

REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMBINED PLAN COMMISSION / ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
Gregory J. Bielawski Municipal Center, Carol Stream, DuPage County, Illinois

September 14, 2009

Chairman David Michaelsen called the Regular Meeting of the Combined Plan Commission/ Zoning Board of Appeals to order at 7:30 p.m. and directed Recording Secretary Wynne Progar to call the roll.

Present: Commissioners David Hennessey, Timothy McNally, Frank Petella, Angelo Christopher, Ralph Smoot, Dee Spink and David Michaelsen

Absent: None

Also Present: Don Bastian, Assistant Community Development Director and Recording Secretary Wynne Progar

MINUTES:

Commissioner Spink moved and Commissioner Petella made the second to approve the Minutes of the Meeting July 27, 2009 as presented. The results of the roll call vote were:

Ayes: 5	Commissioners Hennessey, McNally, Christopher, Spink & Michaelsen
Nays: 0	
Abstain: 2	Commissioners Petella and Smoot

PUBLIC HEARING:

Commissioner Spink moved and Commissioner Petella made the second to open the Public Hearing. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

**#09209: Carol Stream Stratford Inn, Ltd. – 150 S. Gary Avenue
(D/b/a Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites
Variation – Sign Code**

Don Oppermann, President of Carol Stream Stratford Inn, Inc. was sworn in as a witness in this matter.

He presented a power point presentation to show the current signage on the property and then the proposed new signage that is proposed by the corporation as well as the new signage at other Holiday Inn locations. Mr. Oppermann said that the variations requested are a variation to allow two ground signs and to allow the new ground sign to measure 13 feet, 3 inches in height so that it will not be hidden by trees and ground foliage.

There were no comments or questions from those in attendance at the call for Public Hearing.

Mr. Bastian gave the staff report saying, that as part of Holiday Inn's company-wide re-branding initiative, Don Oppermann, President of Carol Stream Stratford Inn, Inc. is planning to replace the existing ground sign located within the entrance median leading into the Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites property at 150 S. Gary Avenue. The sign would be the second "ground sign" on the property, and since the Sign Code only allows one ground sign on properties with frontage on only one street, a variation is needed to allow a second such sign. Also, the proposed sign would measure 13 feet, 3 inches in height, as opposed the six

foot maximum height for ground signs permitted by the Code, and so Mr. Oppermann is also requesting a height variation for the sign.

There is considerable background information involving the history of signage on the Holiday Inn property that the Plan Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals should be aware of in consideration of Mr. Oppermann's current requests. Pertinent information regarding the history of the two existing ground signs on the property is presented below.

“Holiday Inn Hotels & Suites” sign in the entrance median – The Village issued a building permit for the sign located in the entrance median in 1987. This sign, which measures approximately 21 square feet in area and five feet, seven inches in height, complies with the Sign Code requirements for a ground sign and remains in place today.

Changeable copy sign along Gary Avenue, north of hotel entrance – In 1999, the Village Board approved variations to allow for the installation of a changeable copy sign with messages that changed more often than once every 30 minutes, and for the sign to measure six feet, seven inches in height versus the maximum ground sign height of six feet. (The Code has since been amended such that there is no longer a restriction as to how frequently messages can change on changeable copy signs.) In the variation application materials submitted for this sign, it was clearly stated and shown on the site plan that the changeable copy sign was intended to replace the existing “Holiday Inn Hotels & Suites” sign in the entrance median. This would have been consistent with the Sign Code provision limiting the number of ground signs on a single frontage property to one such sign.

Following approval of the variations, the building permit application for the changeable copy sign showed that the sign would be installed at its actual present location, some 200 feet north of the entrance median. The building permit application did not identify, in any way, the then (and still) existing sign within the entrance median, nor did it provide an indication as to whether that sign would remain or be removed. In point of fact, there were changes in the Community Development Department staff between the time that the variation was processed and the processing of the subsequent building permit. It appears that the Village had some culpability in the issuance of the permit, as the Village should have required the removal of the existing ground sign in the entrance median as a condition of issuance of the permit for the changeable copy sign.

