

minutes

Citizens Planning Commission

Regular Meeting
Monday, May 12, 2014
7:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers

1. **Roll Call**

Present: Chairman Miller, Secretary Caldwell; Commissioners: Hall, Lamour, LaRoy, Roberts and Swartz

Excused: Vice Chairman Smith and Commissioners: Hall and Robinson

Public: B.J. Wade and Bernie Wade

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

3. **Consent Agenda**

Motion by Commissioner Roberts to approve the Consent Agenda (Agenda and Meeting Minutes for April 14, 2014), as presented. Second by Commissioner Lamour.

Motion passed unanimously (7-0)

(Smith and Robinson excused)

4. **Case Reviews**

1. **Case:** #SPL MIN 14-001
Applicant: Advanced Signs
Property Address: 87 Jerome Street
Request: Request for Pole Sign / Minor Review
Property ID: 49-00669-000
Property Owner: Pacific Pride
Zoning: I-1, Light Industrial

Chairman Miller introduced the case and asked for the staff report

Staff Report

Mr. Green presented the staff report prepared by the Planning Department. He noted that comments from other departments were not solicited as this is not a standard site plan but essentially a sign application.

Staff had discussed the proposed pole sign with the applicant explaining that a monument sign is required by the zoning section of the Monroe Code unless the sign would block the vision of drivers or a wall sign could not legally be installed on a building elevation facing the street.

After further review, the Planning Department determined that there was no practical location for a monument sign and a wall sign could not legally be installed on the existing building fronting E. First and Jerome Streets as the applicant, Crystal Flash, does not occupy the primary structure on this parcel. Additionally, the request is to replace an existing pole sign.

While a face change to an existing pole sign is a relatively common request, the applicant, due to the deteriorated condition of the pole sign, was seeking to replace the pole sign completely. Staff determined that a new pole sign would improve the site's appearance and, when coupled with the site's unique configuration, were suitable for a hearing before the Planning Commission.

Given these findings, staff recommended that the Commission approve the request, as presented.

Applicant Comments

There were no comments by the applicant or the applicant's representative.

Public Comment

Chairman Miler opened the public comment portion of the meeting for anyone wishing to comment on proposed Case #SPL MIN 14-001

Discussion and Commission Action

There being no one wishing to comment, Chairman Miller closed the public comment period and moved to Commission Action.

There being no discussion on the proposed request to replace the pole sign at 87 Jerome Street, Chairman Miller indicated he would entertain a motion at this time.

Commissioner Swartz made the motion "To approve the sign request, as presented." Second by Commissioner Lamour.

Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

2. **Case:** #SPL MIN 14-002
 Applicant: Advanced Signs
 Property Address: 1125 W. Front Street
 Request: Request for Pole Sign / Minor Review
 Property ID: 19-00863-000
 Property Owner: Pacific Pride
 Zoning: I-1, Light Industrial

Chairman Miller asked for the staff report on Case #SPL MIN 14-002

Staff Report

The staff analysis for the proposed request to place a pole sign on the property at 1125 W. Front Street was presented by Mr. Green. He noted that the request was before the Citizens Planning Commission due to unique conditions of the site that prohibit the placement of a monument sign.

In reviewing the request, staff determined that there is no practical location for a monument sign due to the building and site configuration, which has a sandwich shop in the front portion of the building on W. Front Street. Additionally, placing a wall sign for the Crystal Flash fueling station on the sandwich shop building would be contrary to sign requirements found in the zoning portion of the City Code.

The Code states that "in permitting a pole sign, the Citizens Planning Commission shall permit the minimum height necessary to achieve visibility, provide it does not exceed the height of the building to which it is accessory." The proposed sign does not exceed the height of the adjacent building.

Staff did note in its review that there is currently a "Pacific Pride" wall sign located on the subject building's west elevation, which should be removed.

Given these findings, staff recommended that the request for the proposed pole sign be approved, as presented, contingent upon removed of the Pacific Pride wall sign located on the building's west elevation.

