

Rock Island Planning & Zoning Commission Minutes

Council Chambers, City Hall, 3rd Floor

1528 3rd Avenue

July 7, 2025

5:30 PM



Voting Members Present	Mike Creger Sarah Wright Don Mewes Tanja Whitten Maureen Riggs Samuel Odeyemi
Voting Members Absent	Norm Moline Reshanda Johnson Bill Sowards
Staff Present	Eunice Amissah-Mensah, Urban Planner Tanner Osing, Planning & Zoning Manager

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Riggs called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM and read the roll call.

Public Comment

No members of the public wished to comment so the meeting continued.

Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes

Mewes moved to approve the minutes for April 7, 2025. Whitten seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 0.

Mewes moved to approve the minutes for June 2, 2025. Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 0.

Public Hearings

2025-16 Public hearing: Request from Illinois Casualty Company to consider a variance from the Rock Island Zoning Ordinance for property at 225 20th Street in a B-2(downtown business) district.

Amisshah-Mensah read the staff report with the recommendation for approval of the request.

Arron Sutherland, CEO of Illinois Casualty Company, spoke on the behalf of the request. He concurred with staff’s analysis. He stated his appreciation and noted that the main issue was tying into an existing fence and wanting to keep the appearance nice and consistent for the area and neighbors. Commissioner Mewes asked if there

was an existing 8-foot fence, and Mr. Sutherland confirmed it was part of the property. He also confirmed they just wanted to install the fence along a section to connect a patio area fence to a parking lot fence. Commissioners asked if there were other businesses in the vicinity with similar metal, see-through fences, and this was confirmed by staff.

As there were no other questions or members of the public wishing to speak, Chair Riggs called for a motion.

Decision for Case 2025-16

Whitten made a motion to approve the fence variance with staff's recommendation. Odeyemi seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 0 (Riggs, Creger, Whitten, Wright, Odeyemi, and Mewes)

2025-17 Public hearing: Request from Michael Parker to consider a variance from the Rock Island Zoning Ordinance for property at 43 Woodley Road in an R-1 (one unit residential) district.

Amisah-Mensah read the staff report with the recommendation for denial of the variance request.

Marcella Parker spoke on the request. She stated that the shed will be used to store their lawn care equipment as their two-car garage is currently used for storage and is insufficient. She also stated that the ravine in the backyard prevents building behind the house and also has a sloped side yard that many neighbors do not, which serves as a drainage area. She added that placing anything there would cause drainage issues. She also added that they intend to buy a pre-fabricated kit to build on a concrete slab.

Julie Wilson and Dale Keppy spoke in opposition to the shed variance request. Julie, a resident, argued that placing a shed in front of a house would disrupt the character of the area. She raised concerns about visual appeal, blocked views, and potential safety risks. Mr. Keppy, her friend supported her stance, praising Julie's landscaping efforts and stating the shed would detract from the neighborhood investment. He emphasized that challenging terrain is common in Rock Island and should not justify exceptions, asserting the shed would negatively impact neighborhood aesthetics and visibility.

As there were no other questions or members of the public wishing to speak, Chair Riggs called for a motion.

Decision for Case 2025-17

Creger made a motion to deny the shed variance. Whitten seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 0 (Riggs, Creger, Whitten, Wright, Odeyemi, and Mewes)

2025-18 Public hearing: Request from Quad City Botanical Center to consider a variance from the Rock Island Zoning Ordinance for property at 2525 4th Avenue in a B-3 (community business) district.

Amissah-Mensah read the staff report with the recommendation for approval of the request.

Kate Mapes spoke on behalf of the request and concurred with staff's analysis. She stated they are looking to put a sign up by the street because the center sits really far back from the road and have received feedback that people do not know where they are or how to find the botanical center. She also added that the front of their building is all glass, so existing signs are not visible from the street. She stated that the center has a small marquee sign, but traffic comes around the corner on fourth avenue too quickly for people to read it so they need the sign for people to find them.

As there were no other questions or members of the public wishing to speak, Chair Riggs called for a motion.

Decision for Case 2025-18

Creger made a motion to recommend approval of the variance to the City Council. Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 0 (Riggs, Creger, Whitten, Wright, Odeyemi, and Mewes)

2025-19 Public hearing: Request from A Hana Illowa LLC to consider a variance from the Rock Island Zoning Ordinance for property at 3809 60th Avenue West in a B-4 (highway business) district.

Osing read the staff report with the recommendation for approval of the request.

Missy Garowski with Hodge Construction spoke on behalf of the request. She explained that the requested 125 foot sign height, taller than the nearby 99 foot Valley sign, is necessary because the location is closer to trees and a curve in the interstate, which obstruct visibility. The goal is for the sign to be seen clearly from the interstate, especially by drivers approaching from the I-280 bridge before they reach the exit.

Commissioners raised concerns about the proposed 125 foot sign height, noting it significantly exceeds the nearby 99 foot Valley sign and is comparable to a 12-story building, taller than any building in downtown Rock Island. Osing clarified that the previous casino variance included allowances for sign area, setbacks, and message frequency, which would also apply to this new sign. It was confirmed that the sign would serve both the dispensary and travel center, which are by the same developer, though possibly with different end-users. Commissioners noted typical billboards along I-74 and I-80 are about 75 feet tall, while the NTI logo at the top of the proposed sign is at 80 feet, supporting the applicant's argument for increased visibility. Missy Garowski reiterated that the 125 foot height is intended to ensure visibility from the interstate, especially beyond the Valley sign and surrounding trees.

As there were no other questions or members of the public wishing to speak, Chair Riggs called for a motion.

Decision for Case 2025-18

Whitten made a motion to recommend approval of the variance with an amended sign height of 100ft to the City Council. Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 0 (Riggs, Creger, Whitten, Wright, Odeyemi, and Mewes)

Other Business

None

Adjournment

Chair Riggs adjourned the meeting at 6:21PM.

Minutes submitted by Eunice Amissah-Mensah.