



**APPROVED**

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PUBLIC HEARING  
OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2014  
CITY OF ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS**

The Rock Island Planning Commission held its regularly scheduled meeting in the City Hall Council Chambers at 1528 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois. The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Diane Oestreich at 5:30 PM. Present were Commissioners Michael Creger, Bruce Harding, Jason Lopez, Norm Moline, Kevin Nolan, Diane Oestreich, Bruce Peterson, Berlinda Tyler-Jamison and Lorian Swanson. Commissioners Ted Johnson and David Levin were absent. Also in attendance were Ben Griffith and Brandy Howe. Ward 3 Alderman P.J. Foley, Ward 5 Alderman Kate Hotle, Ward 6 Alderman Joy Murphy, City staff members Jeff Eder and Alan Fries were also present in the audience.

**AN ORDER APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 5, 2014 MEETING**

The Commission considered the matter of approval of the minutes of the March 5, 2014 meeting. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Lopez made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Nolan seconded the motion and the Commissioners unanimously approved said minutes.

**PROCEDURAL EXPLANATION**

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

**PUBLIC HEARING: CONSIDERATION AND RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF ROCK ISLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND  
THE ROCK ISLAND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Next there came before the Planning Commission a public hearing: consideration and recommendation to City Council of the City of Rock Island Comprehensive Plan and the Rock Island Strategic Development Plan. Vice-Chairman Oestreich asked Ms. Howe to present the plan. Ms. Howe approached the podium and provided a brief overview of the planning process and timeline of events, culminating with the public hearing. She described the changes to the plan text and maps over the preceding months and how they had evolved.

Vice-Chairman Oestreich asked if any of the Commissioners had any questions for Ms. Howe. Seeing none, she stated that she had prepared a list of proposed revisions to the plan and maps,

which had been placed at the Commissioners seats, along with a letter from Andrea Gaeta. She then opened the public hearing, inviting the citizens to address the Commission.

Jason Tanamor of 1628 – 22<sup>nd</sup> Street approached the podium and stated that Highland Park was in the transitional overlay, yet the City wants to protect historic districts, adding that wetlands get more scrutiny. He said that he was making a statement and needed more information.

John Phillips of 2910 – 22½ Avenue approached the podium and stated that he was representing Activate Rock Island and that he supported the Comprehensive Plan because it promoted physical activity and healthy living to combat such public health issues as obesity and diabetes. He stated that the plan's support of healthy living, walkability and mixed transportation options would move the City forward.

Elizabeth DeLong of 1627 – 27<sup>th</sup> Street approached the podium and thanked the Planning Commission and City Council for their tireless and thankless work on the Comp Plan. She had objections to small businesses along 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and was OK them going only 2-3 lots deep to preserve the quality of life for the residents, but she preferred them to be only 1-2 lots deep, like Hungry Hobo. Ms. DeLong stated that if the Planning Commission voted to adopt the plan as it is, the Audubon site will be able to be changed to commercial and it would lead to the decay of the Wallace Grove Addition neighborhood since the side streets would become busy thoroughfares. She thanked the Planning Commission for their continued support.

Ellen Martin of 1626 – 27<sup>th</sup> Street approached the podium and stated that allowing the Overlay to go too many lots deep would make busy streets busier and cause people to use side streets through the neighborhood, like at Hy-Vee down the street. She stated that the Planning Commission is aware of her concerns and thanked the Commissioners for allowing her to talk to them.

Andrea Gaeta of 2630 – 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue approached the podium and thanked the Planning Commission for their efforts and for considering the concerns she and the neighbors have near the Audubon site. She referred to the letter she had provided and stated that allowing commercial development 1-3 lots deep allows business development without too much intrusion into the neighborhood to be invasive. Ms. Gaeta stated that if the Overlay was allowed to extend a full block she would put her house up for sale because she would be clearly impacted by the truck traffic and noise since 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue would become a busy street. She stated she believes the transitional overlay intends to rezone all properties within it to commercial and asked the Planning Commission to not move forward with the Overlay as shown.

Ms. Howe stated that the Overlay did not rezone any properties and that a formal request and application would be required to do so. She stated that the transitional overlay would require the Planning Commission to consider extra policies above and beyond the current zoning ordinance when reviewing proposed zoning changes. For instance, the submittal of a detailed site plan would be required to address lighting, landscaping and buffering to separate residential and commercial uses.

Linda Anderson of 1718 – 21<sup>st</sup> Street approached the podium and stated that she lives in Highland Park and questioned the City Council's direction to Planning staff to change the plan during their study session since there was no specific verbiage in the meeting minutes.

