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Community Development Department
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Community Development Committee Meeting
Thursday, August 17, 2017 at 4:00 PM
Minutes

I. Called to Order: At 4:00 P.M. by Trustee Bruce Barker

II. Present: Mayor Ron Gunter, Trustee Linda Liddle, Trustee Jim Addington, Trustee Steve Nero, Trustee Bruce Barker, Trustee Marie Guzzo, Village Manager Steve May, Village Clerk Jinny Szymski, Community Development Director Jill Ziegler, Village Planner Joseph Hennerfeind, Executive Director of Economic Development Larry Forssberg, Building Commissioner Jason Vitell, Deputy Chief Steve Riley, Police Chief Jim Gunther, Public Works Director Mike Ramsey, Finance Director Spencer Parker, Municipal Services Office Supervisor Melissa Brendle, Permit Coordinator Kim Kane, Administrative Assistant Erica Perez

Guests: Corinne Beller, Resident / Property Owner; Jim Lenihan, Resident / Property Owner; Vivian Ly, lylocks; Ted Augustyniak, Farmers Insurance.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

IV. Approval of Minutes: Trustee Barker made a motion to approve the minutes from June 8, 2017. Mayor Gunter seconded the motion. Motion passed.

V. Community Development Reports

A. Sign Code Update

Joe Hennerfeind presented the proposed text amendment changes regarding the sign code. The overall goal for these changes is to create a user friendly and more readable code. The current code is difficult to comprehend, which makes it challenging for applicants to interpret without assistance from staff. The intent of the proposed text amendments is to implement a sign code which is simple to regulate and allows for commercial success within the Village. The process for this involves analyzing the current code, formulating changes, testing proposals, and implementing the changes upon approval from the Village Board.

While there are many proposed changes to the current sign code, Hennerfeind presented the significant highlights. The first major proposed change are the permit fees. In the current code, sign fees are found within the sign code, rather than the building code. The amended text would define the sign fees within the building code portion. Mayor Gunter asked if most communities have their sign code fees in the building code section. Hennerfeind responded that

very rarely are fees found in the actual sign code. Trustee Barker asked if this change was discussed in previous Economic Development Committee meetings. Hennerfeind responded that no it was not brought up. The actual permit fee costs are being proposed to change as well. The current fee structure for signs is $5.00 per square foot. However, the proposed fee structure would be 1.5% of the cost. This specific change would result in a reduction of sign permit fees.

The next significant change relates to wall signage. There will be an increase of allowed signage in the B-1 District from 1.5 square feet to 2.0 square feet per foot of frontage. This will create a 33% increase of signage for the businesses in the downtown area. New box / cabinet signs will be restricted, which will result in the usage of individual letter signage. New allowances will be established for shopping centers, office/research districts, and corner lots. The code currently states that a building can have only one sign. The proposed changes will allow each individual tenant to have their own signage, rather than just one overall sign. Corner lots will also be calculated differently as each frontage will be allowed 2.0 square feet. Trustee Barker asked if these particular changes will create less Planning and Zoning submittals. Hennerfeind responded that applicants can work within the square footage to accommodate the code, but variances are still possible. Many specific cases will require a variance.

The current sign code states that signs can lose their nonconforming status in ten days to three months. After this time period, the sign will be removed or brought up to code. The proposed change will allow for maintenance and panel changes to nonconforming signs. After one year, signs could lose their nonconforming status. Nonconforming signs will also be prohibited from moving locations and increasing in size. Any approved variance will override the nonconforming status. The variance runs with the building and not the tenant, so if a tenant moves out, the variance will still be in place for that building. Trustee Addington asked if a new tenant wants to switch to letter signage, can that be bigger than the wall sign that was existing. Hennerfeind responded that they would be allowed up to 2.0 square feet for letter signage. Within one year of the tenant vacating, the existing wall signage can be used. However, after the year expires, letter signage will need to be incorporated. Trustee Addington stated that letter signs look much classier than the box signs. They are easier for people to see, especially at night. Hennerfeind responded that it is very rare to see new cabinet signs proposed.

