

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE COMMITTEE MEETING OF  
THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, ILLINOIS HELD MONDAY,  
JANUARY 29, 2018 IN THE COUNCIL ROOM OF CITY HALL**

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**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Ebersohl called the Committee of the Whole committee meeting of the City Council of the City of Columbia, Illinois to order at 7:00 P.M.

Upon Roll Call, the following members were:

Present: Committee Members - Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Huch, Reis, Holtkamp and Martens. Mayor Hutchinson was also present.

Absent: None.

Quorum Present.

Administrative Staff Present: City Administrator James Morani, Director of Community Development Emily Fultz, City Engineer Chris Smith, Building Official Justin Osterhage, City Consultant Scott Hanson, Plan Commission Chairman Bill Seibel, Police Chief and Director of EMS Jerry Paul, Deputy Chief of Police Jason Donjon and Accounting/Clerical Assistant Sandy Garmer.

Guests: Jim Vogt, representing Heneghan and Associates and Tracy Butler, representing the Home Builders Association (HBA).

Chairman Ebersohl stated the meeting was called for the purpose of discussing: (1) Subdivision Code; and (2) Public Comments.

**II. SUBDIVISION CODE**

Chairman Ebersohl opened the discussion and Director of Community Development Emily Fultz explained the subdivision code update process included two (2) plan commission meetings in which the revisions were reviewed in detail, as well as, four (4) meetings with developers, builders, engineers and surveyors who actively participated in the process. Emily introduced Scott Hanson, a consultant hired by the City, who then began with a presentation including the following highlighted subdivision code revisions:

- A. Major Initiatives – Preliminary and Final Plats
  - Major versus minor subdivision and definitions.
  - All variances from the subdivision regulations identified at the Preliminary Plat stage.

- Changes time frame for development of a preliminary plat from one year to three years.
- Clarifies information to be provided / identified at the Preliminary and Final Plat stages of developments.
- Improvement Plans approved by City Engineering Department prior to Final Plat approval.

**B. Major Initiatives – Design Standards**

- “Buildable” lots must be adjacent to a public street or private streets built to public street standards.
- Establishes parameters as to when a Traffic Study is needed.
- Provides for how connections from subdivisions to Bike / Pedestrian trails are to be made.
- Requiring notation of grades and lowest permitted foundation openings.
- Disallows “flag lots”.
- Prohibits permanent structures or impediments in utility easements (e.g. pools, retaining walls, garden sheds, etc.).

**C. Major Initiatives – Engineering**

- Updates the Stormwater control standards.
- Updates Performance Guarantee language.
- Adds sketches and details on construction standards for public improvements:
  - a.) utility trenching
  - b.) water service
  - c.) cul-de-sac design
  - d.) storm and sanitary sewer installation

Mr. Hanson concluded the presentation with the following policy questions for the council members to discuss:

- (1.) Discuss masonry ordinance in conjunction with a comprehensive plan update, rather than with the subdivision code update.
- (2.) Tree preservation and / or tree planting requirements.

The council shared the following questions, comments and concerns:

**Masonry Ordinance**

- What is the advantage or disadvantage of discussing the masonry ordinance in conjunction with the comprehensive plan? Mr. Hanson explained the comprehensive plan is a community wide initiative to guide future goals and visions with a timeline and is created with substantial public input. City staff and Plan Commission recommend addressing the masonry ordinance in the near future in conjunction with the comprehensive plan update.
- The Committee questioned whether the builders and developers suggested new and improved building materials and whether the list of masonry materials has

been updated? Mr. Hanson explained there are no changes to the masonry ordinance in the draft subdivision code being reviewed tonight. Emily explained the Home Building Association (HBA) submitted a proposal to the Plan Commissioners outlining masonry percentage changes in zoning designations and various building material suggestions. The HBA brought in a variety of new building material products to a Plan Commission meeting for the commissioners to discuss, view and handle. The new materials were discussed at length with consideration being given to the installation, testing of the new products, warranties and the pros and cons of each material. In conclusion, the Plan Commission recommended no update to the masonry requirement in the subdivision code, but rather to review in conjunction with a future comprehensive plan update.

