

REPORT OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION / DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

Wednesday September 7, 2016 – 4:00 PM

Conference Room D – County-City Building
1515 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481

PRESENT: Chairperson Lee Beveridge, Alderperson Garrett Ryan, Commissioner Tim Siebert, Commissioner Sarah Scripps, Commissioner Tom Baldischwiler, Commissioner Joe Debauche, and Commissioner Bob Woehr.

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Associate Planner Kearns, and Bailey Voigt.

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Discussion and possible action on the following:

1. Approval of the report of the August 3, 2016 HP/DRC meeting.
2. Request from Bailey Voigt, representing the property owner, for design review to install an electronic message center and awning at **956 Main Street (Parcel ID 2408-32-2015-28)**.
3. Adjourn.

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1. Approval of the report of the August 3, 2016 HP/DRC meeting.

Commissioner Woehr commented on the report of August 3, 2016 HP/DRC meeting in regards to the wording on page three, paragraph ten, second sentence. Associate Planner Kearns stated the m

Motion by Commissioner Siebert to approve the report of the August 3, 2016 HP/DRC meeting; seconded by Alderperson Ryan.

Motion carried 5-0.

2. Request from Bailey Voigt, representing the property owner, for design review to install an electronic message center and awning at **956 Main Street (Parcel ID 2408-32-2015-28)**.

Associate Planner Kearns summarized the request from the property owner and staff report. He recommended one of two options: the removal of the middle awning and installation of the electronic message center between the two entryway awnings, or for the middle awning to be extended to match the existing entryway awnings in color, material, and design in order to resemble the look of one awning spanning the length of the entire front façade.

Commissioner Woehr asked if staff had a properly completed application.

Associate Planner Kearns stated it was the application form that had been submitted, with Commissioner Woehr adding that it had not been signed, dated, or had any indication that the Alderperson had been notified.

Associate Planner Kearns explained that staff had the ability to be lenient and that they also extended deadlines to allow additional material to come in or for plans to be changed given staff review. He also added that the signature requirement was more of an internal policy to know that the applicant is willing to make the request.

Alderson Ryan asked if there were any dimension specifications regarding the sign request that couldn't be exceeded in that area.

Associate Planner Kearns confirmed that it was based on the signable area, which in this case was between the first floor commercial windows up to the bottom of the sill of the second floor commercial windows, adding that the sign graphics within that signable area couldn't exceed 45%.

Alderson Ryan asked if it included the awning and the digital sign, to which Associate Planner Kearns confirmed that, but also added that the signable area was measured by drawing a rectangle around the logo, lettering, and any other information that was presented on the sign.

Chairperson Beveridge asked if they had approved the awning with the Live on Main logo, to which Associate Planner Kearns stated that it had not gone through the Inspection and Development Department or Historic Preservation Commission.

Chairperson Beveridge asked if they could require the removal of the awning regardless of the outcome with the other signage, to which Associate Planner Kearns confirmed that it was up to commission.

Alderson Ryan asked if the proposed blue awning color fell into the guidelines for awnings for the Historic District, and if it didn't, if there was an acceptable blue within the guidelines.

Associate Planner Kearns stated that the adopted color palettes were regarding paint, but if they wanted to use those color palettes for awnings and other facade materials, they could.

Alderson Ryan asked if there was anything within the sign code relating to displays where they couldn't be flashing, scrolling, or changing color.

Associate Planner Kearns stated that they did not, but added that if the electronic message center were to be approved, he had recommended conditions regarding the operation of the sign in order to maintain the residential mixed-use character downtown and for it not to be over obtrusive to the area.

Commissioner Woehr stated that the city sign ordinance prohibited flashing signs.

Alderson Ryan stated that there were some downtown that had not been approved by the commission.

Bailey Voight (4925 Coye Dr) stated that the blue color was for example purposes, adding that they had a color palette where they could select a different color of canvas were the center awning to be approved.

Chairperson Beveridge read a section of the application regarding the electronic message center capability prior to asking if the staff recommendation was to require that the majority of capability of the sign not be used, as well as restrictions on color.

Associate Planner Kearns stated that his conditions didn't discuss color, but it was something that could be added if they wanted to see a specific color used.

