

MINUTES CITY OF DARIEN

PLANNING, ZONING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, July 15, 2026

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

ABSENT: Chris Green, 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, and swore in any audience member wishing to present public testimony.

Regular Meeting – New Business

- a. PZC-26-9 (Variation) – Petition from Bryan Wozny for a variation from Section 5A-7-2-6(A) of the City Code to permit an enclosed patio within the rear yard of 1623 Golfview Drive, Darien, IL 60561 (PIN 09-33-122-028).**

Mr. Ryan Murphy, City Planner, reported that the variation would be for a covered porch on an existing deck north of the golf course. He stated that the deck doesn't comply with the zoning ordinance, but there are other similar properties. He further stated that there were no prior variations found on the property, but it would be legal non-conforming due to the age of the property. Mr. Murphy presented the plat and site plan of the property, and noted that the height of the gabled roof would not be more than 14.5 feet off the ground. He reported that the variation is needed for any future modification that would increase the bulk of the deck. He further reported that the petitioner's house is placed as far up on the setback as it can be, and their justification is primarily reasonable enjoyment of their yard.

Mr. Bryan Wozny stated that he moved into their dream house five years ago, and they had a tree taken down that protected them from the golf balls going to the back of their house. He stated that the whole deck would need to be replaced due to rotting, and that they would utilize the proposed deck to protect them from golf balls and to improve aesthetics.

Commissioner Jonathan Christ questioned if he would rebuild the whole deck.

Mr. Wozny confirmed that they would due to rotting, but it would be the same footprint.

Mr. Murphy stated that they would be able to replace the deck as long as it didn't make the encroachment worse.

Commissioner Chris Jackson questioned if there was any significance to the height mentioned.

Mr. Murphy stated that it was mentioned for the purpose of development standards.

Commissioner Jackson questioned if the golf course had any comments.

Mr. Murphy stated that there had been a public notice, but no comments had been received.

Commissioner Christ clarified that there would be no restrictions with the golf course.

Mr. Murphy confirmed that there were not.

There was some discussion regarding damage to the homes on the golf course.

Commissioner Christ questioned if it would be a screen.

Mr. Wozny confirmed that it would be a screen from the top of it to the deck, and there would have to be a railing due to code requirements.

Commissioner Gillespie made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Jackson to approve PZC-26-9 (Variation) – Petition from Bryan Wozny for a variation from Section 5A-7-2-6(A) of the City Code to permit an enclosed patio within the rear yard of 1623 Golfview Drive, Darien, IL 60561 (PIN 09-33-122-028).

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

Mr. Murphy explained the next steps to the petitioner.

- b. PZC-26-11 (Variation) – Petition from Cynthia Haney for a variation from Section 5A-5-11(A) of the City Code to permit a recreational vehicle within the front yard of 1008 Juniper Lane, Darien IL 60561 (PIN 09-27-308-015).**

Mr. Murphy reported that the house was constructed in 1959 and has diagonal plotting. He reported that code enforcement contacted the homeowner in May, and after discussing their options, the homeowner resolved to request a variation to keep the RV in its current location. He further reported that this is the first of its kind for Darien. Mr. Murphy displayed the plat and photo of the subject property, and stated that the justification included the mature landscaping in the yard. He stated that there had been one public comment that supported the neighbor, and another that took a neutral stance.

Ms. Cynthia Haney stated that her family bought the house in 1967, and she purchased it from her father in 2019. She stated that the way the house sits on the lot, if she were to take down or alter the pine tree, the RV would be more exposed to her neighbor than it currently is.

Commissioner Shari Gillespie questioned if there was room on either side of the house.

Ms. Haney stated that because of the angle, it would be more exposed to the street, and she would not be able to put it on the Warwick side.

Commissioner Jackson questioned what would be compliant on a corner side yard.

Mr. Murphy stated that it would have to be an interior side or rear lot. He pointed on a photo where the RV would be permitted on her lot.

Commissioner Jackson questioned if the petition was due to a citation.

Mr. Murphy stated that it was due to a notice of violation, and that recent ordinance updates had prompted the code enforcement officer to make note of it in a drive-by. He clarified that it was observed, not due to a complaint.

Commissioner Gillespie questioned if it would be a permanent spot for the RV or if it would be just for the summer.

Ms. Haney stated that it would be permanent, that she is a single parent that can't afford to store her RV elsewhere. She stated that she is in Darien because she doesn't have an HOA, and many arguments about recreational vehicles are based on opinion. She further stated that if people want specific restrictions in their neighborhood, they should live somewhere with an HOA. Ms. Haney stated that she would not like to remove the trees in her yard, that it blocks the RV from her neighbor's view. She stated that she hopes the variation is considered, and not based on someone's personal opinion on camping.

Chairperson Mallers stated that he drove by the property and noticed that the RV stood out from the street. He questioned is there would be room to move it back from where it is now, or if she could put it on the side yard.

Ms. Haney stated that the RV was as close to her garage as it could be, and she would have to take down the mature tree in order to do so.

Chairperson Mallers questioned if this would set a precedence for RVs if approved.

Mr. Murphy stated that it would depend on what the findings were based on, and that a variation is very site-specific. He stated it would be based on the justification Ms. Haney provided and the facts in this case, that it would pertain to this particular property.

Commissioner Jackson clarified that for precedence, they would have to have identical situations. He questioned if other residents who have received the same violation have complied.

