

## DRAFT

MINUTES OF  
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS  
DESIGN COMMISSION  
HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.  
MARCH 8, 2022

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

Members Present: Jonathan Kubow, Chair  
Ted Eckhardt  
Kirsten Kingsley  
Scott Seyer

Members Absent: John Fitzgerald

Also Present: Robert Lisk, Lisk Homes for 739 N. Belmont Ave.  
Jackie Lewis, Owner of Forbici Salon  
Steve Hautzinger, Planning Staff Liaison

### REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 22, 2022

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SEYER, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 22, 2022. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

## ITEM 2. SIGN VARIATION REVIEW

### DC#22-001 – Forbici Salon – 7 S. Highland Ave.

Jackie Lewis, owner of *Forbici Salon*, was present on behalf of the project.

Mr. Hautzinger summarized Staff comments. Forbici Salon is an existing business in the Downtown. They are proposing to install two small blade signs to the bottom of the existing awning frames above the storefront windows on each side of the entrance to their salon. The business currently has a small 9 sf wall sign next to their entrance doors, and signage on the awnings above their storefront.

Per Chapter 30 sign code, each business in the Downtown is allowed only two of the following four types of signs: wall sign, awning sign, blade sign, and plaque sign. Since Forbici Salon already has a wall sign and awning signs, a variation is required to also allow the use of blade signs. Additionally, per code, only one blade sign is allowed per street frontage, so a variation is required to allow two blade signs. Finally, a variation is required to allow blade signs with 7'-6" of clearance above the public sidewalk, where blade signs are required to maintain a minimum clearance of 8-feet above a pedestrian thoroughfare.

1. A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-201.h.6.a, to allow two blade signs, where each business shall be permitted no more than one blade sign for each street it fronts on.
2. A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-201.h.6.b, to allow blade signs with 7'-6" of clearance above the public sidewalk, where blade signs are required to maintain a minimum clearance of eight feet above a pedestrian thoroughfare.
3. A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-201.h.9, to allow a business with three types of signage, where only two of the following four types of signs are allowed: wall sign, awning sign, blade sign, and plaque sign.

The petitioner has submitted a letter addressing the hardship criteria, stating that due to the undeveloped site across the street and the parking garage to the south, their existing awning and wall signage receives limited visibility. They are requesting the proposed blade signs to improve their visibility to foot traffic and passing vehicles. They also state that 7'-6" is enough clearance from the sidewalk for pedestrians, which is minimal due to the existing benches located beneath their awnings.

Mr. Hautzinger said that Staff agrees that the location of this business does have less visibility than other businesses that are located in the middle of the Downtown. Staff also agrees that 7'-6" of clearance to the proposed blade signs is adequate for pedestrians, noting that only 7 feet of clearance is required for awnings. Also, since the existing Forbici wall sign, the existing awning signage, and the proposed blade signs are all quite small and understated, in this unique case, Staff does not object to the use of three types of signage, where only two are allowed. Finally, Staff does not object to the use of two blade signs instead of one since it works well to frame out the entry doors, and the combined 3 sf size of the two blade signs is still less than the allowed 6 sf size for a single blade sign.

Staff recommends approval to the Village Board for the following sign variations for *Forbici Salon* at 7 S. Highland Avenue:

1. A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-201.h.6.a, to allow two blade signs, where each business shall be permitted no more than one blade sign for each street it fronts on.
2. A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-201.h.6.b, to allow blade signs with 7'-6" of clearance above the public sidewalk, where blade signs are required to maintain a minimum clearance of eight feet above a pedestrian thoroughfare.
3. A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-201.h.9, to allow a business with three types of signage, where only two of the following four types of signs are allowed: wall sign, awning sign, blade sign, and plaque sign.

This recommendation is subject to compliance with the plans received 1/12/22, awning measurements received 2-10-22, Federal, State, and Village Codes, regulations, and policies, and the issuance of all required permits, and the following conditions:

1. 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.

