

Planning Commission

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting #2

September 17, 2013 at 5:15 PM
City Hall Council Chambers (3rd floor)
1528 3rd Avenue, Rock Island

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes of the regular meeting of September 2, 2013
3. Approval of the written Agenda
4. Comprehensive Plan
 - a. Project update
 - b. Overview of workshop and focus groups outcomes
 - c. Identify policy and development priorities
 - d. Next steps
5. Public Comments
6. Other Business
7. Adjournment



UNAPPROVED

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 3, 2013
CITY OF ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS**

The Rock Island Planning Commission held its regularly scheduled meeting in the City Hall Council Chambers at 1528 – 3rd Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois. Present were Commissioners Michael Creger, Bruce Harding, Ted Johnson, David Levin, Jason Lopez, Norm Moline, Kevin Nolan, Diane Oestreich, Bruce Peterson and Berlinda Tyler-Jamison. Commissioner Lorian Swanson was absent. The meeting was called to order by Chairman David Levin at 5:16 PM. Also in attendance were Alan Fries and Ben Griffith.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Levin announced that the Mayor had appointed two new Planning Commissioners and asked Bruce Harding and Kevin Nolan to introduce themselves. After doing so, the rest of the Planning Commissioners welcomed them to the Commission.

AN ORDER APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 20, 2013 MEETING

The Commission considered the matter of approval of the minutes of the August 20, 2013 meeting. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Lopez seconded the motion and the Commissioners unanimously approved said 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 seconded by Commissioner Creger. The Commissioners then voted unanimously to approve the written agenda.

PROCEDURAL EXPLANATION

Chairman Levin provided a brief explanation of the public hearing procedures for the benefit of the Planning Commissioners and those in attendance.

**CASE #2013-09: REQUEST FOR A FINAL SITE PLAN FOR A PUD
(PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT) DISTRICT LOCATED AT 1301 – 22ND AVENUE**

Next there came before the Planning Commission Case #2013-09: a request for a final site plan for a PUD (planned unit development) district located for Friendship Place, located at 1301 – 22nd Avenue. Chairman Levin announced that he was on the Board of Directors of Friendship Manor and would need to recuse himself from the proceedings. He passed the gavel to Vice-Chairman Diane Oestreich and she chaired the meeting. Vice-Chairman Oestreich asked Mr. Fries to introduce the case. After presenting the staff report, Mr. Fries was asked if there were any additional variances being requested and he replied that none were.

Hearing no further questions from the Commissioners for Planning staff, Vice-Chairman Oestreich asked the applicant to step forward. Mr. Scott Steiner, Director of Plant Operations at Friendship Manor, addressed the Commissioners. He stated that they had received 14 commitments for 13 units, that the soil removed from the site was going to the site of the City's new police station and that the sidewalk on the south side of 21st Avenue had been deleted due to the steepness of the slope for their elderly residents.

Vice-Chairman Oestreich asked if there would be landscaping on the 22nd Avenue side of the site since that was the front for the neighbors, but the rear for the site. Mr. Steiner replied that a fence had been proposed and approved for three sides of the site, that it would be nicely landscaped and would also have a limestone retaining wall. Mr. Fries added that the decorative metal picket fence was approved as part of a variance in the original PUD request.

Hearing no further questions from the Commissioners, and seeing none from the audience, Vice-Chairman Oestreich closed the public hearing and asked for a motion.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the PUD request as presented, which Commissioner Creger seconded. After a brief discussion, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the PUD request to the City Council.

Afterwards, Vice-Chairman Oestreich returned the gavel to Chairman Levin and he chaired the rest of the meeting.

**CASE #2013-10: REQUEST FOR REZONING FROM ORT (OFFICE/RESEARCH PARK AND
TECHNOLOGY) DISTRICT TO B-4 (HIGHWAY/INTENSIVE BUSINESS) DISTRICT
LOCATED AT 4480 – 48TH AVENUE COURT**

Next there came before the Planning Commission Case #2013-10: a request for a rezoning from ORT (office/research park and technology) district to B-4 (highway/intensive business) district for property located at 4480 – 48th Avenue Court. Chairman Levin asked Mr. Fries to present the staff report. Mr. Fries pointed out that there were several parcels in the surrounding area which were zoned both ORT and B-4 and that all four owners of the four building units had signed authorizations for the rezoning of the property. Members of the Planning Commission asked if the building was in a flood zone, if there would be any outside storage in the fenced area at the rear, and what business was the proposed one replacing. Mr. Fries stated that the applicant was present and could probably best answer those questions.

