

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

APPROVED

DATE: September 18, 2024

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

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

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Ashlee McLaughlin, Adam Rusch, Charles Warmbrunn, Harvey Welch

MEMBERS ABSENT: Joanne Chester, Matt Cho, Nancy Uchtmann

STAFF PRESENT: Marcus Ricci, Planner II; Teri Andel, Planning Administrative Assistant II

OTHERS PRESENT: Brant Muncaster, Bridgett Wakefield

A. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

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

B. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

C. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes of the June 26, 2024 Regular Meeting

Mr. Warmbrunn noted a correction to the minutes. Harvey Welch's name should be removed from the names of members in attendance.

Mr. Warmbrunn moved that the Zoning Board of Appeals approve the minutes of the June 26, 2024 regular meeting as amended. Mr. Rusch seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

D. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

- Email from Sarah McEvoy and Huseyin Sehitoglu in opposition of Case No. ZBA-2024-MAJ-01
- Email from Dave Schwenk in general support of Case No. ZBA-2024-MAJ-01

E. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

NOTE: Chair Welch reviewed the procedure for a public hearing and swore in members of the audience who wished to speak on a case. He reviewed the procedures for a public hearing.

F. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

ZBA-2024-MAJ-01 – A request by Brant Muncaster, on behalf of Gary Luth dba Illinois Farmhouse Alumni Association, for a Major Variance to increase the maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) from 0.50 to 0.73 at 809 West Pennsylvania Avenue in the R-7 (University Residential) Zoning District.

Chair Welch opened Case No. ZBA-2024-MAJ-01. Marcus Ricci, Planner II, presented the case to the Zoning Board of Appeals by stating facts from the written staff report. He explained the purpose for the proposed major variance and gave a brief history of the proposed site. He noted the land uses and zoning of the subject property and of the surrounding properties. He showed an aerial photo and illustrations of the proposed site. He also showed floor plans and renderings showing the proposed enclosed stair tower. He talked about the effects of increasing the Floor Area Ratio and about lot coverage requirements throughout the lifespan of the existing building. He reviewed the variance criteria from Section XI-3 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance and the staff findings of how the proposed expansion would relate to each criterion. He reviewed the notification process for this case. He summarized staff findings and read the options of the Zoning Board of Appeals. He presented City staff's recommendation for approval with the following condition: Construction must be in general conformance with the site plan, entitled "Farmhouse Fraternity – 809 West Pennsylvania Avenue – August 1, 2024". He pointed out that representatives of the applicant were present to answer questions.

Chair Welch asked if any members of the Zoning Board of Appeals had questions for City staff.

Mr. Warmbrunn asked if the old fire escape is one person at time. Mr. Ricci deferred this question to the applicant.

Mr. Warmbrunn asked about the proposed fire escape. Mr. Ricci deferred this question to the applicant. He said that he knows they will meet the building code.

With there being no further questions for City staff, Chair Welch opened the public hearing for public input. He invited the applicants to speak.

Brant Muncaster approached the Zoning Board of Appeals to speak. He stated that fire escapes are allowed to be narrower than enclosed stairs. So, the existing fire escape is a single passage stair. The proposed new stair would be conforming to the new building code, and it would be wide enough for two people to go down it.

With there being no further input from the audience, Chair Welch closed the public input portion of the hearing and opened it up for discussion and/or motion(s) by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mr. Rusch moved that the Zoning Board of Appeals forward Case No. ZBA-2024-MAJ-01 to the City Council with a recommendation for approval with the condition that construction must be in general conformance with the Site Plan that is attached in the written staff report based on the findings of the staff in the report. Ms. McLaughlin seconded the motion.

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Ms. McLaughlin	-	Yes	Mr. Rusch	-	Yes
Mr. Warmbrunn	-	Yes	Mr. Welch	-	Yes

The motion was approved by unanimous vote of 4-0.

Mr. Ricci stated that Case No. ZBA-2024-MAJ-01 would be forwarded to Committee of the Whole on October 7, 2024 and tentatively to the City Council on October 14, 2024.

G. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

H. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

I. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

J. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Ricci reported on the following:

- 408 West Main Street – A new duplex was constructed that had been approved for a reduction in the Floor Area Ratio and some setback variances.
- 312 West Illinois Street – City staff received a building permit application to build a duplex, which the use was approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals in a previous case along with setback and FAR variances.

Mr. Warmbrunn asked if there is an update on the court case involving the storage units on the northwest corner of Route 150 (University Avenue) and Route 130 (High Cross Road). Mr. Ricci said that he had not heard anything yet. Staff will check on the status and let the Board know at a future meeting.

Mr. Warmbrunn asked about updating the Board’s bylaws. Mr. Ricci stated that he would ask Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner, what the timeline is for bringing the bylaws to the Board for update and approval. He asked if there was anything specific that Mr. Warmbrunn would like to see changed or added. Mr. Warmbrunn replied that there is an issue with nonattendance of Board members, so he believed a policy should be written about attendance. Also, the Board is supposed to review the bylaws every two years. Mr. Ricci stated that staff would make this an agenda item for the next meeting.

Mr. Warmbrunn asked if a new mayor could clear out the Board and start over with new members. Mr. Ricci said no because members are appointed on the Zoning Board of Appeals for five years. Mr. Rusch asked what each member's term is, and Teri Anzel, Planning Administrative Assistant II, stated each member's term expiration. Mr. Ricci said that the Zoning Board of Appeals members could send any suggested changes or additions to either himself or to Ms. Anzel via email.

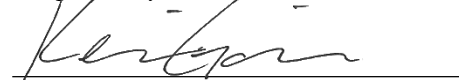
K. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

L. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Garcia, Secretary
Zoning Board of Appeals