



REPORT: Electronic Signs

Sign Code Modifications

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INTRODUCTION & BRIEF OVERVIEW

Bulletin Boards

Bulletin boards are defined by the Village Code to be “a sign which has a message board with changeable letters, the purpose of which is the advertising of events pertinent to the operation of the on site facility.”

Bulletin board signs are expressly allowed in residentially zoned areas with the restrictions that they are allowed only for public, charitable, educational or religious institutions. If bulletin boards in residential areas are over 12 square feet, then it must be reviewed by the Design Commission.

Bulletin boards are also allowed by the Village in business, manufacturing, and institutional zoning districts. The Code permits establishments in these districts to have “advertising structures” which identify the occupant of a building or building or which pertains to a use within the buildings or upon the premises, provided that the sign complies with a section of the Code pertaining to the type of sign (i.e. wall sign, ground sign, etc.).

Electronic Bulletin Boards/Message Boards

Electronic bulletin boards or message boards are not allowed by Village with the Code-stipulated exceptions of time/temperature signs and service station gasoline price signs. The Village’s electronic civic events sign is allowed by code and was approved by the Village Board.

Variations have been granted in two instances: the Daily Herald sign along I-90 and the Sheraton Hotel sign on Euclid Avenue. At one time, an electronic message sign was also approved for Arlington Park. However, that sign was destroyed.

Recently, the Village received two requests for electronic signs. These requests were from from Walgreens (for the S. Arlington Heights Rd. location) and Southminster Presbyterian Church. The Walgreens request was denied. The Southminster request was withdrawn by the petitioner. More requests are anticipated prompting the review of this subject.



PART II: BACKGROUND

Electronic Changeable Sign Types

Electronic Signs have a multitude of types. It is important to understand the differences when determining if a type would be prohibited or allowed by the Village. There are many types of electronic signs both on-premise and off-premise. The different types of electronic signs are illustrated in the photographs below.

1. **Electronic Changeable Signs:** Used by many small businesses to replace the manual changeable signs. The text allows limited animation such as a character walking across the screen, and multiple color options. The text may scroll, and has simple images.

2. **Electronic Graphic Display Sign:** An example is The Sears Center electronic sign on the I-90 expressway. The images are presented similar to a power point presentation, which may be high definition however no animation is involved.

3. **Video Display Sign:** Similar to a large jumbotron with a high definition image. The effect is that of watching moving images on a television or theatre.

4. **Multi-Vision or Tri-Vision Sign:** Allows pre-set images and text to change. The number of images on a board is limited to three.

5. **Electronic Static:** Time and temperature and gas price signs may also be electronic, and remain static throughout the day, which is currently allowed in the Village.



1. Electronic Changeable Sign,
City of Chicago



2. Electronic Graphic Display Sign,
Sears Center



3. Video Display Sign,
City of Chicago



4. Multi-vision or Tri-vision sign, off-premise
example



5. Electronic Static: Time/Temperature
& Gas Price Signs,

Visual Impact

The Village has reviewed a few inquiries as well as requests for variations for electronic signs. Some of the general inquiries that the Village has had so far are from businesses such as a car wash, contractor businesses, and convenience stores. Some of the variation requests that Design Commission has reviewed to date are a church, Walgreens, and Tanita corporation. The Village and the Design Commission should evaluate the impact that these types of signs may have in the commercial corridors as well as the more sensitive residential areas.

Having multiple electronic signs on a commercial corridor may have a negative aesthetic impact. An electronic bulletin board added onto a monument or ground sign may create visual clutter. Site visits to other municipalities by staff, have identified multiple electronic signs on a commercial corridor as a key concern because of visual blight and distraction. Commercial corridors in Arlington Heights that are of concern are Northwest Highway, South Arlington Heights Road and Rand Road. These corridors already have perceived visual blight, and allowing a business and or multiple businesses in a row to convert manual bulletin boards into electronic message center may magnify the existing conditions. The electronic signs tend to draw more attention because of brightness and illumination.

Currently there is no differentiation between large and small businesses, since all businesses on the same corridor are allowed the same size sign, regardless of the width of the lot, or square footage of the retail center. If electronic signs are allowed as of right, the Village may see the signs spaced closely together.



75th street in Woodridge with multiple electronic signs



South Arlington Height Road commercial corridor with existing multiple bulletin board signs



South Arlington Height Road commercial corridor with existing multiple bulletin board signs

"In general, signs tend to be allowed in residential, mixed use, and office districts only as a special exception, and permitted by right only in commercial and industrial zoning districts. The risk in latter zones is that electronics, by their higher visibility, will make bad sign clutter worse --- not by adding to it, but by making the clutter more noticeable." Planning April 2009, Sign for the Times

Visual Impact

Within the Village, religious institutions, schools and park district buildings are often located within residential districts. These institutions are surrounded by residential neighborhoods with single family homes. Allowing institutions located in neighborhoods to have electronic message boards may impact the character of that neighborhood.

Allowing electronic signs on a use that is located in or adjacent to a residential neighborhood such as a school or religious institution may have negative impacts on the surrounding single-family homes. Examples of existing types of public uses in residential neighborhoods are, Pioneer Park, Westgate School, Olive Mary Stitt School, Our Lady of the Wayside Church. Impacts that may affect single-family homes that face the electronic sign, are illumination and brightness from the signs during the evening and weekend hours. A homeowner that views an electronic message board from his living room window may complain about the constant illumination and messages that are frequently changing throughout the day. Electronic signs may be viewed as a more commercial application.



Our Lady of the Wayside located on Park Street and Ridge Avenue in a R-3 zoning district, surrounded by single-family homes



Southminster Presbyterian Church on Central Avenue, in a R-3 zoning district, adjacent to commercial uses



Example of a single family lot rear yard facing an electronic sign in the front yard of a church. The sign is visible even though there is year round screening. Church is located in the west suburbs

Visual Impact

Allowing electronic message boards onto existing or new ground signs may have design implications. Existing businesses that have manual bulletin boards and are looking to convert to an electronic message board may not consider the overall integration and design of the sign.

Design considerations must be evaluated when allowing electronic signs as of right. Existing businesses that wish to incorporate an electronic message center may not cohesively tie in the sign with the existing ground sign. Some businesses may not evaluate proportions, or sizes when incorporating a new electronic message center with an existing sign. In the case of Park Federal Bank in Woodridge, Illinois, the number of text lines dictated the size and location of the message center.

In the other cases a electronic sign is mounted onto an existing pole with no colocation of electronic message board and main static signage. Some municipalities allow electronic signs as of right to be free standing signs.



Park Federal bank sign, 75th street in Woodridge, example of existing sign with electronic sign added



McDonalds sign, City of Chicago, example of existing sign with electronic sign added



Free standing electronic sign at a service station

Distraction to Drivers

The recent studies on electronic signs are from a collection of reports issued by PAS (Planning Advisory Service) through the American Planning Association (APA). The studies are centered around digital billboards and to date are inconclusive. There are no completed studies regarding retail or commercial electronic signs. Information and considerations concerning billboard signage may or may not be transferrable to retail or commercial signs. However, the general issues that have been raised are outlined below for reference and future consideration when more on-point studies are completed. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is currently conducting a study on driver distraction and the safety or impact of new sign technologies and signs, however the study will not be released until the later part of 2009. The PAS studies evaluate message duration and transition, impact of electronic messages and video signs and brightness standards and enforcement. Most municipalities are dealing with the increasing requests for electronic signs, such as those found on pharmacies, fast food places, convenience marts, and car washes. In regards to electronic signs for municipalities the PAS inquiry cites that specific approaches taken by jurisdictions varies greatly depending on how they want their community to appear. The range varies from some communities prohibiting electronic signs to others allowing with regulations. PAS concludes that municipalities regulate through permits, architectural review, and design review process.

Summary of Planning Advisory Service Reports Issued by the American Planning Association regarding electronic billboards:

Digital signs are brighter and more distracting than any other type of sign. Most studies indicate that digital display signs are a safety concern. This is quantified in several ways:

- Message Duration & Transition
- Impact of Electronic Messages or Video Signs
- Brightness standards and enforcement

Message Duration & Transition:

Most images change every six seconds, because that is how long it takes to comprehend a message. Accidents may occur when drivers take their eyes off the road for more than two seconds. Motorists often stay focused on the sign to see what is next, or wait until the message finishes telling a story. ¹ Scenic America, Issue Alert 2, Electronic Signs, 2007

Impact of Electronic Messages or Video Signs:

Drivers make twice as many glances at active (i.e. video signs) than they do at passive (i.e. static) signs. Signs that were a part of the study were video signs, scrolling text signs and tri-vision signs. These types of signs attracted more than twice as many glances as static signs. ² Zoning Practice, Marya Morris, April 2008

Glances at active signs were longer in duration, 88% were at least .75 seconds long. This is important because that is the amount of time required for a driver to react to a vehicle that is slowing down ahead. Video and scrolling text signs received the longest average maximum glance duration. ³ Zoning Practice, Marya Morris, April 2008

Electronic signs are more distracting than other types of signs. Drivers who take their eyes off the road for more than two seconds may be more likely to suffer a crash. This is relevant because many electronic signs will present a message between 5 to 8 seconds. Drivers tend to focus on the message until it is complete. ⁴ Zoning Practice, Marya Morris, April 2008

Messages that flash or change are more distracting, less comprehensible, and require more reading time than do static images. ⁵ Texas Transportation Institute Study 2005

Electronic signs with moving images will distract drivers for longer durations (or intervals) than do electronic signs with no movement. Signs that use two or more frames to tell a story are very distracting because drivers are involuntarily compelled to watch the story through to its conclusion. ⁶ G. Wachtel, City of Seattle 2001 Study

Brightness Standards & Enforcement

Current sign technologies which include dynamic components have the ability to emit more light and respond to ambient conditions, which raise concerns about sign brightness in areas where signs compete with traffic signals.

7. SRF Consulting Group, Dynamic Signage: Research Related to Driver Distraction and Ordinance Recommendations, Prepared for the City of Minnetonka, June 2007

Enforcement of luminance of electronic signs is very difficult to measure in the field. Luminance is measured and calibrated in a controlled factory setting using a spectral photometer to measure the light output. The higher the ambient light levels, the brighter the sign. A luminance meter is held close to the face of the sign to capture the light emitted from the sign. The luminance meter can measure 13,000 NITS on a small sign. A dimmer control on electronic signs should be required as well as photo cell, can track the ambient light conditions and adjusts a sign accordingly. A written certification from the sign manufacturer for the light intensity can be preset and not to exceed the illumination levels.⁸ SRF Consulting Group,

Dynamic Signage: Research Related to Driver Distraction and Ordinance Recommendations, Prepared for the City of Minnetonka, June 2007



Image of Portillo's Restaurant electronic sign in Chicago



Image of Sonic Restaurant electronic sign in Bartlett, Illinois

1. Laura Williamson McCafferty, Scenic America Issue Alert 2, Billboards in the Digital Age, 2007
2. Marya Morris, Zoning Practice, Practice Smart Sign Codes, April 2008
3. Marya Morris, Zoning Practice, Practice Smart Sign Codes, April 2008,
4. Marya Morris, Zoning Practice, Practice Smart Sign Codes, April 2008
5. Study by Texas Transportation Institute, 2005
6. G. Wachtel, Video Signs in Seattle- Final Report, 2001
7. SRF Consulting Group, Dynamic Signage: Research Related to Driver Distraction and Ordinance Recommendations, Prepared for the City of Minnetonka, June 2007
8. SRF Consulting Group, Dynamic Signage: Research Related to Driver Distraction and Ordinance Recommendations, Prepared for the City of Minnetonka, June 2007

There are many challenging issues that arise when enforcement of electronic signs is considered. The number of times a message can change during the day, the illumination standards, ambient light levels of the sign when compared to the daylight and evening light, the spacing standards of signs. If electronic signs are allowed there are numerous considerations on how a message be enforced.

Enforcement Issues to Consider:

Number of Times a Message Can Change:

If allowed how would the Village regulate a sign that is required to remain static for a period of time, and transition between messages. For example a regulation standard may be to allow an electronic sign, if it remains static for 60 seconds, and the transition between messages is 2 seconds. If multiple signs in the Village are allowed to be electronic, it would become an almost impossible enforcement issue to regulate this standard.

Illumination Standards:

Based upon research, it is difficult to measure light once a sign has been installed in the field. A photometer is used to measure the luminance level, which is a costly investment. Maya Morris, Zoning Practice April 2008

Additional concerns are that staffing is not available during evening hours.

Ambient Light Levels:

Standards for light levels may be set by the manufacturer, however ambient conditions in the field vary, and a pre-set sign may appear brighter on a cloudy, rainy day versus on a sunny bright day. Also natural light requirements during the day are less intense than during evening hours. The same sign during the day may appear brighter and more luminous during the evening.

Spacing Standards:

Many properties in the Village, for example on Northwest Highway and Arlington Heights Road are 70 feet or less in width in the B-2 zoning district. Currently there are no minimum spacing standards between signs such as at least 30 or 50 feet apart. Allowing electronic signs on all properties regardless of lot width will create clutter.

