

MINUTES CITY OF DARIEN

PLANNING, ZONING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

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

ABSENT: None

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 members wishing to present public testimony.

Regular Meeting – New Business

- a. PZC2025-17 – 1535 N. Frontage Road – Nerijus Ceponas – Petition for a variation from Section 5A-5-9-5 to allow for the construction of an accessory structure (garage) exceeding 800 square feet in size on the property located in the (O) Office Zoning District at 1535 North Frontage Road, Darien IL 60561.**

Mr. Ryan Murphy, Senior Planner reported that the petition would request a variation for an accessory structure exceeding 800 square feet. He reported that the increase in size would allow for more indoor storage for larger vehicles and that there would be no land-use changes. Mr. Murphy further reported that flood hazard areas are outside the limits of the structure and that the City Engineer stated that a grading plan may be required.

Mr. Nerijus Ceponas stated that he would like to increase the size of the garage for storage which would help his business.

Commissioner Jonathan Christ questioned if the petitioner had worked on the grading.

Mr. Ceponas stated that he had an engineer to work on it.

Commissioner Chris Jackson questioned what the purpose of the porch on the front of the plans were.

Mr. Ceponas stated that it would be for aesthetic purposes.

Commissioner Kazich made a motion, and it was seconded by Commissioner Gillespie to approve PZC2025-17 – 1535 N. Frontage Road – Nerijus Ceponas – Petition for a variation

from Section 5A-5-9-5 to allow for the construction of an accessory structure (garage) exceeding 800 square feet in size on the property located in the (O) Office Zoning District at 1535 North Frontage Road, Darien IL 60561 subject to the following condition:

- 1. That the petitioner submits a grading plan.**

Upon roll call vote, the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7-0.

Mr. Murphy announced that the petition would move forward to the Municipal Services Committee meeting on October 27, 2025.

- b. PZC2025-15 – 6811 Fairview Ave – Patrick Sullivan – Petition for annexation and a plat of subdivision to divide the existing 1.4-ac (61,000 sf) parcel into three lots, for the property at 6811 Fairview Avenue, Downers Grove, IL 60516.**

Mr. Murphy reported that in advance of the final plans being considered, the petitioner had called for a public hearing, so the Planning and Zoning Commission could review, comment or make a recommendation on the proposed plat design. He reported that there would be at least two other public hearings required for this item.

Mr. Murphy reported that the first lot would front Fairview Avenue and lots two and three would connect to the existing DiCosola Court cul-de-sac. He noted that the accessory structure on lot two is an existing garage that may remain or be removed depending on the petitioner. Mr. Murphy reported that upon plan review, staff noted that the street and utility should be extended in accordance with state requirements as well as provide further drainage study. He further reported that the petitioner had conducted outreach prior to publication, and that he had received five public comments prior to and three after publication, which generally disapprove the design.

Attorney Matthew Claes, petitioner attorney, stated that the accessory structure would not be a material component within their plan, and they would be amenable to some provision within the annexation agreement that would move or remove it within a certain time frame. He stated that Mr. Sullivan's property is bordered between the DiCosola Court subdivision and other unincorporated subdivisions, with Darien Club to the south.

Attorney Claes stated that he and the petitioner had met with Mr. Murphy and Director Gombac to determine the city's input and concerns, and that it was clear that the easement in their initial plans was inconsistent with the city's comprehensive plan. He stated that Mr. Sullivan had amended his plan to include a right-of-way to extend the road in the future, which he considers a significant concession and major contribution.

Attorney Claes stated that one of the first concerns shared during the design process was drainage, which Mr. Sullivan feels confident he can demonstrate sufficient natural drainage using best management practices. He stated that the snow removal would not present a greater challenge to the municipality than any other cul-de-sac. He further stated that the

petitioner's driveway design would be in keeping with the other drives on DiCosola Court, and that the petitioner felt the extension of DiCosola Court would place an unreasonable burden on him.

