

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 18, 2015

AGENDA

1. **Noah's Event Venue - Building and Parking** **Perimeter Drive**
15-036INF **Informal Review**
2. **BSD R – Tuller Flats – Sign** **4313 Tuller Road**
15-043MSP **Master Sign Plan Review (Approved 6 – 0)**
3. **Bridge Street District Sign Guidelines** **Administrative Request**
15-040ADM

The Chair, Victoria Newell, called the meeting to order at 6:29 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Other Commission members present were: Christopher Brown, Robert Miller, Cathy De Rosa, Deborah Mitchell, and Stephen Stidhem. Amy Salay was absent. City representatives present were: Philip Hartmann, Steve Langworthy, Alan Perkins, Gary Gunderman, Rachel Ray, Joanne Shelly, Michael Hendershot, Lia Yakumithis, Nicki Martin, and Laurie Wright.

Administrative Business

Motion and Vote

Ms. Newell moved, Mr. Brown seconded, to accept the documents into the record. The vote was as follows: Ms. De Rosa, yes; Mr. Miller, yes; Ms. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Stidhem, yes; Ms. Newell, yes; and Mr. Brown. (Approved 6 - 0)

The Chair briefly explained the rules and procedures of the Planning and Zoning Commission. She said no cases were eligible this evening for the consent agenda. She determined all of the cases would be heard in the order they were published in the agenda.

1. **Noah's Event Venue - Building and Parking** **Perimeter Drive**
15-036INF **Informal Review**

The Chair, Ms. Newell, said the following application is a request for construction of an 8,700-square-foot building for business training, weddings, receptions, banquets, and other events on a 3.6-acre site on the west side of Perimeter Drive, south of Liggett Road. She said this is a request for informal review and feedback for a potential venue prior to a future concept plan application.

Steve Langworthy said he was presenting the case for Tammy Noble-Flading. He restated this is a request for an event facility and presented an aerial view of the site. He explained the site is an irregular shaped parcel with frontage on one of the curved sections of Liggett Road. He said the south side is heavily wooded and open on the north side. He said the City has dealt with this site for a number of years for a number of different reasons. He said the site is divided southwest to northeast by designated floodplain associated with the South Fork Indian Run and included 100 and 500-year floodway fringe. He said this floodplain includes a large area of the site, which most significantly affects the eastern and western edges of the site.

Mr. Langworthy said the site is designated in the Future Land Use Plan as Premium Office/Institutional. He said overall, the use proposed is suitable in this category, as many of the events will be corporate level activities for training. He said it is zoned Technology Flex, which does not allow this use, so a Planned Unit Development request would have to be filed.

Mr. Langworthy presented the proposed site plan that shows the position of the building on the site in relation to the existing stream, floodplain line, and existing native vegetation areas. He noted the front entrance would be on the north side of the site with some secondary patio areas. He said the site is positioned to handle corporate events as well as wedding receptions.

Mr. Langworthy presented the proposed front elevation constructed primarily of brick with wood trellis openings covering the doors in the front and back. He presented the proposed east and west elevations as well, noting the patio areas.

Mr. Langworthy said Planning identified some review issues:

Access

The Perimeter/Post Intersection: Mr. Langworthy said Perimeter Drive is a fairly high speed road and a traffic study will be required as part of the rezoning and that examination will determine if improvements might be necessary to accommodate this particular use.

Layout

Perimeter Setback: Mr. Langworthy said this is somewhat less of a setback than what is normally required along Perimeter Drive.

Parking/Building Separation: Mr. Langworthy indicated there was not much of an issue as he does not see what else could be done with this site to make it more developable. He said the connection area between the parking area and the building would need close attention in terms of security, lighting, and the quality of the bridge needed to cross the floodplain area.

Building Size

"Fit" on the Site: Mr. Langworthy said it is a difficult site so any building constructed would have to fit and in the best possible location. He explained the building itself marginally affects the floodplain area but not by much.

Operations

Mr. Langworthy said this would be reported by the applicant at the next phase of review.

Parking

348 Spaces Required/114 Provided: Mr. Langworthy said if this was an office building, for example, there would be a fairly low number of parking spaces required (44) but the closest facility calculation we have to compare this type of use to results in a requirement for 348 spaces but that does not necessarily mean this is an appropriate requirement. He indicated the applicant will need to provide documentation of their parking needs and reflect the calculations in the development text. He said Planning's only concern with that approach is what may happen in the future, like if there is an overly large parking area available and it is not needed for the next use if this business were to leave.

