



CITY OF  
URBANA

400 S Vine St  
Urbana, IL 61801

**URBANA CITY COUNCIL  
APPLICATION FOR VACANCY IN WARD 2**

Name: Erik Sacks

Address: [REDACTED]

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Employer: Univ. of Illinois

Occupation: Faculty

How long have you lived in Ward 2? 10 years

**1. Why do you wish to serve on the Urbana City Council?**

I wish to represent the residents of my community to address the important issue that we face, including: the need to plan for sustainable high-quality development that preserves and enhances quality of life, promote economic development of the city center and beyond (including the need to infill the large open lots in the downtown), planning for climate change (sustainability and mitigation), social justice, support high quality schools, and promote our urban forest.

**2. Please list education, training, work experience, community involvement, service on municipal boards and commissions, or any other experience which has prepared you to serve on the Urbana City Council. Attach CV, if desired.**

Education:

Ph.D. Genetics, University of California, Davis. 1996.  
M.S. Horticulture, University of California, Davis. 1992.  
B.S. Plant Breeding, Cornell University. 1990.

Work experience:

2016 – present Associate Professor University of Illinois  
2010 – 2016 Assistant Professor University of Illinois  
2009 – 2010 Manager, Plant Breeding Mendel Biotechnology Inc  
2007 – 2009 Senior Plant Breeder Mendel Biotechnology Inc  
2004 – 2007 Research Geneticist (Plants) USDA-ARS, Stoneville, MS  
2001 – 2002 Scientist HortResearch, New Zealand  
1999 – 2001 Affiliate Scientist International Rice Research Institute, Philippines  
1997 – 1999 Postdoctoral Researcher University of California, Davis  
1997 Postdoctoral Researcher Ohio State University OARDC, Wooster

In my career, in addition to teaching, I lead large teams of people with diverse expertise to design and successfully implement large projects. Such management experience is applicable to a wide range of purposes. +

**3. What do you believe are the most important issues facing Urbana?**

1) Revitalizing the downtown.

Until a large number of people live downtown, the potential for economic development there will be limited. The large areas of open parking lots and single story buildings surrounded by large lots are both a deterrent to economic growth and an opportunity for infill that can lead to economic prosperity. Redevelopment of the downtown is key to economic sustainability of the City.

2) Sustainable development.

We need zoning and processes to effectively promote development that enhances the City for the long-term and to discourage projects that prioritize short-term gain over long-term benefits. The City should promote quality construction, architectural integrity of neighborhoods, walkability, bikability, setbacks, and green space. Planning should be based on data. Over the past ten years (2000-2010), Urbana's population has remained flat (-265), whereas Champaign's population rose by 7,722. During this same time, UIUC's undergraduate student enrollment rose by only 2,240, but graduate student enrollment rose by 8,218 (79% of the 10,382 total increase). Thus, population growth in the area appears to have been driven largely by an increase in the number of graduate students, who are typically older and have different housing needs than undergraduate students. The City should encourage development and use that meets the needs of the people actually living in and moving to the area. In contrast, a focus on building housing that targets non-existent new undergraduate students will fail to increase the City's population.

3) Climate change.

4. What do you believe are the most important issues facing Ward 2?

1) Maintaining the Ward's architectural integrity and quality of life.

Many of the people who live in the Ward, chose this area because they are attracted to the historic architecture, the walkable quiet residential tree-lined streets, and the proximity to shops downtown and to the UIUC campus. These attributes are valuable, not just to the residents but to the City as a whole because they promote home-ownership that supports the City via taxes. The residential areas of the Ward have been under substantial and long-standing pressure by developers, who often seek to demolish the older houses that have architectural value and replace them with low-quality high-density housing for undergraduate students. Low-quality housing will not compete well with the many recently built high-quality apartments in Champaign, and past developments of this type in Ward 2 have repeatedly failed to increase Urbana's population. If unchecked, the City could see a reduction in tax revenue due to flight of the current home-owners. Ironically, promotion of development, if done wrong, could result in blight, and we should seek to avoid this outcome.

2) Tree replacement and maintenance.

In recent years, many street trees have been removed but new ones have not been planted in sufficient numbers to replace them. Trees greatly increase the quality of life and property values in the Ward. The current deficit should be made up and new trees planted in anticipation of future removal of older trees.

Please list three personal references:

Name [Redacted]  
Occupation [Redacted]  
Address [Redacted]  
Phone [Redacted]

Name [Redacted]  
Occupation [Redacted]  
Address [Redacted]  
Phone [Redacted]

Name [Redacted]  
Occupation [Redacted]  
Address [Redacted]  
Phone [Redacted]

Signed: [Redacted]

Date: 11/28/2020

Please return completed application via email to [CityClerk@urbanaininois.us](mailto:CityClerk@urbanaininois.us) or by mail to:

Urbana City Clerk 400 S Vine St  
Urbana, IL 61801