The first variation request is to allow two ground signs on the Holiday Inn property, with the two ground signs being the existing changeable copy sign and the new ground sign proposed to be installed in the entrance median. In staff's review of the request to allow two ground signs on the property, we evaluated: 1) other properties with multiple ground signs, 2) the nature of the business uses on the property, and 3) the particular physical characteristics of the property. Our analysis of these factors follows below.

Other properties with multiple ground signs – Though not common, there are a few other properties. One such property is Joe Cotton Ford. Through variations approved in the 1980s, Joe Cotton Ford at one time had three separate ground signs. The justification for the multiple signs was that Joe Cotton Ford felt it was important to separately advertise the three distinct types of vehicles that they sold, which included new cars, new trucks, and used cars and trucks. Following approval of another variation in 2004, the number of signs was reduced to two; with one 25 foot tall pole sign and one 10 foot tall ground sign (ground signs for properties on North Avenue only are allowed to measure 10 feet in height).

Another commercial property, yet to be developed, is Carol's Court Commercial Center, located on the east side of Schmale Road, south of St. Charles Road. Earlier this year, the Plan Commission approved a variation to allow two separate ground signs along Schmale Road, one for each of the two distinct buildings that will be built on the property. The development is approved to contain a stand alone car wash and a multi-tenant commercial building. Based on the distinctly different business uses in the two buildings, the applicant felt it was important for each building to have its own ground sign, and the Plan Commission approved the variation. A key difference between that case and the Holiday Inn case is that the Carol's Court property contains two buildings on one lot, approved through the planned unit development process. However, a key factor in support of the variation was that there were distinct business uses that warranted separate signage.

A key factor in the Village's approval of variations to allow multiple ground signs for Joe Cotton Ford and Carol's Court involved the variety in business uses or product offerings. The Holiday Inn also has several distinct uses and product offerings, including the hotel use, Alberto's Restaurant and Fitzgerald's Tavern. In addition, the hotel hosts special events in the banquet room and tent, the Carol Stream Chamber of Commerce maintains its offices in the hotel, and Avis car rental has an office in the building. As such, there are several distinct business uses housed within the Holiday Inn building. It is true that the Sign Code allows directory signs to be installed for multi-tenant buildings, but these signs are most often and appropriately used for commercial strip centers and multi-tenant industrial buildings. The Holiday Inn is not all that similar to an inline commercial strip center or multi-tenant industrial building, however, and it is unknown how effectively the varied uses in the Holiday Inn could be advertised on a single directory sign.

In his July 27 cover letter, Mr. Oppermann states that the main reason for new ground sign is increased visibility of the hotel. It is true that a significant portion of Holiday Inn's business consists of business travelers, who may not be completely familiar with the specific location of the hotel. As such, visibility from North Avenue is a key consideration. The existing ground sign located in the entrance median off of Gary Avenue is not clearly visible from the intersection of Gary Avenue and North Avenue, and the changeable copy sign is also not effective in identifying the location of the hotel from the intersection. As seen in the photographs of the Gary Avenue frontage adjacent to the hotel (Exhibits B-1 through B-3), the landscape materials on the property have matured so as to create a visual "wall" between the building and the roadway. The second, taller ground sign in the entrance median would more clearly identify the hotel's location.

In addition to the above, it should be noted that two ground signs have existed on this property for the past nine years with no apparent negative impacts, including no complaints from the broader business community and no proliferation of properties with two ground signs. Staff also believes that the multiple business uses taking place within the hotel building is a compelling factor in support of the request. Staff can support the variation to allow two ground signs on the property, but our support would be subject to a condition that any single business aspect taking place in the building can only be advertised on one of the two ground signs. We have spoken to the applicant and he is in agreement with this suggested condition. For the existing changeable copy sign, the applicant intends to have the changeable copy portion advertising special events, and the two fixed panels would be reserved for Alberto's Restaurant and Fitzgerald's Tavern. The proposed ground sign would be limited to advertising for the Holiday Inn Hotel only. As such, the proposed text advertising Alberto's Restaurant on the proposed ground sign, as shown on Exhibits A-1

and A-2, would need to be removed. Again, the applicant is in agreement with this suggested condition.

