



MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION - REGULAR SESSION
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2024, 4:00 PM

The Planning Commission convened in regular session at 4:16 PM, March 6, 2024. Chair Boyd called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Mary Ann Cullen	Commissioner	Present
Mark Muehleck	Commissioner	Present
David Lewis	Commissioner	Present
Justin Boyd	Chair	Present
Brady Sant Amour	Commissioner	Present
Thomas Krieger	Commissioner	Present
Anna Patino	Commissioner	Present
Goverdhan Galpalli	Commissioner	Present
Jackie Beyer	Vice Chair	Present
William Peradotti	Commissioner	Present

Staff present included: Kelly Pfeifer, Assistant Economic & Community Development Director; George Boyle, Assistant Corporation Counsel; Alissa Pemberton, City Planner; and John Myers, Assistant City Planner.

Public Comment

No public comment was provided.

Consent Agenda

Items listed on the Consent Agenda are approved with one motion; Items pulled from the Consent Agenda for discussion are listed and voted on separately.

Item 4.A. Consideration and action to approve the Minutes of the February 7, 2024, regular meeting of the Bloomington Planning Commission.

Commissioner Krieger made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Galpalli, to approve the Consent Agenda.

Roll call.

AYES: Commission Chair Boyd; Commissioner Lewis; Commissioner Sant Amour; Commissioner Krieger; Commissioner Muehleck; Commissioner Peradotti; Commission Vice Chair Beyer; Commissioner Galpalli; Commissioner Patino; Commissioner Cullen

Motion passed.

Regular Agenda

The following item was presented:

Item 5.A. Public hearing, review, and action on a request submitted by Laborers' Home Development Corporation, for approval of a Public Hearing Site Plan to allow Multiple-Family Dwellings in the D-2 (Downtown Transitional) District for the properties located at 408 E. Washington Street and 401 E. Jefferson Street, in Bloomington, PINs: 21-04-407-009 and 21-04-407-007.

Ms. Pemberton presented the Staff report with recommendation for approval, with the condition that the parking Variance is approved and the site therefor in compliance with the Zoning Code. She noted that the development is on two separate properties that will need to be combined prior to construction; 408 E. Washington Street and 401 E. Jefferson Street. She stated the proposed development will be 52 units, consisting of 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom apartments and the proposal meets all the Design Criteria of the zoning district. She noted that the project is pursuing a Variance to the required parking to allow for 65 off-street parking spaces which means the proposed 17 bike parking spaces would be in compliance with the 25% motor vehicle requirement. She noted that an existing approval for the demolition of the Place of Worship on the property at 401 E. Jefferson Street exists, with conditions that will need to be met.

Vice Chair Beyer stated that a 33% reduction in parking is significant. She expressed concern for overflow parking and asked about the possibility of permit parking on-street for residents. Ms. Pemberton explained that, while the initial number of off-street parking spaces required for the proposed development is 99, after credits and reductions they only need to provide 75, so the Variance is only really for a reduction of 10 spaces. Additionally, she noted that parking will be reviewed and discussed in detail by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Commissioner Galpalli asked for clarification on how many units and how the trash will be handled. Ms. Pemberton stated there will be a dumpster located on-site. She added that there is space to construct a second dumpster, if needed.

Vice Chair Beyer asked about lighting for the site. Ms. Pemberton noted they will need to comply with the performance standards in the Zoning Code.

Commission Chair Boyd opened the public hearing.

Tim Ryan (200 Labor Drive, Jacksonville, IL), Applicant, gave a brief description of Laborer's Home Development and the project. He noted the developer plans to be a long-term presence in the community and tries to hire locally, when possible. He noted the apartments will be affordable and will be based on the Area Median Income. The precise rental price points have yet to be determined.

Vice Chair Beyer asked for an explanation of the number of apartments and rooms.

Heidi Wang (401 W Superior Street #400, Chicago, IL), Architect for the Applicant, stated 50% will be 3-bedrooms, 25% will be 2-bedrooms, and 25% will be 1-bedrooms.

She noted this is a preliminary site plan to ensure zoning compliance. She further explained the parking reductions and credits. Additionally, Ms. Wang stated that there will be minimal Staff on-site.

Vice Chair Beyer stated support for the development.

Mr. Ryan added to Ms. Wang's statement that there will rarely be more than two Staff members during the day, but he will be on-call to help with any issues.

Noah Tang (504 E Olive Street), Resident, expressed support for the project. He noted Bloomington's housing shortage, proximity to public transit, and the underutilized public parking lots. He encouraged the Commission to think about people outside of cars and this is a step in the right direction.

Commission Chair Boyd closed the public hearing.

Commission Chair Boyd noted that he supports developing space for people instead of cars. Additionally, he stated this project is a great infill development.

Commission Vice Chair Beyer made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cullen, to establish findings of fact that the Site Plan meets the standards and objectives for which the Code is designed and to recommend approval of the Site Plan for the property located at 408 E. Washington Street and 401 E. Jefferson Street to City Council, with the Condition that a Variance to allow reduced off-street parking (resulting in Site Plan compliance with motor vehicle and bicycle parking requirements) is approved, prior to Council approval of the item.

