

MINUTES CITY OF DARIEN

PLANNING, ZONING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

PRESENT: Lou Mallers – Chairperson, Jonathan Christ, Shari Gillespie, Chris Jackson, Jonathan Johnson, Mark Kazich

ABSENT: Chris Green

OTHERS: Ryan Murphy - City Planner

Chairperson Lou Mallers called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. at the Darien Police Department Training Room, 1710 Plainfield Road, Darien, Illinois. Chairperson Mallers declared a quorum present and swore in any audience members wishing to present public testimony.

Regular Meeting – New Business

- a. **PZC-26-1 – 2505 75th Street – Husain Koita – Petition to rezone the 0.97-acre parcel located at 2505 75th Street (PIN: 09-29-301-009) from (R-1) Single Family Residence District to (B-2) Community Shopping Center Business District, and for site plan approval for the construction of a new building approximately 7,000 square feet in size. The proposal includes site improvements for parking, trash enclosures, landscaping and stormwater management.**

Mr. Ryan Murphy, City Planner, stated the petition would rezone the property from R-1 to B-2 and construct a new building. He provided a brief history of the site development, and explained that the area is a key development area bordered by different zoning. He stated that the land use would be a sign shop, which staff determined a by-right use. Mr. Murphy stated that the zoning would require all indoor operations, which the petition would comply with, that pedestrian access would be along 75th Street, there would be a dock loading area in the rear, as well as a trash enclosure. He further stated that staff reviewed the site plan and the engineering review showed it would comply with standards, and that a grading plan and stormwater management plan would be required. Mr. Murphy explained that a fence would be required between zoning districts and that the petitioner stated he would comply with all required landscaping.

Mr. Husain Koita, Koita, Inc. introduced himself, the owner, the architect and the engineer on the project, and thanked the commission for their consideration.

Commissioner Chris Jackson questioned how similar their business model would be to Fast Signs.

The owner stated that it was a different model, that they do all manufacturing.

Commissioner Jackson questioned how business is generated.

The owner stated that signs are ordered online.

Commissioner Jackson questioned what the turnaround is.

The owner stated that they do about 3-5 signs a month, but business is growing and they need a bigger space.

Commissioner Jackson questioned where a delivery truck would go.

The owner stated that they would have one delivery truck that would be parked inside.

There was some clarification regarding the floor plan.

The owner stated that there would be minimal noise because work would be done inside.

Mrs. Grace Kwak, resident abutting the subject property, stated that she had been concerned with the back of the proposed development touching her property, but that all the neighbors were fully in support of the sign shop going in. She stated that the other business properties on each side of the development had no fence, that landscaping separates the businesses from residential. She further stated that the fence had been proposed only at her property line, but was not enclosed and she would prefer it not go in.

Chairperson Mellers questioned if she had been maintaining the landscaping of the subject property.

Mrs. Kwak confirmed that she had been.

Mr. Sergio Lopez, resident abutting the subject property, stated that they should put new trees in as the fence is not functional. He stated that if they do decide to put a fence in, the neighbors would like to decide what it looks like. He questioned who would buy their properties if not segued by trees, and that the proposed fence would be a wall than anyone could walk around.

Commissioner Jackson questioned why Mrs. Kwak had been maintaining the property.

Mrs. Kwak stated that if she didn't, it would be a mess. She stated that she has been mowing, fertilizing and watering about 40 feet of property. She clarified that she would hope to not maintain once the petitioners moved in, and that they should use the money for a fence on more mature trees.

There was some clarification regarding zoning regulations.

Mrs. Kwak stated that they would like the trash enclosure to be placed closer to the building.

Chairperson Mallers clarified that the petitioner had agreed to this request.

Mrs. Kwak stated that if they were to use trees, lighting would not have an impact.

Alderman Eric Gustafson, Ward Six, stated that the business would be a great addition to Darien, and that he did a walk through of their Willowbrook location and it was a great operation. He stated that the biggest issue is with the fence and its lack of purpose, and that the trash should be closer to the building and cameras and lighting should not go into residents' yards. He further stated that the rear doors should stay closed during manufacturing to keep noise to a minimum, but this would make a very nice facility.

Mr. Steve Tonaszek stated that he supported the recommendations of the neighbors, and he asked for the consideration of the commission.

Mr. Koita stated that they were not married to the fence, but wanted to comply with code requirements and would like some privacy. He stated that the owner is open to suggestion with the fence and to moving the trash refuse closer to the property. He further stated that lighting would not be an issue, that it would deflect to not go toward residences. Mr. Koita stated that could not make any promises regarding leave the doors closed all the time, but they would try not to disturb the neighborhood; he stated that they are their neighbors and they want the residents to feel comfortable coming to them with any issues.

Commissioner Jackson stated that the trash enclosure should not be visible from the street. He questioned if the petitioner would put in a variance to not require a fence?

Mr. Koita stated that they would not want to slow the process with more variances.

There was some discussion regarding the variance process.

There was some clarification with the project's engineer regarding the site plan.

There was further discussion regarding the stormwater detention.

Mr. Murphy clarified that Darien-Woodridge had stated the turn radius would be fine.

There was some discussion regarding a tree inventory on the property.

Mr. Murphy stated that Mr. Dan Gombac, Director had been to the property many times and had noted that the landscaping would not be worth saving.

There were some questions regarding the landscaping requirements.

Mr. Murphy stated that the full landscaping plan would be required during the final plan approvals, and that there would be a point system for trees and other landscaping.

Mrs. Kwak questioned what would be approved today.

Mr. Murphy clarified that the plan should be in spirit of what is presented today, but the landscaping and BMPs could change. He stated that the parking and building structure would be approved as presented.

There was some clarification regarding the topography.

Commissioner Jackson commended staff for choosing the B-2 zoning, reiterated that the intent of landscaping would be to provide a buffer, and questioned if the city engineer had provided a traffic memo.

Mr. Murphy stated that the policy would not require trip generation on a non-Darien road, and that County forecasted road use had not shown concern.

There was some clarification regarding the count of parking spaces.

Commissioner Jackson questioned how preliminary the design was.

Mr. Koita stated that they wanted to make sure the site plan would be approved before finalizing design, and that they would continue with design as the process moves along.

Commissioner Kazich made a motion to approve PZC-26-1 – 2505 75th Street – Husain Koita subject to the following condition:

- 1. That the commission or staff consider a final engineering and landscaping plan.**

Without receiving a second, the MOTION FAILED.

Commissioner Jackson explained that this would be a required part of approval, so the commission would not need to revisit it.

Commissioner Jackson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve PZC-26-1 – 2505 75th Street – Husain Koita with the following condition:

- 1. That the dumpster enclosure be relocated to behind the building and closer to the building.**

Upon roll call vote, the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 6-0.

Commissioner Jackson explained that the fence issue would be up to whether or not the petitioner wanted to apply for a variance.

Mr. Murphy stated that the petition would move to the Municipal Services Committee on February 23, 2026.

There was further clarification regarding site plan requirements.

Regular Meeting – Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

Staff Updates & Correspondence

Mr. Murphy stated that there would be potential developments coming in to the city, and that a couple of businesses have closed recently.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Jackson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the February 4, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Upon voice vote, the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 6-0.

Next Meeting

Chairperson Mallers announced that the next meeting is scheduled for March 4, 2026.

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 Jackson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kazich. Upon voice vote, the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, and the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Approved:

X

Jessica Plzak
Secretary

X

Lou Mallers
Chairperson