Fairness / Level Playing Field

The current sign code regulates signs for various uses through zoning districts. However this becomes an issue when similar uses are located in different zoning districts. An example are churches in Arlington Heights which are located in both a commercially zoned district and also in a residential district. Allowing electronic signs in a commercial district would create an advantage for over a church in a residential district, and take away from the level playing field established by the code.

If only certain uses are permitted electronic signs, this may also create a disparity in fairness of applying the code. The same zoning district and corridor may have hotels and gas stations that may also request an electronic sign. In this case a restriction for one use may be considered a hardship that is created by the code.

Similar Use Different Zoning:

Lakewood Calvary Church is located in a B-2 Zoning district on Palatine Road, while Southminister Presbyterian Church is located in an R-3 zoning district on Central Road. If electronic signs are permitted in a Business zoning district, it would create an unfair hardship for a church in a residential zoning district, although both churches front on major arterials. If an electronic sign is allowed by variation it would create an unfair level playing field.

Similar Zoning Different Use:

The South Arlington Heights Road corridor is a patchwork of various uses that have been approved . If it is determined that only certain uses are allowed an electronic sign, because of the nature of the business, this would create a disparity in applying the code. For example it may be determined that banquet facilities should be allowed an electronic sign because they draw visitors from out of town. While the Walgreens should not be allowed an electronic sign.



Southminister Presbyterian Church on Central Road



Wellington Banquet Hall on South Arlington Heights Road



Walgreens on South Arlington Heights Road

Other Considerations

Environmental impacts need to be considered if electronic signs are allowed. Although many signs use LED light source, the energy and heat island effect given may not have a desirable impact on the environment. This may be of issue if multiple electronic signs are located in a commercial corridor, and give off a heat island affect. Currently bulletin board signs or manual copy change signs emit light and energy only during evening hours, keeping the heat island affect to a minimum.

Energy Consumption & Heat:

Multiple sign in the Village would have an impact on the amount of heat emitted from each sign. The Village is looking ways to promote more sustainable developments, however if electronic signs are allowed, it would create a heat island effect and not project an image of sustainability.

Most existing bulletin board signs are lit only during the evening hours and therefore the heat island effect is kept to a minimum. Internally illuminated signs are only lit during evening hours, whereas an electronic sign is on during the day and evening hours, requiring more energy consumption.



Multi-tenant electronic sign inon Northwest Highway and Dryden with illumination during the evening



Multi-tenant electronic sign in Bolingbrook, Illinois with constant illumination during the day and evening

Comments from Legal Department

The Legal Department has evaluated electronic signs in regards to how such regulations may impact churches. The conclusion is that as long as there is a rational reason and any restrictions are reasonable, then RLUIPA does not prohibit the regulation of electronic signs for churches.

RLUIPA Discussion

While there is no case law directly on point, it appears from a review of cases interpreting RLUIPA in other circumstances that in order for a law to constitute a substantial burden, it must render religious exercise impractical or put substantial pressure on someone to modify behavior and violate beliefs.

It does not appear that an appropriately drafted ordinance prohibiting electronic signs would present a RLUIPA problem. Such an ordinance could not, for instance, single out churches. It could, however, differentiate by zoning district. There would need to be solid justification as to different rules in different zoning districts because the net effect could be favoring commercial speech over non-commercial speech, which the courts generally frown upon. It would also have to be the least restrictive means available, meaning that if electronic signs could be permitted but with reasonable limitations (e.g. limits on light) then that would be the preferred course.



Church sign in Bartlett, Illinois



Church sign in Mt. Prospect, Illinois

A bulletin board sign is explicitly allowed in the residential district, up to 12 square feet as of right, while the business and manufacturing district permits it as an "other advertising structure...which pertains to a use within the building or upon the premises..." The Village currently allows bulletin board signs in the business districts. However, the code provision for "Other Advertising Structure" refers to canopies, awnings and clocks. Discussion is required as to whether the current definitions of electronic signs in Chapter 30 are sufficient to cover emerging technologies for electronic signs.

Code Sections Under Chapter 30:

Section 30-101 Definitions 5: Bulletin Board. A sign which has a message board with changeable letters, the purpose of which is the advertising of events pertinent to the operation of the on site facility.

For those businesses in the B zoning district, the signs listed below are allowed. The code states:

Section 30-204 Business (B) and Manufacturing (M) District Signage Provisions. *Only the following signs are permitted in a Business (B) or Manufacturing (M) Districts. All requirements and restrictions outlined in this section, pertain only to properties zoned for Business or Manufacturing.*

- a. *Any wall, ground, directional, temporary sign or other advertising structure which identifies the occupant of a building or buildings, or which pertains to a use within the buildings or upon the premises, provided that the sign complies with that section of this Chapter pertaining to that type of sign.*

Under the residential district Bulletin boards are specifically allowed. The code states the following:

Section 30-203 Residential (R) Districts Signage Provisions. *Only the following signs are permitted in Residential Districts. All requirements and restrictions outlined in this Section pertain only to those properties zoned Residential.*

- b. *Bulletin boards, not over 12 square feet in area or public, charitable, educational or religious institutions when located on the premises of said institutions. Any sign more than 12 square feet in area must be reviewed by the Design Commission and approved by the Village Board of Trustees. The application for such approval must comply with the notification requirements for sign variations.*

Currently in the Village electronic signs are used by automobile service stations and banks for gas prices and time and temperature respectively.

Some municipalities, such as Naperville and Oak Park, are allowing electronic bulletin signs as long as they remain static for a time period (8 seconds), and do not allow them to flash.

Code Sections Under Chapter 30:

Definitions

Flashing Sign. Any illuminated sign on which each artificial light unit or externally mounted light source is not maintained in a stationary condition or constant in intensity and color at all times when such sign is illuminated.

Illuminated Sign.

Any sign which has characters, letters, figures, designs, or outline illuminated by electric light, luminous tubes, or any other means of illumination either internal or external to the sign structure.

Manual Change Bulletin Boards
Electronic Bulletin Board / Changeable Message Board

The options for code modifications are broken down into types then residential districts and business districts.

I. Manual Change Bulletin Board

A. Residential

1. Do nothing and continue to allow variations on a case-by-case basis.
2. Make minor amendments to clarify current policy (ex. amend provision on bulletin boards in residential districts to state that only "manual change" bulletin boards are allowed.

B. Business, Manufacturing, and Institutional

1. Do nothing and continue to allow variations on a case-by-case basis
2. Change Code to allow bulletin boards only in residential zoning districts for public, charitable, educational or religious institutions thereby not allowing bulletin boards in business, manufacturing and institutional districts.

