

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
March 3, 2025

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a meeting on March 3, 2025, in the Yusunas Meeting Room at the DeKalb Public Library, 309 Oak Street, DeKalb, Illinois. Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

A. ROLL CALL

Planning Director, Dan Olson, called the roll. Planning and Zoning Commission members present were: Chair Max Maxwell, Steve Becker, Trixy O'Flaherty, and Maria Pena-Graham. Vice Chair Bill McMahon and Commission member Jerry Wright were absent. Planning Director Dan Olson, Communications and Engagement Manager Scott Zak, and Assistant City Manager Bob Redel were present representing the City.

B. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRPERSON

Chair Maxwell inquired if any Commission member would like to nominate someone for election as Vice-Chair. Chair Maxwell stated he would like to re-elect the current Vice Chair Bill McMahon. No additional nominations were made. Chair Maxwell requested a motion to re-elect Bill McMahon as Vice Chair. Becker motioned to approve the re-election of Bill McMahon. O'Flaherty seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (Additions/Deletions)

Chair Maxwell requested a motion to approve the March 3, 2025, agenda as presented. Ms. O'Flaherty motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Becker seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. February 18, 2025 – Chair Maxwell requested a motion to approve the February 18, 2025, minutes as presented. Mr. Becker motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. O'Flaherty seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

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

None.

F. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Public Hearing** – A petition by the City of DeKalb for amendments to the UDO to allow Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations as an accessory use in all zoning districts. In addition, the amendments will also allow EV charging stations to be counted as satisfying minimum parking space requirements.

Chair Maxwell read the petition by title only.

Planning Director, Dan Olson, introduced City Communications and Engagement Manager, Scott Zak, who is the City Liaison with the Citizen Environmental Commission (CEC) who developed the Sustainability Plan. He also mentioned Mr. Zak is familiar with the Metropolitan's Mayor's Caucus as well.

Scott Zak thanked the Commission for having him and discussed the background leading to the text amendment requests. Mr. Zak explained the root of the amendments are in the City's Sustainability Plan. The Plan was first written in 2016, and in 2022, the CEC initiated an update to the Sustainability Plan. He explained the update was initiated in a similar manner to the 2022 Comprehensive Plan with public input and a survey being sent out to gather additional information. Mr. Zak said the CEC is to the Sustainability Plan as the Planning and Zoning Commission is to the Comprehensive Plan. The Sustainability Plan update was approved by the City Council in 2024.

Mr. Zak further explained the Sustainability Plan contains several references recommending residents and community members reduce their carbon footprint. He noted one successful way of reducing a carbon footprint is to utilize electric vehicles, adding one of the specific goals in the energy section is to reduce greenhouse admissions. Mr. Zak stated this section articulates additional charging stations throughout the community will encourage drivers to consider electric powered vehicles or hybrid vehicles.

Continuing, he explained at the time the Sustainability Plan was approved the City also joined the Greenest Regions Compact. The Greenest Regions Compact is an initiative of the Metropolitan Mayor Caucus. The Compact provides an outline of steps cities can take to implement their Sustainability Plans and goals along the way. Mr. Zak stated participating cities also become members of the Mayors Caucus and of the Mayors Caucus' Environmental Commission.

Mr. Zak further mentioned the Greenest Regions Compact, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and their Environmental Commission provide additional programs to aid with the implementation of cities' respective Sustainability Programs. One of those programs is called the EV Readiness Program, which is funded by ComEd and put on the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. The goal of this program is to eliminate as many barriers as possible to owning an electric vehicle. This includes bi-weekly classes and a comprehensive program, covering everything from first responder training for electric vehicle fires to recommending zoning changes.

Mr. Zak stated there are three levels in the aforementioned program, and the City is starting in the Bronze level. The text amendments being requested are the minimum changes needed to the UDO in order to be classified as "Bronze Level EV Ready". With that, DeKalb would be able to advertise itself as an EV ready community, teaching residents and non-residents all the different ways DeKalb is working to make EV chargers available. Importantly, Mr. Zak added there is no cost to the City for anything the CEC is doing.

Planning Director Olson reviewed the requested amendments as follows:

Article 3 – Definitions

Definitions were added for Electric Vehicles, Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment, Electric Vehicle Charging Station and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure. Mr. Olson noted the definitions came from the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' EV Readiness Program.