Bob Miller asked about the City's long term plans for Liggett Road.

Mr. Langworthy indicated he did not believe there was a plan established.

Mr. Miller asked if the land across Liggett Road was owned by the City. Mr. Langworthy answered that was still part of this property and part right-of-way.

Cathy Ramondelli, 2970 Rutherford Road, Powell, OH 43065, said she is Noah's corporate architect. She said she did not think their property went across Liggett Road. She restated Noah's is an event venue and they have corporate training during the day, and during the week they have events in the evenings for businesses as well as on the weekends for events like weddings and receptions. She said Noah's also likes to work with communities to accommodate youth football/soccer sign-ups and similar types of events. She said for smaller schools they would facilitate sports' banquets and proms. She said their space is very versatile. She said they can offer a lot of different uses for each room and everything is on wheels so rooms can be set up to specific needs. She said this could be billiards and shuffle board night as a team-building function or a more formal meeting can be held with a conference table and chairs. She stated there is state-of-the-art Audio/Visual equipment in every room and can facilitate Super Bowl parties or corporate presentations.

Ms. Ramondelli explained Noah's is not tied into any national companies for catering; they like to work with the local restaurants and catering companies so each business or family has the opportunity to bring in a caterer of their choosing for their function. She said cooking is not permitted on the premises; it is strictly a preparation area. She stated the patio areas are not rented out as separate areas for outside events; they are "landscape features" used as an overflow area or quiet zone and tables may be placed in the area to hold a drink or two. She said Noah's venue does not rent out space to functions that will have more than 350 people in attendance. She said parking is typically around 100 spaces, which is an average for their various venues around the country and they would definitely not need the 348 spaces.

The Chair invited the public to speak on behalf of this application. [Hearing none.] She asked if there were recommendations by Staff.

Mr. Langworthy said since this is an Informal Review, discussion questions have been prepared:

- 1) Does the Commission support this use in this location?
- 2) Does the proposal adequately protect natural features of the site?
- 3) Does the Commission support the proposed parking ratio for the use?
- 4) Is the proposed architecture appropriate for this site?
- 5) Other considerations.

Mr. Langworthy concluded his presentation by presenting the complete proposed site plan along with his list of five review issues.

Chris Brown indicated he has been affiliated with enough small businesses to know that this type of venue is always needed. He said the proposal has some interesting character and the location is appropriate. He said he likes the approach across the bridge and that this site has some visibility, but is also tucked away. He said his only concern is the location and trying to make a left turn to make the Post Road exit at different times of the day could be challenging. He understands the limitations on accessibility given the creek and the flood plain. He asked why there was not a loading dock.

Ms. Ramondelli said caterers and people that set up events will only use the main front entrance. She said carts are kept at the facility for loading/unloading equipment.

Cathy De Rosa asked the applicant to talk about the site design, layout, and corporate image. From what she found on the internet, she said this appears to be a standard layout and did not understand how it is intended to fit within the character of various neighborhoods.

Ms. Ramondelli said this is pretty standard for their typical layout of their sites. She said they search for similar sites around the country, typically in a business park for the weekly daytime traffic as well as the weekend traffic. She said Noah's uses the same landscape architect for every project. She explained they

want the experience to start the moment visitors enter the parking lot. With this site, she said they envision a nice bridge with some lights and a really nice approach to the building, which would provide brides a very picturesque approach to the facility as well as for pictures during any event.

Ms. De Rosa asked about the exterior design.

Ms. Ramondelli reiterated this proposal is their standard building elevation with brick, stone, and tile used for the building materials. She said Noah's feels the natural materials fit into most communities with the understanding of caveats of colors of brick and stone. She added they keep a neutral palette of tans as opposed to grays and reds, etc. She said they have been successful in most communities not having to resort to using stucco or HardiePlank siding. She said this is their signature look to be recognized around the country. She confirmed that brick is on all four sides of the building and the base is a stone material that anchors the building on all four sides. She said tile is used mainly at the two entries at the canopy. She said the columns for the canopy are no longer included as part of the proposal, as they have redesigned the canopy to be a little wider and secured within the interior of the building due to value engineering.

Mr. Miller asked how many employees there were. Ms. Ramondelli answered three employees.

