

**Minutes of the Community Design Commission
Held on February 27, 2013
At Village Hall in Room 101**

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Attendees: Acting Chairperson Bernie Woytek , Commissioners David Brumirski, Douglas Chien, Teresa Heit-Murray, Christina Loran, Lloyd Natof, Lindsay Salvatore, Greg Sorg (arrived at 7:02 p.m.), Aaron Stigger, Michele Wheeler

Absent: Chairperson Tom Phillion, Commissioners John Schiess, Sharon Snook

Also present: Craig Failor, Village Planner; Michael Bruce, Zoning Administrator; and Trustee Glenn Brewer

Public Attendees:

Non-Agenda Public Comment:

None.

Minutes: Commissioner Chien motioned to approve the minutes from January 23, 2013. Commissioner Salvatore seconded. The minutes were approved as submitted.

Agenda Items Sitting as the Design Review Commission:

Cal. No. 01-13-DRC: 219-221 Lake Street, School of Rock – Approval of the Resolution

Commissioner Natof motioned to approve the resolution. Commissioner Wheeler seconded. The motioned was approved unanimously.

Cal. No. 02-13-DRC: 332 Lake Street - Oak Park Cleaners, applicant, is requesting a variation be granted from Section 7-7-14 (A) (Table 2), which provides that ground signs are not permitted in the Neighborhood Commercial Sign Overlay District, in order to maintain their existing ground sign after the amortization period (March 23, 2014) has passed.

Mr. Bruce gave an explanation of the Neighborhood Commercial Overlay district along Lake Street. He indicated that the signage was geared toward pedestrians and not vehicular traffic and that the goal of the 2009 Sign Ordinance was to phase out ground signs in favor of monument signs.

Mr. Daniel Park, son of the applicant, spoke on behalf of the applicant. He said the ground sign allowed for the business to be seen one or two blocks away and wondered why that was an issue. Acting Chair Woytek explained the purpose of the sign code was to keep the character of signs in that area more pedestrian in scale. Mr. Failor said that the Village adopted a new sign code in 2009 and courtesy letters were recently sent out to business owners whose signs were in violation of the code. Mr. Failor said the amortization schedule required signs in compliance by March 23, 2014.

Mr. Park said the sign helps motor vehicles see the business and his father had been in business for over 30 years. He believed it wasn't a part of the downtown area and said a monument sign could provide an opportunity for students or others to deface the sign with graffiti. Commissioner Natof asked if there was a problem with graffiti on the rest of the property. Mr. Park said there was a window broken but no graffiti. Commissioner Loranz asked if Ridgeland Commons' sign fell under the same rules. Mr. Bruce said there were plans to replace the ground sign when the new facility was built. Mr. Park said there was a gas station across the street with a ground sign as well. Mr. Failor said there were other businesses in the area in violation and they had been notified. Commissioner Loranz said she did not believe a dry cleaning business was a destination location, it was more of a neighborhood use and that people who live in the neighborhood would already know about its location without the sign. Mr. Park said the sign has been there for over 30 years and he was surprised about the change in law. A short discussion ensued about signs that had been grandfathered into the code. Mr. Bruce said there were five historical signs in the Village that had been grandfathered into the sign code.

Commissioner Brumirski noted that the other signs on the property were almost as large as the ground sign. He said that would be sufficient signage if the ground sign was removed. Commissioner Natof said the option wasn't just removal; the applicant could replace it with a monument sign. Mr. Park said that option would go back to the possibility of defacement.

Commissioner Salvatore said pedestrian-oriented design studies had shown that people on the street buy more than people in vehicles and that was the intent of sign code. She asked about the placement of a monument sign, if the area would be too cluttered for one. Mr. Failor said it could be difficult to find a location for a monument sign due to the parking lot location but that the option was there for the applicant to explore.

Commissioner Natof asked if there was any unusual financial distress to remove the sign and what the cost would be to replace with a monument sign. Mr. Park said it would affect the budget, but he did not know exact numbers. Commissioner Natof said he would like to have more information about the costs and would like more detailed information on whether a monument sign would be possible for that location.

Commissioner Stigger motioned to deny the variance application. Commissioner Brumirski seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Stigger- yes
Brumirski- yes
Salvatore- yes
Natof- no
Sorg- yes
Heit-Murray- no
Wheeler- no
Chien- yes
Loranz- yes
Woytek- no

The motion failed 6-4. Mr. Failor explained that a quorum was 7.

Commissioner Natof motioned to continue the application to the next meeting provided the applicant could provide some further information. Mr. Bruce explained that the standards were not based on economic hardship. Mr. Bruce read the standards to the Commission.

Commissioner Salvatore motioned to deny the application for a variance. Commissioner Chien seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Salvatore - yes
Chien - yes
Natof - yes
Stigger - yes
Sorg - yes
Heit-Murray – no
Wheeler – no
Brumirski –yes
Loranz - yes
Woytek – no

The motion passed 7-3. The variance was denied.

Mr. Park asked what his next steps could be. There was some discussion on whether the applicant could withdraw his application before a resolution was passed denying the variance with the option to resubmit it later with more information pertinent to the standards. Staff said they needed to check with legal to see if this would be possible before advising the applicant.

Commissioner Heit-Murray asked about the procedure going forward regarding a possible influx of sign variations due to the sign code amortization date. Mr. Failor explained the Board of Trustees will likely review the sign code process again in May. Trustee Brewer said that the Board hoped to get more clarity from business owners and perhaps that will cut down on the number of variance applications that might come before the CDC.

Commissioner Chien left at 7:58 p.m.

Commissioner Natof asked staff for an overview of the sign code. Staff agreed. Mr. Failor said Chair Phillion pointed out the next CDC meeting was during spring break and asked if it could be cancelled or rescheduled. Mr. Failor said no applications had been submitted as of yet and there was a possibility the meeting would be cancelled, but he would contact commissioners after the deadline for submission had passed.

Staff Reports:

Mr. Failor updated commissioners on the Comprehensive Plan process, saying there was a great turnout at the public meeting on February 20, 2013 with a lot of people interested in participating in the upcoming focus groups and workshops. Mr. Failor said he will invite commissioners to the workshops once the dates for each topic are established. He said the Lake Street streetscape

committee has some recommendations to present to the Board at a future date. He said Trustees had asked for the streetscape recommendations for Oak Park Avenue to come back before the Board again as well. After May, he hoped the Board would hear the Madison Street streetscape improvements. He said Roosevelt Road was almost closed out, but there were a few punchlist items left to finish for IDOT.

Sub-Committee Reports:

None.

Other Business:

Comprehensive Plan On-Line Survey – Bring smartphone or tablet

Mr. Failor said he had been asking various commissions to complete the Envision Oak Park on-line survey at the end of the meetings in order to get more participants. He urged commissioners to complete the survey either at the end of the meeting or at home.

Adjournment

Commissioner Brumirski motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Stigger seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Angela Schell,

Recording Secretary