



CITY OF
URBANA

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PLAN COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

DATE: Thursday, September 05, 2024

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE: 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

AGENDA

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

B. Changes to the Agenda

C. Approval of Minutes

[Minutes](#) of the July 11, 2024 Regular Meeting

[Minutes](#) of the July 18, 2024 Regular Meeting

[Minutes](#) of the August 22, 2024 Special Meeting

D. Communications

E. Continued Public Hearings

F. Old Business

G. New Public Hearings

H. New Business

I. Audience Participation

J. Staff Report

K. Study Session

Imagine Urbana Comprehensive Plan Draft

L. Adjournment

PUBLIC INPUT

The City of Urbana welcomes Public Input during open meetings of the City Council, the City Council's Committee of the Whole, City Boards and Commissions and other City-sponsored meetings. Our goal is to foster respect for the meeting process, and respect for all people participating as members of the public body, city staff, and general public. The City is required to conduct all business during public meetings. The presiding officer is responsible for conducting those meetings in an orderly and efficient manner.

Public Input will be taken in the following ways:

Email Input

In order to be incorporated into the record, emailed public comments must be received prior to 5:00 pm on the day preceding the meeting and sent to the following email address: Planning@urbanaininois.us. The subject line of the email must include the words "PLAN COMMISSION - PUBLIC INPUT" and the meeting date. Emailed public comments labeled as such will be incorporated into the public meeting record, with personal identifying information redacted.

Written Input

Any member of the public may submit their comments addressed to the members of the public body in writing. If a person wishes their written comments to be included in the record of Public Input for the meeting, the writing should so state. Written comments must be received prior to the closing of the meeting record (at the time of adjournment unless otherwise noted).

Public Hearing

Any person desiring to appear at the public hearing and present testimony may speak during each public hearing at the time they appear on the agenda. This shall not count towards regular Public Input for the meeting. The Public Hearing is an opportunity for comments and questions to be addressed specific to each case. Board or Commission members are permitted to respond and engage during this time and/or the Chairperson may direct the applicant to respond during rebuttal. Comments unrelated to any of the public hearings listed on an agenda should be shared during the Public Input portion of the meeting where Verbal Input guidelines shall apply.

Verbal Input

Protocol for Public Input is one of respect for the process of addressing the business of the City. Obscene or profane language, or other conduct that threatens to impede the orderly progress of the business conducted at the meeting is unacceptable.

Public comment shall be limited to no more than five (5) minutes per person. The Public Input portion of the meeting shall total no more than one (1) hour, unless otherwise shortened or extended by majority vote of the public body members present. The presiding officer or the city clerk or their designee, shall monitor each speaker's use of time and shall notify the speaker when the allotted time has expired. A person may participate and provide Public Input once during a meeting and may not cede time to another person, or split their time if Public Input is held at two (2) or more different times during a meeting.

The presiding officer or public body members shall not enter into a dialogue with citizens. Questions from the public body members shall be for clarification purposes only. Public Input shall not be used as a time for problem solving or reacting to comments made but, rather, for hearing citizens for informational purposes only.

In order to maintain the efficient and orderly conduct and progress of the public meeting, the presiding officer of the meeting shall have the authority to raise a point of order and provide a verbal warning to a speaker who engages in the conduct or behavior proscribed under “Verbal Input”. Any member of the public body participating in the meeting may also raise a point of order with the presiding officer and request that they provide a verbal warning to a speaker. If the speaker refuses to cease such conduct or behavior after being warned by the presiding officer, the presiding officer shall have the authority to mute the speaker’s microphone and/or video presence at the meeting. The presiding officer will inform the speaker that they may send the remainder of their remarks via e-mail to the public body for inclusion in the meeting record.

Accommodation

If an accommodation is needed to participate in a City meeting, please contact the City at least 48 hours in advance using one of the following methods:

Phone: 217.384.2455

Email: hro@urbanaillinois.us

Watching the Meeting via Streaming Services

All City meetings are broadcast on Urbana Public Television and live-streamed on the web. Details on how to watch are found on the UPTV webpage located at <https://urbanaillinois.us/upty>.

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

DRAFT

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 for a typical parcel. With regards to building height, he stated that although the FAR is currently 0.4, 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 conversation 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 Place 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 7 stories is considered a high-rise. Economy does not allow for 9, 10, or 11 stories. 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 whether developers would have to go up 120 feet, and if not, why not just leave it at 120 in case someone ever did want to go up that high? 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.

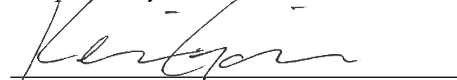
K. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

L. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

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

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Garcia, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

DRAFT

DATE: July 18, 2024

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

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

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

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Will Andresen, Debarah McFarland, Bill Rose

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner; Teri Andel, Planning Administrative Assistant II

OTHERS PRESENT: Phyllis Williams

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

There was none.

D. COMMUNICATIONS

- Email from Annie Feldmeier Adams regarding Plan Case No. 2485-T-24
- Email from Graeme Rael regarding Plan Case No. 2485-T-24

E. CONTINUED 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 re-opened the public hearing for Plan Case No. 2485-T-24. He noted that this case was continued from the July 11, 2024 meeting. The meeting left off with Plan Commission discussion. Since there is a new audience member present at this current meeting, he suggested that they re-open the public input portion of the public hearing.

