

**Minutes of the Community Design Commission  
Held on June 26, 2013  
At Village Hall in Room 101**

Meeting called to order at 7:20 p.m.

**Attendees:** Acting Chairperson Douglas Chien, Commissioners David Brumirski, Christina Loran, Lindsay Salvatore, John Schiess, Aaron Stigger, Michele Wheeler

**Absent:** Chairperson Tom Phillion, Commissioners Teresa Heit-Murray, Lloyd Natof, Sharon Snook, Greg Sorg, Bernie Woytek

**Also present:** Craig Failor, Village Planner; Michael Bruce, Zoning Administrator; and Jim Semelka, Forestry Superintendent

**Public Attendees:** Mark Burkland, Park District of Oak Park Attorney; Eric Penney and Don McKay, Park District Architects; Bill Hamilton, Park District Manager of Ridgeland Commons; Jan McCarthy, Sign Designer

**Non-Agenda Public Comment:**  
None.

**Minutes:** Commissioner Brumirski motioned to approve the minutes from February 26, 2013. Commissioner Salvatore seconded. The minutes were approved as submitted.

**Agenda Items Sitting as the Design Review Commission:**

Cal. No. 03-13-DRC: The Park District of Oak Park, applicant, is requesting that variances be granted from the Sign Code of the Village of Oak Park to allow The Park District to install a new pole sign replacing the existing pole sign at the southwest corner of Lake Street and Ridgeland Avenue in its current location (415 Lake Street - Ridgeland Common). Relief is being sought for the following; Section 7-7-14(A), which section limits the sign area of pole signs to 24 square feet and the height to 5 feet tall, among other elements in the Residential Sign Overlay District pursuant to Table 2. The proposed sign is 48.12 square feet (total area of all four sides) and is approximately 15 feet in height; Section 7-7-14(D), which section prohibits any part of a ground sign located within the public right-of-way. The proposed sign projects approximately one foot into the public-right-of-way; Section 7-7-16, which section prohibits electronic message signs in the Residential Sign Overlay District. The proposed sign features a 25.4 square foot (total area of all four sides) electronic message sign similar to the existing sign; and any other section of the Sign Code necessary to authorize the installation of the proposed pole sign as depicted and specified in the variance application.

Mr. Mark Burkland, general counsel for the Park District, briefly introduced the application. Mr. Don McKay, architect for the Ridgeland Commons project, presented the elevations of the Ridgeland Commons Building and said the sign would be compatible with the façade of the new building. He said the major change they wished to make was a four-sided sign versus the current two-sided sign

but they would use the same pole. He said due to the traffic signals and some mature trees they were unable to relocate the sign. He added they would be putting in a planting bed about 5-6' in diameter around the base of the pole based on comments in the staff report.

Mr. Bruce presented the variance request and the staff report. He said the Village staff team supported all of the variance requests. He said the team wanted it known that while they supported the electronic message sign because it was intended for a public purpose, rather than a commercial purpose. Staff did not support any blinking, flashing or movement on the electronic sign. Mr. Bruce said the team wanted the Park District to enhance the aesthetics of the sign with perhaps a stronger design and also questioned the placement of the pole in the middle of a pedestrian walkway by suggesting the Park District add a planting area, which Mr. McKay had indicated they would.

Mr. Burkland responded that the architects would flare out the sidewalk near the sign to create more space around the planting area and pole. He said the electronic message board would be more refined and have colors versus the current one that is only white. He said the Park District concurs on the limits for flashing and popping messages. Mr. Burkland said the new electronic message sign was capable of having a message travel from one side of the sign to another, which could add a vibrancy to the sign, although that was not essential and the Park District would follow whatever guidelines were set.

Commissioner Schiess asked about the material proposed for the fence around the facility. Mr. McKay said it would be a metal material with a brick fence at the north side of the building. Mr. McKay said the context for the sign would change from the current building as the new building would have more prominence than the previous one did.

Commissioner Schiess said the sign was located on a busy corner and he was troubled if they were proposing a sign with messages that moved. Mr. Burkland said the new sign would move less than the current sign. Mr. McKay said they wanted to understate the electronic portion of the sign. Ms. Jan McCarthy, designer for the Park District, said the image would be replaced all at once, rather than a scroll or flowing movement. Commissioner Stigger asked what kind of messages would be on the sign. Mr. Burkland said historically the sign had announced dates and events. Ms. McCarthy said it could also be a photograph of an event that took place at the facility, like a hockey game or swimming event, etc.

Commissioner Schiess said he had a problem with putting up images as it went beyond the public service into advertising. Commissioner Brumirski said the sign went against the spirit and letter of the sign code. He said this sign was across the street and larger than the dry cleaners' application the CDC denied a variance for in the last meeting. Commissioner Salvatore pointed out that it was a community event sign rather than a commercial sign. Mr. Bruce said that was the reason staff was in support of it. Mr. Burkland said what set the sign apart from the commercial sign was it was dramatically understated and there was a difference between a sign that acts as a public announcement of a public facility that was open to all residents versus a commercial sign.

Commissioner Lorz said she believed this sign served a much different purpose than the cleaners' sign. The new building at Ridgeland Commons needs a new sign to go with it. Commissioner Schiess said he was ok with static, simple messages. Commissioner Wheeler said pictures have a heart to

them and she liked the option of pictures and thought it was part of being current. Commissioner Salvatore asked staff if the CDC could control content. Mr. Bruce clarified that they could not. Commissioner Schiess said he believed they could recommend text and not images. Mr. Bruce disagreed, saying it might be against the First Amendment of the Constitution. Mr. Burkland said the Park District had been a good steward and there was no reason to suggest it would not be a good steward on the electronic messages, but if the commission wanted the Zoning Officer to inspect the sign to be sure there were no moving images that would be a safety net to ensure it. Mr. Bruce said no movement was part of the sign code and if they got a complaint they would enforce it. Acting Chair Chien said he felt confident that the existing code would be enough to ensure the Park District would abide with no movement but asked how the brightness would compare with the current sign. Ms. McCarthy said it would be brighter. Mr. Burkland clarified that the brightness was variable to adjust after sunset, etc. Mr. McKay said the top half of the sign would be reduced in terms of light output. Acting Chair Chien asked about ADA compliance with the plantings around the pole. Mr. Burkland said they would be ADA compliant.

Commissioner Stigger said he was concerned with the blandness of the non-electronic portion of the sign. Mr. Burkland said the lettering would be exactly the same as the lettering on the building. Ms. McCarthy said part of the reason to keep the upper half simple was to allow the message and dynamic part to be effectively. Mr. McKay said another detail they were proposing was to put a black trim ring on the top that would relate to the black fencing. Commissioner Stigger asked about the need for the top half to say Ridgeland Commons since it was so well-known. Mr. Burkland said there were swim meets and invitationals and therefore important for guests to locate.

Acting Chair Chien reviewed the criteria for deliberations.

Commissioner Schiess motioned to approve the application as submitted. Commissioner Loranz seconded. Acting Chair Chien indicated he would abstain as he chairs a commission in the Park District. Commissioner Schiess withdrew his previous motion. Commissioner Loranz withdrew her second. Commissioner Schiess motioned to table the discussion to the next monthly meeting on July 24, 2013. Commissioner Stigger seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Schiess- yes  
Stigger- yes  
Loranz- yes  
Birmirski- no  
Wheeler- yes  
Salvatore – no  
Chien- yes

The motion passed 5-2.

As there were only 7 members of the Commission, which is a quorum, all seven would need to state a positive vote in order for the application to go forward. With one known abstention, that vote could not be achieved therefore it was tabled to the next meeting.

#### **Staff Reports:**

Mr. Semelka said there were still removals of Emerald Ash Borer trees and they had planted the spring plantings. A short discussion ensued about watering of trees and using rainwater. Mr. Semelka said he would look into the possibility of using rainwater for the water trucks. He said the software purchase was still in the beginning stages. He said he was looking into using email as an optional notification system versus the door-hanger system that was currently in place.

Mr. Failor said the consultants for the Comprehensive Plan would be presenting to the Plan Commission on July 11, 2013 and urged CDC members who were available to come hear the latest information on the plan. Mr. Failor said tentatively in July there would be a discussion with the Village Board on the Madison Street streetscaping project. He said the Village had applied for a TIGER grant for Lake Street improvements and it hoped to know by August. Commissioner Brumirski asked about the new street signs that were tested previously. Mr. Failor said that was something the previous manager had spearheaded and it was not going forward. He said new street lights were going to be installed on Garfield from Harlem to Clinton as well as some plantings. Mr. Semelka said a similar effort was underway on Harrison Street with some sidewalk and curb repairs and plantings.

**Sub-Committee Reports:**

None.

**Other Business:**

2013 Cavalcade of Pride Awards

Commissioners divided up responsibility for each zone for nominating properties.

Acting Chair Chien suggested moving the discussion of the work plan to the next meeting in July.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Salvatore motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Brumirski seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Angela Schell,

Recording Secretary