II. Electronic Bulletin Board / Changeable Message Board

A. Residential Zoning Districts

1. Do nothing and continue to *not* allow electronic bulletin changeable signs
2. Allow electronic bulletin changeable message signs with restrictions concerning operation
3. Allow electronic bulletin changeable message signs for specified uses (ex. only for public entities such as schools) with restrictions concerning operation

B. Business, manufacturing and/or institutional

1. Do nothing and continue to *not* allow electronic bulletin changeable signs
2. Allow electronic bulletin changeable message signs in designated business, manufacturing, and/or institutional districts with restrictions concerning operation
3. Allow electronic bulletin changeable message signs for specified uses (ex. only for public entities such as schools or major tourism venues) with restrictions concerning operation
4. Allow electronic bulletin changeable message signs in specified locations (ex. along I-90 or on Rand Rd. corridor) with restrictions concerning operation

PART V: REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS IF ELECTRONIC SIGNS ARE ALLOWED

Summary of Surveys (supplemented by staff)

If electronic signs are allowed in the Village, then regulatory considerations must be addressed prior to implementation or code modifications. Some communities that have allowed electronic signs have certain restrictions for example on brightness and illumination. Elmhurst only allows electronic signs if they remain static for 8 seconds with a 2 second message transition and only amber text on black background. The considerations below are extracted from PAS reports, survey of other communities and Village restrictions.

- A. Static messages only (no scrolling, flashing, etc.)**

Local communities surveyed that allow electronic signs, allow only if they prohibit scrolling, flashing, moving, animated signs.
- B. Minimum distance between electronic signs**

A minimum spacing between signs should be established. Currently the code has no regulations. For example Prospect Heights requires a 500 feet of separation, while Mt. Prospect requires a 600 feet of separation.
- C. Frequency of message change**

The FHWA recommends minimum 8 second duration, with a transition between signs at 1-2 seconds.
Naperville, Elmhurst and Oak Park allow electronic signs.
- D. Limit allowed colors of lights (ex. amber only, amber only in residential areas)**

Palatine requires a consistent color, no glare on adjacent property or street. Elmhurst allows amber text on black background.
- E. Illumination standards including different illumination in day and night**

Per PAS reports, a common daytime NIT level is between 5,000 to 7,000 NITS. A common night time NIT level is 500 NIT. Some communities require an adjustment meter on the sign, while other communities require a sensor for the sign to adjust to ambient levels. A written certification from the sign manufacturer for the light intensity should be preset an not to exceed the illumination levels.
- F. Maximum electronic sign area (as a percentage of the allowed sign)**

PAS reports cite that communities may base this on aesthetic regulations.
Naperville allows 50% of the monument sign to be LED, Palatine 40%, Des Plaines 30% or 20 sf whichever is less.
- G. Orientation and set back from residential districts**

The Village should evaluate restrictions for signs adjacent to residential district, with no light emittance towards residential properties.
- H. Limit as to sign type – ground signs, wall signs**

Oak Park adopted regulations to restrict electronic signs to window signage only.
- I. Window signs**

Current Village regulations do not require a permit for window signs. There is no definition of what can constitute a window sign. A window sign can be a paper graphic, neon sign or LED screen. A window sign under current code restrictions cannot exceed 40% of the window or surface area.
- J. Design Standards (ie. integration of the sign with design of the building, placement below (not above) business sign**

Some communities that allow LEDs as of right, allow integration of LED into existing monument or ground signs. This may lead to an undesirable aesthetic affect, where the new LED component may not match the existing sign.
- K. Sound**

An electronic sign may have the ability for sound which could potentially conflict with safety. Provisions should be included for no sound emittance.

PART VI: SURVEY OF OTHER COMMUNITIES / OTHER RESEARCH

Nineteen communities were surveyed through the Northwest Municipal Conference. Additional communities that typically are not part of the NWMC were added through staff interviews.

Comparable Communities: Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Des Plaines, Elk Grove Village, Elmhurst, Evanston, Hoffman Estates, Naperville, Mt. Prospect, Palatine, Schaumburg

Other Communities: Carpentersville, Glencoe, Grayslake, Hanover Park, Libertyville, Prospect Heights, Rolling Meadows, Streamwood

The following is a summary of major issues that the Village is reviewing. A more comprehensive survey is attached in the reference section.

Are Dynamic Display signs allowed as of right in the code?

64% (12) do not allow as of right
36% (7) allow as of right

What are the restrictions on number of times a message can change, per day or per hour?

63 % (12) do not allow changes on message board
32 % (6) that allow place some restrictions, see below
05% (1) allow changeable message, has no restrictions, see below
Carpentersville: 60 seconds
Des Plaines: 7.5 seconds
Elmhurst: 5 seconds
Grayslake: 8 seconds
Naperville: 10 seconds
Palatine: 4 messages allowed per 24 hour
Hanover Park: no restrictions

Are there restrictions on brightness and illumination?

63 % (12) do not allow dynamic signs
10 % (2) that allow dynamic signs, place no restrictions
26 % (5) place some restrictions, see below

Elk Grove: discretion of Village
Elmhurst: limits brightness on sign
Mt. Prospect: discretion of Plan Commission
Palatine: consistent color, no glare on adjacent property of street
Prospect Hts: review at Public Hearing

Are there concerns over dynamic display/electronic signs being distracting to drivers?

84 % (16) communities are concerned over distraction
16 % (3) communities are not concerned over distraction

Are animation or moving images allowed on the sign?

92 % (18) do not allow animation, flashing, moving, video
08 % (1) restrict through special use or variation process

Are there concerns over community character and Dynamic Display Signs?

47 % (9) have regulations or are concerned over community character, see below
26% (5) have no concerns
27 % (5) no response

Arlington Heights: concern over multiple signs
Elmhurst: limits number of colors, and black background
Evanston: concerned, does not allow
Glencoe: allowed only for commercial signs
Naperville: concerned over multiple signs
Mt. Prospect: minimum of 600 feet separation
Palatine: limit to 4 corridors, minimum of 300 feet of frontage, 500 feet of separation
Prospect Heights: minimum of 500 feet of separation
Schaumburg: restricted to I-90 corridor for convention center only

PART VI: COMMUNITIES THAT RECENTLY MODIFIED CODES

If electronic signs are allowed in the Village, then regulatory considerations must be addressed prior to implementation or code modifications. Some communities that have allowed electronic signs have certain restrictions for example on brightness and illumination. Elmhurst only allows electronic signs if they remain static for 8 seconds with a 2 second message transition and only amber text on black background. Two recently modified codes are summarized below:

Naperville, Illinois

Approved by the City Council on December 16, 2008. The Council added a definition for Changeable Copy, and permits electronic signs as of right. The following is a summary:

Message Change: No more than once every 10 seconds

Limits: Cannot exceed 50 % area of a monument sign

Message: Must remain static, no flashing, video, animation

Illumination: Light intensity not to create a nuisance to adjacent property or a traffic hazard to motorists or pedestrians.

