

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS DESIGN COMMISSION

HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.
SEPTEMBER 13, 2022

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

Members Present: Jonathan Kubow, Chair
Scott Seyer
Kirsten Kingsley

Members Absent: Ted Eckhardt
John Fitzgerald

Also Present: Jim Cochran, JRC Design Build for *1627 N. Yale Ct.*
Joe Muran, Muran Architects for *205 W. Euclid Ave.*
Maribeth Shover, Timeless Homes for *205 W. Euclid Ave. & 1214 E. Kensington Rd.*
Lisa Staszek, Parvin-Clauss Sign for *155 E. Algonquin Rd.*
Steve Hautzinger, Planning Staff

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FOR AUGUST 23, 2022

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KINGSLEY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SEYER, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 23, 2022. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

ITEM 5. SIGN VARIATION REVIEW**DC#22-049 – 155 E. Algonquin Rd.**

Lisa Staszek, representing *Parvin-Clauss Sign*, was present on behalf of the project.

Mr. Hautzinger summarized Staff comments. The subject property is the former Daily Herald office building which has been vacant for many years. The petitioner is planning to renovate the building to become a new medical office building. At this time, the petitioner is marketing the building for lease, and they are proposing to install two large leasing banners at the top of the building to face the I-90 tollway. The proposed banners are 420 sf and 840 sf for a total of 1,260 sf, where the total square footage allowed for temporary signs is not allowed to exceed 64 sf, with no individual sign exceeding 32 sf. The following variation is required to allow the oversized signs:

1. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-601a, to allow two temporary signs of 420 sf and 840 sf for a total of 1,260 sf, where the total square footage allowed for temporary signs shall not exceed 64 sf, with no individual sign exceeding 32 sf.

The petitioner has submitted a letter stating the unique circumstances and hardship that justify the proposed banners is due to the building's unique location which is only visible from the I-90 tollway where traffic is traveling at 60+ mph. Furthermore, the grade around the building sits much lower than the toll road and the building is setback a significant distance from the roadway.

Staff has concerns about the size of the proposed temporary signage, and permanent signs of this size would not be supported. The only other similar situation is a previous variation that was approved in 2013 for Northwest Crossings which allowed 300 sf of leasing signage to face Route 53, which is significantly less than the proposed 1,260 sf. However, the site grade of Northwest Crossings is on the same level as Route 53, allowing good visibility for the leasing signs mounted on grade close to the frontage road, whereas the subject property site grade is much lower than I-90 making a typical ground-mounted lease sign not visible from the road.

Staff acknowledges that the subject property is a unique situation since it does not have frontage on Algonquin or Arlington Heights Road, and it is only visible from the I-90 tollway. Due to the low site grade, mounting the banners on the building places them at a height where they can be seen from I-90. Also, it should be noted that this building is located within the South Arlington Heights Road corridor, where the South Arlington Heights Road Corridor Plan has been adopted to promote new development in this area. Leasing of this long term vacant building can contribute to this goal of revitalizing this area.

Based on these unique circumstances and hardships, oversized temporary signs are justified. Based on the viewing distance of approximately 575 feet from I-90 east as well as the high traffic speed, Staff does not object to the proposed banners that are in the range of 575 sf. Staff recommends approval of the requested sign variation subject to a time limit being established for the removal of the signage. It is recommended that the requested temporary signage be removed in two years, or upon 50% leasing of the property, whichever is sooner.

Chair Kubow asked who makes the decision with regards to the time limit expiration. Mr. Hautzinger replied that the time limit is a suggestion from Staff, which the Design Commission can either agree or disagree with, and then this commission's recommendation will go to the Village Board for final approval of the sign variation.

Ms. Staszek said she is with Parvin-Clauss Sign Company, representing Bradford Allen who is asking for approval of the sign variation needed to allow these two temporary banners on the building. This building requires larger banners because of the setbacks from the expressway and the large lettering is needed to be visible and to draw attention and interest to this building that is completely empty. She stressed the importance of finding tenants for this building, which is being repositioned as a medical facility.

