

VILLAGE OF SHOREWOOD
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
04 November 09

Chairman Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Present: Chairman Gary Fitzgerald, Vice Chair Dan Gron, Steve Brockman, Duane Gronwold, Pete Cerve, Dan Warren and James Relyea.

Absent: Melissa Bradford, Jim Schlunz and Debbie Olson

Also present were Kurt Carroll, Village Administrator, Nancy Roman, Economic Development Director and Karen James, Planner.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

MINUTES

Duane Gronwold made a motion to approve the minutes from the 02 September 2009 meeting, seconded by Steve Brockman. All in favor, none opposed, minutes approved.

PLANNING & ZONING

1. Impact Outdoor LLC

a) **Public Hearing**

b) **Petition #09-300**

Consideration of a sign variance for Impact Outdoor LLC as provided by the Shorewood Village Code 10-10-3L regarding Billboard Signs at 19747 Frontage Road.

Gary Fitzgerald introduced the Public Hearing. He continued by swearing in en mass the people present that intended to testify. Mr. Fitzgerald gave instructions for testimony. Ms. Roman asked that anyone intending to speak, please sign in.

Gary Fitzgerald declared the Public Hearing open. He asked staff to outline the variance.

Nancy Roman spoke, noting that billboard signs are prohibited by Ordinance. She continued by stating the Petitioner is requesting a variance to allow for such a sign on the Joliet Inn property to be placed immediately north of the northerly entrance, closest to the lobby. The dimensions are 14 x 48 for a total of 672 square feet, with a height of 62 feet. Ms. Roman further stated that the Petitioner requests to convert the sign to a “fully digital” sign at some point in the future when they make the determination that demand is

sufficient to make that capital investment. Ms. Roman noted that there was discussion with the Petitioner on issues such as the future redevelopment of the property. Ms. Roman concluded by mentioning the numerous phone calls from residents of Deer Run opposing the billboard sign and a letter with concerns from Ron Tirapelli Ford that was included in the packet.

Kurt Carroll noted that Jim Haller from the City of Joliet was present. Mr. Haller was there on behalf of the residents of Joliet to express their concerns.

Joe Cook, the Petitioner, of 25213 W. Jessup Street, Channahon, took the floor. Mr. Cook is President of Phase I Consulting. Also present was Rod Hirsch the owner of Impact Signs. Mr. Cook stated this Petition is about business. He noted that the Village of Shorewood has done a tremendous job of bringing business into the community. He continued by talking about the expense of advertising. Mr. Cook noted that currently thousands of cars drive down I-55 each day and will be reached by retailers in Shorewood. The sign will allow for not only retailers to get high impact advertising at a reasonable rate but it would also allow for co-op sharing of the sign. Mr. Cook pointed out that retail is hurting, sales tax is down and retailers need the opportunity to advertise. He feels this billboard would benefit Shorewood retailers.

Mr. Cook continued by talking about purchasing a permanent easement from the property owner. He stated the effect on neighboring residents would be minimal. He also stated the billboard sign gives off no more light than a porch light. The goal of the lighting on the sign is to light up just the sign. He concluded by noting that the FAA and IDOT have permitted this sign.

Mr. Cook then asked for questions.

Kurt Carroll stated that one of the concerns of Staff is how the billboard sign would impede future redevelopment of the Joliet Inn property. The impact of buying the sign out may hinder redevelopment.

Mr. Cook felt they addressed that concern by buying the permanent easement. He also noted there is a billboard 1500 feet ahead of this proposed sign and Joliet has several billboard signs promoting their businesses.

Gary Fitzgerald called for public testimony.

Cheryl Salaiz of 4156 Caribou Court, Joliet, Illinois 60431 took the floor. She stated the residents of Deer Run do not want the sign over their homes. They have 100 homes in Deer Run and they do not want to see it. Ms. Salaiz continued by saying the sign would be right in her back yard. She would like to see her neighborhood improve and feels this sign will hurt her neighborhood.

Jason Park of 4179 Whitetail Court, Joliet, spoke next. Mr. Park's concern was safety related. He feels the sign would be a distraction on an already risky stretch of road. As a motorcycle rider he does not want to see another distraction. He feels they can move their sign further down the road where there are fewer houses.

Terence Zeismer of 4217 Fawn Court, Joliet, is looking at the aesthetics. He stated the other side of their homes is a green area. A six story, 42 foot wide billboard would be in his backyard. He wants to improve his property and see it look nice. Mr. Zeismer feels the billboard would make it difficult to sell their homes. He is also concerned about low flying helicopters and planes. Mr. Zeismer concluded by asking why the Village would allow a variance to something they don't allow in the first place.

