

MINUTES OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
February 22, 2010

The regular meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order by Chairman William Cotey at 7:00 p.m. at the Village Hall.

Members present: Chairman William Cotey, Scott Adams, Robert Guarnaccio, Terry Howard, Mark Moore, and Walter Oakley.

Members absent: Andy Robinson.

A quorum was established.

Village Staff present: John Spoden, Director of Community Development; David Smith, Senior Planner; and Pat Sheeran, Project Engineer.

Board Member Oakley moved, seconded by Board Member Adams, to approve the January 25, 2010, Zoning Board of Appeals meeting minutes.

Motion carried 6 - 0.

OLD BUSINESS:

**ZBA 10-01 Cambridge Office and Retail Plaza, LLC, Applicant
820-890 S. Milwaukee Avenue**

Request is for variations to: 1) increase the maximum permitted tenant panels for a multi-tenant sign from 6 to 18 in order to install a multi-tenant sign; 2) increase the maximum permitted sign area identifying commercial tenants on a multi-tenant sign from 50% to approximately 85% in order to install a multi-tenant sign; 3) increase the maximum permitted number of freestanding signs for a zoning lot in order to install a multi-tenant sign and an additional freestanding business sign for a single commercial tenant; and 4) increase the maximum permitted number of business signs for a business occupancy from 2 to 3 in order to install two wall signs and an additional freestanding business sign for a single commercial tenant for the Cambridge Plaza Shopping Center located in a C-4, Shopping Center Commercial District.

Board Member Moore recused himself from this item.

Mr. David Smith, Senior Planner, stated that the petitioner, Cambridge Office and Retail Plaza, LLC is requesting approval for sign variations in order to install a multi-tenant sign along Milwaukee Avenue, a separate freestanding business sign for a single tenant for a space located in the Cambridge Plaza, and additional wall signs on a new facade proposed to be constructed to bridge the two existing Cambridge Retail Plaza retail buildings located on either side of an existing patio

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courtyard area. Mr. Smith stated that the subject site is located at the Cambridge Retail Plaza at 820-890 South Milwaukee Avenue.

Mr. Smith stated that the petitioner is proposing to construct a new multi-tenant sign that is 23 feet in height with 18 commercial tenant panels. He stated that the overall sign area is approximately 104.7 square feet in sign area of which 89.3 square feet (85%) will belong to the tenant panels and the remaining 15.5 square feet (15%) will belong to the 'Cambridge Plaza' center identification board sign area. He stated that the sign is proposed to be located along Milwaukee Avenue adjacent to the center's driveway entrance.

Mr. Smith stated that in addition, the petitioner is proposing to construct a facade wall extension to connect the two shopping center buildings at the northeast corner of the property where the two buildings which are separate, but are at their closest proximity to each other. He stated that the building separation is infilled with a pedestrian type outdoor plaza. Mr. Smith stated that the petitioner is proposing to construct facade that will span and connect the two buildings at their closest points from each other. He stated that the facade wall extension is shown to be constructed approximately 9.5 feet above the ground to allow pedestrians to walk under it and to the north end tenant space located beyond and north of the proposed facade extension.

Mr. Smith stated that the petitioner is proposing to relocate the Hong Kong Chop Suey wall sign on the new facade extension and a new tenant wall sign for an occupant not yet identified for the tenant space located in the far north space in the east shopping center building. Mr. Smith stated that this proposal, if approved, would permit the north vacant tenant space to have three business signs; a wall sign above its door, a wall sign on the new facade wall extension, and one freestanding sign at the southwest corner of the Cambridge Plaza shopping center adjacent to the Milwaukee Avenue and Valley Park Drive intersection.

Mr. James Babowice, attorney representing the petitioner, stated that the proposed wall extension will match the architectural style of the existing plaza. He stated that there are currently 10 tenant panels on the existing freestanding sign. He submitted a floor plan of the north tenant space and indicated that it has a floor area of approximately 5,400 square feet. He stated that this is in response to Staff's request to assist in determining maximum gross sign area.

