



MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION - REGULAR SESSION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2025, 4:00 PM

The Planning Commission convened in regular session at 4:01 PM, January 8, 2025. Chair Justin Boyd called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Anna Sochotsky	Commissioner	Present (4:02 PM)
Jackie Beyer	Commission Vice Chair	Present
Goverdhan Galpalli	Commissioner	Present
Justin Boyd	Commission Chair	Present
Mary Ann Cullen	Commissioner	Present
David Lewis	Commissioner	Present
Thomas Krieger	Commissioner	Present
William Peradotti	Commissioner	Present
Mark Muehleck	Commissioner	Absent
Brady Sant Amour	Commissioner	Absent

Staff present included: George Boyle, Assistant Corporation Counsel; Kelly Pfeifer, Director of Development Services; Jon Branham, City Planner; Alissa Pemberton, City Planner; 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.

Commissioner Lewis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cullen, to approve the consent agenda as presented.

AYES: Boyd; Lewis; Krieger; Peradotti; Beyer; Galpalli; Sochotsky; Cullen

Motion carried (viva voce).

Item 4.A. Consideration and action to approve the Minutes of the October 2, 2024, regular meeting of the Bloomington Planning Commission.

Item 4.B. Consideration and action to approve the Minutes of the December 4, 2024, regular meeting of the Bloomington Planning Commission.

Regular Agenda

The following item was presented:

Item 5.A. **Z-14-24** - Public hearing, review, and action on a request initiated by the City of Bloomington, for the approval of text amendments, modification and additions to the Zoning Code of the City of Bloomington, Illinois (Chapter 44 of the Bloomington City Code, 1960), relating to the creation of translation zoning for annexed properties.

Ms. Pemberton presented the staff report, with recommendation for approval. She explained that the proposed changes to Chapter 44 will be paired with changes to Chapter 8.5 (Annexation) which was written in the 1970s and rarely updated since. The original impetus for review was related to already-developed properties that want/need to annex and continue operating as-is, but currently require a full Agreement and Zoning Map Amendment process to do so. The proposed changes to Chapter 44 set up a chart for “translation zoning” that would be used for automatic zoning classification upon annexation. She noted comparisons and previous cases. She noted R-1 is a little different since the City has three different R-1 districts, so the translation is structured to target the least dense R-1 district that does not create a nonconforming lot.

After the proposed changes take effect, properties that want to annex at the equivalent City zoning to their existing County zoning may do so through a Petition only. This helps the City and Property Owner by reducing the hurdles required to: provide City water and sewer to these properties, increase City property tax base, increase consistency in City limits and service provision, and more. If the current County zoning is not what they would like to annex in as, a Zoning Map Amendment would still be necessary. One other alternate “automatic classification” is also proposed for properties owned by the City or “other units of local government” to be automatically classified to the appropriate (“P”) Public Interest district; if these properties are sold or long term leased it would trigger a zoning map amendment out of the “P” district.

Chair Boyd asked for clarification on the remaining process for adoption. Ms. Pemberton stated the recommendation and both chapter amendments would be placed on the Consent Agenda for Council’s approval, as one item since they are integrally related.

Chair Boyd opened the public hearing.

No testimony was received.

Chair Boyd closed the public hearing.

Vice Chair Beyer stated she supported the amendments and appreciates the reduction in procedural effort to achieve the same outcome.

Commission Vice Chair Beyer made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Krieger, to establish findings of fact that the proposed text amendments meet the standards and objectives for which the Code is designed and are in the public interest, and to recommend that City Council approve the proposed text amendments, as presented.

Chair Boyd directed the clerk to call roll.

AYES: Boyd; Lewis; Krieger; Peradotti; Beyer; Galpalli; Sochotsky; Cullen

Motion passed.

Ms. Pemberton stated the item is expected at Council on January 13, 2025.

The following item was presented:

Item 5.B. **Z-12-24** - Public hearing, consideration, and action on a request by BBig Solar, LLC, for an **Annexation Agreement and Zoning Map Amendment**, to the City A (Agriculture) District upon annexation, pertaining to property generally located at the western terminus of Lutz Road, consisting of approximately 17.0 acres (part of PIN: 21-20-100-006).

Ms. Pemberton explained that the following two items, Z-12-24 and Z-13-24, are related to property that is currently all one parcel, but will be split into two with two separate owners. She stated that the current case (Z-12-24) is related to the southern portion of the property.

