

**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MINUTES
January 23, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairperson (Ch.) Michael McCann called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Ms. Eberhardt, Mr. Frost, Mr. Maier, Mr. Steffes, Mr. Foernssler,
Ch. McCann

Absent: Mr. Werner

A quorum was established.

Staff: Jason Zawila, Planning Manager
Flora Ramirez, Village Planner

Also present: Gary Colby, Ashley Furniture

MEETING PROCEDURES:

Ch. McCann asked those in attendance to silence their phones for the duration of the meeting. He then reviewed the procedures to be followed during the public hearing, noting that there was one petition before the Board for consideration, the second petition having been withdrawn. He verified with staff that the proper notifications had been made regarding posting of the petition, and noted that members of the Zoning Board of Appeals have had an opportunity to review the materials provided by staff and in some cases have visited the site in question. In order for a requested variation to be approved there must be a majority of four votes in favor of approval. Ch. McCann called upon anyone intending to speak before the Board on the Agenda item to rise and be sworn in, as the public information portion of the meeting is an evidentiary hearing and comments made during this portion of the meeting are considered testimony. He explained that staff would make its presentation first, followed by comments by the petitioner. If anyone in the audience wishes to speak either in favor of or in opposition to the petition, they would have the opportunity to do so following the petitioner's presentation. When the public participation portion of the meeting is closed, the Board will deliberate on the information provided and vote to either approve or deny the petition.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Nov. 28, 2018

A Motion was made by Mr. Foernssler and seconded by Mr. Steffes to accept the minutes as presented.

AYES: Mr. Foernssler, Mr. Steffes, Ms. Eberhardt, Mr. Frost, Mr. Maier,
Ch. McCann

NAYS: None

The Motion carried 6:0.

18-ZBA-0009: A petition seeking a variation for the location of a wall sign along the Tollway. The property is currently zoned B-3, General Services and Highway Business. The property is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Butterfield Road and Highland Avenue, just north of the Ronald Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), commonly known as 2900 Highland Avenue (PIN 06-29-302-004). Jones Sign c/o Kathleen Corvin, Petitioner, and Chicago 101, LLC, Owner.

Staff Presentation:

Village Planner Flora Ramirez stated that the petitioner is requesting a sign variation to permit 482.53 square feet of signage where 300 square feet is permitted, in lieu of installing a 225 square foot tollway monument sign. She displayed a location map of the property, which is zoned B-3. Ms. Ramirez indicated that the property is southwest of the intersection of Butterfield Road and Highland Avenue. She showed a slide of the site plan and existing signage at the location. There are two multi-tenant panels measuring about 73 square feet, which is not included in the total amount of signage square footage allowed to the tenant. It can be considered as “bonus” signage. There presently is a north façade wall sign facing Butterfield Road, as well as a wall sign facing the Tollway totaling 260 square feet for the two wall signs. The existing wall sign facing the Tollway will be removed and remounted to the eastern façade of the building. She noted that the south facade will have a new sign measuring 225.97 square feet. The total signage then would be 482.53 square feet, with 300 square feet allowed. However, since the property is by the tollway, the petitioner is proposing the wall sign in lieu of the allowed monument sign.

Ms. Ramirez outlined the criteria for approval of the variation, stressing the hardship the petitioner has expressed. The hardship is unique to this location as there is a notable grade variation of about 8 feet, in addition to the existence of dense vegetation lowering the visibility of any signage at that location. In addition there is a 9’ easement on the edge of the lot that would require setting any monument signage back further.

Based on the analysis, staff does recommend approval of the requested variation subject to the conditions listed on page five of staff’s report dated January 23, 2019. She noted a correction to staff’s report on page five, the first line stating the words “sign location” should be removed so that the phrase reads “criteria for granting variation,” and the words “sign location” at the beginning of condition one should also be removed.

Ch. McCann asked if the petitioner is in conformance right now, and Ms. Ramirez said they were. She added that the wall signage was part of a Planned Unit Development amendment to include additional square footage for signage.

In further clarification, Ms. Ramirez was asked if a standalone sign was put on the Tollway sign whether it would be setback to the property line. She replied that there should be no permanent structures on the utility easements. With regard to the position of the monument sign, Mr. Zawila added that it would be in the grass area near the parking lots due to the Nicor easements. He noted it is difficult to see the existing sign from the highway.

