

**SUMMARY NOTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
ARCHITECTURAL COMMISSION
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2011
VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD**

On Monday, February 14, 2011, at the Northfield Village Board Room, 361 Happ Road, the Architectural Commission met at 7:00 P.M. to consider two issues:

Members in Attendance:

Pat Karr, Chair
Steve Page
Tim Engling
Patricia Leonard

Members Absent:

Steve Hirsch
Jason Felicione
Cathy Magers

OTHERS PRESENT: Linnea O'Neill and Anne Kane (see attached sign-in sheet).

Chair Karr requested approval of the Summary Notes of the December 13, 2010, Architectural Commission meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leonard, Seconded by Commissioner Engling to approve the Architectural Commission Summary Notes of December 13, 2010.

The vote was as follows:

AYES: 4

Pat Karr
Steve Page
Tim Engling
Patricia Leonard

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

ABSENT: 3

Steve Hirsch
Jason Felicione
Cathy Magers

Motion Carried

ISSUE #1: Consideration of a request for permanent signage for Poliquin Performance located at 500 Central Avenue. The petitioner is Poliquin Performance.

The petitioner was not present, and therefore, the Commission moved on to the next matter.

ISSUE #2: Continuation of a permitting process to regulate the display of temporary signs and banners in the Village of Northfield.

Chair Karr admired all the Commission members and staff involved in putting this together and indicated staff has made its recommendations for changing the sign code. She said she understands what the Village is trying to do because there has been a lot of confusion about what is allowed, what is not allowed and what you have to do, etc. She has been involved in several of these temporary sign review processes.

Commissioner Leonard liked the comparisons made in the staff report with other municipalities. She indicated that they are trying to accommodate everyone through all these meetings. She felt the banner size was important and it appears that Northfield will allow the largest banner as compared to other towns.

Chair Karr remembered being at the first meeting where fees were discussed and everyone objected to any fees charged. She said she has gone through this process with not-for-profits and felt that property owners should not be penalized. She volunteers for the North Shore Senior Center and they have an interest in the type of banners they are allowed to display. It is a tough decision for not-for-profits and churches to expend money for ground signs because they change messages all the time. She said she was not present for some of those discussions.

Commissioner Leonard added that St. James the Less has a permanent sign but appear to be adding another portion to it. Ms. O'Neill indicated they are starting with a whole new ground sign with two sections which can be changed; one for banners and one for services. Commissioner Leonard felt this was a perfect solution for this concern.

Commissioner Leonard went on to ask staff for their findings from other communities with respect to policing signs. She felt they didn't want to spend the money on doing that. Ms. O'Neill indicated that they would set up a tickler calendar. Many of the staff are in the field at some time during the day and they can note if a sign is up or removed. Ms. Kane said that the challenge with the current exemption for temporary banners is that they are allowed to have them up 2 times per year for 14 days. It is now on an honor system and it becomes difficult to track how many times per year they have been up. Often times it is brought to staff's attention by other organizations who want to follow the regulations but question the offenders. The intent of establishing a permit process is to: 1) Convey to the organization or business what the regulations are; 2) That they have received the regulations; and 3) They acknowledge understanding of the regulations when they sign for the permit. That is their commitment that they will abide by the Village regulations. Chris does an amazing job of tracking when signs need to go up for meetings, etc. We anticipate that our calendar would be also used to know when banners have and have not gone through the permit process.

Commissioner Engling felt that 14 days is too short of time. For example; you may need more than 14 days to put on your calendar when Vacation Bible School is. He heard people saying that the permit process was an undue burden. In listening to the community, he felt they were substantially against the permit process. Ms. O'Neill responded that right now the banners are in a section called "signs exempt from permit." So, if they choose to have a banner, a letter is sent to the Village Manager stating what, where, when and it's allowed to be up for 7 days. If they decide to have it up longer or want a larger sign than staff thinks is appropriate, they would have to go through the permit process after coming before this Commission for approval.

Commissioner Leonard questioned whether the permits would be available online as was discussed at one of the meetings. Ms. Kane said permit applications are not accepted online at this time, but they could get an application online. It would be a matter of getting a permit at the counter and at that time, they could let the Village know their schedule for the entire year, such as reoccurring special events. They would let the Village know who the contact person would be regarding putting up and taking down the banners. The Village could then give a reminder call if necessary.

