

APPROVED

MINUTES OF
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
DESIGN COMMISSION MEETING
HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.
APRIL 26, 2016

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

Members Present: Ted Eckhardt, Chair
Anthony Fasolo
Jonathan Kubow

Members Absent: Alan Bombick
John Fitzgerald

Also Present: Tom Abatemarco, Prestigious Home Builders for *1534 N. Walnut Ave.*
Paul Rogner, Par Craft Ltd. for *1126 N. Dryden Ave.*
Sarah & Tom Galla, Owners of *1126 N. Dryden Ave.*
Jereme Smith, Architect for *1515 N. Wilke Rd.*
Barbara Marlas, Founder of *Kensington School*
Charles Marlas for *Kensington School*
John Hague, Hague Architecture for *Kensington School*
Jim Kapustiak, Spaceco Inc. for *Kensington School*
Steve Hautzinger, Staff Liaison

Chair Eckhardt informed the petitioners that a unanimous vote was required for any project to pass tonight, since only 3 of the 5 commissioners are here tonight.

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FROM APRIL 12, 2016
ELECTRONIC SIGNS – POSITION STATEMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS FROM APRIL 12, 2016

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER FASOLO, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 12, 2016 & ELECTRONIC SIGNS – POSITION STATEMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS FROM APRIL 12, 2016. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVED

**MINUTES OF
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
DESIGN COMMISSION MEETING
HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.
APRIL 12, 2016**

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

Members Present: Ted Eckhardt, Chair
Anthony Fasolo
John Fitzgerald
Jonathan Kubow

Members Absent: Alan Bombick

Also Present: Tony VanDijk, DRH Cambridge Homes for *1207 N. Wilke Rd.*
Robyn Swanson, Owner of *1301 E. Kensington Rd.*
Sean McCormack, Architect for *1301 E. Kensington Rd.*
Steve Hautzinger, Staff Liaison

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 29, 2016

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER FASOLO, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 29, 2016. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

Chair Eckhardt asked for a motion to move the Electronic Signs agenda item under 'Old Business' to the end of the agenda.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW, TO MOVE THE AGENDA ITEM 'DC#09-025 VILLAGE-WIDE ELECTRONIC SIGNS' TO THE END OF THE AGENDA. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

ITEM 3. OLD BUSINESS

DC#09-025 – Sign Code Modifications – Village-Wide Electronic Signs

Chair Eckhardt asked the commissioners for their comments after driving around to look at electronic signs throughout other communities.

Commissioner Kubow said that the more he drove around looking at electronic signs, especially through Mt. Prospect, the more he felt strongly in favor of Option #5 – Future Technology, as listed in Staff's Draft Recommendations; however, he would go with what the Design Commission as a body recommends. He was comfortable going in the direction of waiting for better future technology, such as electronic ink signage. He felt that the electronic ink signage was very clean, crisp and classy. After seeing the electronic LED signs that are out there, the worse he felt about them, and as of right now, he was not in the position to approve any electronic signage.

Commissioner Fasolo said he was not at the last meeting when this matter was discussed and Staff presented images and videos of electronic signage in other communities. He did recently visit a few communities to look at electronic signage, and felt that there are some electronic signs out there that are not so bad. He felt that monochromatic red and amber LED signs were not a good option and should not even be considered; however, some of the color LED signs that have more high definition images are pretty nice, although more expensive, and should be considered as options. He felt the electronic sign in downtown Mt. Prospect was not too bad, and he liked it better than Arlington Heights' electronic sign. He felt that the Village needed to better enforce electronic signs because he saw a couple of them inside storefront windows in town, even though they are not allowed by code. He noticed storefront LED signs near Arlington Heights Road and Central with the storefront windows trimmed out in chasing LED lights. **Mr. Hautzinger** acknowledged that this type of LED storefront lighting has been appearing more and more in the Village and needs to be addressed.

Commissioner Fasolo felt that something needed to be put in place regarding electronic signage because the topic has been out there for several years now. He was in favor of Option 2, because major venues such as the Racecourse and theaters should be allowed these types of signs if the signs are done right. He was still opposed to electronic signs in a neighborhood, such as a school or church; however, with the right technology and good aesthetics, it could work well. Existing manual change bulletin boards are pretty bright and he did not think LCD signs were much brighter, and if the operation of signs were limited to certain times, we should consider them. He felt that electronic signs on the highway were fine, although too many signs would resemble Las Vegas or Times Square.

