



MEETING MINUTES

Planning & Zoning Commission

Thursday, May 2, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Newell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Newell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Commission members present: Ms. Newell, Ms. Kennedy, Ms. Fox, and Mr. Supelak.

Commission members absent: Mr. Fishman, Mr. Wilson and Ms. Call

Staff members present: Mr. Papsidero, Ms. Husak, Mr. Boggs and Mr. Stang

ACCEPTANCE OF DOCUMENTS

Ms. Kennedy moved, Ms. Fox seconded to accept the documents into the record.

Vote: Ms. Newell, yes; Ms. Kennedy, yes; Ms. Fox, yes; Mr. Supelak, yes.

(Motion passed 4-0)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Fox moved, Ms. Kennedy seconded to approve the April 4, 2019 meeting minutes.

Vote: Mr. Supelak, yes; Ms. Fox, yes; Ms. Newell, yes; Ms. Kennedy, yes.

(Motion passed 4-0)

Ms. Newell stated the Planning and Zoning Commission is an advisory board to City Council when rezoning and platting of property is under consideration. For those cases, City Council will receive recommendations from the Commission. For other cases, the Commission has the decision-making responsibility, and anyone who wishes to address the Commission on any of the administrative cases must be sworn in.

CASES:

1. Midwestern Auto Group – Porsche Signs, 6325 Perimeter Loop Road, 19-030AFDP, Amended Final Development Plan

Ms. Newell stated that this application is a proposal for three signs for the Porsche showroom as part of the existing Midwestern Auto Group campus, a 30-acre site zoned Planned Unit Development District. The site is south of Perimeter Drive, approximately 250 feet west of the intersection with Venture Drive. This is a request for a review and approval of an Amended Final Development Plan under the provisions of Zoning Code Section 153.050.

Case Presentation

Mr. Stang stated this is a proposal for an Amended Final Development Plan for the sign package for the MAG Porsche showroom. The site is located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Perimeter Drive and Venture Drive. The Commission approved the demolition of the former Land Rover building and construction of the Porsche showroom in February of this year. The applicant is seeking approval for the signs that were removed from the previous application. The proposal includes a mixture of ground and wall signs for the showroom based on the types permitted by the MAG Planned Unit Development. The applicant is proposing a directional sign south of the service drive for the customer drop-off/pick-up area and a brand sign south of the main entrance to the building, as marked on the screen. Both signs contain the Porsche logo with supplemental text near the base of the sign. Both signs meet the applicable standards of the MAG development text and are consistent with the campus wide sign character. A wall sign is also proposed on the front elevation and is comprised of the word "Porsche" in red channel lettering. The sign is proposed at a height of 14 feet, five inches and is 33 square feet in size. The sign meets all applicable requirements of the development text for wall signs, however, the proposed red color is inconsistent with wall signs throughout the campus. Wall signs throughout the campus are primarily a silver color for the manufacturer's name with color being applied to the logo, if incorporated. Staff is conditioning that the applicant replace the red color with a complementary color used throughout the campus, subject to staff approval with the sign permit. The application has been reviewed against the criteria, and staff is recommending approval with one condition:

- 1) That the applicant revises the wall sign to replace the manufacturer color with a complementary color used throughout the campus, subject to staff approval with the filing of sign permits.

Commission member questions:

Ms. Fox stated that she visited the site. She believes she saw a MAG sign on the MAG campus that was green – is that correct?

Mr. Stang confirmed that there is. It identifies the MAG campus.

Mr. Supelak stated that there is a MAG sign on the pond facing the highway, which has green lettering.

Ms. Fox stated that she believes that is the only sign of a different color than silver.

Mr. Supelak stated that he is trying to determine if the silver signs on this campus reflect the requirements of the adopted development text, or if it is an inferred standard.

Mr. Stang stated that the silver signs are not a requirement of the development text. There is nothing prohibiting the red color; however, the campus is looked at as a whole. With the number of sign types permitted, the attempt has been to have some consistency among all three subareas. A similar color palette has been applied to all the buildings on the campus, as has the architecture and styles. Including a red color is very different than what has been seen there. Land Rover has had green signs approved in the past.

Mr. Supelak noted that it still has green signs.

Ms. Husak stated that the Land Rover sign was a topic on which there was significant discussion a few years ago. When changes were made to the Land Rover building at that time, there was discussion regarding whether the entire green wall constituted a sign. In the past, the Commission has attempted to keep the identity modern and use a gray, black and silver color palette. When BMW Mini applied, they had proposed accent bands in brighter colors, and the Planning Commission requested that those be removed from the building. Since that experience, staff has been conservative in terms of the colors that were introduced, especially for the wall signs.