Applicant Comments

Bernie Wade with Advanced Signs (Perrysburg, Ohio) addressed the Commission regarding the proposed request.

Chairman Miller asked if the proposed sign would be for both the fueling station and the restaurant. Mr. Wade indicated that it would only be for the fueling station. With no questions from commissioners, Chairman Miller opened the public comment period.

Public Comment

There being no one wishing to comment on Case #SPL MIN 14-002, 1125 W. Front Street, Chairman Miller closed the public comment period.

Discussion and Commission Action

There being no discussion on the proposed request to replace the pole sign at 87 Jerome Street, Chairman Miller indicated he would entertain a motion at this time.

Commissioner Caldwell made the motion "To approve the sign request, contingent upon removal of the wall sign on the west elevation of the building at 1125 W. Front Street." Second by Commissioner Lamour.

Motion passed unanimously (5-0)

5. **Discussion**

- Proposed Amendments to "Junkyard" Zoning Language

Mr. Swallow briefly highlighted changes to the "Junkyard" zoning language, as requested by the commission. Staff was directed to forward the revised zoning amendment to the City Council for review and action.

6. **Old Business**

- *Goals & Objectives* Sections of the Master Plan

Staff encouraged commissioners to forward any comments or issues related to the *Goals & Objectives* for the Master Plan to staff.

7. **New Business**

- Update on Three (3) Proposed Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ)

Mr. Swallow and Mr. Green presented revised NEZ configurations reflecting the addition of a third NEZ area covering the Old Village Plat area; and a larger area that would combine the Old Village Plat area with the zone proposed for the east side of Monroe for a total of two zones versus three (east side, Old Village Plat, and west side).

The NEZ legislation allows up to 15% of a community's total area to be designated as NEZs. The percentage of land area that would be covered by the west side zone and the combined Old Village Plat/east side NEZ would total less than 3% of the city's land area.

At the conclusion of the presentation and discussion on Neighborhood Enterprise Zones Chairman Miller temporarily stepped down as chair in order to make the motion "To recommend to City Council adoption of two neighborhood enterprise zones, a west side zone and a combined

Old Village Plat/east side zone, as recommended by staff." Second by Commissioner Lamour.

Acting Chairman Caldwell called for the vote.

The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

8. **ASPR Committee Update**

Case: SPL AD 114-005 – T-Mobile Cell Tower Upgrades, 129 Maple Blvd.

The applicants were proposing upgrades to antennas located atop the power line running down the median of Maple Blvd. The ASPR Committee reviewed and approved the application as presented.

9. **Communications**

None

10. **Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Caldwell thanked the commission for recommending adoption of the Neighborhood Enterprise Zones to City Council.

Chairman Miller noted that the City Council in its discussions has encouraged commission members to attend Council meetings. He also noted that he would like to discuss medical marihuana at either a work session or as part of the next commission meeting.

11. **Staff Comments**

Mr. Green noted that it was Commissioner Caldwell who has worked over the past several years to get NEZs before the Commission and on to the City Council with a recommendation for adoption.

12. **Public Comment**

None

13. **Planning-Related Articles**

- *Resiliency Growing Pains*, Planetizen. May 7, 2014. www.planetizen.com
- *Plans Fall Into Place for Warren's Dream of Downtown*, The Detroit Free Press. May 5, 2014. www.freep.com
- *With Demolitions on the Horizon, Milwaukee Preservationists Seek Balance Between History & Safety*, Next City. April 22, 2014. <http://nextcity.org>
- *Roundabouts: A Tool for Placemaking, Better Cities*. January 31, 2014. <http://bettercities.net>

- *Hey, Dan Gilbert: You Can't Bulldoze Every Abandoned Building in Detroit*, Next City. October 31, 2013. <http://nextcity.org>.

14. **Adjournment**

Commissioner Roberts made the motion "To adjourn." Seconded by Commissioner Lamour.

Motion passed unanimously.

jlg: 6.9.2014 / approved: 6.9.14