Phyllis Williams approached the Plan Commission to speak. She felt that the City staff was trying to change our regulations to market a piece of property for some client rather than having the client come forward with a plan and ask for variances as part of the Planned Unit Development, if needed.

She believes that 75-feet is tall enough for a building, especially on Lincoln Avenue. One hundred twenty feet maximum height does not make a lot of sense.

She said that the residents are not going to get much in return. There are going to be parking problems in the neighborhood. There is no mention of lighting in the changes. The proliferation of lighting in certain areas of Urbana makes the areas appear to be unsafe and makes it hard to appreciate any kind of dark sky. She suggested the City use enclosed bulbs and something that makes it more person friendly.

Mr. Garcia mentioned that City staff has been doing some zoning compliance for some of the new lighting in the neighborhood. The City of Urbana has pretty robust standards for lighting in the Urbana Zoning Ordinance.

Chair Allred asked for clarification that the proposed text amendment is for revisions of a zoning district, and there is not any kind of proposal for development of a specific parcel. Mr. Garcia replied that was correct.

Mr. Hopkins stated that when he researched the existing B-3U (General Business – University) Zoning District, he discovered a vacant parcel that the Plan Commission members had received a notification from a developer for a proposal for a 10-story building. He looked at the record for the meeting in May and discovered that the developer had responded to the survey, so he thinks it is disingenuous of the Plan Commission to pretend that there is no proposal on the table. So, he feels that we are making a change for a specific proposal that we know about. Mr. Garcia responded by saying that City staff has been working on the proposed text amendment for some time and talked to City Council around the end of 2022 and again in January 2023 about prioritizing a list of tasks. The proposed text amendment was at the top of the list. It has been a task that has been on the Planning Division's to-do list since he began working for the City in 2014.

Mr. Hopkins stated that he understands this. After last week's meeting, he assumed that the major thing that the Plan Commission would be talking about during this meeting is to have the maximum height of the building at 75 feet, 85 feet or 120 feet. At that meeting, the Plan Commission was saying it does not really matter because a 120-foot building would not happen. It turns out not only is there a parcel ready, there is a person wanting to do it on a particular parcel and we know who that person is. Mr. Garcia replied that when City staff went to City Council in 2023, staff told them about the vacant parcel and said that the current Zoning Ordinance would not allow it to be developed in a good way.

Mr. Fell clarified that when he commented about reducing the maximum height to 75 feet at the previous meeting, he had no idea that there was a proposal on the table. He really believed that no developer would propose a 120-foot-tall building in the district.

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).

Mr. Garcia summarized the changes that he made to the proposed text amendment based on the discussion held by the Plan Commission at the July 11, 2024 meeting. He recommended that the main pedestrian entrance be located on the street that the building is addressed off of and to recommend that maximum height of 120 feet.

Ms. Simms believed that a lot of the discussion at the previous meeting was predicated primarily implicitly on an assumption that the best use of a development was for student housing. This was on her mind since the meeting because all the data indicates that student enrollment is going to decline. She felt that they need to think about how to improve development in reflection of where we think the City would be going. The first plan felt like it was trying to make it neighborhood friendly, which she could see it being multi-generational, multi economic. She can see a much more diverse pluralistic landscape, so she just wants us to be clear that the City may end up with a surplus of student housing. If we are making decisions with that sort of implicit about the best practice for development, many of the changes they made may not be what we want to see in 10 years. She believes they may have tossed away some values that might take the City further in terms of the types of communities we could build. Some of the specific changes that were discussed at the previous meeting included the space between the sidewalk and the front door, the maximum height of a building, and scaling back of parking spaces.

The Plan Commission talked about the changes they recommended at the previous meeting and how to adjust them to allow for mix-use developments and alternatives for student housing in the future. Mr. Fell encouraged staff to come up with some incentive program for a developer that wants to build a mix-use development. Mr. Garcia mentioned that part of the district is within the Enterprise Zone, which allows some tax breaks if a certain percentage of the overall floor space is commercial.

Mr. Hopkins stated that as far as requiring the main entrance to be located on the street that the building is addressed on, it does not matter because they could always have the address changed in the future.

Ms. Yu stated that she felt herself to be in support of the maximum height of a building to be 120 feet. Mr. Hopkins stated that he has concerns about the maximum height being 120 feet; however, it would be nice if there would be a way for the Plan Commission to have discretionary evaluation of developments in the proposed district. Is there a way to do this by requiring a Special Use Permit. Mr. Garcia suggested the following, *"Building height is a maximum of 85 feet by right. If you want to construct a taller building than 85 feet, then you have to get a Special Use Permit"*. Chair Allred and Mr. Fell agreed that there would need to provide some guidance about what would satisfy the Special Use Permit review. The kind of guidance to provide could include bulk and the setback from street edge.

Chair Allred pointed out that the proposed text amendment as originally written by City staff never indicated that development would be constructed as student housing. The discussions by the Plan Commission is what steered this way of thinking. Other than the 12-foot ceiling height requirement on the first floor and the maximum height limit of the building, he did not believe that there was anything being proposed that would not allow other types of development. It really just depends on the market.

