

MINUTES CITY OF DARIEN

PLANNING, ZONING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

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

ABSENT: Chris Green, Jonathan Johnson, Mark Kazich

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 and swore in any audience member wishing to present public testimony.

Regular Meeting – New Business

- a. **PZC-26-2 – 7511 Lemont Road – Special Use (Darick Ammons) – Petition for the approval of a Special Use Permit for the establishment and operation of a pool hall/amusement use with a full kitchen and bar within the Chestnut Court shopping center located in the B-3 (General Business) zoning district at the southeast corner of 75th Street and Lemont Road, commonly known as 7511 Lemont Road (PINs 09-29-300-008, 09-29-300-022, 09-29-300-023, 09-29-300-024, and 09-29-300-025).**

Mr. Ryan Murphy, City Planner stated that the petition would be for a special use, amusement establishment, and noted that it would be mixed-use zoning, correcting a typo from his report. He stated that the establishment would be located in the Chestnut Court shopping center in the previous XSport Fitness location, and that it would be a pool hall with a full kitchen and bar. He further presented a conceptual floor plan and interior and exterior renderings, stating it would include a craft bar, 2nd floor mezzanine, video gaming and darts. Mr. Murphy stated that the code could not regulate hours of operation, so the proposed may be subject to change. He stated that there had been no formal public comments made, but there had been some chatter on social media regarding the proposal.

Mr. Murphy outlined the responsibilities of the commission. He stated that the business would be well insulated by the design of the shopping center, and reminded the commission that a TIF had been approved last year, but any use of the TIF funds would require approval from the property owner.

Mr. Darick Ammons, petitioner, stated that the project had been a couple years in the works and he was excited to see it presented. He stated that he would like a large, welcoming, well-lit and clean space that would appeal to any generation. He further stated that he noticed the younger generation spending more time at social events like the proposed, and he wanted to create something bigger than just pool, but big for the community as a whole.

Chairperson Mallers questioned if this was the petitioner's first establishment like this.

Mr. Ammons confirmed that it was. He further explained the reason behind the business name 9-Sting.

Commissioner Shari Gillespie questioned if it would be 21 and over.

Mr. Ammons stated that he wanted to work with the local high schools to bring kids in for gym classes, and would be open on Sundays and look at a possible expansion for a younger crowd.

Mr. Murphy noted that Director Dan Gombac had informed him of a question from an alderman regarding minors coming in to the establishment. He stated that they would abide by Illinois law, which would allow minors given certain areas be restricted if consuming alcohol. He further confirmed that they would abide by state law and the liquor license requirements.

Commissioner Chris Jackson questioned what their business model would be.

Mr. Ammons stated that they would have the mezzanine as a membership type place and for private events, that there would be leagues using the space, that they would bring in younger kids for tournaments and classes, and they would bring in a bourbon expert for education.

Chairperson Mallers stated that this was a growing, popular thing, and that Q Bar is used a lot. He stated that this would be the largest vacant space in Chestnut Court, and questioned what other types of entertainment they would have.

Mr. Ammons stated that they would have mocktails, high-end dart boards, shuffleboard, and would overall have a high-end feel.

Commissioner Gillespie questioned what the restaurant would be like.

Mr. Ammons stated that it would be a full restaurant, not bar food. He stated that the gaming part of the establishment would be high tech and the restaurant would still be part of the vibe, but have a more organic feel.

Alderman Eric Gustafson, Ward Six, stated he had been getting calls from residents about kids coming in to the establishment, and he would like to see set times for families to get in for tournaments. He thanked the petitioner for choosing Darien, and stated that he would like to see as many residents included in the experience as possible.

Someone in the audience questioned if there would be pool tables for kids.

Mr. Ammons stated that there is cool technology he would use that would be appealing to kids, and he would want to bring his grandkids in.

Another person in the audience stated that pool would also allow anyone physically disabled or wheelchair bound to play.

Alderman Gustafson questioned if there would be specific tables for those disabled.

Mr. Ammons stated that they wouldn't need them as pool tables are designed for all.

Chairperson Mallers questioned what attracted the petitioner to Darien.

Mr. Ammons stated that the legal gambling drew him in and that the intersection was very busy and accessible.

Chairperson Mallers questioned when he would anticipate opening.

Mr. Ammons stated he had a hard target of August 15th because he would need to bring the leagues in before September 1st.

Commissioner Jackson questioned how people would get up to the second floor.

Mr. Ammons stated that he was looking into getting an elevator.

Commissioner Jackson questioned how his model would differ from Q Bar?

Mr. Ammons stated that he shoots pool there and it is a different vibe altogether. He stated that his business would be world class, higher scale, and have a more relaxed ambiance.

Mr. Murphy stated that when the commission would consider public convenience, they would not be preventing competition.

Mr. Ammons stated that in some ways it would be competition, but mostly it would be meeting a growing demand.

Commissioner Jackson thanked the petitioner for choosing Darien and stated that this business would be an anchor that could catalyze more tenants and create a good mix in the shopping center.

Mr. Murphy stated that the city is in active discussion to bring more businesses in to Chestnut Court, and the first would be important.

Commissioner Jackson questioned if the petitioner would do exterior remodeling.

Mr. Ammons stated that he had proposed an exterior remodel and would want both interior and exterior to be world class.

Commissioner Jackson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie to approve PZC-26-2 – 7511 Lemont Road – Special Use (Darick Ammons) – Petition for the approval of a Special Use Permit for the establishment and operation of a pool hall/amusement use with a full kitchen and bar within the Chestnut Court shopping center located in the B-3 (General Business) zoning district at the southeast corner of 75th Street and Lemont Road, commonly known as 7511 Lemont Road (PINs 09-29-300-008, 09-29-300-022, 09-29-300-023, 09-29-300-024, and 09-29-300-025).

Upon roll call vote, the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 4-0.

Mr. Murphy announced that the petition would move to Municipal Services on March 23.

Regular Meeting – Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

Staff Updates & Correspondence

Mr. Murphy stated that the next meeting would consider a plat subdivision at Home Depot.

He stated that two businesses had submitted formal applications for the former TGIF location.

He stated that they would see another time extension for the drive thru space by Taco Bell.

He stated that the city had been holding weekly meetings with restaurants looking to come into Chestnut Court. He further stated that there would potentially be an additional tenant space available in the shopping center.

He stated that the developer had made progress on the condos on Plainfield and all easements had been secured.

He stated that 2505 75th St would be submitting a variation to remove the fence requirement.

He stated that the gas station on Cass and Frontage would break ground in the spring.

He stated that the commercial vehicle update had been approved with some edits made to the original proposal.

He stated that Al Chile was not in operation and would be trying to sell.

He stated that Rosati's would be applying for a liquor license and would be adding gaming.

Approval of Minutes

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

Commissioner Jackson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie to approve the February 18, 2026 Minutes.

Upon voice vote, the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 4-0.

Next Meeting

Chairperson Mallers announced that the next meeting would be scheduled for March 18, 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 Christ made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Jackson to adjourn. Upon voice vote, the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, and the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Approved:

X

Jessica Plzak
Secretary

X

Lou Mallers
Chairperson