Vice-Chairman Oestreich answered that the Council study session was informal and that the plan was now in the Planning Commission's court to be forwarded to Council later. Commissioner Peterson stated that the plan would go to Council for a final vote and that in study session, Council disagreed with Planning Commission, but that Planning Commission can provide formal recommendations to Council.

Ward 3 Alderman P.J. Foley approached the podium and stated that he was not present for the study session but that perhaps Alderman Hotle or Murphy could answer that questions since they were present and took part in the discussion.

Vice-Chairman Oestreich asked Ward 5 Alderman Hotle if she could address the Planning Commission.

Ward 5 Alderman Kate Hotle approached the podium and stated that she is studying the details of the proposed plan and Overlay to grasp what it means, but stated that it was not an automatic rezoning of properties.

Ms. Howe stated the policies of the Comprehensive Plan are intended to guide decision making and to ensure that when a rezoning request is submitted, the request will get a closer look and meet performance standards above those required in the zoning ordinance.

Alderman Hotle stated that she believed that the Overlay provided an additional level of standards that needed to be met and gave the example of the Audubon rezoning and the variances which were requested with it. The Overlay will have specific requirements. She added that she and other members of Council believe that it is a better way to go. She stated that she was still not sure why Highland Park is included in the Overlay because it doesn't seem that it will be rezoned or redeveloped as a commercial area, since it has a historic designation. Alderman Hotle concluded by stating that the Comprehensive Plan is a broad document and that ultimately, the Planning Commission and City Council will determine rezonings on a case-by-case basis.

Ms. Anderson asked if the Fareway project were requested as it originally was proposed, within the Overlay zone, would the Overlay stop it or another similar use from being built? Commissioner Peterson answered that the Overlay would make it more difficult to build as originally proposed, but would also provide guidance when a similar use is proposed in the future. Ms. Howe added that it would allow review on a case-by-case basis.

Sue Swords of 1620 – 22<sup>nd</sup> Street approached the podium and stated that she supported what Ms. Anderson was saying. She was concerned about making Highland Park a part of the Overlay area because it opens the door to destabilizing the neighborhood and asked if the Planning Commission can override the Council. Vice-Chairman Oestreich said no, but that the Planning Commission can make convincing arguments.

Bonnie Tanamor of 1628 – 22<sup>nd</sup> Street approached the podium and stated that she was new to Rock Island, but moved here to find a house to invest in, adding that she is a real estate appraiser and will put her house up for sale if any businesses or mixed uses were allowed in her neighborhood. She stated that she would like her neighborhood taken out of the Overlay area and that she was obviously upset.

Elizabeth DeLong of 1627 – 27<sup>th</sup> Street approached the podium again and stated that on the prior future land use map the Audubon property was different and now that the building has been demolished, it had changed.

Seeing no other audience members wishing to speak, Vice-Chairman Oestreich closed the public hearing portion of the meeting. She stated that she had provided a list of proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan, listed page by page, adding that this will be frozen in time and we need to make it count. Vice-Chairman Oestreich then began discussion of each item listed on the page and there was discussion on each item by the Planning Commissioners.

After a lengthy discussion, Commissioner Lopez made a motion to amend three portions of the text of the draft Comprehensive Plan as proposed by Commissioner Oestreich's list as follows:

1. Page 33 – since it looks like the Criterium is leaving downtown (but might be back), perhaps keep it but waffle the words a bit.... “Quad Cities Criterium has been a Memorial Day weekend feature for many years.” Then continue your paragraph.
2. Page 40 – Douglas Park references 1840s buildings – but I am not aware of any that remain. Perhaps say something like “development of this area began as early as the 1840s,” which is probably accurate.
3. Page 111 – under “Encourage the Creation of Neighborhood Association”... eliminate “officially designated” in the first line. There really is no official designation, these groups are just generally recognized, even though they're mostly non-profits.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nolan and unanimously approved by the Planning Commission.

Immediately following the vote, Commissioner Peterson made a motion to remove the Highland Park Historic District from the Transitional Overlay Area on the proposed future land use map with the revised boundary running along the north side of 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 17<sup>th</sup> Street to 24<sup>th</sup> Street. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tyler-Jamison and a lengthy discussion ensued amongst the Planning Commissioners, not only about the Highland Park District, but about the Transitional Area Overlay boundary and its possible affects on the properties included within it. After further discussion, the Vice-Chairman asked for a vote and the motion was unanimously approved by the Planning Commission.

Vice-Chairman Oestreich asked if there were any other motions for proposed changes and Commissioner Moline asked about the placement of the Overlay boundary line at different locations north and south of 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, stating that the depth should be shallow to only encourage small businesses. Commissioner Nolan stated that it seemed to be consistent and asked Community & Economic Development Director Jeff Eder if he could explain.

