



APPROVED

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY MARCH 2, 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 5:30 PM. Present were Commissioners Mike Creger, David Levin, Jason Lopez, Norm Moline, Javier Perez, Bruce Peterson and Lorian Swanson. Commissioners Andrew Dasso, Bruce Harding, Ted Johnson and Berlinda Tyler-Jamison were absent. Also in attendance were Alan Fries, Ben Griffith and Brandy Howe.

AN ORDER APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 3, 2016 MEETING

The Commission considered the matter of approval of the minutes of the February 3, 2016 meeting. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Creger made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Perez 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 #2016-02: REQUEST FROM WILLIAM CLAY FOR REZONING FROM R-3
(ONE AND TWO FAMILY RESIDENCE) DISTRICT TO B-3 (COMMUNITY BUSINESS) DISTRICT
AT 2033-2035 – 9TH STREET**

Next there came before the Planning Commission Public Hearing #2016-02, a request from William Clay for a rezoning to allow use of the former restaurant as a new restaurant and possibly locate an outdoor advertising sign on the site.

Mr. Fries presented the staff report, providing a review of the applicant's request, explaining the current site conditions, adjacent land uses and zonings, Comprehensive Plan designation, zoning history of the various Special Use Permits requested for the subject property going back to 1995, and provided a detailed site analysis of the proposed project. He stated that one Interested Party was registered with the City Clerk's Office. Mr. Fries stated the applicant has already purchased the property and intends to operate a restaurant and perhaps erect a billboard in the future. He stated Planning staff had met with the applicant and was recommending denial of the rezoning but would support a Special Use Permit request for use of the site as a restaurant.

Hearing no questions from the Commissioners for Planning staff, Chairman Levin invited the applicant to come forward.

Mr. William Clay of 1103 – 29th Avenue in Rock Island approached the podium and signed in. He introduced himself as a local businessman and a union electrician and that he had recently purchased the property which had been abandoned and distressed for several years. Mr. Clay described what he had done to clean up and improve the property including getting the power turned back on and the streetlights operational again. He stated he was not currently pursuing a liquor license, but that he may consider getting one that allowed beer and wine to be served with meals. Mr. Clay described the area and the lack of local eating establishments, as well as the proximity of other commercial uses. He stated he was improving the site at his expense and intended to operate a family-style restaurant that would fill a need for the neighborhood. Mr. Clay described some of his other business ventures, adding that with the opening of the restaurant, he would provide a much-needed service and possible job growth.

Chairman Levin stated he was the last broker for the subject property and had brought a client who proposed liquor and chicken which was turned down. He said another broker brought a client who proposed a Mexican restaurant with beer which was approved, but never opened. Chairman Levin noted the utilities had been turned off for quite some time and expressed concerns over mold in the building.

Commissioner Moline expressed concerns that rezoning would allow Mr. Clay to sell to another person who could do whatever was allowed by the zoning and asked Mr. Clay why he was opposed to a Special Use Permit. Mr. Clay answered that he had purchased the distressed property which had been vacant for almost eight years, that he did not want to see another garden and intended to provide a business service in the form of a family-style restaurant. Commissioner Moline stated that a Special Use Permit would allow a restaurant as he wanted and Mr. Clay responded that he had been in touch with MetroLink about placing a bus stop shelter, adding that a billboard could be used for public service announcements such as staying in school and going to college.

Commissioner Peterson asked about parking. Mr. Clay answered that the adjacent parking area would accommodate approximately 15 parking spaces.

Commissioner Creger asked about the type of food the restaurant would serve. Mr. Clay responded that he was thinking Southern/Cajun cuisine with po-boy sandwiches, red beans & rice, soups and sauces, etc.

Hearing no further questions from the Commissioners, Chairman Levin opened the public hearing and invited Interested Party Judy Patsch to come forward. Ms. Judy Patsch of 921 – 21st Avenue in Rock Island approached the podium. Ms. Patsch stated she was a long-time resident and was glad to see the property being cleaned up. She gave a brief history of the site, mentioning that it had been used as a gas station and grocery store decades ago. She stated she had spoken with Planning staff and had concerns about liquor sales and about the building being turned into a bar with outdoor loitering. Ms. Patsch had no problem with the restaurant, other than potentially odorous

exhaust fan fumes from the kitchen, but would be opposed to package liquor sales or to a bar and all the trouble it would bring. When asked about her thoughts regarding a billboard, Ms. Patsch responded that she was opposed to a freestanding billboard because people could hide behind the sign and posts. Mr. Clay responded that it was not his intention to open or operate a bar and that the exhaust fan fumes shouldn't be a problem—other than to draw in customers for the good food.

Commissioner Peterson asked about the outdoor advertising and Commissioner Perez stated he had no issues with it. Commissioner Lopez asked about the size and location of the sign. Mr. Clay answered that due to the layout of the site and location of adjacent homes, he would probably place the sign on the north façade or roof of the building, depending on the operation of the exhaust fan, perhaps 12' x 6' or 72 square feet in size, which is similar to the signs he currently has on 11th Street.

