

**Minutes of the Community Design Commission/ Forestry Sub-Committee  
Special Meeting  
Held on September 30, 2015  
At Village Hall in Room 101**

Forestry Sub-Committee Meeting called to order at 6:45 p.m.

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

**Absent:** None

**Also present:** Craig Failor, Village Planner

**Discussion regarding forestry issues:**

Mr. Failor provided commissioners with the Forestry Division written update. Commissioners reviewed a draft of a tree removal door hanger for residents. Chair Chien suggested clarifying if a tree would be replaced. Commissioners corrected some grammar issues as well.

Commissioners reviewed the revised division website and suggested a new main page photo and adding some of the awards the Village has received for its urban forest. Commissioners agreed to send suggestions to Superintendent Rob Sproule. A short discussion ensued about tree species and diversity. A more detailed report was expected at the next monthly meeting.

Commissioner Rolfes suggested having a series of articles about forestry issues in the local papers in the spring as part of the sub-committee's educational efforts. Chair Chien suggested three topics: a history of the village forestry program; bugs/diseases; and what to plant/diversity of plantings. Commissioner Wheeler also suggested the village's FYI newsletter for articles.

**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, Richard Katz, Christina Loranz, Lloyd Natof, James Rolfes, John Schiess (arrived at 7:35 p.m.), and Michele Wheeler

**Absent:** Commissioners Adam Kallish, Nick Sinadinos and Aaron Stigger

**Also present:** Craig Failor, Village Planner; Michael Bruce, Zoning Administrator; Byron Kutz, Assistant Village Engineer; Bill Schmidt, Terra Engineering

**Non-Agenda Public Comment:** None.

**Forestry Superintendent Report Overview:**

Chair Chien reviewed the report and shared the door hanger with the commission.

**Minutes:**

Commissioner Rolfes moved to approve the minutes from August 26, 2015. Commissioner Ebner seconded. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

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

**Cal. No. 03-15-DRC: 855 Madison Street, Core Power Yoga – Resolution**

Commissioner Wheeler moved to approve the resolution. Commissioner Katz seconded. Chair Chien clarified that the resolution included all the amendments from the prior meeting. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved 9-1.

**Cal. No. 04-15-DRC: 1107-1109 South Boulevard, Connolly Public House Inc. - Resolution**

Commissioner Katz moved to approve the resolution. Commissioner Heit-Murray seconded. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved unanimously.

**Cal. No. 02-15-DRC: 812 Madison Street, Sugar Beet Co-op;** Sugar Beet Co-op, applicant, is requesting a variation from Section 7-7-15 (C) (1) of the Sign Code of the Village of Oak Park, which requires that permanent window signs affixed to or painted on the inside of a window shall occupy no more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the surface of each window area, in order to maintain their existing window signage that covers more than 50% of certain window areas.

Mr. Greg Marsey, a Sugar Beet board member, reviewed the application. He said the design of the signage was more of an illustration rather than just a business name and they were asking that the free space between the illustrations be considered open space.

Mr. Bruce clarified window areas were defined by a dividing architectural feature, such as a structural column. He said there were four items of information. Commissioner Carpenter asked if they had plans for the blank windows. Mr. Marsey said he wasn't completely sure but he believes so.

Commissioner Natof said he liked the signage and it was similar to the School of Rock in that it mimics a mural. He said he was uncomfortable approving the variance using the applicants' reasoning that blank space between the lines in the images should be counted as open - because in total, space and lines create compete images. He said going forward, how would the applicant change text or imagery. Mr. Marsey said they would prefer flexibility to follow the same theme. Commissioner Natof asked staff about the procedure for changing signs.

Mr. Bruce said if a business changes its permanent window sign it would need a permit; the window area would be evaluated and if a variation had been granted, the same variance would follow for each window area. Commissioner Carpenter asked why only 25% was allowed in the code. Mr. Bruce said it was for aesthetic and safety reasons, although that may not be a concern with the Sugar Beet signage. Commissioner Carpenter said she liked the signs and didn't find them distracting.

A short discussion ensued about permanent versus temporary signage. Commissioner Carpenter said she appreciated that the signage would not be traded out for temporary paper signs like at many grocery stores. Mr. Failor said it could be a condition of approval if commissioners wanted to prevent temporary signage in addition to the variance. Chair Chien suggested adding language that additional signage cannot differ substantially from the current style. Commissioner Natof suggested reviewing future applications on their own merit. He also said it was a clever way to disguise backs of displays.

Commissioner Natof asked if commissioners wanted to limit any elements of the signage. Commissioner Schiess said he felt it was a clever design and he didn't want to piece it apart. Mr. Bruce reminded commissioners that the purview was for the application in front of them.

Commissioner Heit-Murray said she was a member of Sugar Beet and asked if that would be considered a conflict of interest. Mr. Bruce said the standard would be if she was able to be impartial in her determination. Mr. Failor asked any commissioners to state if they were members for the record. Commissioner Lorz said she was a member of the co-op, but she could be impartial in her decision. Commissioner Heit-Murray and Commissioner Rolfes also stated the same.

