

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLAN COMMISSION HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2010, AT THE VILLAGE HALL, 7760 QUINCY STREET, WILLOWBROOK, DUPAGE COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kopp called the meeting to order at the hour of 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Those present at roll call were Commissioners James Baker, Robert DelSarto, Joseph Heery, James Soukup, Vice-Chairman Wagner and Chairman Kopp. Also present were Planner Sara Hage and Secretary Joanne Prible. ABSENT: William Remkus

3. OMNIBUS VOTE AGENDA

The items on the Omnibus Vote Agenda were as follows:

- a. Waive Reading of Minutes (APPROVE)
- b. Minutes – Regular Meeting December 2, 2009 (APPROVE)
- c. Minutes – Village Board Meetings – November 23, 2009 (RECEIVE)

MOTION: Made by Commissioner DelSarto seconded by Vice-Chairman Wagner, to approve the Omnibus Vote Agenda.

UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE

MOTION DECLARED CARRIED

4. DISCUSSION – Review of Willowbook Sign Regulations Previously Discussed (See attachment)

Planner Hage said that she wanted to give the Commissioners an opportunity to review all of the items that were discussed collectively before this is put out to the public. She said that her plan is to have a public hearing at the next meeting, February 3rd. She added staff will be working on the technical language that supports the items in the summary as well as some more public relations oriented materials to share with the business community in an effort to try to solicit comments and get some feedback at that public hearing. Planner Hage said she wanted to see if there were any comments. In addition, there were also three items that she asked for additional feedback on.

Chairman Kopp asked if there was informal input from the President. The Plan Commission has loosened up almost everything that we have looked at and Chairman Kopp said he does not want the business community to get excited about what is presented and then have the Board not agree.

Planner Hage responded that she has given the Board general updates about where the Plan Commission is in the process and that the Commission is working through some of the code amendments relative to signs. She said the Board gets a copy of the minutes and after this meeting she and Tim will go through the amendments. The President is an advocate for more signage, so that is the general direction staff has moved in. Planner Hage added that she does not

think that the Commission would have gotten some of the recommendations they had if the Commission did not have the support of the President.

Chairman Kopp said he understands that there is a process and that he did not want the Board to come off as the bad guys, we are usually the bad guys.

Planner Hage said the Plan Commission has done the work of getting through some of the issues that we see day to day. This is certainly not set in stone. We have drafted final language that does need to go to our attorney. That is the next step.

Commissioner Heery asked if this will go to the attorney first before it goes to others to review.

Planner Hage said she will do the drafting of the language and have the attorney review it. At the February hearing, she suggested that we do not close the hearing so we can leave it open for changes or ask any additional questions. Planner Hage said we do need to have some discussions before we have the final language set in stone.

Vice Chairman Wagner asked are we supposed to meet as a Plan Commission with the Board in the future before this goes or do we assume that the Board is getting feedback from staff and the minutes and if there was something out of the parameters, then the Plan Commission would have gotten some feedback by now.

Planner Hage said her understanding of the process was that the Board did not want to reconvene as a group. The Board's intention was to let the Plan Commission do the work that they are charged with doing. The Board can modify the Plan Commission changes. Following this meeting, she said, she and Tim will share the information with President Napoli and Attorney Hennessy and come to some general agreement about how President Napoli wants to move this forward. So it is somewhat flexible, there is not a specific direction but that is the general consensus and the general understanding of how we are going to move forward. She added that she has given updates of the Plan Commission process through the Village Administrator's report.

Commissioner DelSarto asked Planner Hage if she had heard any comments from the Board regarding the minutes.

Planner Hage said there were a few comments that were raised but they were minor. A Trustee asked about the garage sale signs, which we discussed at the last meeting and another raised an issue about political signs.

Planner Hage said there is one specific question on page two. In our discussions relative to the signage in the B-4 district, on properties such as Willowbrook Ford, the feedback received was that a larger monument sign would be appropriate for the B-4 properties. Planner Hage asked whether or not the Plan Commission wants to extend this to large parcels in the B-2 district that are not shopping centers, Target would be a specific example. Target is larger than 10 acres and does not fall into the definition of a shopping center and it is not in the B-4 district; it is in the B-2 district. So the question is whether or not you wanted to allow for a larger monument sign there and put a threshold minimum parcel size of 10 acres.

Chairman Kopp asked how big Kmart is.

Planner Hage answered 10 acres and it is in the B-2 district. Because Kmart has the extra tenant space, technically they are a shopping center. So they fall into the extra signage allowances.

Vice Chairman Wagner said the difference between Ford and Target is that one is in B-2 and one is in B-4, but they are both large self-standing, non-shopping center properties.

Commissioner Heery said he would not be in favor because it is one location that is well lit. Everyone can see that it is a Target store.

Vice-Chairman Wagner asked if there was another example of a B-2 property that is a self-standing store that is not a shopping center.

Planner Hage answered yes, Whole Foods.

Vice-Chairman Wagner said there is no mistaking that is Whole Foods from 63rd Street. Why would you make something bigger than it already is?

Planner Hage said that why we specified a minimum of 10 acres. Target is a 10-acre shopping site as large as the Kmart shopping center or another high volume shopping site.

Chairman Kopp asked if someone comes in and buys the Kmart site and it is a single user, he said he would want to do everything to encourage that.

Commissioner DelSarto asked could they ask for a sign change.

Planner Hage answered not unless they were a PUD. Target is not. They are one building on one parcel. Kmart, if they redeveloped or asked to become a PUD, then they could. But that is an expensive process and the indications that we have from Sears are that they are evaluating that but we do not know when that will happen.

Vice-Chairman Wagner said are you suggesting that the rules for a B-4 be applied to the B-2 if it is greater than 10 acres.

Planner Hage answered, yes, or some other variation. Do you want to allow for some greater amount of monument signage for a parcel of that size?

Vice-Chairman Wagner said he would say no and that it is hard to make a judgment simply because he does not know how much Target can have now. He added that he certainly does not want to see a 24 feet high sign in front of Target.

Planner Hage said under our discussions, what we have for shopping centers is that they can go up to 16 feet. Target as a stand-alone business, they can have 90 square feet, 12 feet high.

Vice-Chairman Wagner asked if that was 90 square feet total for both sides.

Chairman Kopp said that is a high increase. He added he is all for signage, but does not find anything compelling on this item.

Vice-Chairman Wagner asked how much further away would you be to not notice Target on Route 83. There is a monument sign near the right of way, whether it was double the size or not, it certainly is visible.

All Commissioners agreed that the B-4 provisions should not include B-2 parcels such as Target, which are greater than ten acres, but are not considered shopping centers.

Planner Hage said the next item is on page three and is relative to our office and industrial districts. Currently, the signage regulations, as spelled out in the zoning ordinance, apply to our non-residential uses in residential districts. One question that staff had was whether or not the Plan Commission wanted to also make these signage provisions applicable to assisted living facilities. She said this came up with Sunrise when the Plan Commission discussed, and gave support to, a sign variation for them. Planner Hage noted that one of the things that she noticed in reviewing their application and signage is that they somehow appeared to already have more signage than what's allowed in a residential district and her conclusion was that they had applied the non-residential LOP/ M-1 sign regulations to that property. She said that was how it appeared although, technically, that is not how it would be read by staff today. Given that the Plan Commission just increased signage for those districts, you may not be interested in changing this provision, but leaving it status quo.

Chairman Kopp said he is worried about allowing them to extend further in the residential district and about the signage going in that direction as well. Chairman Kopp added that he was not enthusiastic about this one.

Planner Hage said that no one has asked for it. We do have restrictions that if it is facing residential or if it is within so many feet of residential that you cannot have the sign higher than 20 feet.