Chair Karr then asked Ms. Kane about the non-illuminated temporary special event sign banners to celebrate a special event and in thinking of some of the organizations in the Village and if they have 6 events a year – how does this differ between a commercial business and a not-for-profit? Ms. Kane indicated the Code does not differentiate. The Village Attorney's opinion

indicated that they do not differ. She indicated that the Village also wants the businesses to succeed and so when there are spring sales going on, they should be allowed to post a banner. Chair Karr then said when a not-for-profit has an event they want to display, that's what they would do too. Ms. O'Neill suggested they could use the community events sign also.

Tom Peterson, 196 Coach Road, is an attorney on behalf of the New Foundation Center which was formerly Willpower on Frontage Road, the Lions Club of Northfield and the Northfield Community Church. The church has a permanent sign, illuminated with the name on the church and there is a place to put what the sermon is. He asked how they advertise events such as a family event with line dancing where they invite the community to come in for lunch and dancing. How do they advertise religious events and that the Northfield Nursery School, who is their tenant, advertise, and they have a Korean Church that rents space on Sunday afternoon and evenings – how do they advertise? Chair Karr asked Mr. Peterson if he has seen the sign at St. Phillip the Apostle Church. She said they have a ground sign and they can change the lettering on it for every event that is coming up. Mr. Peterson countered that they don't feel that they can have the Northfield Community Nursery School under the banner of the Northfield Community Church, nor the Korean Church. He felt they need separate signs and asked what they should do. Chair Karr felt that a ground mounted sign like at St. Phillip's, they could advertise everything, i.e. services, fundraising events, holidays. Mr. Peterson said they are tenants and are not sponsored by the Church and to put them on the Church's sign would be inappropriate. Chair Karr said that was their issue then and they have to decide how they want to promote themselves. Mr. Peterson said they are trying to develop community concerns and said they are faced with this problem. They want to give the Koreans a place to worship and the Nursery School a place to hold their programs. Chair Karr then pointed out that the Lutheran Church of the Ascension also has a tenant who is another church. Ms. Kane said that while they cannot differentiate between multi-tenant and commercial properties, we do not discriminate against multi-tenant places of worship and the Village would be comfortable, provided that they have the 100' separation that the Code requires so that the Korean Church would be allowed 6 banners per year, they would be entitled to their own permits, as well as the Nursery School. Another way to promote events is through e-mail. Mr. Peterson said they want to attract people who are driving through the community or non-members who they do not have e-mail addresses for. Chair Karr said the Village is concerned with sign clutter and the distraction of banners blowing in the wind and there isn't any uniformity in how they are promoted. Mr. Peterson said that the Korean Church doesn't have the money to pay for a permit or sign – Chair Karr said they don't have to pay for a banner permit – Mr. Peterson said he meant the construction cost of them having to go out and have one constructed. Not-for-profits don't have that kind of money. He said the Lions don't have that kind of money. When they have the steak fry, to advertise, can it only be on the Park District property? Ms. O'Neill said they could advertise on the community events sign. Mr. Peterson then said the Park District puts a sign up, but they sell food as a convenience to the people and also to raise money. Money is given to the organizations and charities here in Northfield. They are the only ones who are solely Northfield's social agency. He was told the small little signs are illegal. Ms. O'Neill felt that part of the problem is that the banners go up because they are fairly inexpensive to make and it was not anticipated years ago when the sign code was re-written that separate regulations would be needed. Now, no one follows the regulations. It would be easier for the organizations if they knew what the regulations were and they could then plan what events they want to promote with banners. They could come to the Village and advise the Village of all the events throughout the year which, of course, could be subject to change. It helps everyone involved. Everyone would be treated the same and there would be consistency.

Mr. Peterson said that at the last meeting, the Village was asked how many complaints were received against not-for-profit groups and the indication was very few. Ms. Kane indicated it wasn't neighbors calling to complain, it's from other organizations who want to comply with the regulations but see banners that have been up multiple times or for too long elsewhere in the community. Since there is no permit, there is no evidence or record of it to keep track. Chair Karr agreed and hopes to recommend this regulation.

