



MINUTES OF THE PLAN COMMISSION

VILLAGE OF TINLEY PARK, COOK AND WILL COUNTIES, ILLINOIS

DECEMBER 17, 2015

The regular meeting of the Plan Commission was held in the Council Chambers of Village Hall on December 17, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Plan Commissioners:

Gina Miller
Mark Moylan
Art Pierce
Bill Reidy
Tim Stanton
Rita Walker, Chairman

Absent Plan Commissioner(s):

Jeff Ficaro
Tom Mahoney
Bob McClellan

Village Officials and Staff:

Amy Connolly, Planning Director
Paula Wallrich, Deputy Planning Director
Stephanie Kisler, Planner
Debra Kotas, Commission Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Plan Commission Chairman Walker called to order the regular meeting of the Plan Commission for December 17, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the December 3, 2015 regular meeting of the Plan Commission were presented for approval. A motion was made by COMMISSIONER MOYLAN, seconded by COMMISSIONER PIERCE to approve the Minutes as presented. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY by voice call. PLAN COMMISSION CHAIRMAN WALKER declared the motion approved.

TO: VILLAGE OF TINLEY PARK PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FROM: VILLAGE OF TINLEY PARK PLAN COMMISSION

SUBJECT: MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 17, 2015 MEETING

RE: ORDINANCE AMENDING THE VILLAGE ZONING ORDINANCE SECTION IX (SIGN REGULATIONS) AND SECTION II (DEFINITIONS) TO UPDATE THE VILLAGE SIGN REGULATIONS RELATED TO WALL AND FREESTANDING SIGNAGE AND SECTION V.D (OVERLAY DISTRICT REGULATIONS) TO ESTABLISH A RICH TOWNSHIP ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT OVERLAY DISTRICT

Consider a text amendment to the Village Zoning Ordinance, particularly Section IX (Sign Regulations), Section II (Definitions), and Section V.D (Overlay District Regulations). These text amendments would update and improve signage regulations for wall and freestanding signs within the Village and would also establish a new Rich Township Entertainment Overlay District with unique use and signage regulations.

Present were the following:

Plan Commissioners:	Gina Miller Mark Moylan Art Pierce Bill Reidy Tim Stanton Rita Walker, Chairman
Absent Plan Commissioner(s):	Jeff Ficaro Tom Mahoney Bob McClellan
Village Officials and Staff:	Amy Connolly, Planning Director Paula Wallrich, Deputy Planning Director Stephanie Kisler, Planner Debra Kotas, Commission Secretary

In an effort to make the current sign regulations less complex and easier to read, PAULA WALLRICH, Deputy Planning Director, presented amendments to the existing Ordinance. She noted that while quite a bit of changes are proposed, most is simply better organization of the information. She added that the proposed amendments provide better clarification and address any inconsistencies with the Ordinance.

MS. WALLRICH reported at the December 3, 2015 Plan Commission workshop, the following areas were identified as needing to be addressed:

1. Improve readability of the Sign Regulations;
2. Clarify maximum sign face areas for each type of signage;
3. Change methodology for calculating sign face area;
4. Create clear setback and line-of-sight requirements for ground signs;
5. Create clear maximum letter height requirements for wall signs;
6. Update electronic message requirements.

MS. WALLRICH reported one of the problems is when a freestanding sign becomes obsolete. She explained as a tenant goes out of business, their respective sign panel is turned around. The regulations will ensure that there needs to be clear panels that are consistent in background color with the others on the sign. In an effort to discourage box signs, she showed how the sign face area will need to be measured to the frame of back lit box sign. She stated if a larger sign is desired, it would require channel lit letters. She reported the current Ordinance had no way to determine what is the area of a freestanding sign. She explained industry standard is just to examine the sign panel.

With regards to Wall Signs, MS. WALLRICH stated that these signs are determined on the basis of linear footage of building or tenant frontage. For better clarification in the Ordinance, she explained the new calculation for a wall sign will be based on frontage of a ROW or along the principal point of access/front door. She added a wall sign cannot extend above face of building. As a result of issues arising from the recently approved Planet Fitness, she explained background color will now be included in the sign area calculations. She added that no more than two (2) lines of text will be permitted on a wall sign.

Not addressed in current Ordinance is where to place the wall sign. MS. WALLRICH reviewed location requirements. She explained a single-tenant building with only one (1) business, the sign will need to be centered over the door, and multi-tenant spaces with varying sizes will use the same center line.

MS. WALLRICH proceeded to discuss Freestanding Signs. In an effort to achieve architectural compatibility between a freestanding sign and the building, additional criteria has been added to the existing Ordinance for determining what is architecturally compatible by using the four (4) new following guidelines:

1. similar materials and color;
2. harmony and design;
3. similar architectural features; and,
4. cannot block any architectural components of the building.

