

Design Review Board
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Meeting
September 16, 2009, 9:00 AM

Present: Chairman Robert C. Turgeon, Councilman Joseph W. Norris, Joann Baierlein, Steve Urso, Judy Hamilton, David P. Gallagher; Charles L. Rogers – Board members

Town Staff: Cathy Flerlage, Director of Planning & Zoning; David M. Jenkins, Director of Municipal Development; Danielle Mandley, Town Clerk

Minutes:

Chairman Turgeon called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM and led the Board and all attendees in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of September 2 minutes

Mr. Gallagher moved to approve the minutes of the September 2 meeting. Councilman Norris seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Building Signage for Benny's Chinese Restaurant – 6505 Crain Highway *[Staff report dated September 16, 2009 was included in the meeting packets.]*

Presenter: Hui Cheng, Benny's Sub Shop, 6505 Crain Highway, La Plata. Ms. Cheng had no additional information or items to present beyond those included in the meeting packets.

Ms. Baierlein moved to approve the building signage for Benny's Chinese Restaurant, 6505 Crain Highway. Mr. Gallagher seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Following the motion to approve the Benny's Chinese Restaurant signage, discussion ensued regarding the Boards desire to have additional signage, for future tenants; match the signage that has been approved.

Review and Discuss Current Sign Moratorium

Discuss Proposed Amendments to the Sign Ordinance

Discuss the proposed Amendments to the Design Guidelines
[The worksheet "Proposed Changes to the TOLP Sign Ordinance" was used to discuss and review the Sign Moratorium, Sign Ordinance and Design Guidelines, and has been inserted to represent the discussion of each item, and the Consensus reached.]

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TOLP SIGN ORDINANCE

The following list is comprised of a number of suggested amendments to Chapter 191 of the Town Code. The first group of changes was generated during our review last summer of the Community Design Guidelines, and reflects efforts to provide consistency between the Guidelines and the Code, and to better define and regulate certain types of signs.

From 191-63 – Prohibited signs and devices

- 1) Add in a 191-63P. – Pole signs. In connection with adding the prohibition on pole signs to Code, we had agreed in our previous discussions to put a definition of “pole” sign into 191-61. Suggested wording could be **“any sign mounted on a single vertical support post, which is less than 1/3 of the width of the sign or more than twice the height of the sign.”**

Board Consensus: Following discussion the Design Review Board agreed to the following:

- *Obtain an industry definition of a “Pole Sign”.*
- *Work on specific wording options to clarify the definition within the code.*
- *Check on local Ordinances from other jurisdictions through Jim Peck, with Maryland Municipal League.*

- 2) Add in a 191-63Q. – Billboard-type signs, of any size, constructed for the purpose and used as advertising space.

Board Consensus: Following discussion the Design Review Board agreed to include 191-63Q Billboard-type signs in 191-63 – Prohibited signs and devices.

- 3) 191-63E. – Need to fix this, as we **do** allow one sort of portable sign – the sandwich board sign.

Board Consensus: Following discussion the Design Review Board agreed to include wording such as “with the exception of sandwich boards as described in 191-70B(8) and 191-71B(9) and discuss further.

- 4) Need to discuss 191-63D, E, F, G, and H. Seems more specificity is needed. The way it reads now, “costumed” humans or other attractions that are heavy enough or secured so as not to “blow” in the wind are allowed. On the other hand, a few balloons at a shop’s doorway doesn’t seem too bad, but would be prohibited the way the Code is written now. Also, the prohibition on pennants might be seen to conflict with our “Town” pennants hung from the street light posts, which are rotated in and out for the various seasons.

Board Consensus: Following discussion the Design Review Board agreed that temporary events such as car washes, non-profit and other's of the like need to be addressed and wording included implementing safety guidelines. Further discussion will occur at a later date pertaining to Mascots Pennants, windblown signs; balloons, flags and other attention attracting devices.

From 191-70 – Signs in CB and CBT

- 1) 191-70A(3) – Change to read **“Wall signs. Wall signs shall be considered part of the business’s overall allowed sign area. A maximum of (2) upper story wall signs are allowed on buildings which are a minimum of four stories in height, limited to (1) sign per façade or (1) per 300’ of wall length.”**
 - a. This change must also be reflected in the C-B Guidelines, specifically Section D4 of the CB set. (#3) should be removed entirely (keep prohibitions in Code). (#4) should read **“Design signs to fit the architectural character, proportions, design details, and colors of the primary structure. Signs which are designed using individual letters or elements on a raceway (or other “open” design) shall be installed on a solid and uniform background, to optimize appearance and readability.”**

Board Consensus: Following discussion the Design Review Board agreed to remove Section D4, (#3) from the C-B Guidelines and discuss the code changes at a future meeting with copies of the referenced code.

From 191-71 – Signs in CH

- 1) 191-71A(3) – Change as described above, to accommodate upper story wall signs

Board Consensus: Following discussion the Design Review Board agreed to discuss the code changes at a future meeting with copies of the referenced code.

- 2) 191-71B(2) – Discuss a possible change to reduce the maximum allowable height. If the general feeling is that 20’ is “too tall” under any circumstances, and the Board is reluctant to approve one of that size, then the Code shouldn’t read to allow it. What would seem appropriate?
 - a. As above, these changes must be reflected in the C-H Guidelines. In Section F1(#4), Section F2(#7), and Section F3(#5) – remove these items entirely as they refer to prohibitions.

Board Consensus: Following discussion the Design Review Board agreed to make no change to 191-71B(2) and to remove Section F1(#4), Section F2(#7), and Section F3(#5) in the C-H Guidelines.

1) 191-69E – Permits for temporary signs

Board Consensus: Following discussion the Design Review Board agreed to add guidelines for temporary signage to the Master Sign Plan requirements.

2) 191-70B(8) and 191-71B(9) –

- a. Change Code as it relates to sandwich boards – should they be allowed at all in C-H? Or, should it be specified that they are to be used only as they are in CB – at the entrance to the business, seen by pedestrians, not out on the highway to be seen by motorists.
- b. Add language to allow off-site sandwich boards, with owner permission, one per frontage. All other sandwich board regulations apply (size, style, brought in at night).

Board Consensus: Following discussion the Design Review Board agreed to the following items, with a request for staff to bring back with new wording:

- *Add language to require sandwich boards to be a specified distance (number of feet not determined) from the main entrance to the business.*
- *Add “can’t be an impediment to pedestrian traffic and must provide 5 feet of sidewalk access”.*

Other Business

Ms. Flerlage briefly described a hair salon that is proposed to open at the former Esco site, and the application for building signage will be brought forth at a later date.

There being no further discussion, Councilman Norris moved to adjourn at 11:10 AM. Ms. Baierlein seconded the motion and it carried.

Submitted by:

Danielle Mandley, Town Clerk