Mr. Doug Brown, petitioner, stated that he is the owner of the shopping center. He stated that they have been struggling to fill the north tenant space due to being hidden behind the front building facades. He stated that previous tenants in the hidden space have been Cambridge Home Design, an office, another mortgage office and vacant for a substantial amount of time. He stated that the shopping center building is 48,000 square feet of which 20% is vacant on average. He stated that he is in need of good signage.

Mr. Duane Laska, North Shore Sign Co., stated that the existing multi-tenant sign replaced an older sign in 1979 so the existing sign is already aesthetically old and has required extensive maintenance. He stated that the proposed multi-tenant sign will accommodate all of the tenants in the two shopping center buildings. He stated that the architectural element on top of the sign exceeds the

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sign cabinet in height in order to aesthetically tie it in to the shopping center architecture. He stated that the sign area will be less than the existing sign area.

Mr. Babowice stated that the sign area reduction is from 117 square feet in sign area to approximately 105 square feet in sign area.

Mr. Laska stated that after calculating the floor area of the north tenant space, they have determined that a variation to increase the maximum permitted gross sign area is not necessary as they will comply with the Sign Code for that particular regulation.

Mr. Brown stated that the tenant on the south end of the easterly building was another bank which used to have its own freestanding sign at the southwest corner of the parcel. He stated that they want to use that same sign location to allow the north tenant to have its own freestanding sign. He stated that this proposed sign will be smaller and shorter, but is needed due to the visibility challenge that the north tenant space has.

Mr. Laska described the physical specifics of the proposed single tenant freestanding sign. He stated that the two shopping center buildings have a separation of approximately 34 feet as measured from the buildings' canopies.

Mr. Brown stated that the hardship given to justify the variation requests is the fact that traffic from Milwaukee Avenue cannot see the north end tenant space.

Mr. Laska stated that the wall extension will match the existing buildings' fascia.

Commissioner Oakley asked why the petitioner needs two freestanding signs. Mr. Brown stated that they will not install a new single tenant freestanding sign without a new tenant.

Commissioner Oakley asked if the petitioner considered moving the multi-tenant sign further to the south so that the smaller single tenant freestanding sign wouldn't be necessary. Mr. Laska stated that the current location of the multi-tenant sign is necessary as it helps to delineate the entrance driveway.

Mr. Babowice stated that it is difficult to lease the corner northern tenant space so they need the small single tenant freestanding sign as proposed.

Commissioner Oakley asked when the sign proliferation stops.

Commissioner Adams stated that he cannot support the smaller freestanding sign proposal.

Commissioner Guarnaccio asked about the number of parking spaces for the shopping center. He stated that he is concerned that if all the vacant tenant spaces are filled with retail uses that there may be a parking issue. He stated that the hardship is self-created. He asked what the use-type will be in the corner tenant space.

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Mr. Brown stated that he anticipates that the future tenant will be a quasi-office use. He stated that the future tenant will bring in traffic. He stated that there is a mix of uses in the center now. He stated that the future tenant will help to serve the other tenants that are there now.

Commissioner Howard asked when the old bank freestanding sign disappeared. Mr. Brown stated that he estimates that it was removed between 10 and 15 years ago.

Commissioner Howard asked why it was removed. Mr. Laska stated that the previous bank, Liberty National Bank, removed the old freestanding sign. He stated that when Harris Bank took over the south end tenant space, they chose to not replace the freestanding sign. He stated that the old freestanding sign was approximately 10 feet in height with a sign area of approximately 30 square feet. He stated that the new freestanding sign is approximately 6 feet in height at approximately 32 square feet in sign area.

Commissioner Howard stated that he understands the request for a second freestanding sign, but not for a single tenant. He stated that he has a safety concern for the multi-tenant sign. He stated that he has difficulty ferreting out the sign messages when all the text is installed in capital letters. He stated that the multi-tenant sign is too busy with too much information.

Mr. Brown stated that the multi-tenant sign works well due to its location and proximity to the traffic light at Milwaukee Avenue and Condell Drive.

