

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
August 1, 2022

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a meeting on August 1, 2022, at the DeKalb Public Library in the Yusunas Meeting Room located at 309 Oak Street, DeKalb, Illinois. Chair Max Maxwell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

A. ROLL CALL

Planning Director Dan Olson called the roll. Planning and Zoning Commission members present were: Steve Becker, Trixy O’Flaherty, Maria Pena-Graham, Shannon Stoker, Bill McMahon, and Chair Max Maxwell. Jerry Wright was absent. City Manager Bill Nicklas, Planning Director Dan Olson, and City Engineer Zac Gill were present representing the City of DeKalb.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (Additions/Deletions)

Chair Maxwell requested a motion to approve the August 1, 2022, agenda as presented. Mr. McMahon 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. July 18, 2022 –Chair Maxwell requested a motion to approve the July 18, 2022, minutes as presented. Mr. Becker 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** – Project Wildcat - A petition by ChicagoWest Business Center and Trammell Crow Company-Chicago and JJK 343, LLC, property owner, for approval of the annexation, rezoning, and a preliminary development plan for an approximately 160-acre property located at the northwest corner of Gurler Road and Peace Road to accommodate a distribution, packing and storage company and accessory uses.

Chair Maxwell recused himself due to a conflict of interest. Vice-Chair McMahon took over as Chair for the hearing.

Jerry Krusinski, on behalf of ChicagoWest Business Center and JJK 343, spoke on the request. He stated its for approval of the annexation of 160 acres directly east of the Ferrara and Amazon projects in the ChicagoWest Business Center. Mr. Krusinski added they are requesting approval of a site plan for Project Wildcat which will consist

of two buildings, one being approximately 1.2 million square feet for a distribution, packing and storage company, and another building being added in phase two.

Josh Udelhofen of Trammell Crow Company described phase one of Project Wildcat being a building approximately 1.24 million square feet on the west side of Peace Road. Mr. Udelhofen pointed out a unique characteristic of the building will be an automatic storage and retrieval system which consist of about 1/3 of the building. He explained the system uses rack heights up to 120-130 feet which results in the building being just under 140 feet tall.

Josh Udelhofen said all the truck traffic will be accessed off Gurler Road with a secure truck entrance and egress in the middle of the site. He explained this may ultimately service both sites (Phase I and II) but that will be determined after a traffic study is completed. Mr. Udelhofen told the Commission the building will also be serviced by rail with a private Union Pacific spur that would come in on the northern side of the building into an enclosed train shed. He spoke about the south side of the building being office space which will be about 50,000 to 60,000 square feet. Mr. Udelhofen stated total employment for the entire building will be at approximately 700 people across a two-shifts and there is adequate parking for the number of employees on both shifts.

Mr. Udelhofen spoke on the proposed phase two of Project Wildcat and stated they will hopefully break ground in 2023, although they do not have a precise timeline yet. He explained Phase II will likely have two phases of its own: the first being a building around 500,000 to 600,000 square feet with a potential addition taking it up to 850,000 to 950,000 square feet.

Mr. Udelhofen focused on phase one of Project Wildcat and stated the timeline is accelerated and they hope to break ground in September of 2022 with mass grading activities, roadway expansions, and utility connections. He discussed the need for an accelerated timeframe even though the building is not opening until 2025. Mr. Udelhofen added the core of the building will be completed in the first or second quarter of 2024 which will then allow the erection of the ASRS space. He mentioned there will be phased occupancy starting in early 2024 with the final occupancy coming in early 2025.

Mr. Udelhofen mentioned all aspects of the development are being worked out with City staff including proposed roadways and utility connections. He added there will be an updated plat of subdivision that creates three separate lots, two for the buildings, and one for a future ComEd substation to service the facility and others in the area.

Planning Director Olson went over the staff report dated July 28, 2022, and said this is an expansion to the ChicagoWest Business Center and stated two buildings will be constructed in two phases in an area that is not in the City so that is the reason for the request for annexation. Mr. Olson added as a part of the request, the petitioner is requesting rezoning to the Planned Development Industrial District, approval of a preliminary development plan, and approval of a final plat.

Mr. Olson explained there are three points of access along Gurler Road, two being for employee parking, one for truck traffic with emergency vehicle access being off Peace

Road. He added there is adequate parking and two large detention areas. He also noted sanitary sewer will be extended from the west, and water will be brought to the site from the south side of Gurler Road.

Mr. Olson touched on the timing of the project noting grading will start in early September of this year and completion of the project occurring in 2025. He stressed the plan has been reviewed by City staff and the Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District. He mentioned one of the conditions is the final plan can be reviewed by the City staff, and not the Commission or City Council, if it's in substantial compliance with the preliminary plan.

Mr. Olson explained the three variance requests to the Unified Development Ordinance. He stated one is exceeding the maximum building height which is 75 feet. He said the petitioner is requesting 140 feet in the phase one building. Mr. Olson added the maximum site coverage which is 70% and the petitioner is requesting up to 80%. Finally, he noted the applicant is requesting the parking spaces be reduced from 19 feet long to 18 feet. Mr. Olson stated the City supports all three requests.

Planning Director Olson said the proposed plan for rezoning meets the intent of the Comprehensive Plan, is compatible with the trend of development in the surrounding area and meets all the requirements of the UDO except for the three requests for variances discussed previously. Mr. Olson stated there were no public comments received for the proposal.

