

**MINUTES
CITY OF EDINA, MINNESOTA
PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
JULY 25, 2012
7:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Grabiell called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

II. ROLL CALL

Answering the roll call were Commissioners Scherer, Forrest, Potts, Carpenter, and Grabiell

Absent from the roll: Fischer, Schroeder, Platteter, Staunton

Commissioner Platteter arrived at 7:10 PM

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Meeting Agenda was approved as submitted.

IV. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Potts moved approval of the July 11, 2012 meeting minutes. Commissioner Carpenter seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

V. COMMUNITY COMMENT

None

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Sign Area Variance – Edina Public Schools, 5701 Normandale Road, Edina, MN

Planner Presentation

Planner Teague informed the Commission the Edina Public Schools are requesting a 264 square foot wall sign size variance to allow the existing sign on the back of the Kuhlman Stadium press box located at 5701 Normandale Road.

Teague explained that this sign was just recently put up on the press box; the previous sign that was there was 90 square feet in size. Edina Sign Ordinance allows a maximum of 24 square feet. The previous sign was erected without a permit from the City of Edina, therefore, previously existed as a nonconforming use. Rather than replace the 90 square foot sign, the applicant is seeking approval of the larger sign.

Planner Teague concluded that staff recommends denial of the requested variance to install a 280 square foot sign on the Kuhlman Stadium press box, based on the following findings:

1. There is no practical difficult in this instance. The request is made simply because of a desire to have a large sign that exceeds the Sign Ordinance by 256 square feet.
2. The applicant could replace the existing non-conforming sign with a 90 square foot sign, which would be three times larger than the Sign Ordinance would allow.
3. The proposed sign does not assist in way finding; when people are looking for the field, they would see the field itself and know they have probably located what they are looking for. A 90 square foot sign, then verifies that they have found the correct field.
4. There are several fields and parks in Edina that could be characterized as the "Home of the Hornets." Should this sign be allowed, others may wish to have a similar or larger sign than what is allowed by the Zoning Ordinance.
5. The proposed sign faces single-family homes to the south. These homes are located 550 feet from the proposed sign.
6. The proposal does not meet the general purpose and intent of the sign ordinance, which is to allow signs that in proportion to the wall and the façade on which it is proposed. The proposed sign would cover the entire back wall of the press box.

Appearing for the Applicant

John Sumo, Edina Public Schools

Comments/Questions

Commissioner Scherer commented that in her opinion the sign in itself is unusual and asked how it was measured. Planner Teague responded that Ordinance dictates that the sign be measured by drawing a single rectangle which can be made to circumscribe the letters, symbols, logo or figure drawn on the building or monument. The subject sign is on the rear elevation of the press box.

Commissioner Forrest asked if other signs are proposed at this location. Planner Teague responded that no other signage is proposed.

Applicant Presentation

Mr. Sumo addressed the Commission and explained that Kuhlman Stadium has no directional signs, adding if one lives in Edina they know where the stadium is; however, if one doesn't the stadium can be difficult to find. Continuing, Suma said Edina has a great reputation; but its buildings are older and this is an attempt to update, "give life to" and instill pride in the community.

Page Rickert told the Commission the School District was considering creative ways to "spruce up" the stadium and the proposed signage does that. Rickert explained that the signage material is 3M vinyl adding the signage provides identification and direction while promoting school spirit. Rickert commented that in his opinion a school stadium shouldn't be considered as a business.

Further Discussion

Chair Grabiell said in his opinion the School District shouldn't have erected the sign without first applying for the variance. Grabiell said the School District knows the City has certain requirements with regard to

building, signage, etc. and went ahead and put up the sign without going through the process. Concluding, Grabiell said he is also the concerned that if allowed other District venues could want similar signs.

Commissioner Forrest asked Mr. Sumo if the sign is lit. Mr. Sumo responded the sign is not lighted.

Commissioner Potts said in his opinion the sign is a good sign; however, it is unfortunate how it was erected. Continuing, Potts asked staff if the "signage" on the City's water tower was considered a "sign" in the same way as this was considered a "sign". Continuing, Potts said in his opinion the signage does not adversely affect the neighborhood and the sign is in proportion with the stadium. Potts said he also understands the concern about signage on other District venues and suggested that the District review all signs to ensure another oversight doesn't occur and if signs are erected they go through the proper City channels.

Commissioner Carpenter asked the cost of the sign. Mr. Page responded that the cost was roughly \$6,000 and was donated.

Public Comment

None.

Commissioner Carpenter moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Potts seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

Continued Discussion

Commissioner Scherer said in this instance she agrees with staff that the subject site is unusual and unique. Scherer also pointed out that it appears City Ordinance does not appropriately address this type of building and/or structure. Concluding Scherer said in her opinion the sign should stay. The residential properties are at a considerable distance; reiterating this site is unusual and unique.

Chair Grabiell said he can't support the variance request. Grabiell stated he finds no "practical difficulties"; reiterating he doesn't support granting a variance in this instance. Concluding, Grabiell said he also has difficulty granting a variance "after the fact".

A discussion ensued on "practical difficulties" and the intent of the School District in sign placement and timing. The majority of the Commission felt there are practical difficulties and that the School District was unaware the sign did not meet the Sign Ordinance (requiring a variance) when erected. Practical difficulties were noted to include: the unique need and use, circumstances of the property (location off frontage road/Highway); and tree line.

Mr. Sumo also noted that this stadium is different from most high school stadiums in that it is not located on the Edina High School campus which creates difficulty in way-finding and identification of a varsity venue.

Commissioner Platteter asked Planner Teague if in this instance the stadium bleachers (along with the press box) could be considered "the building wall" or one building. Planner Teague responded that one can certainly "make the case" that it's one structure. Commissioner Carpenter pointed out in light of that it may be possible a variance wouldn't be required. The sign may meet Ordinance.

Motion

Commissioner Forrest moved variance approval based on staff findings with additional findings that the football stadium is not located on the high school campus; the sign supports way-finding and noting that this type of structure is unique. With the further condition that no additional signage is added to the structure. Commissioner Potts seconded the motion. Ayes; Scherer, Forrest, Potts, Platteter, Carpenter. Nays; Grabiell. Motion carried.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITIONS

Chair Grabiell acknowledged back of packet materials.

VIII. STAFF COMMENTS

Planner Teague reminded the Commission the next meeting of the Commission is on August 22, 2012 and that the regularly scheduled meeting on September 26th was shifted to September 27th.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Potts moved meeting adjournment at 7:40 PM. Commissioner Platteter seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion to adjourn carried.

Jackie Hoogenakker

Respectfully Submitted