

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
May 15, 2023

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a meeting on May 15, 2023, in the Yusunas Meeting Room at the DeKalb Public Library, 309 Oak St. DeKalb, Illinois. Chair Max Maxwell 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, Maria Pena-Graham, Shannon Stoker, Jerry Wright, and Chair Max Maxwell. Bill McMahon was absent. Planning Director Dan Olson, City Manager Bill Nicklas, and City Attorney Matthew Rose were present representing the City of DeKalb.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (Additions/Deletions)

Chair Maxwell requested a motion to approve the May 15, 2023, agenda as presented. Mr. Becker motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Stoker seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. May 1, 2023 –Chair Maxwell requested a motion to approve the May 1, 2023, minutes as presented. Mr. Wright motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. O’Flaherty 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 DeKalb CUSD #428 to amend the Special Use Permit approved by Ordinance #2020-044 to extend the time frame for a modular classroom to remain on the site at 1121 School St. (Littlejohn Elementary School) for two more years.

Tammy Carson, Director of Facility and Safety Operations for #428, explained the School Districts request for an extension of two years for the modular classroom located at Littlejohn Elementary School. Ms. Carson discussed the modular classroom is still needed due to capacity issues throughout the entire School District. She spoke on a plan to open a new elementary school at the old NIU School of Nursing building in August of 2025. She added at that time the School District will be asking to remove all mobile classrooms except for the one located at Lincoln Elementary. Ms. Carson said the mobile classroom at Littlejohn currently contains a music room and a STEM room.

Planning Director Olson went through the Staff Report dated May 11, 2023, and covered the history of the modular classroom on the property. Mr. Olson explained the special use permit approved in 2017 for the modular classroom that is currently on the property and mentioned the extension granted in 2020 which expires this June.

Mr. Olson stated the City recommends approval for an extension to August 15, 2025, noting the modular classroom has not had a negative impact on the neighborhood. He mentioned two public response forms were received, the first from Donna Clausen of 919 Huffman Court noting her support for the proposal. The second was from Joan Vassilogambros of 920 N 9th Street who supports the proposal in general but would like to see more specifics. Planning Director Olson finished by indicating part of the recommendation is to require the ground to be restored to grass condition when the modular classroom is removed.

Chair Maxwell asked if there were any comments from the public in which there were none.

Chair Maxwell asked if there were any questions or comments from the Commission members.

Trixy O'Flaherty stated the school is in her neighborhood and it has been fine for years.

Jerry Wright inquired on the redistricting of the schools and if that would solve the problem for overcrowding at Littlejohn. Tammy Carson responded yes, the plan is to reduce classroom count and move some students closer to their homes.

Mr. Wright asked what the chances would be that modular classrooms are still needed after redistricting is complete. Ms. Carson replied there is no anticipation for the need of mobile classrooms once the redistricting is complete.

Max Maxwell questioned if Ms. Carson knew how far overcapacity the school system is. Ms. Carson responded she did not have exact figures to provide at this time.

Ms. O'Flaherty moved that based on the submitted petition and testimony presented, the Planning and Zoning Commission forward its findings of fact and recommend to the City Council approval of an amendment to Ordinance 2020-044 to extend the time frame for a modular classroom to be located at 1121 School St. (Littlejohn Elementary School) as shown on the attached Exhibit A, subject to the following condition:

1. The modular classroom may remain on the subject site in the location as shown on Exhibit A up to August 15, 2025 and shall, on or before said date, be removed from the property. At such time, the surface beneath the modular classroom shall be restored to a pre-installation, grassed condition.

Mr. Wright seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Mr. Becker – Yes, Ms. O'Flaherty – Yes, Ms. Pena-Graham – Yes, Ms. Stoker- Yes, Mr. Wright – Yes, Chair Maxwell – Yes. Bill McMahan was absent. Motion passed 6-0-1.

2. **Public Hearing** – A petition by the City of DeKalb for text amendments to the UDO by adding a “GS” Government Sanitary District and associated list of permitted uses and conditions of use for the District. Text amendments are also proposed to remove the use “Sewage Treatment Facilities” from the SFR-1, SFR-2, TFR, MFR-1, MFR-2, and LI Zoning Districts.

Planning Director Olson went through the Staff Report dated May 11, 2023, and stated an agreement was approved by the City Council last October with the Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District (KWRD) to treat all their properties as public institutions and they would be zoned under their own district.

Mr. Olson talked about the four current properties that will be coming back to the Commission to be rezoned later under the new “GS” Government Sanitary District. He added the four KWRD properties are currently three different zoning districts and the goal is to unify them as one district. Mr. Olson explained the new zoning district includes a purpose statement along with permitted land uses and conditions of the use.

Planning Director Olson described the amendments to remove the terms “sewage treatment facilities” and “sewage treatment plants” from the various zoning districts. Mr. Olson said KWRD will come back with petitions to rezone the main plant on Sycamore Road, two properties along I-88, and a property near Buena Vista Golf Course. He finished with notifying the Commission that KWRD will not need permits or to follow City zoning regulations like setback rules due to this new district being created.

Chair Maxwell asked if there were any questions or comments from the Commission members.

Mr. Maxwell wanted clarification on the purpose of rezoning to “GS”. He asked if that meant KWRD would not have to come before the Commission for approval on future land use action. Planning Director Olson replied they would not have to come back for any zoning approval, they will just have to comply with State and Federal regulations.

Steve Becker questioned the four properties coming back to be rezoned. Mr. Olson responded there will be a public hearing on all four properties being rezoned.

Mark Eddington, Executive Director of the KWRD, asked about annexing the South Slope Site. Mr. Olson answered the annexation and rezoning for the site would be addressed at the same Commission meeting.

Mr. Wright moved that based on the submitted petition and testimony presented, the Planning and Zoning Commission recommend to the City Council approval of text amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance regarding the establishment of a “GS” Government Sanitary District as indicated in Exhibit A to the staff report.

Mr. Becker seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Mr. Becker – Yes, Ms. O’Flaherty – Yes, Ms. Pena-Graham – Yes, Ms. Stoker- Yes, Mr. Wright – Yes, Chair Maxwell – Yes. Bill McMahon was absent. Motion passed 6-0-1.

F. REPORTS

Planning Director Olson announced the next Commission meeting is set for Monday, June 5, however nothing is scheduled at this time. He stressed the second meeting in June is on Tuesday, June 20 due to a holiday on the 19th. He added there should be a petition for special use for DIMCO on that date.

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 6:17 PM.

Minutes prepared by: Stephanie Turner Approved: June 20, 2023