

Planning Commission

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting #6

January 8, 2014 at 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Third Floor, City Hall
1528 3rd Avenue, Rock Island

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Approval of the December 3, 2013 meeting Minutes
3. Approval of the written Agenda
4. Review of Draft #2 Comprehensive Plan and Draft #2 Strategic Development Plan
5. Public Comments
6. Other Business
7. Adjournment

Comprehensive Plan documents available online:

Draft Strategic Development Plan

http://www.vandewalle.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Economic-Strategy-Document_Layout-1.pdf

Draft Comprehensive Plan

<http://www.vandewalle.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Draft-2-Plan-12.30.13.pdf>



UNAPPROVED

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #5
DECEMBER 3, 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. The meeting was called to order by Chairman David Levin at 5:30 PM. Present were Commissioners Michael Creger, Ted Johnson, David Levin, Norm Moline, Diane Oestreich, Bruce Peterson, Lorian Swanson and Berlinda Tyler-Jamison. Commissioners Bruce Harding, Jason Lopez and Kevin Nolan were absent. Also in attendance were Ben Griffith and Brandy Howe.

AN ORDER APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 5, 2013 MEETING

The Commission considered the matter of approval of the minutes of the November 5, 2013 meeting. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Creger made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Oestreich seconded the motion and the Commissioners unanimously approved said minutes.

AN ORDER APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 19, 2013 MEETING

The Commission considered the matter of approval of the minutes of the November 19, 2013 meeting. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Oestreich made a motion to approve the minutes with Mr. Ruklic's address corrected. Commissioner Tyler-Jamison seconded the motion and the Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes as corrected.

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 Johnson made a motion to approve the written agenda as presented, which was seconded by Commissioner Tyler-Jamison.

CONTINUED DUSCUSSION OF THE DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Ms. Howe provided a brief review of the draft Comprehensive Plan and stated that several Commissioners had provided written comments. There was generally positive feedback regarding the proposed transitional overlay guidelines for the future land use map. The

Commissioners discussed specific locations of the “bubble” overlays, such as along 14th and 18th Avenues and 30th and 38th Streets. They also discussed specific verbiage in the proposed overlay guidelines, striking, revising and adding text. Ms. Howe will provide proposed text changes to Mr. Scott Harrington at Vandewalle & Associates to update the guidelines.

There was an extensive discussion regarding site-specific plan proposals, owner-initiated vs. City-initiated rezonings, conversion of single-family residences for small businesses, and the pros and cons of rezonings vs. special use permits, especially where potential financing from lenders was involved.

Commissioner Moline asked about the Riverfront Overlay District, stating that he did not see a reference to it in the draft plan. Ms. Howe responded that she viewed it as a zoning district and had not mentioned it in the plan but would reference it.

Commissioner Oestreich stated that the Planning Commission had recommended approval of wind and solar ordinances and that the City Council had not adopted them.

Commissioner Johnson asked about the Augustana College master plan. Ms. Howe stated that she had contacted Kai Swanson but had not yet received any response. Commissioner Moline provided a brief summary of the master planning process, concluding that it was never finished nor was it adopted by the college since there was much opposition to the initial proposed plan.

Commissioner Moline stated that while the draft plan had all the things he would expect a good comprehensive plan to have, he felt that it should also have some specifics prioritized for short-medium- and long-range objectives for the Planning Commission and City Council to act on. Ms. Howe responded that his concerns would probably be met in the implementation chapters which would be available for review in the next version of the draft plan.

Commissioner Moline stated that he had difficulty in determining what changes had been made from the current future land use map to the proposed future land use map. He stated for the record, that he would not be able to make such a determination without a parcel-by-parcel listing of the changes made, or at least some sort of summary, for reference in future rezoning requests.

There was also a brief discussion about how often to update and revise the comprehensive plan once it is adopted. After some discussion, the Commissioners were comfortable with a regular ten-year review and update, but that there should be the ability to review in the interim years if the need arose. Ms. Howe stated that she would begin work on the next draft version and hoped to have it to the Commissioners before the end of the year so they could review it before their next regular meeting on January 8th.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Levin stated that everyone had been provided the materials prepared by Mr. Ruklic and asked him if he would like to address the Commissioners. Mr. Peter Ruklic of 2128 – 32nd Street, provided an overview of his materials and asked the Commission for their feedback. Chairman Levin read an e-mail from Commissioner Harding to the audience. Commissioner Peterson stated that he felt like the Commission was pretty close to where Mr. Ruklic is with his imperatives. Commissioner Moline thanked Mr. Ruklic for articulating his thoughts and commented that the Commissioners and City staff struggle with balancing ideas such as his with the reality of Rock Island in the twenty-first century. Commissioner Oestreich stated that the draft Comprehensive Plan was the first one to mention walkability, cycling and transit, adding that density is the key. Commissioner Johnson stated that development has traditionally occurred in the core of the City, not at the outskirts and this lack of growth has provided an advantage in terms of walkability.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Oestreich reminded everyone about the APA Audio Conference at Bi-State the following day beginning at 3:00 PM.

Mr. Griffith stated that the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission would be Wednesday, January 8, 2014 at 5:30 PM. He stated that no public hearing items had been submitted and that the deadline for non-advertised items wasn't until next Tuesday, December 17th but was not aware of anything pending.

Mr. Griffith 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. He 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.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no other business, Chairman Levin asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Peterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:44 PM. Commissioner Oestreich seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission is Wednesday, January 8, 2014 at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Ben Griffith, AICP

Revisions to Draft Plan #1

Draft: 12/23/2013

As of December 30th, CED staff received detailed comments on Draft #1 of the Comprehensive Plan from three Planning Commission members. These are listed in the following table and have been integrated into Draft #2. Changes in Draft #2 have been highlighted in the document for easy reference. Additional revisions to Draft #2 were also made in response to staff suggestions; these revisions are also highlighted in the document and listed in the table below. Other comments were provided by Planning Commissioners that staff feels warrants further discussion and consideration by the Planning Commission as a whole. These comments are bulleted on pages 4-6 of this document. Other revisions throughout the document include typographical corrections. These changes were not highlighted to focus your attention to revisions affecting policy direction.

Page Number References		Planning Commission Comments
Draft #2	Draft #1	
104, #10	105, #10	Shared driveways in residential areas can cause lots of conflicts between adjacent residents. I know a neighbor now who has a big problem with a shared driveway that she actually owns but others park their cars there and block her.
104, #11 110, #11	N/A	Can we add a policy for the city to be proactive in mitigating brownfields? It would be a good idea, because there is state funding - could help get the old "country market" on 24th Street & 23rd Avenue back in a retail operation.
106	106	Instead of just saying that these preservation related groups should have a stronger role..., I would recommend that you add the line: The City Council should be encouraged regularly to follow the recommendations of these groups.
109	109	Also....the plan should encourage enough schools so that it's feasible to walk or, for older kids, to bike. This means not great distances from their homes. The move to close schools just makes it nearly impossible for a child to walk. This would fit under the safe routes to school paragraph or the "issues of Mutual Concern", too. Hard to be safe if you have to walk over a mile.
111	112	For downtown, mention something about retail. If we could have businesses similar to College Hill, it would be very beneficial. Some of the artisanal things mentioned - canoe company, woodturners, dPhilms, etc., don't really encourage shopping for needed items. Even more services - beauty parlors/barber shops, could be useful, too.
111-112	112	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the BDDs and TIF districts --- TIF districts are one reason our schools and the county are having financial problems. And they're getting renewed from their initial 23 years. This doesn't make economic sense for the good of the greater city. • Business Development District. I am not sure I or the public would favor increased taxes even for business development purposes when there already are TIFs. In the downtown area there should have been a special service district and associated tax established some years ago but no one had the guts to do it.
113, #1	113	There is not enough emphasis on new housing and especially upper end.

114	113	The housing and neighborhood policies section - some comments, especially on the greater variety of housing types. I am referring to the APA audio conference last week that had several recommendations that I disagree with. One was to permit "mother in law" cottages at the rear of lots. This has been the cause of a lot of problems in my neighborhood, some of which are still being resolved. Most of our houses face the street (rather than the avenue). But over the years, on corner lots, smaller houses were built on the avenue, at the back of the street house. This means there's no room for a garage, which most people want given our climate. It often means there's no real yard for either of the houses. Sometimes they're owned by a single person, but the lots have occasionally been subdivided later. This also caused problems in the past, when multiple housing units were established in old buildings on a single lot. This causes some notable problems, especially on 20th Street. Most of them were ultimately demolished because the condition got so deteriorated. However, the concept of "bungalow" courts is good. We could encourage that.
115-116	115	At bottom....I think this mostly refers to development of larger parcels of vacant land in SW RI. Perhaps that should be clarified. I was first reading it as if it was within the mostly developed part of the city. (It did make more sense when I read more later).
117, #7	117	Sidewalks - I am all for more sidewalks but I believe we need to rethink their location. When they are placed behind the curb or perhaps with a 3' boulevard they quickly become covered with snow when the plow goes by. We need to start moving them further into the lot, maybe with a 6-8 foot boulevard.
117, #10	117	Perhaps establish some "suggested" bike routes through city - not necessarily marked lanes because they're not needed on side streets - but provide a higher level of maintenance to these streets, from surface maintenance to snowplowing. 20th Avenue between 24th and 30th Streets is a perfect example. It's a good bike route with access to commercial and an easy way to get across town, but it has layers of peeling blacktop and is very rough.
117, #11	N/A	Another policy should include installation of bike racks....when new or significantly upgraded building, sidewalk, or street construction occurs in business or commercial areas.
120	120	While I know that some favor these lane reductions, such as on 7th Avenue east of 38th St. (by the way, I would add that east of 38th St. qualifier to your reference to 7th Avenue because I believe that is the only part in question), I am more cautious about making those changes because of the amount of criss-crossing traffic in that area which, because of the space available, has not caused many accidents. Thus, I might add the phrase: Yet, given the users' familiarity with existing patterns, any lane reductions should occur only after careful traffic flow analysis. If one wants to be more specific, for that 7th Avenue section, perhaps you might add something about "if and when all Illinois 92 traffic, eastbound and westbound, would be routed north of the Augustana College property. Realistically, without that change, which would be decided by the state, I can't imagine lane reductions in the current 7th Avenue.