The second variation is to allow the new ground sign to measure 13 feet, 3 inches in height, as opposed to the maximum allowable height of six feet for ground signs. In staff's review of the request to allow two ground signs on the property, we evaluated: 1) the types of signage allowed by the Sign Code for the Holiday Inn property, 2) the effectiveness of signage allowed by the Sign Code, and 3) the potential impact of the requested signage. Our analysis of these factors follows below.

The Sign Code allows different types of signage for properties in the Business Districts depending on the size of the property, the nature of the use, and the size of the building. The Code provides definitions and design parameters for the different types of signs. The proposed sign that the applicant wishes to install does not match up well with the types of signs allowed by the Code, but rather seems to meet certain requirements of several different types of signs that are allowed. The Sign Code allows a Pole or Commercial Identification sign for single-use buildings and lots containing 100,000 square feet of space and 10 acres of land. These signs may be 25 feet in height, 160 square feet in area, and must be set back 40 feet from the front lot line. The Holiday Inn property is only 7.67 acres in size, but the building does meet the 100,000 square foot requirement. By comparison, the proposed sign is only 13 feet, 3 inches in height and approximately 50 square feet in area, which is significantly less than would be allowed for a pole sign. As such, the Sign Code does not provide an allowance for the type of sign that the applicant feels is needed to adequately advertise the location of the hotel.

Due to the property not meeting the 10-acre size threshold required for a pole sign, ground signage for the Holiday Inn is limited to six feet in height. The existing ground sign in the entrance median measures five feet, seven inches in height, and this sign is ineffective in identifying the location of the hotel until a motorist is very close to the sign. A taller sign would be more effective in identifying the hotel and the entrance to the hotel property.

Staff considered potential positive and negative impacts of the requested 13 foot, 3 inch tall sign. From a positive standpoint, the new sign could have a positive impact on business for the Holiday Inn. The potential negative impacts could include impacts on the view of the streetscape, and also the precedent-setting nature of the sign, if approved. With respect to the streetscape, it is worth noting that although the properties in the vicinity are located within the Gary and North Avenue Overlay Corridors, a cohesive overall streetscape has not emerged. Staff might be more concerned about allowing a sign that is significantly taller than that allowed by the Code if a consistent signage theme and streetscape view had been established in the area, for example, as found on the south Schmale Road corridor between St. Charles Road and Geneva Road. Regarding the potential precedent-setting nature of this request, if the Plan Commission is ultimately inclined to approve this request, staff would suggest that the Commission identify unique aspects of the property that warrant the installation of a taller sign.

Staff can support the variation to allow two ground signs provided that any single business aspect taking place in the building can only be advertised on one of the two ground signs. Once, again, two ground signs have existed on the property, albeit illegally, for the past nine years with no apparent negative consequences. Staff can also support the variation to allow the new ground sign to measure 13 feet, 3 inches in height, due the mature landscape materials that serve to obscure the view of shorter signage, provided that the sign not be

installed any nearer to the Gary Avenue property line than the existing sign in the entrance median.

Staff recommends approval of the Sign Code variations to allow two ground signs on the Holiday Inn property, and to allow the new ground sign to measure 13 feet, 3 inches in height, subject to the following conditions:

That the distance of the existing ground sign in the entrance median from the Gary Avenue property line must be documented on a survey by the applicant and verified by Village staff prior to the removal of the existing ground sign, and that the new sign shall not be located any nearer to the Gary Avenue property line than the existing sign (and in no case shall be closer than five feet of the front property line);

That the existing ground sign in the entrance median must be removed prior to the installation of the new ground sign, and that there shall not be more than two ground signs allowed on the property;

That any single business aspect taking place in the building can only be advertised on one of the two ground signs;

That the text referring to Alberto's Restaurant shown on the photo renderings of the new ground sign must be removed from the sign;

That all required building permits must be received for the new ground sign prior to the installation of the sign; and

All signs must comply with all State, County and Village Codes and requirements.

