

The City of Lake Forest
Building Review Board
Proceedings of December 4, 2019 Meeting

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Wednesday, December 4, 2019 at 6:30 p.m., at the Municipal Services Building, 800 Field Drive, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Building Review Board members present: Chairman Jim Diamond and Board members, Joanne Bluhm, John Looby and Richard Walther

Building Review Board members absent: Chris Bires, Fred Moyer and James Sykora

Staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development

1. Introduction of Board members and staff, overview of meeting procedures – Chairman Diamond

Chairman Diamond reviewed the role of the Building Review Board and the meeting procedures followed by the Board. He asked the members of the Board and staff to introduce themselves.

2. Consideration of the minutes of the November 6, 2019 meeting of the Building Review Board.

The minutes of the November 6, 2019 meeting were approved as submitted.

**3. Consideration of a modifications to the signage regulations for Conway Office Park.
Presented by: City staff**

Chairman Diamond asked the Board members for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from City staff.

Ms. Czerniak explained that in response to requests from the Conway Park Owners' Association (CPOA), updates to the signage standards for Conway Park are presented for Board review and approval. She explained that the draft amendments were prepared jointly by representatives of the CPOA and City staff. She stated that the goals of the project are to update the standards, recognize new technologies and materials and to, where appropriate, streamline the signage approval process to allow administrative approval of signs that fully meet the updated standards. She reviewed that in 2011, staff the Conway Park Signage Standards were initially developed recognizing that Conway Park requires a different type and scale of signage than the City's business districts. She stated that all agreed that it was time for a review and update to the standards. She noted that signage standards specific to different areas

of the community are in place and adopted as part of the City Code. She noted that the recent approval of signage for the new Hyatt Place Hotel prompted discussion by the CPOA and interest in reconsidering the current standards. She clarified that the signage standards do not prevent a business from coming forward to the Building Review Board to seek approval of exceptions to allow signage that does not comply with the standards. She reiterated that signage that fully complies with the standards, and has the can be approved by staff, without Board review. She reviewed that the Board has consistently held that signage is for building identification purposes, not for advertising purposes. She noted that staff routinely receives complaints from community members about excessive signage (size and number), the intensity or glare from lighting on signage, and signage that is out of character with the community. She explained that although the Code allows wall signs, historically, no wall signs have been installed in Conway Park or approved by either the CPOA or the Building Review Board. She stated that the proposed modifications to the signage standards allow wall signs with limitations on size and other aspects, to be approved administratively. She noted that the proposed amendments allow additional monument and wall signs, visible only from the Tollway, for buildings which have frontage on the Tollway. She noted that the standards do not allow wall signs to be visible from outside of the office park, except from the Tollway. She noted that in particular, wall signs cannot be visible from Route 60, except from on the bridge over the Tollway, or visible from the surrounding residential areas. She added that wall signs, except those facing the Tollway, must be located as low on a building as possible, while still providing visibility from Field Drive or Field Court. She stated that the standards as proposed require that signs be located on buildings only in architecturally appropriate areas for instance, not covering windows or extending beyond the plane of the wall. She stated that consistent with signage standards throughout the community, back-lighting, halo-lighting and ground-lit signage is permitted. She added that any proposal for signs with internal illumination would require review and approval by the Building Review Board. She noted that lighting on signs must be turned off after business hours. She stated that the standards provide for administrative approval of limited graphics on signage in Conway Park.

Chairman Diamond invited questions or comments from the Board.

Board member Walther expressed overall support for the proposed changes. He noted several inconsistencies in the terminology used in the document and asked that further thought be given to clarifying whether the standards apply just to office buildings in Conway Park or also to those on the south side of Route 60. He noted that the review process for signage for office buildings outside of Conway Park will be different from those in the office park. He also suggested that further thought be given to signs on angled walls that are not parallel to the Tollway, but still not visible from Field Drive, Field Court or Route 60. He also noted that for visibility, some businesses may desire wedge shaped monument signs along the Tollway, rather than signs that are perpendicular or parallel to the Tollway.

Board member Bluhm stated that the proposed amendments should make the review and permitting processes more efficient. She agreed with the suggestions offered by Board member Walther to clarify and further detail the document.

Board member Looby stated that the proposed modifications to the standards should help visitors to identify the various buildings. He stated support for low key signage for identification purposes adding that some higher profile signage will be good for the businesses and good for Lake Forest.

Chairman Diamond noted that although Board member Moyer is not in attendance, he submitted a written statement expressing support for the proposed modifications.

Chairman Diamond agreed with the comments offered by the Board members and stated support for the proposed changes. Hearing no further comments from the Board, Chairman Diamond invited public comment.

Stephen Wright, consulting architect for the CPOA and former member of the Building Review Board stated that the CPOA is appreciative of the City's willingness to update the standards and further streamline the process. He stated that the CPOA is sensitive to the need for high quality signage.

Hearing no further public comment or questions or comments from the Board, Chairman Diamond invited a motion.

Board member Walther made a motion to approve the updates to the Conway Park Signage Standards subject to editing and clarification as discussed by the Board including consistent use of language and clarification of the applicability of the standards to specific properties.

The motion was seconded by Board member Looby and approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

OTHER ITEMS

4. Opportunity for the public to address the Building Review Board on non-agenda items.

There was no additional public testimony presented to the Board.

5. Additional information from staff.

No additional information was presented by staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine J. Czerniak
Director of Community Development