

Holmen Planning Commission January 19, 2010 Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Holmen Planning Commission was held Tuesday, January 19, 2010 at 6:30 PM in the Village Hall Board Room.

Village President Nancy Proctor called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the following Commission members present: Elaine Nelson, Mark Seitz, Howard Olson, Robert Haines, Trygve Mathison and Mary Willett.

Also present was Scott Ryan, owner of Heritage Homes.

1.) Approve the minutes from the December 15, 2009 meeting.

Motion by Olson, second by Mathison to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried with no dissenting votes.

2.) Possible recommendation and action on proposed conditional use permit for freestanding electronic message sign in Park Lawn Estates mobile home park in an area zoned R-5 Multiple-Family Residential District, on parcel 14-1520-000.

Scott Ryan distributed pictures he prepared by cutting and pasting the electronic signage from Happy Joe's to the bottom of his existing sign to illustrate the request for approval of new signage for his 41 year old business. Mr. Ryan noted that the arrow on the right side of the sign in the picture would be removed and not included in the new signage.

Mr. Ryan would like to have a brand new sign created on the same sign post (which may be "skirted" to update) which would not exceed 8' x 10'. The existing sign was built in 1969. It is more cost effective to build a completely new cabinet. The measurements are approximately 5' x 8' for the top half of the sign and 4' x 8' for the bottom portion where the electronic messaging is proposed.

Howard Olson asked, "Have there been any studies done to prove this type of signage is more beneficial?"

Mr. Ryan explained that he has investigated this type of signage quite a bit. Some literature claims a 100% increase in sales, and a 20% increase in sales for large ticket items. Scott Ryan said that even if the predicted sales were cut in half and there was a 10% boost in sales, it would be beneficial.

Director of Public Works Robert Haines said that the state requirements for signage rest with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Initially, DOT told him that a permit was required from the state for this signage, and then DOT waffled a week later and said no permit from the state is required.

Holmen's electronic message signage requirements are contained in Ordinance 195-42. No signage is allowed in residential districts. Haines explained that the identical request came before the Planning Commission in July 2008 and was turned down by a unanimous vote. Mr. Haines wanted to know why this request was different and asked if a commercial zoning was a possibility. Haines' concern is the noncompliance with the ordinance and the increased impact. Would Mr. Ryan consider reducing the impact from 2 signs to 1?

Mr. Ryan said that he had personally contacted all potential legal objectors with his new signage proposal.

Additionally, Mr. Haines said that he had notified all of the same people of this meeting. Mr. Ryan stated that both the signs help illuminate his property: the big one is needed for the intersection – the small sign illuminates the drive on his property.

Mr. Ryan stated that his mortgage company will not allow a rezoning from residential to anything else. Nor will it allow a subdivision of the property or even prepayment on his loan.

Haines explained that to make this exception would set up a poor precedent for future conditional use requests with signage.

Administrator/Clerk Willett proposed including a conditional use for the business itself located on the residential parcel (along with the conditional use for the signage) with the area where business is conducted to be described in the permit. This proposal could eliminate the variation from the Village's zoning ordinances. The conditional use permit would expire when Mr. Ryan is no longer the owner of the property, and any new permits would need to be received if the property changed hands.

Howard Olson asked if the conditional use request from a chiropractor would be a precedent for this request.

Mr. Seitz recalled that this property was annexed in as a business versus creating a new business in a dwelling. The business has been there for 40+ years and he should be allowed to change the signage.

Haines stated that the Commission would need to bring forward any "conditions" Mr. Ryan would need to follow for the conditional use.

Nancy Proctor said she would not like to see "trivial messages".

Mark Seitz stated that while moving signs are not his favorite, this sign could be acceptable.

Signage supporting local success, such as a state sport championship, could be included.

Electronic Political signage would be objectionable use.

Mr. Ryan stated that political signs are allowed by statute, but Willett stated the statute applies to yard signs not the electronic sign being considered for the conditional uses which are being outlined by the Commission at this time.

Discussion produced informal agreement for electronic messages for: on-premise activities, sales for Park Lawn Estates and Heritage Homes, the time, the temperature and the date.

Mr. Seitz motioned and Ms. Nelson seconded the motion to recommend to the Village Board from the Planning Commission to create and approve a conditional use permit authorizing the business of manufactured home sales with a new lit sign reusing the existing pole which will not exceed 8' x 10' and will only give this type of information in the electronic portion of the sign:

1. No trivial or political messages
2. Date, time and temp
3. On-site Sales for manufactured homes
4. On-site activities within Park Lawn Estates
5. Public Service messages subject to Village approval
6. Comply with Village Code, Chapter 195-42

The motion carried with no dissent.

3.) Other items that may come before the Commission.

Members welcomed Mary Willett, noting it was her first Holmen Planning Commission meeting.

Following a motion by Mark Seitz, seconded by Trygve Mathison, the meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Mary M. Willett
Village Administrator/Clerk