

MINUTES OF THE  
ROCK ISLAND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
Regular Meeting March 1, 2011 5:15 P.M.

( x ) Mike Creger	( x ) Jason Lopez	( x ) Bruce Peterson
( x ) Ed Hanna	( x ) Tim Meegan	( x ) Lorian Swanson
( ) Ted Johnson	( x ) Norm Moline	( x ) Berlinda Tyler-Jamison
( x ) David Levin	( x ) Diane Oestreich	

Staff Present: Alan Carmen, Alan Fries and Doris Quigley

Chairman Levin called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** Approval of Minutes of the regular meeting of December 7, 2010. Commissioner Meegan moved to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Lopez seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

**Case #2011-1- Request for approval for Riverfront Corridor Overlay District site plan review in an I-1 (light industrial) district for approximately 4501 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.**

Alan Fries presented the staff report.

Gere/Dismer Architects, LLC, for MetroLINK, has filed an application for a Riverfront Corridor Overlay District site plan review for a new 149,000 gross square foot one-story transit maintenance structure at approximately 4501 Fourth Avenue. The applicant will also construct a 120-space parking lot on the site.

The property measures 715' x 659' x 496' x 223' x 206' x 436' (approximately 421,269 square feet, or 9.67 acres). The site is currently undeveloped. To the north is the City of Moline Water Treatment Plant, zoned B-3. To the east is Deere and Company's outside storage yard in Moline, zoned B-3. To the south are several industrial and residential uses, zoned I-1. To the west is the Quad City Industrial Center, zoned I-1. The Comprehensive Plan identifies heavy industrial land use for the site.

The site has access to Third and Fourth Avenues and 46<sup>th</sup> Street. The site is flat and slightly above street level.

The proposed structure will meet the building setbacks for the I-1 zoning district (20-foot front and rear yard requirement and a 15-foot side yard requirement). The site plan identifies a 74-foot south front yard, a 107-foot east front yard and a 101-foot north front yard. There is also a 164-foot west rear yard with the parking lot located in this area. The structure will cover approximately 35 per cent of the site.

The Zoning Ordinance requires three spaces for every four employees on a maximum working shift, plus one space per business vehicle and one space for every 250 net square feet of office area for this type of use. There will be three shifts with approximately 90 employees working on each shift. According to Ordinance requirements, 68 spaces are required for employees. All

buses (approximately 70) will be parked inside the structure. Finally, there will be 10,000 gross square feet of office area (dispatchers and other office workers), which will require 40 parking spaces. Total parking requirements will be 108 spaces. There is a 120-space parking lot identified on the site plan

The site plan identifies a 74-foot wide landscaped front yard area on the south end of the structure and parking lot. This front yard area will also serve as a dry water-detention basin. The total front yard area will include several Red Maple and River Birch trees along with many juniper shrubs. There will also be a berm alongside the central area of the south façade of the structure.

The east front yard will include three “designer prairie” areas with native prairie grasses. The north yard will include a row of nine Red Maple trees located within an approximate 20-foot wide landscaped area on the perimeter of the north access drive. Finally, the parking lot will have a 15-foot wide landscaped area on the west and two long central islands with several Red Maple and River Birch trees. There will also be a landscaped berm area on the northwest corner of the site along with another “designer prairie” area on the northwest corner of the structure.

There will be several attached signs - area and location yet to be determined - incorporated onto the structure. The parking lot will be lighted - light standards have yet to be chosen, but illumination levels will meet Ordinance requirements.

The proposed development will relocate the transit company’s bus maintenance and dispatch facility from its current location on Fifth Avenue; administrative offices will remain at the Fifth Avenue location. The larger structure will allow for inside parking for up to 70 buses.

The site will have adequate parking for employees and visitors in the lot on the west side of the development. There will be adequate access and landscaping for the parking lot and the entire development. Staff believes that the site plan meets the standards of the Riverfront Corridor Overlay District in terms of property size, compatibility, site planning, open space/landscaping, and parking.

Staff recommends approval of the final Riverfront Corridor Overlay Site Plan because the proposed structure and parking area are attractive, functional and a well-planned design that will have adequate access, parking and landscaping that meets the standards for the Riverfront Corridor Overlay District.

Chairman Levin asked for questions from the Commissioners for staff. Commissioner Tyler-Jamison declared a conflict of interest in this hearing.

Commissioner Levin asked if the new facility would harmonize with the Sylvan Slough Natural Area that the City had developed.

Mr. Fries replied that the applicant had building elevations to share with the Commission.

Mr. Carmen stated that, based on the Columbia Park Plan, the demolition and proposed use would be a suitable development in this area.

Commissioner Creger asked if the buses would be fueled at this location.

Mr. Carmen enlarged the map and showed the area where the fueling station for compressed natural gas and diesel fuel would be located. He said that fire code and building code would be met in relation to the fueling station.