Commissioner McNally asked who will be advertising on the changeable copy sign and Mr. Oppermann said that the changeable copy will be used only by Fitzgerald's and Alberto's. Commissioner Spink asked about retaining the "Avis" sign that is at the top of the building and Mr. Oppermann said that it will be removed and replaced with the big H and suites. Commissioner Spink concurred that the trees and the landscaping have grown so tall, that one has to pay attention closely so as not to drive by the entrance drive. Commissioner Petella said that he discovered a third sign, a moveable wood A-frame sign in the parkway that has "Sunday Brunch" and asked if will still be used, Mr. Oppermann said that the changeable copy sign will be used to advertise different meals being offered. Commissioner Petella asked if the new sign will be lit at night and was told that it would be. Chairman Michaelsen said that the new sign is appropriate and he agrees that the height has become necessary with the growth of the trees over the years. Commissioner McNally moved and Commissioner Spink made the second to approve the request for an additional ground sign on the property of the Holiday Inn and Suites at 150 S. Gary Avenue, in accordance with staff recommendations. The results of the roll call vote were:

Ayes:	6	Commissioners Hennessey, McNally, Petella, Christopher, Spink and Michaelsen
Nays:	0	
Abstain:	1	Commissioner Smoot

Commissioner McNally moved and Commissioner Christopher made the second to approve the request for a variance for a sign to exceed the allowable height for ground sign at the Holiday Inn and Suites at 150 S. Gary Avenue, in accordance with staff recommendations. The sign to be 13 feet and 3 inches. The results of the roll call vote were:

Ayes: 6 Commissioners Hennessey, McNally, Petella, Christopher, Spink and Michaelson

Nays: 0

Abstain: 1 Commissioner

**09230: Pete Palade – 611 Appaloosa Court
Variation – Zoning Code**

Peter Palade, 3N541 Linda Lane, Addison, IL was sworn in as a witness in this matter. He explained that the request is for a variation to extend his driveway across the front of his house so that he can park more than one car in his driveway. He said that he has a letter from his neighbor saying that they approve having the driveway extended as it will also benefit him by having more space on the common part of the driveway to get past Mr. Palade's vehicles.

There were no comments or questions from those in attendance at the call for public hearing.

Mr. Bastian said that it is important to have an understanding of the intent and history of the Zoning Code regulation that is the subject of the request. In developing regulations for driveway design, it is important to strike a balance between allowing for an adequate amount of parking, while not negatively impacting neighborhood aesthetics through the construction of unnecessarily wide driveways, particularly those that encroach into front yards in front of homes.

In typical suburban neighborhoods, it is generally recognized that the lawn area in front of a single-family home should not be used for automobile parking. To make sure that front yards remain free of vehicle parking, Carol Stream's Zoning Code contains a provision stating that driveways "shall not extend across the front of the principal structure by more than three feet." This regulation became part of the Zoning Code in March 2007 through the adoption of Ordinance 2007-03-11. This provision effectively limits the width of any driveway pavement in front of a home to a maximum of three feet. As a point of information, this provision does not prohibit the widening of any portion of a driveway that is not directly in front of the home.

Existing Neighborhood Conditions

The Zoning Code provision that limits the width of driveway extensions in front homes to three feet is effective and appropriate in most single-family neighborhoods in Carol Stream. However, *The Park* Subdivision, in which the applicant's property is located, has some uncommon design aspects that present specific constraints with respect to off-street parking and driveway design, as identified below.

The lots in *The Park* are small, at less than 5,000 square feet in area;

The lots are narrow, with typical widths of 45 feet;

The front yard setback, at only 20 feet, is less than in most subdivisions. The lesser setback results in shorter driveways, which reduces the amount of driveway parking;

The required side setback for homes is zero (on one side), which positions the attached one-car garages very close to the shared property line. This results in driveways being very close to the adjacent property, which limits maneuverability and expansion opportunities; Many homes have only one-car garages and one-car wide driveways, which reduces parking availability in both garages and driveways;

Many neighboring properties in this subdivision, including that of the applicant, have a shared driveway access to the public street, which constrains parking, accessibility and maneuverability; and

The right-of-way has an unconventional layout around the cul-de-sac, in that the right-of-way does not widen around the cul-de-sac bulb as is typically the case. Instead, the cul-de-sac pavement in front of 611 Appaloosa Court comes right up to the front property line. Usually, there would be a traditional parkway around the perimeter of the cul-de-sac between the back of curb and the private property line. This condition serves to further reduce the effective length of the driveway on the applicant's property.

