



APPROVED

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING OF AUGUST 20, 2013
CITY OF ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS**

The Rock Island Planning Commission held a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee meeting in the City Hall Council Chambers at 1528 – 3rd Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois. Present were Commissioners Ed Hanna, Ted Johnson, David Levin, Jason Lopez, Diane Oestreich and Lorian Swanson. Commissioners Michael Creger, Tim Meegan, Norm Moline, Bruce Peterson and Berlinda Tyler-Jamison were absent. The meeting was called to order by Chairman David Levin at 5:15 PM. Also in attendance were Ben Griffith, Brandy Howe and Consultant Jessica Schmiedicke.

AN ORDER APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 2, 2013 MEETING

The Commission considered the matter of approval of the minutes of the July 2, 2013 meeting. Chairman Levin stated that the minutes were revised by staff as directed at the August 6th meeting and asked Planning staff to explain. Mr. Griffith reported that he had added the requested portion listing the corrections to the court reporter transcript and that he had revised the portion Commissioner Moline had asked to be amended. He further explained that since Commissioner Moline would not be able to attend, he had asked him about the amendment. Commissioner Moline e-mailed Mr. Griffith some verbiage which was then read into the record. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Oestreich made a motion to approve the minutes with the revisions as provided by Commissioner Moline's e-mail. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion and the Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes.

AN ORDER APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 6, 2013 MEETING

The Commission considered the matter of approval the minutes of the August 6, 2013 meeting. Chairman Levin asked if any revisions or corrections were needed and hearing none, asked for a motion. Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Hanna seconded the motion and the Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes.

AN ORDER APPROVING THE WRITTEN AGENDA

The Commission considered the matter of approval of the written agenda for the meeting. Chairman Levin asked if there were any suggested amendments to the written agenda and seeing none, asked for a motion. Commissioner Lopez made a motion to approve the written

agenda as presented, which was then seconded by Commissioner Hanna. The Commissioners then voted unanimously to approve the written agenda.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN KICK-OFF MEETING

Ms. Howe provided a brief overview of the Comprehensive Plan process and reviewed the results of the Planning Commissioner/Department Head survey, adding that she had received 13 responses. She then introduced Jessica Schmiedicke of Vanderwalle & Associates to the Commissioners. Ms. Schmiedicke provided a PowerPoint presentation explaining what a Comprehensive Plan is and what is included, describing the various components of the plan and the tasks involved to produce the document. She explained that her firm would be working closely with Planning staff and outlined the schedule as dictated by the State as part of the grant award.

Commissioner Johnson asked if the Planning Commission and Comprehensive Plan were appropriate venues to review City park facilities and needs if there was a Parks and Recreation Board. He also stated that the survey questions seemed geared more towards department heads than Planning Commissioners. Ms. Schmiedicke answered that it was part of the review of existing conditions and would provide direction and guidance going forward.

Commissioner Oestreich detailed a list of questions, comments and concerns on various pages of the Existing Conditions Report, including the list of plan components, timeline, spellings, data sources, household income and housing values. She asked if the data was available to retailers why it couldn't be made available to Planning staff.

Chairman Levin suggested contacting the local Board of Realtors and provided a name and number for staff to call. He also suggested that making infrastructure information, such as fiber optic networks, more readily available would assist area realtors in locating property for development, because if the info took too long to locate, developers would go elsewhere.

Ms. Schmiedicke stated that her firm would be conducting a gap analysis that will go far beyond what is available from the Census data, which is a standard baseline for initial data collection.

Commissioner Johnson referred to the Existing Conditions Report statement about out-of-date ordinances, such as those dealing with zoning, signage and landscape, asking what was missing or needed to be updated. Ms. Schmiedicke answered that she had only begun to review those ordinances and would defer to staff.

Commissioner Oestreich stated that the report should also list schools because the quality of schools is one of the most important things buyers look at when looking for a home, asking how we are going to attract middle-class families who are concerned about education.

Commissioner Oestreich stated that she was also concerned that the adopted 2009 International Residential Code requires sprinklering of homes. Chairman Levin responded that

the Illinois and Iowa Realtors Association wanted homeowners to have options, such as education and fire extinguishers, instead of adding \$15-30,000 to the cost of a house in a very competitive market. He added that the Fire Marshals and unions such as the Plumbers and Pipefitters had also endorsed the sprinklering of homes.

Ms. Howe reviewed some of the upcoming meeting dates and was asked by the Commissioners to send a list when available. She reported that there had been a minor glitch in the survey software when first posted, but that it was promptly fixed.

Ms. Schmiedicke reviewed the Community Leaders Meeting earlier that day and stated that it had been very productive with many good ideas for focus groups and outreach meetings with underserved populations around the City.

Commissioner Oestreich asked if outreach to Black Hawk College was with the real college or with the Adult Education Center in Rock Island. Commissioner Hanna answered that he had attended the meeting earlier that day and said that it was intended for Rock Island residents who attended Black Hawk College since many of the students who attended Augustana College were not from Rock Island.

Commissioner Oestreich stated that a lot of people did not go to the MLK Center and that having some of the meetings away from there, perhaps at a school or other location would be better because she would hate to have no one attended. Ms. Schmiedicke answered that the outreach meetings would be geographically dispersed for greater variety of input.

Commissioner Johnson stated that Rock Island did not have the luxury of being out in the middle of nowhere, that it was impacted by neighbors and how do we address these issues. Ms. Schmiedicke answered that Rock Island does not exist in a bubble and that the intergovernmental relations section would probably address some of those issues.

Commissioner Oestreich stated that the City had gone out of its way to work on consistent solar and wind power regulations as part of the unified zoning ordinance and that all major changes need to be carefully negotiated.

Commissioner Swanson stated that the City has always been looked upon as the poor stepsister to overcome its negative perception throughout the Quad Cities, even though the best parks are located in Rock Island, for instance.

Commissioner Lopez stated that he tells his kids how lucky they are to live in such a great place where they can walk or bike to stores and he would like to see the bus service expanded and that part of that effort may include educating the general public on the benefits of the local transit service. He referred to a book he read recently about World War II prisoners who, in a desperate situation, were lead by great ingenuity to plan great escapes as a catalyst for improvement.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Karen Williams of 852 – 19th Street in Rock Island expressed concerns about the length of the survey and that it might cause some respondents not to spend as much time on their answers, and liked the idea of a shortened survey questionnaire.

Peter Ruklik of 2128 – 22nd Street in Rock Island stated how he and his wife lived in an area where they could walk, ride their bicycles or take the bus to work, conduct personal business or run errands. He stated that he was seeing more people and people of all types do the same. Mr. Ruklik was concerned that not everyone shared his enthusiasm for such a healthy lifestyle and feared that some decisionmakers may not take the efforts of the Comprehensive Planning process seriously and possibly ignore it when making important decisions.

Linda Anderson of 1718 – 21st Street in Rock Island, stated that she was concerned with the low number of responses to the Community-Wide Survey and urged everyone to push their friends and neighbors to fill out the survey, adding that expanding on answers would help in collecting data for preparation of the plan.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to be discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Hanna made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:38 PM. Commissioner Lopez seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. The next meeting of the Planning Commission would be September 3, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Griffith". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ben Griffith, AICP