Chairman Cotey asked if the proposed tenant panels on the multi-tenant sign decreased in size. Mr. Laska stated that the number of panels increased and the overall sign size has decreased.

Mr. Babowice stated that Liberty Auto City has a multi-tenant panel sign that was approved for a variation.

Chairman Cotey stated that the proposed wall sign is needed. He asked what the sign size is for the proposed small freestanding sign at the southwest corner of the parcel. Mr. Laska stated that it is 32 square feet in sign area. He stated that the three signs proposed for the north corner tenant space will not exceed code for maximum permitted sign area.

Chairman Cotey asked if the petitioner would like for the Zoning Board of Appeals to render their recommendation tonight. Mr. Babowice stated that he would like for the vote tonight.

In the matter of ZBA 10-01.1), Board Member Oakley moved, seconded by Board Member Howard, to recommend the Village Board of Trustees approve a variation to increase the maximum permitted tenant panels for a multi-tenant sign from 6 to 18 in order to install a multi-tenant sign for the Cambridge Plaza Shopping Center located in a C-4, Shopping Center Commercial District, in accordance with the plans submitted.

Motion failed 1 - 4.

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Ayes: Oakley
Nays: Cotey, Adams, Howard, Guarnaccio
Absent: Robinson

In the matter of ZBA 10-01.2), Board Member Howard moved, seconded by Board Member Adams, to recommend the Village Board of Trustees approve a variation to increase the maximum permitted sign area identifying commercial tenants on a multi-tenant sign from 50% to approximately 85% in order to install a multi-tenant sign for the Cambridge Plaza Shopping Center located in a C-4, Shopping Center Commercial District, in accordance with the plans submitted.

Motion failed 2 - 3.

Ayes: Adams, Oakley
Nays: Cotey, Howard, Guarnaccio
Absent: Robinson

In the matter of ZBA 10-01.3), Board Member Howard moved, seconded by Board Member Oakley, to recommend the Village Board of Trustees approve a variation to increase the maximum permitted number of freestanding signs for a zoning lot in order to install a multi-tenant sign and an additional freestanding business sign for a single commercial tenant for the Cambridge Plaza Shopping Center located in a C-4, Shopping Center Commercial District, in accordance with the plans submitted.

Motion failed 1 - 4.

Ayes: Guarnaccio
Nays: Cotey, Adams, Howard, Oakley
Absent: Robinson

In the matter of ZBA 10-01.4), Board Member Howard moved, seconded by Board Member Oakley, to recommend the Village Board of Trustees approve a variation to increase the maximum permitted number of business signs for a business occupancy from 2 to 3 in order to install two wall signs and an additional freestanding business sign for a single commercial tenant for the Cambridge Plaza Shopping Center located in a C-4, Shopping Center Commercial District, in accordance with the plans submitted.

Motion failed 1 - 4.

Ayes: Guarnaccio
Nays: Cotey, Adams, Howard, Oakley
Absent: Robinson

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NEW BUSINESS:

**ZBA 10-02 Insite Re, Inc.
200 East Cook Avenue**

Request is for a variation to reduce the minimum required Perimeter Landscaped Open Space in order to construct Personal Wireless Services Antennas with related electronic equipment in an IB, Institutional Buildings District.

**ZBA 10-03 Insite Re, Inc.
200 East Cook Avenue**

Request is for a variation to increase the maximum permitted height of a structure in order to construct Personal Wireless Services Antennas with related electronic equipment in an IB, Institutional Buildings District.

The applicant requested that these items be continued to the March 22, 2010, Zoning Board of appeals meeting.

In the matters of ZBA 10-02 and ZBA 10-03, Board Member Adams moved, seconded by Board Member Howard, to continue these items to the March 22, 2010, Zoning Board of Appeals meeting.

Motion carried 6 - 0.

COMMUNICATIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Board Member Oakley moved, seconded by Board Member Adams, to adjourn the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting.

Motion carried 6 - 0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.