Article 7.04 – Accessory Uses, Buildings and Structures

The proposed amendment would allow Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations as an accessory use in all zoning districts in the UDO. The amendment will facilitate the installation of chargers by making it easy to understand where they are allowed in the City.

Article 12.07 – Supplemental Off-Street Parking and Loading Regulations

An amendment is proposed that would allow EV charging stations to be counted as satisfying minimum parking space requirements. This amendment will reduce the cost of installing chargers by eliminating the need to construct additional spaces (without chargers) to meet parking minimums.

Mr. Olson mentioned the EV charging stations currently present within the City were approved by permits. The changes would codify and make it clear they are accessory uses and can be used to meet the minimum parking requirements. Although this has been happening, the language was not present in the UDO. He suggested there may be additional amendments in the future to expand and potentially receive higher awards from the Mayors Caucus. He discussed the various locations of EV charging stations currently within the City, pointing out the stations located at the AMC Theater could almost be considered off-site signs with advertising on the monitors on the chargers. Mr. Olson said the Commission will need to take that into consideration going forward.

He added some communities require a certain number of EV chargers for every project, but the City is not at that point at this time. The City plans to follow the demand trends for charging stations, juxtaposing trends with requirements. He further explained while new homes are not required to have an EV charging station, they are required to have 200-amp service (minimum), which could accommodate an EV charging station. Additional signage, length of charging time limits and other safety requirements may be added in the future as well. Mr. Olson stated no problems have been identified thus far with the charging stations currently present.

No public comments were made, and the public hearing was closed.

Ms. O'Flaherty believed any additional rules regarding charging time frames, etc. would need to wait until problems arose before anticipating those potential needs. She thought the number of public chargers currently in the City would not provide enough insight and most residents owning electric cars would utilize home charging stations. Presently, the public EV charging stations are simply a nice benefit. However, she noted as they become more popular in the future, she could see the Commission needing to revisit additional parameters.

Chair Maxwell was amenable to Ms. O'Flaherty's thought process, adding he sees no issue with the charging stations at the AMC Theater. However, if the off-site advertising on the stations had a line of site to the road, they would probably need to be more restrictive. Ms. O'Flaherty agreed, noting the charging stations, although publicly used, are on private property.

Chair Maxwell inquired if public funds were available for those who want to install them, either for the infrastructure or electricity. Mr. Zak explained the City does not offer any funding, but he has learned ComEd does offer rebates for this type of thing, for both electric vehicles and for cities to install charging stations. He added the City's website will contain additional information regarding this program.

Chair Maxwell asked if any maps exist reflecting the current charging stations. Mr. Zak responded several companies that provide apps showing the locations of charging stations, the cost, their activity, and the speed at which they're charging. Ms. O'Flaherty mentioned it sounds similar to the parking availability apps which Mr. Zak agreed.

Mr. Olson reminded the Commission of the three requested amendments, adding additional amendments will be proposed should the need arise.

Mr. Becker moved that based on the submitted petition and testimony presented, he moved the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended to the City Council approval of text amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance regarding EV charging stations as indicated in Exhibit A.

A roll call vote was taken: Becker – yes, O'Flaherty – yes, Maxwell – yes, Pena-Graham – yes. Commission members McMahon and Wright were absent. The motion passed 4-0-2.

G. REPORTS

Mr. Olson stated the next meeting on March 17th will contain a public hearing for a sign variance for the Shell Gas Station at 175 W. Lincoln Hwy. He said they would like to add a digital display sign to the existing ground sign. Mr. Olson noted the current sign is legal nonconforming in relation to height and size.

Commission member Becker and Chair Maxwell both noted they will be absent from the March 17th meeting. Since the hearing has been set, Mr. Olson stated he will call the other Commission members closer to the meeting date to ensure a quorum will be present.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Maxwell requested a motion to Adjourn. Pena-Graham motioned to adjourn, and Ms. O'Flaherty seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia K. Doss, Recording Secretary

Minutes approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission on March 17, 2025.

Click [here](#) to view the agenda packet for the March 3, 2025 Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting.

Click [here](#) to view the video recording of the March 3, 2025, Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting.