

**Minutes of the Community Design Commission
Held on July 24, 2013
At Village Hall in Room 101**

Meeting called to order at 7:40 p.m.

Attendees: Chairperson Tom Philion, Commissioners David Brumirski, Douglas Chien, Teresa Heit-Murray, Lindsay Salvatore, John Schiess (arrived at 7:50 p.m.), Aaron Stigger, Michele Wheeler

Absent: Commissioners Christina Loranz, 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: Park District of Oak Park: Jan Arnold, Executive Director; Mark Burkland, Attorney; Eric Penney and Don McKay, Architects; Bill Hamilton, Manager of Ridgeland Common. West Cook YMCA: Jim Lencioni, Board Member; David Parsons, COO.

Non-Agenda Public Comment:

None.

Minutes: Commissioner Chien motioned to approve the minutes from June 26, 2013. Commissioner Wheeler seconded. The minutes were approved as submitted.

Chair Philion explained that as Commissioner Schiess was still on his way to the meeting, they would first discuss the Cavalcade of Pride awards and then move on to the public meeting.

Mr. Failor said at the last CDC meeting zones were assigned and some commissioners were able to review the first round. Hopefully, by the August meeting nominations would be nailed down. Mr. Failor also asked commissioners to take pictures in the second round of reviews so those would be available as well.

Chair Philion said Commissioner Salvatore has resigned from the commission and was relocating. Tonight would be her last meeting. Mr. Failor said Commissioner Snook had also notified him that she was moving out of state. Chair Philion said he has resigned effective September 1, 2013. Commissioner Chien was nominated to be the new chair, which the Village Board would likely be reviewing at its September meeting. Mr. Failor said he would ask Commissioner Natof to take over zone 9 for Commissioner Salvatore on the Cavalcade commission.

Chair Philion welcomed Trustee Barber, the new Trustee liaison to the CDC. Commissioners introduced themselves.

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. **Continued from the June 26, 2013 meeting.**

Mr. Bruce reviewed the variance request and went over the sign code sections that were pertinent.

Mr. Mark Burkland, general counsel for the Park District, briefly introduced the application and the designers and architects for the Ridgeland Common renovation project- Mr. Don McKay and Mr. Eric Penney. Mr. Burkland said in general terms the sign would be a replacement of the existing sign but with greater technological updates and a fresher design. He went through the four standards and said the new sign would be harmonious to neighbors and the area and that the design would be an aesthetic improvement.

Mr. McKay went through the elevations of the new sign. He said the new sign would be more relevant to the design of the new building. He said they would try to reuse the existing pole, if possible, and they wanted to keep the size of the existing sign except for adding the additional dimension. He said based on comments from the previous hearing they would keep a single color on all four sides of the sign. He said they would introduce a planter area on the base of the sign. They would add a black trim ring at the top and in between the two panel pieces due to some of the feedback from the last meeting.

Mr. Burkland said at the last meeting some commissioners had concerns about the electronic message system portion of the sign. He said the Park District would abide by the Village's existing standards relating to the electronic message sign, including the message being static. He said the technological advancement in the electronic portion would make the sign much more substantially aesthetically pleasing than the existing electronic sign.

Mr. Bruce presented the staff report on the variance, saying the team supported the request as the dimensions would be about the same as the existing sign and was in support of the electronic message portion as it would be used for a public purpose rather than merely a commercial purpose. The team suggested an enhanced design for the sign as they felt the proposal was rather plain. The team also suggested a planter along the base of the pole as a way to alert pedestrians.

Commissioner Wheeler asked about the space for walking around the concrete planter. Mr. McKay said they widened the south sidewalk for more accessibility.

Commissioner Heit-Murray said she intentionally looked at the existing sign for information and asked if the message would be different on all four sides. Mr. Burkland said there was the capability to have that option, but they were not sure if they would do that as of yet. Commissioner Heit-Murray suggested varying the size of the top portion and the electronic portion and said she liked the idea of the color all the way around. She asked if a ground sign was ever considered. Mr. Burkland said they did consider it, but due to the location and visibility and the electronic message portion would not be as effective they decided to go for another pole sign. Mr. McKay said they will need to identify the building as “Ridgeland Common Recreational Complex” and it would be difficult to change the size of the top portion to accommodate all of that text.

Commissioner Salvatore asked about picture or video being an aspect of the electronic sign and said that concerned her during the last presentation. Mr. Burkland said the park district would not use pictures or full color electronic messages and he apologized for the confusion during the last meeting where some commissioners got the impression that that type of message would be displayed.

