The Planning and Zoning Commission held a Meeting on August 7, 2019, at the City of DeKalb Municipal Building, 200 South Fourth Street, DeKalb, Illinois. Chair Christina Doe called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

A. ROLL CALL

Recording Secretary Christine Wang called the roll. Planning and Zoning Commission members present were Chair Christina Doe, Katharina Barbe, Vicki Buckley, David Castro, and Ron Klein. Commissioners Max Maxwell and Jerry Wright were absent.

City staff present were Principal Planner Dan Olson and Recording Secretary Christine Wang.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (Additions/Deletions)

Chair Christina Doe requested a motion to approve the August 7, 2019, agenda as presented. Ms. Barbe motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Buckley seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

July 3, 2019 – Mr. Castro motioned to approve the minutes, Mr. Klein seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

July 17, 2019 – Ms. Buckley motioned to approve the minutes, Ms. Barbe seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Open Floor to Anyone Wishing to Speak on Record)

None

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. Public Hearing (continued from July 27, 2019 meeting) – Petition by 1704 Sycamore LLC, represented by Daniel Damaschke, for a rezoning from the ‘GC” General Commercial District to the “PD-C” Planned Development Commercial District for a 1.61 acre site to allow for a video gaming establishment. The petition also requests allowance of a video gaming establishment to be located within 500 feet of another video gaming establishment and to allow a Planned Development on less than two acres.
Principal Planner Olson advised Commission members the applicant had withdrawn its petition and no further action was required.

2. **Public Hearing** – Petition by PNG Development LLC, represented by John Pappas, requesting a rezoning from the “LI” Light Industrial District to the “PD-C” Planned Development Commercial District for an approximate 2.9 acre site located along the east side of North 4th Street between Oak Street and Locust Street, commonly known as the Mooney property. The applicant is requesting approval of the rezoning in order to allow for the development of 94 apartment units and approximately 12,000 square feet of commercial space in a 4-story building to be called Agora Tower. Waivers to the Unified Development Ordinance are requested for maximum site coverage, off-street parking and other approvals as required for the subject property to allow for the construction as proposed and indicated on the development plans.

Mr. Jeff Lewis, attorney with Klein, Stoddard, Buck and Lewis in Sycamore, introduced himself to the Commission as the representative for PNG Development LLC. He added that Mr. John Pappas, the manager of PNG Development LLC, was present to address any additional questions by the Commission. Mr. Lewis provided background on the property formerly known as the Mooney property and they will be requesting PD-C Planned Development Commercial zoning. He noted the intent is to raze the existing structure, construct a new 4-story building at the corner of 4th Street and East Locust Street with residential units on the upper floors and commercial space on the ground level. He said there would be 94 total apartment units with half 1-bedroom units and the other half 2-bedroom. He referenced the rendering of the proposed building and commented on its similarity to the Cornerstone project, which has experienced success in leasing their residential and commercial space. Mr. Lewis provided members with information as to the anticipated type of tenants for the project, and the appropriateness of the facility within the neighborhood. Mr. Lewis advised members there was a marketing plan already in the works to bring in good commercial tenants to compliment the residential units. He described the benefits of the project for the City regarding removing an older building and noted prior attempts to make the current facility functional. He advised there were agreements with the necessary utility companies regarding the removal of utility poles and wires and cleaning up the environmental issues on-site. Mr. Lewis stated he believed the redevelopment of this property would be a nice compliment to the surrounding area.

Principal Planner Olson referred to the staff report dated July 31, 2019, that was provided in the Commission’s packets. He commented on the modifications implemented as a result of the Commission’s and staff comments during the prior conceptual plan review, and how the project addressed and met numerous aspects of the City’s 2007 Downtown Revitalization Plan, the 2011 Downtown Design Guidelines, and the 2013 DeKalb City Center Plan. He noted the previous plan had shown two buildings in the middle of the site and now shows one building at
the corner of North 4th Street and East Locust Street. Principal Planner Olson also reviewed the parking aspect of the project and the justification of a waiver for parking. He provided an overview of the environmental concerns on the property and remediation recommendations that were provided along with landscaping requirements and exceptions to the PD-C District Regulations. He continued with his review covering the Standards for Zoning Map Amendments along with Standards for Planned Developments per the UDO. He then completed his overview of the staff report by covering the public input provided so far.

Chair Doe gave the public an opportunity to speak. There were none. Chair Doe closed the public hearing. Chair Doe asked if the Commissioners had any more questions or comments.

Ms. Buckley advised she liked the new site layout as it flowed better than the previous one. She liked the incorporation of the 2-bedroom units and the demand for such a product had perhaps not yet been seen before. She stated the project would be a great addition to the downtown.

Mr. Castro inquired as to the difference between the two companies, PNG Development and Pappas Development. Mr. Lewis advised the entities were two different companies, and that PNG Development had been formed to address the acquisition of the property for this project. He continued by stating Pappas Development is a separate company which was essentially hired by PNG Development as the contractor on the project. Mr. Castro inquired as to whether PNG Development would be the ultimate owner of the project and Mr. Lewis confirmed they would be. Mr. Castro proceeded in addressing Principal Planner Olson’s comments regarding the contamination on the property caused by a previous gas station and how the responsibility is assigned when the contaminated property is abandoned. Principal Planner Olson shared that while he was not aware of all the regulations from the State regarding contamination, he did state when gas tanks leak, they are required to be replaced under State law. Mr. Castro commented on the situation wherein someone has to be responsible for cleaning up the contamination. Principal Planner Olson responded by stating the developer is proposing to clean it up and meet the ILEPA standards, which was part of the TIF funding approval.