Mr. Peterson thought it was discussed at the last meeting that not-for-profits would be placed into a separate category. Retail can afford professional signs. Chair Karr said she has been involved in many not-for-profits in the Village and when they wanted to do something like this, they would appeal to their members to raise funds. Mr. Peterson said fundraising is pretty hard nowadays. Everyone agreed, but if there is a long range plan, it might be worked out. Ms. Kane wanted to remind Mr. Peterson that the Village Attorney has provided an opinion which says the Village cannot differentiate between commercial and not-for-profit groups. Chair Karr then told Mr. Peterson she appreciated his dedication to the church and the community.

Commissioner Page questioned whether or not the Commission was going to increase the duration from 10 days to 14 days. Chair Karr indicated that staff has recommended increasing the amount to six (6) times a year for 10 days each time. The chair would like to see that increased to 14 days each time. Chair Karr also clarified the amount of banners on a commercial lot and not-for-profit lot. Ms. Kane indicated two banners could be placed on the same property, provided they are no closer than 100'. Chair Karr agreed with Staff's recommendations.

Commissioner Engling felt it would be a burden for people coming in multiple times per year for the permit. Chair Karr and Ms. O'Neill explained that their events could be calendared for the year and thus only coming into the Village once. He also suggested more than 14 days in duration.

Commissioner Page asked what will be asked for when requesting a permit. Ms. O'Neill indicated they would need a rendering of the sign, the dimensions and location. He then asked if it would be possible to evaluate how the process is working after a year or so. Ms. Kane said that was a good idea.

An unknown person from the audience from Northfield Community Church asked the Commission if there was an appeals process with an administrative body in case of an appeal or litigation. Ms. Kane indicated there is an appeal process to the Architectural Commission. Ms. O'Neill pointed out that a letter will be sent to all organizations in the Village and will explain the new process, including the process for exceptions or special considerations.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was made:

A motion was made by Commissioner Leonard, Seconded by Commissioner Page to recommend approval to the Village Board of Trustees, the following changes to the sign code:

- 1. A banner permitting process including revisions to Chapter 12, Signs, Section 12-5 SIGNS EXEMPT FROM PERMIT REQUIREMENTS (13) and (22) and Section 12-6 SIGNS REQUIRING A PERMIT.**
- 2. Addition of residential construction site signs to Section 12-6 SIGNS REQUIRING A PERMIT, Construction Site Signs (1)(a).**

3. Permit application and approval for banner applications and construction site signs through the Community Development and Building Department, subject to the following changes:
 - A. A banner size of 32 square feet on properties with 100 lineal feet or more of frontage and 24 square feet when the lineal length is less than 100 feet.
 - B. A display period of six (6) times a year for fourteen (14) days each event.

4. Temporary Banners – Non-illuminated temporary special event sign/banners to celebrate a special event, such as a grand opening or other special events, may be displayed outdoors under these conditions:
 - A. Banners are to be professionally made and adhere to the following:
 1. Banners are to be clear and legible. Letter height is to be at least 4” if all uppercase and at least 5” if upper and lower case mixed.
 2. Banners may not be illuminated unless the banner is part of a permanent ground sign structure.
 3. Banners may not exceed 32 square feet and/or six feet (6’) above ground level unless wall mounted.
 4. Wall mounted banners may not be placed higher than the second floor window sill of the structure.
 - B. Banners may be displayed for a maximum period of fourteen (14) days and must be removed within one (1) day following the event, no more than six (6) times a year.
 - C. Banners may not be re-displayed without a new application.
 - D. One (1) banner is allowed per lot. In case of multiple tenants, no more than two (2) banners from different tenants shall be permitted at one time and no closer than 100’.
 - E. Banners shall be affixed in such a manner so the banner sign does not allow wind activation and wall banners must remain flush with the wall.
 - F. Off-site banners are prohibited.
 - G. Banners may not be located in the local, county or state right-of-way or within the sign distance triangle at any street or drive intersection.

5. The following sentence shall be added to the end of Section 12-8 OBTAINING SIGN PERMITS (4) Banner Permit Application: “Any appeals would be made to the Architectural Commission per Section 12-14.”

