

# APPROVED

## MINUTES OF THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS DESIGN COMMISSION

HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.  
JANUARY 11, 2022

**Chair Kubow** called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Jonathan Kubow, Chair  
Ted Eckhardt  
Kirsten Kingsley  
John Fitzgerald

Members Absent: Scott Seyer

Also Present: Nicholas Sahm, OKW Architects for *Arlington Town Square*  
Crystal Holowell, Shive-Hattery for *Consumers Credit Union*  
Richard Silverman, MJK Real Estate for *Consumers Credit Union*  
Steve Hautzinger, Staff Liaison

### REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 14, 2021

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KINGSLEY, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 14, 2021. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

ITEM 1. SIGN VARIATION REVIEWDC#21-085 – Arlington Town Square – 21 S. Evergreen Ave.

Nicholas Sahn, representing *OKW Architects*, was present on behalf of the project.

Mr. Hautzinger summarized Staff comments. Arlington Town Square is an existing multi-tenant shopping center in the Downtown which has approximately 66,000 sf of retail space on the ground level, and an additional 34,000 sf of office space on the second floor. The petitioner is proposing a new "Office Center" blade sign and directory wall sign to help identify the entrance location to the second floor offices as well as to identify the names of the second floor tenants. In addition to the new signs, the petitioner is proposing to stain the existing orange brick at the office entry area with a dark red color to match the existing dark red brick within Arlington Town Square.

The following sign variations are required:

Office Center Blade Sign:

1. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-201.h.6.b to allow a blade sign at 27'-7 3/4" above the pedestrian thoroughfare, where 15 feet is the maximum allowed.
2. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-201.h.6.e to allow a 39.1 sf blade sign, where 6 square feet is the maximum allowed.
3. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-201.h.6.g to allow an internally illuminated blade sign where only external illumination is allowed.

Office Center Directory Sign:

4. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-201.h.3.a, to allow a 66.5 sf directory wall sign, where 30 sf is the maximum allowed.

In 2018, this property received approvals for numerous sign variations for multiple new signs throughout the shopping center to improve their branding and exposure, as well as to improve wayfinding. As part of that package, the following sign variations were approved for a new "Office Center" entrance canopy:

1. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-201.h.2.b, to allow 30 sf of canopy signage, where 4.4 sf is the maximum allowed.
2. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-201.h.2.b, to allow signage to be located on top of a canopy, where lettering is not allowed to project above or beyond the physical dimensions of the awning.

To date, none of the 2018 approved signs have been installed. The current proposal for new "Office Center" signage will take the place of the previous canopy, so the previously approved canopy sign variations should be repealed as part of this review.

The petitioner has submitted a letter stating the need for the proposed signage to provide adequate visibility and wayfinding for the second floor tenants, and that the existing lack of signage has caused hardships for leasing. Staff agrees that improved visibility and wayfinding signage for the second floor office entrance is needed. The proposed blade sign and wall directory are very nicely designed and scaled to fit with the existing character of Arlington Town Square. Staff is in support of the sign variation requests.

With regards to staining the brick color, Staff agrees that this would enhance the office entry area, however there is concern about the finished appearance of the stained brick matching the existing dark red brick walls which have a red tinted mortar and slight color variations among the individual bricks. The Design Commission should evaluate the details of the proposed brick staining technique.

Staff is also concerned at the lack of a canopy above the office entry door. It is recommended that a nice metal canopy be added to highlight the entry location and provide protection above the door. The canopy should be designed to match/complement the proposed blade sign.

Overall, Staff recommends approval of the sign variations, with a condition to repeal the previously approved 2018 office center canopy sign variations, evaluate the brick staining technique, and a recommendation to add a metal canopy.

**Chair Kubow** asked if the petitioner had any comments at this time. **Mr. Sahm** thanked Steve for his presentation. With regards to staining the brick, he said that in a project such as this, the typical application they use is a Nawkaw stain with a pre-treat and manufacturer's specification cleaner. Those will be custom matched and stained to match the adjacent tenant at the corner, field matched, and then submitted and approved at the location.

**Mr. Hautzinger** asked if each brick would be stained individually and what the mortar color would be. **Mr. Sahm** said each brick is stained individually and the mortar color is typically the same tinting as the brick.

The commissioners summarized their comments. **Commissioner Eckhardt** said that when he first looked at this project, he felt it was a very needed element to improve visibility and let people know there is office space upstairs; he was surprised it did not happen sooner. He liked the idea of a blade sign so it can be seen, because the entrance to the second-floor is buried in the corner, and highlighting the corner with a stained masonry is a great idea. The existing white panels above the entrance door and window, as well as on other elevations, will really pop when the brick at the office entry area is stained the dark red color, and he suggested adding an address or something to the panel. He had no issues with the method of staining the brick, which he is familiar with and is a very successful way of colorizing brick. He was in favor of the sign variations that will be a great improvement for visibility and hopefully help with leasing of the second-floor space.

**Commissioner Kingsley** agreed with Commissioner Eckhardt's comments, specifically that the existing limestone panels will benefit from the dark red stain color. She asked if the existing darker brick on the façade will remain and **Mr. Sahm** said yes. **Commissioner Kingsley** also asked for clarification of the location of the tenant board sign; it is shown below the accent in the rendering and above the accent in the drawing. She preferred it below the accent as shown in the rendering. **Mr. Sahm** said it should be as shown in the rendering. **Mr. Hautzinger** said that there appears to be a drafting error, but it is a good observation that the placement of the tenant board sign should be coordinated with the existing brick banding. **Commissioner Kingsley** also said that because the end of the blade sign will be lit, Staff should review the intensity of that light, and she pointed out that the rendering shows some new wall sconce light fixtures, which **Mr. Sahm** said will be provided as shown. **Commissioner Kingsley** also referred to the 2018 sign variation approval that eliminated the limestone ball on top, and **Mr. Sahm** replied that they intend to keep the limestone ball element that occurs at other locations throughout the site; there is no plan to remove those limestone balls at this time.