Commissioner Fitzgerald said that he would follow word-for-word what Commissioner Kubow stated.

Chair Eckhardt said that he was only in favor of initially establishing code sections that would allow electronic signs for institutional, educational and religious uses, and each one of them would be reviewed by the Design Commission for size, scale, and appropriateness. The sizes of the permitted electronic signs should be strictly regulated, be small in scale, calm, and appropriate for each individual use. There should also be strict rules about the illumination and exposure to adjacent residential properties. He did not want to see the use of the 3-bulb (LED) color technology, and he was only in favor of black and white signage. The (electronic) ink on white is the only format that he would allow, and the message should be static or still, and not moving. No electronic signs should be allowed at commercial properties for purposes of advertising. The consideration of the number of permitted signs on a property needs to be established, and the number of signs on a single block or street needs to be limited. He is making a conservative initial recommendation. He also pointed out that Mt. Prospect allows electronic signage by special amendment, which does not seem to stop everyone in town from getting one. He does not want to be responsible for cluttering up Arlington Heights with electronic signs, especially since the nicer electronic signs are not yet affordable and the technology is still being developed.

Mr. Hautzinger referred to the DRAFT April 12, 2016 Electronic Signs Position Statement & Recommendation document prepared by Staff for the commissioners' review tonight. He reiterated that the goal is to develop a general overview of the issues related to electronic signage, report on a range of general approaches regarding electronic signs, and recommend an approach for the Village Board to discuss this matter by early June of this year. He reviewed the section called 'Types of Electronic Signs' that was added since the last meeting as a result of gathering more research from sign manufacturers. There are primarily three types of electronic signs: LED, LCD, and Electronic Ink. LED signs are the most common type of electronic sign because of many manufacturers and competitive pricing. They are available in monochromatic or full color and capable of video displays. LCD signs are less common and more expensive than LED signs. They are similar to a high definition television and typically used for close up viewing such as indoor fast food menu signage, outdoor drive-through signage, and bus shelters. Electronic Ink signs have the appearance of printed ink on paper similar to a Kindle e-reader. Electronic Ink technology is currently under development for more widespread use in outdoor signage applications.

Mr. Hautzinger presented a Kindle device as an example of electronic ink technology. He explained that manufacturers of this new technology have communicated to him that outdoor electronic ink signage is not currently a production/commodity product; however, the technology is currently being developed and is beginning to be used in outdoor signage such as gas station signage, primarily in Europe more so than in America. The manufacturer reported that it is only a matter of time until these products are available and they are definitely on the way. Staff is excited about this electronic ink technology and feels there is tremendous potential with it, and it is the solution for electronic signage in residential neighborhoods. He demonstrated that the Kindle does not emit any light and use very low power, and newer Kindle models include internal illumination that can be used for reading in the dark.

Mr. Hautzinger reviewed the three main options to consider:

1. Continue to not allow electronic signs Village-wide.
2. Allow electronic signs Village-wide.
3. Allow limited applications of electronic signage.

He also reviewed the General Approaches / Options for Specific Uses, Locations, and Types of Signs that included the following:

1. Community Wide Commercial Business Electronic Signage
2. Major Tourism Venues
3. Schools, Churches, Government and Park District Facilities
4. I-90 and Route 53
5. Future Technology

Based on discussions with and feedback from the commissioners, Staff is presenting a possible 'Position Statement' for the Design Commissions' review and consideration, although approval tonight was not required. This statement consists of two categories, per the request of the Village Board:

1. What are the issues related to electronic signs?
2. What are the recommendations on how to move forward with this?

Mr. Hautzinger reviewed the five issues relating to electronic signs that include:

1. Image
2. Nuisance
3. Traffic Safety
4. Code Enforcement
5. Environment

Recommendations from Staff, based on input from the Design Commissioners, are as follows:

