

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
January 18, 2022

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a meeting on January 18, 2022, at the DeKalb Public Library in the Yusunas Meeting Room located at 309 Oak Street, DeKalb, Illinois. Vice Chair McMahon called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

A. ROLL CALL

Recording Secretary Stephanie Turner called the roll. Planning and Zoning Commission members present were: Steve Becker, Trixy O’Flaherty, Jerry Wright, and Vice Chair Bill McMahon. Maria Pena-Graham, Shannon Stoker, and Chair Max Maxwell were absent. Planning Director Dan Olson was present representing the City of DeKalb.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (Additions/Deletions)

Vice Chair McMahon requested a motion to approve the January 18, 2022, agenda as presented. Ms. O’Flaherty motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Wright seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. January 3, 2022 – Vice Chair McMahon requested a motion to approve the January 3, 2022, minutes as presented. Mr. Becker motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Wright seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Open Floor to Anyone Wishing to Speak on Record)

None

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Public Hearing** – A petition by Pappas Development for the partial annexation, rezoning and preliminary plan approval for 4-story executive suites building with (61) 1-bedroom units to be called Arista Residences located on a 1.8-acre site at the northwest corner of Barber Greene Road and County Farm Road.

Foti Pappas appeared on behalf of Pappas Development and stated they have been investing in the community for over thirty years by building beautiful and well-maintained buildings. He continued with the proposal which will be called Arista Residences, Arista deriving from the Greek word “best in class”.

Mr. Pappas discussed the plan for the 61-unit apartment building which would be located at the corner of Barber Greene Road and County Farm Road, a property that has been on the market for many years. He added it is adjacent to a gas station and a commercial building, which has been vacant since it was built 18 years ago. Mr. Pappas spoke on some of the features of Arista Residences which includes fully furnished apartments, hotel style lobby, maid service, a hospitality room, exercise room, golf simulators, and a business center.

Foti Pappas explained there is an expanding demand for the fully furnished apartment concept, and it's driven by working professionals moving to the area at a rapid pace. He went on to state Arista Residences will bring new life to the area by attracting working professionals who will support the surrounding businesses. Mr. Pappas stated corporate investment in DeKalb and the expansion of the Northwestern Medical Campus add to the need for this style of living.

Mr. Pappas stressed these units do not burden the school district in any way. He went on to mention that over 90% of the construction for the proposed building would be conducted by local family-owned businesses.

Dan Olson, Planning Director, went through the staff report dated January 13, 2022. He noted the proposed 1.8-acre site is the old Buhr's Landscaping and Lawn Care business on Barber Greene Road. Mr. Olson said the west parcel of the site would have to be annexed and the east parcel is currently zoned General Commercial District "GC". He added both sites are requested to be rezoned to Planned Development-Residential District, "PD-R".

Mr. Olson mentioned Arista Residences would consist of 61 one-bedroom, 700 square foot apartment units carrying 12-month leases with a monthly rent of approximately \$1350.00. He went over the preliminary development plan, which was also requested for approval. Mr. Olson mentioned there will be three points of access to the subject site; a right-in/right-out access on Barber Greene Road, a full access on County Farm Road, and access on the north side of the property to a private east-west drive owned by the Northland Plaza Shopping Center owner.

Mr. Olson covered the public services that will be provided to the site. He advised there will be a detention pond, and the sanitary sewer located through the site will be relocated to the perimeter of the property. He noted a sidewalk will be added on Barber Greene Road connecting walks to the east and west. Mr. Olson also touched on the landscaping plan, which follows the guidelines of the Unified Development Ordinance "UDO". He mentioned there will be 92 parking spaces on the site, which will meet the UDO requirement of 1.5 parking

spaces for each one-bedroom dwelling unit (61). He added there will be covered parking at the perimeter of the site.

Mr. Olson reiterated the plans have been submitted to all the appropriate departments for review. He noted the Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District has informed Pappas Development of future permits that will be needed and fees. Mr. Olson added a Final Development Plan will be required to be submitted, which will go through the Commission and City Council.

Mr. Olson reported there are a couple waivers to the UDO. He said one is regarding the acreage of the site being under 2 acres, and the other for less than 15% of open space being required for "PD-R" sites. He noted staff recommends approval of both waivers.

Mr. Olson stated the City received public input from the owners of the subject property, Herb and Linda Buhr, who support the project.