Commissioner Heit-Murray moved to approve the application. Commissioner Schiess seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Heit-Murray – yes  
Schiess – yes  
Wheeler – yes  
Loranz – yes  
Natof – yes  
Carpenter – yes  
Rolfes – yes  
Katz - yes  
Ebner – yes  
Chien – yes

The motion passed 10-0.

**Other Business:**

***Chicago Avenue Streetscape Design Update Presentation***

Mr. Byron Kutz, Assistant Village Engineer, updated commissioners on the project. He said at the prior presentation to the CDC there was discussion about the possibility of having medians. That was no longer part of the design. They will meet with the business district and have met with the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust and were looking for feedback tonight on lighting elements and some of the streetscape design.

Mr. Bill Schmidt, from Terra Engineering, reviewed the streetscape elements and the lighting elements. He said they were going with a traditional period-fixture lighting element that complements the Marion Street lighting as well as other areas of Oak Park. He also showed another option that reflected a prairie style design.

Mr. Kutz said they decided to go with the period lighting because it was more in keeping with the business district and also there were inconsistencies with the prairie style theme in the various lights such as roadway lights, streetlights, etc. The period style had a more consistent look to it across lighting types. Commissioner Schiess agreed and said translating Frank Lloyd Wright's style to lighting just doesn't work. Commissioner Katz asked if the street lighting and the pedestrian lights could be more similar with the same fixture. Mr. Schmidt agreed but said there could be issues with scale if they do that. Chair Chien asked about cost and lumen values for having a dual pole light for pedestrians. Mr. Kutz said they were still early in the planning and hadn't factored tree canopies or second floor windows so those details were not set. Mr. Schmidt said they were looking more at the pedestrian experience. Chair Chien said he had an issue with the acorn light on the street light. Commissioner Carpenter said she liked the idea of more pedestrian light and liked the scale of it being lower.

Mr. Kutz said the first step would be getting the fixture style settled before moving onto distribution. Chair Chien said as they move forward to keep in mind the need to not waste lighting going upward so he'd prefer fixtures that face down. Commissioner Katz said the acorn doesn't relate to any light fixture in the Village. Commissioner Natof said he doesn't care for the acorn shape either so he would advocate for a different shape.

Mr. Schmidt reviewed the street furniture. He said they were going with a very traditional black bench and bicycle racks and they would be adding planting pots. Commissioner Schiess asked about maintenance for black benches. Mr. Kutz said they typically consider maintenance but they weren't aware of any issues that would make them harder to maintain than other similar benches. Commissioner Schiess said he'd go with the wood option. Commissioner Rolfes said he thinks the planters in Oak Park are too small and look out of place.

and urged designers to incorporate them better into the overall design. Mr. Schmidt agreed. Chair Chien said he was not a fan of planters unless the business district maintains them such as Downtown Oak Park does, so he urged designers to minimize them as much as possible.

Commissioner Schiess said the crosswalk at Marion and Chicago was dangerous and suggested some sort of permanent feature, such as planters, to help slow traffic at that spot. Mr. Schmidt reviewed some enhancements at corners along Chicago such as at the Maple Avenue crosswalk with embedded strips in the concrete in a prairie style. Commissioner Wheeler said from a design point of view to have the different themes it wouldn't flow. Commissioner Heit-Murray said the circle design would be incorporated throughout. Commissioner Carpenter suggested cobblestone would be more appropriate with the lighting. Commissioner Wheeler said she liked the idea of styling in the concrete but the design should stick with the same era. Commissioner Schiess suggested they simplify the concrete treatment. Mr. Kutz said they need to comply with ADA and be careful not to add any tripping elements with cobblestone so the concrete option was a way to create interest and keep in cost and safety.

Commissioner Rolfes suggested improving the corner where Peterson's ice cream store is as that was a major meeting point for people and a good opportunity to highlight Oak Park to visitors at the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio. Mr. Schmidt said the plan was to expand that corner. Mr. Kutz agreed.

Mr. Schmidt reviewed the existing trees and the plan for additional tree planting.

Mr. Kutz said they would incorporate comments from tonight, comments from the business district and bring the final plan to the Village Board. Chair Chien said the commission would like another chance to review the plans after they've been changed.

#### ***Cavalcade of Pride Awards Discussion***

Commissioner Heit-Murray reviewed the presentation from last year.

Commissioners finalized and clarified the selections for block and garden. Zone 9 still needs clarification and pictures. Commissioner Heit-Murray urged commissioners to take pictures of their zone winners and send in before the season changed substantially. Commissioner Carpenter suggested a property for most improved on Ontario. She will provide staff with the information.

#### ***2016 Work Plan***

Mr. Failor reviewed the Work Plan. Commissioners suggested keeping in landscape review in case the Plan Commission requests it for a planned development. Mr. Failor said in terms of membership, discussion was needed on the requirement that some members have landscape design or forestry backgrounds. Mr. Failor noted it would be the last meeting for Commissioner Schiess and Commissioner Lorz.

**Adjournment:** The meeting ended at 9:18 p.m.

Angela Schell,  
Recording Secretary