



**PLANNING COMMISSION - REGULAR SESSION  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4, 2025, 4:00 PM**

The Planning Commission convened in regular session at 4:04 PM, June 4, 2025. Vice Chair Beyer called the meeting to order.

**Roll Call**

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Jackie Beyer	Commission Vice Chair	Present
Goverdhan Galpalli	Commissioner	Present
Justin Boyd	Commission Chair	Present (4:04 PM)
Mary Ann Cullen	Commissioner	Present
Mark Muehleck	Commissioner	Present
David Lewis	Commissioner	Present
Rachael Mosley	Commissioner	Present
Thomas Krieger	Commissioner	Present
William Peradotti	Commissioner	Present
Anna Sochotsky	Commissioner	Absent

Staff Present: George Boyle, Assistant Corporation Council; Kelly Pfeifer, Director of Development Services; Jon Branham, Planner II; Alissa Pemberton, Planning Manager.

**Public Comment**

No public comment was provided.

**Consent Agenda**

**Commissioner Krieger made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Muehleck, to approve the consent agenda as presented.**

**AYES:** Lewis; Mosley; Krieger; Muehleck; Peradotti; Beyer; Galpalli; Cullen

**Motion carried (viva voce).**

Item 4.A. Consideration and action to approve the Minutes of the March 5, 2025, regular meeting of the Bloomington Planning Commission.

**Regular Agenda**

*The following item was presented:*

Item 5.A. **Z-02-25** - Public hearing, consideration, and action on a request by the City of Bloomington, for Zoning Map Amendments to the P-2 (Public Lands and Institutions) District, for the properties located at 801 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. (PIN 14-32-351-

003), 2418 Maloney Dr. (PIN 21-02-277-017), 205 N. Prospect Rd. (PIN 21-02-253-014), and 409 E. Mulberry St. (PIN 21-04-256-005).

Ms. Pemberton presented the Staff Report, with a recommendation for approval, explaining the key motivation for the zoning change is to provide clarity about the future use of these properties for current and future property owners in the vicinity. Three properties are currently being used as detention basins and will continue to be used as such. The fourth property is a church with an associated parsonage; the church will continue to operate, while the parsonage will be demolished to create green infrastructure to alleviate localized flooding and reduce stress on combined sewers. By changing the zoning to P-2 (Public Lands and Institutions), the Zoning Map will better communicate the actual and intended use of these properties. Pemberton noted that while the current uses can continue, the zoning change helps people understand the future potential of the land and ensures the zoning accurately reflects its current and planned functions.

Vice Chair Beyer asked about allowable uses under the new zoning, specifically whether homeless shelters would be permitted by right. Ms. Pemberton confirmed that the P-2 zoning does allow Shelters as Permitted by Right, this clarified that in practice these properties are not suitable for homeless shelters due to lack of access and small size, so such development is not a realistic concern. The discussion emphasized that the zoning change is intended to provide clarity and accurately reflect the properties' actual and intended uses.

Chair Boyd arrived at 4:04 PM.

Vice Chair Beyer asked about the potential for the city to purchase adjacent lots to enable new development. Ms. Pemberton explained that such redevelopment would be extremely costly and complex, involving major infrastructure changes due to the existing use of the City-owned property as detention basin. She emphasized that adjacent lots would remain in their current zoning and any future change in zoning of additionally purchased lots would still require the normal public hearing. She also noted that if P-2 properties cease to be used for P-2 uses they revert to the R-1A district, ensuring more appropriate future use. She restated the overall goal of providing clarity and setting realistic expectations for the public regarding the future of these properties.

Vice Chair Beyer inquired whether agricultural or residential zoning would be more appropriate as a placeholder for the properties in question. Ms. Pemberton explained that agricultural zoning is often misunderstood by the public, and that P-2 zoning more accurately sets expectations for future land use. Ms. Pemberton noting that while the city and church uses are likely to remain for the foreseeable future, if use ever does cease operation, the properties would revert to residential zoning. The overall rationale is to ensure the zoning reflects both current use and realistic long-term expectations for the area.

Vice Chair Beyer opened the public hearing.

No public testimony was provided.

Vice Chair Beyer closed the public hearing.

Jon Branham noted that Chair Boyd had joined at 4:04 PM, after item review had started, and is not eligible to vote.