Mr. Miller asked if any sound management was built into the structure itself.

Ms. Ramondelli said they have very high quality windows and doors where sound can barely be heard outside during live events, even when standing on the patio. She said this is due to the insulated doors and windows as well as the heavy materials of brick and stone.

Steve Stidhem inquired about the layout inside and if it is standard nationwide.

Ms. Ramondelli responded this is a new layout that Noah's just started building, but the basic look and function are the same. She said they just rearranged some of the rooms, again as a result of value engineering. She said the operations and maximum occupancy of the building have not changed.

Mr. Stidhem asked if that was enough bathrooms for 200 people or so. Ms. Ramondelli answered they have not had any issues to date to her knowledge.

Deborah Mitchell asked if this model is for growth analysis based on franchising or if they were all company owned. Ms. Ramondelli said Noah's is all company owned and are now building them, themselves.

Mr. Stidhem asked if anything could be done to push the building away from Perimeter Drive because of the floodplain. He said it appears to be encroaching on the floodplain already, at least the 500-year flood plain.

Mr. Langworthy explained there are all kinds of floodplain ranges now, but the 100-year floodplain is usually the one of most concern since it has the highest average probability. He said in this case, it appears the applicant has clipped the corner of it, and that may be adjusted with hardscape.

Ms. Newell asked what the building setback is being proposed.

Ms. Ramondelli said these are just preliminary site plans to gain feedback and once they move forward, more detailed information will be provided.

Ms. Newell said the current proposal shows the building lined up perpendicular to Perimeter Drive and she suggested the building footprint be skewed a little bit to fit around that flood plain and open up the

distance from the street for the setback. She said it may provide a perception of more open area. She stated she likes the architecture better with the canopy supported by the columns on the building, as they help the overall design of the building. She noted that without a tree survey it is hard to tell, but there appears to be a decent grove of trees across the site. She stated that the City likes to preserve as many trees and natural vegetation as possible.

Ms. Newell suggested that if this is brought back for a PUD, that there be more screening besides plant screening to be considered and gave brick or stone walls as examples for screening from the amount of parking needed. She indicated the setbacks farther down on Perimeter Drive are approximately 200 feet as this was once considered a scenic roadway. She said this would be the first property to propose a much smaller setback. She agreed that requiring a 200-foot setback would make this site undevelopable. She recommended other considerations be made in exchange for a larger density of parking that the Commission will probably see on this property. She concluded this is a good use for the area.

Mr. Stidhem agreed it is a good use.

Mr. Brown said he supports the proposed parking ratio and agrees the columns are needed for the architecture to provide dimension to the building. He said Dublin tries to hold a higher standard, particularly as this is a gateway property. He said traffic is certain to go by this property. He indicated he was not concerned with the setback because a lot of that is a patio area. He agreed with Ms. Newell to balance the extra parking density with adequate screening.

Ms. Ramondelli said there are six feet high screen walls at the patio. Mr. Brown clarified they cannot just be a blank walls.

Ms. Newell said she did not recall a lot of six-foot high walls in Dublin but there are some instances where they are acceptable.

Ms. Ramondelli asked if a thin brick or stone was permitted. She said they are real, just not full size in thickness.

Ms. Newell said she did not know of any prohibition on those materials, and that is a product she would support if detailed well.

Mr. Brown added that the architecture should be given depth.

Ms. Ramondelli said the detail of the building does not change if it is thin-brick as opposed to the full-size brick, there is just more foam insulation behind the thin brick.

Mr. Brown concluded this would be a really neat site for this type of venue. He said he loves the bridge, the approach, and the balance of this site with good potential.

Mr. Miller concluded he hopes the Commission sees them back.

Ms. De Rosa said she would support it as well.

**2. BSD R – Tuller Flats – Sign
15-043MSP**

**4313 Tuller Road
Master Sign Plan Review**

The Chair, Ms. Newell, said the following application is a request for a Master Sign Plan Review for a multiple-family residential development consisting of 420 apartment units within 29 three-story apartment buildings, a community clubhouse, and associated streets and open spaces on approximately 21 acres south of Tuller Road, east of the intersection with Tuller Ridge Drive. She said this is a request

for review and approval for a Bridge Street District Master Sign Plan in accordance with Zoning Code Section 153.065(H) and under the provisions of Code Section 153.066.