Chairman Kopp said they have residential across the street and when they build the addition no homeowner wants to look out their window and see the sign.

Commissioner DeSarto said he does not think there should be a change.

Commissioner Baker asked who checks this [the Sign Code amendments].

Planner Hage said that she will do the drafting of the language and then it will go to our attorney, to Tim Halik and to the Village Administrator.

Planner Hage confirmed with the Commissioners that the consensus is no as far as adding assisted living facilities to the sign provisions for LOP, LOR, M-1 and OR districts.

Planner Hage said that the last item for discussion is for ground signs on LOP, LOR, M-1 and OR sites that are larger than 4 acres. She asked if the Plan Commission wanted to allow for two signs if it is a corner parcel with two entrances.

Chairman Kopp said he would be in favor of this one.

Planner Hage said one parcel that would fall into this category is at Quincy and Executive. The Village has had development inquires about that parcel and they have always included two entrances.

Chairman Kopp said he thinks four acres is big enough to justify two signs, one on either street.

Commissioner Heery said it is a vacant lot right now.

Commissioner DelSarto asked if this would be two signs of 50 square feet each..

Vice-Chairman Wagner asked if what Planner Hage was saying was that the total monument sign allowance would be divided in two and asked what the limit was for one sign.

Planner Hage answered that her suggestion would be that they could have two signs, each of the size that was discussed last time, which was 50 square feet for a ground sign.

Vice-Chairman Wagner clarified that this would be for a corner parcel.

Commissioner DelSarto said it would be one sign on each street.

Planner Hage said, yes, it would be no more than one on each side.

Chairman Kopp said that is a good point, but it is not specified in the materials.

Vice-Chairman Wagner said he is concerned about the wordage “two or more public streets”; that does not say a corner lot.

Planner Hage said that can be specified however the Commission would like.

Chairman Kopp said the alternative would be that the parcel is in the middle of the block. He said he would be even more worried about a corner parcel if the signs were right next to each other.

Planner Hage said one of the things she has tried to focus on with the amendments is to consider some of the potential situations and to raise these as items for discussion before they become an issue. She stated that the Plan Commission has the opportunity to debate them and decide whether or not this is something to consider before someone comes to the Village with a request.

Vice-Chairman Wagner said to Planner Hage that she raised an interesting scenario. If you do have a corner lot, the intent would be [to have a sign on] this long frontage over here and this long frontage over there, but if they decide to put two giant signs right off the corner, that is defeating the purpose. He said should we change the language to allow it so that they are separated or not allow it at all.

Commissioner Heery said there is no language yet. Someone can follow this and know how it works instead of being left open for interpretation.

Vice-Chairman Wagner said to Planner Hage that she brought up the property at Quincy and 75th. Would this apply to Stone Wheel?

Planner Hage said, no because that site is not four acres.

Commissioner Heery said he is not opposed to two signs as long as they are separated on different streets.

Vice-Chairman Wagner said he would agree.

Commissioner DelSarto asked is there any way to establish a center line.

Planner Hage said, yes, you could say no closer than 50 feet or 100 feet from either corner.

Commissioner Baker asked when will these happen.

Planner Hage asked if he was referring to the development of those parcels.

Commissioner Baker said yes.

Planner Hage said we do not know.

Vice-Chairman Wagner said the problem is that there is no ability to vary from the sign code, only through a PUD or a text amendment, and both are a fairly big hurdle. So the concept, as long as they are separated on two distinct frontages and are not a combination of one huge sign with two faces, is ok with me.

Commissioner DelSarto said there should be some sort of distance restriction from the corner.

Chairman Kopp said it could be a restriction from the corner but could it also be that the signs cannot be within 100 feet of each other.

Vice-Chairman Wagner said that a separation is simpler rather than telling them how far from the corner it should be.

Planner Hage asked if 100 feet from each other was acceptable.

Chairman Kopp said, right, on the two streets.

Commissioner DelSarto asked what the diagonal distance could be.

Chairman Kopp said it should be on the frontage.

Planner Hage added that it should be as measured along the lot line.

Chairman Kopp said it could be 50 and 50 or 10 and 90.

Vice Chairman Wagner said there are so many scenarios; as long as they are separated by some distance, it gives us some control over it.

Planner Hage said no matter what scenario we come up with there is going to be somebody who wants something else. As it is applied, we may find that this was not quite right, maybe we need to change this and add this or take away that but it is a shorter process than going through this whole chapter and saying our signage is grossly understated or overstated.

Planner Hage said, to clarify, one sign has to be around the corner, it cannot be at the corner, so that they are on distinct frontages.

Planner Hage said today, at the Chamber of Commerce meeting, the President gave the State of the Village address and let the Chamber know that we will be having a public hearing next month on the signage.

Planner Hage said this is the most cumbersome part of our code and the one that is used almost every day. We will not always have a subdivision going on or building going on but we always have signage. In these amendments, there is a good amount of signage available for a retail tenant.

Commissioner DelSarto asked if there were any grey areas in here. We tried to eliminate them all, do you see any other grey areas.

Planner Hage said a sign code is a grey area. If an applicant finds one issue with your sign code that they do not like, they can tear it apart. We tried to be objective and reasonable and specific at the same time. It is not uncommon for us to get a call from someone interested in putting up a billboard on the site where the Country Kitchen was. Usually, it is someone working for a sign company or someone who wants to buy that parcel and says what a great place for a billboard and, you, the Village cannot stop me from putting up a billboard via the state regulations that allow me to do so. What we have to rely on is our code and sections that specifically sight the billboard statutes and that we restrict them by provisions that impart a height restriction of 12 feet. So sure you can put a billboard up, but it can only be 12 feet tall.

Vice-Chairman Wagner asked isn't there a billboard somewhere.

Planner Hage answered yes at the Kerry Piper. We annexed that property and it is legal non-confirming.

Vice-Chairman Wagner asked if there were a change at some point it would go away.

Planner Hage said if it were to blow over in a storm.

Commissioner Baker asked how our sign code matches up to the surrounding municipalities.

Planner Hage answered there is no point by point comparison. Willowbrook is slightly more conservative. She said when surveying our surrounding neighbors and then other communities that have similar development patterns, we found that the average and the median sign allowance rate was 1.5 square feet and we decided on 1.25. A lot of communities did not have limits on the

maximum [sign surface area] or their maximum was set at 350, but similar to us, those maximum thresholds are different depending on the district.

Commissioner Soukup asked what the restrictions on “for sale signs” are.

Planner Hage said we did not cover “for sale signs” in our discussion. There were no particular issues that came up with “for sale signs” and noted that residential “for sale signs” are allowed at four square feet and we did not take it up as an issue because we are not changing it and no issues had been raised with it.

6. VISITOR’S BUSINESS

None.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

Planner Hage said she had two items: the first is that at our next meeting, we assume that we are going to have a sign code public hearing. There will also be two other public hearings, for a total of three hearings. Goodwill has filed their applications to amend the use provisions for the Dominick’s Shopping Center so that they can open shop there. There might be some residents that will attend as notices will be sent to Lake Hinsdale Village. Also, the shopping center where Verizon Wireless and Amcore Bank are located, at 75th Street and Route 83, John Koliopoulos has secured another tenant for the vacant space. It is a bike shop and bicycle sales are a special use so they will be coming in for a special use permit for bicycle sales. It will be a full agenda.

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Made by Vice-Chairman Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Heery, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Plan Commission at the hour of 8:00 p.m.

UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE

MOTION DECLARED CARRIED

PRESENTED, READ AND APPROVED,

_____, 2010

Minutes transcribed by Joanne Prible.

Chairman