

MINUTES OF
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
DESIGN COMMISSION

HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.
JANUARY 24, 2023

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

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

Members Absent: Scott Seyer

Also Present: Ryan Schulz, *AH School District 25* for Dryden School
Don Hansen & Mike Henderson, *STR Partners*, 350 W. Ontario St., Chicago
Crystal Holowell, *Shive-Hattery* for Consumers Credit Union
Steve Hautzinger, Planning Staff

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 20, 2022

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 20, 2022. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

ITEM 3. SIGN VARIATION REVIEW**DC#22-077 – Consumers Credit Union – 950 E. Rand Rd.**

Crystal Holowell, representing Shive-Hattery, was present on behalf of this project.

Mr. Hautzinger presented Staff comments. Consumers Credit Union is a new business at the Southpoint Shopping Center. They are currently building a new free-standing building on the site facing Rand Road. The new building is planned to have two code-compliant wall signs with the primary wall sign facing Rand Road, and a secondary smaller wall sign facing Jane Avenue. In addition to their wall signs, Consumers Credit Union is requesting a dedicated ground sign to be located adjacent to their new building facing Rand Road.

1. A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-302.a, to allow 8 ground signs, where 7 is the maximum allowed per a previously approved sign variation, and 6 is the maximum allowed per code (one for each building).

Mr. Hautzinger presented history and background for the ground signs at Southpoint Shopping Center. Per code, one ground sign is allowed per building. In 1989, a sign variation was approved to allow 6 ground signs at the Southpoint Shopping Center, where a maximum of 5 ground signs were allowed (due to 5 buildings on the site). In June 2022, a sign variation was approved to allow a new dedicated ground sign for the new “At Home” retail store that is moving into the existing building formerly occupied by Bif Furniture, bringing the total number of ground signs at the Southpoint Shopping Center to 7.

The new Consumer Credit Union building currently under construction will bring the total number of buildings at the shopping center to 6, and the requested ground sign will bring the total number of ground signs to 8. A new variation is required to allow the proposed additional sign.

The petitioner has submitted a letter addressing the hardship criteria, which in summary states that the requested ground sign is needed to improve visibility for the business due to the mature trees along Rand Road which limit visibility of the building. The sign is designed to match the new building, and they feel it will be aesthetically pleasing to the area.

Staff is always cautious about sign blight and the amount of signage in the Village. The Consumer Credit Union building is planned to have a large wall sign facing Rand Road, with an additional smaller wall sign on the southeast wall facing Jane Avenue. The petitioner is concerned that the existing row of mature parkway trees along Rand Road will block visibility of their building and wall signs, but Staff feels that the tall height of the mature trees will allow clear visibility under the canopy of the trees. Additionally, the petitioner has reported that as part of Consumer Credit Union’s lease agreement, they are allowed tenant panels on 2 of the 3 existing multi-tenant Southpoint Shopping Center signs located at the corner of Jane Ave & Rand Road and at Palatine Road. They do not have signage rights on the third multi-tenant sign north of their site along Rand Road. **Chair Kubow** asked how many ground signs there are already along Rand Rd. in the Southpoint Center and **Mr. Hautzinger** replied that there are five.

Staff does not agree with the petitioner’s claim that the business has a visibility hardship. The building is facing and parallel to Rand Road which will provide abundant visibility. The business will also have a tenant panel on the ground sign directly adjacent to their building at the corner of Jane Avenue. Since the hardship criteria for granting a sign variation are not met, Staff does not support this request and recommends denial.

Ms. Holowell advised that the goal of Consumers Credit Union is to improve the appearance of properties within Arlington Heights. They feel that the ground sign that was submitted compliments the building that is currently under construction, and the scale is relatively modest compared to some of the other signs on Rand Rd. The overall scale and materials would complement that area and make it better. **Ms. Holowell** pointed out that further southeast on Rand Road there are other commercial properties similar in size and some closer to Rand Road that have both wall

signs and monument signs. She asked that this precedent be taken into consideration. In regards to the hardship criteria not being met, they are willing to look into other options, including modifying the appearance or size of the sign as currently proposed, or relocating it to be more centered between the At Home sign that was previously approved and the existing multi-tenant sign at Jane Avenue.

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

The commissioners summarized their comments. **Commissioner Eckhardt** asked where someone might turn into the shopping center when going east on Rand Road and driving past the Consumers Credit Union building, and **Mr. Hautzinger** advised that they would utilize the new driveway being added next to the new At Home sign. **Commissioner Eckhardt** said that the scale of the proposed sign is modest and lower in profile than the At Home store sign, but similar to the Chili's sign. He was okay with the variation request to allow the new ground sign.

Commissioner Fitzgerald was not in favor of the proposed ground sign. He felt that having the option to add signage on the existing multi-tenant ground sign, as well as having a wall sign on the southeast corner of the building and the front of the building was sufficient because the trees will not hide the signs. He really did not want to set the precedent for other businesses.

Commissioner Kingsley said the proposed ground sign is nicely designed and she liked that the petitioner did not ask for a larger sign. Driving northwest on Rand Road it will be seen from the street. She almost would rather see another wall sign, although she acknowledged it is not allowed by code. **Commissioner Kingsley** understood Staff's opinion on the proposed ground sign, but she also appreciates that the sign is nicely designed and placed, and it does make more sense now that the At Home store will be adding a new entry drive.

Chair Kubow wanted to be fair and equitable and see the petitioner succeed at this location; it is nice to see a new building at this shopping center. He felt the proposed ground sign is small, well designed and respectful, and although he felt the business would most likely do fine without the sign, it could be helpful to drive a little more business, which he wanted to be supportive of. He was in support of the ground sign and felt it would not add to sign blight at the center, although he questioned if the location of the ground sign is the right one.

Commissioner Eckhardt asked for clarification about access into this shopping center when travelling from the west; he was thinking about a possible issue or hardship with the arrival on this site. **Mr. Hautzinger** pointed out where the two primary entrances to the site are located.

Commissioner Fitzgerald suggested a straw vote from the commissioners before a motion is made. **Commissioner Kingsley** appreciated hearing comments from Staff and the other commissioners about the sign; however, she was okay with the new ground sign that she felt would not hurt because it is small and pointed out that landscaping will help soften the sign. Other than building signage, there is not signage when traveling southeast on the other side of Rand Road, so this ground sign would provide another opportunity for people to see the sign one more time to be able to turn onto Jane Avenue. **Commissioner Eckhardt** and **Chair Kubow** were in support of the ground sign. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** was not in support of the sign.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KINGSLEY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, TO RECOMMEND TO THE VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING SIGN VARIATION REQUEST FOR *CONSUMERS CREDIT UNION* AT 950 E. RAND ROAD:

1. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-302.A, TO ALLOW 8 GROUND SIGNS, WHERE 7 IS THE MAXIMUM ALLOWED PER A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED SIGN VARIATION, AND 6 IS THE MAXIMUM ALLOWED PER CODE (ONE FOR EACH BUILDING).

THIS RECOMMENDATION IS BASED ON THE PLANS RECEIVED 10/26/22, OVERALL SITE SIGNAGE PLAN RECEIVED 1/3/23, 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.

KINGSLEY, AYE; ECKHARDT, AYE; KUBOW, AYE; FITZGERALD, NAY.
MOTION CARRIED.