Light source: not visible from a public street or private residence

Monument Sign: Size of monument sign is based on speed limit:

40 mph:	45 square feet
45 – 50 mph:	90 square feet
55 mph:	120 square feet

Sign Height: No greater than 10 feet.

Staff did interview the planner at Naperville, and found that the Council debated the proposed modifications, and in the end decided to allow as of right.

Oak Park, Illinois

The Village of Oak Park permits electronic signs as of right. This was approved by the City Council on March 23, 2008. The following is a summary:

Message Change: No more than once every 8 seconds

Limits: Cannot exceed 6 square feet

Message: Must remain static, no flashing, video, animation

Illumination: No illumination onto residential property or interfere with safe traffic movement.

Sound: no audio or sound

Monument Sign: Not allowed on monument sign.

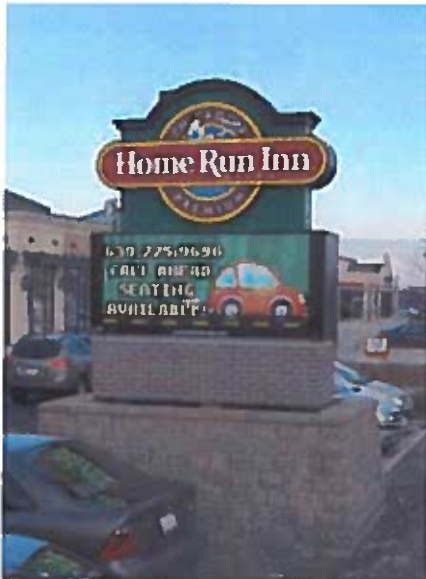
Sign Height: No greater than 7 feet.

Window Sign: Allowed as a window sign, screen shall be included in the 25% window sign area for permanent window signs.

PAS reports consist of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Scenic America, Wisconsin DOT, Scottish Executive and several other key sources for research on both on-premise signs and off-premise signs. The FHWA report is critical to the analysis of safety, and at this time is inconclusive. An additional FHWA summary is due out late 2009. Relevant articles are attached as part of the reference section.

On-Premise Signs

For on-premise signs, the specific approaches taken by jurisdictions varies greatly depending on how they want their communities to look, so there are responses ranging from near total bans on dynamic displays to permissive ordinances that allow nearly any type of sign. Municipalities can allow by right or exercise control through permitting, architectural review and design review process. Some communities take the approach of limiting electronic signs to a special sign overlay district, to specific zoning district (industrial or commercial), or have spacing requirements for streets. In general, having different restrictions for each type of zoning district provides the greatest specificity.



On-premise sign for restaurant in Addison, IL



Electronic sign for fast food restaurant, Carol Stream, IL

RECOMMENDATIONS:

After review of all the issues and options staff continues to be concerned about the potential for excessive sign blight. While not convinced of the need for manual change bulletin boards, it is recognized that it is most likely unrealistic to change the code to require their removal. Given this limiting factor and recognizing advances in technology one option would be to permit electronic changeable signs only. In doing so, the Design Commission should acknowledge that this will result in the proliferation of these types of signs. If the Design Commission believes electronic changeable signs are appropriate for the community then the following may be considered.

MANUAL CHANGE BULLETIN BOARD

1. Continue to allow manual change bulletin boards as currently allowed in all zoning districts.
2. Limit the size of manual change bulletin boards in all business, manufacturing, and institutional zoning districts to 30% of the total sign area or 20 square feet whichever is less.

ELECTRONIC CHANGEABLE SIGNS

Residential

1. Allow electronic changeable signs in residential districts for non-residential uses.
2. Require that electronic changeable signs in residential areas or adjacent to residential districts be turned off from 9 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.
3. See below for other regulations concerning changeable message boards.

Business, Manufacturing, and Institutional Districts

1. Allow electronic changeable signs in all business, manufacturing and institutional districts.
2. Limit the size of electronic changeable signs to 30% of the sign area or 20 square feet whichever is less.
3. See below for other regulations concerning changeable message boards.

REGULATIONS FOR ELECTRONIC CHANGEABLE SIGNS

1. Static Message: Messages shall change no more frequently than only once per 60 seconds.
2. Color: Color shall be limited to amber lights on black backgrounds
3. Sign Type: Electronic changeable signs shall only be allowed on monument signs (not wall signs or ground signs).
4. Establish daytime and nighttime illumination limits.
5. Prohibit electronic changeable signs as window signs.
6. Establish design standards requiring electronic changeable signs to cohesively tie into the monument sign.
7. Prohibit sound as a component of the sign.
8. Prohibit signs that promote or advertise any commercial enterprise or event not conducted on the same premises.
9. Message: Messages only for the business upon which the sign is placed shall be permitted. No off-premise advertising shall be allowed.

NEXT STEPS:

1. **Draft of Code Language**
2. **Review of Code Language by Design Commission**
3. **Other Sign Items**

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

The following documents were referenced as research for the sign report. The research articles from the Planning Advisory Service of the American Planning Association were selected from a much larger group of articles because these articles were the most referenced and comprehensive when it came to the issue that staff was evaluating.

Staff Material:

- A. Hamid, Village of Arlington Heights, Past Variation Requests for LED Signs
- N. Boyer and A. Hamid, Survey of Other Municipalities, Northwest Municipal Conference and Staff Survey: February 27, 2009

Planning Advisory Service Research Material through American Planning Association:

- Marya Morris, Zoning Practice, April 2008, Practice Smart Sign Codes Issue Number 4
- Laura Williamson McFarrety, Scenic America Issue Alert 2, Electronic Signs, 2007
- James Krohe Jr., Planning Magazine, Signs for the Times April 2009
- USDOT FHA Memorandum, September 25, 2007, Guidance on Off-Premise Changeable Message Signs

APPROVED

**MINUTES OF
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
DESIGN COMMISSION MEETING
HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.
APRIL 14, 2009 AT 6:30 P.M.**

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

Members Present: Ted Eckhardt, Commission Chair
John Fitzgerald
Jim Tinaglia
Kirsten Kingsley
Alan Bombick

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Robin Ward, Assistant Village Attorney
Nora Boyer, Housing Planner
Afshan Hamid, Staff Liaison
Pat DiMatteo, Recording Secretary

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 31, 2009

Commissioner Kingsley pointed out a spelling error on page 15 of the minutes. **Chairman Eckhardt** said that Staff asked him to have the commissioners review and clarify the discussion of the *Verizon Wireless* project to ensure that the minutes accurately reflect each commissioner's intention to suggest that the petitioner provide for 3 wall signs. **Chairman Eckhardt** confirmed that he supported 3 wall signs, which the minutes correctly reflected; **Commissioner Fitzgerald** agreed; **Commissioner Tinaglia** said that he was fine with the minutes as they were; **Commissioner Kingsley** had no comments.