**Commissioner Krieger made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cullen, to establish findings of fact, as presented in the Staff Report, that the request for approval of the following Zoning Map Amendments are in the public interest and not solely for the benefit of the Applicant or Property Owner and to recommend approval of the requests:**

- **Amend the property at 801 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr., from B-1 to P-2;**
- **Amend the property at 2418 Maloney Dr. from A to P-2;**
- **Amend the property at 205 N. Prospect Rd. (PIN 21-02-253-014), from B-1 to P-2; and**
- **Amend the property at 409 E. Mulberry St. (PIN 21-04-256-005) from R-2 to P-2.**

**Vice Chair Beyer directed the clerk to call roll:**

**AYES:** Lewis; Mosley; Krieger; Muehleck; Peradotti; Beyer; Galpalli; Cullen

**ABSTAIN:** Boyd

**Motion passed.**

Chair Boyd took over as the presiding Chair of the meeting.

*The following item was presented:*

Item 5.B. **Z-03-25** - Public hearing, consideration, and action on a request by the City of Bloomington, for the approval of text amendments, modifications and additions to the Zoning Code of the City of Bloomington, Illinois (Chapter 44 of the Bloomington City Code, 1960), relating to 1) allowed uses tables, (2) bulk and site standards, (3) transitional yards, (4) use provisions, and 5) administrative procedures.

Ms. Pemberton explained that the proposed amendment package is smaller than originally planned, with any items focused on allowing missing middle housing uses postponed. She presented the Staff Report, with recommendation for approval.

She explained the main focus of the first item is clarifying the distinction between use and ownership in zoning, particularly to address challenges with condominium financing and to allow for fee simple ownership of multi-unit buildings that can already be built under the current Zode. She provided the example of townhouses that can already be built, but almost exclusively result in the development of rental units due to zoning provisions that result in the governance of ownership rather than just use and form.

Vice Chair Beyer pointed out that “Fee Simple” is also a recommendation from the Opticos report on zoning barriers, so it seems related to missing middle housing. Ms. Pemberton explained that it is related to all real estate finance and that it would be an expected result of almost any report done in any jurisdiction for how to facilitate the development of any housing type.

Ms. Pemberton explained the focus of the second item is allowing for select commercial uses in the most “Urban” residential districts: R-3B and R-D. This is primarily about

facilitating Mixed Use items, like allowing a public coffee shop or gym to be integrated with a larger scale residential project that could already be constructed in those Districts. She noted that any implementation of the new uses that occurred outside of a Mixed Use development would result in the use requiring a Special Use Permit.

The third item addressed by Ms. Pemberton was a clarification of terminology for the tables in the R-2 and R-3 Districts. Since the Use Tables and the Bulk and Site Tables classify things slightly differently, notes are proposed for the Bulk and Site Tables to explain which line items correlate between the two.

Next, Ms. Pemberton explained changes proposed to improve the practical buildability of the kinds of structures that are already permitted in the Zoning Code. She explained that the Division has been working with Building Safety and private developers for an extended period of time to identify pain points where the Code does not align with practical construction practices. Duplicate and triplicate regulation has been identified (FAR in addition to size/setback/height), minimum lot areas per dwelling unit that are the same as the minimum lot size mean that ADUs are unbuildable on most conventional lots in any District (and don't align with the prescribed densities for the districts and/or other bulk/site requirements), physically described heights don't align with conventional heights described in feet, and some of the existing height limitations are not practical points of differentiation from a Building Code standpoint.

Vice Chair Beyer pointed out that many of the recommendations being made are also recommendations from the Opticos report on zoning barriers. Ms. Pemberton explained that there is going to be overlap between recommendations for how to enable and how to enable practical development of housing of any type and how to enable a specific type of housing (missing middle), since one is a subset of the other.

Director Pfiefer explained that the currently proposed changes are not coming from recommendations that have been presented by Opticos as part of the Missing Middle Housing Study. These recommendations have come from practical experience with the difficulties of developing the structures that are currently allowed in the City's Zoning Code, having been identified through working on Variances, Waivers, Development Agreements, etc.

