



APPROVED

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2016
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. The meeting was called to order by Chairman David Levin at 5:31 PM. Present were Commissioners Mike Creger, Andrew Dasso, Ted Johnson, David Levin, Jason Lopez, Javier Perez and Lorian Swanson. Commissioners Bruce Harding, Norm Moline, Bruce Peterson and Berlinda Tyler-Jamison were absent. Also in attendance were Alan Fries, Ben Griffith and Brandy Howe.

AN ORDER APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2015 MEETING

The Commission considered the matter of approval of the minutes of the December 2, 2015 meeting. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Creger made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Lopez seconded the motion and the Commissioners unanimously approved said minutes.

PROCEDURAL EXPLANATION

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

PUBLIC HEARING #2016-01: REQUEST FROM THE ROCK ISLAND ECONOMIC GROWTH CORPORATION FOR REZONING FROM B-3 (COMMUNITY BUSINESS) DISTRICT TO B-2 (CENTRAL BUSINESS) DISTRICT AT 1740 – 5TH AVENUE.

Next there came before the Planning Commission Public Hearing #2016-01, a request from Rock Island Economic GROWTH Corporation for a rezoning to allow for construction of approximately 45 apartments above the former Zimmerman Honda dealership building.

Mr. Fries presented the staff report, providing a review of the applicant's request, explaining the current site conditions, adjacent land uses and zonings, zoning history of the subject property, and provided a detailed site analysis of the proposed project. He stated that the rezoning to B-2 would negate the need for off-street parking, site landscaping and building height restrictions and would also allow 0-foot building setbacks. Mr. Fries stated that Planning staff had met with the applicant's architect earlier in the day and had been provided with

updated plans which he presented on the screen to the Commissioners and audience. Major changes were the addition of a partial fourth floor, different exterior finishes and two indoor parking areas where the former Zimmerman service bays were located.

Hearing no questions from the Commissioners, Chairman Levin invited the applicant to step forward to the podium and sign in.

Mr. Andy Fisher of 103 Pine Street in Seton, IL approached the podium and signed in. He stated he was the construction manager for Rock Island Economic GROWTH Corporation and that they intended to construct three floors above the original dealership building with 40 apartments, including: 10 studios, 20 two-bedroom, and 10 three-bedroom units.

Chairman Levin asked what funding GROWTH was using and if the apartments would be market rate. Mr. Fisher responded that they were using LIHTC tax credits, that there would be a mix of market rate and income-adjusted units, and that based on The Locks project, the monthly rents would be in the \$600 - \$800 range.

Commissioner Creger asked if the downtown was at capacity for apartments with all the projects located there. Mr. Fisher responded that The Locks were full and had a waiting list of about 170, Jackson Square had 2 vacancies, and the other apartments such as Goldman, Sala Flats and the Renaissance Apartments above Icons, were completely full.

Hearing no further questions from the Commissioners, Chairman Levin opened the public hearing and invited members of the public to come forward to speak in favor or against the request. After asking three times and seeing no one else come forward, he closed the public hearing and asked for a motion.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to recommend approval of the rezoning request of B-2 (central business) district to City Council. The motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Lopez. Hearing no further discussion, Chairman Levin called for a vote and the Planning Commission voted 7—0 to recommend approval of the rezoning request. Chairman Levin stated that due to the applicant's condensed submittal schedule for their tax credit funding application, the item would be placed on the February 8th City Council agenda for final review and approval.

**PRESENTATION OF GREENBUSH NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN BY AUGUSTANA
COLLEGE STUDENTS ALYSSA CLARIDA AND CHRISTIAN MONTBRIAND.**

Ms. Howe introduced Augustana College students Alyssa Clarida and Christian Montbriand and gave a brief overview of the neighborhood planning process. The students thanked Dr. Chris Strunk of the Augustana Geography Department and began their PowerPoint presentation. Ms. Clarida explained the background investigation and data collection portions and how the existing conditions report was assembled. She emphasized that the plan was a grass-roots and

neighbor-driven effort with many community workshops and meetings. Mr. Montrbriand reviewed the assets and issues of the neighborhood and how they were determined. He also reviewed the six goals identified by the neighbors for the plan. Ms. Clarida explained the implementation matrix and next steps for the plan.

Commissioner Johnson and others asked why Augustana College hadn't done something like this sooner and congratulated Dr. Strunk. There were questions about the 22% vacancy rate and condition of the vacant houses. Commissioner Perez talked about communications, websites and social media for neighborhood associations. The MetroLink bus routes were also discussed. There were questions about the number of Augustana students who lived in the neighborhood. Questions about crime, and more importantly, the *perception* of crime were discussed at great length by all present. There was a brief discussion about the businesses in the area. Several other neighborhood issues were discussed.

Mr. Tim Meegan of 544 – 30th Street stated that he had not received any notices or flyers about community workshop or meetings. He discussed the condition of the neighborhood, both past and present, and how it had changed over the years. He praised the students for their efforts.

Mr. Bob Hotle of 2914 – 6th Avenue also talked about the neighborhood and how it had changed over the years. He said absentee landlords didn't care about the neighborhood, making it difficult to clean up. He said he would like to see young families and first-time home buyers move into the neighborhood because they would fix up their properties and help reverse the trend of decreasing property values. He thanked the students for their hard work.

Mr. Alan Carmen, Rock Island Township Supervisor at 2827 – 7th Avenue thanked Dr. Strunk and the students for all their hard work and efforts. He said it had been a pleasure working with them and seeing them work closely with Mike Markell and Bob Hotle of the Greenbush Neighbors association. He discussed the township's efforts at assisting the residents and pointed to KeyStone's micro-grant program as a major success. He asked the Planning Commission to be supportive of the plan and at the appropriate time, asked for a positive recommendation to the City Council.

Commissioner Dasso stated that his mother-in-law lived in Greenbush and had purchased a duplex and had difficulties fixing it up. He suggested the City help the residents with ways to improve their properties, allowing them to purchase vacant city-owned lots to enlarge their yards, build garages, overall improving the neighborhood. Commissioner Swanson stated there should be more information available to help prevent declining neighborhoods in the future. Chairman Levin thanked everyone for their participation in developing the plan.

Ms. Howe concluded by stating that there was a final neighborhood meeting planned for February 16th then present a final draft of the plan to the Planning Commission at the March 2nd meeting and ask for a recommendation to the City Council.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Griffith stated that one rezoning request had been submitted for public hearing for the March 2nd Planning Commission meeting and that the deadline for non-advertised items wasn't until the following week. He asked if anyone present thought they may not be in attendance for that meeting and Commissioner Johnson said he would not. Mr. Griffith reminded everyone about the Bi-State APA planning webinars and 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 Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:29 PM, which was duly seconded by Commissioner Perez. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission is Wednesday, March 2, 2016 at 5:30 PM in the City Council Chambers.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Ben Griffith, AICP, Secretary