Ms. Ward explained that the commissioners could not change what happened at the last meeting, as reflected in the minutes; however, they could clarify whether what was transcribed was correct or not.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KINGSLEY, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 31, 2009. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED. COMMISSIONER BOMBICK ABSTAINED.

ITEM 1. SIGN CODE MODIFICATIONS/ELECTRONIC SIGNS

Ms. Hamid recapped what was discussed at the Sign Code Modification kick-off meeting that was held with the Design Commission on July 8, 2008. This included the following:

- Blade/Plaque signs in Downtown
- LED Signs
- Ground Signs Downtown
- Ground Signs Village wide
- Wall Signs
- Corner Projecting Blade Signs
- Code Clean Up Items

Questions that were also discussed at the meeting included the following:

- What is the visual impact of LED technology
- Multiple LED signs on a block or corridor
- Is there a circumstance where LED is preferable than static, changeable message board
- Should LED be allowed in residential district
- Should messages on LED bulletin boards be regulated
- How will restrictions be enforced
- If LED is allowed, will EBB also be allowed

Ms. Ward said that she was here tonight to give an overview of legal guidelines when reviewing signage. In general, signage is protected under the 1st Amendment Free Speech, and falls under 2 categories: commercial signage, and non-commercial signage. When regulating signage, regulatory considerations must evaluate signage as content neutral. Municipalities may regulate signage on time, place, and manner restrictions. The two distinctions are off-premise and on-premise signs. On-premise signs are usually considered commercial signage, for example, for a fast food place. Off-premise signs are usually considered non-commercial signage, such as billboards. Signage must be reviewed and applied objectively to protect free speech.

Ms. Hamid began tonight's presentation on "Electronic Signs", which was prepared by the Department of Planning and Community Development, specifically herself and Nora Boyer. An introduction and brief overview was given. This included definitions of the following:

- Bulletin Boards
 - A sign that has a message board with changeable letter, the purpose of which is to advertise events pertinent to the operation of the on-site facility.
- Electronic Bulletin Boards/Message Boards
 - No allowed by the Village, except for time and temperature signs and service station gasoline price signs.

Ms. Hamid also pointed out that sign variations were previously granted for electronic signs for the Daily Herald located along the I-90 corridor, and for the

Sheraton Hotel located on Euclid Avenue. Recent requests received by the Village for electronic signs include one for the Walgreens on S. Arlington Heights Road, which was denied, and one for Southminster Presbyterian Church on Central Road, which was withdrawn by the petitioner.

The 5 types of electronic signs were reviewed by Staff and photos were presented, which included the following:

- Electronic Changeable Sign
- Electronic Graphic Display Sign
- Video Display Sign
- Electronic Static Sign
- Multi-Vision/Tri-Vision Sign

The following issues related to the 5 types of signs were presented by both Ms. Hamid and Ms. Boyer, and photos were presented as well:

- Visual Impacts
 - Aesthetic impact of multiple electronic signs on a corridor
 - Make bad sign clutter worse by making the clutter more noticeable
 - Same size sign allowed regardless of the width of the lot or square footage
 - Electronic signs adjacent to a residential neighborhood
 - Consider proportions and scale of new electronic signs so they cohesively tie in with existing ground sign.
 - Some municipalities allow a free-standing electronic sign
- Distraction to Drivers
 - Recent studies on electronic signs from PAS through the American Planning Association are focused on electronic billboards.
 - The Federal Highway Administration is currently evaluating driver distraction and safety. Current studies are inconclusive.
 - No complete studies on retail or commercial signage; municipalities vary and review in regards to design and aesthetics.
 - Message duration and transition
 - Impact of electronic messages or video signs
 - Current sign technology includes dynamic components that have the ability to emit more light and respond to ambient conditions that raise concerns about sign brightness.
- Enforcement
 - Number of times a message can change
 - Illumination Standards
 - Ambient Light Levels
 - Spacing Standards
- Fairness/Level Playing Field
 - Current sign code regulated signs for various uses through zoning districts
 - Similar Use Different Zoning
 - Similar Zoning Different Use
- Other Considerations
 - Energy consumption and heat
 - RLUIPA

Commissioner Bombick asked about the cost of a photometer, and Staff replied that they were unable to obtain an exact amount; however, it was a costly investment.

Ms. Boyer reviewed Staff's breakdown of options for sign code modifications, first into types, then into residential district and business district.

- Manual Change Bulletin Board
 - Residential
 - Do nothing and continue to allow variations on a case-by-case basis.
 - Make minor amendments to clarify current policy.
 - Business, Manufacturing, and Institutional
 - Do nothing and continue to allow variations on a case-by-case basis.
 - Change sign code to allow only in residential zoning districts for public, charitable, educational, or religious institutions.
- Electronic Bulletin Board/Changeable Message Board
 - Residential
 - Do nothing and continue to NOT allow
 - All with restrictions concerning operations
 - Allow specified use (i.e. schools) with restrictions concerning operation
 - Business, Manufacturing, and Institutional
 - Do nothing and continue to NOT allow
 - Allow in designated business, manufacturing, and/or institutional districts with restrictions.
 - Allow for specified uses, schools or major tourism venues with restrictions.
 - Allow in specified locations (I-90 or Rand Road Corridor) with restrictions.

Ms. Hamid summarized the regulatory considerations to consider if electronic signs are allowed:

- Static messages only, no scrolling, flashing, etc.
- Minimum distance: Establish minimum spacing between signs.
- Frequency of message change: FHWA recommends minimum of 8 seconds.
- Limit colors of lights: Elmhurst allows amber on black only.
- Illumination Standards: Require a threshold for illumination during the day versus evening hours; require an adjustment meter or sensor for adjustment.
- Maximum Sign Area: Determine a reasonable sign area, i.e. 30%.
- Orientation and setback from residential district.
- Limit as to type, i.e. monument or wall.
- Window Signs: Further define what constitutes a window sign.
- Establish Design Standards
- Sound

Ms. Hamid said that a survey of 19 communities was done through the Northwest Municipal Conference and Staff, with respect to electronic signs. Comparable communities included Buffalo Grove, Des Plaines, Elk Grove Village, Elmhurst,

Evanston, Hoffman Estates, Naperville, Mt. Prospect, and Schaumburg. Other communities included Carpentersville, Glencoe, Grayslake, Hanover Park, Libertyville, Prospect Heights, Rolling Meadows, and Streamwood. A list of major issues that other communities are reviewing was summarized as follows:

- As of right
- Restrictions on number of times per day or hour
- Illumination and brightness restrictions
- Concerns over electronic signs being distracting to drivers
- Are animation or moving images allowed
- Are there concerns over community character

Naperville and Oak Park, Illinois are two communities that recently modified their existing electronic sign code. Approved in December 2008, Naperville added a definition for Changeable Copy, and permits electronic signs as of right. Approved in March 2009, Oak Park permits electronic signs as of right, for window signage only.