Joanne Shelly indicated this will be one of the Commission's first Master Sign Plans (MSP) to review in the BSD. She said the purpose of this MSP is for signs proposed for a site that do not meet specific Code requirements. Specifically, she said this allows for some creativity and flexibility.

Ms. Shelly said the site is south of I-270 between Riverside Drive and Village Parkway and presented an aerial view.

Ms. Shelly reported the ART reviewed the application for sign types, architectural compatibility, size and scale, materials, locations, wayfinding and any encroachments. She indicated the applicant is allowed more signs than they have requested.

Ms. Shelly said the proposal is for three projecting signs and one wall sign. She described the wall sign as a wall mounted sign for the clubhouse in the center of the community, meeting all of the Code requirements. She said it is interesting because it is a custom design with stainless steel letters with blue LED halo lighting in the background as an illumination effect for nighttime, which adds to the character of the building and contemporary style of the entire development. She presented a rendering of the front façade of the clubhouse as viewed from across the Square, looking north showing a very attractive sign that does not appear to be overwhelming or glaring.

Ms. Shelly presented a slide showing what is actually permitted by Code as well as what the applicant is proposing for comparison. She said a permitted sign could: reach a maximum height of 15 feet; be located within the first story of the building; and cover a maximum area of 15 square feet. She said that a sign meeting those requirements could barely be seen and does not add to the character of the building. She said the applicant is proposing signs that would be 32.5 feet above grade at the second and third stories with a maximum area of 56.25 square feet each. Three projecting signs have been proposed, she said, and the applicant sees these as basic wayfinding signs once someone is in the area already to direct them to the leasing area located in the clubhouse.

Ms. Shelly presented an image of John Shields Parkway looking southwest that shows a projecting sign. She said from a distance, it is visible but not overwhelming to the location or surrounding buildings. She believes the signs fit within the architecture.

Ms. Shelly said the ART has conducted its analysis of the project based on the information submitted and found it met the criteria for a Master Sign Plan.

Ms. Shelly concluded approval is recommended for a Master Sign Plan allowing one wall sign (meeting Code requirements) and three projecting signs that each exceed the height and area permitted by Code.

Victoria Newell asked if the vertical projecting signs were illuminated. Ms. Shelly responded they have the same blue LED halo lighting behind stainless steel letters just like the wall sign.

The Chair invited the applicant to speak.

Aaron Underhill, 8000 Walton Parkway, Suite 260, New Albany, OH, said he was representing the applicant. He said they are very excited to be breaking ground on the project in 10 days. He said this Master Sign Plan was tailor-made for this project as it does not fit neatly within the box of the Code. He reiterated the applicant is asking for some larger projecting signs but were entitled to a lot more signs spread throughout the project that they did not request; this is a good balance for identification.

The Chair invited public comment. [Hearing none.] She closed the public comment portion of the meeting and the Commission began its deliberation of the matter.

Chris Brown stated he believes the Master Sign Plan meets the intent of Bridge Street District; the plan provides dynamic signs; the number and sizes are not overwhelming; and the signs will look appropriate in both the daytime and nighttime.

Cathy De Rosa said she likes the proposal a lot; it is simple and efficient. Both she and Mr. Brown agreed it fits the architecture.

Ms. Newell said her comments were the same. She said she thought the signs were tasteful, proportioned well, and capture the style of the buildings. She said she is not crazy about the idea of allowing signs that exceed the 15-foot height limitation because the Commission has held to that limit for so many places throughout the community, but it is a nice exchange between the height and the amount of signs permitted. She concluded the plan was very creative.

Steve Langworthy said signs have been discussed with the applicant from the beginning of this project and it was determined how suburban the area would look and feel if ground signs were used. He said this proposal has a much more urban feel. Ms. Newell agreed.

Motion and Vote

Ms. Newell made a motion, Mr. Brown seconded, to approve this application for a Master Sign Plan allowing for one wall sign (meeting Code requirements) and three projecting signs that each exceeds the height and area permitted by Code. The vote was as follows: Ms. De Rosa, yes; Mr. Miller, yes; Ms. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Stidhem, yes; Mr. Brown, yes; and Ms. Newell, yes. (Approved 6 – 0)

3. Bridge Street District Sign Guidelines 15-040ADM

Administrative Request

The Chair, Ms. Newell, said the following application is a request to create a guide intended to help applicants understand and apply the sign requirements in the Bridge Street District and provide direction for sign design and placement in a pedestrian-oriented environment. She said this is a request for informal review and feedback on this future request for review and recommendation of approval to City Council for Bridge Street District Sign Guidelines.