Ms. Newell stated that similar color restraints and consistency were required for the adjoining Crown Mercedes dealerships. Traditionally, the MAG dealership has been permitted to have more signage on their site as part of their plan development than is typically allowed, along with the color concession.

Mr. Supelak stated that is helpful. He is trying to identify the standard or precedent that is guiding this restriction as opposed to a personal preference to have/not have the color of red.

Ms. Husak stated that color has been the negotiation mechanism for permitting a greater number of signs on this campus while also maintaining a look of high quality and consistency.

Ms. Newell responded that the intent has been to have a well-integrated look on the campus.

Ms. Newell invited the applicant to speak.

Brad Parish, President, Archall, 49 E. Third Avenue, Columbus, Ohio, stated that following the previous meeting, he shared the Commission's concerns with Porsche. From their standpoint, there is a need to remain consistent with their brand standards across the country. All their showrooms do have this red lettering on the buildings, a modern contrast to the silver curved façade. They have, however, made concessions in the lighting of the sign. Their current standard is red lettering with red LED lighting. The concession that Porsche has made in other cities is either a white halo lighting or a red, perforated vinyl that shines white at night. With the Porsche brand, black or white lettering signifies their corporate buildings. They try to have consistent identification of their showrooms and corporate buildings. If a greater number of signs were permitted on the site over the years due to color concessions, it was not due to any text requirement. Instead, it has been a subjective consistency argument. He would ask the Commission to consider this proposal from the standpoint of the elevation of the building and the contrast that the sign provides against the silver and glass box.

Ms. Newell inquired if he has any photographic images of the different options.

Mr. Parish responded that he does. He submitted those today, but it is his understanding that the Commission has to take action in order to view those.

Mr. Boggs stated that because the documents submitted to staff today did not meet the submission deadline for materials to be provided for this meeting, they were not included in the document acceptance action taken by the Commission earlier on the agenda. However, the Commission does have the authority to accept documents that are received after the

deadline. In this instance, staff does not object to the Commission receiving these documents and reviewing them for the purposes of this case tonight.

Ms. Newell inquired if staff had the opportunity to review the images today. If not, it probably is not appropriate for the Commission to accept and consider them.

Mr. Stang responded that staff has seen them. As Mr. Parish stated, the only change was in the illumination method; otherwise, it is identical to what the Commission received in their packet.

Ms. Newell stated that she would be in favor of reviewing those images in the interest of being concise and quick.

Mr. Supelak moved, and Ms. Kennedy seconded, to accept the documents proffered by Mr. Parish.
Vote on the motion: Ms. Fox, yes; Ms. Newell, yes; Ms. Kennedy, yes; Mr. Supelak, yes.
(Motion passed 4-0)

[Slide images displayed]

Mr. Parish reviewed the difference between the lighting options. With the previous submission, Option 1 provides for red lettering with the red LED illumination, same size and color palette as the other options. With new Option 2, a perforated red vinyl is installed over the front face of each letter, which allows a white light to show through at night against the silver façade. With Option 3, a halo light is provided. The front and sides are solid with a white glow surrounding it. This is a compromise to achieve a monochromatic color palette in the evening hours. His preference is Option 2, which will provide a transformative signage for daylight to nighttime.

Ms. Kennedy inquired if staff had concerns with any of the lighting concepts. Was their concern related only to the color?

Mr. Stang responded that is correct.

Ms. Kennedy stated that, coming from an industry background, she cannot imagine seeing a Honda dealership sign without the blue "H". She empathizes with the situation in which Mr. Parish is in with this case. The logo and the color is synonymous with the company and is recognizable by consumers. She is leaning toward permitting this concession in some manner.

Mr. Supelak noted that the color of the channel for the letters is silver. What is the building material?

Mr. Parish responded that it is silver Alucobond. There is a perforated section of the material near the door.

Mr. Supelak noted that there is no color contrast – just silver and silver. What about the Jaguar and Land Rover building?

Mr. Parish responded that the Land Rover building has a darker champagne-gray tone on the front facade, so the silver lettering on that building provides a nice contrast. With the BMW dealership sign, there is black background with white lettering. The intent is to have a contrast with all of the signage on the campus.

Mr. Supelak stated that either color or texture can provide that contrast. Many signs are stipulated within the PUD text. There are also signs interior to the glass.

Mr. Parish stated that those are permitted only within Subarea A and required to be within three feet of the glass.