Mr. Olson advised the proposed development meets all the findings of fact for a rezoning and City staff recommends approval of the project. He noted the proposed request will allow the development of a highly visible vacant lot in the Sycamore Road/Barber Greene corridor that will have a positive impact on the community by improving the site and provide needed housing.

Vice Chair McMahon gave the public an opportunity to speak. He stated he received one speaker request form from Denise Weinmann.

Denise Weinmann of 286 D Bent Grass Circle, DeKalb, IL stated she is the real estate agent for the sellers, Herb and Linda Buhr. Ms. Weinmann discussed her involvement with this property since 2006 with numerous attempts to sell to hotels, a national restaurant, and a few retail chains but the deals always fell through. She added the reasons included the requirement to annex part of the property and the re-location of the sanitary sewer through the site. Ms. Weinmann stressed she has exhausted all avenues to try to sell the property and feels the proposed use will be great for the property, turning the site from a vacant piece of land to a building that will provide much needed housing. She noted the developer is a good landlord and the residential real estate market in the area is tight right now.

Vice Chair McMahon asked if there were any comments or questions from the Commission

Ms. O'Flaherty raised a concern of turning a commercial site into a residential building. She added she would love to see the property sold for the Buhr's but does not feel comfortable approving residential for the property.

Foti Pappas asked why Ms. O'Flaherty did not like residential on the site given the walkability to multiple businesses. Ms. O'Flaherty replied she would not want to live there due to the surrounding area including a gas station and other large commercial retail buildings that are not particularly walkable to.

Mr. Pappas stated one could eat breakfast, purchase dog supplies, grocery and clothes without getting into your car. Mr. Pappas said this area would be more walkable than downtown. Ms. O'Flaherty noted she feels the property is most suitable for a commercial development. Mr. Pappas added the commercial building next to the subject site has been vacant for 18 years.

Mr. McMahon asked about this project being different from their previous developments, which had commercial on the first floor. Foti Pappas responded by stating the building will be 100% residential as there are too many commercial vacancies in the surrounding area to justify using this location for any type of commercial use. He also pointed out the residential units will bring in working professionals who will spend their income at the businesses in the area.

Mr. Wright asked about the profile of residents that will occupy these units.

Mr. Pappas stated interns from Northwestern Hospital, traveling doctors and nurses and workers from the larger companies in DeKalb. He added these individuals enjoy the idea of hotel style apartments being fully furnished.

Mr. Wright asked if Pappas Development sees any competition with themselves with all the other apartment buildings they currently own. Foti Pappas replied he does not as he believes their downtown projects stands alone and these one-bedroom fully furnished apartments are a different concept. He added their more recent development, Isaac Executive Suites, was fully leased within 15 days.

Mr. Becker was concerned at first but noticed the area around Isaac Executive Suites and stated people may be too focused on this site being a commercial corner. He added this site is two blocks away from a major hospital where professionals work long shifts and just want to get home quickly. He stated he likes the proposal and feels this will serve a need in the community.

Mr. Pappas said every project seems to get better and with eliminating commercial on the first floor, they can add additional amenities allowing for an improved product.

Mr. Becker moved that based upon the submitted petitions and testimony presented, the Planning and Zoning Commission forward its findings of fact and recommend to the City Council approval of the rezoning, upon annexation, from

the “SFR1” District to the “PD-R” District for a .68 acre property located along the north side of Barber Greene Road, approximately 180 feet west of County Farm Road, commonly known as 2616 Barber Greene Road and approval of the rezoning from the “GC” District to the “PD-R” District for a 1.1 acre property located at the northwest corner of Barber Greene Road and County Farm Road, commonly known as 1383 Barber Greene Road; Approval is also recommended for a preliminary development plan as listed in Exhibit A to accommodate a 4-story executive suites residential complex with (61) 1-bedroom dwelling units subject to the standards listed in Exhibit B and subject to staff comments listed in Exhibit C.

Mr. Wright seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Mr. Becker- Yes, Ms. O’Flaherty – No, Mr. Wright – Yes, Vice Chair McMahon – Yes Ms. Stoker, Ms. Pena-Graham, and Mr. Maxwell were absent. Motion Passed 3-1-3.

F. REPORTS

Mr. Olson announced the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 7, which will include the final development plans for the new First United Methodist Church on N. Annie Glidden Road. He added the second meeting in February will be on Tuesday, February 22, due to President’s Day on Monday, February 21.

G. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Wright motioned to adjourn, Ms. O’Flaherty seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. The Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting adjourned at 6:27 PM.

Minutes prepared by: Stephanie Turner Approved: 2/7/2022