

APPROVED

MINUTES OF
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
DESIGN COMMISSION MEETING
HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.
JULY 11, 2017

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

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

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Brian Hyde, Greenscape Homes for *408 W. Mueller St.*
John Wozniak, David Weekley Homes for *1014 N. Chicago Ave.*
Bogie & Joanna Szescho, Owners of *1014 N. Chicago Ave.*
Pastor Sunny Mathew for *Zion Christian Church*
Pastor Abbey Mathew for *Zion Christian Church*
Rev. Anish John for *Zion Christian Church*
Rev. Sam Abraham, Pastor of *Zion Christian Church*
Mathew Kattappurath for *Zion Christian Church*
Steve Hautzinger, Staff Liaison

Chair Fitzgerald welcomed Aaron Coon, new Design Commissioner.

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FROM JUNE 27, 2017

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KINGSLEY, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 27, 2017. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KINGSLEY, TO MOVE THE ITEM UNDER 'OLD BUSINESS' (DC#09-025) TO THE END OF THE AGENDA. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

ITEM 4. SIGN CODE MODIFICATIONS RE-REVIEWDC#09-025 – Village-Wide Electronic Signs

Mr. Hautzinger said that this matter was discussed at the last meeting when only 3 commissioners were in attendance.

He gave a brief summary of the history and background of electronic signs, as well as discussions regarding the possible conditional review process, which concluded with the Village Board directing Staff to further research and draft a conditional use process to allow electronic signage that meets certain criteria. Staff completed detailed research of other communities that allow electronic signage standards and approval processes. The areas where electronic message signage could be allowed, along major arterial roads, have been refined and maps illustrating those areas within the community have been prepared. Common standards for electronic signage include restrictions to locate the signs only along major roads, enforce a minimum spacing between signs, and limitations when adjacent to residential zoning districts. Common operational restrictions include minimum display change times, no flashing/scrolling/animation/video, and brightness limitations.

Feedback given by the commissioners at the last meeting on June 27, 2017 as well as Staff's response, are as follows:

1. None of the commissioners supported the idea of allowing electronic signs.
2. Concern was expressed that the Design Commission's review and recommendations regarding individual electronic sign requests may be ignored by the Village Board, and would therefore be a waste of the Design Commission's time.
 - a. Staff recommends that the Design Commission stay in the review process and continue to provide recommendations to the Village Board on this matter.
3. The commissioners asked if the Conditional Approval would be transferable to a new business in the same location.
 - a. The draft ordinance could be revised to clarify that electronic sign approvals not be transferable, and the Design Commission should make a recommendation on this matter.
4. The commissioners recommended that Staff review the proposed ordinance with the Chamber of Commerce.
 - a. The Chamber Commerce is aware that this is being studied, and Staff intends to provide a full update at the appropriate time.
5. The commissioners recommended that electronic ink signs be allowed for schools, churches, and park facilities in Residential Zoning Districts.
 - a. Staff recommends that this be considered as a separate amendment ordinance, but the commissioners should make a formal recommendation on this matter.
6. The commissioners suggested preparing a list of existing businesses within the designated corridors that will be likely to request an electronic sign (such as Walgreens, McDonald's, Dunkin Donuts).
 - a. Staff presented a hypothetical list of businesses and locations, such as car dealerships, gas stations, restaurants, and banks.
7. The commissioners made a motion to continue this matter to a future meeting when all commissioners are in attendance.

At this time, Staff has completed the necessary research and prepared Draft ordinance language pertaining to electronic message signage for presentation to the Village Board. This Draft ordinance is being presented to the commissioners tonight, with any feedback tonight to either be included with the Draft ordinance, or the Draft ordinance amended to reflect the changes recommended tonight.

The commissioners reviewed and discussed the Draft language, and gave the following comments:

Section 30-101 – Definitions – Electronic Message Sign

- Add a statement that public messages are allowed.

Section 30-701 – Maps designating where Electronic Message Signs are allowed

- There is a need, without question, to allow electronic ink signs (black and white or color) for schools and churches, which should be included at this time and not as an amendment in the future.
- A recommendation to not include Arlington Heights Road in Map 3. The Village Board has asked Staff to research how to beautify this strip, which cannot be achieved without taking down the existing poles and not allowing electronic signs. In an effort to beautify these retail corridors, adding electronic signs would be a step backwards.