Ms. Boyer summarized the recommendations by Staff with regards to each sign type:

- Manual Change Bulletin Board
 - Continue to allow manual change bulletin boards as currently allowed in all zoning districts.
 - Limit the size of manual change bulletin boards in all business, manufacturing, and institutional zoning districts to 30% of the total sign area or 20 square feet, whichever is less.
- Electronic Changeable Signs
 - Allow electronic changeable signs in residential districts for non-residential uses.
 - Require that electronic changeable signs in residential areas or adjacent to residential districts be turned off from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m.
 - Consider other regulations concerning changeable message boards.
- Business, Manufacturing, and Institutional Districts
 - Allow electronic changeable signs in all business, manufacturing, and institutional districts.
 - Limit the size of electronic changeable signs to 30% of the sign area or 20 square feet, whichever is less.
 - Consider other regulations concerning changeable message boards.

Other regulations for electronic changeable signs include the following:

- Static message: messages shall change frequently no more than once per 60 seconds.
- Color: color shall be limited to amber lights on black backgrounds.
- Sign Type: electronic changeable signs shall only be allowed on monument signs (not wall signs or ground signs)
- Establish daytime and nighttime illumination limits.
- Prohibit electronic changeable signs as window signs.
- Establish design standards requiring electronic changeable signs to cohesively

- tie into the monument sign.
- Prohibit sound as a component of the sign.
 - Prohibit signs that promote or advertise any commercial enterprise or event not conducted on the same premises.
 - Message: messages only for the business upon which the sign is placed shall be permitted. No off-premise advertising shall be allowed.

Ms. Hamid said the next steps would be for the commissioners to discuss the information presented tonight, and consider the following:

- Draft of code language
- Review of code language
- Any other sign items

Commissioner Bombick asked if he understood correctly that Staff was recommending that only electronic changeable signs be allowed, with no movement or images, and limited to amber on black background. **Ms. Hamid** replied that that was correct.

Commissioner Kingsley asked about height restrictions for monument signs, and the difference between a ground sign and a monument sign. **Ms. Hamid** replied that a monument sign has a 6-foot height with a decorative base, and a ground sign can be up to 16'-6" in height.

Commissioner Tinaglia felt that the use of both 'ground sign' and 'monument sign' was confusing and a clearer definition should be established. He asked whether both terms were even necessary and whether one could be eliminated, and how the Village could regulate how many electronic signs are allowed. **Ms. Ward** clarified that a ground sign was essentially a pole sign, and a monument sign was a sign on a base close to the ground.

Commissioner Tinaglia further stated that he would not be in favor of electronic signs that moved, and he felt that the Village's electronic sign at the corner of Northwest Highway and Arlington Heights Road moved too fast. He also asked Staff if there was any aftermath from the recently approved sign variation for *The Grand Station*, which he felt might be a good starting point for the future of electronic signs in the Village. He concluded that he was a big proponent of signage, which he felt was important.

Commissioner Bombick asked if there was a scientific graphic design reason behind the recommendation for the amber on black background color, as opposed to black on white, which was a lot easier to read, or white on black. He wanted to understand the justification; is it because amber is less obtrusive at a distance, and has less glare than other colors? **Ms. Hamid** replied that during the day, amber on black is most likely more readable, whereas in the evening, black on white may be more legible.

Commissioner Bombick also asked Staff what town(s) he could visit to see the type of electronic signs being recommended. **Ms. Hamid** replied that Staff visited

numerous towns to obtain the pictures presented tonight, which included Naperville, Bolingbrook, Woodridge, Carol Stream, Hanover Park, Bartlett, Hoffman Estates, Mt. Prospect and Chicago. The church sign in Mt. Prospect shown on page 11 was the type of electronic changeable sign that Staff was recommending.

Commissioner Bombick said that one the problems with some of the sign examples presented by Staff, was that the sign area was not big enough to do any good, unless the sign was right up on the road, and we had to be careful if we were going to restrict these, especially with community messages, which would be a waste of money if they were not big enough to see, and even more distracting.

Commissioner Tinaglia wanted to make one more comment before he had to leave because of another meeting commitment. He felt that many of the existing manual change bulletin board signs in the Village were offensive and old-looking, and wanted to see something happen with these signs. **Commissioner Tinaglia** left the meeting at this time.

Commissioner Fitzgerald agreed that some of the older, existing manual change bulletin board signs, such as the one at the car wash on S. Arlington Heights Road shown on page 3, were unattractive; however, he felt the new manual bulletin board sign for Southminster Church, shown on page 4, was a great example. He said that he never liked electronic changeable signs because they are too busy and would add to the busyness of existing signs in the Village, especially on S. Arlington Heights Road. He felt that at some point, electronic signs would start moving faster than we could control, and be brighter than we could control. He especially did not like these types of signs in a residential area because it cheapened the area, even with time restrictions. He also felt that once these electronic changeable signs were allowed, everybody would want one, and he did not like any of the electronic sign examples provided by Staff. He felt the existing rules for electronic signs should remain as is, existing manual bulletin board signs could be improved and updated, and the option for a sign variation could remain.

Commissioner Bombick pointed out that the existing manual bulletin board sign at the car wash on S. Arlington Heights Road, shown on page 3, managed to make something as obnoxious as a hi-definition TV sign without any technology other than fluorescent lights, and this sign was a result of the existing sign code.

Chairman Eckhardt said that he was a proponent of the highest technology of video signs known to man, because that was the future; however, he was also a proponent of developing regulations so that electronic signs stay static for the most part. He was not in favor of the highly graphic image of blade runner-type signs, and he would not support an electronic changeable sign with only amber lights because it was old-school and outdated before it even started. He felt the Village needed to leap forward into the sign technology future, which is a sign with a video screen that is regulated. He also acknowledged that once this type of sign was allowed, it would be difficult to stop it from becoming like Disneyland; however, he would vote for no electronic sign unless it was a sign that had the new technology, with restrictions. **Chairman Eckhardt** also felt it was important to never allow

someone to put a sign on someone else's property, resulting in too many signs too close together.