Ms. Pemberton highlighted that no use permissions are changing that allow missing middle housing types that are not currently allowable, minimum lot widths are not recommended for change, and many of the other items that enable or create the kinds of structures referred to as "Missing Middle" housing are still barriers in the current Zoning Code, with no recommendations for correction in the current proposal.

Vice Chair Beyer said it appears that the Commission is being asked to act on things that align with recommendations in the Opticos report that Council declined to act on. Ms. Pemberton explained that conversations related to the items before the Commission have been in process for a long time, with many of the current Commissioners having been present for them. While the proposed text amendments overlap with recommendations from the Opticos report, they were developed independently by city staff to address persistent issues in the zoning code. She noted that many planners would identify the same barriers to development, regardless of the

report, and emphasized that the amendments are intended to resolve widely recognized obstacles and improve the practicality and clarity of the city's zoning regulations. The changes are not a direct response to the Opticos report, but rather reflect common best practices and local experience.

Additional discussion ensued, relating to the reasons for specific changes related to height and construction type, including commonly granted variances and waivers, language improvements and the creation of supportive imagery to improve understanding.

Chair Boyd asked about inconsistencies that continue to be found throughout the Code that was adopted in 2019. Ms. Pemberton explained that current staff has tried to identify the cause for inconsistencies with the documented discussions held by the Commission during those efforts and the results of the codified Code, but the documentation is difficult and it makes the most sense to just move forward from what is currently adopted.

Ms. Pemberton discussed the final component of the proposed text amendments which aligned terms in the Use Tables with the existing definitions in § 44-16, related to Automobile/Vehicle Service/Fueling Stations which had somehow been integrated as the same Use as Vehicle Repair & Service which is defined as a semi-heavy industrial use, including engine work, grinding, and painting, resulting in complicated overlap and the inappropriate assignment of Use Provisions to what would, otherwise, be a somewhat common development.

Finally, Ms. Pemberton noted that the changes to § 44-17 were the same in content that the Commission previous reviewed, but with enough change to language after review by the Legal Department that staff felt it was best to re-run the proposed changes back through the Commission for good measure. She clarified that the one major language change was related to the expression of how Variances that receive a majority vote of fewer than four (4) are handled, since they require a vote of four or more to be "approved."

Commissioner Lewis asked what Council would use as the information to determine whether they should grant or deny the Variance once it was referred to them. Ms. Pemberton explained they would use the Findings of Fact transmitted by the Zoning Board of Appeals (and the documented record of the public hearing).

Vice Chair Beyer asked to go back to the proposed content related to Assisted Living Facilities in P-2, asking why the addition was occurring since the use was already permitted. Ms. Beyer and staff reviewed the proposed content, a printed copy of the Zoning Code, and the official eCode version of the Zoning Code, determining that the inquiry was related to a printed copy of the Code that was no longer accurate and that the official version of the Code did no longer include the Use in P-2, as it was omitted by accident during the reorganization of the Residential Uses in the Use Tables. The inquiry was withdrawn.

Chair Boyd opened the public hearing.

**Noah Tang** (504 E. Olive St.) spoke in favor of the proposed text amendments. He highlighted how current zoning and subdivision codes make it difficult for multi-unit residential structures to be owner-occupied, resulting in more rental properties despite the demand for ownership. He advocated for changes that would allow fee simple ownership, which he argued would promote generational wealth, neighborhood stability, and better infill development. He also shared a personal experience about the challenges of building an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) for family use under the current code, emphasizing the need for reforms to make it easier for homeowners to provide housing for relatives and support multi-generational living.

**Dakota Black**, local resident from Baker Street, spoke in favor of the proposed text amendments. He highlighted the benefits of allowing retail and restaurant uses by Special Use in certain residential districts, which would enable small, neighborhood-oriented businesses like coffee shops with apartments above. He emphasized that these changes would not result in large commercial developments in residential areas, but would instead foster vibrant, walkable neighborhoods. He also shared a personal goal of owning a shop with a residence above and discusses the importance of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) for supporting multi-generational living, particularly for family members with health needs.

Chair Boyd closed the public hearing.

Vice Chair Beyer asked for clarification on whether a new definition for Vehicle Repair & Service needs to be created since the terms in the Use Provisions and Use Tables have been changed. Ms. Pemberton explained that all of the terms have existing definitions, and the tables and provisions have been corrected to align with those definitions.