Using photographs, MS. WALLRICH showed how the base of a freestanding sign must be fully enclosed with no pole or post being visible. While the existing Ordinance requires landscape around a sign, she reported that this has now been quantified as 2 square feet (sf) per 1 sf of area, with a minimum of 20 sf of landscape and maximum of 200 sf. She added that no advertising will be permitted on the base of freestanding sign.

MS. WALLRICH reported that the existing Ordinance did not explain how to measure the height of a freestanding sign. While the current Ordinance states no greater than ten feet (10'), she explained that it is not clear how that 10' is measured. She clarified that the height is to be measured from the average natural grade to the top of the sign.

In an effort to regulate and improve the appearance of panel signs, MS. WALLRICH reported that multi-panels signs must be consistent in color, method of illumination, material and design with back panels being the same. In an effort to eliminate non-conforming signs in the Village, she explained that no new tenant signage will be allowed on an existing non-conforming sign until that sign is brought into conformity.

MS. WALLRICH reviewed changes to the Ordinance by Zoning Districts. She explained the sign requirements are now arranged in a table format by each zoning district. She proceeded to review a table for Residential Zoning Districts noting that wall signs are prohibited in residential areas, however, freestanding signs are allowed limited at one (1) per entrance with a maximum of two (2), an allowable area of 5 sf, with no maximum letter height, and a maximum sign height of five feet (5'). She showed non-residential uses within the Residential Zoning Districts, including churches or schools, are allowed 1 wall sign per frontage with a maximum of 2 wall signs, 1 sf per 1 linear foot of frontage to a maximum of sixty (60) sf, letter height of 36" and a maximum sign height of 84". She explained freestanding signs requirements will remain the same at 1 per ROW with a maximum of 2 freestanding signs, 16 sf, in allowable area, and a maximum height of 6'.

MS. WALLRICH then reviewed a table regarding wall signs for all Business Zoning Districts, except B-4. She stated the changes involved the size of the building when determining wall sign regulations. She highlighted the following:

- buildings <10,000 sf are allowed a maximum letter height 30” and maximum sign height of 78”
- buildings 10,001-25,000 sf are allowed a maximum letter height of 36” and maximum sign height of 84”
- buildings 25,001-80,000 sf are allowed a maximum letter height of 48” and maximum sign height of 84”
- buildings 80,000+ sf are allowed a maximum letter height of 96’ and maximum sign height of 96”

MS. WALLRICH reported that freestanding signs were confusing in the Ordinance relative to their square footage. Recognizing that some commercial centers in the Village have very long frontages with several entrances, she explained Staff found that it made sense to allow more than 1 sign, therefore, the following changes are proposed:

- <500 LF frontage 1 freestanding sign allowed
- >500 LF frontage 2 freestanding signs allowed, 300’ apart
- >1,000 LF frontage 3 freestanding signs allowed, 300’ apart

MS. WALLRICH also reported that sign face area was never addressed in the current Ordinance. Staff proposes 1 sf per 2.5 LF lot frontage with the following maximums:

- <350,000 square feet 40 sf
- 350,000-500,00 sf 100 sf
- >500,000 sf 125 sf

MS. WALLRICH then reviewed signage involving the B-4 Zoning District explaining this is the more restrictive office district, however, there are areas within B-4 having other uses. Regarding wall signs, she stated the current Ordinance standards remain the same with only a change to the lettering height, now proposed at a maximum of 30”. She explained the current Ordinance did not designate between wall and freestanding signs in the District, therefore, the proposed amendment will clarify standards for freestanding signs at 1 per ROW frontage with a maximum of 2 signs, a maximum height of 10’, and area calculated at 1 sf per 2.5 LF of frontage.

MS. WALLRICH then reviewed sign standards for the ORI District, noting the only proposed change is a maximum letter height of 36” for wall signs. She stated that freestanding sign regulations will remain the same except for how area is calculated and smaller maximum allowable areas as follows:

- <350,000 square feet 40 sf
- 350,000-500,00 sf 80 sf
- >500,000 sf 80 sf

MS. WALLRICH explained that wall sign regulations for the M-1 General Manufacturing District will remain the same except for a maximum lettering height of 36” and maximum sign height of 84”. She stated that monument sign standards are similar to those in ORI, but must include the name of the commercial center and address.

MS. WALLRICH reported the addition of vehicle signs, door signs, and off-premise signs to the list of Prohibited Signage.

CHAIRMAN WALKER inquired how area business will be notified of these changes that may affect them. Staff reported that the Village’s Code Enforcement Officer will visit any violating businesses to discuss the changes to the Ordinance.

