

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
May 16, 2022

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a meeting on May 16, 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 6:01 PM.

A. ROLL CALL

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

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (Additions/Deletions)

Vice Chair McMahon requested a motion to approve the May 16, 2022, agenda as presented. Ms. O'Flaherty 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 2, 2022 –Vice Chair McMahon requested a motion to approve the May 2, 2022, minutes as presented. Mr. Wright motioned to approve the minutes as presented. 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)

George Schramer, from Sycamore, asked if the Commission knew if Union Pacific was selling the vacant DeKalb train depot and if the City was interested in acquiring the property.

City Manager Nicklas responded he has had several conversations regarding the rumor of Union Pacific selling the depot, however as far as he knows they are not selling. He stressed the City will never issue a demolition permit for the depot as this is a historic part of DeKalb.

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Final Development Plan and Final Plat** – Approval of a Final Development Plan and Final Plat for Arista Residences- 1383 Barber Greene Road.

Hannah Roche, Office Manager at Pappas Development, explained a couple of alterations have been made involving the design elements and eliminating an access point into the parking lot. Ms. Roche informed the Commission the access point to the north was removed due to the Northland Plaza Shopping Center owner not approving

of the access point. She added there will still be a right-in/right-out point off Barber Greene Road and a full access point off County Farm Road. Ms. Roche touched on the changes in the appearance of the building stating they added vertical pillars and changed the color of the masonry at the bottom portion of the building.

Dan Olson, Planning Director, went through the staff report dated May 12, 2022, and stated the City approved the rezoning of the subject property in January. He added the City also annexed part of the site and approved a preliminary plan for a 4-story executive suites building with 61 one-bedroom units. He added the planned development ordinance required the applicant to come back with a final plan, including a final engineering, lighting plan and a final plat.

Mr. Olson reiterated the two changes Hannah Roche spoke on regarding the removal of the northern access point and the change in the masonry work. He stated the north access point was not granted by the Northland Plaza owners, so it was removed from the final plan. Mr. Olson stated the masonry changes give the building an overall better appearance. Mr. Olson finished by stating City Staff and the Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District have all approved the Final Plan and Final Plat.

Vice Chair McMahon asked if there were any comments or questions from the public, in which there were none.

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

Jerry Wright asked if the changes in the brick work stemmed from a suggestion or if they decided to make this change on their own. Hannah Roche replied stating Pappas Development decided to change the masonry as they pride themselves on their brick exterior work.

Ms. Stoker moved that the Planning and Zoning Commission recommend approval of the Final Development Plan and Final Plat for Arista Residences on the subject site per the plans noted in Exhibit A in the staff report.

Mr. Wright seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Ms. O'Flaherty – Yes, Ms. Pena-Graham – Yes, Ms. Stoker – Yes, Mr. Wright – Yes, Vice Chair McMahon – Yes, Mr. Becker and Chair Maxwell were absent. Motion passed 5-0-2.

F. CONSIDERATIONS – Discussion on the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update

Planning Director Olson stated the focus for tonight's meeting will be on the Urban Design Guidelines section of the Comprehensive Plan. He said there were no significant changes just expanding and modifying some of the language.

Mr. Olson mentioned the chapter is broken down into sections by land use and started with the Planned Development and Subdivision Design section. He noted the language for the guidelines for parks, open space, and bike paths had a change for the action item by adding the City work with the Park District, DeKalb County, and DSATS which

is the regional planning organization. Mr. Olson mentioned the language was expanded to identify bike path links in public easements as well as rights-of-way, which would be reviewed by the Commission during the planned development process. He said language was modified regarding viewsheds and visual corridors when designing subdivisions.

Mr. Olson moved on to landscape buffers between various types of land uses and said there are currently guidelines in the UDO for buffers between commercial and residential uses, however buffers need to be looked at between commercial and industrial land uses.

Mr. Olson continued to the Single-Family and Two-Family Residential section. He described the first guideline regarding developments should be compatible with the surrounding area in terms of lot size and requiring the developer to submit a statement showing compatibility. He described the action item of getting a variety of architectural designs in subdivisions. He said language was added that homes with the same architecture style should not be located next to each other.

Planning Director Olson talked about the multiple family use section and stated one of the guidelines is to minimize the visual impact of off-street parking. He stated language was added to allow flexibility in the screening requirements when adding parking spaces in existing multi-family developments. Mr. Olson explained under Commercial Uses, large-scale buildings are recommended to have their architectural design reviewed. He stated language was added and strengthened to ensure proposed material and colors are shown on building elevations when part of a Planned Development or special use permit review. Mr. Olson described improvements in the Central Business District language to make sure new buildings are compatible with the historic structures in the downtown area.

