

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
September 19, 2022

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a meeting on September 19, 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

Recording Secretary Stephanie Turner 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 and Planning Director Dan Olson were present representing the City of DeKalb.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (Additions/Deletions)

Chair Maxwell requested a motion to approve the September 19, 2022, agenda as presented. Mr. McMahon motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Becker seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. September 6, 2022 –Chair Maxwell requested a motion to approve the September 6, 2022, minutes as presented. Mr. McMahon 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 the City of DeKalb for approval of rezoning, upon annexation, from the “SFR1” Single-Family Residential District to the “HI” Heavy Industrial District for the Afton Road Right-of-Way from E. Gurler Road to Keslinger Road.

Planning Director Olson went over the staff report dated September 15, 2022, and stated the City is requesting to rezone the Afton Road Right-of-Way from Gurler Road to Keslinger Road. Mr. Olson covered the history of this roadway and stated a portion of Crego Road between Gurler Road and Keslinger Road had to be vacated with the development of the Meta Campus, so a new north-south road (Afton Road) was created. He added Afton Road needs to be annexed into the City and then rezoned to the Heavy Industrial District “HI”.

Mr. Olson discussed the findings of fact in the staff report and stated the City recommends approval of this request. He said there were no public comments submitted to the City for this matter.

Chair Maxwell stated there was nobody present for comments from the public.

Chair Maxwell asked if there were any questions from the Commission members in which there were none.

Ms. O’Flaherty stated 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 the rezoning of the Afton Road Right-of-Way from E. Gurler Road to Keslinger Road, upon annexation, from the “SFR1” Single-Family Residential District to the “HI” Heavy Industrial District.

Mr. McMahon seconded the motion.

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

F. CONSIDERATIONS

Planning Director Olson started out by thanking the Commission for their hard work and informed them this is a follow-up discussion since the approval of the Comprehensive Plan in August. Mr. Olson informed the Commission the objectives and goals laid out in the Comprehensive Plan need to be discussed along with a plan to implement.

Mr. Olson said amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance and items on affordable housing need to be addressed by the Commission and perhaps other groups. He stated one objective is to encourage planned developments along principal corridors involving site plan review by the Commission. Mr. Olson stated this could be done, in part, by removing the minimum lot size of two acres for Planned Developments.

Planning Director Olson touched on reviewing Article 7 for installing buffers, fencing or landscaping, between industrial and commercial uses. Mr. Olson went on to discuss commercial areas such as DeKalb Market Square and Northland Plaza, and to look at the variety of uses in these shopping centers. He added non-retail uses and residential options have located in these areas and there may be more. Mr. Olson stressed the Commission consider looking into restrictions on dwelling units and review the list of permitted and special uses in these areas.

Mr. Olson reiterated a possible need for an “overlay” zoning district for South Fourth Street between Taylor Street and Fairview Drive due to the development south of I-88. He informed an overlay district covers a certain area with additional regulations, usually stricter than the UDO, but particular to the specific area. He stressed parking regulations need to be looked at related to the actual demands of certain uses.

Mr. Olson explained all the zoning districts will be researched along with their associated permitted and special uses. He stated the Commission should look into changing special uses to permitted uses if the City is approving the special use on a regular basis.

Chair Maxwell asked if areas along East Lincoln Highway could possibly be assigned dual use or be dual zoned to encourage more development. Planning Director Olson responded this could be looked into.

Mr. Olson continued his discussion with affordable housing and said allowing a higher density and smaller lot and home sizes could aid in more affordable housing. City Manager Nicklas stated a study was done in March for affordable housing but explained now is not the right time to do a study on this topic since the market is volatile. He informed the Commission the hope is to gather data in the first quarter of 2023.

Maria Pena-Graham said building homes right now is expensive and she does not see the prices coming down. Ms. Pena-Graham spoke on her idea of building condos at the old Campus Cinema site at Blackhawk Rd. and Hillcrest Dr. She stated condos are affordable and are owner occupied. City Manager Nicklas replied condos are a good option and said the City Council will start publicizing ideas for the area at Blackhawk and Hillcrest sometime this fall. He hopes a core list of uses will be prepared by the end of the year.

Steve Becker spoke on hundreds of acres of land dedicated to unattached, single-family, patio style homes in Indiana as an option for affordable housing. Mr. Nicklas added the average median home income in DeKalb is in the low \$50,000's which is not conducive for citizen's being able to buy homes.

Planning Director Olson explained the increase of agriculture use in the updated plan in the 1 ½ mile planning area. He also noted goals such as connecting streets can be addressed when development projects are submitted for review. Mr. Olson spoke on the recent mixed-use developments and the possibility of adding an institutional zoning district to the UDO.

Chair Maxwell inquired if there is any way to promote the changes and updates that are being made to the Comprehensive Plan. City Manager Nicklas responded Management Analyst Scott Zak can do this by posting information to our social media platforms and website.

Ms. O'Flaherty said starting with proposing amendments to the parking requirements seems like a good starting point.

Mr. Becker stressed the signage coming into and leaving the City needs to be focused on. He added it is a simple marketing tool to attract people to our city.

Chair Maxwell questioned if there were restrictions on billboards, which are a great way to advertise City business to motorist along the tollway.

Planning Director Olson stated the UDO prohibits signage that advertises something that is not located on the property. Mr. Becker stated signage on exits coming into DeKalb could be a possibility. City Manager Nicklas added as other developments come in adjacent to I-88, signage may be requested that exceeds the UDO maximums. Mr. Olson noted the UDO does allow higher signs along the Tollway. He stated he has been unsuccessful with talks with the Tollway Authority for signage promoting DeKalb business and attractions.

G. REPORTS

None at this time.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Pena-Graham 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 6:33 PM.

Minutes prepared by: Stephanie Turner Approved: October 3, 2022