Robert Larson of 4167 Caribou Court, Joliet, stated that he has lived there for 15 years. He feels the billboard will take away from his home. He also feels it also a distraction to driving. Mr. Larson commented that his son works for a digital sign company and his son stated the billboard would be very bright. Mr. Larson asked Mr. Cook why he doesn't put the sign at I-80 and I-55 in Channahon. Mr. Cook responded that if the billboard were allowed it in that area he would have placed it there. Mr. Cook would love to offer that opportunity to his community.

Sally Lasser of 4177 Whitetail Court, Joliet, spoke next. She stated she moved to Deer Run because it is wooded and full of nature. She likes to look at the trees and deer and does not want to see the billboard. Ms. Lasser also commented that by the time you can read the sign, it is already too late to make the turn into Shorewood.

Jim Haller, Community Development Director for the City of Joliet took the floor. He addressed the Commission on behalf of his residents. He asked the Commission not to approve the billboard. He feels it is a quality of life issue. Mr. Haller concluded by stating the billboard would not help Shorewood, but would help the businesses at Route 6 in Channahon, or at Route 30 in Joliet.

Jim Relyea asked Mr. Haller if there were plans to put up billboards at the Bridgestreet project. Mr. Haller answered there was no plan for billboards at this time.

Gary Fitzgerald called for further statements or questions. He then asked the Petitioner to respond.

Mr. Cook responded that the reason for the height and angle of the billboard is to capture traffic from the furthest point possible. He stated the sign would allow enough time to exit at Shorewood. He noted that Impact Outdoors has put up 4 signs in Joliet and the City of Joliet owns one of them, he further noted that one sign is only 50 feet from a residence. Mr. Cook agrees that the residents of Deer Run have a beautiful greenspace to the east, but there is still an interstate to the west. Mr. Cook concluded by adding the angle of the sign keeps the lighting concern almost null to the residents.

Cheryl Salaiz took the floor again. Ms. Salaiz agrees with Mr. Park that there is a safety issue. She asked Mr. Cook the location of the sign that was 50 feet from a residence. Joe cook answered I-80 and River Road.

Suzanne Lasser of 4158 Caribou Court, Joliet, spoke next. She moved here last June, because she loved her daughter's home so much. She feels the lighted billboard would be a nuisance and will devalue their property. Ms. Lasser feels if someone needs a car dealership, they know how to get there; they don't need a sign to get there.

Dan Gron asked about Tyson Motors and their sales last year. Kurt Carroll answered Tyson was number one in sales in Illinois, proving that they didn't need a billboard sign.

Jason Park took the floor again. He again addressed safety concerns and the distance of the billboard to the exit. He also feels it would not allow enough time to make the decision to exit there.

Sally Lasser spoke again. She noted the residents have a privacy fence that keeps them from the highway. She also stated the sign being in the west would ruin their beautiful view of the sunset. Ms. Lasser then asked Mr. Cook if this sign would be only for Shorewood Vendors exclusively. Joe Cook answered it would not be exclusive to Shorewood, but they would be offered premium pricing.

Mr. Cook also noted none of these residents will be seeing the full face of the sign.

Terry Zeismer spoke again and stated that he would still be looking at a 60 foot sign, no matter which side he will be seeing.

Robert Larson took the floor last and stated he felt this was all about dollars and cents and that the Petitioner couldn't care less about what any of the residents or commissioners think.

Chairman Fitzgerald called for further comments. Hearing none, Chairman Fitzgerald called for a motion to close the Public Hearing. A motion was made by Duane Gronwold and seconded by Steve Brockman. All in favor, none opposed, motion passed.

Duane Gronwold made comments on traffic control. He noted that IDOT feels that there is no traffic problem. Mr. Gronwold also mentioned the comment made by Mr. Zeismer on Air Traffic; but noted that the FAA gave their approval. Mr. Gronwold stated that what it comes down to is that this sign is prohibited by a Village Ordinance and whether or not we want to make an exception to that Ordinance.

Pete Cerve commented that the Village of Shorewood tries to set itself apart from other communities. The fact that a community down the road put a billboard sign 50 feet from a residence is not our concern. Mr. Cerve feels if we open the door for this we would be setting a precedent for other billboards to line I-55.

Dan Gron asked why the billboard was not allowed at the Route 6 site. Joe Cook answered because of the Federal Highway Beautification Act, which regulates the zoning districts that billboards are allowed in.

Rod Hirsch took the floor and talked about the Lady Bird Johnson Act and the zoning requirements that allow for a billboard. Mr. Hirsch stated that this is the only site available for a billboard sign.

Mr. Cook also noted that if the state doesn't follow highway guidelines, they will not receive federal tax highway dollars.

