

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



MEETING MINUTES

DATE OF MEETING:

January 5, 2023

APPEARANCE COMMISSION

6:00 pm

Village Hall Board Room
2020 Chestnut Street
Homewood, IL 60430

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

ROLL CALL:

Members Scheffke, Quirke, Zander, Kidd, and Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak were present. Member Preston and Chairman Wright was absent. In attendance from the Village were Village Planner Valerie Berstene and Building Department Secretary Darlene Leonard. Four people were in the audience, and one person was on Zoom.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak asked for changes or corrections to the meeting minutes from September 1, 2022. There were none. A motion was made by Chair Pro-tem Hrymak to approve the minutes of September 1, 2022.

AYES: Members Quirke, Zander, and Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: Members Scheffke and Kidd

ABSENT: Member Preston and Chairman Wright

Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak introduced and welcomed the new members to the Commission, Members Scheffke and Kidd.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

CASE 22-46 – 18046 Halsted Street – CD One Price Cleaners Exterior Alterations and Sign Variance

Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak introduced the case and asked Village Planner Berstene to present the case.

Village Planner Berstene presented the case and identified the recommended conditions to add the additional masonry sill and associate with the motion that they must maintain 60% transparency of the windows, and comply with all building code requirements.

Village Planner Berstene explained the request for an additional 39 sf for the proposed signage. The proposed signage is 56 sf on the wall and 12 sf on the pole sign for a total or 68 sf.

Several options were presented to reduce the signage square footage to reduce the needed square footage for the sign variance, including eliminating the circle on the signage, reducing the size of the entire sign, and reducing the size of just the circle.

Piyush Patel, the owner of the cleaners, stated the business does have a long name and that the letters are not that big, they are about 11-3/4" and he does want the signage to be visible.

Member Quirke stated the building was originally approved for 21 feet per unit and asked how it expanded and changed. Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak asked if there were variances over time. Village Planner Berstene stated that the sign code hasn't changed since 1997 and it is not clear why it was set at the lesser amount when originally approved, but over time the signs were approved individually without the context of the other spaces, creating the current situation where each tenant exceeds an even distribution of the allowed signage.

Member Quirke asked if there were any other successful requests for changes. Village Planner Berstene referenced a previous case that was considered as a variance, but was still within the total amount allowed by the ordinance.

Member Quirke referenced the requirement of the ordinance that the property owner be responsible for allotting sign area between tenants and asked Mr. Silken Patel for history on management of signage as the business owner. Mr. Patel informed the commission that he purchased the property in recent years and this is the first substantial change under his ownership.

Member Quirke led discussion and questioning around the history of the previous sign allotment and approvals to gain an understanding of how the current status came to be.

Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak asked if anyone had spoken to the building owner of the other tenants about their signage. Mr. Silken Patel, on Zoom, stated he was the building owner. Mr. Patel stated he has not spoken to the tenants.

Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak asked if he was aware of the signage and the variance. Mr. Patel stated he is not sure how much is requested and it not sure what is allowed or permitted.

Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak pointed out that by the ordinance, it is the owner's responsibility to parcel out the allotted signage among businesses. Mr. Patel stated that the tenant have been there since 2001 or 2002 and CD One Price is the first tenant under his ownership.

Member Quirke asked there have been any changes in the signage since the ownership change. Mr. Patel stated no.

Mr. Patel stated there are around 40 locations of CD One Price Cleaners in the Chicagoland area and businesses with more visible signage have better business.

Member Zander stated the signage looks good, and reducing the scale of the signage wouldn't be effective for the business. There is definitely a problem with the total area, but the scale is right.

Member Zander asked if the other locations have the circular logo. Mr. Patel stated yes.

Village Planner Berstene stated if they are looking to reduce the overall size, reducing the round logo could be effective. The logo is about 2 feet in diameter and if it comes down in size it would reduce the total sign square footage without reducing the size of the letters.

Member Zander stated being a corporate business the signage might already be set.

Member Quirke asked if the hanger circle can be eliminated. Mr. Patel stated it would be a half done sign as the logo is part of the company identity.

Member Kidd asked if the size of the logo can be reduced. Mr. Patel stated yes, it can be done.

Member Scheffke stated that some corporations allow different sizes of logos, and that it's probably in the franchise agreement so it would be worth exploring.

Member Quirke stated that if you look at a business like McDonald's, there is a huge difference in the signs because of local ordinances.

Mr. Patel stated they could scale down the logo without minimizing the letters to maybe 3x3 at a guess.

Chairman Pro-tem Hrymak stated something has to be done because the variances keep getting bigger and bigger. And stated some kind of language that maybe any new tenants coming in need to stick to the allowance. He added that making the circle logo smaller will help. He wants to see equity among all the businesses. He then stated that they hadn't talked about the masonry at the window or the 60% transparency in the windows and added that he is in a favor of both of those provisions.

Member Quirke stated his agreement with Chair Pro-tem Hrymak in favor of the changes to the elevations and asked if the proposed design meets the recommended condition for 60% transparency. Village Planner Berstene stated yes, and clarified that the requirement is currently in the draft zoning ordinance, not yet adopted.

