

**Minutes of the Community Design Commission/ Forestry Sub-Committee Meeting
Held on April 22, 2015
At Village Hall in Room 101**

Forestry Sub-Committee Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Attendees: Chair Douglas Chien; Commissioners Michele Wheeler and James Rolfes

Absent:

Also present: Craig Failor, Village Planner; Rob Sproule, Village Forester

Discussion regarding forestry issues:

Mr. Sproule gave an update on the forestry department. He said cycle pruning has finished up for the year in various sections of the Village. Winter removals have also finished up or will be finished up in the next few weeks. 400 contract removals were done this winter. He said the inventory done in the fall allowed for the village to have an updated database on removals, which will likely lead to less removals in the summer. He said stump removals are ongoing as well as spring planting. He said residents who call are prioritized to get a replacement tree, usually within each planting season.

Commissioner Wheeler noted that sub-committee members tagged trees in Scoville Park as part of Arbor Day and Earth Day festivities.

Forestry Committee Advice:

Commissioners met with Ms. Debbie Brubaker, an Oak Park resident. They discussed the trees near her property and gave recommendations on tree species for her yard.

Commissioners met with Oak Park resident Ms. Sarah Finnegan regarding tree recommendations as well.

Community Design Commission Meeting called to order at 7:15 p.m. and roll was called.

Attendees: Chair Douglas Chien; Commissioners Julie Carpenter, Susan Ebner, Teresa Heit-Murray, Adam Kallish, Christina Loran, James Rolfes, and Michele Wheeler

Absent: Commissioners Richard Katz, Lloyd Natof, John Schiess and Aaron Stigger

Also present: Craig Failor, Village Planner; Mike Bruce, Zoning Administrator

Public Attendees: Charles Lopez, Ageless Arts Tattoo

Non-Agenda Public Comment: None

Forestry Superintendent Report: Commissioner Rolfes recapped the Green Tuesday discussion from April 21, 2015 at the Oak Park Public Library. He said there were speakers about the Arboretum status for the Village and there was also talk about possibly including front lawns that have distinct botanic gardens to be part of a database. He said there was also an interesting presentation about the tree inventory recently done for the Village. Chair Chien said commissioners tagged about 70 trees in Scoville Park and recapped the Forestry Superintendent report as well.

Minutes: Chair Chien noted his name was misspelled in the body of the minutes. Commissioner Wheeler moved to approve the minutes from March 25, 2015 with the correction. Commissioner Loranz seconded. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Hearing(s); Sitting as the Design Review Commission:

Charles Lopez, on behalf of Ageless Arts Tattoo, is requesting that a variation be granted from Section 7-7-15 (B) (3) of the Sign Code of the Village of Oak Park, which requires that projecting signs shall not project more than six and one-half feet (6.5') from the face of the building to which they are attached, in order to install a proposed projecting sign that would project eight and one-half feet (8.5') from the face of the building at 6743 North Avenue.

Chair Chien noted that the size of the sign was within what was allowable by the code so the variance was for the projection from the building.

Mr. Lopez said the industry standard was a 4' by 8' sign. He said the sign would meet the size requirements of the code and noted the building had a sidewalk and front yard. He said North Avenue was a huge street and he was looking for a larger sign so that his business could be noticed from across the street.

Mr. Bruce explained that the sign code requires projecting signs to be at least six inches from the wall, but it cannot project more than 6.5'. There is height from grade requirements as well and the sign cannot go above the roofline.

Mr. Lopez presented some information on traffic speeds and the amount of time to look at a sign. He said there was two seconds for people to look at a sign in a location such as his. Chair Chien asked where his customers were from. Mr. Lopez said his was mainly a destination business. Commissioner Kallish asked why he did not consider having an awning versus a projecting sign. Mr. Lopez said his opinion was they were not as effective. Mr. Lopez said other signs along North Avenue were larger, such as some signs across the street in Chicago.

Mr. Bruce recapped the staff report, saying the team was not in support of the proposal. Commissioner Carpenter asked how the new sign would be secured. Mr. Lopez said there would be two posts coming from the wall. Mr. Failor said the sign would have to meet the structural and wind load building code requirements for projecting signs.

Chair Chien commended Mr. Lopez on his application as it addressed the variance process very well. Commissioner Rolfes said the applicant was locked in because of the size of his building. Chair Chien said they'd like to support the businesses but also the sign code and asked if there was a way for the applicant to apply for a variance to put a sign on the wall as you approach North Avenue. Mr. Lopez said that wall was for Michael's Beef and he asked the other neighbor as well. Commissioner Kallish said he could see why asking for a larger sign was important but he wondered why the applicant couldn't just move the existing sign in and take the increase to the sign size. Mr. Lopez said the price would be the same for the larger sign versus a nonstandard size. Commissioner Wheeler said the Chicago side of North Avenue had more lenient rules regarding signage. Commissioner Loranz said the code was written in keeping with the Chicago side.

Commissioner Heit-Murray said one suggestion for projecting signs was to have something very unique that fit within the confines of the code like the moose sign for Sears Pharmacy. She said something like that would catch the eye more so than a larger sign would. She also suggested a round sign.

Commissioner Loranz moved to approve the variance. Commissioner Kallish seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Loranz – yes
Kallish –yes
Ebner – no
Rolfes – no
Carpenter – yes
Heit-Murray – no
Wheeler – yes
Chien – no

The vote was 4-4. The motion failed.

A short discussion ensued regarding offering pre-application consultation for sign applicants with the commission. Commissioners agreed it could benefit applicants beforehand.

Other Business:

Chair Chien said staff would come back with more details on the Sign Code reformatting at the next CDC meeting. Commissioner Heit-Murray suggested assigning zones for the Cavalcade of Pride nominations at the next meeting. Staff agreed.

Staff Report:

Mr. Failor said the Lake Street Streetscape Committee will be presenting to the Village Board on May 11, 2015. He said the Planned Development application for the Colt site was expected to go to the Plan Commission in June.

Adjournment: The meeting ended at 8:20 p.m.

Angela Schell,

Recording Secretary