MS. WALLRICH proceeded to address electronic message signs. She reported using industry standards in updating the following requirements for electronic message boards:

1. must be located on a monument sign;
2. amount of electronic messaging allowed increased from 20% to 50% of sign face area;
3. 8-second change intervals;
4. dimmer control;

5. no audio allowed;
6. no video, flashing lights or blinking lights allowed.

MS. WALLRICH reported that several new Definitions have also been added to the Ordinance that will assist with the understanding and administering of the sign regulations. She reviewed the definition regarding "Building Frontage", explaining a tenant with an entrance door and that also faces a public right of way will be allowed 2 signs where as a tenant in the same building have 1 entrance door and not facing a public right of way will be limited to 1 sign. She also referenced the definition for a "Roof Sign" that are not allowed.

In summary, AMY CONNOLLY, Planning Director, explained that most dimensional standards for signage did not change, however, the proposed amendments provide clarification of the existing Ordinance. She explained the intent was to examine what are the most difficult things that are encountered daily in administering the Sign Ordinance and to clarify these immediately.

In conclusion, MS. WALLRICH reported a public hearing regarding the proposed amendments to the Sign Ordinance is scheduled for January 7, 2016.

Prior to the public hearing, COMMISSIONER REIDY suggested a peer review be conducted and information be made available to the Plan Commission including those ordinances from other area villages used by Staff in drafting the proposed amendments to the Sign Ordinance and what studies were referred to for research. MS. CONNOLLY stated that the proposed amendments were not patterned after similar regulations in other municipalities since each has unique needs and requirements, those other regulations offered no value. She reported that industry standards from the Federal Highway Administration were utilized.

COMMISSIONER REIDY also inquired if any studies were available that correlate signage to sales. MS. CONNOLLY stated recommendations of those in the advertising industry should not be given much weight as they are often biased in favor of more signage and certainly there are no scientific studies documenting more signage means more sales. Additionally, MS. CONNOLLY did not believe this information was relevant since the Ordinance is not changing the amount of signage for businesses in the Village but simply clarifying portions of the Ordinance.

COMMISSIONER REIDY inquired if any input was sought from local business organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Commission. MS. CONNOLLY stated that no discussion was held with the Chamber of Commerce as the ordinance is merely provide clarifications to the ordinance and not substantially changes the amount of signage for individual businesses (major changes in amounts would require inquires with business organizations). The Main Street Commission was also not consulted because the Legacy Code has its own signage requirements.

MS. CONNOLLY reported within the same Ordinance, a public hearing will also address a Rich Township Entertainment Overlay District. She explained the reason they are related is when the possibility of creating this District was initially discussed, it had been suggested to re-use the existing non-conforming sign along I-80 that previously belonged to the First Midwest Amphitheater. She explained the sign has a large impact on tourism in the community and is currently not in use. Staff proposes to redeploy the sign as an economic incentive tool to advertise businesses within Rich Township, the township within the Village that has the highest taxes. She added that only those commercial businesses within the Rich Township Entertainment District would be allowed to advertise on the sign in the hopes of increasing tourism and build economic development. She added that the sign may also be used to advertise Village-sponsored events, traffic or weather notices.

MS. CONNOLLY reported the Rich Township Overlay District has particular boundaries and within the boundaries would be special uses, prohibited uses and principal permitted uses including restaurants, microbreweries, concert venues, event halls, golf courses, hotels/motels, commercial recreation, retail, wedding chapels, tourism-oriented businesses and wayfinding.

MS. CONNOLLY explained the existing sign would become an electronic sign that would conform to the same sign regulations within the Ordinance. She proceeded to compare the existing sign dimensions with the proposed sign dimensions that include an increase in sign height to 80', a larger sign face area with LED on the entire sign that will display 1 video advertisement at a time. She reported the sign will become a legal, non-conforming sign that will continue to be owned by the current property owner, adding they will be responsible for the expense of all sign face changes.

COMMISSIONER MOYLAN commented the sign would be a great way to promote the Convention Center, bring in more tax revenue, more tourism, and provide a general wayfinding benefit to the Village, however, both he and COMMISSIONER STANTON expressed concern with other Village businesses not being able to advertise on the sign. MS. CONNOLLY again stressed the importance of limiting this to the Rich Township area that is not seeing the same growth as the rest of the Village. She added the sign will serve an economic development purpose and be an incentive to those businesses in the District paying the highest property taxes, create uses for that District and stimulate development within the District.

In conclusion, MS. CONNOLLY stated all updates to the Zoning Ordinance related to signage discussed tonight and the establishment of a Rich Township Entertainment Overlay District will be part of one (1) ordinance having a public hearing on January 7, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by COMMISSIONER PIERCE seconded by COMMISSIONER MOYLAN to adjourn the regular meeting of the Plan Commission of December 17, 2015 at 9:23 p.m. THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED by voice call. PLAN COMMISSION CHAIRMAN WALKER declared the meeting ADJOURNED.