Mr. Murphy confirmed that over the years, people have complied by placing the vehicle in the side yard or elsewhere.

Commissioner Jackson questioned if they would need screening in the compliant location.

Mr. Murphy stated that there were no screening requirements, only setback requirements.

Commissioner Jackson questioned if the petitioner had any comments on the public comment letter.

Ms. Haney stated that the variation shouldn't be based on someone's opinion.

There was some discussion regarding the specifics of the RV.

Mr. Murphy stated that staff recommended that should the Commission approve the variation, they should limit it to the length of the RV.

Ms. Haney stated that 30 feet would be reasonable, and she would understand a contingency based on if something happens to the pine tree.

Mr. Murphy stated that the setback to the right of way is about 34 feet.

Commissioner Jackson clarified that there is no sidewalk at the property.

Chairperson Mallers questioned if there would be enough room for the RV to back up if she trimmed back the pine tree.

Ms. Haney stated that she would not want to mess with the mature landscaping.

Commissioner Jackson stated that the trees are currently serving a purpose, but if they go away, they'd lose the screening.

There was some clarification regarding the RV ordinance.

Mr. Murphy stated that they could require the landscaping remain in place or be replaced if damaged.

Chairperson Mallers questioned if the property could be grandfathered in given the age of the home.

Mr. Murphy stated that he had discussed this with the petitioner, and that if they had a photo showing they owned an RV in the past, it would be allowed.

Ms. Haney stated that her father did have a trailer or RV, but there are no photos.

Commissioner Mark Kazich stated that if the request was for seasonal parking, he would be more lenient.

Commissioner Jackson questioned if financial hardship is a justification.

Mr. Murphy stated it is called out as one that should not be used.

Commissioner Kazich made a motion which did not receive a second, prompting further discussion.

Commissioner Jackson stated that he saw some merit to the justification, but also saw an issue with precedence. He questioned if there was a discussion regarding compliance.

Mr. Murphy stated that there was a discussion, and it would require the installation of paving and alteration to the mature landscaping.

There was some clarification as to what qualifies as paving.

Commissioner Christ stated his main concern would be with the precedent.

Commissioner Kazich made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Jackson to approve PZC-26-11 (Variation) – Petition from Cynthia Haney for a variation from Section 5A-5-11(A) of the City Code to permit a recreational vehicle within the front yard of 1008 Juniper Lane, Darien IL 60561 (PIN 09-27-308-015).

Upon roll call vote, the MOTION FAILED 0-4-1.

AYES: None

NAYS: Mellers, Gillespie, Kazich, Christ

ABSTENTION: Jackson

ABSENT: Green, Johnson

Mr. Murphy explained the next steps to the petitioner.

- c. PZC-26-13 (Final Plat of Subdivision – 2201 75th Street, Dutch Bros) – Petition from Manhard Consulting, Ltd. c/o RCG-Darien PM LLC for approval of a final plat of subdivision to subdivide the former TGI Friday's lot located at 2201 75th Street (PIN 09-29-400-026) into two lots to accommodate the approved Dutch Bros and Andy's Frozen Custard developments.**

Mr. Murphy reported that this was a recently approved project in May to amend a PUD at the Walmart Center. He reported that the building and engineering plans had been approved, but prior to issuing permits the final plat would need approval. He stated that the bar for reviewing is substantial conformance, and that the unknown engineering details had been addressed by the city engineer.

Commissioner Jackson stated that this plan shows the easement, but it appears the date was not updated.

Mr. Murphy stated that the packet included the original drawing, and that the revised drawing made a blanket statement for the public utility easement.

Commissioner Jackson clarified that the easement had been added, but they forgot to change the date.

Mr. Murphy confirmed that they have the up-to-date drawing.

Commissioner Jackson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie to approve PZC-26-13 (Final Plat of Subdivision – 2201 75th Street, Dutch Bros) – Petition from Manhard Consulting, Ltd. c/o RCG-Darien PM LLC for approval of a final plat of subdivision to subdivide the former TGI Friday's lot located at 2201 75th Street (PIN 09-29-400-026) into two lots to accommodate the approved Dutch Bros and Andy's Frozen Custard developments with the following condition:

- 1. That the easement recommended by Christopher Burke appears on the final plat.**

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

Regular Meeting – Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

Staff Updates & Correspondence

Mr. Murphy reported that Chestnut Court had signed an agreement with Autozone where the Chinese restaurant had been.

He reported that signs for 9-Sting had been put up, and that interior demo plans would be approved soon.

He reported that they had received a building permit for the demo of the white house on the Carmelite campus.

d. Discussion/review of comparable jurisdictions RE: electronic messaging centers

Mr. Murphy reported that the electronic messaging center for Culver's would go to City Council. He reported that the motion would ask the council to authorize research to amend the sign code. Mr. Murphy presented a comparison of sign restrictions in Woodridge, Downers Grove, Westmont, and Bolingbrook.

Commissioner Christ made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Jackson to request staff to seek City Council authorization to research and prepare amendments to the sign code allowing electronic message centers.

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

Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes to approve.

Next Meeting

Mr. Murphy announced that the next meeting would be scheduled for August 5, 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 to adjourn. Upon voice vote, the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, and the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Approved:

X

Jessica Plzak
Secretary

X

Lou Mallers
Chairperson