The Plan Commission talked about density issues and urban development. One way is by controlling building height and bulk to protect shade and light for properties across the street from a

development. Chair Allred stated that we have a pattern built in with the zoning that provides for transitions to a certain extent. They would be potentially altering the pattern with the proposed text amendment. They need to figure out if they would be creating discontinuities by removing the buffer that transition from some parts of Lincoln Avenue with two story homes to something else that might be six or seven-story buildings.

Mr. Garcia stated that the solution may already be in the proposed text amendment. City staff is recommending adding Residential Planned Unit Development (PUD) to the list of permitted uses. If a developer wanted to go above the maximum height, then the developer could apply for a PUD. A PUD requires 1/2 acre. A block is equivalent to about 2-1/2 acres in this district.

The Plan Commission discussed whether it should be a Special Use Permit, a Residential Planned Unit Development, or set the maximum height of a building at 85 feet. Ms. Yu stated that smaller scale development would get relief from the parking requirement and would be able to build up to 85 feet, which should be sufficient. For certain cases where a developer wants to construct a bigger building, the developer would have to go through the PUD process to get approval. She did not think this would be too burdensome. Mr. Garcia clarified that a developer can ask for whatever relief or deviation from the Zoning Ordinance they want. Mr. Fell added that the Zoning Ordinance will allow certain relief if a developer offers certain benefits.

Ms. Yu moved that the Plan Commission forward Plan Case No. 2485-T-24 to City Council with a recommendation for approval based on the Planning staff's revised text amendment with the change of the maximum height limit to 85 feet. Mr. Hopkins seconded the motion.

Mr. Fell asked for a modification to the motion to say 85 feet to the roof surface. Mr. Garcia responded that the Zoning Ordinance does not describe "building height" anywhere else.

Mr. Garcia asked for clarification on the motion as to whether it includes City staff's recommendation that the main pedestrian entrance be located on the street that the building is addressed off of. Ms. Yu said yes. Mr. Hopkins stated that his second still holds.

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

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

The motion passed by unanimous vote. Mr. Garcia stated that this case would be forwarded to Committee of the Whole on August 5, 2024.

F. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

G. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

H. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

I. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

J. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Garcia reported on the following:

- Comprehensive Plan – Staff sent out a draft of the Comprehensive Plan. The study session at the Plan Commission will be on August 22, 2024. Maps will be coming soon.

Ms. Simms stated that it would have been nice to have had some additional step to discuss the draft plan. She said that there is just something that happens with collaborative discussions. Mr. Garcia stated that while they have a tentative timeline, it is not set in stone, so City staff will be doing as many study sessions with the Plan Commission as needed before it becomes a case and they hold public hearings.

Mr. Hopkins did not see a reason why the draft plan could not be shared with the public when it is a public plan. Mr. Garcia stated the Plan Commission is the body that prepares the draft plan for City Council. If the Plan Commission members want to make the plan public now, then City staff can have conversations and make a decision on it. Mr. Hopkins felt that they need to have a conversation on the whole process. Chair Allred asked to have this built into the agenda for August 22, 2024. They talked about the timeline.

K. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

L. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Garcia, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

DRAFT

DATE: August 22, 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, Bill Rose, Chenxi Yu

MEMBERS ABSENT: Debarah McFarland

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Karen Simms

STAFF PRESENT: Teri Andel, Planning Administrative Assistant II; Breaden Belcher, Grants Division Manager; Tim Cowan, Public Works Director; Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner; Will Kolschowsky, Senior Management Analyst; Mayor Diane Marlin, Carol Mitten, City Administrator; Andrea Ruedi, Senior Advisor for Integrated Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Anne Feldmeier Adams

A. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

Chair Allred called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. Roll call was taken, and there was a quorum of the members present.

B. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

C. COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

D. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

E. STUDY SESSION

Imagine Urbana Comprehensive Plan Process to Date
How the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan Will Be Used
Discussion of Early Draft and Structure
Public Input on *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan Early Draft

Chair Allred opened this item on the agenda. He thanked City staff for all the work they had done putting together the draft plan. He also thanked the Plan Commission members for setting aside time to attend this special meeting.

He said that we have an early draft that he feels needs some work on the key content and on some issues with how it is organized, particularly when we think about how the Plan Commission uses the plan in the work that they do. He stated that he wanted to structure the discussion of the draft Comprehensive Plan by first focusing on the uses of the Comprehensive Plan and who it is used by. Secondly, thinking about what content is missing that needs to be in the plan so that it can be useful for the different users and stakeholders. Thirdly, he suggested talking about how the structure or the organization of the plan may also need to change as a result of their discussions. After this, he would like to spend time getting general reactions of the Plan Commission members' first look at the draft. Lastly, he wants to allow the public time to comment and provide input on the draft or the discussions that they have heard.

He mentioned that he had asked staff to brainstorm who the users might be. This would include City staff from various departments, elected officials, development community, residents and the business community. He invited City staff to make their presentation.

Carol Mitten, City Administrator, and Andrea Ruedi, Senior Advisor for Integrated Development, approached the Plan Commission.