Mr. Castro addressed the issue of parking, stating he doesn’t believe there is a problem at the present time, but one may occur in the future. He commented that while looking at the maps there is a parking lot just north of the DeKalb Library that belongs to a Catholic church and he wondered if an agreement could be reached between the City and the church to allow people to use that parking lot for the future. Mr. Castro continued by referencing a current parking use agreement between a nearby funeral home and the DeKalb Library and suggested this could occur with this development. He then offered his thanks to Principal Planner Olson for the staff report explanation of the parking concerns noted by the Executive Director of the DeKalb Library. Mr. Castro noted he had a tour of the Cornerstone
building with Mr. Pappas on July 26th and mentioned their resulting conversation regarding the business model and the idea of sustainability for the project. He shared his concern about the project and wants to ensure that 20 years from now the project continues to be successful. He shared that he was willing to take the risk to provide a yes vote for this project and was willing to address any opinions or comments from the members of the Commission.

Chair Doe advised she felt she had a unique side that the other members didn’t have in light of her employment with NIU where she receives phone calls from individuals asking about apartment complexes to rent from. She offered her perspective on the developing pattern of young individuals who are not yet ready to invest in a home and who are not sure if they will be in the area for 3-5 years. She added they are interested in renting a higher-end apartment where multiple amenities are offered. She said the current market is supportive of the type of development proposed by the applicant.

Mr. Klein advised members he would not be participating in any discussion as he and Mr. Lewis were partners in the same law office and did not want any appearance of impropriety or conflict of interest and therefore would be abstaining from voting on this item.

Ms. Barbe mentioned she liked the new plan much better and was sad the green space between the buildings was gone but understands the compromises that are needed. She also shared she would like to see an outdoor restaurant with seating on the site and not just parking. She stated the proposed development would be an asset to the City.

Ms. Buckley inquired about the project timeline. Mr. Pappas responded by noting upon approval he would proceed with the EPA remediation items, raze the building by the end of 2019 and then start construction in the Spring of 2020. He said the estimated timeline would be a year and a half to two years from start to finish.

Mr. Pappas then provided members with comments relating to some of the history of rental housing in the City and his perspective on what the future requirements are for sustainable properties. He said there is a trend to more one- and two-bedroom units instead of four to five-bedroom units. He noted the success of the Cornerstone project and mentioned the variety of backgrounds (e.g. singles, retirees, young professionals, grad students) of the residents.

Ms. Buckley made a motion that, based upon the submitted petition and testimony presented, the Planning and Zoning Commission forward its findings of fact and recommend to the City Council approval of a Zoning Map Amendment from the “LI” Light Industrial District to the “PD-C” Planned Development Commercial District, exceptions to the UDO regarding site coverage, landscaping and parking for a Planned Development and approval of a Planned Development Preliminary and Final Plan as listed in Exhibit A of the staff report for the subject site located
along the east side of North 4th Street between Locust Street and Oak Street, with addresses of 204 North 4th Street and 420 Oak Street subject to the standards listed in Exhibit B of the staff report and subject to the staff comments listed in Exhibit C of the staff report. The motion was seconded by Ms. Barbe.

A roll call vote was taken. Ms. Buckley – yes, Mr. Castro – yes, Mr. Klein – abstain, Ms. Barbe – yes, Chair Doe – yes. Motion passes 4-0-2 with one abstention. Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Wright were absent.

3. **Public Hearing** – Petition by Mobilitie, represented by Mark O’Brien, for a special use permit for a 10-foot tall cell antenna to be located on top of the building at 100 West Lincoln Highway (Walgreens)

Principal Planner Olson advised members that since the agenda had been posted, the applicant had requested the hearing be continued. He said the applicant is evaluating the design of the cell antenna and would like more time and may be revising the drawings. He requested a motion from the Commission to continue the hearing to Wednesday, September 4th, at 6:00 PM in the City Council Chambers.

Mr. Klein made a motion to continue the hearing to Wednesday, September 4, 2019, at 6:00 PM in the City Council Chambers as requested. Seconded by Mr. Castro.

Motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

F. **REPORTS**

Principal Planner Olson mentioned the next Planning and Zoning Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 21st, however no hearings are scheduled. He advised members the meeting would likely be cancelled, with a notice being sent to members the week before. He said at the July 22nd City Council meeting, the Council approved the Park 88 amendments previously reviewed by the Commission. Mr. Olson also advised members this was the last meeting for Recording Secretary Christine Wang as she was moving on to law school. He offered his thanks for her efforts, provided her with a card and an emblem from the City and wished her the best. Chair Doe also thanked Ms. Wang for all her efforts and commented on the great job she had done taking the minutes for the Commission.

G. **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Buckley motioned to adjourn, Ms. Barbe seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 6:49 PM.
Minutes were approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission on October 9, 2019.