Rachel Ray said this is a great opportunity for the Commission to do some *planning* beyond their typical *zoning review* responsibilities. She said the intent is to provide a guide primarily for applicants that bring forward sign applications, as well as the Commission, Architectural Review Board, and ART members for the reviews. Since there is every type of sign imaginable, she said this guide is specific to how signs should happen in an urban environment.

Ms. Ray summarized questions to guide the Commission discussion:

- 1) Do the BSD Sign Guidelines achieve their stated objectives? Should the objectives be modified?
- 2) Are there other Character Principles that should be addressed in the sign guidelines?
- 3) Are there images in the document that should not be used as exemplary signs to be used in the BSD?
- 4) Are signs with neon-like lighting elements and three-dimensional objects that serve as signs to identify a tenant appropriate in an environment like the BSD and if so, should a future Code amendment to allow these types of signs be considered?
- 5) Other considerations by the Commission.

Ms. Ray started with the intent for signs in the Bridge Street District. She indicated when the regulations were being drafted for signs in the BSD, they discussed the difference between suburban and urban signs. She said the intent for the BSD are signs for walkable, urban environments that are meant to be visible to pedestrians from all directions – across the street, the same side of the street, or from parking areas behind the building. She said when signs are appropriately integrated into an urban environment, they can add character and interest to a streetscape; when carefully integrated into the architectural design of a building, signs can help create a pleasurable, comfortable strolling and window-shopping experience.

Ms. Ray provided a brief history. She said the BSD provisions of the Zoning Code were adopted March 25, 2012. Soon after, she said PZC, CC, and Staff had discussions about the recent signs being approved in terms of sign quality, creative design, and if they were meeting the original intent. In the meantime, she said Planning contracted with a sign design consultant for services to review signs when it was felt the applicant should be pushed a little further with their designs and recommendations were needed for Zoning Code amendments. She noted City Council adopted the most recent BSD Code amendments on December 8, 2014, and they requested Planning prepare sign guidelines to demonstrate desirable sign qualities.

Ms. Ray presented the Objectives of the Guide:

- Encourage excellence in sign design, both as a communication tool and as an art form.
- Allow and encourage creative and unique sign designs while preventing cluttered and unattractive streetscapes.
- Provide basic parameters for creative signs that may be as varied and unique as the businesses they represent.
- Provide guidance for designing signs in the Historic District, as well as signs associated with buildings that were constructed prior to the enactment of the Bridge Street District zoning regulations.
- Outline the contents of Master Sign Plans, which are intended to allow greater flexibility and creativity in sign design and display where signs are used as a placemaking tool.

Ms. Ray said these guidelines apply across the board so these will be used by the ARB as well. She reported these will be discussed with the ARB for their feedback at their meeting on June 24th and she will report back to the Commission with their comments.

Ms. Ray referred to her **first discussion question** as she approached the Table of Contents.

- 1) Do the BSD Sign Guidelines achieve their stated objectives? Should the objectives be modified?

Ms. Ray explained the Table of Contents presents the outline of the document:

1. Purpose & Intent
2. Process
3. Applicability
4. Character
5. Quality
6. Requirements
7. Master Sign Plans

Ms. Ray presented five **Character Principles** that were identified along with examples for each:

1. **Architectural Integration**
All signs shall be designed to fully integrate with the building architecture and overall site design, and to enhance the pedestrian experience in the Bridge Street District to create memorable places for people to enjoy.
2. **Illumination**
The illumination of signs is strongly encouraged to help add a sense of liveliness and activity to the Bridge Street District. Well-designed signs use lighting as an accent rather than a distraction designed to compete for attention in a busy urban streetscape.
3. **Colors & Secondary Images**
Colorful signs can add character and interest to buildings and the overall streetscape throughout the Bridge Street District; however, in no case shall the use of color and supporting graphics distract from the creation of attractive signs with simple, easy to understand messages.
4. **Graphic Design & Composition**
Unique, interesting signs that contribute to a memorable, pedestrian-oriented environment generally demonstrate strong adherence to accepted graphic design principles. Signs should be designed thoughtfully, with consideration for aesthetically pleasing composition.
5. **Dimensionality**
Signs should be constructed to stand the test of time, designed to be weather and fade-resistant. High quality signs are also designed to appear substantial, with three-dimensional elements that give the sign presence without appearing overly heavy. Quality signs also conceal structural elements that are not integral to the sign's overall design.

