

**MINUTES
CITY OF DARIEN
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
June 17, 2020**

PRESENT: Lou Mallers – Chairperson, Michael Desmond, Robert Erickson, Steve Hiatt, Julie Kasprovicz, Brian Liedtke, Ralph Stompanato

ABSENT: Bryan Gay, Hilda Gonzalez

OTHERS: Joseph Hennerfeind-City Planner

Chairperson Lou Mallers called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Darien City Hall, Council Chambers, 1702 Plainfield Road, Darien, Illinois. Chairperson Mallers declared a quorum present and swore in the audience members wishing to present public testimony.

REGULAR MEETING:

A. Public Hearing PZC 2020-06– 8131 Lemont Toad (Solar Panel Screening Variation). Petitioner RETHINK Electric seeks approval to vary Section 5A-5-9-8(B)5 of the City Zoning Code requiring non-flush mounted solar panels to be screened at 8131 Lemont Road in Darien, Illinois.

Mr. Joe Hennerfeind, City Planner reported that the building sits approximately 74 feet from the primary Lemont Road frontage and 100 feet from the north road frontage. He reported that the building is unique in that there is no parapet wall at the cap of the building. He explained that parapet walls typically extend higher than the roof and are often constructed to screen various types of rooftop equipment.

Mr. Hennerfeind reported that Section 5A-9-9(B)5 stated that “panels on a flat roof that are not flush-mounted must have a parapet or screening wall between the panels and the adjacent street and said parapet or screening wall must be at least as high as the panels.” He reported that Non-Flush mounted panels are further defined as any panels that extend more than 6 inches above the roof.

Mr. Hennerfeind reported that the petitioner proposes to install a solar array in the flat roof of the building. He reported that solar panels installed on a flat roof must be installed at an angle, and although not excessive in height, are approximately 14 inches off the roof at the highest point. He further reported that the petitioner provided a response to the variation standards noted in the agenda packet and states that the unique condition of the property is the overall height of the building in comparison to surrounding development, and that the panels will not be seen in close proximity to the building. Mr. Hennerfeind reported that the petitioner provided line-of-sight diagrams.

Mr. Hennerfeind reported that the petitioner is asking for a variance because building a wall or a screen is very expensive. He stated that the PZC should consider any decision may be precedent setting and any unique conditions should be stated if approved. He

reported that Lace School is proposing to do something similar but that they are a one-story building and that the panels will be visible. Mr. Hennerfeind reported that more requests for panels will be forthcoming and that there may be a need to revise the Code.

Chairperson Mallers opened the meeting to anyone wishing to present public comment.

Mr. Gil Lopez, Commercial Project Manager-Rethink Electric stated that the petitioner is looking for an exemption to not build walls. He stated that the panels will not be visible.

Commissioner Desmond questioned how many panels will be installed.

Mr. Lopez stated that there would be approximately 304 panels.

Commissioner Liedtke questioned the installation process. He stated that there are unique conditions and that generally he is not a fan of seeing the panels.

Mr. Lopez stated that the installation is set by Commonwealth Edison.

Commissioner Desmond questioned the stored energy.

Mr. Lopez stated that the energy is used while it is produced.

There was no one else wishing to present public comment and Chairperson Mallers closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Liedtke made a motion and is was seconded by Commissioner Kasprovicz approval of a variation as presented to Section 5A-5-9-8(B)5 of the City Zoning Code requiring non-flush mounted solar panels to be screened at 8131 Lemont Road in Darien, Illinois and that the installation of the panels are invisible to the human eye.

Upon roll call vote, THE MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

OLD BUSINESS

Chairperson Mallers stated that the Carmelite building has solar panels and that he does not remember them coming before the PZC.

Mr. Hennerfeind reported that the City Council voted against the sign at Plainfield and Cass Avenue. He reported that the City is looking into a low brick wall with a water feature and a monument sign for the Dunkin Donuts and Pizzeria.

Mr. Hennerfeind reported that Steak n' Shake is officially closed.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Hennerfeind reported that there is one variation request from ComEd for a tower for their facilities.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Hiatt made a motion and is was seconded by Commissioner Desmond to approve the June 3, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Upon voice vote, THE MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

NEXT MEETING

Mr. Hennerfeind announced that the next meeting is scheduled for July 1, 2020 but that it may be canceled.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (On any topic related to planning and zoning)

There was no one in the audience wishing to present public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Liedtke made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Desmond. Upon voice vote, THE MOTION CARRIED unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

APPROVED:

Elizabeth Lahey
Secretary

Lou Mallers
Chairperson