1. Community-Wide Commercial Business Electronic Signage:
 - a. Continue to not allow electronic LED signs.
Commercial signs should be used for business identity, not advertising.
2. Major Tourism Venues
 - a. Continue to not allow electronic signs.
Major tourism venues may be a good application for electronic signage. However, it may be challenging to draft code language and to predict the possible impacts for these unique, individual electronic sign applications. Review of electronic sign requests for major tourism venues may be best handled through the sign variation process.
3. Schools, Churches, Government and Park District Facilities
 - a. Continue to not allow electronic signs.
Schools, churches, government and Park District facilities do have the need for community message board signage. However, since these uses are typically located within residential neighborhoods, electronic signs should continue to not be allowed. Alternate emerging non-light emitting electronic sign technology, such as electronic ink, should be closely monitored for this application.
4. I-90 and Route 53
 - a. Continue to not allow electronic signs.
Allowing electronic signage along major highways would not directly impact the character within Arlington Heights. However, it may have unintended consequences such as possibly creating a competitive advantage for those businesses with frontage along major highways over similar uses elsewhere in the community, and contributing to signage blight along the highways.
5. Future Technology
 - a. Continue to not allow electronic signs at this time, but monitor the developments in electronic sign technology in the future for new, aesthetically pleasing, environmentally friendly alternatives to current electronic signs, such as electronic ink signage.

Mr. Hautzinger welcomed the feedback from the Design Commissioners on the Issues and Recommendations.

Commissioner Kubow asked if the Sign Code would possibly be changed to reflect the Village's position to not allow electronic signage now, while being open to new technology. **Mr. Hautzinger** replied that at the outcome of this study, Staff will communicate the Design Commission and Village Board's position on electronic signage as individual requests are received. **Commissioner Kubow** said that this would be his recommendation tonight.

Commissioner Fasolo said that electronic ink signage was great; however, until it is available, he was unsure if it should be allowed. He also felt that LCD signs were a good option because they could have a similar appearance as an electronic ink sign. **Mr. Hautzinger** replied that the difference would be the brightness of an LCD sign. **Commissioner Fasolo** felt that LED signs were not the way to go; however, he was not opposed to allowing LCD signs as an option, especially for schools and churches, as long as the brightness and changeability of the message could be controlled. He also was not opposed to allowing uses that are zoned for entertainment such as Arlington Racecourse to have electronic signs, and he felt that electronic signs should be allowed along major highways, on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioner Fitzgerald said that after Staff presented this information in February, he left that meeting feeling mad to think that these signs might be allowed in town, and after driving through other communities to look at LED signs, he felt mad about it again, and he is feels the same way tonight. He agreed with all 5 of the issues presented

by Staff, especially the Environmental issues. He felt it was ridiculous in this day and age to approve signs that consume energy, even during the day. He would rather see Arlington Racecourse keep their existing entrance sign in flowers than allow an electronic sign, and he had the same feeling about the Metropolis Theater. He could not see allowing LED signs for these types of venues, and he has never been in favor of allowing electronic signs for schools, churches or government. He also was opposed to adding more light pollution along the highways with this type of sign.

Commissioner Fitzgerald was in favor of Recommendation #5, to not allow electronic signs at this time and continue to monitor the developments in electronic sign technology in the future. He reiterated that he has consistently felt this way since the first time this matter was reviewed, and although he is trying to keep an open mind, the more he learns about electronic signs the angrier he gets. He felt the Village Board needed to see the same presentation Staff gave to the commissioners, which was a powerful presentation, and **Mr. Hautzinger** agreed.

Chair Eckhardt concurred with Commissioner Fitzgerald. He was encouraged by future technology of electronic ink signage because he firmly believed that churches and schools need to get their messages out, although it must be done in a tasteful and quiet way, and electronic ink signage seems to be the solution. He was concerned that allowing LCD signs would result in a loss of control with the message changing. He hoped that the Design Commissioners as designers would maybe take a harder line than the Village Board takes because of pressures from businesses. He clarified that he is pro-business and he is okay with signs that promote a business; however, he was very concerned about all of the LED signs that exist in Mt. Prospect that look cheap, and he did not want Arlington Heights to be like that. He was putting the brakes on electronic signs for this reason.