Ms. Ray referred to her **second discussion question**:

- 2) Are there other Character Principles that should be addressed in the sign guidelines?

Ms. Ray presented the requirements section. She said these pages are laid out similar to the Bridge Street Code with building type requirements on a two-page spread dedicated to each of the many different types of signs. She said the left page includes a graphic depiction of how to measure sign height and area. She explained this is a summary that should match the actual Code requirements. She said the right page has positive sign examples and a description of what is desirable about those types of signs. She said on the flip side are examples of what is not desired and elements that should be avoided. She indicated all the examples of the signs "to avoid" are extreme to make the point clear.

Ms. Ray concluded these are signs identified by Planning that could be attractive in the BSD. She noted there are a number of images in the document of signs that would not be permitted in the BSD without a Master Sign Plan for a variety of reasons. She said many of the examples are neon lights that are prohibited in the City's Zoning Code across the board.

Ms. Ray referred to her **third and fourth discussion questions**:

- 3) Are there images in the document that should not be used as exemplary signs to be used in the BSD?
- 4) Are signs with neon-like lighting elements and three-dimensional objects that serve as signs to identify a tenant appropriate in an environment like the BSD and if so, should a future Code amendment to allow these types of signs be considered?

Ms. Ray asked the Commission to consider if any of the signs should be removed or added as examples and whether any Code Amendments should result from this process.

Ms. Ray concluded by stating the zoning regulations are the *requirements* for signs in the Bridge Street District; the BSD Sign Guidelines, especially if adopted by resolution, will have some authority, but are still just considered guidelines.

Cathy De Rosa said she questions what the difference is between signs and advertising when it comes to sandwich board signs.

Ms. Ray explained that sandwich board signs are only permitted in the Historic District unless they were to be approved by a Master Sign Plan.

Ms. De Rosa said sandwich board signs are a very urban thing to do.

Ms. Ray agreed. She added if sandwich boards are to be permitted in the BSD, they should not function as moveable ground signs; they are to be designed to be artistic and advertise services or daily specials.

Chris Brown agreed sandwich boards are very urban, and if we are trying to encourage a restaurant district and walkable areas with street-side dining, they are almost a necessity. He said he would hate to restrict potential tenants in a way that does not encourage lots of business; they are the basis of economic vitality.

Ms. De Rosa indicated sandwich boards are fun to read. She used Jeni's Ice Cream as an example where they advertise a flavor or special of the day.

Victoria Newell pointed out text that specifically states the purpose of the sandwich board signs and not meant to be fixed printing. She said she finds that signs that promote a special of the day or a special for a holiday coming up like Father's Day are appropriate.

Ms. De Rosa said more consideration might be given to sandwich board signs in the BSD and what they can advertise on them.

Mr. Brown said he had not noticed in his review of the document that sandwich board signs were just restricted to the Historic District, so if that is the case, that might need to be made more clear.

Steve Langworthy explained the primary image is for the business name and secondary images were for tag lines, addresses, and specials. He said this is certainly getting harder to enforce, and he reported a recent Supreme Court decision that is going to make it even more difficult to legally distinguish between secondary images versus primary images.

Ms. Newell said overall, she thought the sign guidelines were really nice. She said there are a couple of signs she would like to see eliminated. She said the Coldwell Banker sign did not add any character to that building. Ms. Mitchell agreed.

Ms. Newell inquired about the graphics explaining how to measure for a window sign.

Ms. Ray agreed to fix that graphic so it is clearer. She explained that the Code states that regardless of the number of panes separated by divisions, the entire area is considered one big window.

Ms. Newell noted the difference between the storefronts in Historic Dublin as opposed to the really wide storefronts anticipated for the rest of the BSD, which could result in some really large window signs.

Ms. Ray said there is a cap on the size of the window sign, which is 8 square feet or 20% of the entire window area. And in the case of a door between two windows for one tenant, she said it is considered two windows, therefore two signs if one was placed on each side of the door.

Ms. Ray said holiday signs and display signs are permitted as holiday decorations.