Hearing no further questions from the Commissioners and seeing no one else come forward after asking if anyone else wanted to speak in favor or against the request, Chairman Levin closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Peterson asked Planning staff if a Special Use Permit would allow a billboard and Mr. Fries answered that it would not because of the underlying residential zoning. Commissioner Peterson also asked if previous uses of the property pre-dated the zoning ordinances and Mr. Fries answered that some of the older uses certainly pre-dated the zoning ordinances, but that more recent ones had received Special Use Permits.

Commissioner Swanson stated that she didn't believe the property would ever go back to single-family residential use and asked why Planning staff did not support the rezoning. Mr. Fries responded that although the property would probably never go back into residential use, the Special Use Permit offered protection to adjacent neighbors through conditions and stipulations for impacts that could possibly negatively affect the neighbors.

Commissioner Moline stated he supported Planning staff's recommendation against the rezoning, especially since the applicant would be able to operate a restaurant under a Special Use Permit. He then made a motion to deny the request for the rezoning, which was duly seconded by Commissioner Lopez.

Commissioner Creger applauded Mr. Clay for trying to open a business in an economically depressed area of Rock Island, but suggested he apply for a Special Use Permit which he would support for a restaurant since he felt rezoning the site would appear to be a "spot zoning."

Hearing no further discussion, Chairman Levin called for a vote and the Planning Commission voted 7—0 to recommend denial of the rezoning request. Chairman Levin stated that the item would be placed on the March 14th City Council agenda for final review and decision.

**PUBLIC HEARING: CONSIDERATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE
GREENBUSH NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN TO CITY COUNCIL**

Next there came before the Planning Commission a public hearing for consideration and recommendation of the Greenbush Neighborhood Plan to City Council for formal adoption.

Ms. Howe provided a summary of recent planning activities, including a presentation of the plan by Augustana College students to the Planning Commission on February 3rd and to the City Council on February 15th, as well as review by the Greenbush Neighbors at their February 16th neighborhood meeting. She indicated there had been positive feedback from all bodies and that the only major revision to the document was the addition of an illustration by an Augustana student.

Chairman Levin asked Commissioner Moline if he had questions since he was not present at the last Planning Commission meeting where it was first presented. Commissioner Moline asked why the former gas station at the southeast corner of 7th Avenue and 27th Street was not highlighted for improvement by the plan. He added that if there is any site that indicates you're moving into a depressed area when traveling on 7th Avenue, it is that site. Ms. Howe responded that the plan addressed grass-roots issues brought forward by the residents and this particular property was not one of them. There was a lengthy discussion about the site and other blighted properties in the area and what would be done to address them.

Commissioner Moline asked for clarification on whether this is the plan for what the Greenbush residents want or is it a city-adopted plan for what it hopes will occur in Greenbush. Ms. Howe responded that it is both a plan created by and for the neighborhood, but is also a neighborhood plan to be adopted as a component of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Moline asked what were the plan's implementation priorities and how it worked with the City's Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Howe answered that the relaunching of the neighborhood association was identified as a high priority for the residents, along with assistance with landscaping and general maintenance of homes in the area and interest in the City's new sidewalk program which replaced the former "50/50" sidewalk program last year. Commissioner Lopez stated he was struggling with how the City was going to incorporate a neighborhood plan into its Comprehensive Plan and a lengthy discussion ensued among the Commissioners.

Commissioner Peterson stated he liked the traffic calming measures as a means to assist small businesses in the area and Commissioner Perez stated he liked the collaboration between residents, Augustana College and the City.

Hearing no further discussion amongst the Commissioners, Chairman Levin opened the public hearing and invited members of the public to come forward and comment on the plan.

Mr. Mike Markell of 2736 – 6th Avenue in Rock Island approached the podium. He stated that he was a 39-year resident and President of Greenbush Neighbors. Mr. Markell stated the residents were very enthusiastic about the plan and had been meeting monthly about it. He said that maybe one of the reasons the gas station was not an issue is that it has vastly improved over the last ten years and that 7th Avenue looks vastly different than when he moved in. Mr. Markell said he was

confused the Commissioners didn't see the connection between Greenbush Neighbors and the City, adding that they get great response from the City, especially Public Works and Police Departments. He said the City may not have a lot of money, but always seems to be able to squeeze something out and get things done. Mr. Markell closed by stating that Greenbush Neighbors was about people not an organization and that the planning document goes a long way to that end.

Hearing no further comments and seeing no one else come forward after asking if anyone else wanted to speak, Chairman Levin closed the public hearing and asked for a motion. Commissioner Creger made a motion to recommend approval and adoption of the Greenbush Neighborhood Plan to City Council. Commissioner Swanson duly seconded the motion, adding that Greenbush was lucky to have these resources working on the plan.

Commissioner Moline stated he wanted to make clear that once adopted, it's the City's plan and not the citizens who worked on it and what they wanted.

Hearing no further discussion, Chairman Levin called for a vote and the Planning Commission voted 7—0 to recommend approval and adoption of the plan. Chairman Levin stated that the item would be placed on the March 14th City Council agenda for final review and decision.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Griffith stated that no requests had been submitted for a public hearing for the April 6th 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 the April 6th meeting and Commissioner Moline 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 Moline made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:22 PM, which was duly seconded by Commissioner Lopez. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission is Wednesday, April 6, 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, slightly slanted style.

Ben Griffith, AICP, Secretary