Ms. Mitten stated that she has been involved since the beginning of the process when they first were coming up with ideas of what City staff wanted the new Comprehensive Plan to address. When meeting with Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Allred prior to this meeting, she recalled Mr. Hopkins saying, "Don't just make plans, use plans." She pointed out that one of the hallmarks of Mayor Marlin's two terms in office has been using plans to lay a foundation for action. These plans included What's in Your Square and the Facilities' Master Plan. The whole idea is to do a plan that leads to implementation. They understand that the most important asset we have besides the people that work here and live here is our streets, so they undertook a comprehensive pavement condition index analysis, which then fed into a newly revitalized and much more transparent Capital Improvement Plan, which they are very diligently implementing at a rate and in a way that we have not been able to in the past. So, it is their intention to make the new Comprehensive Plan realistic and to be a plan that can be implemented.

She went on to say that the Comprehensive Plan is supposed to be an overarching policy document that guides all place-based activity on the part of the City. They want one place where all activities of the different departments happen. They also want to include Mayor-Council goals and how to spend our American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

Ms. Mitten stated that it is important that the new Comprehensive Plan is authentic to the City of Urbana, and it will not be like anything else. This is why there has been a lot of public outreach and a lot of toggling between the input they have received from the public and the City staff. They also want the plan to reflect the broadest set of values for the community, to have a realistic sense of where we are starting, to tell a story of who we are today, and to have a realistic sense of what can be accomplished during the projection period.

She talked about the constraints of creating a new Comprehensive Plan. This includes the fact that the plan is intended to be a 10-20 year plan, so there are only certain things that we can accomplish

over this time period. Another constraint is resources. There are priorities over things that are not included because we do not have resources to accomplish them. She stated that this will be a very important guide for City staff as we go forward. It will help the Plan Commission to decide whether we should make an investment or approve a rezoning.

Ms. Ruedi talked about how *Imagine Urbana* will be used. She referred to a table stating how City Planners; Other City Staff, Elected Officials & Commissions; Developers, Architects & Contractors; and New & Existing Residents & Businesses would use the draft plan. She believes that the table will help people understand that the Comprehensive Plan is a broad-based document because it does affect a lot of users.

She reviewed the *Imagine Urbana* process with going out into the different wards and hosting meetings. She mentioned several reports that were created from the various outreach events that were held. She also noted when City staff gave an update to the Plan Commission on where they were in the process and the outcome of each event.

Ms. Ruedi then talked about calling overarching goals the “Big Ideas”, calling strategic action items “Big Moves” and “Little Moves”, and providing metrics to measure where we are at now, where we are going to go, and what we will accomplish.

She reviewed the reports that Ms. Mitten had briefly talked about. She explained the announcement and promotion of the draft plan review. She presented a list of future meetings that they plan to hold informal community discussions on the draft plan. She presented a list of meeting dates for public meetings before various boards and commissions, including the Plan Commission. She noted the tentative dates for the Plan Commission, Committee of the Whole and City Council once the public meetings have been held and a Final Draft of the plan is ready to be approved.

Chair Allred asked Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner, to go through how Planning staff uses the Comprehensive Plan for certain cases and where in the draft of the new Comprehensive Plan one could find the information that staff uses. Mr. Garcia stated that when a planner gets a call inquiring about rezoning a property, the planner will look at the Future Land Use Map to see whether the proposal to rezone a property is going to relate to what the map says. City staff is currently putting together the new Future Land Use Map with annotations and more detail than just listing a future land use designation. He stated that Planning staff also looks at the goals and objectives in the Comprehensive Plan to see how they relate to a proposal.

Chair Allred asked how the draft plan with the way it is organized with Big Ideas, Big Moves and Little Moves map onto goals and objectives and action items. Mr. Garcia replied that Big Ideas are the overarching goals of the plan. Big Moves are the objectives, and Little Moves are the action steps to meet those objectives.

Mr. Garcia went on to explain that Planning staff uses the Comprehensive Plan for other things like when someone says that they want to do a particular thing in a particular place. Planning staff will look in the Comprehensive Plan to see what it says about that. They are not just using the Comprehensive Plan for cases.

Mr. Rose stated that Big Move #2 was to revise the Zoning Ordinance so that it aligns with *Imagine Urbana*. The Plan Commission’s work hinges greatly on the Zoning Ordinance. He asked Mr. Garcia to elaborate on this. Mr. Garcia stated that the existing Future Land Use Map designates a

particular area west of Lincoln Avenue. The Zoning Ordinance did not align with the Comprehensive Plan Map designation, so City staff changed the zoning district to match up with the Comprehensive Plan. Another big issue that City staff has had with the Zoning Ordinance to date is that it was not updated to align with our current Comprehensive Plan, so City staff wants to address this quickly after the adoption of the new Comprehensive Plan.

The draft plan focuses on creating complete neighborhoods, which has more of a mix of housing types and maybe even some small-scale businesses. The current Zoning Ordinance does not allow this at all, so City staff would need to rewrite the Zoning Ordinance and create new zoning districts that aligns with the future land uses in the new Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Ruedi noted that Breaden Belcher, Grants Division Manager, and Tim Cowan, Director of Public Works, were present at the meeting and could speak about how they use the Comprehensive Plan in their day-to-day tasks as well.

