

From: **Matt Flaherty** <matt.flaherty@bloomington.in.gov>

Date: Fri, Mar 14, 2025 at 4:00 PM

Subject: Correcting Factual Inaccuracies and Sharing Collaboration Timelines re: Resolutions 2025-05 and 2025-06

To: Kerry Thomson <kerry.thomson@bloomington.in.gov>

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Hi all,

I wanted to share some facts and timelines related to the development of Resolution 2025-05 and 2025-06 (as well as Resolutions 2024-23 and 2024-25), since there seems to have been some misunderstanding or misapprehension—leading to a demonstrably false narrative has been constructed and advanced by some, including [local media](#). (I planned to cover much of this history of staff collaboration during my presentation for Res. 2025-05, though of course I was not granted the opportunity.)

In Brief:

- Resolutions 2025-05 and 2025-06 (and Resolutions 2024-23 and 2024-25) were all developed via extensive coordination and collaboration with city staff over the past year—much more so than most legislation in fact (whether coming from the mayoral administration or CMs).
- Mayor Thomson and Deputy Mayor Knapp (along with relevant city staff) were fully aware of these resolutions in all cases, sometimes more than a year in advance as demonstrated via email communication and meetings noted below.
- Council resolutions to develop UDO amendments are one step in a process toward implementation of related city plans and goals—and the required step when UDO changes are initiated by the council. This step is not final. It entails multiple, mandatory opportunities for additional public input (at Plan Commission and council); and does not preclude even more public outreach and engagement of any form we would all like (design charrettes, town halls, etc.).

- Repeatedly during this year of collaboration with staff, I (and others) suggested that city staff could lead these efforts if they would like. It would not only be more efficient, but city staff has far greater capacity and resources to support public engagement. This offer was declined for most UDO changes (with a few staff-led exceptions headed to us soon)—with Director Hittle instead agreeing that CMs should bring forward proposed UDO changes on which there was general staff alignment in principle.

What Next:

- As a matter of basic courtesy and respect, I would like to kindly request a phone call from each of my colleagues in the future if they plan to prevent introduction or discussion of legislation at all.
- I'm very open to whatever procedural steps folks would like to take to duly consider the legislation developed based on a year of collaboration between CMs and city staff, reiterating that these are steps to *direct policy development* and Plan Commission recommendations. They are not final proposals or decisions.
- If the mayor wants to lead a set of proposals related to implementing city goals and plans with respect to increasing housing availability and density (especially missing middle housing), it would be helpful to know on what timelines since such an effort would be a *reversal* from what was communicated by staff to CMs over the past year. (Though I'll note again, the mayor and staff can also lead extensive public engagement efforts *following* passage of resolutions that would direct policy proposals. The default 90-day deadline built into those resolutions could also be changed as needed.)
- It seemed like some CMs and the mayor were functionally imposing new "requirements" on the fly, including (apparently?) imposing an additional new timeline of more advanced notice for legislation (prior to release of a packet) and/or a requirement for mayoral sign-off or acknowledgement of final text of legislation prior to introduction. Respectfully, if one seeks to impose such functional requirements, doing so formally and consistently would be advisable.

If you have questions or concerns about any of this, please feel free to reach out to me.

Note, the timeline below includes items that are specific to Resolution 2025-05 (which I sponsored), but also speaks significantly to the other three UDO-related resolutions (2024-23, 2024-25, 2025-06). The sponsors of those resolutions may wish to add additional detail, as they had other meetings and points of collaboration with city staff.

Relevant Dates and Collaboration Leading to Resolution 2025-05 (and Other UDO-related Resolutions)

April 21, 2021

- **Council unanimously adopted Climate Action Plan (CAP), including the following Strategies and Actions:**
 - **Strategy EB 4-A: Support and accelerate electrification** of on-site fossil fuel combustion systems citywide by 2% of 2018 consumption levels

- (natural gas, propane, fuel oil, etc).
 - **Action EB4-A-2:** Explore the establishment of polices or **ordinances supporting all electric buildings, such as an all electric requirement for buildings** receiving PUD or Conditional Use Permit approvals.
- **Strategy TL 1-E: Encourage density and increase housing options** and affordability with the goal of increasing gross density by 3% of 2018 values.
 - **Action TL1-E- 2: Reevaluate minimum parking requirements** in the Unified Development Ordinance as listed in Table 04-9: Minimum Vehicle Parking Requirements.
 - **Action TL1-E- 3:** Continue assessment and review of Unified Development Ordinance for **identification of zoning modifications to encourage appropriate increased density**, increased community "walkability," and decreased reliance on automobile use.