The commissioners summarized their comments. **Commissioner Seyer** understood the need for the banners but questioned if the larger one had to be the full width of the building; it just looks awkward as proposed and he suggested that it only be the full width of the window band. **Ms. Staszek** said that reducing the size of the larger banner would bring down the height of the letters, and although the other smaller banner could be made smaller without impacting the signage, they did not want to change the shape of one and not the other. They are hoping to have the building leased out and the banners removed sooner than the 2 year time limit. **Commissioner Seyer** understood and was in favor of the banners as proposed.

Commissioner Kingsley had a similar thought with the banners; however, it was the height of them that she felt could be better if they were the same height as the strip windows. She agreed that the banner as proposed looks heavy and detracts from the architecture of the building; however, a 2 year time limit helps the situation and the angle of the banners draw the eye in. She saw the need to have large signage that is temporary, and said the banners are tastefully done; therefore, she would lean in support of the variation request.

Chair Kubow felt the same way and said this commission wants to help in any way to get this building leased and bring new life to this building that is a pretty interesting design that is not built much these days. The signs are temporary and there will be an expiration of 2 years, so he is in support.

Commissioner Seyer suggested holding back the diagonal edge of the banner by about one-foot from the diagonal edge of the building which would make it appear even more interesting and more tasteful. He felt the font size could remain as proposed, but the overall banner size be slightly reduced to create a border around all four sides. **Ms. Staszek** replied that a complete field survey would need to be done of the building and actual measurements taken in order to get the exact cut size of everything; however, she felt there should not be an issue with adding a border as suggested.

Commissioner Kingsley reiterated her concerns about the height of the banner; she preferred to see a border added between the window and the bottom of the banner. **Ms. Staszek** said the sign needs to be attached to the building wall and not the window mullions, so there will be a small border between the windows and the banner. **Commissioner Seyer** did not want to see the banner much smaller, but felt that having a border around all four sides would be better. **Commissioner Kingsley** agreed.

Commissioner Seyer suggested holding back the edge of the banner on the vertical side to align with the window below, and using that same dimension for a border on all four sides of the banner. However, if the petitioner feels that would be too small and will be a detriment to marketing the building, then seeing a comparison of the two sizes would be helpful. **Mr. Hautzinger** asked if the petitioner could obtain the necessary field measurements and provide more precise drawings prior to the Village Board meeting, and **Ms. Staszek** said she could provide that information next week.

Chair Kubow asked if there was any public comment on the project and there was no response from the audience.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER SEYER, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KINGSLEY, TO RECOMMEND TO THE VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING SIGN VARIATION REQUEST FOR 155 E. ALGONQUIN ROAD:

1. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-601A, TO ALLOW TWO TEMPORARY SIGNS OF 420 SF AND 840 SF FOR A TOTAL OF 1,260 SF, WHERE THE TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE ALLOWED FOR TEMPORARY SIGNS SHALL NOT EXCEED 64 SF, WITH NO INDIVIDUAL SIGN EXCEEDING 32 SF.

THIS RECOMMENDATION IS BASED ON THE PLANS RECEIVED 7/20/22, FEDERAL, STATE, AND VILLAGE

CODES, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES, THE ISSUANCE OF ALL REQUIRED PERMITS, AND THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. A REQUIREMENT THAT THERE BE A BORDER SO THAT YOU CAN SEE THE STONE WALL ON ALL FOUR SIDES OF THE BANNER, APPROXIMATELY THE SAME SIZE AS THE DISTANCE FROM THE EDGE OF THE VERTICAL WALL TO THE WINDOW BELOW.
2. THE TEMPORARY SIGNAGE SHALL BE REMOVED IN TWO YEARS, OR UPON 50% LEASING OF THE PROPERTY, WHICHEVER IS SOONER.
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, 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.

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