Mr. Hopkins commented that there is a fundamental problem with what a Comprehensive Plan actually is. He explained that a Comprehensive Plan is focused, like the other plans that Ms. Mitten mentioned, on a particular component of City actions. The time frame and the image of long-term, unpredictable criteria and principles of physical development that may occur within 20 years or may not occur for 50 years or may never occur that we still have to be prepared for to avoid it happening too quickly without sufficient rehearsal to be prepared for how it is done. So, the notion that there is a projection period and actions to be ticked off is appropriate at one extreme for the Mayor-Council Annual Strategy Plan or for an organizational plan that is intended to prioritize budgets over four years or a Capital Improvement Plan, which is resource constrained. A Comprehensive Plan is about land development and infrastructure in the very long range, and it is not resource constrained because it is trying to be ahead of the possibility that resources become available, that the economy changes dramatically, and that we have principles, location ideas, and legal backing for zoning to be prepared for it. He felt that they needed to decouple part of what *Imagine Urbana* is trying to be in order to enable the City to have a Comprehensive Plan, which despite the name is not the City's overall organizational strategic plan. It is comprehensive in the sense that it includes all of the City and all of the things, not just the things we want to prioritize now or that we have the resources to act on, that we have to be prepared to deal with in the very, long run. He went on to say that the things that are missing are the land development infrastructure, Plan Commission, and Long-Range Transportation Plan activities. These will not fit in the current structure of the draft Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Mitten pointed out that Mr. Garcia had land use maps to still show the Plan Commission. She continued by noting that the previous Comprehensive Plan emphasized growth through annexation. While it makes sense to figure out what the City wants to do with the fringe areas, it is not what City staff expects to do in the next 20 years because the City cannot afford it and it has not been effective. This is important guidance for how we view what is inside Urbana. It is important guidance for Public Works. It is important guidance for people who acquire farmland thinking that the City is going to bring them sewer and streets. Mr. Hopkins replied that the reason the existing Comprehensive Plan looks this way is because annexation is what was happening. He mentioned several examples of developments that happened at the time. The fact that annexation is not happening now does not mean that we do not have to have policies and expectations about how development will occur at our edges. At some point, in some way, it is likely to occur. If we do not want it to occur or if we want it to occur in a particular way, we have to say so. The 2005

Comprehensive Plan still says if people want to develop in certain places, then the City wants a certain kind of connectivity.

He stated that it is okay to say in a future plan that we are focused on infill, but the existing Comprehensive Plan confounds infill in incremental and does not explain them. It is no where near specific enough about this kind of choices that we need to be prepared for. It can be this sort of short run, resource constrained, action-oriented organizational focus for the next five to ten years, but that is not what a comprehensive plan needs to be able to provide. Ms. Mitten responded that unlike the existing Comprehensive Plan that we basically let be what it was. Aside from one neighborhood plan that came out, the plan was not revisited. There was not any reporting out on the progress towards the ideas that were reflected in it. The idea for the new Comprehensive Plan is that it will be revised every five years.

She mentioned that economic trends in places that are highly desirable might occur very quickly in major cities with rapid growth. She said that she did not see that happening in Urbana. So, it is the responsibility of City staff as they see trends happening to catch up. Mr. Hopkins stated that the whole point of a comprehensive plan is to not to have to catch up. It is to prepare ahead of time so that we have the frame to use to make the decisions because we do not know when they are going to come up. The draft of the new Comprehensive Plan focuses heavily on downtown Urbana and on a particular notion of walkability. He said that if we cannot think beyond a short term this is what is happening now and this is what we are dealing with, then we are not thinking the way a comprehensive plan needs to think. He said that we need to think centennially and act daily.

Tim Cowen, Director of Public Works, stated that he likes “think centennially” and felt that is what they need to do. He agreed that they need to think about growth outward; however, they need to be realistic about it. If the City’s Comprehensive Plan states that we are ready to grow in a way that the City cannot sustain, then that is an issue. He mentioned that there are people who approach the City staff about developments that are not even located within the Urbana Champaign Sanitary District’s planning area. We are talking about tens of millions of dollars that if we build the infrastructure and the development does not happen, then the City is sitting on it and the infrastructure is deteriorating underneath us, and we do not get any use out of it. Conversely, we are also dealing with development up now, which is a limitation and a big focus in Urbana of infill and growth. He said that the last 100 years, the City has not been diligent enough about analyzing the infill developments based on the systems that we put in place to be able to handle those things. There are some points in *Imagine Urbana* that talks about pursuing our infrastructure so that it is financially and environmentally compliant and also about building things and being cognizant of what we have got. The City has developments that over the years were potentially bad buys for the City in terms of not having money in the bank to maintain. He mentioned that they recently overhauled the Land Development Code and it has been useful to stop letting people do things that the City cannot sustain. City staff is trying to look holistically about the whole thing and not repeat mistakes that have happened in the past. He said that he understands that we need to be prepared for these things, have enough education to talk about those things so that when they come up, the City can be real with developers about what is and is not realistic for the City.