Chairperson Beveridge stated that the awning that wasn't approved needed to be dealt with, adding that it looked like it almost needed a whole new awning to go across the entire thing.

Alderson Ryan asked if anything had been done in order to deal with the fact that it hadn't been brought forward or a permit hadn't been pulled.

Associate Planner Kearns stated they had been working with Tim Schertz (property owner) for well over a year to address the violation. He also added that they were about to issue a citation when Mr. Schertz contracted Bushman Electric Crane and Sign.

Aldersperson Ryan asked if a rewrite for the sign code was underway, to which Associate Planner Kearns confirmed and went on to explain the definition of flashing signs. Mr. Kearns also stated that when the sign code was originally created, it had not identified electronic messaging centers and added that changeable copy was amended to include automated changeable copy signs, but felt it had not been reflected within the entire document. To his point, it didn't fully address electronic message centers or automatic changeable copy signs.

Chairperson Beveridge asked if the process in working with the owner had been included in the packet. He also added that the idea of a digital display on Main Street was contrary to everything we had been trying to do for 20 years.

Aldersperson Ryan agreed that allowing one would set a precedence to allow others, adding that it wasn't an image they wanted to be pursuing downtown with digital displays.

Commissioner Debauche stated that the earlier sign examples that were given, such as Mid-State Technical College, were a different kind of sign, adding that there was not a single sign on the front of the building that changed rapidly. He also expressed concern over setting a precedence for electronic signs.

Associate Planner Kearns explained that graphics in the windows, open signs, and neon signs were allowed, making it difficult to control if someone puts a small electronic sign in the window since the sign code doesn't specifically address it. He added that it would essentially be a larger version of that just placed on the wall.

Commissioner Woehr asked if sandwich boards were allowed on the sidewalk, to which Associate Planner Kearns confirmed that they were.

Bailey Voight (4925 Coye Dr) explained that after struggling with the property and cleaning it up, the owner was trying to create a venue where he could attract larger music acts rather than just local talent. She added that they were open to suggestions if it involved a display that would be able to promote and attract customers and bands without being obnoxious.

Commissioner Scripps asked whether the owner had a preference in terms of the staff recommendations provided, to which Ms. Voight stated that she had not spoken to him regarding the recommendations.

Bailey Voight (4925 Coye Dr) stated that she wasn't sure that she received the final packet with staff recommendations after speaking with Kyle.

Chairperson Beveridge questioned whether anyone received the final packet.

Associate Planner Kearns explained the only change was adding a restriction on the operation of the electronic message center were it to be approved given its proximity to the area and residences it may face.

Chairperson Beveridge stated that they had allowed a kiosk on Clark Street at one of the banks.

Associate Planner Kearns stated Mid-State had a freestanding sign and Berkshire Hathaway had a smaller electronic messaging center that had been approved through the commission.

Chairperson Beveridge stated they had been completely different applications.

Motion by Chairperson Beveridge to deny the request from Bailey Voigt, representing the property owner, for design review to install an electronic message center and awning at 956 Main Street (Parcel ID 2408-32-2015-28), and to require conformity of the existing awnings; seconded by Alderperson Ryan.

Commissioner Scripps asked whether the redoing of the awning would be in accordance with staff recommendations to have it extended.

Chairperson Beveridge explained that he was referring to the awning with the guitar logo, stating that while they had allowed information on valances, they had not allowed signage on the face of awnings.

Bailey Voight (4925 Coxe Dr) commented that Arbuckles Eatery & Pub and Girls in Pearls Boutique had them.

Alderperson Ryan added that Guu's On Main used to have their logo on the face of the awning, but it was no longer there.

Commissioner Scripps asked if Arbuckles Eatery & Pub had come through the commission, to which Alderperson Ryan confirmed.

Chairperson Beveridge questioned them allowing signage on the face of the awning, to which Alderperson Ryan confirmed that they had and it was currently on the face of their awning.

Alderperson Ryan asked if there would be any issues with the logo as it is if the black awnings were brought forward.