Commissioner Brumirski asked if the new sign would be altered so that pictures and video could not be shown. Mr. Burkland said it would not and the sign was capable of displaying that technology, but the park district was not allowed to display it per the Village’s sign code and it would not do so.

Chair Philion said he appreciated that the park district responded to the feedback from the last meeting. He said while he preferred it not to be a pole sign and instead be something more cutting edge, he also felt the park district did a good job of improving what was there and staying true to the tradition and neighborhood.

Commissioner Schiess motioned to approve the application as submitted. Commissioner Wheeler seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Schiess – yes
Wheeler – yes
Salvatore – yes
Stigger – yes
Heit-Murray – yes
Brumirski – no
Chien – yes
Philion – yes

The motion passed 7-1.

Cal. No. 05-13-DRC: The West Cook YMCA (255 South Marion Street) is requesting that variations be granted from Section 7-7-14 (A) (Table 2), which provides that ground signs are no longer permitted in the Neighborhood Commercial Sign Overlay District after the amortization period of March 23, 2014, in order to maintain their existing ground sign after the above amortization period has passed at the premises.

From West Cook YMCA Mr. Jim Lencioni, a board member, and Mr. David Parsons, COO were present to address the variation request. Mr. Lencioni said the existing sign had been there for fifty

years and the national YMCA logo had changed. He said they need to update the current sign but wanted to make sure they could keep the existing sign once the new compliance regulations go into effect in 2014. He said a primary reason to keep the existing sign was economics but they were also concerned that a monument sign could be a hazard on the heavily trafficked corner.

Commissioner Salvatore asked if it was a four-way stop. Mr. Lencioni agreed. He said it was a precarious corner with a lot of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Commissioner Stigger agreed, saying he was a Y member and a monument sign could be hazardous, but thought the current sign height was too high. Mr. Lencioni said that Village staff had indicated the height was too high, but now that trees had been trimmed the visibility was better. Mr. Lencioni said the sign was more of a message board and aimed for pedestrians. Commissioner Salvatore said if it was indeed more of a message sign then perhaps a monument sign was more appropriate and she asked staff for input on the safety issue.

Mr. Bruce responded that he had no comment on safety issues. Commissioner Chien said while he was sympathetic to the safety issue it wasn't in the CDC's purview. Commissioner Chien asked about the physical condition of the sign. Mr. Lencioni said it was in good shape, but they would like to change the logo. He said the bottom line was it was a not-for-profit organization and they had expenses to maintain the building and changing the sign out would be difficult.

Chair Philion said he believed with the renovation of South Marion and Mills Park, the areas near the YMCA were changing in terms of design and rejuvenation and while the Y was at the periphery, he preferred a monument sign. He said he also weighed that with it being a non-profit organization. Commissioner Brumirski said he didn't believe the design of the surrounding area was pertinent and he believed if the organization felt the existing sign was adequate than that was sufficient. Commissioner Schiess said the sign fit the building and didn't see a ground sign as adding to safety. Commissioner Brumirski said the sign was smaller and less bright than the sign that was approved by the CDC recently for the Carleton Hotel. Commissioner Heit-Murray said due to the 50s design aspect it could almost be considered a grandfathered sign like ghost signs.

Chair Philion asked the applicants about their plans to update the logo. Mr. Lencioni said they would replace the plastic panel with the new logo and keep everything else the same. Commissioner Chien said he would be comfortable with the variance until it was time to replace the sign or if the sign needed major maintenance. Mr. Lencioni agreed.

A short discussion ensued about whether the variance would extend should the sign need to be replaced – if it were damaged by a car, for example. Staff explained that unless a condition was placed on the variance it would stand for the life of the business. Commissioner Chien said he would like to condition that should the sign need to be replaced or substantially repaired for any reason it would be replaced per code.

Commissioner Brumirski motioned to approve the variance with Commissioner Chien's condition. Commissioner Stigger seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Brumirski – yes
Stigger – yes
Schiess – yes

Chien – yes
Wheeler – yes
Heit-Murray – yes
Salvatore – no
Phillion – yes

The motion passed 7-1.

Commissioners Schiess and Chien left at 8:30 p.m.

Staff Reports:

Mr. Semelka said they have been continuing to do doing storm damage clean up.

Mr. Failor said the Comprehensive Plan consultants were now looking at transit-oriented sites. The consultants presented to the Plan Commission the goals and objectives and would be presenting to the Village Board next.

Sub-Committee Reports:

None.

Other Business:

None.

Adjournment

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

Angela Schell,

Recording Secretary