still invests in, are directly profiting from mass death and wanton human suffering. IMET provides a safer investment portfolio with similar return rates as Illinois Funds, making it a no-brainer to move the City's investments there. Urbana has the opportunity to a leader in this area and a shining light in the growing darkness. Please take the important opportunity and show other municipalities in Illinois what means to invest ethically.

I also want to urge City Council to consider ethics and human rights as they approve construction of new housing projects. In case some of you might have forgotten, even after my many reminders, 28% of Urbana lives at or below the poverty line. That is truly a staggering and embarrassing statistic. With poverty like that, we do not need more housing for professionals and grad students. We need affordable housing for working people. People are struggling and the situation is only going to get more desperate as the cost of living continues to go up while wages remain stagnant. Affordable housing must be a priority. We already have far too many unhoused people in our community, and that number is going to continue to rise if more affordable housing is not made available. We must focus our efforts on caring for the most vulnerable in our community.

Thank you for your time and attention. I trust you will all take my well-meaning and earnest comments into consideration and make the right decision. Divest from companies profiting from genocide and vote no on housing projects that do not prioritize affordability.

Sent from [Proton Mail](#) for iOS.

PUD on Main

From grouchybirdman [REDACTED]
Date Mon 5/18/2026 8:19 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

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Dear City Council,

Please read my comments into the record. I write to ask you to support ordinance No. 2026-05-013. I'm a resident of Ward 3. I live close to this area and visit it often. A new apartment building would be a welcome sight. 32 new homes instead of empty lots is a positive for the community. I would be interested in living in such a development and allow someone else to access my sub \$500 rent apartment. These units can free up other more affordable units within the city for people to access. As someone who works with the homeless (both individuals and families) any units becoming available is good thing because it creates opportunities for people to move and open up space for those in need of homes. There are better people to explain the merits of infill and development bringing density and people to downtown. I believe if you vote no on this proposed ordinance you should stop lying about Urbana being welcoming, and saying you care about the homeless. The money you give RPC, CTSO, and courage connection should be set on fire. Why should you support these organizations if you can't support building homes. As a side note, your questions to the township supervisor are genuinely pathetic. They lack context, an understanding of homelessness, and don't enlighten. Please take a skeptical approach to the supervisor when she talks about homeless issues. This will benefit everyone including the supervisor and the programs she oversees. She doesn't speak for the CSPH. James you're alright.

Grouchy Regards,

Grouchy Birdman, esq.

I am an 8-year veteran of the Urbana Plan Commission, and never in those 8 years did I ever deal with a case that clearly ran so contrary to our zoning laws and comprehensive plan.

This PUD is simply BAD City planning, period. Since when is it OK to jump the zoning on the most historic street in Urbana from R2 single family to R5 high density residential in one fell swoop?

Here are the conflicts with the Imagine Urbana plan:

Big Idea 3, Objective 3.1 says *Capitalize on the strengths and assets of individual neighborhoods.*

Main St's strengths and assets are its historic homes, and they need to be protected from large infill developments.

Big Idea 3, Objective 3.4 says *Focus on making it safe, comfortable, convenient, and useful for people to walk and bike in their neighborhood.*

This PUD will dramatically increase noise and traffic on Main and render it far less desirable for children and their parents to be safe walking and biking.

Little Move 4.5 says *Encourage multi-family housing options in Downtown at various income levels.* One of the main problems with this PUD is that Plan Commission persisted in seeing it as an extension of Downtown. But Main St. is NOT downtown, and there are far better near-Downtown locations that would be much more appropriate for this large development. The City could give the developers the lot at Race and Griggs and that would be problem solved!

Little Move 11.14 says *Encourage adaptive reuse and historic preservation of existing buildings that contribute to the City's architectural heritage.*

If this PUD is built, a lovely Victorian house will be demolished, a low-income apartment house will be lost, and a huge apartment will loom over the area,

increase traffic, and impinge on the lives of single family and small rental residents of the street. It will set a terrible precedent that could result in further encroachment of high density developments on Main St. and farther south into the heart of West Urbana.

When my husband and I moved to 510 W. Main in 1981, the street was zoned R5—high density residential. Several large apartment buildings had already resulted in the demolition of several historic homes, the most significant of which was the Busey mansion where the complex called Element now stands. When another plan was unveiled to tear down a beautiful Princess Anne Victorian and build yet another high density apartment in the 600 block, the neighbors came together, and our dear friend Marylee McDonald succeeded in purchasing the house to prevent that from happening. Then we began a concerted effort to get the street downzoned to R2 to protect the historic resources that were left.

When the City Council initiated the Downtown to Campus Plan to review all the zoning in W. Urbana, the Plan Commission studied every single street and every single block, and we thoughtfully considered whether the zoning should be changed or left as it was. When the time came to study Main St., there was not ONE dissenting vote on Plan Commission, nor later on City Council, that it should most definitely be downzoned to R2 to a)reflect the predominance of single family residential, b) to prevent the encroachment of any more high density apartment development, and c)to protect the many historic homes that have long been a source of beauty and pride for our city.

I am asking you tonight to come together, reject the recommendation of a Plan Commission on which the architect of this plan serves, reject once and for all the notion that Main St. is an extension of downtown Urbana, acknowledge its value to our city, and leave the R2 zoning in place.

Carolyn Baxley