

# APPROVED

## MINUTES OF THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS DESIGN COMMISSION

HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.  
FEBRUARY 14, 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: Lee Norton, *Nottingham Builders* for 1518 N. Vail Ave.  
Ryan Schulz, *AH School District 25* for Olive-Mary Stitt School & Patton School  
Don Hansen & Mike Henderson, *STR Partners*, for Olive-Mary & Patton School  
Chris Smalec, *Stratus Unlimited* for BMO Harris Bank  
Steve Hautzinger, Planning Staff

### REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FOR JANUARY 10, 2023

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2023. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

### REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FOR JANUARY 24, 2023

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 24, 2023. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

**ITEM 4. SIGN VARIATION REVIEW****DC#22-083– BMO Harris Bank – 630 W. Northwest Highway**

Chris Smalec, representing *BMO Bank*, was present on behalf of this project.

Mr. Hautzinger presented Staff comments. BMO Bank has a new building currently under construction near the intersection of Euclid Avenue and Northwest Highway. This property is a thru-lot with frontage on two streets, which is a unique circumstance of this proposal. The petitioner is proposing four wall signs; one wall sign on each side of the building, a code compliant ground sign, and two small code compliant directional ground signs. Per code, only one wall sign is allowed per street frontage, so the following variations are required to allow the proposed four wall signs where only two are allowed.

1. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-402.a Number, to allow four wall signs, where only two wall signs are allowed.
2. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-403.a Dimensions, to allow a 21.6 sf wall sign on the southeast wall of the building, where 0 sf is allowed
3. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-403.a Dimensions, to allow a 21.6 sf wall sign on the northwest wall of the building, where 0 sf is allowed.

All four signs are the identical size and design, and are all internally illuminated. The petitioner has submitted a letter addressing the criteria for reviewing a sign variation stating that they feel all of the proposed wall signs serve a purpose, as the subject property is a unique shape with multiple points of entry which is a disadvantage and a hardship. Due to the site constraints, the main building entrance had to be located on the side, therefore a sign is needed to identify the entrance. The drive-thru is also located on the side, therefore a sign is needed there for identification, and the ground sign is located on the north, next to the driveway off Euclid, so there is no ground sign on the south. The petitioner states that the business cannot function without adequate visibility for their customers trying to identify their destination.

Mr. Hautzinger presented a diagram showing where all the wall signs would be located.

Overall, the proposed wall signs are nicely designed, modest in scale, and they work well with the architectural design of the building. Staff acknowledges that this through lot site is a unique layout with access from Euclid Avenue on the north and Northwest Highway on the south. Since only one ground sign is allowed per code and the applicant has chosen to locate the ground sign facing Euclid Avenue, the driveway along Northwest Highway does have less visibility. Therefore, Staff does not object to the additional wall sign located above the building entrance on the southeast wall which works well to draw attention to both the building entrance as well as the driveway entrance.

However, Staff does not agree with the need for the fourth wall sign located on the northwest wall at the end of the drive through. The fourth wall sign has limited visibility due to the neighboring building to the west, and it is not necessary to identify the building. Furthermore, of the nine existing free-standing bank buildings in Arlington Heights, only one building has more than two wall signs. A fourth wall sign is unnecessary and excessive, and it would be an unfair advantage. Staff recommends denial of the variation for four wall signs, but recommends approval of a variation for three wall signs.

Mr. Smalec provided street view photos of the building under construction. He said that the fourth wall sign would be located on the drive-thru tower at the end of the drive-thru lanes and would be visible when traveling east on Northwest Highway. It is above the restaurant and tall enough to be visible to help drivers enter the site because if you miss the first entrance, which is a do-not enter, then they would need to go to the second driveway. So seeing the additional sign would be helpful.

Chair Kubow, asked for clarification on which signs Staff is recommending approval of. Mr. Hautzinger replied that Signs S16 and Sign S20 are allowed by code, and Staff is recommending approval of Sign S1 as an additional third

wall sign, where only 2 are allowed. Staff is recommending denial of Sign S2.

**Mr. Smalec** said that due to the oddity of this property, they feel an additional wall sign is warranted, as it would make it much more visible to drivers and prevent customers from missing the entrance to avoid making U-turns on Northwest Highway.

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

**Commissioner Fitzgerald** agreed that it is probably one of the more odd shaped lots that he can remember, but he also agreed with Staff; having the sign on the Northwest Highway side of the building is sufficient, along with the sign on the southeast, the sign on the back (Euclid), plus the ground sign are needed.

**Commissioner Eckhardt** said that the petitioner's photos actually show that Sign S2 is not very visible, especially when you are close. He asked Staff to clarify if the entrance is a one-way drive. **Mr. Hautzinger** replied that the right entrance drive is an entrance only, and the left driveway is an exit only. **Commissioner Eckhardt** said that he could support the fourth wall sign if it helped people to access the site, but they cannot enter into the first driveway anyway.

**Commissioner Eckhardt** also felt that the wall on the end of the drive-thru is a very tall structure, similar to a tall ground sign structure. The wall is 26' tall, where 16'-6" is the maximum allowed height for a ground sign. He said the wall to support the drive-thru canopy does not need to extend up so high, but they have extended it to place the sign way up high to be seen. He felt it was an attractive design and it is a logical place to put a sign; however, he felt the sign teetered a little bit on looking like a ground sign that is too tall. For that reason, he could not support it.

**Commissioner Kingsley** agreed with the comments of both Commissioner Fitzgerald and Eckhardt. She had no further comments.

**Chair Kubow** was in agreement with the other Commissioners, because although this is an odd and unique site, it is also a site that provides a lot of exposure, in his opinion. Inherently, people will see this. **Chair Kubow** said that he wants to support the business to be successful, but he felt the fourth sign was not necessary and was too much for him.

**Commissioner Eckhardt** explained that this commission is a recommending Board to the Village Board, and the petitioner has the right to go to the Village Board, regardless of this commission's recommendation.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KINGSLEY TO RECOMMEND TO THE VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, DENIAL OF THE FOLLOWING SIGN VARIATIONS FOR BMO BANK AT 630 W. NORTHWEST HIGHWAY:**

1. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-402.A NUMBER, TO ALLOW FOUR WALL SIGNS, WHERE ONLY TWO WALL SIGNS ARE ALLOWED.
2. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-403.A DIMENSIONS, TO ALLOW A 21.6 SF WALL SIGN ON THE NORTHWEST WALL OF THE BUILDING, WHERE 0 SF IS ALLOWED.

**AND A RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING SIGN VARIATIONS FOR BMO BANK AT 630 W. NORTHWEST HIGHWAY:**

1. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-402.A NUMBER, TO ALLOW THREE WALL SIGNS, WHERE ONLY TWO WALL SIGNS ARE ALLOWED.
2. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-403.A DIMENSIONS, TO ALLOW A 21.6 SF WALL SIGN ON THE SOUTHEAST WALL OF THE BUILDING, WHERE 0 SF IS ALLOWED.

**THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE PLANS RECEIVED 12/21/22, 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.

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