Petitioner’s Statement

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Gary Colby of Ashley Furniture said he was present to answer any questions. Ashley Furniture believes it would be ineffective for them to put up a Tollway monument sign, and they are searching out other ways to effectively “sign” their property for I-88. They want to transfer the square footage from the allowed Tollway monument sign to their building. He said that he has done this across the country for Ashley as there are many communities trying to avoid the number of monument signage poles along the highways. He referenced the photos shown from the Tollway area noting there exists an obvious grade change and a tree line. In order to position the monument sign from the other side of the tree line, they would have to request an increase in height for a monument sign to increase their visibility. They believe, however, that this petition is the most effective way to do this, by utilizing the total amount of square footage they are allowed to have, but merely transferring it to the building rather than along the Tollway as a monument sign.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Colby said that there is no photo showing the sign facing Butterfield because they didn’t have updated photos after the sign was installed.

Mr. Zawila referred the Board member to page 22 of the .pdf file that shows the relocated sign. He said the sign on the south side of the building is being moved over. The next page of the .pdf shows the new sign in question (F).

Ch. McCann asked why a monument sign would have to be so much higher, and Mr. Colby responded that it would have to be seen over the overpass. He added that there is a definite cost savings in placing a wall sign on the building over constructing a monument sign.

Ch. McCann asked staff about the potential number of other properties that might come in and request a wall sign in lieu of a monument sign. Mr. Zawila said that this is part of the PUD process for that property. There is only one other example in the corridor and that was Coopers Hawk located further west on the corridor. He noted that every case is reviewed on its specific merits. The Village boundary extends to slightly west of I-355 on I-88 for the western boundary. The eastern boundary would be primarily office properties going into Lombard.

Ms. Ramirez clarified that there are wall signs on the north and on the south face. The south sign will be removed and placed on the east façade. Mr. Colby said they are changing that sign because they want to take advantage of the traffic signal at the intersection.

There being no further comments, Ch. McCann closed the public portion of the meeting.

Deliberation

Mr. Maier referenced the uniqueness of the site based on its location at Butterfield Road and I-88, as well as its proximity to the overpass. The PGA Superstore next door has similar signage. He thinks it’s reasonable to put up the requested signage as it provides an opportunity to read the sign and drive safely. He said the Coopers Hawke situation is a very similar situation.

Ch. McCann said he understands Mr. Colby’s comments regarding the signage requested. They simply want to transition the amount of signage allowed from a monument sign to the wall sign, which they think, is reasonable.

APPROVED MINUTES

There were no dissenting comments.

Mr. Maier moved that the Board recommend approval of the requested variation subject to the following conditions listed on page 5 of Staff’s report dated January 23, 2019:

- 1. The variation shall substantially conform to the Staff report and sign package prepared by Jones Sign, dated September 2017 except as such plans may be modified to conform to the Village Codes and Ordinances.**
- 2. No additional wall or monument signs shall be permitted for this site that would result in an increase in overall sign area.**

Mr. Foernssler seconded the Motion.

AYES: Maier, Foernssler, Eberhardt, Frost, Steffes, McCann

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6:0



18-ZBA-0010 – WITHDRAWN: A petition seeking a zoning exception to vertically extend a non-conforming wall. The property is currently zoned R-4, Residential Detached House 4. The property is located at the northeast intersection of Lincoln Street and Washington Street, commonly known as 4525 Washington Street, Downers Grove, IL (PIN 09-05-318-007). Adrian & Kimberly Rivera, Petitioner and Owner.

Per Planning Manager Jason Zawila, the petitioner has withdrawn Case 18-ZBA-0010, a petition seeking a zoning exception to vertically extend a non-conforming wall for the property commonly known as 4525 Washington.

New Business:

Mr. Zawila said that there are no meetings scheduled for next month. He announced that former Senior Planner, Scott Williams, has left the Village for another position. The Village is in the process of hiring another Planner and he will inform the Board as soon as any additional information is available.

Adjournment

Mr. Maier moved, seconded by Ms. Eberhardt, to adjourn the meeting.

Ch. McCann adjourned the meeting by voice vote at 7:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tonie Harrington
Recording Secretary
(transcribed from mp3 recording)