Hennerfeind discussed the proposed ground sign changes which include allowing corner lots to have two signs rather than one and an increase in area of the signage. Ground sign bases, which tie into the Strategic Plan, will have new width requirements of 50% width up to 8’ and 75% width above 8’. Hennerfeind stated that the typical free standing signs are grounded and the new code will promote that the signs have a base and therefore will eliminate pole signs. The sign code language will be clarified in order to require landscaping around the base of the signage. For example, a parking lot base sign should be surrounded by something substantial in regards to landscaping. Shopping centers will also have an increase in signage area based on the width of the lot.

Temporary signs currently require a $250.00 bond, but there are no associated permit fees. The proposed change will include administering a $25.00 permit fee and eliminating the bond. Changes will also include a reduction in sign size / height. The size of temporary signs will

be reduced from 50 square feet to 32 square feet. The height will be reduced from 10 feet to 8 feet. Temporary signs will also be required to have a setback of 5 feet from property lines. Trustee Barker asked if the code will allow for A-Frames, flags, and banners. He stated that the Village does not want to see a business with all those varieties of signs. Hennerfeind responded that he made changes in the A-Frame code to prevent this from occurring. However, he did not prohibit flag, banner, or feather signs. Hennerfeind stated that there is nothing in our code that allows multiple signs in one location. Trustee Barker stated that we need to limit the amount of signage.

The proposed sign code changes will allow gasoline stations to have additional allowances for canopy signage. It will also allow for car dealerships to have a second wall sign. Projecting signs will only be permitted in the B-1 District. One sign will be allowed for each business in the downtown area and the maximum size allowed will be 6 square feet per side. There will also be restrictions on the clearance and overall height of the signs. Trustee Barker asked if the code will standardize projecting signs so that they all look consistent. Hennerfeind responded that there will be no standard look for the signs, as the downtown will look eclectic with the variations of signs. He stated that we want to allow the business owner to be creative with their business and we do not want to limit them. Trustee Barker asked if a standard size / sign can be included in the Grant program. Jill Ziegler responded that this can be incorporated into the Grant program.

Changes for window signage will include reducing the allowed area from 60% to 40%. As of now, roughly 95% of current business owners will meet the 40% coverage allowance for window signs. In regards to A-Frame signs, the main issue that needed to be addressed was how to prevent overcrowding of these signs. Hennerfeind stated that this can be accomplished by creating a minimum separation distance of 25 feet between all signs. There will also be a setback requirement of 5 feet when the A-Frame sign is not in the B-1 District. The revised sign code will allow A-Frames to be incorporated in the C-1, B-3, R-4, R-5, and R-6 District as well. They are currently only allowed in the B-1 and B-2 District.

Following the presentation, Hennerfeind asked for an open discussion on the proposed changes. Larry Forssberg stated that the current sign code is not up to date and does not accommodate with current signs. So far everything he has heard from local businesses has been very positive and believes the changes are coming along quite well. Trustee Addington stated that there will be ideas that continue to come up after the fact. Mayor Gunter stated that the changes proposed have accomplished everything that has been asked and has allowed the community to give their input. Trustee Guzzo agreed that the businesses were able to give their input. She stated that it is a pet peeve of hers to see both banners and A-Frame signs in front of one business. She stated that the proposed changes will create an inviting atmosphere. She also wanted to thank the business owners who stepped up and gave their opinions. Trustee Addington stated that he can see some nice potential blade signs that could be directional and dress up the street. Trustee Liddle asked what kind of signage is allowed in R-4, R-5, and R-6 Districts. Hennerfeind responded that these Districts consist of 50 units or more (i.e. Westmont Village

Apartments). They will be allowed to display A-Frame signs and they often like to put them out to notify the public of available units for rent.

Trustee Addington made a motion to move the proposed sign code amendments forward to Planning and Zoning. Trustee Barker seconded the motion. Motion passed.

