

APPROVED

MINUTES OF
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
DESIGN COMMISSION MEETING
HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.
JUNE 24, 2014

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

Members Present: Ted Eckhardt, Chair
John Fitzgerald
Jonathan Kubow
Alan Bombick

Members Absent: Anthony Fasolo

Also Present: Jon Ridler, Arlington Heights Chamber of Commerce
Steve Hautzinger, Staff Liaison

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FROM JUNE 10, 2014

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 10, 2014. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Hautzinger suggested changing the order of agenda items tonight since Commissioner Kubow has indicated that he must recuse himself from the Hickory/Kensington Design Guidelines review due to a potential conflict of interest.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER BOMBICK, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW, TO AMEND THE ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS TONIGHT.

ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

ITEM. 1. OTHER BUSINESS - PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

Sandwich Board Signs, Community-Wide

Mr. Hautzinger explained this was a preliminary discussion with the commissioners to determine whether or not this item should move forward as a formal review. As a result of the recently approved Downtown Sandwich Board and Removable Hanging Sign code revisions, the Village Board has asked Staff and the Design Commission to consider expanding sandwich board signage community-wide throughout the Village.

Mr. Hautzinger summarized the issues regarding this topic and the research conducted by Staff. He also gave a power point presentation showing images of existing sandwich board signs.

Chair Eckhardt understood the question to be whether or not the Village should allow sandwich board signs by users outside the Downtown. In fairness, he felt the Village should find a way to allow other users to have tasteful, properly located, somewhat controlled sandwich board signs throughout the Village. **Commissioner Bombick** did not understand the communities that were chosen for comparison, which were Mt. Prospect, Schaumburg and Deer Park, none of which have a real Downtown or the quality of environment being promoted in Arlington Heights. He felt Northbrook, Deerfield, Lake Forest, and even Evanston or Oak Park are more equal or better comparisons. He felt that some of the examples shown by Staff tonight are a response to the economy and a grasping at straws to try to drag people in for any bit of business they can get, which is a different problem. It seems like this is trying to solve the wrong problem, which is a bad business plan, or a poor location, or bad marketing, or just bad economy in that sector. He felt the examples shown tonight at gas stations have always been around and are expected, whereas the rest of these signs are clutter and a fad. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** agreed, and added that the commissioners were supposed to look at design and these signs just look junky and bad.

Mr. Hautzinger pointed out the two primary issues: allowing sandwich board signs outside the Downtown at all, and if allowed, Staff would strongly recommend they not be allowed out by the street and only near the store entrance.

Chair Eckhardt asked the commissioners if there was a circumstance or a crafting of an ordinance where they could support sandwich board signs outside the Downtown. **Commissioner Kubow** said no, because it was too easy to take advantage of. **Commissioner Bombick** said yes, but very limited. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** said he was open but extremely limited. **Chair Eckhardt** said yes, but with limited and well-crafted restrictions, only because he is in the spirit of fairness, however these signs should be controlled and regulated if possible, although he acknowledged it would be a lot of work. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** did not see how these signs could be regulated and would just end up being everywhere. **Chair Eckhardt** felt the rules and regulations recently established for sandwich board signs in the Downtown should be used as a basis for beginning this discussion; however, the kinds of users for these signs need to be identified, with perhaps not all of them qualifying. It appeared as though

there were a few cautious “yes’s” from the commissioners tonight and one “no”, which is because this is an area that needs a lot of care, otherwise it could backfire and end up looking like it is right now.

Commissioner Bombick pointed out that tenant leases may already include information that these types of signs are not allowed on the property, or they are not allowed by public ordinance.

Chair Eckhardt felt the next steps should be to develop language that addresses the following:

1. Sandwich board sign location.
2. How the signs would be supervised and policed.
3. Will sign permit applications with exhibits be required, or would the established ordinance simply allow a user to put up a sandwich board sign and then wait to find out if it was done incorrectly.

He felt there were significant retailers outside the Downtown that are probably thinking what's fair is fair about sandwich signs. **Commissioner Bombick** asked if landlords of the major commercial centers and some of the smaller centers have been asked whether or not they allow these types of signs in their tenant leases, or if they even want these signs on their property. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** encouraged the use of window signage. He also felt that the sandwich board sign examples shown tonight were unattractive and appeared unsafe.

Chair Eckhardt asked if there was any public comment and there was a response from the audience.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jon Ridler, Chamber of Commerce Director, said that he liked the direction the commission was going in. What businesses are telling them is exactly this; they have these signs up. The current sandwich board ordinance talks to the question of location; the sign must be in front of the business and within 5-feet of the storefront, and the Chamber would recommend this be expanded to the north and south side. Businesses are trying to figure out how to bring people into their business and it cannot be policed the way the commissioners want it to be policed. However, if guidelines are established and business owners are educated about what is allowed, it can then be better enforced. He encouraged the commissioners not to spend more time creating another ordinance to allow sandwich board signs for businesses on the north and south side, and simply expand the current ordinance that was recently approved for the Downtown. He also questioned the boundaries of the Downtown, which some business owners are confused about. **Mr. Hautzinger** stated that the recently approved ordinance allowing sandwich board signs in the Downtown applied to the B-5 zoning district only.

Chair Eckhardt felt that the issue of expanding an existing ordinance or creating a new ordinance is probably subject to approval by the Legal Department.

The commissioners wanted to further explore this item. They requested Staff to provide further information for review, including a draft of possible code language.