Gary Fitzgerald called for further comments or questions, hearing none Duane Gronwold made a motion to recommend denial to the Village Board of Petition #09-292 for the following reason(s) the variance is not in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Ordinance and the variance, if granted, will alter the essential character of the neighborhood or will be substantial detriment to adjacent property, seconded by Jim Relyea. Roll call vote, all in favor, none opposed, motion passed.

2. Consideration of Site Plan for McDonald's at Market Street Lot 4

Gary Fitzgerald asked staff to introduce the agenda item. Nancy Roman noted that she passed out additional information, including a revised landscape plan and the specifications for the dumpster enclosure.

She continued by stating that coming out of the Concept Plan meeting there were comments on the orientation of the building. Staff worked with McDonald's on addressing those concerns. Staff asked to see a perspective of the building as you are turning in. The overall size of the building is smaller. McDonald's agreed to utilize the stone that was used at the Towne Center. The stone arcade element at the corner of the building was also added. There was a lot of attention spent on the landscaping.

Kurt Carroll discussed the decorative changes made to the building and how the building has been dressed up.

Gary Fitzgerald inquired as to whether the brick column could be raised a bit more.

Ed Schneider with McDonald's took the floor. He noted that he was involved with several of the architectural meetings. He stated they have already raised the column and cannot raise it any more. They have also made some parapet wall changes in response to height comments.

Mary Meyer with McDonald's stepped up and stated that the roof line is trademarked and can't go higher.

Mr. Schneider noted that this is the first time they have ever been asked to use this type of stone. He continued by saying it took a good deal of effort to be able to use this type of stone.

Gary Fitzgerald inquired about the awning. Mr. Schneider answered it is a metallic trellis, basically an awning to provide rain protection.

Gary Fitzgerald then asked how the reduced size of the building would affect the inside. Mr. Schneider answered it did not really affect the inside. They will have 72 to 74 seats. Currently the drive-thru incurs about 70% of the business. The side by side drive-thru enables them to better service their customers.

Nancy Roman talked about the two tone brick and that the banding of the Route 59 side continues on the front side of the building.

Dan Gron discussed the landscape plan. Nancy Roman described the Fat Albert Spruce. She stated this variety gets to be about 15 feet in height at maturity and has a spread of 10 to 15 feet.

There was further discussion of the Landscape Plan and the types of trees and shrubs used.

Dan Gron mentioned he would like to see uplighting in the trees. He also commented about how lighting makes a building look great at night. He stated that in Shorewood the buildings look as nice at night as in the daylight.

Nancy Roman noted that the signage is in conformance and that staff is pleased with the level of cooperation from McDonald's

Chairman Fitzgerald called for questions or comments. Hearing none Duane Gronwold made a motion to recommend the Site Plan subject to final engineering, final photometric, final signage and final landscape to the Village Board, seconded by Jim Relyea. Roll call vote, all in favor, none opposed, motion passed.

3. Consideration of revision to the Detention Pond Planting Ordinance.

Gary Fitzgerald noted that the Village Engineer was here and talked about what was included in the packet.

Mayor Rick Chapman took the floor and introduced the revision to the Ordinance for detention ponds. Mayor Chapman stated that the public has made comments on how poor some of our detention ponds are. He talked about the different kinds of detention ponds. He feels if people are going to live around these ponds, they need to be more accessible and more aesthetically pleasing. Mayor Chapman further stated they he asked Bryan Welch to come up with a compromise so that people can enjoy the ponds but the Village can support the integrity of the ponds. Mayor Chapman introduced Bryan Welch.

Duane Gronwold said he wasn't sure what the technical terminology was. He asked specifically what C value referred to.

Mr. Welch answered that he wasn't sure of all of the meanings either. He continued by stating that he is one of many people in his office who worked on this; there were several people who designed this revision to the Ordinance. Mr. Welch was certain that all of the plantings are native to the area.

Mr. Welch continued by saying there has been some desire to allow better access to the ponds (i.e. being able to get to the banks for fishing, etc.). What this Ordinance revision does is breaks the planting approach into two areas; one being low profile which is 6 inches to 2 feet and then high profile which is 2 to 6 feet.

Dan Gron asked why you would use a high profile if a low profile worked as well. Mr. Welch answered for screening or to avoid access to the water. He continued by noting the

Ordinance currently reads that ponds shall have planting without defining it further. What this Ordinance does is give the developer an approach or guideline.

Gary Fitzgerald inquired if the lower profile plantings are sufficient. He also wondered what access to the water means. He questioned if it meant fishing or boating? Lastly, he asked if the lower profile planting is equivalent to the higher profile when providing erosion control.

Kurt Carroll answered that from a practical standpoint residents are cutting down or not maintaining the species of plants that were planted. The Ordinance allows plantings that are lower in height, but still allow erosion control.

Gary Fitzgerald stated that the larger policy issue is who owns the ponds and who should maintain them.