**Commissioner Fitzgerald** agreed with the comments made so far. He was open to something being added on the limestone panel above the entry door, which he felt was the purpose of the panel, and he agreed with Staff's suggestion to add a canopy. As much as this area can be beefed up, the better. He also asked how the office tenant signage will look like if just one tenant leases the entire space, or if there are vacancies. **Mr. Sahm** said the intent is that the top of the multi-tenant sign will be internally illuminated, and the remaining tenant panels will have specific letter sets (6-inches). According to ownership, if the entire upper level is leased by one tenant, that tenant would only maintain the first tenant panel with the 6-inch letter set height, and the remaining panels would be blank until such time as future tenants change. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** said this was unusual and asked if there is a way to solve that situation if it occurred. **Mr. Sahm** said each panel is replaceable and will be designed as additional tenants are leased or the leasing changes. If a single tenant leases the entire space, having one tenant panel on the entire sign could be addressed at that time. To this point, ownership has requested that it stay within the 6-inch letter set just to maintain visibility throughout the site. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** stated for the record that if that ever happened, he would open to the tenant name and a small logo on the sign; he would rather see something like that versus an all blank sign.

**Chair Kubow** agreed with the commissioners' comments; this will be a vast improvement on a development that we want to stay occupied and want to stay healthy. He was excited to see how the mural looks, which will be a nice feature. He was in support of the project as proposed.

**Chair Kubow** asked if there were any public comments on the project and there was no response from those in the audience.

**Chair Kubow** asked if the commissioners had any further comments at this time. **Commissioner Eckhardt** asked the other commissioners how they felt about the suggestion to add a canopy above the office entry door, because he was inclined to make a motion that will allow a canopy, such as a thin, rectilinear shape similar to the blade sign, that will be able to shield water above the door, maybe project from the building about 2-1/2-feet. He also supported Commissioner Fitzgerald's comments about the office center directory sign and the possibility of one tenant leasing the entire second-floor and wanting to fill the entire directory sign with their signage. He felt the petitioner should let ownership know that the commission is open to allowing more tenant signage on the directory sign, if there is one tenant for the entire second-floor. **Mr. Sahm** appreciated that and agreed that any tenant who leases the entire space would love the extra signage. **Mr. Hautzinger** clarified that some of the existing second-floor tenants already have wall signage that is shown on the photos submitted. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** said that he never noticed those second floor signs.

**Commissioner Kingsley** said she was in favor of some type of simple canopy above the office entry door, which could be reviewed by Staff because it would be different from the canopy that was approved in 2018. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** was in favor of that as well.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, TO RECOMMEND TO THE VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING SIGN VARIATION REQUEST FOR ARLINGTON TOWN SQUARE LOCATED AT 27 S. EVERGREEN AVENUE:**

**OFFICE CENTER BLADE SIGN:**

1. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-201.H.6.B TO ALLOW A BLADE SIGN AT 27'-7 3/4" ABOVE THE PEDESTRIAN THOROUGHFARE, WHERE 15 FEET IS THE MAXIMUM ALLOWED.
2. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-201.H.6.E TO ALLOW A 39.1 SF BLADE SIGN, WHERE 6 SQUARE FEET IS THE MAXIMUM ALLOWED.
3. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-201.H.6.G TO ALLOW AN INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED BLADE SIGN WHERE ONLY EXTERNAL ILLUMINATION IS ALLOWED.

**OFFICE CENTER DIRECTORY SIGN:**

4. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-201.H.3.A, TO ALLOW A 66.5 SF DIRECTORY WALL SIGN, WHERE 30 SF IS THE MAXIMUM ALLOWED.

**THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE PLANS RECEIVED 12/6/21, FEDERAL, STATE, AND VILLAGE CODES, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES, THE ISSUANCE OF ALL REQUIRED PERMITS, AND THE FOLLOWING:**

1. REPEAL THE PREVIOUSLY APPROVED 2018 OFFICE CENTER CANOPY SIGN VARIATIONS.
2. A SUGGESTION TO ADD A SMALL CANOPY WITHOUT SIGNAGE ABOVE THE OFFICE ENTRY DOOR, TO BE REVIEWED BY STAFF OR BROUGHT BACK TO THIS COMMISSION FOR REVIEW.
3. THIS REVIEW DEALS WITH ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED TO BE AN APPROVAL OF, OR TO HAVE ANY OTHER IMPACT ON, NOR REPRESENT ANY TACIT APPROVAL OR SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED LAND USE OR 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 PETITIONER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO INCORPORATE ALL REQUIREMENTS LISTED ON THE CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS INTO THE PERMIT DRAWINGS, AND TO ENSURE THAT BUILDING PERMIT PLANS AND SIGN PERMIT PLANS COMPLY WITH ALL ZONING CODE, BUILDING CODE AND SIGN CODE REQUIREMENTS.

ECKHARDT, AYE; KINGSLEY, AYE; FITZGERALD, AYE; KUBOW, AYE.  
ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

**Mr. Hautzinger** commented that sign variations required Village Board review and approval.

A resident who lives at Sigwalt & Evergreen arrived at the meeting. She said she received public notification for this meeting but it did not indicate which meeting room it was being held in Village Hall, and she just spent 15 minutes trying to find this meeting room. She wanted to know what the variations are for and **Mr. Hautzinger** provided a brief overview. The resident was okay with the request.