Vice Chair Beyer asked why the building height was removed. Ms. Pemberton explained that the Commission had reviewed and approved multiple requests for waivers of this provision since it was adopted, and the buildings would still not be able to violate height restrictions of any subject District. Chair Boyd affirmed the history of the item.

Commissioner Muehleck left at 4:55 PM.

Vice Chair Beyer asked Corporation Council for clarification on whether the recommendations are tied to the Opticos report or whether the Commission is ok to approve them. Chair Boyd asked for clarification that the proposed recommendations are independent of the report. Ms. Pemberton confirmed, explaining that missing middle housing types are not allowed by any of the proposed amendments, but would not be harmed by the proposed amendments either. Vice Chair Beyer clarified her request to Corporate Council, asking for verification that acting on unrelated recommendations provided by staff that happen to also be present in the Opticos report is appropriate. Mr. Boyle advised that the text amendments have been proposed by City Staff and there are existing standard for review that can be applied to determine their appropriateness.

**Commissioner Krieger made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cullen, to establish findings of fact that the proposed text amendments are in the public**

**interest, and recommend that City Council approve the proposed text amendments, with the following language as replacement for the second sentence of § 44-1708G (Variances, Approval), “If the majority of the members who consider an application vote in favor, but the majority is less than four (4), the matter may be referred to Council for final action. For example, if only 5 members are present, and 3 of the 5 members vote to approve, the matter may be referred to council.”**

**Chair Boyd directed the clerk to call roll:**

**AYES:** Boyd; Lewis; Mosley; Krieger; Peradotti; Beyer; Galpalli; Cullen

**Motion passed.**

## **New Business**

*The following item was presented:*

Item 6.A. Presentation of the Draft Regional Strategic Land Use Map for McLean County, Town of Normal, and the City of Bloomington (City focus).

Ms. Pemberton introduced Anthony Baumann from the McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC).

Mr. Baumann presented the Strategic Land Use Map and Plan to the Commission. He explained that the map is a planning tool designed to help local planners make informed decisions about future development in the community. He described the process of creating the map, which involved gathering and refining existing land use data from multiple sources and collaborating with local staff. The resulting maps—both existing and future land use—are intended to address immediate development pressures and provide a foundation for more detailed planning and decision-making for future projects in the region. He reviewed the newly created land use classifications, noting they are intended to guide future development and provide flexibility for staff decision-making. These classifications are standardized across the City, Town, and County to ensure consistency, while still meeting the specific needs of each municipality. He also noted that the Strategic Land Use Map document includes detailed definitions and descriptions for each land use category, offering staff a clear guide for making future development decisions and ensuring clarity in the planning process.

Vice Chair Beyer asked why the presentation was not attached to the agenda packet. Ms. Pemberton explained that it will be attached as an Exhibit to the Minutes, but since it is a non-voting item, presented by an outside agency, the precise presentation was not available at the time the packet was published.

Mr. Baumann explained that his presentation is purely informational. The Draft Plan will be issued for public comment soon, and he hopes that all of the Commission members will review and provide their feedback on the draft.

Commissioner Peradotti asked Mr. Baumann to highlight where the biggest differences between the current and future proposed maps and explain the significance. Mr. Baumann explained that for the City, specific growth areas are called out, with short explanations of the relevance and restrictions, prepared by local staff.

Commissioner Galpalli asked for clarification on whether the maps evaluate projects already in progress. Mr. Baumann explained that the maps are informed predictions about how development pressures not included in prior iterations of the Comprehensive Plans can, or will, be addressed.

Chair Boyd asked for clarification on the timeline. City Planning Commission tonight, Town of Normal tomorrow, then another touch-base with local staff. Mr. Baumann expected the public draft to be issued sometime in the next two (2) weeks and staff will make sure the Commission receives the information to participate in the comment period.

## Adjournment

**Commissioner Krieger made a motion, seconded by Commission Vice Chair Beyer, to adjourn the meeting.**

**AYES:** Boyd; Lewis; Mosley; Krieger; Peradotti; Beyer; Galpalli; Cullen

**Motion carried (viva voce).**

The Meeting Adjourned at 5:09 PM.

## CITY OF BLOOMINGTON



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Justin Boyd, Chair



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Alissa Pemberton, Staff Liaison