

MINUTES  
CITY OF DEKALB  
**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**  
May 20, 2020

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a Meeting on May 20, 2020, at the City of DeKalb Municipal Building, 200 South Fourth Street, DeKalb, Illinois. Chair Max Maxwell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Chair Maxwell stated he wanted to thank everyone for being here tonight, including Commission members who are attending remotely and for those who are watching on Channel 14 or streaming live. He referenced the Governor's Executive Order in March that allows Commission members to participate remotely. He said member Chris Doe will be joining the meeting remotely by calling in and mentioned for those attending the meeting the room has been set up to meet the CDC recommended distancing guidelines and the Executive Order from the Governor.

A. ROLL CALL

Principal Planner Dan Olson called the roll. Planning and Zoning Commission members present were: Chair Max Maxwell, Ron Klein, Jerry Wright and Trixy O'Flaherty. Vice Chair Christina Doe attended the meeting remotely by an audio conference call. Commissioners Vicki Buckley and Steve Becker were absent. Principal Planner Dan Olson was present representing the City.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (Additions/Deletions)

Chair Maxwell requested a motion to approve the May 20, 2020, agenda as presented. Mr. Klein motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. O'Flaherty seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. April 22, 2020 – Chair Maxwell requested a motion to approve the April 22, 2020 minutes as presented. Mr. Wright motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Klein 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 Christa and Matt Gehrke for approval of the rezoning of 421 Grove Street from the “CBD” Central Business District to the “PD-C” Planned Development – Commercial District and approval of a preliminary and final development plan to accommodate a building contractor’s office and material storage on the subject site.

Matt Gehrke, owner of Swedberg Associates, stated he had submitted a petition to the City of DeKalb to move his 9-year old construction company from Sycamore to DeKalb. He advised the business has outgrown its current facility and has decided the subject site would be the best for his expanding business. He noted the property has both office space and a warehouse, which is perfect for a construction company.

Mr. Gehrke advised a fence will be constructed to screen the outdoor storage. He stated the majority of the storage would be trailers, work vehicles, and staged construction materials. He noted the fence would be installed along the alley, parallel with S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and be flush with the south side of the building. He noted he prefers to install a corrugated metal fence (Option #1), which would be easy to repair and would be a solid privacy fence. He added they would install splash planks on the bottom of the fence to prevent damage to the landscaping.

Mr. Gehrke provided examples of two other fence styles, which could be installed at the recommendation of the Commission and City Council. He advised the second option would be a chain link fence with a mesh cover (Option #2). He advised this type of fencing requires the most maintenance and has the worst overall aesthetics. He noted the third option is also a corrugated metal fence but is slightly more expensive and labor intensive to install compared to the initial option (Option #1).

Mr. Gehrke advised the landscaping would be cleaned up on the site and 17 shrubs added along S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street and 10 shrubs added along S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street.

Mr. Gehrke noted all parking for visitors and employees would be along the front or side of the building. He advised there are approximately 20 parking spaces on the site (outside proposed fenced area) and his employees would occupy about four of those spaces. He advised there would be low activity on the lot, as most of his employees are working at jobs sites.

Principal Planner Dan Olson went through the staff report dated May 15, 2020. He advised under the current zoning classification (CBD), building contractor’s office with materials storage is not specifically listed as permitted use or special use. He noted the CBD District currently prohibits outside storage when it’s a principal use. He advised the proposed “PD-C” zoning will allow the applicant

to have the building contractor's office with materials storage. He stated the request also involves a waiver to the Unified Development Ordinance for a Planned Development less than two acres. He advised the City has previous granted similar waivers for the Cornerstone and Plaza DeKalb projects.

Mr. Olson said the subject property is approximately 1.24 acres and has a building that is mostly vacant and a parking lot around all four sides. He noted the property has been listed for sale since 2013. He stated the building's office area is being leased out to three business, however its underutilized. He noted the current owner rents the interior of the building for vehicle, RV and boat storage.

Mr. Olson stated an 8-foot tall fence would be installed along 5<sup>th</sup> Street and the rear alley to screen construction materials and storage. He reiterated the three fence option details given by Mr. Gehrke, with a detail of a third option provided to the Commission at the meeting.

