

Economic Development Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 5, 2017, 9:00 AM
Minutes

1. Called to Order: At 9:00 A.M. by Chairman Addington.

2. Present: Chairman Jim Addington, Village Clerk Virginia Szymiski, Business/Resident Representative Frank Brady, Citizen Representative Corinne Beller, Business/Resident Representative Gregg Pill, Citizen Representative Nancy Martens, Director of Park District Bob Fleck, Community Development Director Jill Ziegler, Planner II Joe Hennerfeind, Chamber Executive Director Larry Forssberg, Village Manager Steve May, Fire Chief Dave Weiss, Deputy Liquor Commissioner Tom Mulhearn, Police Chief Jim Gunther, Administrative Assistant Erica Perez

Guests: Michael Melaniphy, Outfront Media and Frank Trout.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approval of Minutes: The minutes from March 1, 2017 were motioned for approval by Frank Brady. Gregg Pill seconded the motion.

5. New Business

A. Off Premise Sign - 151 West Ogden Avenue

Michael Melaniphy from Outfront Media gave a presentation on the proposal of an off premise sign located at 151 West Ogden Avenue. The company will lease the area from the martial arts studio and pay them rent in order to have their sign installed at their location. The proposed sign would be a 10'x 30' double sided sign that would be composed of one digital side facing the east and one static side facing the west. The sign would be surrounded by a 6' x 8' planter structure that is 3' in height and consists of ten (10) Green Velvet Boxwood. The lighting of the sign would not exceed .3 footcandles and would incorporate a sensing device, making the sign its brightest during the day and dimmest at night. Different traffic studies were discussed that have been conducted in the United States relating to the safety of signs similar to the one being proposed. The research that has been completed showed that the installation of digital signs did not create an increase in driving accidents.

Mr. Melaniphy stated that there were numerous benefits to having this type of sign in the Village of Westmont. It would provide an opportunity to post public safety notices, amber alerts, emergency notifications, law enforcement, and advertisements for events in the Village.

Joe Hennerfeind discussed the various zoning challenges that Outfront Media will encounter through the process. Three (3) variances and one (1) text amendment will need to be

pursued in order to meet Village requirements. The Village's ordinance states that signs cannot exceed 20' in height and Outfront Media's proposed sign is 30' in height. The ordinance also states that signs cannot exceed 200 SF in area and the proposed sign is 300 SF in area. When comparing the sign to the length of the facade, the proposed sign exceeds approximately 200% of what the ordinance allows. In addition to the variances, a text amendment will also need to be requested to incorporate the allowance of digital advertising signs within the Village. This text amendment would change the rule for everyone who wants to install a billboard.

The question was raised as to what the state codes are regarding digital signs, since Ogden Avenue is a state highway. Mr. Melaniphy stated that the codes simply imply that digital signs cannot impact drivers and must have a ten second ad change. Trustee Addington asked what the height is from the bottom of the sign to the pavement and what the height of a state truck is. The height from the bottom of the sign is 20' and a state truck is 13'. Gregg Pill inquired how many digital signs exist in the United States similar to the one being proposed. Roughly 4,000 exist, of which 12 are in the Chicagoland area. Gregg brought up the fact that there is not much of a difference in illumination when comparing east vs. west direction of the sign. Mr. Melaniphy explained that digital signs are not much brighter than static signs and both sides of the sign are below .3 footcandles. He also stated that the sign will illuminate continuously throughout the day and night. Gregg asked what percentage of the advertisements are focused on public safety. An exact percentage could not be given since the ads are unpredictable and dependant on unknown situations (i.e. severe weather). The sign would have eight (8) slots open per day, of which one slot would be dedicated to public safety ads. Outfront Media would handle the production of the ads as long as the artwork is distributed. There will be no sexual oriented businesses allowed for advertisement on the sign. Joe discussed that the typical sign code prohibits off premise advertising but there is nothing that prohibits the content of advertising.

Trustee Addington inquired how many off premise billboard signs exist in Westmont. Joe responded that there are none in the Village limits and that this is the first request for this type of sign. Jill Ziegler pointed out that the proposed sign would be in direct conflict of what is being accomplished with the gateway signage that is in progress. Westmont lacks complete control over this since it is a state highway. Bob Fleck asked who would be handling the maintenance and how long their lease was. Outfront Media will handle their own maintenance. They have signed a long-term lease but did not disclose for what extent of time. If the lease is terminated, Outfront Media would remove the sign and restore the property. Joe Hennerfeind questioned if a change of ownership would affect the lease. In the event of a new tenant moving into the space, they would inherit the lease with Outfront Media. Trustee Addington asked what the next step will be in the process. Outfront Media will present their sign proposition to Planning & Zoning on June 12th. It will then be presented back to EDC in early July.