Mr. Hautzinger asked if the commissioners were in agreement with the 5 issues relating to the Position Statement, and the commissioners unanimously agreed. He also reviewed the 5 Staff recommendations, and asked the commissioners for their feedback. The commissioners all agreed with Staff's recommendation for #1: Community-Wide Commercial Business Electronic Signage; #2: Major Tourism Venues; and #3: Schools, Churches, Government and Park District Facilities. With regards to Staff's Recommendation #4: I-90 and Route 53, **Commissioners Fitzgerald, Kubow and Chairman Eckhardt** were opposed to allowing LED signs along the highways, and **Commissioner Fasolo** was in favor of allowing them only through the variation process. The commissioners unanimously agreed with Staff's Recommendation #5: Future Technology.

Mr. Hautzinger reiterated that the goal is for the Design Commission to make a motion to approve a Position Statement and Recommendations to the Village Board on electronic signage. He asked if the commissioners were prepared to make a motion tonight based on their feedback.

Chairman Eckhardt wanted to amend Recommendation #3: Schools, Churches, Government and Park District Facilities, to allow only electronic ink signs. **Commissioner Fasolo** agreed and felt that electronic ink signs should be allowed for schools, churches, government and Park District facilities now and not when technology is further developed.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY CHAIRMAN ECKHARDT, TO AMEND STAFF RECOMMENDATION #3: SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, GOVERNMENT AND PARK DISTRICT FACILITIES AS FOLLOWS:

1. CONTINUE TO NOT ALLOW ALL ELECTRONIC SIGNS, EXCEPT FOR ELECTRONIC INK SIGNAGE, AS MAY BE APPROVED BY THE DESIGN COMMISSION.

COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD SECONDED BY THE MOTION.

Mr. Hautzinger clarified that the motion should include the Position Statement that includes the issues related to electronic signs, and the 5 Staff recommendations.

Chair Eckhardt stated that there is nobody in the audience to comment on this matter.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY CHAIR ECKHARDT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW, TO APPROVE THE DESIGN COMMISSION POSITION STATEMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS ON ELECTRONIC SIGNAGE, WITH THE FOLLOWING CHANGES:

1. RECOMMENDATION #3: SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, GOVERNMENT AND PARK DISTRICT FACILITIES.
 - A. OPTION 1, CONTINUE TO NOT ALLOW ELECTRONIC SIGNS, EXCEPT FOR ELECTRONIC INK SIGNAGE, AS MAY BE APPROVED BY THE DESIGN COMMISSION.

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

Commissioner Kubow said that this shows that the commissioners are willing to consider a new technology that is still unproven, like electronic ink, and that they like the technology enough to approve it. **Mr. Hautzinger** said that he would revise Recommendation #3 to reflect the motion made tonight in anticipation of the entire matter going before the Village Board. **Chairman Eckhardt** thanked Staff for creating a well drafted document that summarized the commissioners' previous comments and concerns, and the proposed language for the commissioners' review tonight.

APPROVED

**MINUTES OF
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
DESIGN COMMISSION MEETING
HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.
MARCH 29, 2016**

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

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

Members Absent: Anthony Fasolo

Also Present: Ravi Chigurupati, Owner of *915 E. Euclid Ave.*
Tom Buckley, Tom Buckley Architects for *915 E. Euclid Ave.*
Barry O'Neil, Owner of *627 N. Douglas Ave.*
John Haran, E&J Builders for *627 N. Douglas Ave.*
Steve Gawlick, SG Architects for *627 N. Douglas Ave. & 1849 N. Chestnut Ave.*
Peter McGovern, T.P. Carpentry for *1849 N. Chestnut Ave.*
Chad Conley, Owner of 410 N. Derbyshire Ave.
Steve Hautzinger, Staff Liaison

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 8, 2016

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 8, 2016. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

Chair Eckhardt asked for a motion to move the agenda item under 'Old Business' to the end of the agenda.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW TO MOVE THE AGENDA ITEM 'DC#09-025 VILLAGE-WIDE ELECTRONIC SIGNS' TO THE END OF THE AGENDA. COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD SECONDED THE MOTION. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

ITEM 5. OLD BUSINESS

DC#09-025 – Village-Wide Electronic Signs

Mr. Hautzinger said that on February 23, 2016 Staff re-introduced the topic of Village-Wide Electronic Signage to the Design Commission and reminded that per the request of Mayor Hayes, the goal at this time is for the commissioners to develop a general overview of the issues related to electronic signs, and to recommend an approach for the Village Board to discuss this matter by early June. Since the last meeting, Staff has prepared additional research including a survey of other community's electronic sign requirements and numerous photographs and videos of different types of existing electronic signs from other communities, which will be presented tonight to continue the discussion of this topic.

