



Agenda Memo

Crest Hill, IL

Meeting Date: March 18, 2024

Submitter: Ronald Mentzer, Interim Community and Economic Development Director

Department: Community Development

Agenda Item: Will County Children's Advocacy Center Sign Variance

Summary:

Land Use Summary

	Land Use	Comp Plan	Zoning
Subject Parcel:	Public	Commercial	B3
North:	Office	Commercial	TO
South:	Commercial	Commercial	B2
East:	Public	Joliet	R2
West:	Townhomes	Multifamily	R2

Project Summary

In 2023, Will County acquired the Subject Property and is currently renovating the former child day care facility into what will be the new home for the Will County Children's Advocacy Center (the "CAC"). The building renovation project is nearly complete, and the grand opening of the facility is scheduled to occur sometime in the next month. The CAC is a not-for-profit established in 1995 by Will County States Attorney James Glasgow as a child-focused, coordinated response center to provide hope, healing and justice for children who have endured severe physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect, and exposure to violence.

As a final component of their initial renovation project, the CAC is planning to construct a new masonry monument sign on the northwest corner of the property along Cedarwood Drive. The CAC has requested a Sign Ordinance variation that would, if approved by the City, allow a 28 square foot electronic message board to be incorporated into the new sign. The Sign Ordinance restricts electronic message board sign elements to 20 square feet in area.

Analysis

In consideration of the request, the key points to consider and details of this request include:

- The CAC has submitted the attached February 28, 2024, letter to explain why it believes it is necessary and appropriate to incorporate a larger than normally allowed electronic message board into the new monument sign the organization is planning to construct on the subject site.

- The proposed electronic message board sign would be used to provide information on the services and events the organization provides and offers to the community. No commercial advertising is planned for the sign.
- The proposed height of the sign is 3.5 feet lower than the 15-foot maximum height allowed under the City's Sign Ordinance.
- CAC is only proposing one monument sign even though the Sign ordinance would allow them to install two monument signs, (one along each street frontage).
- The applicant's sign contractor, Express Signs, has confirmed the electronic message board element component of the sign will be equipped with technology that automatically dims the message board as the amount of ambient light in the sky reduces to prevent an unnecessarily bright sign during cloudy periods and after dark.
- In 2019, the City of Crest Hill adopted revisions to the sign ordinance, requiring landscaping at the base of all new monument signs.
- The proposed sign location would be as far away from nearby residential properties as physically possible and its view to nearby residential homes would be buffered by the existing landscaping and building improvements on the Subject Property.
- Section 15.12.275 (B) (1) of the City Code states the City Council shall grant a variation to the Sign Code only when it shall have been determined, and recorded in writing, that all of the following standards are complied with:
 1. *That the property in question cannot yield a reasonable return if permitted to be used only under the conditions allowed by the regulations in that zone;*
 2. *That the plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances; and*
 3. *That the variation, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.*
- The additional supplemental Sign Ordinance variation review standards contained in Section 15.12.275 (B)(2) of the Sign Code are attached for your consideration as Exhibit A.

Staff Assessment

Based on Staff's review of the information submitted with this application, and in consideration of the Sign Variation approval standards contained in the City Code, Community Development Department staff feels the approval of the Sign Ordinance variation requested in this case would be justified.

City Council Action

If the City Council concurs with Staff's assessment, ***Staff recommends the City Council direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance to memorialize the approval of the Will County Children's Advocacy Center's requested Sign Ordinance variation for a 28 sq. ft. electronic message board on a new monument sign that will be installed on the property located at 1206 Cedarwood Drive subject to the following four conditions:***

1. ***The Applicant shall install decorative landscaping around the base of the sign.***
2. ***The electronic message board component of the sign shall be equipped with technology that automatically dims the message board as the amount of ambient light in the sky reduces to prevent an unnecessarily bright sign during cloudy periods and after dark.***
3. ***No additional exterior electronic message board signage shall be allowed or installed on the subject property.***
4. ***The sign design and location shall be substantially consistent with the application materials submitted by the Applicant.***

Recommended Council Action:

Financial Impact:

Funding Source:

Budgeted Amount:

Cost:

Attachments:

Variation justification letter, site plan/survey and supporting sign design documents submitted by Applicant.