Hearing no further questions from the Commissioners for Planning staff, Chairman Levin asked the applicant to step forward. Mr. Kyle Woeber approached the podium to address the Commissioners. He stated that the business in the space that was leaving was a textile and uniform business out of Cedar Rapids. Mr. Woeber stated that his business was a paintless dent removal business that “pushes and pulls” the dents out without having to do traditional body work or painting. He continued that his business was mobile, usually going to the customers home or business and to local car dealers, adding that most of his business was due to hail damage. Mr. Woeber stated that he could repair dents as large as a basketball in size and that although his employees had trucks and vans that go to the jobsite, none would be parked at the property since his employees took them home in order to respond to calls. He also said that on that rare occasion when a customer did come to his office, they had a roll-up door and that he could pull the vehicle inside to do any work.

Hearing no further questions from the Commissioners, and seeing none from the audience, Chairman Levin closed the public hearing and asked for a motion.

Commissioner Moline made a motion to approve the rezoning as requested, which was seconded by Commissioner Tyler-Jamison. After a brief discussion, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the rezoning request to the City Council.

CASE #2013-11: REVIEW OF FINAL SITE PLAN FOR A PUD (PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT)
DISTRICT LOCATED AT APPROXIMATELY 3200 BLACKHAWK ROAD

Next there came before the Planning Commission Case #2013-11: a request for a final site plan approval for a PUD (planned unit development) district located at approximately 3200 Blackhawk Road. Chairman Levin asked Mr. Fries to present the staff report. Commissioner Moline asked where the stormwater retention area was located and where it would go. Mr. Fries answered that he wasn't sure of the exact location of the retention area but that the Public Works Department had approved the stormwater drainage plan and that the applicant could perhaps address the location of the retention area.

Hearing no further questions from the Commissioners for Planning staff, Chairman Levin asked the applicant to step forward. Mr. Bob Buker approached the podium to address the Commissioners. Mr. Buker stated that the retention area was 1-1½ acres in size and that all the stormwater on the site drained into that area; afterwards, it went to the Rock River to the south.

Commissioner Oestreich asked about the portion of property along Blackhawk Road and the rest of the development which had not already been developed. Mr. Buker replied that he was reserving the parcels along Blackhawk Road for commercial development, that the residential units were upscale rentals going for \$1,290 per month, not Section 8 and/or subsidized.

In response to the Commissioners' questions about stormwater retention, Mr. Buker stated that the drainage system was designed to accommodate stormwater from the entire site when completely developed and that there was an outfall to the Rock River, all of which had been approved by the Public Works Department. He stated that there would be a “tall green fence” of evergreen trees planted around the retention area and perimeter of the site that the neighbors should like. Commissioner Peterson asked Mr. Fries if a landscape plan had been submitted to Planning staff for review and Mr. Fries replied that it had not.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the depth of the stormwater retention pond and whether or not a fence would be needed and whether or not the Commission should make it a condition of their approval.

Hearing no further questions or discussion from the Commissioners, Chairman Levin asked if any members of the audience cared to comment.

Mr. Virgil Mayberry approached the podium to address the Commissioners. Mr. Mayberry stated that he was of the understanding that when the development was first proposed, that it was going to be condos, not rentals, and wanted to know what happened? He stated that he was concerned that it would become "Arsenal Courts East" and hadn't heard anything about the development becoming a rental property, adding that the Planning Commission had made a mistake. Mr. Fries stated that the development had been condos but the developer had sold only one unit. Mr. Buker added that he had originally intended to sell condos, but that the market demand was not there, but it was strong for upscale rental units.

Hearing no further questions or discussion from the audience, Chairman Levin closed the public hearing and asked for a motion.

After a brief discussion, Commissioner Peterson made a motion to recommend approval of the PUD as requested, subject to submittal of a landscape plan to Planning staff. Commissioner Oestreich seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the PUD request to the City Council, subject to submittal of the landscape plan.

**REVIEW OF A PRELIMINARY PLAT OF "THE MANOR OF ROCK ISLAND" SUBDIVISION
LOCATED AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF 26TH AVENUE AND 7TH STREET**

Next there came before the Planning Commission a review of a preliminary plat: "The Manor of Rock Island" subdivision located at the southeast corner of 26th Avenue and 7th Street. Chairman Levin asked Mr. Fries to present the staff report and a detailed listing of the variances requested by the applicant. The Planning Commissioners asked about the variances, who specifically was the applicant, the absence of parking lots and stormwater retention. Mr. Fries answered that the variances were requested in order for the applicant to meet the targeted density or number of dwelling units for the development, that the development consisted of single-family and two-family structures with garages and driveways, negating the need for large parking lots, and that the Public Works Department would be responsible for reviewing and approving the stormwater system.