- There were several comments concerning the observation that the first homes built in a new subdivision are typically the minimum masonry requirement and the impact that has on the development.
- It was questioned whether other communities have masonry coverage requirements. Mr. Hanson said he was familiar with Edwardsville requiring thirty to forty percent (30–40%) masonry on the front of the home and a lower percentage on the sides, but he explained that this is only for one area of town. He also stated that several metro east communities have looked to Columbia's masonry ordinance as a reference.
- The following questions were asked:
  - (1.) Since the masonry requirement has been in existence for over ten (10) years, are we happy with the subdivisions being built?
  - (2.) If changes need to be made to the masonry ordinance, would this be the time to change it?

The questions were briefly discussed with the conclusion the Committee was focusing on the details and background of the masonry requirement when this meeting was called for an overview of the draft subdivision code. It was the consensus to table the masonry requirement discussion and continue reviewing the subdivision code.

#### Tree Preservation

- Mr. Hanson explained city staff has discussed the following ways to approach tree preservation:
  - (a.) A requirement that a tree be planted on every residential lot as part of the occupancy permit. Edwardsville has tried this policy and found it was unsuccessful since the residents were not always satisfied with the type of tree planted and the location.
  - (b.) The policy option of a resident selecting the type of tree and the location and the city paying for the cost of the tree (for example: \$75.00 credit for a tree of three (3) inches in diameter). This type of program has been successful for Edwardsville in conjunction with their Tree City designation.
  - (c.) The city planting trees on right-of-way or major corridors, with no tree requirement on individual lots.

- (d.) The city could view it as site specific (not a requirement) related to the comprehensive plan which is what O'Fallon does.
- There was a brief discussion on whether the city should have a policy or an ordinance on tree preservation and whether it should be included in the subdivision code or whether the discussion is more appropriate with the comprehensive plan update. It was concluded this could be a lengthy discussion similar to the masonry requirement topic. The consensus was to take no action on tree preservation at this time.

#### Other Discussion

- What was the purpose of changing the time frame from one year to three years for the development of the preliminary plat? Mr. Hanson explained that the time frame was discussed with the Plan Commissioners with suggested allowance from one (1) year up to five (5) years, with the concern that standards can change significantly over a five (5) year period, and the three (3) year period was found to be a good compromise.
- There was a concern about the language in the 16.3.16 Prohibited Variance section, with the verbiage "substantial differences". Mr. Hanson provided a few examples of what "substantial differences between the preliminary plat and final plat" could be which included the addition of lot(s) or variation in the street layout which could affect the way the traffic is routed or public safety. There were several suggestions on how to clarify the language. One suggestion was to add "substantial differences, as determined by staff" and the other suggestion was to define "substantial differences" in the 16.2.2 Terms Defined section.
- City Administrator Jimmy Morani brought up the issues involved with street improvements related to the properties being annexed into the city. The example being parcels next to each other – one inside the city and the other not – and how to deal with the street improvements in this type of situation, so not as to result in "leapfrogging" street improvements. It was suggested that the subdivision code would be the appropriate reference to address this concern and related language should be drafted to be included in the code. The following was discussed: (a.) the council could require street improvements in the annexation agreement; (b.) in the past the situations were handled on a case-by-case basis; (c.) currently there is no language in the subdivision code to address to this concern; (d.) it's a policy question we need feedback on; (e.) what are other cities doing in similar situations?; and (e.) the suggestion of a possible recoupment agreement or special service areas.
- City Engineer Chris Smith addressed questions and issues dealing with the following: the addition of compaction report standards and soil reports, statements on all final plats concerning the city's approval and liability clause concerning the settlement of driveways and sidewalks, etc., and the need and suggested methods to address karst topography. Chris explained the review and revision of the subdivision code included the research of other communities best practices, the reaction to existing and past situations and the addition of standards and practices followed that are now written in the subdivision code. In conclusion, Chris said

the updated subdivision code provides the guidance for developers and builders to build good developments with reasonable expectations.

Emily concluded the discussion by requesting any content changes be forwarded to her as soon as possible. Emily and Mr. Hanson thanked the Committee for their time and feedback.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were none.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Alderman Agne and seconded by Alderman Reis to adjourn the Committee of the Whole committee meeting of the City Council of the City of Columbia, Illinois held Monday, January 29, 2018 at 8:17 P.M. Upon voice vote, Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Huch, Reis, Holtkamp and Martens voted yea. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Gene Ebersohl

Chairman Gene Ebersohl  
Committee of the Whole

Sandy Garmer

Minutes by Sandy Garmer, Accounting/Clerical Assistant