Commissioner Moline said that the combination of middle to upper-middle income housing anticipated for this area and a bus maintenance garage would seem to be an unusual mix for the mixed-use area; and asked if staff was certain that this use was a good fit for the future housing uses that are planned (per the Columbia Park Plan) and if the buffering areas would be adequate.

Mr. Fries replied that vehicle storage and maintenance would be housed inside the building, the landscaping appeared to be adequate and fitting to the area, and there is adjacent industrial usage.

Commissioner Swanson asked where the Columbia Park Plan proposed housing uses were located, and if the buses would be repaired on site.

Mr. Carmen replied that the mixed-use commercial/residential housing concept areas were west of 44<sup>th</sup> Street and also between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. He also stated that housing was a longer-term development concept.

Mr. Fries replied that repair and maintenance would be performed on-site, inside the building.

As there were no additional questions for staff, Chairman Levin invited the applicant to come forward.

Perry Gere of Gere/Dismer Architects, 124 Arts Alley, Rock Island and Dan Payne of MetroLINK, 1515 River Drive, Moline, addressed the Commission. Mr. Gere stated that the development would be seeking a LEEDS Silver status, so the number of parking spaces would be reduced from 120 to the number required by ordinance, 108. He handed out a set of drawings showing various building elevations of the development.

There will be photovoltaic arrays (solar cells) on the roof of the building. The maximum vertical height of the building will be about 30 feet. The interior design is as column-free as possible. The building is constructed from insulated pre-cast panels with glass throughout – something new to MetroLINK buildings and sure to be appreciated by the employees. The project was designed and sited to be expandable to the east by the year 2036. There are no detention requirements for this project because the site was previously fully impervious; however, detention areas have been carefully designed into the project to meet future requirements.

Chairman Levin asked for questions from the Commissioners for the applicant.

Commissioner Levin asked what the column spacing in the building was.

Mr. Gere replied that the general spacing was 75 feet with an 80-foot clear-span zone in the turning house.

Commissioner Oestreich asked about fencing, sidewalks, and parking-lot drainage.

Mr. Gere responded that there would be fencing starting at the southeast corner of the building parallel to Fourth Ave/River Drive, following the property along 46<sup>th</sup> Street to the northeast corner of the property, then along the northern property-line to enclose the rear and side of the building for security purposes. He hopes that the fencing will not create a negative appearance in the area. He said there would be sidewalks located immediately adjacent to the streets, that the parking lots would drain into the island areas, which were designed as detention areas.

Commissioner Lopez asked what the traffic pattern would be for buses returning to the lot at the end of the day.

Mr. Payne, Transit Maintenance Facility Manger for MetroLINK, stated that the vehicle flow pattern will have the buses travelling east on Fourth Ave/River Drive, then north on 46<sup>th</sup> Street to the entrance, queuing up in the lot, through the fueling station, then into the structure for washing and cleaning, through the turning house and into stacked parking in the garage ready to exit again through the north-facing doors. Special buses that do morning school runs will enter from 46<sup>th</sup> Street into the turning house and line up in the garage, ready for their afternoon runs.

He also gave an additional answer to Commission Moline that the location of a transit maintenance site adjacent to mixed-use commercial and residential areas should be an asset for the mixed-use area for people to take advantage of the ease of public transportation. This is called transit-oriented development and smart growth.

Commissioner Creger asked about the location of the administrative offices.

Mr. Payne noted that the administrative offices have been in Moline for several years as the site on Fifth Avenue had been over-crowded. He stated that the Operations offices would be in the new location and that the Fifth Avenue location – owned jointly with the City of Davenport – would no longer be utilized by MetroLINK. It is not known yet what Davenport will do relative to the Fifth Avenue location.

As there were no further questions for the applicant and no others in the audience to speak, Chairman Levin opened the floor for discussion by the Commissioners.

Commissioner Lopez moved that the request be approved as recommended by staff. Commissioner Creger seconded the motion.

Chairman Levin called for the motion and it passed on a vote of nine in favor, none opposed and one abstention.

There was some talk about the railroad as a neighbor to the bus facility and issues relative to train traffic.

The recommendation will be presented to City Council on Monday, March 7, 2011 at 6:45 p.m.

**Other Business:**

Mr. Carmen brought two new 'neighborhoods' to the attention of the Commission as areas that would be brought before the Commission for neighborhood plan review later this year; College Hill District (14<sup>th</sup> Avenue near the intersection of 30<sup>th</sup> Street, and near the intersection of 38<sup>th</sup> Street)- a subgroup of the Hilltop Area, and the Arsenal Corridor area (24<sup>th</sup> Street and Fourth Avenue).

**Adjournment:**

Commissioner Oestreich made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Moline seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan M. Carmen, Secretary  
Rock Island Planning Commission