Mr. Hautzinger reviewed the general overriding questions as listed in the Memo titled 'Electronic Signage Restrictions' dated February 17, 2016. He then summarized the feedback given by the commissioners at the meeting on February 23, 2016, which included concerns about sign pollution, electronic sign animation/movement, the value of electronic signs for business advertisements versus public message boards, and that overall, the commissioners felt that some amount of electronic signage with restrictions should be allowed.

Mr. Hautzinger reviewed the summary of research from other communities that included which communities allow some form of electronic sign by right (with restrictions), which communities do not allow electronic signs at all, which communities allow electronic signs through a conditional or special permit/use, which communities do not allow electronic signs for businesses, and which communities only allow electronic signs for government use. He mentioned Schaumburg as an example of a community that does not allow electronic signs, except for governmental use. He gave the example of Golf Road in Schaumburg which is a major retail corridor. If electronic LED signs were allowed, this corridor could possibly look horrible with countless electronic signs at every store, restaurant, and car dealership, but instead it has a nice appearance with landscaped parkways and quality signage.

Mr. Hautzinger presented and reviewed photos and videos of electronic signs from surrounding communities such as Mt. Prospect, Prospect Heights, Palatine, and Rolling Meadows. Examples of signs from churches, restaurants, automotive repair, retail businesses, Village, library, fire department, and park district were presented. He explained that the technology of the signs observed used either monochromatic (red or amber) or full color LED displays. The full color signs used a combination of red, blue, and green LEDs to create the full color displays. He reported that overall the electronic LED signs were bright and glaring, and that the true brightness is hard to capture in the photos and videos, and he encouraged the commissioners to visit these signs in person to understand the full impact of them. He reported that all of the signs had changing messages and most utilized flashing, scrolling, animation, and videos. Many of the signs observed were located adjacent to residential properties, which is a concern. Specifically, one of the church signs observed was located in the middle of a residential neighborhood and was blinking, animating, and casting light onto the surrounding houses. Messages on the signs ranged from dancing Easter eggs to hot dog specials, and some signs had burnt out sections of LED lighting which added to the poor appearance of the signs.

After presenting the photos and videos, **Mr. Hautzinger** questioned the value of the advertisement information being communicated on the signs for businesses, as opposed to the value of the information being communicated on the signs for municipalities, schools and churches. **Mr. Hautzinger** presented a photo of an outdoor electronic ink sign and gave an update on this promising alternative to LED signs, possibly for schools and churches in residential neighborhoods. Recent discussions with the manufacturer confirmed that outdoor electronic ink signs operate normally in temperatures down to 10 degrees Fahrenheit, and a heating device can be added to the signs to allow them to operate in sub-zero temperatures. Electronic ink signs do not emit light and have extremely low power consumption. Messages on the signs can be electronically changed, but they do not scroll or animate.

Mr. Hautzinger concluded with a summary of Staff's concerns regarding electronic LED signs:

1. LED displays are bright and glaring.
2. Electronic LED signs in residential neighborhoods are not appropriate.
3. Dozens of electronic signs along commercial corridors create character concerns.
4. Nuisance to adjacent properties, especially residential.
5. Traffic distraction concerns.
6. Electronic Ink signage has great potential as an alternative to LED, especially for school and church message boards.
7. Electronic signs may be appropriate at major tourism venues, such as Arlington International Racecourse, or possibly along I-90.

Commissioner Bombick commented that some of the photos being shown look like old electronic signs with very low resolution that would probably not be allowed today. He added that there is a real variation in the quality of resolution now available for electronic signs, allowing some of these signs to be similar to a television.

Chair Eckhardt said that his office is in Mt. Prospect and he drives past the Mt. Prospect electronic municipal sign a dozen times a day and it really does not bother him; he actually looks at it to read the information being displayed; however, the images being shown tonight make him question his perception of the sign.