Mr. Hopkins stated that this tells him that we need the level of detail in principles and policies that would relate to infill, sewer capacity, and development, which is about location, gravity and density or demand. This matters in redevelopment or intensified development. The problems we have had with reconstruction and expansion ought to be identified because that is what the Plan Commission needs to be aware of. Before we needed to have the Urbana-Champaign Sanitary boundary

agreement outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. It is part of the annotation of the Future Land Use Map. This is what the developers, the Plan Commission, and people who come to talk with the Planning staff need to have evident and visible. The level of detail needed is not that we need infill, but tell us what the infrastructure capacity is, where it is, and whether or not it is a problem. Mr. Cowan mentioned that when working on the maps for the future Comprehensive Plan, they are making the Sanitary District's boundary visible so a developer knows where there are limitations for expansion with water service.

Mr. Garcia pointed out that the Public Works staff are working on creating these [data and tools] over time, but we do not want to hold up adopting the proposed draft plan until we have that level of detail.

Mr. Garcia noted that one reason City staff went to using online software hosting platform is so that when changes are made to the plan over time, the current plan will be available online. Our current Comprehensive Plan has many amendments and you cannot find one place to see a revised current plan, so City staff wants to have the new plan all in one place online.

He stated that he wants to share the draft of the online Master map. Mr. Hopkins shared his concern that the map is being talked about as an afterthought of the draft Comprehensive Plan, but the policies, moves, actions and statements in *Imagine Urbana* he does not agree with. If they cannot talk about them through the representation of the map the content, then City staff and the Plan Commission are not on the same page.

Chair Allred stated that he has a problem with this as well. The draft plan talks about encouraging incremental development. He asked what is the capacity for incremental development and where is it going to happen. If we are going to say that we are going to prioritize incremental development, then we should know that we have the ability to absorb some incremental development in particular locations and that absorbing incremental development in those locations makes sense in terms of other priorities, such as walkability and providing housing. The draft plan does not have a lot of specificity. The vagueness in the draft plan comes back to spatial analysis, the maps that do not exist, to support the ideas in the draft plan.

Mr. Hopkins stated that it does not make sense to jump to the map, because there is a whole set of policy questions and focus questions that need answers; otherwise, it would be a wide-open discussion. Mr. Garcia stated that his intention was to share the map at this meeting to give the Plan Commission members a chance to form ideas and discussion topics for a future meeting.

Ms. Yu stated that not every city has a comprehensive plan. She added that there is a history for why cities create comprehensive plans. She asked City staff if there was a shift in how cities approach comprehensive plans. Her understanding is that City staff wants to make a living document to best serve the City of Urbana that will always be up-to-date as new pieces become available. However, Mr. Hopkins has a very different idea of what a comprehensive plan is and should be. Mr. Hopkins, with his 50 years of planning background, may have a different idea than our City staff. She believes that we need to get a mutual understanding before we get into more detail of the content in the draft plan. Chair Allred stated that it is not a question of whether the plan is a living document. Ideally, people would love if the plan was updated every 5 years; however, this is a question of resources and not being able to update it.

Chair Allred stated his understanding of Mr. Hopkins' comments to be whether the draft plan has the content to be able to provide guidance for the work that the Plan Commission does, for the work that City staff does, and to send the appropriate signals that allow developers and land owners to make the kind of decisions about investments that they want to make. Ms. Yu replied that she understands this; however, City staff is trying to make an authentic plan for the City residents driven by the approach to have more inspiration. This type of authentic plan would not do things that Mr. Hopkins mentioned until more of a core part of a comprehensive plan is slowly added to the proposed visionary plan. Chair Allred explained that the Plan Commission needs the Comprehensive Plan to function for them immediately. If the draft plan is adopted in December, and in January, someone proposes a Planned Unit Development in a particular neighborhood, the Plan Commission needs things in the new Comprehensive Plan to be able to make a recommendation to City Council.

Ms. Yu recalled that for every case, City staff always refers to the 2005 Comprehensive Plan to help the Plan Commission make a decision. She asked if the content in the draft Comprehensive Plan have the information they would need for future cases. Chair Allred stated that it is not just about guiding the Plan Commission for making decisions. He pointed out that the Comprehensive Plan is the legal basis for zoning and changes to zoning. The courts will defer to cities exercising their police power and zoning and making zoning changes if the cities are basing their decisions on something, historically this has been the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan keeps the City out of trouble.

Mr. Garcia stated that City staff had discussed and what he is hearing at this meeting is that they need to kick the tires on this plan from the perspective of different end users for the plan. If it does not serve the needs of the different user groups, then what good is the plan. City staff will figure out how to structure this and go forward with it.

Mr. Fell stated that as an architect, what gets him in trouble with the Comprehensive Plan is there are quality items in the Plan, and the way he has to use it are not quality items. They are definable, measurable things in the Comprehensive Plan. He noted that a developer's perception of a goal in the Plan may not be the same the City's intention for the goal. A developer may believe that he is presenting the City with the goal they want, and he is not.

Mr. Fell stated that the problem with the existing Comprehensive Plan is that it is outdated enough that the developers cannot use it to back a decision. So, it is very important that the Comprehensive Plan stays up-to-date and that the Zoning Ordinance matches the Plan.