Section 30-702 – Conditional Review Process and Criteria

- (a) No comments.
- (b) The language is unrealistic and confusing. No electronic message sign will serve the best interests of the Village. Electronic signs absolutely provide for a competitive edge over a business that does not get one.
 - o The language should state, 'The Electronic Message Sign will serve the best interests of the Village, and be desirable for the public convenience'. Eliminate the remaining language.
 - o When a business applies for an electronic sign well after other nearby businesses have one, will they be able to meet the intent of the hardship criteria, which is not to have a competitive advantage?
 - o What type of copy will be used on the electronic message sign, which is giving the business a quick advantage over what their 'sale of the day' is?
- (c) Add additional language that specific parts of the electronic sign need to be compatible with the essential character of the locality, such as the sign enclosure, materials, and scale.
- (d) What is the definition of a valid need? Need more specific language.

Section 30-703 – Applications

- (a) No comments.
- (b) Add a requirement that the petitioner submit representative images to show the quality, design and content of the proposed message display, as opposed to submitting a static elevation of a black screen.

Section 30-704 – Notification Requirements

- (a) Written notice to property owners within 100 feet should be increased to 300-feet; equal to the 300-foot separation required between signs.
- (b) Add language specific to where the public meeting sign must be located on the property; near the public way and not on the building itself. The sample public meeting sign, MEETING FOR: should state "Conditional Review for an Electronic Sign".

Section 30-705 – Standards for Electronic Message Signs

- (a) No comments.
- (b) Concerns about enforcing repair/maintenance of electronic signage. Add, "must maintain 'like new' operating condition or cease operations of sign."
- (c) Concerns about the maximum size allowed for an electronic sign. Suggestion to change from 50% to 33%. Sign variation to amend the amount up to 50% if necessary.
- (e) There are concerns about the initial onset of applications in order to beat the 300-foot minimum spacing requirement. Suggest a survey be done of the spacing between buildings along the commercial corridors designated for electronic message signs, to determine whether the minimum 300-foot spacing is appropriate or needs to be adjusted.
- (f) No comments.
- (g) No comments.
- (h-1) No comments.
- (h-2) No comments.
- (h-3) Concerns about whether IDOT's lighting standards are the same as what is proposed, and Staff verified that they are the same.

- (h-4) No comments.
- (h-5) Staff clarified that this is more restrictive by not allowing an electronic message sign to be illuminated when the business is closed; however, the top portion of the sign is allowed to be illuminated after hours.

The commissioners gave the following general comments and concerns about electronic message signs:

1. The commissioners are not in support of allowing electronic message signs.
2. The commissioners are not in support of the Draft language presented tonight unless it is amended to reflect the recommendations given tonight, prior to being presented to the Village Board.
3. Concerns about too many businesses having an electronic sign, resulting in a cluttering of these signs up and down major arterial roads in town. A suggestion for a qualification for an electronic sign to be based on the size of a business.
4. How does allowing electronic message signs relate to the Comprehensive Plan; Concerns that electronic message signs will negatively impact beautification.
5. Concerns about enforcing the content of messages being displayed on an electronic sign.
6. Concerns about the brightness of electronic message signs.
7. Concerns about businesses with more frontage being allowed multiple electronic signs, as opposed to smaller business only allowed one electronic sign.

Staff recommended the commissioners make a motion tonight that would be a recommendation to the Village Board. The commissioners wanted to see the Draft ordinance amended to include the changes they discussed tonight, prior to the draft ordinance presented to the Village Board; however, it did not mean that they would vote in favor of the ordinance.

Commissioner Kingsley said that she was completely opposed to allowing electronic signs, and she was conflicted as to whether or not she wanted to review the ordinance, because each time she did she would probably say no to it. However, if there has to be an ordinance to allow electronic signs, she felt Staff did a very good job with their research, and once the ordinance is amended to include the commissioner's comments, it could go before the Village Board, but it will be on their head, not the design commissions'.

Commissioner Eckhardt did not support electronic signs.

Chair Fitzgerald did not support electronic signs because they did nothing to beautify the Village, which is part of what the Design Commission does. If no one has them, it is a fair advantage that no one has them. He did not see other communities such as the North Shore, allowing electronic signs or even considering them. He felt it was the Design Commission's job to make the Villager nicer and better, not just to allow 'because'.

Commissioner Coon said that from a marketing standpoint, he did not think there was a need for electronic signs; the current sign code for commercial users is adequate and there is no need to add to the current signage in the Village.

Commissioner Kubow agreed and had nothing more to add. He liked the even playing field analogy.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KINGSLEY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW, THAT THE REVISIONS DISCUSSED TONIGHT BY THE COMMISSIONERS BE INCORPORATED INTO THE DRAFT ORDINANCE FOR ELECTRONIC MESSAGE SIGNAGE, AND BROUGHT BACK TO THE DESIGN COMMISSION FOR A FINAL MOTION TO BE MADE.

**KINGSLEY, AYE; COON, AYE; ECKHARDT, AYE; FITZGERALD, AYE; KUBOW, AYE.
MOTION CARRIED.**