Chair Eckhardt had the following comments:

1. He is in favor of only black backgrounds on electronic signs.
2. He wanted a very high resolution required.
3. He is very interested in the electronic ink as an alternative to LED.
4. The scale of electronic signs must be small.
5. If he had to make a decision in one minute, he would say that he liked electronic signs, but he would only support a special use for each sign. He was not in favor of a blanket approval for all commercial properties.
6. He agreed with Staff's example of Golf Road in Schaumburg which could look horrible if littered with electronic LED signs.

Commissioner Fitzgerald had the following comments:

1. He was very bothered by the photo showing two electronic signs across the street from each other on Rand Road, and the impact of seeing two or more electronic signs at one time.
2. He felt that the purpose of a sign should be to locate a business, and signs should not be used for advertising.
3. He disagrees with the idea of allowing electronic signage facing I-90. Some major highways are already littered with electronic signs, but this was not an excuse to litter them more. He preferred to not see all the brightness from signs along highways.
4. He liked the alternative of electronic ink.
5. In general, the electronic sign photos shown tonight by Staff scare him.

Commissioner Bombick had the following comments:

1. The 'Torre & Luke' electronic sign shown by Staff proves the point about resolution; large pixels look crude and very cheap as compared to other electronic signs.
2. We do not need more clutter; we have plenty of it in the daytime and we do not need to extend the pollution to the nighttime.
3. In the case where we would consider an electronic sign on a high volume road or expressway, it should be big enough to be seen or it is a waste of money and a distraction because it cannot be read. The Daily Herald electronic sign was an example of a sign that was too small along the highway.
4. Videos he took of electronic LED billboards show high quality graphics and really good resolution, with a rate of change that does not distract traffic.

5. If we decide to allow electronic signs, we should look to the future with regards to the resolution of electronic signs.
6. McDonald's has video menu board signs inside their restaurants which are a good example of an electronic sign; when the sign is on and not changing it looks just like a printed placard because of the quality of the image and the graphics.
7. Electronic signs should be visually quiet and calm, and not be an advertising format.

Commissioner Kubow had the following comments:

1. After seeing the presentation tonight, the only sign he liked was the changeable panel sign at Southminster Church, which is not an electronic sign. The sign is clean, classy and only backlit.
2. Until it becomes more cost effective for businesses to do high resolution such as 4K or electronic ink, electronic signs should not be allowed across the board.
3. He ignores electronic signs when he drives through other communities and did not realize that there are so many electronic signs in communities such as Mt. Prospect.

Mr. Hautzinger noted that Mount Prospect is one of the communities that requires a Special Use approval for an electronic sign, which shows that just because there is a Special Use process, the quantity of electronic signs can still proliferate.

Chair Eckhardt agreed with Commissioner Bombick's comment that electronic signs need to be quiet and calm, and brightness is the most alarming factor after tonight's presentation. He agreed with Commissioner Fitzgerald's comment about the nature of real information versus advertising on electronic signs. There is a difference between the needs for a church, school or Park District, as compared to a business or fast food establishment. **Mr. Hautzinger** stated that if electronic signs were allowed, then most likely the businesses that already utilize manual change boards would be most interested in an electronic sign, such as McDonalds, Walgreens, or an auto repair business. He also reiterated that the goal is to formulate a recommendation to the Village Board regarding electronic signs to help guide them in their decision on these signs.

Chair Eckhardt said that after seeing the signs presented tonight, he was struck with a higher sense of responsibility in the decision making process of whether to allow electronic signs. He felt the commissioners' focus should be on what would better enhance or support the beauty of the Village, and he suggested categorizing their findings before forwarding them to the Village Board. He said that his focus is on the new technology with higher resolution such as electronic ink, or an electronic sign with a black background. He grew up in New Canaan, Connecticut where the sign code was very strict and every sign looked the same. He was in favor of allowing something that would allow a user to more easily change the message on a sign, instead of the individual letters currently being used that look bad and fall apart. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** agreed and hoped for the new technology to become available; however, he did not want to allow electronic signs just because it made things easier for the user.