Mr. Eder explained that the original concept for the Overlay district was a bubble diagram and that a full block provided much better separation between commercial and residential uses, stating that the street and alley grid ran east/west south of 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue while it ran north/south on the north side. He cited the example of the Walgreens and KFC at the northwest corner of the intersection of 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Street as an example of a mid-block separation that doesn't work well. Commissioner Nolan asked if the Overlay made it easier to bring in business and Mr. Eder replied that it did not necessarily make it easier, but provided guidelines to review each proposal on a case-by-case basis.

After further discussion, Commissioner Moline made a motion to move the northern boundary of the Transitional Overlay Area along 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue to three (3) lots deep, except for the former Audubon School site, existing commercial uses and houses, or if there is a large, single lot. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Creger. Commissioner Nolan asked about the three-parcel policy along 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and whether it was the right number. Vice-Chairman Oestreich answered that several years ago when the question first came up, the Planning Commission had recommended two parcels deep but the City Council had decided to go with three parcels deep.

Commissioner Nolan stated that he was on the Planning Commission when the Hy-Vee came in and was told that there would be minimal impact on 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue and now it's a nightmare, so much so that the neighbors don't want the street fixed because it slowed traffic. He concluded by stating that he supports the concept. Commissioner Lopez responded that Planning staff has repeatedly stated that properties located within the Overlay district would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and that traffic was intended to be kept on the main streets, adding that it makes sense to look at where driveways are placed.

Commissioner Moline stated that if a half block is OK on the south side of 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, what's wrong with the north side? Commissioner Lopez answered that like Jeff Eder said, the north side has no alleys that run parallel with the streets, unlike the south side. He added that the Planning Commission has been told that they will get to review projects within the Overlay boundary on a case-by-case basis. Hearing no further discussion Vice-Chairman asked for a roll-call vote. The motion was approved 8—1 with Commissioner Lopez opposed.

Commissioner Moline stated that he was concerned with development of parcels on Andalusia Road where there were wetlands and floodplain areas. He stated that he had no objections to commercial development if it was nicely done, but felt that the 1% flood line is too close to the roadway and that the text of the Comprehensive Plan cited observance of environmental issues such as wetlands and floodplains. He went on to say that it drives Paul Osman, the Community floodplain coordinator for the state of Illinois, which has the responsibility of lowering flood losses in Illinois, up the wall when development takes place in a floodplain. Commissioner Moline made a motion to revise the proposed future land use map designations for the two large parcels on the north side of Andalusia Road, west of the Rock Island Parkway, from "Employment" to "Agriculture/Rural" or "Conservation and Open Space." Commissioner Peterson seconded the motion.

Mr. Griffith explained that just because a parcel may contain wetland or floodplain areas, didn't mean that it couldn't be developed. He stated that there were very strict rules and regulations at the federal, state and local level regarding development in such areas and that it didn't take place willy-nilly. Commissioner Moline stated that if a worthy development were proposed, it could be reviewed, so to avoid controversy, he suggested changing the two parcels from "Employment" to "Agriculture/Rural." Vice-Chairman Oestreich asked Commissioner Moline if he would like to amend his motion. After discussion, Commissioner Moline revised his motion to designate the parcels "Agricultural/Rural" since it is reflective of their current use. Commissioner Peterson seconded the revised motion. After further discussion, Vice-Chairman called for a vote. The motion was approved 7—2 with Commissioners Lopez and Tyler-Jamison opposed.

Vice-Chairman Oestreich asked if there was any further discussion or motions to be made. Hearing none, Vice-Chairman Oestreich asked for a motion to approve the plan. Commissioner Peterson made a motion to recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Development Plan with revisions as amended earlier in the evening. Commissioner Creger seconded the motion and the Commissioners voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Development Plan to City Council.

Vice-Chairman Oestreich thanked the Planning Commissioners and Planning staff for all the work that went into such a large document, especially Ms. Howe, even though she was pregnant, on maternity leave, and later taking care of a new baby. Vice-Chairman Oestreich encouraged everyone to attend the City Council public hearing the following Monday.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Griffith stated that the Planning Office had received two public hearings item for review in the Riverfront Overlay District for the May meeting. He also stated that election of officers was scheduled for the May meeting.

Mr. Griffith reminded the Commissioners of their need to complete their Open Meetings Act training as required by the State of Illinois, and to forward their certificates of completion to him. 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, Vice-Chairman Oestreich asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Peterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:27 PM. Commissioner Lopez seconded the motion. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission is Wednesday, May 7, 2014 at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Ben Griffith, AICP