

APPROVED

Sign Committee

Workshop Discussion: Members from the Plan Commission, Economic Development Commission, and the Zoning Board of Appeals

Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2004 12:00 PM

Committee Room

Present: Chair Nicholaou, Commissioner Chalberg, Commissioner Benes, Commissioner Waechtler, and Commissioner McCormick

Absent: Commissioner Randall

Staff: Beth Janicki-Clark, Village Prosecutor
Lori Sommers, Planner, Planning and Community Development

Public: Dan Avjean, United Outdoor

1. Review and Approve Minutes

The Sign Committee reviewed and approved the meeting minutes from November 9, 2004.

2. Other

Chair Nicholaou noted that the Chamber had notified their members that there was a Sign Committee meeting today. The Chair also noted that Downers Grove Reporter and the Village's web site noticed that this meeting was being held today.

3. Review and Discuss Signage

Discussion:

Chair Nicholaou started the meeting discussing prohibited signage. He went on to state that he has difficulty with freestanding or sandwich board signs on public property and handed out pictures of signs from various other communities. Many of the Sign Committee members stated that the use of these types of signs make the area looked cluttered. Chair Nicholaou stated that he proposes that if allowed sandwich board signs should have a size and height limit and should be included in the total signage allowed. Commissioner Chalberg stated that maybe the Sign Committee should attached four to five photos and an explanation of why they do not want those types of signs. Commissioner Waechtler stated that sandwich board signs impede the flow of pedestrian traffic. Ms. Janicki-Clark stated that the proposal for tonight's Council meeting is only to allow them for two months. The Sign Committee generally agreed that they would forward the new proposed sign regulations with reasons why the committee did not allow them and that the Committee has suggested that blade type signs will replace sandwich board signs as a flexible alternative to Downtown merchants.

Chair Nicholaou stated that Code Enforcement should be complemented on their efforts in cleaning up Ogden Avenue. The Sign Committee reviewed prohibiting neon signs and clarified windows inside and out can not be outlined in neon. The Sign Committee clarified that mansard type roofs are excluded from being classified as a roof sign.

The Sign Committee reviewed prohibiting box-type signs in the CCA/Fairview Concentrated Business District. Chair Nicholaou stated that the Committee has tried to receive feedback from the downtown merchants. The Sign Committee agreed that box-type signs should be prohibited in the CCA/Fairview Concentrated Business District.

The Sign Committee then discussed the signage for institutions. The Sign Committee agreed that institutions should only be allowed one sign per property. In further discussion the Committee expressed their desire that these signs be placed in front of their buildings and not illuminate

nearby residential neighborhoods. Ms. Janicki-Clark stated that the illumination issue is addressed in the illumination part of the proposed sign regulations.

Ms. Janicki-Clark stated that the Sign Committee needs to review minutes forwarded from the Liquor Commission regarding their desire to prohibit content specific advertising signs. Mrs. Sommers stated that she would forward the minutes for the Sign Committee's review next week.

Chair Nicholaou started discussion on the section on exempt signs. Chair Nicholaou reviewed real estate signs and stated that the proposed language was too small for residential real estate signs and proceeded to show the Committee an example with riders attached to the signs demonstrates that the square footage allowed needs to be increased. Mrs. Sommers stated that the regulations for real estate signs have not changed from the previous ordinance. Commissioner Chalberg stated that the sign regulations need to allow open house signs, possibly for three hours plus additional directional signs. Chair Nicholaou stated that real estate signs need to be taller to provide for the riders. The Sign Committee generally agreed that real estate signs should be seven feet tall with a total seven square feet.

The Sign Committee then discussed contractor signs and suggested that they be no bigger than realtor signs, seven square feet, in residential areas.

The Sign Committee reviewed the section on temporary signs. Mrs. Sommers stated that Code Services had reviewed this section and likes the changes. She continued by stating that the major changes were going to make it easier for Code Enforcement to track temporary signs along with placing a restriction on the number and size of them, which did not exist before. Mrs. Sommers also stated that in researching and talking to other communities that many of them provided additional insight into their sign codes stating how difficult they were to the public or if they allowed something but wished they could change.

Commissioner Chalberg handed out pictures showing signs that she thought would be illegal under our proposed ordinance. Mrs. Sommers stated that the setbacks are the same in the proposed regulations as the old one therefore they should be placed in the correctly. Commissioner Chalberg asked that Code Services verify the setbacks on these signs. The Sign Committee then continued to discuss the general downtown signage and stated that both shingle and freestanding signs only be a maximum of seven feet tall.

Chair Nicholaou stated that in his research and travels he has found no to very little second floor signage. Chair Nicholaou then read from an email sent from Commissioner Randall:

"First of all, I have another conflict today and will not be attending. I did do my homework! Naperville is not following its own code in the central business district. Major retailers have their entire second floor windows covered with display posters. Secondly, their second floor new businesses appear to be following the main floor code. Their most recent developments have beautiful signage, but it is large, back lit and similar to what you see in the Michigan Avenue area of Chicago in creativity--I believe is the standards group that is managing the look vs. the sign ordinance. All of the signage is very new and exciting. Hopefully, this will help your discussions."

Chair Nicholaou stated that the Sign Committee recognizes that there are second floor businesses and people should know the sign ordinance and that placards by the doors should be sufficient. Commissioner Chalberg stated that she did not think there should be second floor signage; it is too difficult to enforce. The Sign Committee expressed that this not the only time they have discussed this topic and felt that they would keep with what they have done to provide for consistency in the downtown area.

4. Adjourn – 2:40 PM