

MINUTES CITY OF DARIEN

PLANNING, ZONING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, July 17, 2025

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

ABSENT: Jonathan Johnson

OTHERS: Ryan Murphy – City Planner

Chairperson Lou Mallers called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Darien City Hall, 1702 Plainfield Road, Darien, Illinois. Chairperson Mallers declared a quorum present.

Regular Meeting – New Business

- a. **PZC2025-13 – 7800 Cass Avenue – Darien Study Center Inc. – Petition from Darien Study Center Inc. for a variation from Section 5A-9-2-8-B-1(a) of the City Code to permit a concrete patio within the side yard, five feet from the side property line, within the Office (O) District located at 7800 Cass Avenue, Darien IL 60561 (PIN 09-28-410-019).**

Mr. Murphy reported that the petition would be to build a concrete patio within five feet from the side property line at Darien Study Center, which allows for classes, religious assembly and residence for 12 people. He reported that the petitioner would demo a concrete landing on the north side of the building and construct a brick paver patio to be used by the residents. He further reported that trees would be protected with their plan and that additional garden protections would be included. Mr. Murphy presented the proposed landscaping and site photos to the Commission and audience. He reported that he had received no public comments on this item.

Chairperson Mallers swore in the petitioner.

Dr. Sandy Smith stated that the Darien Study Center functions to care for members of opus dei, and one thing they lack is the ability to get their residents outdoors. He stated that patio would be floor-level and would allow those with wheelchairs and walkers to get outside. He further stated that it would be hidden by a fence from the neighbors to the north and that they had not received any complaints. Dr. Smith stated that it would improve drainage in their yard and allow older residents to get outdoors.

Commissioner Gillespie questioned if the flagstone would be okay for wheelchairs and walkers.

Dr. Smith stated that it would be smooth and there would be no issue.

Commissioner Jackson questioned if wheelchairs would be able to get out of the doorway.

Dr. Smith stated that there would be easy accommodations to allow for a smooth exit.

Commissioner Jackson made a motion, and it was seconded by Commissioner Gillespie to approve PZC2025-13 – 7800 Cass Avenue – Darien Study Center Inc. – Petition from Darien Study Center Inc. for a variation from Section 5A-9-2-8-B-1(a) of the City Code to permit a concrete patio within the side yard, five feet from the side property line, within the Office (O) District located at 7800 Cass Avenue, Darien IL 60561 (PIN 09-28-410-019).

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

Mr. Murphy announced that the petition would move to Municipal Services on July 21.

- b. PZC2025-14 – 7516 Cass Avenue – Petition from the City of Darien for a variation from Section 5A-8-3-8-(A)(b) to allow the construction of EV Charging Stations within the corner side yard setback of the Brookhaven Plaza Shopping Center, located in the B-2 Community Shopping Center District at 7516 South Cass Avenue, Darien IL 60561 (PIN 09-28-402-024).**

Mr. Murphy reported that this is a City initiated petition that would allow EV charging in the corner side yard setback of the Brookhaven Plaza Shopping Center. He reported that the City has been making efforts to become EV-ready since 2022 and that grant funding had been explored to build public EV infrastructure. He further reported that several sites had been explored for EV parking and the chosen site would be eligible and would provide safe, visible charging for the public, as well as reduce congestion in the parking lot.

Mr. Murphy displayed a site plan for the Commission and audience to view. He reported that Brookhaven Plaza had applied for a building permit and would be time sensitive due to non-conforming side yard setbacks. He further reported that he had not received any public comment.

Chairperson Mallers confirmed that there would be four charging stations by Walgreens and two by Brookhaven.

Chairperson Mallers swore in the petitioner.

Mr. John Peter Bertakis, representative of Brookhaven Market on behalf of John Manos, stated that he did not know all the details of the development or how the decision was made for location.

Mr. Murphy stated that Mr. Dan Gombac, Director had been at a site meeting with ComEd and there were many moving pieces discussed as to why the parking would be placed in the proposed location.

Mr. Bertakis stated that he understands why it would be beneficial to have EV charging on both ends of the plaza. He stated that the Brookhaven location in Burr Ridge has charging stations that get a lot of use, and that they are fast chargers that would be heavily utilized.

Chairperson Mallers questioned when the construction would start.

Mr. Murphy stated that the building permit had received administrative approval, but there had been an inconsistency in the Zoning Code caught by Staff, which is why it had been brought before the Commission. He stated that the contractors were scheduled and would likely get materials in the next few weeks.

Commissioner Christ questioned if there had been a traffic impact study completed due to the tight corner with heavy traffic.

Mr. Murphy stated that he did not have additional detail, but typically as long as they wouldn't be removing stations it wouldn't impact traffic. He clarified that they would be adding spots to the existing lot.

Commissioner Jackson clarified that it would just be for a parking setback.

Mr. Murphy confirmed and stated that the inconsistency in the Code would define this as parking spaces and although there is not a setback requirement for EV charging stations, there is for parking.

Commissioner Jackson questioned if it is a foot setback from the property line.

Mr. Murphy stated that that was a Staff estimation based on scale drawings provided. He further clarified that the variance would be approved as proposed and would approve essentially a zero setback.

There was some discussion regarding the site plan.

Commissioner Jackson pointed out that they should have wheel stops and safety bollards to protect those on the sidewalk.

There was some clarification regarding the location of the spots.

Commissioner Jackson questioned if this was the best location for the charging stations.

Mr. Bertakis stated that this is the least used corner in the lot and there would be nowhere else to put them on that side of the plaza.