Mr. Olson noted 18 parking spaces are required based on the formula in the UDO. He advised there are a total 22 marked parking spaces on the lot outside of the fenced area.

Mr. Olson mentioned staff is recommending approval with conditions to bring the site further into compliance with the UDO including re-stripping of the parking lot, painting the parking lot light poles, and adding landscaping.

Chair Maxwell gave the public an opportunity to speak.

Dana Doty, of 323 S 6<sup>th</sup> St, and owner of the adjacent Archer Alignment stated his concerns regarding traffic in the alley. He stated the City broke its' own ordinances with the Dunkin Donuts drive-through was approved. He advised the alley is always blocked and would prefer if the petitioner limited traffic going through the alley. He advised he would prefer option #3 for the fence. He advised he did support a business moving into the vacant building and welcomed the petitioner to the neighborhood.

Louise Calderone, of 308 S 3<sup>rd</sup> St, noted her concerns of increased traffic between 1<sup>st</sup> St and 4<sup>th</sup> St. She advised she does not want to see more semi-trucks and construction vehicles in the neighborhood. Mr. Gehrke advised there would only be four staff members in the office, which would have very minimal impact on any traffic. He advised his construction crews go to their job sites very early in the morning and might have to return to the subject site only once or twice a day. He noted the Grove Street access will be used most often.

Rita McNatt, of 220 S 5<sup>th</sup> St, said she preferred options #1 or #3 for the fence. She noted she also lives on a cobblestone street and would like to keep traffic out of the area to preserve the street.

Chair Maxwell gave the commissioners a chance to speak.

Mr. Klein questioned what vehicles would be parked within the fence area, and which would be outside. Mr. Gehrke advised office staff would be parking outside the fenced area and work vehicles would be parked in the fenced in area. He noted most materials will be stored inside the warehouse and it would mainly be work vehicles stored outside but behind the fenced area.

Mr. Klein stated he preferred option #3 for the fence and would prefer if traffic off S. 4<sup>th</sup> St be limited. Mr. Gehrke advised the majority of traffic would use the access off Grove St.

Ms. O'Flaherty advised she is excited for someone to move into the building, as it has been vacant for so long. She noted option #3 for the fencing was preferred, and she was happy to hear of the new landscaping.

Mr. Wright questioned what a splash plank was. Mr. Gehrke advised it is a baseboard for a fence, to keep mulch and dirt from getting underneath the fence. Mr. Wright questioned if any semi-trucks would be making any deliveries and what the corner lot (along 4<sup>th</sup> St.) would be used for. Mr. Gehrke advised there would be no semi-truck traffic and the corner lot would only be used for vehicle parking.

Chair Maxwell advised he approved of the request and stated it was a great use of the property.

Chair Maxwell gave the public one more opportunity to speak. There was none.

Mr. Wright moved that the Planning and Zoning Commission forward its findings of fact and recommend to the City Council approval of a Zoning Map Amendment from the "CBD" Central Business District to the "PD-C" Planned Development – Commercial District; approval of a waiver to the Unified Development Ordinance for a Planned Development less than two acres and approval of a preliminary and final development plan to accommodate a building contractor's office and materials storage on the subject site at 421 Grove Street per the plans dated 5-15-20 and labeled as Exhibit A, Fence Detail Option #3 labeled as Exhibit B, and per the conditions listed in Exhibit C.

Ms. O'Flaherty seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Mr. Klein – yes, Ms. Doe – yes, Ms. O’Flaherty – yes, Mr. Wright – yes, Chair Maxwell – yes. Motion was passed 5-0-2. Ms. Buckley and Mr. Becker were absent.

F. REPORTS

Mr. Olson advised the City Council approved Project Ventus and the NuMed Cannabis Business establishment at their April 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. He reminded the Commission the next meeting would be June 3<sup>rd</sup> and there will be a hearing for a mixed-use project at Oakland Dr. and Sycamore Rd. called Isaac Executive Suites

G. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Flaherty motioned to adjourn, Mr. Wright seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. The Planning and Zoning Commission adjourned at 6:41PM.