Mr. Hautzinger suggested the possibility of entities such as schools and churches that have valuable information to communicate to the public, an electronic ink type of sign in the future, to accommodate that need. These types of signs are in the market, but they are not yet prevalent in outdoor signage.

Commissioner Fitzgerald referred to the sign shown tonight for Arlington Toyota, which had advertising on the sign larger than the name of the business. He added that the Village would have no control over the content on these signs if they were allowed.

Mr. Hautzinger showed a video of an electronic ink sign. These signs do not emit any light and cannot do animation or scrolling. Power is used only during the transition of the image, and a Kindle was referenced as an example of this technology. During the day, this type of sign relies on sunlight to read it, just like ink on paper, and at night this type of sign would only be read if light were added to the sign and illuminated like an ordinary sign, which is very different

from the light emitting diodes of an electronic sign. **Commissioner Bombick** was concerned that this technology would still flash from black/white, black/white every time the message changed.

Chair Eckhardt asked that the discussion of electronic signs be continued to the next meeting. He encouraged the commissioners to drive through surrounding communities and be prepared to present 4 or 5 position statements regarding electronic signs at the next meeting.

APPROVED

**MINUTES OF
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
DESIGN COMMISSION MEETING
HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.
FEBRUARY 23, 2016**

Chair Eckhardt called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

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

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Doug Overstreet, Overstreet Builders for *407 N. Gibbons Ave.*
Robert Thornton, Overstreet Builders for *407 N. Gibbons Ave.*
Dominic Grimaudo, Owner of *407 N. Gibbons Ave.*
Steve Hautzinger, Staff Liaison

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 9, 2016

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 9, 2016. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

ITEM 7. SIGN CODE MODIFICATIONS

DC#09-025 – Village-Wide Electronic Signs

Mr. Hautzinger explained that the goal tonight was to re-introduce the topic of Village-Wide electronic signs and create recommendations, not necessarily language for the Village Board. He referenced a letter from Mayor Hayes to the Design Commission dated February 19, 2016 that describes the approach Mayor Hayes is requesting the commission to take with regards to Village-wide electronic signs, which is to develop a general overview of the issues related to electronic signs and recommend an approach for the Village Board to discuss this matter by early June. Mayor Hayes would like the Village Board to have an opportunity to discuss this issue earlier rather than later in the process before giving further guidance and direction to Staff and the Commission.

Chair Eckhardt said the commissioners have discussed electronic signs numerous times and he was ready to summarize his issues at this time. **Commissioner Bombick** agreed and suggested each commissioner quickly summarize their issues.

Mr. Hautzinger explained that Staff would be providing the commissioners with more detailed information on electronic signs in the near future, with this topic to be re-visited a few more times over the next few months before coming to preliminary conclusions. One option available is to arrange a tour for Staff and the Design Commissioners to visit other communities that allow electronic signs to help formulate opinions on what applications of electronic signage are favorable or undesirable. He gave background on some of the issues associated with electronic signs going back to 2007, with sign variation requests for electronic LED signs being denied for Rob Rohrman Auto Mall, Walgreens, and Tanita Corporation. Then, in 2009, a detailed study of electronic signage was prepared by the Planning & Community Development Department that included issues such as visual impact, driver distraction, and code enforcement. After review of the report, the Design Commission decided to continue to not allow electronic signs, but to revisit this issue in the future. In 2012, a Visual Preference Survey was conducted by the Planning & Community Development Department with the objective to evaluate signs of different types throughout the Village, including electronic LED signage. The majority of residents did not want electronic signs, and the Design Commission decided to continue to not allow them. Finally, in 2015, a variation request for an electronic changeable sign at Patton Elementary School was reviewed, which the commissioners did not support, but did want to re-review electronic signs village-wide.

Chair Eckhart said that after the review of the proposed electronic changeable LED sign at Patton School last year, the commissioners realized that this sign technology is up and coming and a needed issue; however, approving the variation would have set a precedent throughout residential neighborhoods. **Commissioner Bombick** added that that petitioner was concerned about the cost of the type of electronic sign that the commissioners would have considered approving.