Chair Allred stated that the Plan Commission also needs the Future Land Use descriptions that go with the uses so when a developer comes to the City to do a Planned Unit Development (PUD), they can not only see the goals or requirements for a PUD in the Zoning Ordinance, but they can look at the future land use descriptions and what incorporates the community's desires/aspirations for particular parts of the City by seeing how it is reflected in characteristics that would describe development in those neighborhoods. He stated that there is not enough nuance in the description use categories in the draft plan. Mr. Garcia stated that City staff is trying to pair it down; however, it seems that they might have been getting a little too less fine grained with the future land uses. Chair Allred replied that we have different neighborhoods and different developments in those neighborhoods. We have heard different willingness to accept changes to those development types.

He went on to say that this ties in with being more walkable. Walkability looks different with different development types in different locations around the City. We need more nuance to be able to say where these things apply and what they look like when they apply to those places. When we start sharing this with the public, this is the kind of information we need so that the public has something to comment on. If we suggest changes to a person's neighborhood that they live in or to a commercial corridor that they frequent, then they have more of an interest to comment on those areas as opposed to generally saying that we want to make the City more walkable. What does that mean? Does that mean we are going to build an apartment building on my block? Does it mean that the City is going to install sidewalks? He believes that these kinds of ideas need to be more fleshed out.

Mr. Rose stated his understanding of what had been discussed. He recalled that Ms. Mitten said the Comprehensive Plan tells a story of who we are today. He commented that the Zoning Ordinance is not telling a story; instead, it is a legal document with a formal structure that serves a distinct purpose, and it is the first document that a developer looks at. The Comprehensive Plan would be the second document they refer to.

He stated that he gets the feel that there are promotional elements in the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed draft plan states that the City will be walkable; whereas, in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, walkability arises from the formal specific task of the Plan.

He stated that his take on the conversation so far is that there is a formal, legal structure that is anything but telling a story. The Comprehensive Plan is providing a structure for decision making.

Ms. Mitten stated that *Examine Urbana* tells a story of who we are today. To her, the Comprehensive Plan is an expression of we aspire to be over a time frame. It is grounded in reality, and that is what they want to bring to the plan about implement ability. So, while it may not be a traditional narrative story, she said that she feels it is still telling a story. The Comprehensive Plan is a policy underpinning to the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Hopkins stated that he feels the Comprehensive Plan should start with a story. The first part of the Plan should be that story aspiration "This is what will be". From this story, we need to rehearse to the public the details of what that story means. We need to spell out, as Mr. Allred, stated the details of what the changes or ideas mean to specific neighborhoods or areas of the City. Chair Allred added that we need this kind of information for people to be able to provide input on it. It does not do any good to say that the City will be walkable, because no one knows what that means. He felt that there was too much jargony language in the draft plan that the average person is not going to really know how to interpret. Another issue is that people do not know what this means in their specific neighborhood on their block on in a place they frequent. As it is currently written, the draft plan does not provide the Plan Commission and City Council anything to be able to assess or push back on a development proposal. So, he expressed that he is skeptical on how useful the proposed new Comprehensive Plan will be.

Chair Allred suggested that the Plan Commission give City staff some tasks or some direction for staff to try and address some of their issues.

Ms. Mitten stated that her understanding is that some of the Plan Commission is not happy with the lack of nuance in the draft plan regarding future land use descriptions/designations. Chair Allred added that another part for staff to work on is explaining how some of the ideas in the draft plan

translate into development types. What does increment development mean for various neighborhoods? Same for walkability...what does walkability mean in general? And what does it mean in specific places? There are overarching goals or more like themes that should show up or suggest ways that particular places in the City could change, should change, might change, or should not change so that we can achieve these things that we have heard from the community are important.

Ms. Mitten stated that she was trying to chunk it out. She suggested starting with the basics and let staff make changes, and then they go from there. Chair Allred stated that he agreed. Since, staff is planning to take the draft plan to the public in two weeks, then they have to chunk it over a timeframe to allow this to proceed in a meaningful way. Ms. Mitten commented that if it is the sentiment of the Plan Commission that taking what we have now to the public is a useless exercise, then we will regroup. Chair Allred said that he would not say that the draft plan is useless; however, there is work to be done, and the Plan Commission is willing to help. Ms. Mitten stated that she acknowledged that there is work to be done and feels that there is useful information to share. If the Plan Commission is willing to help, then City staff will work on making changes in the next two weeks to make their interaction with the public more meaningful.

Mr. Hopkins shared his vision of how the public meetings should be held. He envisioned a table and four panels on easels that contain the following information:

- 1) Future Urbana Map – Since Mr. Garcia and he have already been talking, they could work out the details of the map. He mentioned that he already has ideas of how to create it. He said that there should be two copies of the map: one on a panel and one on the table so it can be discussed easier.
- 2) Big Ideas and Big Moves – He stated that they should go with what is in the draft plan even though he has concerns about both the structure of them and the content of some of them. He felt that putting the information out there is a way to have a discussion in the neighborhoods. They do not have time to create something else.
- 3) Examples of Development Types that we are imagining and do not currently exist in Urbana – He said that if we are going to talk about mixed-use neighborhoods in multiple kinds of neighborhoods in Urbana, which we basically do not have, with a couple of exceptions, we need to think about how to describe them to the public. He can imagine how different neighborhoods are going to react because he has been through this before. He noted that these should be on the easel as well as printouts on the table. Each development type should be on separate paper so they can be easily seen by several people.
- 4) Different Layers of Future Land Use Map – He said that there should be two or three printed maps showing the information of the different layers.