Chairperson Mallers questioned if Mr. Sullivan would be part of the HOA.

Mr. Murphy stated that staff review determined the city cannot require a property owner to annex into an HOA.

Chairperson Mallers stated that the drainage was the biggest concern for residents.

Attorney Claes stated that their engineer would be willing to discuss best management practices.

Mr. Ron Mitra, DiCosola Court HOA president, stated that he represents the homes most impacted by the proposed development. He stated that the proposal raises several concerns including lowered property values, drainage, safety, emergency vehicle access and parking. He further stated that the three driveways would need to fit in a span of 66 feet, and that the area is too small to do so. Mr. Mitra stated that the proposed driveways would cross in front of existing homes which would lower property values and aesthetic.

Mr. Mitra reiterated some of the comments made by the city engineer, all of which the HOA agrees with. He stated that the city stated the importance of stormwater drainage in their latest newsletter, and that the HOA feels that stormwater management studies are critical for the proposed development given the current drainage issues in the area. Mr. Mitra stated that without drainage improvements, the proposed development would only exacerbate the issues. He further stated that the existing homeowners and City of Darien would bear the cost to further issues caused by drainage issues. He requested that the Commission and staff review the comments made by the HOA and take that into account for their decision.

Chairperson Mallers questioned if there would be anything the developer could do to help the HOA.

Mr. Mitra stated that the suggestions that the city made to their original proposal, which would include corrections being made to their temporary cul-de-sac and easements to make the properties whole, as well as extend the sewers and anything else to make it right.

Chairperson Mallers mentioned meeting in middle between the two requests.

Mr. Mitra stated that there was no opposition to development, but there was an opposition to the way the development is being proposed.

Commissioner Jackson questioned what the large vacant lot was.

Mr. Mitra stated that the lot is intended for retention.

Commissioner Jackson clarified that the retention lot works.

There was some discussion regarding the direction of the drainage.

Commissioner Christ questioned what the standard is for plowing cul-de-sacs.

Mr. Murphy stated that Director Gombac stated it would be serviceable but would have to get creative for snow placement.

There was some discussion coming from the audience.

Commissioner Shari Gillespie questioned if the houses proposed would be the same as the existing houses.

Mr. Mitra stated that the HOA would require houses to be brick and that there had been no confirmation as to whether the proposed houses would be built the same.

Chairperson Mallers questioned if the garage structure would be livable.

Mr. Leonard Canino, DiCosola Court resident, reiterated that they did not have a concern with the annexation, subdivision or development, but did have a concern with the plan itself, primarily the driveways. He stated that Mr. Sullivan's proposal would shoehorn in two driveways in a 66-foot frontage, which they feel would greatly reduce property values. He further stated that this lot is currently mostly permeable land and that the runoff would not be the same when hard structures are laid down. Mr. Canino stated that the current runoff water flows into a pond that overflows into Sweetbriar Lane. He stated that this won't work unless there is some change to the plan, and that they would not be opposed to Mr. Sullivan directing the water to their retention area, which would mean the proposed homes would have to belong to the HOA.

Mr. Canino stated that there is currently enough space in the cul-de-sac for four to five cars to park, but with his plan for the driveways, there would be barely enough room for two cars. He stated that delivery trucks, landscaping trucks, and the fire department would have difficulty accessing them. He further stated that the snow removal won't work with two new homes because there would be nowhere to put the snow. Mr. Canino stated that the homeowners think the cul-de-sac needs to be extended because they have lost some of their property and are incurring costs that should come from the developer.

Ms. Jan Avery stated that there was a major flood issue already across Fairview. She stated that they had brought the issue to DuPage County before and wanted to raise a flag before the development adds to the issue.

Chairperson Mallers again questioned what the petitioner would do with the existing garage structure.

Mr. Patrick Sullivan stated that it would either be taken down or moved.

Chairperson Mallers questioned if there would be anything the petitioner would do to compromise with the residents.

Mr. Kevin Chaffin, petitioner civil engineer, stated that they are not here for site plan approval, but they have looked at extending services. He stated that Downers Grove Sanitary District does not want the mains extended. He further stated that the plan is to dedicate the 66 feet, so the frontage would be 100 feet and would connect to the driveways on the cul-de-sac.

Commissioner Mark Kazich recited a statement from their justification narrative and questioned if the well and septic would be nearing the end of its life.

Attorney Claes stated that there is no decline in the existing services, it is just a preference.

Mr. Sullivan stated that if the subdivision were to be allowed, a septic system would likely not be allowed by Darien.

Commissioner Kazich questioned why he would annex now.

Mr. Sullivan stated that they felt they should be on the sewer if they are brought into the city.

Commissioner Kazich questioned if the petitioner had spoken to the owners to the south.

Ms. Marie Becker stated that her and her husband own the three parcels to the south and that they have no issue with the development.

Attorney Claes stated that they would address all objective concerns, with the drainage being the top concern.

Chairperson Mallers closed the conversation to the public.

Commissioner Jonathan Johnson stated that there were issues with drainage, decrease in property value, and that he was not sure how they would fit the cul-de-sac in. He suggested a continuance to further the discussion.

Commissioner Jackson requested clarification on what they would be reviewing.

Mr. Murphy explained the order of events and stated that tonight they would be providing feedback on the preliminary plat in order for the petitioner to move forward with planning. He further clarified that the request tonight would not include annexation, only preliminary plat review.

Commissioner Chris Green reiterated that the most important thing to discuss was the concept plat.

There was some discussion regarding the possible motions on the petition.

Commissioner Jackson stated that the issues would need to be addressed for the petitioner to re-evaluate.

There was further discussion regarding a continuance to the petition.

Commissioner Jackson suggested requiring a preliminary stormwater management review. He stated that they should implement #1 and #6 from Christopher Burke's letter.

Commissioner Jackson made a motion, and it was seconded by Commissioner Gillespie to continue PZC2025-15 – 6811 Fairview Ave – Patrick Sullivan – Petition for annexation and a plat of subdivision to divide the existing 1.4-ac (61,000 sf) parcel into three lots, for the property at 6811 Fairview Avenue, Downers Grove, IL 60516 at the November 19, 2025 Planning, Zoning and Economic Development meeting with the following conditions:

- 1. That the cul-de-sac be extended south as originally intended,**
- 2. And that a new evaluation of net new impervious area included to determine what stormwater improvements will be required, including the street extension.**

Upon roll call vote, the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7-0.

Mr. Murphy announced that the petition would continue at the November 19, 2025 Planning, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee meeting.

Regular Meeting – Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

Staff Updates & Correspondence

- a. Year-to-Date Summary of PZC Decisions – Overview and update on planning cases/decisions made by the Commission to-date.**

The results of the items from this year-to-date were as follows:

- Smoke Bank – withdrawn
- Cass drive-thru – still valid
- Short-term rental – currently in use
- Plainfield condos – currently in plan review
- Richmond lot split – withdrawn
- Grandview fence – completed
- Green Valley fence – completed
- Planet Fitness – plans approved
- Darien Lane parking – completed
- Commercial vehicle – pending
- Brookhaven EV chargers – under construction
- Dunkin mural – completed

Mr. Murphy further reported that the TIF had been approved in September for the Chestnut Court Shopping Center.

Approval of Minutes

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

Commissioner Jackson made a motion, and it was seconded by Commissioner Gillespie to approve the August 20, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Upon voice vote, the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7-0.

Next Meeting

Chairperson Mallers announced that the next meeting would be scheduled for November 5, 2025.

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 Gillespie made a motion, and it was seconded by Commissioner Kazich to adjourn. Upon voice vote, the MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, and the meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Approved:

X

Jessica Plzak
Secretary

X

Lou Mallers
Chairperson