Kurt Carroll responded that most ponds are not being maintained. Mr. Carroll noted that the Edgewater pond has some nice flowering plants. Dan Warren commented that there are some nice flowering plants but there are 30 feet of them and it is a mess.

Kurt Carroll noted that Christopher Burke is an expert in this area and that these are his recommendations.

Dan Gron wondered if the science says these plants will keep the pond from eroding. Bryan Welch responded that the science does say that and that is why these plants are recommended.

Kurt Carroll discussed the slope on ponds and how every subdivision is supposed to have a 5 to 1 slope on their ponds.

Dan Warren asked if there has ever been a survey done showing how much nicely manicured ponds erode compared to the ponds that have native plantings.

There was further discussion on natural versus manicured ponds.

Gary Fitzgerald stated that there are a lot more issues with policy, more than a Plan Commission text amendment.

Bryan Welch stated this Ordinance revision is a baseline for where the aquatic plants have to be, but doesn't restrict the Village from doing what it has been doing all along.

Nancy Roman discussed the issues with ponds where things weren't installed properly, were installed but people removed them or other invasive things took over. She referred to the South Fox Bend pond and Mr. Carroll commented that the Village took over the pond at Fox Bend (River Road and Route 52) to properly maintain it and that pond is doing better than most ponds in Shorewood.

Dan Gron inquired about the 12 inch standard in the Ordinance. Mr. Welch answered that 12 inches is the scientific standard, it is the bare minimum requirement based on engineering experience.

There was further discussion on the definition of “access”. Mayor Chapman described access as “visual access”. For example sitting along the pond and looking out over it.

Dan Warren noted that in his subdivision at a Homeowners Board meeting, the main issue discussed was the pond. People don’t like it.

Dan Gron generally agrees with the Ordinance revision. He is also concerned with the term “access”. He thinks it needs to be described, maybe in the subdivision Ordinance. He also commented on the maintenance piece. He felt like it would be very hard to keep up with. He inquired how the maintenance section would be enforced.

Mr. Welch responded that at the time of final plan approval, the developer would have to provide a maintenance plan.

There was further discussion on how to ensure things are done correctly.

Trustee Jim McDonald took the floor. He stated that he hasn’t seen one pond with any of the native plantings that looks decent. He continued by comparing the different ponds in the community. Trustee McDonald said when people buy houses near a pond, they aren’t aware that all this vegetation will be planted. If they bought a house to have access to a lake they will be upset when all they can see is vegetation.

Trustee Lea Stahr spoke next. Trustee Stahr lives in Kipling Estates. They have a number of ponds there. He commented that when he was building his house he picked a lot on the lake and the lake had tall vegetation. The mosquitoes were so bad, they decided to turn down that lot and chose one away from the pond. All the ponds have now been mowed down to the edge and have only low plantings. It has ended the mosquito problem and looks nice.

Jim Relyea and Pete Cerve wanted clarification as to whether they were voting on the Ordinance as it is and that the other issues would be brought up at a later date. Mr. Relyea stated that the goal here is to give guidance from an engineer’s standpoint to developers. To give something that is a little more sustainable.

Chairman Fitzgerald called for questions or comments. Hearing none Jim Relyea made a motion to recommend the revision to the Detention Pond Planting Ordinance to the Village Board, seconded by Steve Brockman. Roll call vote, three in favor, two opposed, motion passed.

4. Consideration of New Village Standard Detail PVT-19 – “Open Cutting Pavement within the Public Right-of-Way”.

Bryan Welch took the floor to explain a proposal for an addition to the Performance Standard Detail. Currently when there is a saw cut, the pavement is removed and then backfilled with stone. The new Standard would require backfill with a controlled slow strength material within the public right of way. This would allow additional strength and durability.

Chairman Fitzgerald called for questions or comments. Hearing none Duane Gronwold made a motion to recommend the New Village Standard Detail PVT-19 – “Open Cutting Pavement within the Public Right-of-Way”. to the Village Board, seconded by Dan Warren. Roll call vote, all in favor, none opposed, motion passed.

OTHER

Chairman Fitzgerald noted that Firestone would be on the next meeting agenda. He also noted that Gulley Transportation is moving in where Yellow Freight was located and a new beverage store, Armanetti’s Liquor, will be moving into where Maggie’s place was.

Mr. Fitzgerald mentioned that he attended a conference where Metro Study shared some data. Single Family homes are down by 53%; however Shorewood was number 6 in the entire Chicago region. The top subdivision in the entire Chicago region was Shorewood Glen.

ADJOURNMENT

Duane Gronwold made a motion to adjourn at 9:00 p.m., seconded by Steve Brockman. All in favor, none opposed, meeting adjourned.

Next meeting December 2, 2009.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Sharp
Recording Secretary