A field inspection in the *The Park* neighborhood revealed that many driveways have been expanded to create room for additional off-street parking. Building permit records indicate that most of the driveways in *The Park* that have been widened were done with a valid building permit. In a specific example, the applicant has submitted a photo of the property directly across the street (604 Appaloosa Court) from his property which has a driveway configuration very similar to the driveway that he proposes to construct. The Village issued a permit for the driveway expansion at 604 Appaloosa Court in 2000. However, because of the Zoning Code text amendment approved in 2007 which limits driveway widths in front of homes to a maximum of three feet, the Village is not able to issue a permit to the applicant for the proposed driveway configuration without approval of a variation.

In further support of his application, Mr. Palade has stated that when two cars are parked in the driveway, the second vehicle extends over the curb and into the cul-de-sac. Also, the property owner to the north has difficulty entering and exiting the driveway when there are two cars parked in the applicant's driveway, due to the narrow width and curve of the access drive to the public street that is shared with the neighbor. This condition can be seen in the photos provided by the applicant and by the additional aerial photo included in your packet. As a final point of information, the applicant is proposing to install a new retaining wall and landscape materials in front of the home if the variation is approved.

Based on the uncommon design aspects of *The Park* Subdivision, as well as the fact that the Zoning Code provisions that would have otherwise allowed for the proposed driveway expansion were recently changed, staff can support the variation to allow the driveway to extend up to nine feet in front of the home at 611 Appaloosa Court.

Staff recommends approval of the variation to allow the driveway expansion at 611 Appaloosa Court to extend nine feet across the front of the home as opposed to three feet as allowed by the Zoning Code, subject to the condition that the applicant obtains a building permit prior to constructing the expansion.

Commissioner Spink asked if the neighbor's portion of the driveway will be re-done and was told that it would be. She commented that it is very obvious that there is a need for more parking spaces.

Commissioner Spink moved and Commissioner Smoot made the second to recommend approval of a variation for a driveway width within the front of the principal structure in accordance with staff recommendation. The results of the roll call vote were:

Ayes: 7 Commissioners Hennessey, McNally, Petella, Christopher,
Smoot, Spink and Michaelson
Nays: 0
Abstain: 0

The petitioner was reminded that this matter will be heard by the Village Board at their meeting on September 21, 2009 and was advised to attend that meeting.

**09232: Village of Carol Stream
Text Amendments – Zoning Code**

Mr. Bastian said that staff is working on text amendments and a notice was published to indicate the public hearing would be this evening, however, the research needed for these amendments has not been completed. Staff is asking the Commissioners to continue this matter to the meeting of October 12, 2009 at which time the text amendments will be presented.

There were no comments or questions from those in attendance at the call for Public Hearing.

Commissioner Smoot moved and Commissioner McNally made the second to continue this matter to the meeting on October 12, 2009. The results of the roll call vote were:

Ayes: 7 Commissioners Hennessey, McNally, Petella, Christopher,
Smoot, Spink and Michaelson
Nays: 0
Abstain: 0

Commissioner Spink moved and Commissioner Hennessey made the second to close the Public Hearing. The results of the roll call vote were:

Ayes: 7 Commissioners Hennessey, McNally, Petella, Christopher,
Smoot, Spink and Michaelson
Nays: 0
Abstain: 0

Presentation:

**09225: SRBL Architects/Carol Stream Public Library – 616 Hiawatha Drive
Planned Unite Development – Minor Modification**

Jamie Zaura, 616 Hiawatha Drive, CS, was sworn in as a witness in this matter. She explained that the Library is planning on doing a small renovation project to construct a new entry vestibule that will allow the reconfiguration and addition to the areas of the Library for young children, young adults and seniors. There will be additional corrals and computers, separation of the areas for specific users and additional upgrades in technology and computer resources. The work will be done in phases with the least amount of inconvenience for Library users.