Mr. Hopkins stated that this does not actually involve creating new ideas between now and then or even discussing or deliberating about those ideas between now and then. However, it comes up with representations with which to deliberate, which will be helpful to the Plan Commission as well as the neighborhood groups.

Ms. Ruedi stated that she agrees with Mr. Hopkins vision. She mentioned that City staff is getting feedback from the public already on the plan, so they could provide answers to the public's questions too at the public sessions.

Mr. Rose stated that he shares in the notion that the key for public involvement hinges on having a map. He wondered if City staff has in mind the level of change from the 2005 Comprehensive Plan might be presented in map form to the public. Mr. Garcia stated that he has two printed maps that they can share with the public. They also have the online map that includes a layer showing where changes are being suggested.

Mr. Garcia talked about the reason for paring down the Future Land Use designations. He said it was by design to simplify things. He said that with regards to neighborhoods, every neighborhood can have a certain intensity of development. He noted that some businesses are allowed everywhere in Urbana, even in residential homes. So, when City staff paired down the list of Future Land Use designations, it was with the idea that there is a continuum of intensity but that some level of residential and business would be allowable in most areas of the City.

Mr. Hopkins stated that we need to acknowledge that the neighborhoods are different types, and some of those differences are deeply embedded after long, long deliberations and mean a lot to people in those neighborhoods. So, lumping them together in the Future Land Use designations is not going to tell us what we need to know. Mr. Garcia commented that when we rewrite the Zoning Ordinance, that is when we are able to get into those nuances of the particular form of a neighborhood. Mr. Hopkins noted that we are trying to say in the Comprehensive Plan that we recognize this neighborhood in Urbana. We have been developing this neighborhood and nurturing it in a particular way and are not going to be treated like every other neighborhood in the City. This goes for every neighborhood in Urbana. The way this discussion needs to happen, if they are going to be able to do anything as a Plan Commission without having a lot of people in the audience at each meeting screaming at us, is to acknowledge and do some of that rehearsal now as part of the draft Comprehensive Plan. The City wants more mixed use, but we have to work on that hard now, not pretend to save it for later.

Ms. Mitten stated that as they work through what is an appropriate distinction among neighborhoods that is relevant to the level of the Comprehensive Plan, that we are mindful of the values that are reflected for the whole City of Urbana and that no neighborhood gets to adopt its own set of values. Some neighborhoods in other cities are seated in things that are not appropriate and would violate the City's values. Chair Allred said this is true, but we can have a value for the City of Urbana as a whole that we want development that is financially resilient.

Ms. Yu said that going through the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, she found that Chapters 5 & 6 are what the Plan Commission wants to make us feel more comfortable.

Chair Allred asked about what is next for the Plan Commission. Mr. Garcia stated that now that they have good tasks to work on in the next two weeks, City staff can bring to the next Plan Commission meeting what they intend to take to the public during the public sessions.

Mr. Garcia shared the online version of the Future Land Use Map with the Plan Commission. He noted that Nicole Darby, with the Champaign County GIS (CCGIS) Consortium was helpful in creating the map. He noted that it includes layers, which includes the Community Development Target Areas ("Special Development Areas"); high priority items from the Urbana Pedestrian Master Plan; short-term, mid-term and long-term projects from the Bicycle Plan; Future Land Use categories; and a commenting section. He welcomed suggestions to make changes to the map to make it better.

Mr. Hopkins said that we need to give people versions of the information at the public sessions. He did not know if the online map should be shared with the public because someone who does not have knowledge of GIS layers might not know how to work the map. However, it could be useful to have it available at the public sessions. Mr. Garcia stated that they have provided options for people to submit their comments either in person marking on stuff or providing online components to capture different audiences.

Chair Allred asked if the only audience member wished to speak about the draft Plan.

Annie Feldmeier Adams approached the Plan Commission. She stated that she is for dense, walkable, bikeable neighborhoods where there are businesses. She has heard from other people that it is hard to develop in Urbana. She stated that she thinks the draft Comprehensive Plan is a great plan and that it is really exciting. She is grateful for all the work the City staff has put into the plan. She noted that one thing she asks is where she wants to live as she ages if she stays in Urbana. She suggested having a poster/panel asking this to get more public input.

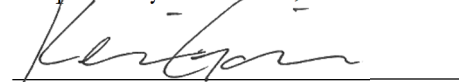
Mr. Rose inquired about the structuring of future Plan Commission regarding the draft Comprehensive Plan. Chair Allred stated that he would work with City staff to create the structure for discussion at future meetings. He pointed out that at some point the study sessions would end and a public hearing would be brought before the Plan Commission for a recommendation to City Council.

Ms. Yu commented that it seems we are trying to do things using newer technology. She has not been trained and is trying to learn the newer technology. Mr. Hopkins stated that this is a major issue for some people. He noted that for the last 5 to 10 years, he has been involved in trying to create online ways to handle access and manage plans. There is a system in Illinois, Maryland and Texas, and none of them get used. He said that when he and Mr. Allred met with Mr. Garcia, they are worked from hard copies. Mr. Garcia responded that some people may prefer to view it online. With it being hosted online, whenever the plan gets updated, staff can easily turn it into a pdf form for people to be able to print it off.

F. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Garcia, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission