

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
July 19, 2021

BOARD MEMBERS:

Valeriano Gomez, President
Anthony Serna, Vice-President
Lilia Ramos, Secretary
Joanne Moricz, Commissioner
Chanthini Fowler, Commissioner
Douglas Sloss, Commissioner
William Allen, Commissioner
Lydia Lopez, Commissioner
Stacy Winfield, Commissioner

STAFF:

Ateria Allen
Richard Morrisroe
Douglas Powers

Reported for Fissinger & Associates, Ltd.

By: Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR RPR

Call to Order: 4:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Roll Call: Present in Chambers: Valeriano Gomez,
William Allen

Present Via Telephone Confererence: Lilia
Ramos, Joanne Moricz, Douglas Sloss, Lydia
Lopez, Stacy Winfield

STAFF: Present in Chambers: Ateria Allen,
Richard Morrisroe, Douglas Powers

MR. GOMEZ: We have approval of minutes
of the regular meeting, Wednesday, July 7, 2021.
Entertain a motion to approve as written.

MR. ALLEN: So moved.

MR. SLOSS: Second.

MR. GOMEZ: Roll call.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None
Opposed: None

MR. GOMEZ: Motion carries.

We'll move on to New Business, City
Planner's report, Indiana Citizen Planner's Guide,
Chapter 1: Plan Commission Basics.

MR. POWERS: Thank you, Commissioners.

1 So this is always a good chapter to discuss just because
2 it kind of brings us back to our roots. So first thing,
3 what the Plan Commissions do? Most Plan Commissions
4 devote much of their time to considering petitions,
5 which require commission approval and recommendation or
6 decision. The guide offers advice on how to make those
7 recommendations and decisions, without losing sight of
8 the Commission's broader purpose and how to function
9 effectively within the law.

10 Serving on a Plan Commission is a
11 difficult job and an important responsibility. Doing
12 the job well involves more than showing up at meetings,
13 it means learning about planning, about your community,
14 and listening to citizens insights involving cases
15 before the Commission and perhaps serving on
16 subcommittees.

17 The primary duty of the Plan
18 Commission is to develop and recommend to the
19 legislative body a plan for the future of the community,
20 which is referred to as the comprehensive plan. So
21 there is another section that talks about how plan
22 commissions are organized. As you can see there, it
23 discusses like the area of planning commissions,
24 advisory plan commissions. The reason that this is
25 important is because it's more towards towns and
villages, and unincorporated areas. The unincorporated
areas fall under the Lake County guidelines. However,
if the area is incorporated, towns or villages may not
have the resources to have a plan commission, so they
may rely on the Lake County Comprehensive Plan and area
planning commission in doing so.

18 However, being that East Chicago, we
19 do have a Plan Commission and all the surrounding areas,
20 you know, do have plan commissions and comprehensive
21 plan as well, some of the advisory components you see,
22 such as making plans for areas outside of the borders,
23 don't really fit into our vision.

24 So the majority, just to give you an
25 idea of the areas that do fall under the Lake County
guidelines. There is an area, you know, kind of the
Calumet/Griffith area. Beyond that it's mostly south of
Crown Point, excluding like Cedar Lake, Lowell and
Schneider. Those would be the areas that mostly fall
under the guidelines for Lake County area.

1 Now, rules and procedures. Every
2 plan commission must have rules or procedures. Indiana
3 law requires these rules and a good set of rules will
4 make the commission job easier. In the City Planner it
5 does have a list of some of those rules. However, if
6 you are ever interested in looking up what we have, if
7 you look at the City Code of Ordinances, Section 32.158,
8 discusses the powers and duties as follow:

9 A. The City Plan Commission shall
10 maintain maps, plans, and charts, and shall keep
11 records of its information, which shall be open to
12 the public. The commission shall have full and
13 exclusive power to make rules and regulations for
14 the proper management and government of the City
15 Planning Commission, subject to limitation
16 provided by law.

17 B. The City Plan Commission shall
18 also have full power and authority to make or
19 cause to be made the recommendations, surveys,
20 studies, maps, plans, or charts, of the whole or
21 any part of the city, including streets, alleys,
22 viaducts, park, parkways, public buildings or the
23 route of transit lines and other related matters.

24 C. Plan Commission shall have power
25 to prepare and submit to the Common Council a
zoning ordinance, to make investigations, studies,
and reports to the Common Council on housing
commissions in the City, as it may from time to
time deem necessary and to accompany its report
with recommendations, and to perform other duties
as they may be delegated to or required of it by
this Code or Ordinances of the Common Council
with trenches to enforcement thereof.

 D. The City Planning Commission
shall consider and report its decisions regarding
requested changes in the zoning regulations.

 There are many other sections in
this chapter that are a nice read, but I am not going
to -- you know -- read through them. The chair's
responsibility or the various board members have
responsibility on handling meetings.

 However, one last point I would like
to address is regards to conflicts of interest.
Planning commissioners in Indiana may not participate as
a member of the commission in a hearing or
recommendation concerning a matter in which he or she

1 has a direct or indirect financial interest. In many
2 parts of the U.S. the conflict of interest standard is
3 stricter than the one used in Indiana, and commissions
4 may want to add stronger standards in the rules
5 governing conflict of interest. It's recommended that
6 the standard remain fairly narrow however to avoid
7 problems caused by the commission members refusing to
8 vote. I think here is all about the perception, we
9 don't want there to be any perception of there being a
10 conflict of interest or -- you know -- an ethical
11 dilemma. If any commissioner at any point in time feels
12 there may be a potential conflict, preferably let us
13 know as early as possible. Then we can make sure that
14 we do have enough commissioners if a vote is required
15 for that item. That's it.

16 MR. GOMEZ: Thank you, Doug. Any
17 questions or comments? (None) No further questions or
18 comments, we'll move on.

19 I believe we have no Old Business.
20 Any other comments from commissioners on any subject?
21 (None) Any comments from the public? (None)

22 Our next meeting will be Monday,
23 August 2nd, at 4:30 p.m.. That concludes our agenda
24 for tonight. I'd entertain a motion for adjournment.

25 MR. ALLEN: So moved.

MS. RAMOS: Second.

MR. GOMEZ: Roll call.


Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None
Opposed: None

MR. GOMEZ: Motion carries.
Thank you everyone.


***** Meeting adjourned *****

Approval of the Meeting Minutes of Monday
July 19, 2021

Approved and signed August 2, 2021



Valeriano Gomez, President



Anthony Serna, Vice-President

Lilia Ramos / Zoom

Lilia Ramos, Secretary

Joanne Moricz / Zoom


Joanne Moricz, Commissioner

Chanthini Fowler / Zoom

Chanthini Fowler

Douglass Sloss / Zoom

Douglas Sloss



William Allen

Lydia Lopez / Zoom

Lydia Lopez

Stacy Winfield / Zoom

Stacy Winfield



Ateria Allen, Recording Secretary

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Peggy S. LaLonde, a competent and duly qualified court reporter, do hereby certify that I did report in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings and that my shorthand notes so taken at said time and place were thereafter reduced to typewriting under my personal direction.

I further certify that the foregoing typewritten transcript constitutes minutes of the said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Munster, Indiana, this 23rd day of July, 2021.

Peggy S. LaLonde



Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR