

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
April 7, 2025

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a meeting on April 7, 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

Recording Secretary, Olivia Doss, called the roll. Planning and Zoning Commission members present were: Chair Max Maxwell, Vice Chair Bill McMahon, Trixy O'Flaherty, Maria Pena-Graham, Steve Becker and Jerry Wright. Planning Director Dan Olson was present representing the City.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (Additions/Deletions)

Chair Maxwell requested a motion to approve the April 7, 2025, agenda as presented. Mr. Becker 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. March 17, 2025 – Chair Maxwell requested a motion to approve the March 17, 2025, minutes as presented. Ms. O'Flaherty motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Pena-Graham 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

- a. **Public Hearing** – A petition by Michael J. Warfel for approval of the rezoning of the site at 209 Grove St. from the "LI" Light Industrial District to the "CBD" Central Business District.

Chair Maxwell read the petition by title only.

The applicant, Michael Warfel, explained he purchased the property at 209 Grove St. about 2 ½ years ago and has put a lot of work into remodeling the building. While Mr. Warfel does not have any specific plan for how the building will be occupied, he believes the small space is a good retail location given the building location and surrounding public parking lots. Mr. Warfel told the Commission he would rather not rent out the space, and instead maintain control of the building, utilizing it for live music. He understands the building would not be a suitable space for a coffee house, restaurant or bar, but envisions it being an open place for the community to spend time and exchange ideas. Mr. Warfel noted he owns the space free and clear and is only looking to make enough profit to cover taxes, insurance and utilities. If he cannot find a viable way to use the space himself, he would be willing to put it up for rent and added it would make a fine retail location. Mr. Warfel concluded, stating he believes this is the beginning of the whole block being redeveloped, mentioning the space on the east side of his building has been vacant since COVID and he would love to see it redeveloped as well.

Planning Director, Dan Olson, gave his staff report (dated 4-3-25) on the petition. Mr. Olson explained the site at 209 Grove St. is currently zoned "LI" Light Industrial District. The building, formerly known as the "Whizzer Building", has about 1,100 sq. ft of usable space. He noted the applicant has gutted the interior of the building and reiterated they are interested in establishing retail/service uses or office space. Mr. Olson recalled last April the City Council approved an AIP grant in the amount of \$23,380 to allow Mr. Warfel to do work in the building to accommodate office or retail space. He listed some of the work completed including HVAC, plumbing, new windows and doors and a new ADA sidewalk. Mr. Warfel purchased the property in 2022.

Mr. Olson continued, stating the proposed "CBD" zoning will allow more uses that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. He noted the area on the north side of Grove St. between S. 2nd St. and S. 3rd St. is zoned "LI" Light Industrial. Mr. Olson explained this industrial zoned area has been in existence for several decades, however has become more commercial in nature. As described in the Unified Development Ordinance, the intent of the "CBD" is to accommodate those retail and office uses which are characteristic of the downtown commercial core of the City. He mentioned the City's 2022 Comprehensive Plan recommends commercial uses for this "LI" zoned area.

Furthermore, he clarified the "LI" Light Industrial District is no longer compatible for the subject site and surrounding area. Mr. Olson explained the size of the building and lack of on-site parking/loading area makes the site incompatible for industrial type uses. He added the proposed "CBD" classification is appropriate for the building, will accommodate the proposed uses and is consistent with the zoning and land uses in the surrounding area. Mr. Olson noted the subject site is in an area where on-site parking is not required, according to the UDO. He mentioned public parking is available in the nearby Vaugh Lot (82 spaces), Embree Lot (75 spaces) and Gurler Lot (139 spaces).

To conclude, Mr. Olson stated City staff recommended approval of the rezoning request as the building is simply not compatible for Light Industrial.

Three letters of support were received by the City from nearby property owners which included Julia Guio of 212 S. 2nd Street, Foursquare Church of 210 Grove Street, and the Consentino Law Firm at 213-217 S. 2nd Street.

No public comments were made, and Chair Maxwell closed the public hearing.

Ms. O'Flaherty mentioned the rezoning petition made sense and Ms. Pena-Graham stated the building looked great.

Chair Maxwell asked for a motion to approve. Vice Chair McMahon moved that based upon the submitted petition, testimony presented and findings of fact, he moved the Planning and Zoning Commission forward its findings of fact and recommend to the City Council approval of the rezoning of the subject site at 209 Grove St. from the "LI" Light Industrial District to the "CBD" Central Business District. Ms. O'Flaherty seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken: Becker – yes, O'Flaherty – yes, Pena-Graham – yes, Wright – yes, McMahon – yes, Maxwell - yes. The motion passed 6-0-0.

F. REPORTS

Mr. Olson had only a few items to report. He stated no hearings are scheduled for the next meeting on April 21, 2025. If a Plat or another item not requiring a hearing is added the meeting will be held, otherwise, the meeting may be cancelled. Mr. Olson mentioned both meetings in May will likely be held but there are just a few items.

G. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Maxwell requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Wright motioned to adjourn, and Ms. Pena-Graham seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia K. Doss, Recording Secretary

Minutes approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission on May 5, 2025.

Click [here](#) to view the agenda packet for the April 7, 2025 Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting.

Click [here](#) to view the video recording of the April 7, 2025, Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting.