

STAFF DESIGN COMMISSION REPORT

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Project Name: McDonald's - Sign Variation
Project Address: 1920 N. Arlington Heights Road
Prepared By: Steve Hautzinger

PETITION INFORMATION:

DC Number: 19-086
Petitioner Name: Michelle Freeman
Petitioner Address: Keyser Industries
9015 S. Kedzie Avenue
Evergreen Park, IL 60805
Meeting Date: October 22, 2019

Date Prepared: October 9, 2019

Requested Action(s):

- 1. A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-208.b, to allow two 20 sf fully digital drive-through menu boards (one per drive-through lane), where only conventional printed menu board displays are allowed.
- 2. A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-208.c, to allow two 10 sf fully digital drive-through pre-sell menu boards (one per drive-through lane), where only conventional printed pre-sell menu board displays are allowed.

ANALYSIS:

Summary:

The subject design is being forwarded to the Design Commission for review pursuant to Chapter 6 of the Municipal Code, specifically Section 6-501 (e)(1), which states that the Design Commission "shall review all Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Building Permit and Sign Permit applications for new construction and those improvements which affect the architectural design of the building, site improvements or signage to determine whether it meets with the standards, requirements and purposes of the Design Guidelines and Chapter 30, Sign Regulations."

This existing McDonald's restaurant is proposing to replace their existing conventional printed drive-through menu boards with new fully digital displays. The existing restaurant has two drive-through lanes, with one menu board per lane. The petitioner has reported that every drive-through McDonald's menu board in the country is being replaced with new electronic menu boards, and thousands have already been installed. The menu image on the boards will remain static except for 3 to 4 menu changes throughout the day which will be controlled from the store based on meal time changes. They will not display any video, animation or sound, and the brightness will be automatically dimmed based on ambient light conditions. The existing speakers will remain, and they are equipped with an adjustable volume control.



Aerial of Property



Zoning Map of Property

Surrounding Land Uses:

Direction	Existing Zoning	Existing Use
Subject Property	B-2, General Business District	McDonald's Restaurant
North	B-2, General Business District	Annex of Arlington Retail Center
South	B-2, General Business District	Palm Court Restaurant
East	B-2, General Business District	Arlington Promenade Retail Center
West	R-3, One Family Dwelling District	Single-Family Residences

Table 1: Drive-Through Menu Boards Summary

SIGN	QUANTITY	MAX. SIZE PER CODE	SIZE	HEIGHT (7' MAX. PER CODE)	REMARKS
Existing Conventional Printed Menu Boards	2	49 sf	43.7 sf	6'-9 1/2"	To be removed.
Proposed Fully Digital Menu Boards	2	49 sf	20 sf	6'-0"	Variation required for fully digital display, which shall comply with all operational standards for electronic signs as set forth in Chapter 30, Section 30-705.h.
Existing Conventional Printed Pre-Sell Menu Boards	None	24 sf	-	-	None existing.
Proposed Fully Digital Pre-Sell Menu Boards	2	24 sf	10 sf	6'-0"	Variation required for fully digital display, which shall comply with all operational standards for electronic signs as set forth in Chapter 30, Section 30-705.h.

Sign Variation Criteria:

The Village Sign Code, Chapter 30, Section 30-901 sets out the criteria for granting a sign variation.

- a. That the particular difficulty or peculiar hardship is not self-created by the Petitioner.
- b. That the granting of said variation will not create a traffic hazard, a depreciation of nearby property values or otherwise be detrimental to the public health, safety, morals and welfare;
- c. That the variation will serve to relieve the Petitioner from a difficulty attributable to the location, topography, circumstances on nearby properties or other peculiar hardship, and will not merely serve to provide the Petitioner with a competitive advantage over similar businesses;
- d. That the variation will not alter the essential character of the locality;
- e. That the Petitioner's business cannot reasonably function under the standards of this chapter.

The petitioner has submitted a letter addressing the hardship criteria, which states that the proposed fully digital menu boards are necessary to comply with McDonald's nationwide initiative to modernize their restaurants, as well as to increase efficiency at their drive-throughs.

The same fully digital menu boards were recently approved for the McDonald's restaurant at 45 E. Golf Road in Arlington Heights. Digital menu boards allow for easier menu updates, and they are smaller than conventional menu boards due to the ability to change the menu items based on the meal time. Staff does not object to the use of full digital menu board displays, but they shall be required to comply with all operational standards for electronic signs as set forth in Chapter 30, Section 30-705.h, which includes static displays only (no scrolling, fading, flashing, animation, video, or sound), auto-dimming photocell technology to control brightness to .3 footcandles maximum above ambient lighting conditions, no off-premises advertising, and only permitted to be illuminated during the hours that the business is open. Additionally, per Chapter 30, Section 30-208.e.1, the sound from the speaker on the ordering canopies shall not be audible at or beyond the property line, and the speakers shall be equipped with an adjustable volume control.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Design Commission recommend **approval** to the Village Board for the following sign variations for *McDonald's* at 1920 N. Arlington Heights Road:

1. A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-208.b, to allow two 20 sf fully digital drive-through menu boards (one per drive-through lane), where only conventional printed menu board displays are allowed.
2. A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-208.c, to allow two 10 sf fully digital drive-through pre-sell menu boards (one per drive-through lane), where only conventional printed pre-sell menu board displays are allowed.

This recommendation is subject to compliance with the plans received 9/27/19, Federal, State, and Village Codes, regulations, and policies, and the issuance of all required permits, and the following conditions:

1. The digital displays shall comply with all operational standards for electronic signs as set forth in Chapter 30, Section 30-705.h, which includes static displays only (no scrolling, fading, flashing, animation, video, or sound), auto-dimming photocell technology to control brightness to .3 footcandles maximum above ambient lighting conditions, no off-premises advertising, and only permitted to be illuminated during the hours that the business is open.
2. This review deals with architectural design only and should not be construed to be an approval of, or to have any other impact on, any other zoning and/or land use issues or decisions that stem from zoning, building, signage or any other reviews. In addition to the normal technical review, permit drawings will be reviewed for consistency with the Design Commission and any other Commission or Board approval conditions. It is the architect/homeowner/builder's responsibility to comply with the Design Commission approval and ensure that building permit plans comply with all zoning code, building permit and signage requirements.

October 9, 2019

Steve Hautzinger AIA, Design Planner
Department of Planning & Community Development

c: Charles Witherington-Perkins, Director of Planning and Community Development, Petitioner, DC File 19-086