Ms. Newell stated that per City Code, interior signage must be within three – five feet of the glass. If it is located further within the building, it is not regulated as signage.

Mr. Supelak stated that the large, red Audi sports van element is part of the Audi building. What he is attempting to point out that there is color all over the campus, including red. Although the interior sign is inside the building, that color is experienced specifically at night, when it is lit up.

Ms. Husak stated that the color may be experienced then, but the City does not regulate it.

Mr. Papsidero stated that as far as the zoning code, it does not exist.

Ms. Husak stated that with the small ground signs, identified as brand signs or directional signs, color restrictions were eliminated. Those signs are also logos, although technically, a logo is not permitted on a directional sign. Many changes have been made in signage for each of the dealerships on the campus.

Mr. Supelak stated that although PZC is to abide by the zoning code, their task is not to protect the Code as much as to protect the City, and he is trying to discern what is being protected. He agrees that the zoning code does not prohibit the red panel. The BMW building has blue, the Land Rover building has green, and the silver on the Jaguar building is consistent with their brand color.

Ms. Husak stated that, historically, the City has not accepted the argument that this is their brand and that is the only way it can exist. A few years ago, the BMW financial services office moved to Hilliard because Dublin did not allow their four colors -- chrome, black, blue and white, on their sign.

Mr. Supelak stated that he is trying to understand what the Commission is responding to in regard to these sites. Are we responding on the basis of a standard or are we inferring a standard?

Ms. Newell stated that the site is a Planned Unit Development (PUD), and every PUD has its own text. The Commission judges those cases based upon its PUD text, including their building architecture. Many MAG cases have been reviewed by the Commission, and the Commission has consistently required them to remain consistent with the original modern theme and color palette for the site. Earlier, Land Rover proposed a green tower; the Commission interpreted that element as signage and asked that the green color be eliminated. Other dealerships on this site have already made concessions in regard to their typical brand that is placed on their building. The same thing has happened on the adjoining Crown site. She believes consistency is important because it is never fair to make concessions for one business when there is a reason the requirement was in place, and concessions to it have not been made for other businesses.

Mr. Supelak stated that he concurs with the need for consistency, but he is trying to discern to what we are trying to be consistent. What he has learned is that there is no PUD text that requires this standard. Is that correct?

Mr. Stang responded that there is nothing in the MAG PUD that requires a certain color for wall signs. There is no provision regarding wall signs that addresses colors. Although it is not a formal regulation, over the years the dealerships have retained a look consistent with that of the main building and the entire MAG campus.

Ms. Fox stated that her concern is that there is nothing that states the sign has to be a particular color. She agrees with the need for consistency, but the purpose of consistency is to achieve a high-class, attractive appearance and does not detract from the image of the building. What are we accomplishing by prohibiting a color simply because it doesn't exist somewhere else? To accomplish the end point of a very classy, high tech, visually appealing building, would it make any difference whether the sign is red during the day and white at night? She understands that, traditionally, that has occurred. However, if someone was not present to share that history, on what would the Commissioners have based their vote? When she drove through the MAG campus earlier today, the first thing she saw was the green MAG sign. On the other buildings, she observed white, black and silver. She attempted to visualize adding the red and does not believe that adding red on this sign would make it appear out of place with the silver. She is leaning toward permitting the red color simply because there is nothing in the PUD text that says they cannot have it. It may be our preference to have neutral colors, but that would not allow the building owner the creativity to have something more interesting.

Ms. Newell stated that the Commission has been consistent in emphasizing the design of the buildings and requiring the signage to be well-integrated with that building design. The red color of this sign would not be similarly integrated into the rest of the campus. She is in agreement with the condition proposed by staff. She requested the applicant's preference for preceding with a vote on the case in view of the fact that all of the Commission members are not present. A majority of the Commission members is necessary for approval.

Mr. Parish stated that he does want to proceed with the vote, and inquired how the lighting options would be addressed. Porsche is willing to compromise on the illumination in order to eliminate the more intense red color during the evening hours.

Ms. Fox inquired if the red color is the same as that on the Porsche sign or if they were two different colors of red.

Mr. Parish confirmed that they were the same.

Mr. Stang stated that the other options that have been proposed would keep the base Porsche sign red during the day, but change at night. No matter which option is selected, the red manufacturer color will remain a part of the sign. The Commission has the option to allow different types of illumination or approve what was originally submitted, which keeps the red during the day and red illumination at night – a consistent red.

Ms. Newell stated that she is supportive of the request with the one condition recommended by staff.