Commissioner Moline stated that he was concerned with density and that the density the developer wants may not be the density the City wants, asking what the density would be if the variances were not approved. Mr. Fries answered that the redevelopment of the site reduced the number of dwelling units from 102 to 52, roughly half of the current density and that he had not calculated the differences in density if the variances were not approved, adding that the applicant was present and that perhaps he or his consultant could answer.

Commissioner Oestreich stated that she agreed with earlier statements about stormwater requirements and that by clearing the site, the developer would essentially have a "blank slate" to work from, and that

the developer should be required to build as if it were new. She also asked how many people were going to live in each unit?

Commissioner Johnson stated that he was not concerned about density since the redevelopment would reduce it by half for this particular site and that zero lot line development could work and that it could be attractive.

Hearing no further questions for Planning staff, Chairman Levin asked the applicant to step forward. Mr. Steve Schmidt of MSA Professional Services approached the podium to address the Commissioners. He introduced himself as the surveyor of record for the project and that the applicant would also be providing comments. Mr. Schmidt stated that the plat was a preliminary subdivision plat, meaning that it was still in the design phase and that the stormwater system would be designed in accordance with the City's Stormwater Control Ordinance and the Public Works Department's approval.

Mr. Stephen Clark approached the podium to address the podium. Mr. Clark identified himself as the developer for the Rock Island Housing Authority (RIHA) and Community Housing Services (CHS). He explained how the 15-year Low Income Tax Credit (LITC) program worked and how the 52 dwelling units proposed would barely meet the investors' requirements for a return on their investment. Mr. Clark stated that the project's proximity to RIHA's Cascade Gardens would allow him to utilize RIHA's rental office and maintenance staff for the Manor Homes project, as well as allow the Manor Homes residents to utilize Cascade Gardens' recreational facilities. He went on to say that HUD was strongly promoting this type of development and that we would see more of them in the future.

When asked about the street names, Mr. Clark answered that the names were merely placeholders and that he did not want a street named after himself. Commissioner Moline asked if he had considered building a "pocket park" or something similar in line with open space considerations for new urbanism concepts. Mr. Clark answered that he preferred to build his developments in areas with facilities close by to encourage interaction throughout the community rather than keeping the residents on the property.

Commissioner Lopez stated that he felt the density was too high and that it was an injustice to the city when people were packed together like sardines, especially when the site was to be demolished and the developer was starting with a clean slate.

Commissioner Oestreich stated that she liked the idea of mixed incomes and that every unit had a garage and driveway, adding that she agreed with Commissioner Moline that a pocket park or similar open space should be provided.

Several other Commissioners expressed their satisfaction with the development proposal and Mr. Clark's approach to subsidized public housing.

After further discussion, Commissioner Johnson made a motion to recommend approval of the preliminary plat as proposed with all of the variances requested, including the suggested street names. Commissioner Tyler-Jamison seconded the motion. The Planning Commission then voted to recommend approval of the preliminary plat to the City Council by a 9—1 vote, with Commissioner Lopez voting against.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Griffith reminded everyone about the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee meeting on Tuesday, September 17th and said he would be forwarding an agenda. He reminded the Commissioners of their need to complete their Open Meetings Act (OMA) training as required by the State of Illinois, especially for the new members. Mr. Griffith concluded by asking the Commissioners to be mindful of any *ex parte* communications and to contact the Planning Office with any questions regarding any items on upcoming agendas.

Commissioner Moline asked why the Planning Commissioners were not taking part in the focus group meetings. Mr. Griffith explained that it was common planning practice to conduct focus group meetings with very small groups and a narrowly defined interest in order to have candid discussions and to gather unbiased responses as part of the data collection. He pointed out that this was also done for the Arsenal Gateway Revitalization Plan and that the consultants had conducted one-on-one stakeholder interviews with various parties. Mr. Griffith concluded by stating that the consultants will provide a summary of their findings at the September 17th meeting of the Steering Committee.

Commissioner Moline then asked why nobody from the City had signed up for the Upper Mississippi River/Urban Waterfront Conference later in the month and if staff was aware of the joint conference taking place in our own back yard. Mr. Griffith answered that staff was aware of it, but that due to budgetary restraints, staff would not be able to attend. Commissioners Moline and Nolan stated that they would contact the Aldermen to express their concern that staff could not attend a conference in our own back yard that only cost \$150.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Oestreich made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:43 PM. Commissioner Lopez seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. The next meeting of the Planning Commission would be Tuesday, September 17, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,



Ben Griffith, AICP