Member Quirke stated it's not a good looking plot of land. The building looks good, but the land has no plantings what so ever. He proposed as a discussion point with the Commission and the property owner to require the owner to put in additional plantings on the east and south sides of the property. He stated that he is strongly opposed to the variance change, but Homewood likes to welcome new businesses and people that take care of their buildings, and they would like to keep the owner happy, but also uphold the laws. He proposed that the property owner install new plants.

Chair Pro Tem Hrymak questioned if the Commission could require the plantings, or simply strongly recommend it.

Village Planner Berstene stated that the site doesn't have the Halsted Street Corridor landscaping because it hasn't come before the commission for changes since that plan was adopted. She explained that often when properties come before the Appearance Commission for approvals, the status of the landscaping is taken into consideration and any improvements are required at that time. She referenced other cases where that standard has been applied recently. She went on to clarify that requirements to improve the landscaping should be in conjunction with the requested changes to the exterior of the building and the investments being made to the property, rather than associated with the sign variance. Village Planner Berstene continued by showing the existing requirements for the Halsted Street Corridor Landscape Plan and the landscape requirements of the draft zoning code- two similar but slightly different approaches for articulating a landscape requirement. She suggested that these two guides could be used as a tool to create a requirement metric for this property to improve the landscaping.

Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak asked Mr. Silken Patel if he had any response. Mr. Patel stated he is not opposed to making the landscape improvement; he just wants it liked by the Village. He affirmed that he is willing to take the steps to make beautification improvements to the property and he plans to be an owner in the Village long term. Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak offered that the Village has a great arborist he can work with, and added that there are benefits to the business and property value of beautification.

Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak returned the conversation to making a determination on the sign variance and stated his stance might be to allow up to a maximum of signage that is already there and no bigger and establish an equitable disbursement of the total allowed signage for the future. Member Quirke stated once grant the variance it stays with that property. Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak stated it has to be in the language that nothing it allowed to be any larger.

Village Planner Berstene stated how the motion is worded is important and to say something that future tenants or signage have to comply or adhere to as the letter of the law and be clarified with the updated code later. It can be more specific in the motion.

Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak suggested to allow the signage to be no larger than the maximum of the signs on the property. Village Planner Berstene stated that Pizza Hut & Jimmy John's have larger panel signs on the pole, so suggested limiting this maximum to the wall signage.

Member Quirke stated it is important to not use "required" when it comes to the plantings. And stated the sign is being scaled down, but it is still not in compliance and is a variance. He cautioned against enacting a "quid pro quo" sign variance in exchange for plantings. Village Planner Berstene suggested that the requirement or recommendation for landscaping should be attached to the approval of the exterior improvements, not the sign variance.

Member Scheffke expressed concerns that the motion, including the property owner's agreement to install plantings, seems like a quid pro quo. Village Planner Berstene explained that the Appearance Commission does have the authority to require landscape improvements with the request for other exterior changes, referencing the recent case for the gas station rebranding at 2138 W 183rd Street. The Commission discussed further the nuance of separating the conditions of the exterior alterations approval from the granting of the sign variance.

Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak asked for a motion to approve Case 22-46 CD One Price Cleaners Exterior Alterations for 18046 Halsted Street as proposed on Sheet A210 submitted by bernache2 architecture dated December 8, 2022, subject to the conditions provided and add #4, the property owner agrees to install landscaping comparable with the new requirements for the Halsted Street landscaping plan. Motion was made by Member Zander; Seconded by Member Quirke.

Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak asked for a motion to approve Case 22-46 CD One Price Cleaners Sign Variance for 18046 Halsted Street as proposed on the submitted drawings for the wall sign to be no larger than 43 sf, and that all future signs for each tenant of the subject property shall be held to the same. Motion was made by Member Quirke to recommend approval of Case 22-46 CD One Price Cleaners Sign Variance of 39 sf for a total of 251.5 sf; Seconded by Member Kidd.

AYES: Scheffke, Quirke, Zander, Kidd, and Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak

NAYS: NONE

ABSTENTIONS: NONE

ABSENT: Member Preston and Chairman Wright

OLD BUSINESS:

Village Planner Berstene reviewed a memo providing updates on on-going development in the Village.

NEW BUSINESS:

Village Planner Berstene stated Target will be coming back with updates.

The new zoning ordinance goes to the Village Board on January 10 for approval; it includes landscaping, lighting, and exterior elevations with some overlap with the Planning and Zoning & Appearance Commissions. Member Quirke asked if there will be a training sessions and if notes or minutes of issues can be collected. Village Planner Berstene stated that can be done and it's a good idea.

There is an update to the Appearance Commission coming with workshops and public participation. It has been 24 years since it was updated.

Chairman Pro-Tem Hrymak stated Wind Creek is progressing. Village Planner Berstene stated the casino will probably be coming back in soon for a sign. Target is scaling back their landscape islands. Building Department Secretary Leonard stated the casino garage is pending the permit being issued; they are just waiting on some pricing to come in and it should be issued soon. There is a prepour scheduled in the next week for the walls for the Brewery.

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Member Quirke to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 pm; Seconded by Member Kidd. All in favor, none opposed. Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Mesaros
Director of Economic and Community Development