Commissioner Kingsley said she felt similar to Chairman Eckhardt with regards to the electronic sign display. She referred to the 'Home Run Inn' sign on page 17, which she felt was a nice sign. She also said she was definitely not a proponent of anything moving on electronic signs. Her big issues with signs were height and brightness, which she felt should be looked into further. When she thought of signage in other towns, she was impressed with downtown Lake Forest, which had nothing but low signs, which she was a proponent of and suggested the Village look into.

Ms. Ward explained that downtown areas were different than other areas of town with regards to sign height. She said that there was a danger in making a change in sign height because although existing signs could be amortized out, in most situations, existing signs would not come down until they fall apart, resulting in a lot of old, non-maintained signs. **Commissioner Kingsley** reiterated her previous suggestion that the height of signs be reviewed by Staff. She also recommended grouping together all the different types of electronic signs, including the manual bulletin board sign, so that a petitioner was not forced to put a manual bulletin board sign on a tall ground sign, which she was opposed to.

Commissioner Bombick said that he tended to agree, in concept, with Commissioner Kingsley and Chairman Eckhardt about the type of signs that would be nice. He referred to the 'Home Run Pizza' sign on page 17, which was a nicely designed sign with a graphic image that changed; however, the sign was also so pedestrian, so mundane, and so ordinary, which was where he was afraid the Village would end up if electronic signs were allowed. He also referred to the 'McDonald's' sign along I-90, and the digitally-stunning electronic billboards along the stretch of 294 west of the airport in Elmhurst, which were well designed and easy to read electronic signs. He also referred to the 'McDonald's' sign on page 17, which he felt was the most annoying, primitive type of electronic sign you could possibly imagine, which should never be allowed in the Village because it looked cheap and tacky.

Commissioner Bombick also referred to the church sign in Bartlett shown on page 11, which was exactly what Commissioner Fitzgerald meant when he said that he did not want to see an electronic sign in a residential neighborhood, emblazoned on the sunset every day. **Commissioner Bombick** added that he could support a white copy on black or a black and white electronic sign, because it was very readable and not overly bright; however, the concept of dark skies should be considered with regards to signage and lighting. He wanted to know if it was more environmentally sustainable to be changing the material wrapped around a big billboard, signs emitting high powered fluorescent lights, or running a hi-definition display (electronic sign) 24 hours a day. **Commissioner Bombick** also agreed with Chairman Eckhardt that some of the existing manual change bulletin board signs were so archaic and there had to be better technology and a way to control the quality of the graphics.

Chairman Eckhardt suggested developing a design guidelines booklet showing the type of signs the Village expects, signs of high quality and high technology; guidelines similar to the existing guidelines for single-family homes. **Ms. Ward** replied that guidelines could not be put out recommending signage that is not permitted by code, because it would be inviting variations, and in theory, a variation was an exception, and exceptions should not be invited. **Ms. Hamid** added that the commissioners could however, encourage better design overall for signs.

Commissioner Fitzgerald asked Commissioner Bombick if there were any examples of signs presented by Staff that he felt were a positive direction, because he was trying to be open-minded. **Commissioner Bombick** replied that he did not mind the electronic static sign shown on page 2, or the white on black copy, and he felt the manual change bulletin board sign at Southminster Church, shown on page 4, was gorgeous.

Ms. Ward suggested the commissioners think about whether they preferred manual change bulletin board signs over electronic changeable signs, because this was really the issue right now with the type of sign variations that have been coming in. This would help narrow the focus right now by starting small and moving forward with the type of sign that is already out there, and in the future, go forward with signage that is newer in technology, but with restrictions.

Commissioner Kingsley said that she was amazed by the current regulations for window signage in the Village. She felt strongly that something should be done about these types of signs. **Commissioner Bombick** suggested a 'use tax' for any electronic signs allowed in the Village, which could electronically control how many times the sign changed messages.

Ms. Hamid asked the commissioners for some type of direction at this time. **Chairman Eckhardt** felt the direction tonight appeared scattered, although he liked Ms. Ward's suggestion to take a narrow approach by deciding whether to encourage or discourage certain types of signs, electronic vs. manual. It appeared as though none of the commissioners supported stick-up plastic letters on manual signs, although they did support high quality letters like the ones used on the Southminster Church sign; therefore, regulations specific to manufacturer could be considered for illumination and copy to ensure a quality design.

Ms. Ward clarified that currently electronic signs are not permitted; therefore, if the commissioners want to treat electronic signs similar to manual bulletin board signs, code language must first be prepared to 'permit electronic changeable signs'. Caution should also be taken with language pertaining to specific technological standards for these signs, in order to avoid differentiating among uses without any validity or justification. **Ms. Ward** referred to the list of 'regulations for electronic changeable signs' on page 18, which the commissioners could consider moving forward with; or not permit electronic changeable signs at this time; or tighten up the existing regulations for manual bulletin board signs; or not do anything with electronic signs at this time.

Commissioners Fitzgerald, Bombick, and Chairman Eckhardt, were all in favor of doing nothing about electronic changeable signs at this time. **Commissioner Kingsley** said she was in favor of approving electronic changeable signs at this time, with restrictions. **Commissioner Bombick** added that he wanted to see restrictions on manual change bulletin board signs tightened at this time, which **Chairman Eckhardt** agreed with. **Chairman Eckhardt** recommended a future meeting to further discuss manual change bulletin board signs, specifically with regards to improving the font on these signs. **Ms. Hamid** summarized that the commissioners want Staff to come back with a better code definition on manual change bulletin board signs, as well as some design considerations for these types of signs. **Chairman Eckhardt** also said that although they were not asking Staff to draft an ordinance on electronic signs at this time, the commission should continue discussions on these types of signs, with the direction to establish the controls for such a sign.

The commissioners all stated that if they saw any electronic changeable signs in other communities that they liked, they would contact Staff for further investigation. **Commissioner Kingsley** suggested discussing this topic again in 3 months, as well as discussing current regulations for window signs. **Ms. Ward** replied that Staff could look at window signage regulations separate and apart from the issue of electronic changeable signs. **Ms. Hamid** pointed out that the recommendations made by Staff with regards to electronic changeable signs also applied to the B-5 zoning district, which included the downtown.

The commissioners appreciated and thanked Staff for all the information provided in the packet for tonight's meeting, which was very well done.

Ms. Hamid reiterated that her direction from the commissioners tonight was to come up with some design regulations for the current manual changeable signs, and to look further at existing regulations for window signs. With regards to electronic changeable signs, the commissioners want to think more about it and revisit the issue at a later time, with no direction to develop any ordinance language, or to make any changes at this time. The commissioners concurred.

Commissioner Bombick reiterated his question pertaining to the power requirement for electronic changeable signs vs. illuminating a billboard with standard methods, which Staff replied they would look into further.

ITEM 6. GENERAL MEETING

There was no further discussion.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER BOMBICK, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:45 P.M. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.