121, #11	121	We have already addressed wind power in our zoning ordinance (same time as we did solar) and I think that geothermal was already covered. The technology in all of these fields is continually advancing and we need to be sure we're on top of new things, too. As for biomass.....doesn't this mean burning? We know that the gas we use generally burns pretty clean - biomass may or may not. I think that this is something that should be studied in the future to make sure it's not something that will be an air pollution source (or can we bag leaves and turn them into bricks to burn??)
124	124	Perhaps add something to the effect of "Create a mechanism where small gardeners can sell their produce at little or no cost to them." This is different from an organized farmers' market.
125 (mid paragraph mention of RCO)	N/A	From my one-time review, I didn't seem to see any reference to the "overlay district". Is that district going to continue with its previous boundaries? I hope so. While I would like some of those strict review processes, even down to such things as lighting and landscaping and curb cuts, to pertain to the whole city, I can't see that happening in today's political climate. So, at the minimum, we must keep them in place for those places within that short distance of our two main anchor waterways.
130	130	Regionalism strategies. Rather than beginning with increase opportunities (which make it seem like there isn't much of that going on), use this wording: Sustain and even increase opportunities. The wording of that first section is awkward and needs to be rewritten.
132, #2d	133	Many good points, but you need to really drive home the mandatory tone of staying out of flood plains and wetlands. I would add a part d. "Avoid developing in any flood plains and wetland areas.
132, #3	133	Add the words "in areas on the city's outer fringe" after "conservation development." That would avoid the unfortunate and incorrect use of that kind of terminology which was brought up for the Audubon site.
134, #4e	135	Add a point g: "Preserve or create good buffering standards for use between new developments and existing neighborhoods." As you know, we already have some good buffering requirements between different land use. I believe that they should be highlighted specifically in this new plan.
135, #3 135, #3	136	On Neighborhood and community businesses.....can we add something about hours of operation by permits?
135, #5	136	Add the following phrase to the end of point 3 under neighborhood business policies: "....buffering space and/or landscaping for borders with existing neighborhoods." Such a requirement should be part of that detailed plan you call for.
137, #1	138, #1	I thought that the original Columbia Park plan already has come under some second thoughts with revised ideas on what might/should happen there. You might check on that and then modify the words.
Staff Suggested Additions		
107	N/A	New Strategy: Create an Attractive and Inviting Downtown Gateway / Potential Realignment of 15th Street

110, #12	N/A	Establish community gateways by enhancing and beautifying streetscapes along major corridors, particularly 15th Street from the Centennial Bridge, IL 92, and Blackhawk Road (IL 5).
125	N/A	New Strategy: Develop a Strategy to Secure Public Access to the Mississippi Riverfront

Other Planning Commission Comments (page references listed below refer to Draft #1):

- In terms of an overall view, most of the text has some really great ideas. It reads kind of like an example of the best stuff in the planning texts. Section after section has general points which cover a wide range of topics with some really great goals. Of course, I am happy about that....and I am very grateful to those who put together such a fine list of goals!!

Yet, one of the weaknesses of such an approach is the lack of specificity on what exactly we need to do be doing here, perhaps even in a prioritized arrangement. As I said, it reads more like a listing of all the things which might work or which are encouraged for urban environments these days, i.e., the kind of broad goals that might apply to almost any city -- but then few specifics about Rock Island's immediate needs.