September 1, 2023

- CM Flaherty emailed Mayor Hamilton, Larry Allen (Deputy Mayor), Scott Robinson (Director of Planning & Transportation), Jackie Scanlan, and Shawn Miya requesting collaboration on implementing Climate Action Plan calls for building electrification as the only viable pathway for building sector decarbonization consistent with our net-zero carbon emissions goals

September 6, 2023

- CM Flaherty met with with Scott Robinson and Shawn Miya to collaborate on next steps to initiate building electrification action from CAP, including via updated Sustainable Development Incentives and PUD requirements in the UDO

March 1, 2024

- **CM Flaherty emailed Mayor Thomson, Gretchen Knapp,** Jackie Scanlan (interim Director, P&T) seeking to coordinate on council-initiated UDO amendments to implement CAP actions, potentially on an aligned timeline with staff-led UDO amendments (staff amendments were too far in motion to align from 2024 round of updates)
- **Email explicitly articulated the following four items proposed for potential legislation** (language quoted verbatim from email), which would become Resolution 2025-05:
 - **“Eliminating minimum parking requirements** to help improve affordability and housing getting built (Parking Reform Network has extensive research and a database of the many states and municipalities that have move on this)
 - **Reducing minimum lot sizes** to allow lot subdivision and construction of more modest homes (which will generally help add more single-family stock on land at more affordable prices, and not just ADUs)
 - Adding **incentives for building electrification** to the Sustainable Development Incentives section of the UDO (this is a critical pathway to meet our climate goals and getting as much new construction to skip gas infrastructure will save a lot of money in future retrofit costs)
 - Adding **building electrification to PUD** guidelines (same reasons as above)”

April 23, 2024

- **CM Flaherty emailed new P&T Director David Hittle** on same email thread to bring him up to speed / request next steps (**Mayor and Deputy Mayor both on the email thread**)

April 24, 2024

- **CM Flaherty spoke with David Hittle about the proposed sustainability / climate action changes to UDO** after a Parking Commission meeting, which Hittle had attended. He expressed general support for the proposed changes, relating a story about a similar parking reform effort he had led in his prior job.

July 18, 2024

- Following a conversation with council leadership (Piedmont-Smith, Stosberg), **David Hittle emailed Matt Flaherty**—dropping Mayor Thomson from the email thread, but retaining Gretchen Knapp—regarding next steps on council resolutions to initiate proposed UDO amendments.
- Hittle noted: “As Planning & Transportation staff is considering our own list of potential amendments, we might do well to meet and compare notes, look for possible areas of overlap, and **generally make sure we're on the same page.**”
- **Flaherty responded to Hittle's email with a longer list of potential UDO changes** that CMs may like to initiate, having spoken with four other CMs about potential changes in the prior few months (Piedmont-Smith, Stosberg, Zulich, and Rosenbarger) about various changes aligned with city plans and goals.
- Generally, **this list also included the changes proposed by Resolution 2025-06, sponsored by CM Rosenbarger**, along with several other changes that have not been advanced.
- Gretchen Knapp remained copied on these emails and was invited to some subsequent meetings.