Roll call.

AYES: Commission Chair Boyd; Commissioner Lewis; Commissioner Sant Amour; Commissioner Krieger; Commissioner Muehleck; Commissioner Peradotti; Commission Vice Chair Beyer; Commissioner Galpalli; Commissioner Patino; Commissioner Cullen.

Motion passed.

The following item was presented:

Item 5.B. Public hearing, review, and action on a request initiated by City of Bloomington, for approval of text amendments, modifications, and deletions to the Zoning Code of the City of Bloomington, Illinois (Chapter 44 of the Bloomington City Code, 1960), relating to 1) accessory uses, (2) accessory structures, (3) fencing requirements, (4) parking requirements, (5) administrative procedures, and (6) minor definition and figure clarifications.

Ms. Pemberton provided the Staff report with recommendation for approval of the proposed Text Amendments. She noted the main areas being addressed through the proposed Text Amendments include accessory uses, parking, and fencing. For accessory uses, she noted that Staff removed the requirement of a Special Use Permit for chicken-keeping and added language to add clarity to screening requirements, removed some accessory uses from the primary use table, and added a permitting process for chicken-

keeping. Regarding fencing, she noted changes to the language to clarify fence height requirements and changes to allowable fence heights in corner lots. She stated the changes in parking include a reorganization for clarity, increasing the distances for on-street and public parking credits/reductions for commercial and residential development, and modifying parking demand study requirements. Additionally, she noted Staff changed the name of the “Bloomington-Normal Airport Authority” to reflect their new name “Central Illinois Regional Airport Authority”.

Vice Chair Beyer expressed concerns about Home Owners’ Associations (HOA) involvement in permitting chicken-keeping. She asked Staff if an HOA approval can be incorporated into the permitting process. Ms. Pemberton responded that provisions of an HOA or deed restrictions in a community are private agreements the City cannot enforce; those provisions must be addressed between the private parties, but an awareness question has already been added to newly created applications to assist residents in identifying potential future issues.

Vice Chair Beyer asked for clarity on the reorganization of the chapter. Ms. Pemberton clarified where the text changes were located in the chapter, noting that part of the chapter was already in the tables.

Vice Chair Beyer expressed concern about removing the minimum parking requirements for D-2 (Downtown Transitional) District in § 44-1208C. Ms. Pemberton stated that it will only impact nonresidential uses in the D-2 (Downtown Transitional) District. She explained the purpose of the D-2 District and noted that most properties have on-street parking. Additionally, she stated that many of the businesses in D-2 Districts are neighborhood-supported. Ms. Peifer explained that there are some properties within “the buckle” that are zoned D-2. Due to this, Staff is looking to make the same requirements as the D-1 (Central Business) District for nonresidential uses.

Vice Chair Beyer expressed concern for parking availability when allowing residential parking; she asked if a permitted system is possible. Ms. Pemberton responded that parking is self-selecting in nature; people not willing to walk will select alternate locations. She noted some apartments do have contracts with parking decks or lots.

Commission Chair Boyd opened the public hearing.

Noah Tang gave supportive testimony for the chicken-keeping and parking amendments. He noted that there have not been any complaints since he has gotten chickens. Regarding parking, he stated that some similar-sized cities are changing “required” parking to “recommended” parking. He stated that he rarely uses his car and that many of the downtown parking lots are currently underutilized.

Commission Chair Boyd closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Cullen stated that we need to find a balance within the parking ordinance.

Commission Chair Boyd stated that there is a false perception within Bloomington. He noted that there is no shortage of parking right now. He stated that parking does not generate revenue and that we need to make small changes to encourage development.

Commissioner Krieger made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Muehleck, to establish findings of fact that the Text Amendments are in the public interest and to recommend approval of the proposed Text Amendments to City Council. Roll call.

AYES: Commission Chair Boyd; Commissioner Lewis; Commissioner Sant Amour; Commissioner Krieger; Commissioner Muehleck; Commissioner Peradotti; Commission Vice Chair Beyer; Commissioner Galpalli; Commissioner Patino; Commissioner Cullen.

Motion passed.

New Business

Vice Chair Beyer asked Staff if it is possible to update the City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan with the new Census data. Ms. Pemberton responded that Staff is in the process of evaluating some potential amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Myers notified the Planning Commission that Staff is presenting a Resolution to adopt the 2023 Official Zoning Map at Council on March 25th.

Adjournment

Commissioner Krieger made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Muehleck, to adjourn the meeting.

Roll call.

AYES: Commission Chair Boyd; Commissioner Lewis; Commissioner Sant Amour; Commissioner Krieger; Commissioner Muehleck; Commissioner Peradotti; Commission Vice Chair Beyer; Commissioner Galpalli; Commissioner Patino; Commissioner Cullen.

Motion passed.

The Meeting Adjourned at 5:24PM.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON



Commission Chair, Justin Boyd



Staff Liaison, Alissa Pemberton