Ms. Newell indicated well done neon signs could be appropriate but it would need to be on a case-by-case basis rather than a Code amendment. She said LED lighting is so intense and asked about the permitted illumination levels.

Deborah Mitchell inquired about digital signs, as that is a very fast growing area.

Ms. Ray said the changeable copy signs are prohibited currently throughout the city. She said digital signs could be considered as part of a Master Sign Plan but was not prepared to include those in the guidelines yet.

Mr. Langworthy said electronic messaging has been discussed and there is a lot of public material available with examples of what others have done.

Ms. De Rosa confirmed that an applicant could bring digital signs forward as part of a Master Sign Plan. She said she has not been the biggest proponent of the three-color limitation on many signs. She wonders in this particular instance if there isn't an opportunity to relax some of the rules a bit to see what comes forward. She said there are some really creative signs out there, even in the Columbus area. She said it is hard to imagine a really creative sign until it is presented. She said she thinks that should be encouraged but is uncertain how it should be balanced.

Mr. Langworthy suggested that as more Master Sign Plans come forward, there will be a level of consistency, and if we see more and more similar signs that we like, we could write specific standards into the Code instead of having each applicant come in and request the same thing.

Ms. Ray said the challenge of trying to encourage people to do really unique and interesting signs (neon signs for example, which we would need to see on a case-by-case basis) is that if an applicant is told they can only have it if they go to the PZC, they will often just say they will just do something else that they are permitted to do by right.

Ms. Ray said she agreed with Mr. Langworthy. She said with projects like Bridge Park, where they have to bring forward a Master Sign Plan that is where we can help push the envelope and start to get comfortable with other standards that we could use across the board.

Mr. Brown said the nature of this district is that we push the envelope and encourage people to do so. He used the Arena District as an example for public venues or events.

Ms. Newell suggested getting public comment.

Ms. Newell said she struggles with creativity with what is entirely Code compliant. She noted that if an applicant brings forward a sign that is 100% compliant but it is not very attractive, she asked how the Commission could say no.

Mr. Brown said he does not see how to create an "all-inclusive" guide.

Mr. Brown said the guidelines were great and suggested that they provide definitive examples of what is allowed and what is not. He asked about the process for reviewing bodies for Master Sign Plans and what happens when a tenant wants a sign after a Master Sign Plan has been approved.

Mr. Langworthy said it would depend on the Master Sign Plan that was approved before. He said if it did not meet that, the tenant would have to apply for a new Master Sign Plan.

Mr. Brown suggested that there should be something very prominent and specific stated where unique, artistic, and dynamic signs are encouraged to be brought forth for review.

Mr. Langworthy confirmed that the Commission wanted to encourage applicants to seek Master Sign Plans. He said the same is true for Waivers.

Steve Stidhem said he found some examples in both the positive column and what to avoid sections.

Ms. Ray said she would make the delineations clearer.

The Fuse/Cardinal Health sign at The Shoppes of River Ridge was discussed and Mr. Stidhem said he would not like to see it as a positive example, as it contradicts some of the guideline text.

Mr. Brown asked Ms. Ray what she struggles with the most on these guidelines.

Ms. Ray said a lot of applicants just want to understand what the requirements are and how they can get the biggest, brightest, and most signs possible. She indicated sometimes very little thought has gone into the sign design as they are trying to maximize the space they are entitled to. She said she would use the guide to show the applicants specific examples and discuss how they should proceed in a particular direction to achieve a nice and interesting design.

Ms. Newell asked who selected the pictures and where they came from. She said many of the signs were black and white or very simple two-colored signs.

Ms. Ray said the City's sign consultants, Studio Graphique, helped a lot with the pictures, but many others were selected by Planning, or photos taken in places like Seattle. She said there has been hesitation on having brightly colored signs but she included some great examples, including Jeni's. She added for every rule there is an exception.

Mr. Brown said this is so hard to codify because signs need to meet architectural integration.

Ms. Ray said it is difficult to regulate "taste".

Mr. Brown said when a big corporation or a franchise are coming into the area, certain standards are brought and there is representation with professionals and consultants lined up. He said when a 'mom and pop' shop, hair salon, or a small restaurant comes to Planning in Dublin for this process, it is extremely intimidating. He asked if a specialist or someone within the Planning Department could help the "little guy" if they want to be in the BSD. He said everyone wants the most bang for their buck and if they are spending it all in consultation and design, they are not spending it on the sign itself. He said he is not suggesting the City foot the bill for their design but advocates opening up the avenue for walking through these guidelines and helping them to understand them. He understood the City already offers similar customer service, and the outreach is great, but he asked how that could be conveyed to people to get the maximum result.