Mr. Boggs stated that if the Commission wanted to vote on the other options, the wording of the condition could be revised.

Ms. Kennedy inquired if the applicant was in agreement with that condition.

Mr. Parish responded that he is not in agreement with that condition, but he does want to proceed with a vote.

Mr. Supelak inquired if the wording in the condition "with a complementary color used throughout the campus" does not include the color red, and for what reason.

Mr. Boggs responded that because the proposed condition indicates the manufacturer color would be replaced, it would not include "this" red.

Mr. Parish inquired on what standards would that complementary determination be based.

Ms. Husak stated that it would be subject to staff's approval, and the Commission is aware of staff's stand on the matter.

Ms. Fox inquired if staff would consider "complementary" as either white, silver, black or dark gray.

Mr. Stang confirmed that would be staff's position, and also that the color be complementary to the architecture and the signage that has been approved.

Mr. Boggs stated that if the Commission wants to define that color palette more closely, they could specify the colors. The condition as stated allows staff the opportunity to evaluate different shades of red. There are no color prescriptions or prohibitions in the development text, but the approval of a Final Development Plan requires that the proposed sign is coordinated within the PUD and with adjacent development. That is the standard on which staff will base its decision. It is the general standard for all amendments of PUD Final Development Plans that have been approved. It is a judgment call. There is history to support either outcome.

Mr. Parish clarified that he is not agreeing to the condition. His request is that the Commission amend the condition to one of the options that he has proposed.

Ms. Newell inquired if the applicant does not agree with the condition, must it be removed, or can the Commission vote on it.

Mr. Boggs stated that the Commission can vote and include the condition. The applicant would then have the opportunity to appeal that decision.

Mr. Supelak inquired if the Commission could vote on the request without the condition.

Mr. Boggs responded that the Commission could vote to approve the application with no condition or with a condition recommending one of Mr. Parish's alternatives.

Ms. Newell stated that her vote would be to approve the application with the condition recommended by staff. She would not support amending it to reflect one of Mr. Parish's alternatives, and a majority vote of the Commission members is necessary for approval.

Ms. Fox stated that she is in favor of leniency regarding the color, but the images of what Mr. Parish has proposed were just received today. She would prefer to have had the contextual images earlier. Although she is not ready to approve the application at this time, she is willing to give it more consideration with the opportunity to confirm that the red is truly a complementary color.

Ms. Kennedy stated that her position is similar. Although she is supportive of keeping the red in their brand, not having earlier opportunity to study the images that were submitted late makes her uneasy with voting tonight.

Mr. Parish stated that the options submitted addressed illumination and not the color red. If the Commission is comfortable with the color red, he can work with staff on the illumination element. The illumination options attempt to find a compromise by which a monochromatic sign would be seen during the evening hours. He is willing to work with staff on that as a condition for approval. In his view, the condition could read that "one of the three proposed options is acceptable subject to staff's approval." The issue tonight is only about the red color.

Mr. Supelak stated that if the proposed color is not perceptively disagreeable with what exists on the campus, he is not inclined to trump the owner in this matter.

Ms. Newell stated that it appears that there would be a split vote, and an affirmative vote of four is necessary for approval. How does the applicant wish to proceed?

Mr. Parish requested that the case be tabled to the next meeting at which time he is hopeful of receiving a majority vote.

Ms. Fox stated that because there are two elements, color and the illumination, the latter which the Commission did not have opportunity to discuss this evening, she is not prepared to vote at this time.

Mr. Parish noted that the red color is unchanged from the application he submitted eight weeks ago.

Ms. Kennedy moved, Ms. Fox seconded to table the case.

Vote on the motion: Mr. Supelak, yes; Ms. Kennedy, yes; Ms. Newell, yes; Ms. Fox, yes.
(Motion passed 4-0)

Due to the number of Commission members not present, the Communications item will be rescheduled for a future meeting.

Mr. Papsidero announced that Planner Logan Stang has taken other employment and will be leaving the City. This is his last meeting.

Mr. Stang indicated that he has taken a position with a firm called, Planning Next, which deals with strategic plans, comprehensive plan updates, and public engagement around the country. They are based out of Columbus. One of their specialties is working with communities to gather public input for comprehensive updates. They have worked in Dublin in previous years, on the 2007 Community Plan update and various special area plans.

Commission members expressed appreciation to Mr. Stang for the exceptional service he has provided to the Commission and wished him their best.

Ms. Husak thanked Ms. Newell for volunteering to serve on the new Council Chambers Planning Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.


Chair, Planning and Zoning Commission


Deputy Clerk of Council