The vote was as follows:

AYES: 3
 Pat Karr, Chair
 Steve Page
 Patricia Leonard

NAYS: 1
 Tim Engling

ABSTAIN: 0

ABSENT: 3
 Steve Hirsch
 Cathy Magers
 Jason Felicione

ISSUE #1: Consideration of a request for permanent signage for Poliquin Performance located at 500 Central Avenue. The petitioner is Poliquin Performance.

Bill Holley from Bright Light Sign was present and apologized for being late. He advised the Commission that they are proposing to add another tenant to an existing sign, Entrade, and they originally submitted a drawing depicting a 21" tall by 6' wide box sign, stainless steel, non-illuminated and constructed to match the materials of the Entrade sign. The aluminum letters proposed are ¼" deep aluminum where the original letters on the existing sign are ½" deep stainless steel. He acknowledged staff's comments to match the existing sign more closely which he doesn't object to. The customer originally preferred to go with a smaller sign. Mr. Holley passed around a drawing of what the new proposed sign would look like by extending it's width to match the Entrade sign. It would be the same cabinet size as existing with all letters being ½" and no red back panel. He questioned why the background panel was referred to as being bronze tone. He thought it was painted black and has faded. Commissioner Leonard felt that matching the Entrade sign would be best. Mr. Holley pointed out that the problem is that the Entrade sign has been there for awhile and even though it is stainless steel and still looks good, the background panel is a painted piece of aluminum and it has faded so there is a question as to what the original color it actually was. His company did not fabricate the sign and the customer doesn't have any knowledge of it either. He thought it might be a matte black that has faded to a deep green color. Mr. Holley suggested to the customer that he paint the background of the existing Entrade sign, but cost is a factor with them. Painting the background panel would involve removing all the letters spray it and reassemble it.

Ms. O'Neil informed Mr. Holley that the original Architectural Commission meeting minutes, staff report and permit all note that the sign is "Bronzetone Enamel Metal with ½" deep stainless steel letters". Commissioner Leonard asked him if he could match it. Mr. Holley indicated not exactly, but could come close. He would really like to see the background of the Entrade sign painted as well and he told his customer that he would do it for cost. He felt the entire sign would look better. If the customer does not want it painted, they would still do their best to match the existing color.

Commissioner Engling thanked Mr. Holley for preparing the rendering of the 9' long sign as staff suggested. He thought it looked better this way.

Mr. Holley then recalled that the reason they made it smaller in the first place was because they thought the sign would be over the square footage allowed. Ms. O'Neill indicated they measure the actual sign size around the lettering.

Commissioner Page questioned whether the depth was the same. Mr. Holley indicated it is the same, the recessed portion is the same (1-1/2"), and the retainer is the same (1-1/2") so it will look just like what is there.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was made:

A motion was made by Commissioner Page, Seconded by Commissioner Leonard to approve the addition to the Entrade sign for Poliquin Performance at 500 Central Avenue, submitted January 28, 2011 subject to the following:

- 1. The proposed addition should be nine (9) feet wide, the same length as the existing sign.**

2. **The proposed addition background should be painted matte black to match the Entrade sign or bronze tone enamel to match the existing sign.**
3. **All letters should be ½” deep painted aluminum to match the existing sign letter material (stainless); and**
4. **The red background should be eliminated to preserve the architectural integrity of the existing Entrade sign.**

Mr. Holley then indicated that new lettering would not be stainless like the existing. He said they are going with painted aluminum letters with a satin aluminum finish to make them look like the brushed stainless. Commissioner Page indicated that the main intent is that they look alike and that they hold up well. Mr. Holley said they will hold up very well. Ms. O’Neill questioned the color difference and Mr. Holley indicated the existing letters are a brushed stainless steel, similar to aluminum, but the stainless has more of a mirror effect and the aluminum has more of a dull effect. It will have an enamel finish on it to make very close to stainless steel. Ms. Kane suggested getting a sample of both finishes at the time of permit application. Mr. Holley said that would be fine.

The vote was as follows:

AYES: 4
Pat Karr
Steve Page
Tim Engling
Patricia Leonard

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

ABSENT: 3
Steve Hirsch
Jason Felicione
Cathy Magers

Motion Carried

There being no further issues to discuss upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Leonard, seconded by Commissioner Page and passed, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 P.M.

HGM 2/16/11

Approved 6/13/11