August 2, 2024

- CMs Flaherty, Piedmont-Smith, and Stosberg met with David Hittle, Jackie Scanlan, and Eric Greulich to discuss potential amendments, workshoping details of various proposals, including the four changes later proposed in Resolution 2025-05.
- There was **broad staff alignment on the substance of these policies**, although Director Hittle appropriately noted what staff can or cannot support is a policy choice of the Mayor's. P&T staff and CMs aligned on how to subdivide work on various proposals, including **staff agreement that CM Flaherty would introduce a resolution to initiate the four changes proposed in Resolution 2025-05.**

September 5, 2024

- CM Flaherty shared via email with David Hittle, Gretchn Knapp, Jackie Scanlan, and Eric Greulich a **detailed and exhaustive list of potential UDO amendments, including all changes contained in Resolution 2025-05 and Resolution 2025-06**

September 6, 2024

- Several CMs met with P&T staff to continue coordination and collaboration on potential UDO amendments and specific details for resolutions. (CM Flaherty unable to attend due to work travel.)

September 7, 2024

- Council President Piedmont-Smith shared with city staff a meeting summary and next steps, **further aligning on details proposed for council resolutions**; what will be initiated by CMs and what will be initiated by staff; how various UDO changes might be grouped; and who has agreed to lead various proposals.
- **CM Flaherty was noted as the planned sponsor for changes that became Resolution 2025-05.**

October-November 2024

- Multiple CMs developed legislative text, in consultation with council staff and city staff, for resolutions proposing amendments to the UDO, including Resolution 2024-23 (related to affordability incentives); Res. 2024-25 (related to single-room occupancy); Res. 2025-05 (related to CAP implementation); and Res. 2025-06 (related to missing middle housing).
- The legislative schedule in November and December prevented (what would become) Resolutions 2025-05 and 2025-06 from being heard in 2024; planned for early 2025 instead.

November 20, 2024

- Council adopted Resolution 2024-23 and Resolution 2024-24; both were released in a packet on a Friday and adopted five days later, following our normal and almost universally utilized process for introducing and adopting resolutions.
- As with all legislation, the council had the option to postpone these resolutions as it saw fit.

January 26, 2025

- **Council President Stosberg sends a new council Upcoming Schedule spreadsheet to all CMs**, noting:
 - “All, This is a basic tentative scheduling sheet that includes upcoming legislation and reports for the next few meetings, as well as things that are being actively discussed but are not firmly scheduled. **The purpose of this sheet is to inform councilmembers of what is in the legislation pipeline so people are less surprised when they receive the packet.** I will try to always include a contact person/sponsor for legislation so **if you have questions or**

concerns in advance of the packet you can reach out directly to that person."

- The original version of this spreadsheet only outlined agendas through February 19
- Under the heading, **"In progress, but unscheduled,"** the sheet noted:
 - "UDO Changes resolution related to sustainability (Flaherty)"
 - "UDO Changes resolution related to density (Rosenbarger)"

February 19, 2025

- CM Stosberg tells all council members and the public during the Council's Regular Session (at 2h12m) that **"The meeting on March 12,** which right now is a Special Deliberation Session, I'm **considering recategorizing that meeting from a Deliberative Session to a Special (legislative) Session.** That would involve a change of notice ... be aware that is something I'm considering." (Flaherty absent due to illness)
- **CM Stosberg updates Upcoming Schedule** spreadsheet to reflect two Resolutions tentatively **scheduled for March 12.**
 - UDO Changes resolution related to sustainability (Flaherty)
 - UDO Changes resolution related to missing middle housing (Rosenbarger)
 - The "Notes" column adds that these resolutions are in the form of "Request(s) to Plan Commission" as required by the state statutory process for council-initiated proposals to amend the UDO

March 7, 2025

- Resolutions 2025-05 and 2025-06 are released in packet, five days ahead of their scheduled reading at a council meeting, consistent with the council's normal process for resolutions (and consistent with multiple resolutions directing proposed UDO amendments adopted over the past several years).

March 12, 2025

- Council President Stosberg explains details regarding the council's schedule; the statutorily required process for resolutions proposing UDO amendments; the procedural options before the council (including postponement if additional conversation is deemed warranted); the additional opportunities for staff-led public engagement during proposal development; and the Plan Commission and council meetings that would also follow.
- In an extremely rare procedural maneuver, Resolutions 2025-05 and 2025-06 both fail on the motion to introduce with no explanation from any CM voting in opposition.

March 14, 2025

- I send this email. Hoping we can do better going forward.
- Cheers, happy Friday, and have a good weekend, all.

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