The petitioner had no comments at this time.

The commissioners summarized their comments. **Commissioner Kingsley** said the proposed new signage will be a really good addition to the business and help to clarify the entrance. The new signs will also help with visibility from Campbell Street and from the parking lot to the south. She was glad to hear that the required height for an awning is 7', and that only 1.5 sf is proposed for each blade sign when code allows 6 sf for a blade sign. If the petitioner thinks this is what is good for the business, then she has no issue with that.

**Commissioner Eckhardt** had no objections to the sign package being proposed. **Commissioner Seyer** was in support of improving the visibility and the success of local business; however, he was concerned about setting a precedent. He asked what the rationale will be when another business comes in and wants something similar and there ends up being a lot of blade signs. What makes this petitioner unique? **Mr. Hautzinger** replied that Staff supports this request because the petitioner's existing signage is relatively minimal, and the proposed blade signs are minimal as well, whereas another business might have a much larger wall sign already, or really bold awnings, which might then be too much. Since a variation would be required for any business that might want to do the same thing, a formal Design Commission review will be required where the commissioners can evaluate the requests on a case-by-case basis. That being said, it might be a good thing if other businesses in the Downtown add similar blade signs which work really well for pedestrian visibility. **Commissioner Seyer** agreed that a few more of these signs might make it a more pleasant experience for shoppers, but if we are going to allow this then we have to be diligent about when there are too many of them. He had reservations for future signage based on this precedent.

**Commissioner Eckhardt** appreciated Commissioner Seyer's concerns about consistency and setting a precedent; however, in this case, he felt the petitioner's request was reasonable because their business is on a narrow street that makes it difficult to find storefronts and identify their front door. For that reason, he felt the blade signs were important and he was comfortable supporting the variations required. He added that future requests for other businesses will be reviewed individually and evaluated by this commission. **Mr. Hautzinger** pointed out that the vacant property across the street is unusual in the downtown which makes this request unique and contributes to this petitioner's hardship. **Commissioner Eckhardt** added that if and when something gets built across the street, this street will become a tunnel, making it difficult to see the petitioner's signage until you have driven past it. **Chair Kubow** agreed and he understood the concerns about setting a precedent; however, he felt the visibility of this location was negatively impacted by the vacant property across the street. He was in support of the variations.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KINGSLEY, TO RECOMMEND TO THE VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING SIGN VARIATION REQUEST FOR *FORBICI SALON* LOCATED AT 7 S. HIGHLAND AVENUE:**

1. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-201.H.6.A, TO ALLOW TWO BLADE SIGNS, WHERE EACH BUSINESS SHALL BE PERMITTED NO MORE THAN ONE BLADE SIGN FOR EACH STREET IT FRONTS ON.
2. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-201.H.6.B, TO ALLOW BLADE SIGNS WITH 7'-6" OF CLEARANCE ABOVE THE PUBLIC SIDEWALK, WHERE BLADE SIGNS ARE REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN A

MINIMUM CLEARANCE OF EIGHT FEET ABOVE A PEDESTRIAN THOROUGHFARE.

3. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-201.H.9, TO ALLOW A BUSINESS WITH THREE TYPES OF SIGNAGE, WHERE ONLY TWO OF THE FOLLOWING FOUR TYPES OF SIGNS ARE ALLOWED: WALL SIGN, AWNING SIGN, BLADE SIGN, AND PLAQUE SIGN.

THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE PLANS RECEIVED 1/12/22, AWNING MEASUREMENTS RECEIVED 2/10/22, FEDERAL, STATE, AND VILLAGE CODES, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES, THE ISSUANCE OF ALL REQUIRED PERMITS, AND THE FOLLOWING:

1. 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 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.

Mr. Hautzinger clarified that the Design Commission is a recommending body to the Village Board for sign variations, and Village Board approval is required. He will work with the petitioner to schedule the review with the Village Board.

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