There was some discussion regarding the spacing between the spots.

Mr. Murphy confirmed that the landscape would be preserved.

Commissioner Kazich questioned who would pay the electrical bill.

Mr. Murphy stated that there would be a sizable rebate by the utility and that the stations would be pay-to-use.

There was some discussion regarding how the chargers work.

There was further discussion amongst the Commission regarding any conditions to add to the motion.

Commissioner Jackson made a motion, and it was seconded by Commissioner Gillespie to approve PZC2025-14 – 7516 Cass Avenue – Petition from the City of Darien for a variation from Section 5A-8-3-8-(A)(b) to allow the construction of EV Charging Stations within the corner side yard setback of the Brookhaven Plaza Shopping Center, located in the B-2 Community Shopping Center District at 7516 South Cass Avenue, Darien IL 60561 (PIN 09-28-402-024) with the following conditions:

- 1. That wheel stops be added to the end of each parking stall, and**
- 2. Vehicle protection bollards be added to the middle aisle for vehicle protection of the adjacent sidewalk**

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

Mr. Murphy announced that the petition would move to Municipal Services on July 21.

- c. PZC2025-04 – Text amendments to Title 5A (Zoning Regulations) to update commercial vehicle parking restrictions and overweight vehicle parking restrictions on private property, including overnight parking. (City Initiated)**

Mr. Murphy reported that the Police Department had recently updated their parking regulations in response to several issues that they and Code Enforcement had been dealing with. He reported that these issues have caused a lack of clarity and other issues in court or administrative hearings. He further reported that Staff had added a few new provisions, including a zoning-specific definition of a commercial vehicle, descriptors, and a new vehicle class chart.

Mr. Murphy reported that they kept the existing weight restriction but removed the word “overnight” to better regulate the storage of commercial vehicles. He further reported that this would allow penalties to be consistent for Code Enforcement. He reported that this would only allow the storage of one commercial vehicle outside and one inside.

There was some discussion regarding regulations in home owners’ associations.

Mr. Murphy displayed the added vehicle class chart. He reported that he had received calls from businesses and residents and that they were generally in support of the update.

Commissioner Jackson questioned if it would be for private residential or any private property.

Mr. Murphy stated that it would be any property. He displayed the class chart for the Commission and audience to view.

Commissioner Green questioned if there had been conflicts of inconsistencies with the PD enforcement.

Mr. Murphy stated that there are separate department responsibilities.

Commissioner Gillespie questioned if commercial vehicles were prohibited to be in driveways before.

Mr. Murphy confirmed that they were, but they only had one weight limit listed. He stated that some commercial vehicles would be allowed to park in driveways and the text update would make it clearer to enforce.

Commissioner Christ questioned if the 8,000 pounds would be loaded or unloaded.

Mr. Murphy stated that the current Code does not specify, and the update would specify that it is the registered weight of the vehicle.

There was some discussion regarding resident opinions on commercial vehicles in their neighborhood.

There was further discussion regarding Title 9 regulations.

Mr. Murphy clarified that the issue at hand is better defining weight class to be able to better enforce the Code.

There was some discussion regarding the complaints received by residents.

Commissioner Kazich questioned how they would handle a multi-family residential property when the current definition would only allow one vehicle at the property.

Mr. Murphy stated that the existing regulations are also limited to one and he had not received complaints in the past. He stated that if the Commission were to make recommendations he would include it in his report.

Commissioner Christ clarified that they would be voting on the struck-out text and the added text.

Commissioner Kazich pointed out that there was a run-on sentence in one of the added sections. He offered a correction to the sentence to add as a condition.

It is noted for the record that Commissioner Gillespie left the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

There was some discussion regarding the different classifications of vehicles.

Mr. Murphy stated that they would try to balance the needs of both the business people and the residents.

There was some comparison of our restrictions compared to surrounding municipalities.

There was further discussion regarding better defining regulating commercial vehicles for multi-family residential.

Commissioner Kazich made a motion, and it was seconded by Commissioner Jackson to approve PZC2025-04 – Text amendments to Title 5A (Zoning Regulations) to update commercial vehicle parking restrictions and overweight vehicle parking restrictions on private property, including overnight parking. (City Initiated) with the following conditions:

- 1. To edit section G-3 to state, “It shall be unlawful to park or store or allow to stand more than two (2) commercial vehicles upon any lot or parcel of land, including those stored or parked in a fully enclosed building or structure.”, and**
- 2. The City Planner will review further defining residential parking particularly as it applies to multi-family residences.**

Upon roll call vote, the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5-0.

Mr. Murphy announced that the petition would move to Municipal Services on July 21.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

Staff Updates & Correspondence

Mr. Murphy reported that Chestnut Court would not move forward with the residential portion of the development and are now in discussion with City officials to determine what, if any, improvements they will make to the center.

Mr. Murphy reported that the City would be considering an ordinance to begin the TIF process.

There was some discussion regarding the Commission obtaining more of an education on the TIF process as well as external communications to residents.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Jackson made a motion, and it was seconded by Commissioner Kazich to approve the May 21, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Upon roll call vote, the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5-0.

Next Meeting

Mr. Murphy announced that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 6, 2025.

Public Comments (On Any Topic Related to Planning and Zoning)

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

There was some discussion amongst the Commission regarding the condo development on Plainfield Road and the home located across Indian Prairie Public Library.

Adjournment

With no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Christ made a motion, and it was seconded by Commissioner Kazich. Upon voice vote, the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, and the meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Approved:

X

Jessica Plzak
Secretary

X

Lou Mallers
Chairperson