

APPROVED

Sign Committee

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

Meeting Minutes

November 23, 2004 12:00 PM

Committee Room

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

Absent: None

Staff: Beth Janicki-Clark, Village Prosecutor
Don Scheidler, Inspector, Code Services
Lori Sommers, Planner, Planning and Community Development

Public: Michael Bogert, Downers Grove Chamber; Barb Wysocki, Downers Grove Chamber

1. Review and Approve Minutes

The Sign Committee reviewed and approved the meeting minutes from November 16, 2004.

2. Review and Discuss Signage

Discussion:

Chair Nicholaou started the meeting discussing Ogden Avenue signage and that the Sign Committee decided per the Ogden Avenue Master Plan that monument signs should have a numerical street address located on the sign.

The Sign Committee reviewed awnings and added that if an awning or canopy hangs over the public right-of-way then they must enter into a license agreement with the Village. Commissioner Randall questioned the two color limitation and stated that many businesses have logos with more than two colors. Mrs. Sommers stated that logos are exempt from this provision.

Chair Nicholaou reviewed the Sign Committee's recommendation that second floor businesses can have placards or a blade sign displayed at the front entrance. The Sign Committee raised the question about whether second floor businesses should be allowed window signs. The Committee decided to table this issue and come back to it when they discuss the Liquor Commission's issues.

The Sign Committee reviewed and discussed noncommercial signage which includes institutional, home occupations and subdivision entry signs. Commissioner Chalberg questioned if the structure of the entry gate sign was counted towards the total square footage allowed. Mr. Scheidler stated that they do not calculate the structure for the sign area but there is a height restriction.

Home occupation signs were discussed and it was felt that freestanding signs should not be allowed for home occupations. The Sign Committee also stated that the total sign face area allowed should be reduced from four square feet to two square feet.

Commissioner Waechtler questioned if under the insurance and bond requirements that it should be raised to a million dollars based on our recent conversations about sandwich board signs. Ms. Janicki-Clark stated that she would look into it.

Chair Nicholaou stated that for the amortization section that all signs need to comply by 2010 and if there were any modifications to a sign except standard maintenance then the sign needs to comply with the new regulations. Commissioner Waechtler stated that the committee should put a specific date such as January 1, 2010. The Sign Committee agreed with this date. Commissioner Waechtler also questioned if the Village wants to create incentives for conforming before 2010. Commissioner Randall stated that that is not in the purview of this committee but could be something that the EDC could look into.

Ms. Janicki-Clark raised a question to the group stating that there are prior one year amortization periods for roof and off premises signs. This committee needs to understand that once these new regulations are passed those types of signs will be allowed to continue until the new amortization date of January 1, 2010.

Mr. Benes stated that the variations section needs to be reviewed and possibly modified based on our discussions. Chair Nicholaou stated that it could be attached to the Sign Committee's recommendations.

The Sign Committee then reviewed the definitions section. The Sign Committee decided to add a definition for electronic changeable copy and place electronic changeable copy signs as a prohibited sign. Commissioner McCormick stated that in five years the Village might want to review this since there might be new technology. The Sign Committee felt that electronic changeable copy should be prohibited.

The Sign Committee reviewed window signs and asked for clarification on what is counted as the sign in the twenty percent window allowance. The twenty percent is calculated for permanent or temporary signage in the window. It needs to be clarified in the temporary sign section that temporary window signs are exempt from permit. The Sign Committee questioned if the twenty percent should be changed to twenty-five percent to allow more flexibility to merchants. The Sign Committee agreed to twenty-five percent.

The Sign Committee also discussed second floor signage in the CCA/Fairview District and requiring window signs mounted inside of the glass in metallic or white text with no background and only allowing the business name. The Sign Committee also suggested requiring individual letters for wall signs and not having internally illuminated awnings in the CCA/Fairview District. The Sign Committee continued stating that no temporary window signs should be allowed on the second floor.

Mr. Scheidler reviewed the CCA/Fairview District front yard setbacks in section 28.1110(i) that states that in the CCA/Fairview District there are no setbacks for signs. The Sign Committee stated that this section should be moved into the new ordinance.

Ms. Janicki-Clark reminded the Sign Committee that they needed to review the items from the Liquor Commission. Chair Nicholaou stated that staff should write a recommendation to the Sign Committee on this issue. He went on to state that he does not think it is in our purview to decide what people put in their windows. Ms. Janicki-Clark questioned how the Sign Committee felt about lettering on patio umbrellas, should that be counted towards total square footage of signage allowed. The question was raised as to what constitutes a window sign. Chair Nicholaou stated that any sign visible from the street should be counted as a window sign.

3. Adjourn – 2:55 PM