

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE COLUMBIA PLAN COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, ILLINOIS HELD MONDAY,  
OCTOBER 8, 2018 IN THE CITY HALL AUDITORIUM**

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Plan Commission meeting of the City of Columbia, Illinois held Monday, October 8, 2018 was called to order by Chairman Bill Seibel at 6:30 P.M.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Upon roll call, the following members were:

Present: Chairman Bill Seibel and Commissioners Russell Horsley, Virgil Mueller, Caren Burggraf, Karin Callis, Tony Murphy and Doug Garmer.

Absent: Plan Commissioner Amy Mistler.

Quorum Present.

Administrative Staff Present: Director of Community Development Scott Dunakey and Accounting/Clerical Assistant Sandy Garmer.

Administrative Staff Absent: None.

Guests present: None.

**3. APPROVAL OF PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES OF MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2018**

The minutes of the Monday, September 24, 2018 Plan Commission Meeting were submitted for approval.

**A. MOTION:**

It was moved by Commissioner Russell Horsley and seconded by Commissioner Doug Garmer to approve, with a minor correction, the minutes of the Monday, September 24, 2018 Plan Commission Meeting as presented and on file at City Hall. On roll call vote, all Commissioners present voted yes, with the exception of Commissioner Virgil Mueller abstaining. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Zoning Hearing Officer**

Director of Community Development Scott Dunakey opened the discussion by introducing a proposal recently discussed with City Council to select a Zoning Hearing

Officer to review and rule on the zoning issues and variances, which would replace the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Dunakey further explained the background for the proposal by covering the following: (a.) state statute allows a Zoning Hearing Officer to serve the same function as a Zoning Board of Appeals; (b.) currently the Zoning Board of Appeals has only four (4) citizens of the community serving on it, instead of seven (7) board members required by state statute; (c.) it has been difficult to staff the open board positions; (d.) the Zoning Hearing Officer would be a legal professional, typically an attorney, with a background in administrative and land use law appointed by the Mayor; (e.) the proposal will not affect the Plan Commission's role, with the exception of the holding the public hearings for special uses, which is currently being handled by the Zoning Board of Appeals; (f.) the Zoning Hearing Officer's responsibility would be to rule on a zoning variance and the ruling would be final unless the City Council wants to review the decision; (g.) if the City Council reviews the Zoning Hearing Officer's decision, they can review and agree with the decision; review and reverse the decision (two-thirds (2/3) vote) or review it and uphold the decision with additional conditions or amendments; (h.) the City Council was receptive to the proposal since the Zoning Hearing Officer's decision will be consistent, objective and based on city codes, state statute and case law; (i.) a transcriber would continue to attend the public hearings; and (j.) the distributed draft ordinance will be provided to the City Council for their review with no action required by the Plan Commission at this time.

Following Mr. Dunakey's proposal explanation, there was a brief discussion in which all in attendance participated, which included the following items: (i.) the difference in the current practice with the Zoning Board of Appeals holding a public hearing and making a recommendation to the City Council - with the City Council having the final ruling; whereas, the proposed Zoning Hearing Officer will make a final decision - with the City Council having the right to review, revise or reverse the ruling; (ii.) the advantage of paying the Zoning Hearing Officer for only the hours worked on an as needed basis, versus the compensation of seven (7) board members; (iii.) whether the Zoning Board of Appeals is aware of the proposal; (iv.) there has been approximately twenty (20) approved variance cases within the last ten (10) years; and (v.) several other communities such as the Village of New Baden, have a Zoning Hearing Officer. It was the consensus of the Plan Commission to discuss further following the City Council's review and feedback.

**5. OLD BUSINESS**

A. None.

**6. STAFF REPORTS**

A. None.

**7. PUBLIC INPUT**

A. None.

**8. MEETING ADJOURNED**

Since there was no further business to discuss, Chairman Seibel entertained a motion to adjourn.

**MOTION:**

Motion was made by Commissioner Doug Garmer and seconded by Commissioner Caren Burggraf to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Columbia Plan Commission held Monday, October 8, 2018 at 7:00 P.M. On roll call vote, all Commissioners present voted yes.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

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\* Bill Seibel, Chairman

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\* Karen Callis, Acting Secretary

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\* Minutes by Sandy Garmer, Accounting/Clerical Assistant

\*Signed approved copies of minutes are available in the Clerk's Office.

Approved