Mr. Langworthy said we cannot afford a specialist just for sign design on Staff but this guide is a start down that path. He said Planning has offered the services of the City's sign consultant, which we do pay for, and some of those applicants have taken those suggestions. He said that service is not that expensive and maybe the parameters could be loosened for Studio Graphique.

Mr. Brown indicated that exposure to more dynamic metropolitan areas will tend to provide more ideas.

Various signs around town were discussed.

Ms. De Rosa inquired about the picture on the cover and suggested that something “different” could be explored. She suggested that descriptive words could be incorporated into the introduction using words we would like to use to describe the feeling someone should get from a sign. She said a “personality” can set the tone for this guide. She stated the structure of the guide is excellent.

Mr. Brown said the real danger in the broader spectrum of BSD is that so far we have only one developer doing the core and when that is done, the plan becomes more contrived. He said they have the best intentions but without the different perspectives coming in from various design teams, everything can become “vanilla.”

Mr. Brown indicated he would like to see fun things happen here like he has seen at Easton like sculptures of guys hanging off ladders, etc. He asked how this sort of thing or other type of elements can be permitted or encouraged on the outside of buildings for the BSD that are attractive and enticing to lead pedestrians around the corner to see something else.

Ms. De Rosa asked if vertical banners were allowed. Ms. Ray said the banner would be permitted if it was an architectural feature but if it was a sign then there are limits like any other type of sign, but they could be permitted through the Master Sign Plan.

Mr. Brown said areas can be dressed up for events like the Super Bowl or NCAA with banners to make it an exciting, vibrant place.

Mr. Langworthy said we allow the Events Department to take care of that.

Ms. Mitchell remarked on the elements used for the Memorial Tournament.

Ms. Ray indicated the wayfinding project will be coming forward and anticipates the light poles will have the ability to attach banners. She said a community authority is being established for the BSD to coordinate these types of public realm improvements with the City.

Mr. Langworthy said incorporating public art is another thing they are working on; finding installations to place public art. He noted Crawford Hoying has been very good about designing spaces for future art installations.

Ms. De Rosa inquired about “light” logos where they project on the buildings or the sidewalk in front.

Ms. Ray said she included an example of a sign being projected on a sidewalk that was done in Seattle but that is not currently permitted but could be a cool sign to request as part of a Master Sign Plan.

Ms. De Rosa reported she had done that in the past and it is one of the least expensive things you can do for events.

Ms. Mitchell encouraged incorporating something about technology into the guide. She said this is really growing fast. She said there is a growing group of merchants and retailers that are value conscious and love the idea of visuals that can change allowing for flexibility and “in the moment” responses with what they want to convey. She said there is another group where cost is not the main factor, but how people can be swayed to purchase certain products. She said this is based on face recognition, where the signs change for the various demographics.

Ms. Newell asked how that could be regulated.

Ms. Mitchell said that just by having a section in the guide about the advanced technology aspect, it signals the intent for forward thinking sign designs.

Ms. De Rosa agreed it would signal a desire for creativity.

Ms. Ray said we have probably been more conservative with the signs brought forward thus far in the document, and this discussion lets us know what the Commission finds appropriate and would be interested in seeing.

Mr. Langworthy reiterated that the Commission's comments will be relayed to the ARB and vice versa.

Ms. De Rosa suggested the BSD website be more incorporated and integrated as well.

Ms. Ray said they meet with Community Relations weekly to discuss the website and she would pass this along. She said it is exciting with ground breakings as well as finished projects to advertise.

Mr. Brown inquired about the City's Zoning Inspectors. He said ground signs in Dublin are wonderful but the Zoning Inspectors are quite restrictive when it comes to trimming limbs/branches that impede the visibility of signs. He stated that is a detriment to the community.

Mr. Langworthy said he hoped that was changing as the system has shifted where they are inspectors and not enforcers. He said they go out and point out where the difficulties are and offer suggestions to people about how they may be able to resolve a problem. He said there is delineation between the compliance group and the enforcement side.

Communications

Rachel Ray said there were no communications to be conveyed.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

As approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission on July 9, 2015.