Associate Planner Kearns stated that the commission had approved them on a case-by-case basis up to the current point, citing The Wooden Chair façade grant in 2012. He explained that while the design guidelines recommended signage be on the valance, there had been occasions where the Commission had approved it on the face of the awning, but that it had been dependent on the color schemes, graphics, and how well it fit in. He reminded the commission that the middle awning did not meet projection requirements and had to be fixed regardless of approval.

Alderperson Ryan asked if they could recommend extending them down to the length of the existing awnings, to which Associate Planner Kearns stated that it was the second staff recommendation.

Alderperson Ryan asked if the black face and grey valance was being recommended, to which Associate Planner Kearns confirmed.

Bailey Voight (4925 Coxe Dr) expressed concern with having a continuous awning due to the neighboring night club and apartments. She explained that they didn't want to draw the public into the entry for the apartments, adding that there should be some sort of differentiation between the entrance to the club and entrance to the apartments. Another thought she added, would be to have the LED sign above the recessed entry door.

Alderperson Ryan asked if it would still be LED, to which Ms. Voight confirmed.

Alderperson Ryan explained that the issue everyone had with LED signs was how visually distracting they were, especially when trying to create an equally habitable area for not just people going to the night club but people living there, as well as trying to maintain the aesthetic of a historic downtown. He reaffirmed that it would set a precedence for other business owners in requesting illuminated signs, and with the body wanting to be fair, they wouldn't want to say yes to one and say no to another.

Chairperson Beveridge stated that they didn't like internally lit signs, let alone digitally.

Aldersperson Ryan agreed. He also asked whether changes wanted to be made to the original motion to include the center awning.

Chairperson Beveridge requested the addition of the center awning to be removed or brought to code in his motion.

Aldersperson Ryan stated that bringing the awning to code would mean extending them to 3.5 feet which was still shorter than the existing two awnings. If using staff recommendations, they would have to be extended to the existing awnings.

Chairperson Beveridge stated that as long as it met code and lost all signage on them, they could place a shorter awning there

Aldersperson Ryan pulled his second for the motion on the floor, in order to get the original motion sorted out. He further noted that he didn't necessarily agree with removing the Live on Main logo, and added that he had more of an issue with it not coming through the commission rather than it being unappealing.

Chairperson Beveridge suggested to have them leave it and pay a fine.

Commissioner Siebert agreed since it did not come through the commission, but noted that it was not obnoxious.

Chairperson Beveridge stated that it was setting a precedence, noting the previous month's issues relating to stucco due to similar circumstances. He couldn't recall approving signage on awning faces.

Aldersperson Ryan commented on the approval for Arbuckles Eatery & Pub, adding that they had logos on the sides as well. He couldn't recall any others during his time in the commission.

Chairperson Beveridge asked whether the awnings had been covering the signable area.

Aldersperson Ryan stated that there had been no discussion on signage being an issue.

Chairperson Beveridge withdrew his original motion.

Motion by Aldersperson Ryan to deny the request from Bailey Voigt, representing the property owner, for design review to install an electronic message center and awning at 956 Main Street (Parcel ID 2408-32-2015-28), or any signage of any shape or size, but also to approve the extension of the middle awning on the façade to match the existing entryway awnings, subject to the following condition:

- 1. The extended awning shall match the existing entryway awning in design, dimensions, color, and materials.**

Seconded by Commissioner Siebert.

Commissioner Scripps stated that she agreed with extending the awning as long as it met code.

Aldersperson Ryan explained that the height requested seemed to have been designed for a sign to sit beneath it and would probably would not have been built with the center being shorter were there no sign. He noted that he was willing to change that as he was not tied to the length.

Chairperson Beveridge summarized the motion.

Sarah Scripps stated for clarification that the center awning would have to be the same color no matter the length, to which Aldersperson Ryan confirmed that it should be the same color.

Chairperson Beveridge asked for clarification if the existing signage would be left until it deteriorated, in which time the owners would have to come back to the commission. Alderperson Ryan stated yes.

Associate Planner Kearns reminded the commission that if the property was not in conformance with the ordinance, the owner could just remove the middle awning and he would be in conformance.

Motion carried 4-1, with Chairperson Beveridge voting in the negative.

3. Adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 4:37 PM.