She presented the staff report with recommendation for approval, noting key property characteristics, including location, topography, and lack of available public infrastructure. She referred to the property condition as improvable, but not developable with urban uses, indicating that makes agricultural zoning most appropriate. She noted that the Agreement and annexation is to facilitate the installation of a Solar Energy Conversion Facility, but that this is just one possible use that is approvable in the A (Agriculture) District and is not guaranteed to come to fruition. She noted surrounding uses. No waivers or variances are included in the Agreement; one Use Provision is slightly modified to use an already-existing State requirement, rather than create a local requirement that staff would need to review and track separately.

Vice Chair Beyer asked why downzone from R-1 to A when there is a housing shortage, expressing concern that the adjacent properties might not want to develop residential uses next to a solar farm. Ms. Pemberton explained that solar is not necessarily a permanent use like housing. She noted the water and sewer infrastructure are not in place to support other uses. Additionally, she stated it will take approximately 30-40 years for the property to be served by City infrastructure.

Chair Boyd opened the public hearing.

Elizabeth Megli (Attorney for the Applicant) spoke in favor of the request. She noted additional characteristics of the property that make it unsuitable for urban development and for agriculture. She explained, due to the characteristics of the property, the agricultural zoning designation makes sense for the highest and best use of the property.

Scott Lage, 9 Knollbrook Court, (Representative for Trinity Lutheran Church) spoke in favor of the request. He provided the existing uses on the Trinity Lutheran property and stated the proposed use is desirable and that Trinity Lutheran has no objections.

Chair Boyd closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Krieger made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Lewis, to establish findings of fact that the request for approval of the proposed Zoning Map Amendment to the A (Agriculture) District is in the public interest and not solely for the benefit of the Applicant or Property Owner and to recommend approval of the request.

Chair Boyd directed the clerk to call roll.

AYES: Boyd; Lewis; Krieger; Peradotti; Beyer; Galpalli; Sochotsky; Cullen

Motion passed.

Commissioner Peradotti made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cullen, to establish findings of fact that the request for approval of the proposed Annexation Agreement is in the public interest and not solely for the benefit of the Applicant or Property Owner and to recommend approval of the request.

Chair Boyd directed the clerk to call roll.

AYES: Boyd; Lewis; Krieger; Peradotti; Beyer; Galpalli; Sochotsky; Cullen

Motion passed.

The following item was presented:

Item 5.C. **Z-13-24** - Public hearing, consideration, and action on a request by Trinity Lutheran Church, for an **Annexation Agreement and Zoning Map Amendment**, to the City A (Agriculture) District upon annexation, pertaining to property generally located at the northwestern terminus of Lutz Road, consisting of approximately 4.57 acres, part of PIN: 21-20-100-006.

Ms. Pemberton presented the staff report with recommendation for approval. She noted this portion of the property will be sold to Greenwood. She stated characteristics of the site that make it difficult to develop, while noting that Greenwood would like to expand their campus. Ms. Pemberton provided potential uses for the subject area, noting they will most likely be accessory uses to the school. No waivers of variances from the use provisions. She noted it will allow better transportation planning for overall area.

Chair Boyd opened the public hearing.

Elizabeth Megli (Attorney for the Applicant) spoke in favor of the request. She stated this would be a benefit for property, allowing it to be used to its highest and best use. Additionally, she noted this case is straightforward and will be a benefit to the applicant and the future of Greenwood Avenue.

Chair Boyd closed the public hearing.

Commission Vice Chair Beyer made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cullen, to establish findings of fact that the request for approval of the proposed Zoning Map Amendment to the A (Agriculture) District is in the public interest and not solely for the benefit of the Applicant or Property Owner and to recommend approval of the request.

Chair Boyd directed the clerk to call roll.

AYES: Boyd; Lewis; Krieger; Peradotti; Beyer; Galpalli; Sochotsky; Cullen

Motion passed.

Commissioner Galpalli made a motion, seconded by Commission Vice Chair Beyer, to establish findings of fact that the request for approval of the proposed Annexation Agreement is in the public interest and not solely for the benefit of the Applicant or Property Owner and to recommend approval of the request.

Chair Boyd directed the clerk to call roll.

AYES: Boyd; Lewis; Krieger; Peradotti; Beyer; Galpalli; Sochotsky; Cullen

Motion passed.

Ms. Pemberton stated the previous two items are expected at Council on January 27, 2025.

New Business

Vice Chair Beyer asked staff provide current contact information to the Commission so Commissioners can reach out on short notice, particularly regarding attendance. Staff agreed.

Adjournment

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

AYES: Boyd; Lewis; Krieger; Peradotti; Beyer; Galpalli; Sochotsky; Cullen

Motion carried (viva voce).

The Meeting Adjourned at 4:33 PM

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON



Jackie Beyer, Vice Chair



Alissa Pemberton, Staff Liaison