- But then there is the new land use map and, of course, it is detailed down to every parcel. For some specific sites which I know, I could see some changes --- but that made me wonder what exactly are all the other changes. Perhaps I missed them somewhere in the document, but I really would like to see a parcel-by-parcel identification of which ones would no classifications under the plan. I believe it is ESSENTIAL that we on the commission and the whole general public can see such a listing to be able to make an intelligent judgment on whether or not this new plan should be approved. A few years ago when we tidied up the map, a careful listing of almost 400 properties which would have changed status was printed and available to all of us. That is what seems to be needed. Again, forgive me if I missed that list somewhere but I would welcome knowing where it is so that I can look at it soon.
- Page 73 - if the transition to turn the one-ways into Rt 92 happens, need more stoplights, especially between 20th & 24th and 24th & 30th. Otherwise it can be very difficult to cross, especially for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Page 108 - on education & schools. It is imperative to offer those whose neighborhood school is ultra low performing a different option. We won't ever be able to sell houses or sell them to middle class people if they don't have an educational option.
- Page 109 - Our schools' problems are more than perception. Above average kids are ok generally, but only IF they have other kids of similar abilities around them. Same can be said of the average kids/ But when a kid doesn't have the opportunity to attend a school that performs well, because of where the family lives, his overall education will very likely be impacted - and his choice of friends will be limited, too. This makes it hard to sell RI houses.
- P. 108 -109 Quality Education. This section requires a total buy-in by the school board and improved communication between the school board and the city which seems to be lacking. The statement is made about the "negative image" which has existed for the entire 40 years I have lived in Rock Island. I think we must identify and deal with the real cause of the negative image.
- P. 110 - I believe way too much narrative and time is spent on a current situation relative to school closures when this is to be a long term document. An example of overkill.
- P. 114 - the options are way too extreme and innovative for Midwestern neighborhood and housing desires. This area was slow in embracing condominiums so any project that included ADU's,

bungalow courts, pocket neighborhoods or co-ops I believe would fail miserably not just now but far into the future.

- Page 115 - one of the reasons for building decay in RI is that rents that can be charged are simply not high enough to warrant reinvestment in buildings. With tax/insurance/basic maintenance/and water& heat, there's no income left for additional enhancements and expensive maintenance. (Competition from GROWTH subsidized housing doesn't help, either). I don't have a solution for this.....making the city more attractive for everyone would help.
- Page 118 - the transportation fee sounds like the old city stickers that used to be required of all vehicles. One problem is that our streets are used by everyone, not just residents.
- Page 120 – Transit Oriented Development - During the Arsenal Gateway plan development, one thing that nearly everyone wanted was a bus over the Sylvan bridge to the Arsenal. Now you have to go to Moline and then transfer to go to work on the Island. However the proposed concept was rejected by the arsenal powers, apparently for security reasons. Let's keep pushing for it. (NOTE - I see you mention this on page 131)
- P 122 - this issue of city communications is important. While point good in its generality, I believe it would be important for the city to prioritize certain key areas where this should occur soon.
- P. 122. Communications. Doesn't the city have a franchise agreement with Mediacom through which they can provide pressure for Mediacom to provide these necessary services? I would think that the same would be true with the telephone company.
- P. 124. Healthy Community. Mention is made about a farmers market. We already have a farmers market at Modern Woodmen park and at Trinity Hospital and at other locations as well. Too often in the Quad Cities we duplicate programs and facilities to foolish extremes.
- P. 130. Regionalism Policies. #7. I am still astounded by the lack of cooperation and communication between the governmental units even with intergovernmental agreements. This situation between RI and Milan over Jumer's Landing should never have needed to go to court but should have been resolved quickly to everyone's satisfaction. There seems to be no communication or planning between RI and RI County over facility needs and plans and they are right next door to each other.
- Page 133 - I seem to recall that our Suburban Estates category as once conceived could even allow for mini farms and animals. Maybe not.
- Page 134 - under the single family residential. We had lots of complaints about a church in SW RI some years ago... Modern churches are less compatible with low density residential because they want to surround themselves with concrete parking lots.
- Also, in reference to the TND concept, with neighborhood businesses.....the way we define and currently zone neighborhood businesses doesn't mean it's appealing to those in the neighborhood only. In decades past, there were small grocery stores every few blocks and they were indeed a neighborhood business. But one key factor that we'd need to make sure that a business complement a neighborhood rather than is a nuisance is reasonable hours of operation. That's why I believe Special Use permits are the way to go, rather than rezoning. I think that works well for live-work units, too. There's no precedent, everything is reviewed on a case by case basis.
- Page 141 - I was under the impression that our Agricultural zoning was a stopgap - intended as a temporary zoning until the land was developed. All new parcels are annexed as A zoning until they are rezoned. We've kept the agricultural zoning when we annexed large parcels in the SW area that weren't development material at the time.. Does this propose actually keeping them long term

agricultural for the most part or is it just to keep big ag parcels from being nicked and dimed to death? (This does happen when street-accessible lots are sold off, leaving the interior inaccessible.

- After attending the APA workshop on Fiscal Impact Analysis, I would like to see this added as a tool for the planning commission as well as the city as a whole.