Mr. Olson stated the Staff recommends approval of the rezoning, upon annexation, the preliminary development plan and final plat

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

Steve Becker questioned the amount of potential employment with phase two since it was discussed phase one will employ close to 700 people. Josh Udelhofen replied they do not have clarity at the moment, but it will be proportional to the phase one building in regard to building size and the number of employees. Mr. Becker asked if there was an approximate count for truck traffic coming in and out daily. Mr. Udelhofen conferred with Mr. Krusinski, and stated they did not have a count but said it will be typical of an industrial area and similar to Ferrara.

Mr. Becker requested clarification as to the number of bays for the trucks. Mr. Udelhofen said there are 120 dock doors with an additional 70 punchouts that could be added later. He added a preliminary traffic analysis has been conducted, however he doesn't know the number of trucks off the top of his head.

Mr. Becker voiced his concern with the impact on the ingress and egress to the facility and entrance and exit from Peace Road to I-88 and wondered if there will be a congestion of trucks along the roadways that serve the site.

City Engineer Zachary Gill said he has not seen the traffic numbers but stated the roundabout (Peace and Gurler) should allow for no backup on southbound Peace Road traffic. Mr. Gill added a right turn lane has been added on Peace Road for tollway

access for eastbound traffic. He said the only location he possibly could see an issue is on Peace Road exiting I-88 wanting to make a left turn. He added other sites add to this issue. Mr. Becker mentioned with the continued development in the area the development opportunities are fantastic but does not want to see traffic congestion on Peace Road doubling out onto the interstate.

Bill McMahon asked about the height of the building and questioned if the City had the fire protection necessary for this request. Planning Director Olson stated the Fire Department has reviewed the plans and they do not have any concerns regarding the height of the building. He added they want the ability to access the front and sides of the building which can be cleared up when they go into the final plan design.

Mr. McMahon questioned the railroad spur and where it is going to connect to. Mr. Olson showed the tracks at Route 23 going along the north side of Ferrara and Amazon and will connect along the north side of the two proposed buildings.

Mr. Krusinski added with the annexation of the original 343 acres (ChicagoWest Business Center) they planned for a rail spur along the north side of the site and the subject site. He added the rail connection is on the east side of Route 23 so there is no disruption for Route 23 traffic.

Trixy O'Flaherty had a question on the building height (Phase I) compared to I-88. City Engineer Gill informed the Commission there is an 18-foot vertical difference between the bridge deck at Peace Road and I-88 and the roundabout at Gurler and Peace Roads, but he is not sure where the foundation will be for the Phase I building.

Shannon Stoker asked with the facility being a two-shift operation, would there be large amounts of time in which the building would be empty. Josh Udelhofen stated it would be like other distribution centers where the facility will not fully operational during some overnight times.

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

Paul Borek, Executive Director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation, located at 2179 Sycamore Road in DeKalb read a letter stating his support for the annexation, rezoning, and preliminary plan for this project. Mr. Borek stated the detailed material provided shows the project conforms with the accepted standards for zoning map amendments and the Comprehensive Plan. He added this proposal will not have a detrimental effect on future development in the area. Mr. Borek stated the project will expand the DeKalb County economy, diversify the tax base, and provide additional jobs which will increase the need for residential development and lead to potential population growth.

Mr. Borek continued by stating the project fully addresses the county wide economic development policy. He went on to state the DeKalb County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy calls for DCEDC and DeKalb County communities to identify and recruit industries. Mr. Borek summarized this project will expand the DeKalb County economy, create jobs, and increase tax revenue which will allow taxing bodies to reduce taxes. He respectfully asked for the Commission to approve this proposal.

Bill McMahon stated this is an exciting opportunity and will be great for the community.

Steve Becker inquired if the jobs are going to be union jobs. The applicant stated they could not answer the question at this time.

Mr. Becker moved that based on the submitted petitions and testimony presented, the Planning and Zoning Commission forward its findings of fact and recommend to the City Council approval of the rezoning, upon annexation, from the "SFR1" Single-Family Residential District to the "PD-I" Planned Development Industrial District for a 160-acre property located at the northwest corner of Peace Road and Gurler Road for the construction of an approximately 1,240,000 sq. ft. phase 1 building and an approximately 936,000 square foot building in phase 2 to accommodate a distribution, packaging and storage company and accessory uses per preliminary development plan, architectural elevations and final plat of subdivision as listed in Exhibit A subject to the standards listed in Exhibit B and subject to all comments being addressed to the satisfaction of City staff prior to any permits being issued for the subject property and prior to the recording of the final plat.

Ms. Pena-Graham seconded the motion.

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

Chair Maxwell returned to the meeting after the public hearing was closed.

F. REPORTS

Planning Director Olson announced the next scheduled Commission meeting will be held on Monday, August 15 at the DeKalb Police Department and there will be three hearings. He noted the first one will be on the update to the Comprehensive Plan, the second will be a text amendment on solar farms and the final one being a special use request for a solar farm on Pleasant Street. Mr. Olson informed the Commission that on July 25 the City Council approved the three requests from the previous Commission meeting (modular classroom at Brooks School, special use permit for 922 S. 4th St. and the final plat for the Midland Trust Co. – Jim Planey).

G. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. O'Flaherty motioned to adjourn, Ms. Stoker seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. The Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting adjourned at 6:36 PM.

Minutes prepared by: Stephanie Turner Approved: August 15, 2022