Chief Gunther asked where the signs were located in the safety studies that were discussed. Mr. Melaniphy was not sure of the exact locations but stated they were done in Philadelphia and Virginia. Chief Gunther brought up his concern that the proposed location is a

T-intersection with dual use turn lanes and the sign could potentially lead to an increase in traffic accidents.

Gregg Pill made the motion to recommend moving forward. Village Clerk Virginia Szymiski seconded the motion. Upon vote, the motion was not approved.

6. Special Projects

A. Sign Code Update

Joe Hennerfeind discussed that he conducted a sign code presentation to the Business Community in March. The presentation went well and brought up new discussions that had not yet been introduced. Joe went on to explain nonconforming signs and blade / projecting signs. Research was conducted to review the nonconforming sign code in surrounding villages. Joe listed the different codes from other villages and whether Westmont's code shares similar ideas or should be revised accordingly to coincide with neighboring codes. Nonconforming signs allow for panel tenant changes, are prohibited from size increase, and are also prohibited from being moved. The code would not allow a change of ownership / change of name and would also not recommend a compliance date.

In regards to blade signs, it would be recommended that they only be allowed in the B-1 District. They would be useful for businesses that have an excessive amount of foot traffic and walking area in front. The proposed sign code would allow for one (1) blade sign per frontage or two (2) blade signs when the business occupies a corner. The maximum size would be 6 SF per side of building or 10 SF for corner blade sign. The minimum clearance will be 8' from the bottom of the sign to the sidewalk. The maximum overall height shall not be higher than 15' above grade, shall not extend higher than 18' above grade, and cannot exceed the first floor facade. The maximum projection will be 36". Illumination that will be allowed include external, internal, bare bulbs and individual channel letters. It was suggested by Joe that the maintenance portion of the sign code be revised to include a penalization for lack of care / maintenance on signs. The next step in the process is to present to EDC on May 3, 2017.

Joe asked for a general direction from EDC regarding "A-Frames." Village Clerk Virginia Szymiski stated that A-frames are a sidewalk only type of sign. It was also brought up that small businesses may not have the budget to afford nice larger signs, which is why A-frames are more appealing to some businesses.

Corinne Beller asked if blade signs will interfere with awnings. Joe stated that the language can be crafted to state that blade signs cannot interfere with the awnings.

B. Westmont Economic Development Partnership Marketing Opportunities & Projects Update

Larry Forssberg discussed the upcoming job fair that will take place in late May. The Village of Westmont will be partnering with People's Resource Center and College of DuPage in order to help Westmont businesses find employees as many businesses are looking to hire.

There are various ribbon cuttings and ground breaking events occurring in the near future. Audi will have a ceremony on April 12, 2017 at 12:30 PM for their service center. They will also be receiving a prestigious award.

The Westmont Restaurant Week was found to be a huge success. Surveys are currently being conducted by the general community and also by the businesses who participated in Restaurant Week. These surveys will provide Westmont with feedback on how successful the experience was.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan will be presented to the Village Board on Thursday, April 13th.

In regards to project updates, Burger Barn is having a new sprinkler system installed. BMW is reaching the final stages of engineering reviews. They will be meeting with DuPage County next week. A new veterinarian clinic will be submitting for interior renovations. Oakmont Point, which was presented at the last EDC meeting, will be moving forward.

C. Miscellaneous

Frank Trout brought up that he has observed numerous signs (i.e. political) are in residential and commercial yards / properties for a long period of time. He inquired if the Village would allow not-for-profit organizations, such as churches, to put up signs for long periods of time as well. His concern was that if other businesses or agencies could have signs up for an extensive amount of time then the Village should allow the same for not-for-profit organizations. Joe Hennerfeind stated that the sign code cannot favor particular businesses and is content neutral. Code Enforcement will be asked to look into the signs that have been displayed for a lengthy period of time.

7. Adjourn: Meeting motioned to adjourn at 10:40 a.m.: all in favor.