Mr. Bastian said that Jamie Zaura of SRBL Architects, on behalf of the Carol Stream Public Library District, has filed an application for a minor modification to the Planned Unit Development Plan for the Carol Stream Public Library facility at 616 Hiawatha Drive. Specifically, the Carol Stream Public Library District is planning to construct an entry vestibule addition immediately adjacent to the existing library entrance. While small in area, at less than 500 square feet, the new vestibule will allow for a reconfiguration and re-purposing of the space within the existing entry corridor, as well as other modifications within the library space.

Proposed Changes:

The vestibule addition is being done in conjunction with other renovations to the interior of the library space, including enhancements to the facilities for young children and teenagers, and upgrades in the area of technology and computer resources. The vestibule addition will also allow the circulation desk to be moved into the existing entry corridor, which will make space available for further interior reorganization. As shown on the site plan (A1.1) and floor plan (A3.1), the new vestibule would be a rectangular addition located immediately in front of the existing library entrance. The addition would measure approximately 14 by 33 feet, or 462 square feet in area. The exterior appearance of the new vestibule is shown on the building elevations plan (A2.1) and also on the color rendering. As stated in the cover letter, the primary materials used in the addition will include white burnished masonry block and a glass storefront entry. The new vestibule will extend to a height of approximately 17 feet, five inches, which will be about four feet, five inches taller than the main library roof. The vestibule addition will have windows and a decorative roof element that will allow natural light to enter the vestibule area. The new vestibule will incorporate a book-drop system which will allow patrons to drop off loaned materials without having to enter the building.

Parking:

For libraries, the Zoning Code requires one parking space for each 350 square feet of floor area. With the area of the addition measuring 462 square feet, one additional parking space is required. Based on the current area of the library, at 26,525 square feet, 76 parking spaces are required. With the 462 square foot addition, 77 spaces would be required. As the site is currently improved with 80 parking spaces, there is no need for additional parking spaces to be installed in association with the small vestibule addition.

Summary:

Staff is comfortable with the changes proposed by the petitioner. The modifications are consistent with the purpose and intent of the originally approved site plan, and the proposed use serves a community need.

Staff recommends approval of the petitioner's request for a minor modification to the PUD Plan for the building and property at 616 Hiawatha Drive, to allow for a 462 square foot vestibule addition, subject to the condition that a building permit must be obtained prior to commencement of construction.

Commissioner McNally asked if the library will remain open during construction and it was stated that there will be a temporary entrance on the southwest side of the building during the first phase of the project.

Commissioner Smoot asked if the current room to the right of the entrance door will have a wall built to have two separate rooms and Ms. Zaura said it will have an accordion-type divider so that the two areas can be used simultaneously.

Commissioner Spink asked how long this project will take and it said that if the project starts in October, it should be completed by May of 2010.

Commissioner Hennessey if there will be a new sign, and it was stated that there will not be a new sign.

Chairman Michaelsen asked about the drainage from the addition and it was explained that this is a built-in gutter system that will allow drainage to the east and west and not onto the pavers in front.

Commissioner McNally moved and Commissioner Christopher made the second to approve the minor modification to the Planned Unit Development in accordance with staff recommendations.

The results of the roll call vote were:

Ayes: 7 Commissioners Hennessey, McNally, Petella, Christopher,
Smoot, Spink and Michaelsen
Nays: 0
Abstain: 0

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Bastian noted that there are no cases ready for consideration for the meeting of September 28, 2009 and suggested that the Commissioner may wish to cancel that meeting. Commissioner Smoot moved and Commissioner Hennessey made the second to cancel the meeting of September 28, 2009. The results of the roll call vote were:

Ayes: 7 Commissioners Hennessey, McNally, Petella, Christopher,
Smoot, Spink and Michaelsen
Nays: 0
Abstain: 0

At 8:30 p.m. Commissioner Spink moved and Commissioner Petella made the second to adjourn. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

FOR THE COMBINED BOARD