B. Building Division

a. Employee Updates: Ziegler stated that Jason Vitell has been promoted to Building Commissioner. Joseph Hennerfeind has been promoted to Village Planner. Jaime Hofmann has been promoted from part-time to full-time Administrative Assistant. Mike Todorovic will be on military leave for two weeks in September. Dave Chapman has been working on providing code enforcement in the various alleys in order to improve the appearance.

b. Code Enforcement / Property Maintenance: Vitell discussed the water main break that recently occurred at Hobby Lobby. There were damaged valves around the mall, including one broken valve on a private loop system. The break caused a large amount of ground to be pushed out. It also caused part of the floor to bubble up in Hobby Lobby. Staff decided that it was more necessary to solve the problems first rather than make them obtain permits before work could be conducted.

Vitell stated that Code Enforcement has been following up with businesses to maintain the landscaping along the main streets. Vitell also discussed the current court cases. The house on Willard is currently on the market, but there is a lien on the property. The property owner of the house on West End went to court in July. They were issued a $30,000 fine in May. The property owner of North Warwick was issued a fine and 30-day supervision. Painting is to begin by the end of August.

Trustee Barker stated that there is a large volume of cars at Citgo on Chicago Avenue. He asked what the Village's jurisdiction is because there are times when the drive lanes are so tight there. Vitell responded that the location will soon be changed to a Mobil gas station. The location will be cleaned out and improved and there will be a lot of change occurring soon. Mayor Gunter asked if the new gas station will have service lanes. Vitell responded that no it will not. Trustee Addington asked if there will be new awnings installed. Vitell stated that there will be new paint and a new facade completed. Trustee Addington asked if there will be new pumps installed. Vitell responded that yes there will be and the corner sign will also be lowered. Trustee Barker stated that he has noticed overcrowding at other gas stations. He asked when is it *too* overcrowded. Vitell responded that the BP gas station will have reduced signage and new painting completed. Trustee Barker stated that there was an excessive number of cars at the Shell gas station. He stated that it seemed like total chaos for a week. Vitell responded that he will look into it.

c. Permits: Vitell presented a handout that was introduced by Kim Kane, titled "Choosing a Contractor Guidelines." The handout provides various tips and important

steps to follow when choosing a contractor. It could be beneficial to both homeowners and business owners. It will likely be incorporated onto the Village website and in Westmont News. Ziegler stated that the number of permits are up compared to last year. Trustee Barker stated that the Natatorium is in the middle of ongoing negotiations. A press release on the project will be released later today.

C. Engineering Division (updates passed out in Trustee's report packets)

a. GIS

b. Project updates

D. Planning Division

a. Text amendments

b. Project updates and Strategic Plan action items

Text amendments: There are various amendments currently being worked on. Ziegler stated that these amendments include a masonry waiver, beekeeping text amendment, and a heritage tree text amendment. She stated that the Fire Department will possibly be taking over elevator inspections so that they can be completed in house. Administrative Adjudication will likely be completed within Community Development Department rather than through the Police Department's current hearing process.

Community Corridor and Beautification: Ziegler talked about the four main areas that will be the primary focus for the community beautification. The first area will be located at 35th and Midwest Road. The plan is to incorporate native plantings, trees, and a larger sign along the median and entry gateway. Power and irrigation will be required for this area. The second location will be near Cumnor and West Ogden Avenue. This area will include a new entry gateway sign and include landscaping that is easy to maintain. The third location will be near Cass Avenue and Irving. This area will focus on downtown beautification by replacing trees and adding various plantings. The proposed sign will also match the monument sign. The last area to be beautified includes Route 83 and Ogden Avenue. A monarch waystation will be incorporated in this area. Ziegler stated that staff will be meeting with Illinois Department of Transportation next week to discuss the proposed changes. She also stated that the Village will be working with surrounding communities and ComEd to propose a large scale beautification along the railroad right of way. Trustee Barker stated that the plans are very ambitious and phenomenal. Ziegler responded that they will make a big difference.

VI. Miscellaneous - No topics to discuss.

VII. Adjourn: Meeting motioned to adjourn at 5:45 p.m. by Trustee Guzzo. Trustee Nero seconded the motion.