Mr. Hautzinger reiterated that one of the big issues is the precedent that electronic signs in residential neighborhoods would set. He said that Staff has had recent requests from other businesses as well, which prompted the Village Board to encourage the commissioners to address this issue and move forward. He reviewed the 4 types of electronic signs that include Electronic Changeable signs, Electronic Graphic Display signs, Video Display signs, and Multi-Vision or Tri-Vision signs. He also explained the 2 alternatives to electronic LED signs that include Flip Disk signs, which is an old technology, and Electronic Ink signs, which is an emerging new technology with great potential, although this technology does not currently function properly in freezing temperatures. He presented a video of this new technology

called E-Ink, and reviewed the 10 questions contained in the Staff memo to the Village Manager dated February 17, 2016 for the commissioners' consideration. **Mr. Hautzinger** concluded by asking the commissioners for preliminary feedback at this time, including any additional research needed such as touring electronic signs in other communities.

Chair Eckhardt said that he was familiar with electronic signage in other communities and felt that touring other communities was unnecessary to determine what the important issues are, as well as to determine the process for allowing these signs; however, Staff could provide photographs of these signs at night. His initial issue with these signs is movement versus non-movement.

Commissioner Bombick said that his concerns are the same concerns since the first electronic sign was allowed in the Village for the Daily Herald: that the sign is not big enough, and that the display technology appears archaic with light bulbs. He felt that electronic signs today still appear to have coarsely sized LED lights in a grid with annoying colors. He felt that the size must be appropriate for where it is located, the display medium, color and brightness of the light must be appropriate, and the quality of the graphic display must be refined. He also was unsure if the issue of animation was still an issue if the sign is on a street that did not impact neighbors. Finally, he felt that all of the small 'Open for Business' electronic signs located up and down every thoroughfare is annoying enough, and he did not think we need electronic signs with changing copy constantly bombarding us as we drive by on residential and commercial streets.

Commissioner Fitzgerald did not like anything that moves, and if these signs were allowed then they should be timed so that they are not changing all the time. He envisioned that whatever is allowed for these electronic signs would just end up becoming light noise, which **Commissioner Kubow** referred to as sign pollution. **Commissioner Kubow** said that he is still processing the huge precedent this would set, although he felt that location was key, and if these signs are allowed at schools, the signs must be strict in their emittance and colors. A certain type of electronic sign that might have movement could be okay in an industrial corridor along the highway; however, moving towards the main thoroughfares the signs should be proportionately died down, if allowed at all. He did not have any constructive comments to provide at this time because he is still thinking about it all.

Commissioner Fasolo said that creating a code for electronic signs was necessary and it should be consistent for both commercial and residential neighborhoods. He felt that electronic signs should be static; however, if the sign did change, it should be timed appropriately. He pointed out the old style manual change bulletin board sign located at Windsor School, which he felt was brighter than an electronic sign would actually be. He also felt that the current technology for electronic signs was mostly red or orange on black that does not look good, versus white on black which was somewhat limited in availability, and he was confident that current technology would catch up and offer more options. He was in favor of the Electronic Ink signage as an alternative; however, he was unsure how long it would be around and how expensive and available it is, and felt we should be open to whatever new technology will come after LED.

Chair Eckhardt felt that electronic signage was appropriate on residential properties that are commercially oriented, not a homeowner putting up electronic signage in their yard. He also felt that electronic signage was appropriate in a commercial use. He said it was important to focus on different rules and thoughts in each zoning district, such as segregating purely public informational uses versus advertising. His motivation to consider allowing electronic signage comes from schools, churches or businesses not having to go outside, up and down a ladder, to change out letters on their sign. He

would consider and support electronic signage with restrictions, to include discussions about the ability to somehow control the sign. He felt that electronic signage is the coming technology and that it is very useful to get the message out with the ability to have a changing message.

Chair Eckhardt did not disagree that it might be valuable to visit other communities to get a feeling for size and the impact of size of electronic signage, as well as to see some of the current technology. Sign vendors could also provide information on what the current trend in electronic signage is.

In closing, **Chair Eckhardt** polled the commissioners by a show of hands, who was opposed to allowing any electronic signage, and who would consider electronic signage if it had appropriate restrictions that would maintain the dignity of the Village. Overall, the commissioners unanimously felt that some amount of electronic signage with restrictions should be allowed.