Mr. Olson described word modifications and clearer language in the Industrial use section and talked about adding buffers between different land uses, if needed. He said no major changes in the Public and Institutional section were made, just some minor language modifications. Mr. Olson stressed the Urban Design Guidelines have been discussed a few times during this process and would welcome Commission feedback.

Commissioner O'Flaherty provided images for ideas and shared these with the Commission. She stated the one design feature that would most benefit the City would be signage and wayfinding elements and stressed these should be a unified design. Ms. O'Flaherty talked about bridging the gap between the City and NIU with similar designs for signage.

Commissioner O'Flaherty gave examples of wayfinding ideas starting with signage for public parking. She used Sycamore as an example with their kiosk, which is an attractive element. She desired something similar for DeKalb including a downtown directory along with a community bulletin board (digital or manual).

Ms. O'Flaherty continued by discussing the public art element and wanting to see murals, plantings, and sculptural transitions in different areas throughout the City. She discussed the areas she would like to see this done including the NIU East Lagoon,

joining Annie Glidden North to campus, U.P. underpass on S. Annie Glidden, 5th Street, E. Lincoln Highway, and the City owned gravel lot on North 7th Street (east side between Oak St. and UP RR). She would like to see these areas beautified and the transitions between neighborhoods softened.

City Manager Nicklas agreed with Ms. O'Flaherty's ideas and said the language in the Comprehensive Plan could be beefed up as there are statements already in the draft reflecting her ideas. He added the Plan won't be specific on the exact locations of the artwork, but the concept will be supported. Mr. Nicklas told the Commission adding wayfinding signage downtown could be completed after the downtown project (Lincoln Highway reconfiguration) is complete. He added the work will include changes in the downtown streetscape that could include new signage. Mr. Nicklas stressed wayfinding is very much needed, and it should be consistent and have a nice touch to it. Mr. Nicklas explained the plan for art after the City receiving a \$50,000.00 grant from T-Mobile. He suggested Commissioner O'Flaherty attend the Citizens' Community Enhancement Commission (CCEC) meetings for discussions on public art projects.

Shannon Stoker stated she was confused on how these topics were involved with the Comprehensive Plan. She wondered if there would be a specific section on artwork. Planning Director Olson replied there are general goals and objectives that mention signage and wayfinding, but the plan would not include detailed information on specific art projects.

City Manager Nicklas stated the detail he was providing is for discussion and elaboration as to what is coming regarding DeKalb's infrastructure. Trixy O'Flaherty said she is looking for creative thinking on bringing changes to soften the appearance of areas. Mr. Nicklas added public art is growing and people are more self-expressive and there are neighborhoods with buildings that have the potential for art projects. Shannon Stoker asked if there were plans to add this into the Comprehensive Plan, as she sees this could be added as a specific goal. City Manager Nicklas responded the existing language can be expanded.

Shannon Stoker questioned if street signage around the NIU campus was going to include the Huskies logo on the signs. City Manager Nicklas stated there could be decorative pieces to the signs but a Husky could not be on the sign with the name of the street.

Mr. Olson stated the Comprehensive Plan would come back for discussion at another Commission meeting. He informed the Commission there would be a couple open houses for discussion on the Comp. Plan at the end June and in July. He added once the Plan is recommended for approval by the Commission it would move on to the City Council for final action.

City Manager Nicklas said the open houses would be at the library since it's a broadcast center.

Jerry Wright inquired if there was a plan for the lot (Protano site) next to the Pine Acres Rehab Center on S. 4th St. City Manager Nicklas informed the Commission there was ground contamination so it cannot be disturbed so the uses are limited.

Mr. Wright questioned if there was a plan for the wall on the building on the NW corner of E. Lincoln Highway and N. 4th Street. Mr. Nicklas replied there was a serious inquiry on the purchase of the McCabe's building and the grassy area is owned by the City. He continued saying this area is prime for redevelopment but there are access issues that need to be addressed.

G. REPORTS

Planning Director Olson announced the next Commission meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 6. Mr. Olson said there will be a hearing on the extension of a cannabis license for a dispensary at the Junction Shopping Center on the 6th or 21st of June. He added the second meeting in June would be on Tuesday, June 21 due to the Juneteenth Holiday.

H. 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 6:59 PM.

Minutes prepared by: Stephanie Turner Approved: 6/6/2022